

# Charlottetown Family of Schools District Advisory Council

Charlottetown DAC Members 2018-19: Alison MacDougall (Colonel Gray), Karma MacCallum (Queen Charlotte), Richard MacEwen (Prince St), Karu Bate (Parkdale Elementary), Vinay Upreti (St. Jean), Bourlaye Fofana (Spring Park), Kirk Wiseman (West Kent), Wanda Ellsworth (West Royalty), Tara Roche (Donagh), Jonah Bartlett (Chtown Rural student), Jana Parker (Glen Stewart), Melanie Belik (LM Montgomery), Katie Beck (Sherwood), Lindy MacQuillan (Stratford), Melvin Ford (Stonepark), Andrea Richard (PEI HSF rep), Stephanie Knickle (Ch'town Rural), Rachel Bruce (Colonel Gray student), Allie Keedwell (PEI HSF rep)

**May 8th, 2019, Charlottetown Rural**

**Guests: Harvey MacEwen and Dale Sabean, PSB Board of Directors**

## Discussions and Outcomes

### Homework

- A member asked that the DAC be provided with a timeline from the Department on the current review of homework best practices.
- Another noted that it is important for other stakeholders – parents, student, teachers, principals also be consulted for their input.
  - **UPDATE: The timeline has been requested and will be sent to the membership.**

### Bus Arrivals

- The issues that had been raised have been resolved.
- Thanks were expressed to the Transportation Department for addressing the concerns.

### Absenteeism

- It was reported that Erin Johnston at the PSB is examining absenteeism.
- A member requested additional information about that work.
  - **UPDATE: This has been requested and sent to the membership.**

### Hearing and Vision assessments

- The PSB annually tests the hearing of teachers for Music, Trades and Gym.
- Perhaps this is a way to piggyback on an existing program to have elementary school children's hearing tested annually.

### Principals Council

- Members would like to see the Principals Council meeting notes posted online.

- **UPDATE: A request for the Principals Council meeting notes to be posted online has been made.**

## DAC Vacancies

- The Engagement Officer is available to come your Home and School meeting to present to your membership about the role and importance of the DAC in the PEI education system.
- Thank you to all DAC members whose terms are ending June. Your service and dedication to the students of your District and the province is appreciated.

## Report Cards

- There will be a parent survey sent out May 27-June 7th .
  - **UPDATE: The survey was forwarded to all DAC members across PEI for their input and sharing.**

## Provincial DAC report

- The Engagement Officer presented on the work of all DACs this year.

## Forward Agenda

Priorities to bookmark for the Fall to continue or begin work on at the DAC include:

- Absenteeism,
- Homework,
- FTE School Counsellors,
- Family of Schools Class Composition Data,
- PATHS,
- Hearing and Vision Assessments.
- Other areas may be re-visited or suggested in the Fall.

Some members spoke about the desire for smaller groups focused on areas of interest, and a new way of meeting for the Fall.

- **UPDATE: An evaluation survey in will be sent out in June which will have opportunity for members to suggest changes to the meeting and group frameworks.**

**February 7, 2019, Sherwood School**

## Discussions and Outcomes

### Homework

- The DAC has not yet received a response from the letter sent earlier in the year to the Board, PSB and Minister regarding developing new homework guidelines

- **UPDATE: The Leadership and Learning team at the Department is consulting with Principals about Homework.**
- **They will also be reaching out to DACs for input as they look to update the current guidelines.**

## Category 1 School Review Outcomes

- Students in English programs living in the Lewis Point area and currently attending Spring Park will be re-zoned to attend West Royalty.
- This will begin with K-3 students and eventually phase to all K-6, as to have the least impact on students and families.
- There is also an RFP expected to be tendered soon to examine school infrastructure in all older schools across PEI.
  - **UPDATE: Tender was posted on February 28th, and closes on March 21, 2019.**
- The Government committed \$500,000 to this study.
- The results must be to the Board by August, so they can formulate any Capital requests to government by September for the Fall Capital budget.

## Absenteeism

- A member reported that there are students at his school who regularly arrive late and/or leave school early.
- He also had concerns about the amount of instructional time students miss due to extra-curricular and community based programs.
- A student member said that she sees some students consistently missing up to half the time in her classes.
- Another student echoed that especially in the elective classes, students think that skipping is no big deal, and that there is less pressure to not miss these classes.
- It was noted that Erin Johnston, Assistant Director at the PSB, is currently studying student absenteeism.

