

## 2017-2018 DAC members

Amanda Doherty-Kirby (Bluefield), Steven Letner (Westwood Primary), Luke McCarvill (Bluefield student rep), Maxine Mallett (East Wiltshire), Karen Clare (PEI HSF rep), Ricardo Angel (Eliot River), Emily Smith (Englewood), Sandra Skeffington (Gulf Shore), Rayanne Frizzell (Central Queens), Abby Sentner (Bluefield student rep)

**May 28, 2018 at Bluefield School**

### **Bluefield/Kensington-Kinkora DAC Ministerial Meeting**

Guests: Minister Jordan Brown, PSB Board Members Susan Willis, Harvey MacEwen and Dale Sabean

Present: Amanda Doherty-Kirby, Ricardo Angel, Sandra Skeffington, Abby Sentner, Luke McCarvill, Karen Clare, Patricia Cole, Karen Mayne Mullins, Olivia Mullins, Janette MacQueen, Bailey Clark, Dakota MacWilliams, Robert Greenan, Mary MacDonald-Pickering.

## Discussion and Outcomes

### **Bluefield DAC priorities**

#### Resource Allocation

- Teachers see gaps in learning among EAL students and students from low socio-economic households.
- They would like more in-class supports for teachers, and/or substitute time to plan for differential teaching.
- The Minister acknowledged that the Minister's Directive sets out limits but that principals can shift resources.
- It is not mandated to have a resource teacher or a librarian, the staffing model offers suggestions only.
- The Minister was asked to consider examining the current ratio of 400:1 for school counselors in his Directive as it may be outdated for the current school environment.
- The Minister noted there have been 161 additional front line resources added in the last 12 months, and 32 FTE EA positions. T
- here were 27 new teachers added based on class composition data and another allocation is coming for September.
- From the Kinkora perspective, it is imperative to maintain current staff, if not increased overall.
- Both DACs would like the resource allocation model to better reflect individual school needs.

#### School Food

- The DACs want a school food model for all PEI that is healthy, universal, equitable and has a food literacy component.
- They would like to have local chefs using local produce from local communities.
- They support the creation of an NGO that would oversee all aspects of school food.

- A student spoke about the disconnect between being taught about healthy eating but offered unhealthy food in the cafeteria.
- This DAC supports the continued work of Morgan Palmer in researching and establishing a healthy school food model.
- The Minister advised that her contract has been extended until March 2019.

## Kensington- Kinkora Priorities

### Psych-Ed Assessments

- In order for students to receive resources, they must have a diagnosis.
- The long wait for assessments means some students may be missing out on growth and learning.
- The Minister spoke about the strategy in place to improve services.
- Two child psychologists have been contracted by the Public Schools Branch to take on cases and they are hiring 2 more FT positions.
- The goal over the next 2.5 years is to reduce the wait to 1 year from request for assessment to plan.
- The Department has hired technology assistants to add to the complement of resource teachers.
- They will work with psychologists on the needs they identify for students – SLP, EA, tech, etc. to ensure the student can receive what they need.

### Exemptions

- A student brought forward his request to reinstate exemptions for high achieving students.
- He feels that exam exemptions are a good incentive or reward for students who have consistently proven through their term work that they have an excellent understanding of the curriculum.
- Students achieving 90% in coursework should be exempted from final exams, and have the mark prior to exam stand as their final grade for the course.
- It was noted that studying a full term of work is good practice for the demands of post-secondary, where finals are the norm.
- The Minister cited that finals build on student accountability, as well as learning to manage stress, realize consequences and build resilience.
- Another option suggested involved all students writing the exam but the exam's impact on a student's final grade would depend on how well he or she did on the exam.
- As assessment models are periodically revisited, exemptions or some other model for high achieving students could be a recommendation for the department to consider.

**May 3rd, 2018 at Englewood School**

## Discussions and Outcomes

### School Food Initiative

- Morgan Palmer was introduced. She has been working out of the PSB examining ways to get more local food in schools. She worked with students at Tignish Elementary, East Wiltshire Intermediate and Morell Regional High School. She is a registered dietician and chef.
- Morgan spoke about her work developing an Island wide-strategy around school food. It needs to be:
  - Healthy and nutritious
  - Universally accessed
  - Contain food literacy curriculum component
  - Equitable for all households, no matter their level of food security
- In this District, there are varying degrees of school food programs – breakfast programs, snack programs, snack cupboards, lunch programs, and cafeterias. Many DAC members are unhappy with the idea of companies profiting from selling and serving unhealthy school food to students.
- Members shared some of their school models for school food. One member shared that at Westwood, many students rush to eat. They would like to see lunch as a longer time frame, even a class, where students learn to eat with intention, share time with people, learn manners and build good relationships with food.
- Gulf Shore has one of the better models of school food in the District. The students here (K-9) are outdoors for 30 minutes and then eat for 30 minutes, followed by 15 minutes of reading. They have meals brought in via a local restaurant Rustico with a focus on local healthy food. Friday is pizza day. Elementary aged students eat in their classrooms with their teacher. Intermediate students are given regular opportunity to all gather together in the multipurpose room to share lunch and mingle. There is a “Food for Thought” cupboard for any students who may not have food.
- Morgan posed the idea of creating some infrastructure – a not-for-profit – to manage and oversee school food for all of PEI. Their mission would be to provide all students with healthy school food, made locally by professionals. It would not be focused on turning a profit. Morgan also talked about developing new policy and goals around defining healthy school food, including a meal-based policy that included the need for minimally processed food.
- The members thanked Morgan for her presentation and the discussion. Food insecurity is an ongoing issue for this DAC, and they are supportive of Morgan continuing in her role to further explore school food options for PEI.