## Principals' Council

- Members would like the DAC to receive a report on the work of the Principals' Council – including its mandate and meeting outcomes.
  - **UPDATE: it was requested that meeting agendas, outcomes or a report on the Principals' Council be shared with other Councils and the public.**
  - **The mandate information was shared.**

## PsychEd Assessments

- A member shared information she received from the PSB about allotments.
- Schools with a population of less than 200 are allotted three (3) referrals per year, schools with 200-500 are allotted four (4), and schools with 500 or more are allotted five (5).

## January 24, 2019, West Kent School

**Guests: Morgan Palmer, Robin Ettles, Loretta Hawley-MacAleer, Erin Johnston, Hon. Jordan Brown, Minister of Education, Early Learning and Culture.**

## Discussion and Outcomes

### School Food Project

- Morgan Palmer, Project Officer, led a discussion about the project.
- She spoke about the upcoming food service demonstrations at two schools in this District – St. Jean and Prince St.
  - **UPDATE: The demonstrations were held the end of January and were very successful.**
- In September 2019, a school food pilot will be launched in nine (9) Island schools.
- It is envisioned as a non-profit, centralized hub model of procurement, preparations and delivery.
- Hub schools, staffed with food service professionals as well as students, will use school-based industrial kitchens to prepare school lunches and then transport meals to feeder schools.
- Montague High, Kinkora High and East Wiltshire Intermediate have been identified as the hub schools.
- A pay-what-you can component is being planned, and accommodations will be made for dietary and other food restrictions.
- Every effort will be made to keep current food service workers employed through the non-profit organization, and they will be paid for their work.
- There will be opportunity for community volunteers as well.
- There will also be opportunities for student engagement and education about food.
- The model will be governed by the soon to be updated school nutrition policy and the new Canada Food Guide.
- The School Lunch Association in NFLD is the model being mirrored, it has been successful for 30 years in delivering healthy, local lunches to students using a not-for-profit, hub model.
- This is about the school food environment, not just the meals.
- It is about food education as much as it is food service.
- It is an opt -in program. Parents are still encouraged to send meals from home if they choose.
- This program is connected to the provincial PEI Poverty Reduction Action Plan.
- Social media pages will be shared once launched
  - **UPDATE: They are now live, and the links have been forwarded.**

### Psych Ed Assessments

- PSB School Psychologists discussed the process of Psycho- Educational Assessments in PEI.
- The wait times are going down.
- There is a mandate from the Minister to reduce the wait time to one year by June 2020.
- They are at full complement and working hard to meet that mandate.
- In addition to assessments, School Psychologists are also responsible for psycho-educational consultations, re-evaluations, tragic event response and Professional Development

### Hearing and Vision

- A significant number of students referred for assessment are found to have a visual or hearing impairment or difficulty.
- A DAC member suggested the because hearing and sight are health issues, perhaps Health PEI could ensure that children have access to free vision and hearing test yearly, in the same way they have access to preventative dentistry.
- There is a program called Eye See, Eye Learn used in Kindergarten to assess vision.

- It was noted that a child's eyes may change after Kindergarten and yearly assessment in the early grades would be beneficial. This was suggested as an area for DAC advocacy.
- Psychology can look at a more formal method of data collection with regard to the number of referrals received where issues with hearing and vision are first identified.

### Assessment Process

- The process for assessment was outlined. Internal school teams – class teacher, resource teacher, guidance identify a student who is struggling. They reach out to the parents.
- In collaboration, they develop a plan to address the issues – resource teachers can do academic testing, and a referral can be made for psycho-educational consultation, which is the formal, systemic process through which a student is seen by a school psychologist.
- The Internal team identifies supports that could be put in place (students do not need a diagnosis to get supports) that make sense for that student.

### Staffing

- A member asked about staffing. Is there the flexibility in the budget to add in more resource teachers to a school mid-year if that is needed?
- It was reported that resource teachers are usually allocated in June, based on the needs outlined by the school, but that there is some flexibility in the model.