## Distance Education

- tabled until the Fall. An invitation to attend the Fall DAC meeting will be extended to Mitch Murphy to discuss out of school learning options for students.

## Online Parenting

- the recent presentation on Digital Citizenship at TOSH was discussed. This DAC supports the work of the Dept to develop tools for teachers, students and parents to navigate online living.

## Homework Policy

- members received an old version of the ELSB Learning at Home brochure. It was suggested that instead of a policy, homework be looked at in terms of best practices for Grade levels.

## Report Cards

- this engagement piece will come in the Fall of 2018. DAC members are encouraged to keep the upcoming reports as guides for markup on what they like/don't like about the current reporting system. It was clear this DAC feels that reporting should be for students and reflect their learning. The idea of student led conferences in early grades can help connect students to their own learning and not just something that they "do at school".

## Ministerial Meeting

- The topics for discussion at the Ministerial meeting with Kensington - Kinkora on Monday, May 28 at Bluefield were discussed and chosen. They are:
  - Resource Allocation – more in school staff for early intervention of identified needs, including more librarians and EAs, especially in classes using project based learning.
  - Schools need full time Guidance counselors who support the work of the Wellness Teams.
  - School Food - the need of a provincial school food strategy.

A member will create a slideshow that identifies the problems, some solutions and the impact of those solutions.

### February 1st, 2018 at Gulf Shore Consolidated

## Discussion and Outcomes

### Student Well-being Presentation

- Geoff MacDonald, SWB Team Lead, presented an overview of the demonstration project's philosophy and framework.
- He asked for input from the DAC members about issues that may be unique to Bluefield District as they prepare to rollout the SWB team in this District in September 2018.
- Highlights of the presentation include:
  - balanced approach to care
  - child centered
  - easy access
  - early intervention
  - collaboration
- Geoff also spoke about the Mental Health Literacy piece that is in development. This training is for teachers to recognize potential mental health issues in students, and to help guide students to receive help.
- DAC members were encouraged to access SHAPES data for their school, as well as the school goals, as they may shine a light on some areas of concern for DAC and SWB team.

### Distance Education

- There is no PSB policy on this. Currently, there are courses offered in school with a teacher that are free, but at-home correspondence courses are paid by families. DAC members

would like to see this financial barrier removed, and more student choice offered in flexible learning models.

## Online Parenting

- There is a presentation on April 6th, 2018 at TOSH focused on this topic. Perhaps panelists can also come to the Bluefield District.

## Homework Policy

- Several other DACs are also interested in working on developing some advice and suggestions for a potential homework policy for PEI.

## Engagement

- There are several ways that DACs are being asked to offer advice to the Department and or/Branch. These requests will continue to be sent out to DAC members – and in turn, their Home and School members - who can participate as much or as little as they choose.

**Dec 7th, 2017, East Wiltshire School Library**

## Discussion and Outcomes

### Role of the DAC

- The role of the District Advisory Council, including the mandate and responsibilities, as well as the term appointments and process for the appointment was discussed with support material handed out.

### Class Size and Composition

- The DAC has spent considerable time discussing FTE, EAs, Resource and Guidance allotments and assignments. It isn't just the number of students, but how many and if all their needs can be met.
- Changing the method of instruction to Project Based Learning (PBL) could play a role in better outcomes and managing larger class sizes and differing compositions.
- There was discussion on looking at the big picture - how to accommodate students and styles, how to combine subject for cross-curricular learning, using a STEAM approach. How do we want to educate our children?
- The Bluefield student rep stated that students like what they are learning if they can see what it looks like in the real world - when projects and assignments are hands-on.

### Physical Health Issues

- There are challenges to meet the needs of learners who face extended loss of classroom time while out of school with an illness. It was brought forward that the Department consider

using e-learning models approved in other jurisdictions (i.e. Alberta Distance Learning Centre) as a way for students to study at home and gain credits while recovering or receiving medical treatments.

- Currently, when a student is engaged in e-learning, the burden to pay for this is placed on the families, as a cost of upwards of \$500/credit. Members would like to see that financial barrier removed and paid by the Department.
- The DAC would like more information around current policy around distance education/e-learning.

## Mental Health and Anxiety

- Early access to psycho-educational assessments, and a multi-agency approach is needed to address the low numbers of PhDs trained to do these assessments.

## School Food

- East Wiltshire recently received a grant around healthy eating, including quality of food at school and food insecurity.

## Screen Time

- Members report a higher incidence of cyber and real life bullying, and that there is not enough education for parents and students around healthy and safe online activities. Parents need support in how to monitor their child's online life.
- Parents may need some education and redirection about how to make better choices for themselves and their children.

## Team Approach to Wellness

- Medical intervention plans should be released, with parental/student permission, to school administrators and relevant teachers, so that everyone is on the same page when it comes to supports for students.

## Homework

- There should be a provincial policy about homework – amounts, time, rationale per Grade level.

## Arts Education and Wellness

- Access to arts courses Band, Music and other creative credits should be accessed equally by all students in PEI.

## Communicating with Parents

- Student Achieve System (SAS) is used at varying degrees in schools in the District. Parents from elementary schools said they have no school contact via SAS, and that means they often have little teacher contact or reporting on how their child is progressing.
- Parents feel they aren't given enough or clear indicators about how their child is advancing or struggling. They would like to see better communication tools with parents around measuring and tracking student achievement.