### Early Interventions

- The Department has purchased FUNdations, and K-1 instruction and phonics tool to identify kids with potential vulnerabilities.
- They use the outcomes to identify and mitigate possible future problem areas.
- Interventions are constantly reviewed by the school team and parents to see if they are effective.
- Overall, the re-evaluation process is a work in process.

### Class Composition

The Minister joined this part of the meeting.

- A member spoke to the group about the response received from the Board regarding the letter sent requesting class composition data.
- She had a meeting with the Board so they could further clarify what information the DAC was seeking and for what purposes.
- She indicated that the DAC is interested in seeing the data that the PSB uses to make decisions, to get a full picture of student and teacher classroom challenges.
- The Board indicated that the DAC is not likely to receive school based information, as it is protected by privacy.
- DACs are able to access Our School Survey data which is shared with Home and Schools, as well as enrolment and class size data.
- The school enrolment numbers are posted.
  - **Update: class size data was sent out to the membership, along with the school enrolment numbers**
- The DAC was encouraged to advocate for more resource teachers, itinerant teachers and classroom teachers.

- School principals work with their staff to present the best picture of their staffing needs, and now have a new tool to identify class composition needs.
- The Minister mentioned that 160 new positions were added in the last year, in direct response to school needs. That is an increase of 10% in front line staff.
- The Minister stressed the importance of getting the message out that teachers are the front line in identifying needs and implementing interventions like FUNdations and Reading Recovery.

**Oct 10, 2018, Queen Charlotte Intermediate**

## Discussion and Outcomes

### Wellness Committee

- It was decided to table this committee's work until later in the year.
- Members want to monitor the rollout and work of the Student Wellbeing Team in the Colonel Gray FOS and then offer input.
- It was suggested that SWB members come to a DAC meeting and talk directly to members about their work.
  - **UPDATE: Geoff MacDonald, SWB team Project Lead, will attend an upcoming DAC meeting.**

### Homework

- The final draft of the letter hand-delivered to both the Minister and Tammy Hubley-Little at the Spring DAC meeting with the Minister and Board on May 22 was discussed.
- It was decided to edit the letter and resend to the Board.
  - **UPDATE: The letter was sent in Nov 2018.**
  - **UPDATE: A member presented to the Bluefield DAC, as they has also identified homework as a priority.**

### Class Composition Data

- The DAC could offer better informed advice on school and class resource allocation if they know the needs of students in each school, as well as the challenges teachers are facing.
- Enrolment numbers per school will be available in November.
- A letter will be sent to the Board requesting data on the composition of classes and data on student supports per District.
  - **UPDATE: The letter was sent in Nov 2018. A member also met with the Board of Directors.**
  - **UPDATE: Enrolment numbers are posted in the Open Data Portal.**

### Teacher Review

- The process for teacher evaluation and review was discussed.
- A member shared that teachers are evaluated by their Principal after their 1st and 2nd year of teaching, then every 3 years.
- If issues arise, coaching is offered for teachers to improve their capacity.

- One member suggested that a 3rd party evaluate teachers, not their own Principal – either an inspector, or a Principal from another school.

### Psych Ed Assessment

- There is now a full complement of school psychologists (10.6) administering Psych Ed assessments to Island students.
- The goal is to have the wait list reduced to 1 year by Sept 2020.
- The membership is concerned that many families have to pay for private assessments to get a diagnosis.
- Students begin to receive support as soon as they are recommended for assessment.
- Members would like someone to come speak with them about the assessment process.
  - **UPDATE: A Branch-based school psychologist will attend an upcoming DAC meeting.**

### School Food

- Members are concerned that the School Nutrition Policy is not followed or enforced.
- Part of Morgan Palmer's work is to re-write the current policy.
- Members asked that she come to speak with them about her work.
  - **UPDATE: Morgan will attend an upcoming DAC meeting.**

### Late busses

- Several members reported chronic late busses to their schools.
- One student reported that in September, his bus was late every day, but has since been adjusted and he arrives on time.
- Members were asked to go back to their schools and see if the buses are regularly arriving late.
- If so, an action plan to address this will be created.

### Category 1 consultation

- Members want to know if there is an additional consultation process happening before the Board makes their decision re: Spring Park and West Royalty student re-zoning.
  - **UPDATE: The PSB Board of Directors further analyzed the data, and in Dec. 2018 moved forward with the most popular recommendation to re-zone English program students at Spring Park to West Royalty.**