

Bluefield Family of Schools District Advisory Council

Members for 2020-21: Amanda Doherty-Kirby (Bluefield High), Cailin Deacon (Central Queens Elementary), Melissa Rommens (East Wiltshire Intermediate), Angela Campbell (Eliot River Elementary), Rosanne MacFarlane (Bluefield PEIHSF Regional Director), Stephanie Arnold (Gulf Shore Consolidated), Amanda MacFadyen (Westwood Primary), Jill Coffin (Bluefield Teacher), Neleah Lavoie (Bluefield Student), Alex Clow (Bluefield Student)

Vacant: Englewood Consolidated

May 17, 2021, Web Ex

Guests: Natalie Jamieson, Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning, John Cummings, Director of Educational Services

Discussion and Outcomes

DAC Recommendations Discussion

- Mental health
 - Issue: Despite additions of mental health resources in the school system over the last year, there remains a gap between student need and mental health service delivery (available resources).
 - Goal: to support students in reaching their academic potential by meeting their mental health needs
 - Co-benefits
 - Improvements in mental health lead to better social and economic outcomes for students, families, communities, and the province as a whole.
 - Delivery of mental health services at schools improves equitable access.
 - Early intervention minimizes the need for severe intervention in later stages.
 - Recommendation #1: Allocation to counsellors should be based on student need and be outside of FTE allotments.
 - Current model with part-time counsellors in smaller schools does not allow for relationship building and continuity of care due to staff turnover
 - Difficult to “schedule” mental health crises to times when counsellor is present.
 - Assigning counsellors based on numbers of students may not reflect needs of students (may depend on demographic)
 - Recommendation #2: Adequate staffing of the Student Well Being Teams.
 - Adequate staffing to deliver preventive, early-intervention programming to reduce reactive, severe interventions in the long-term.
 - Family support service worker.
 - How do we improve BIPOC representation within each SWB team? BIPOC community navigators and staff or other appropriate resources may be able to support BIPOC students when receiving help from SWB Teams.
 - Recommendation #3: Assessment of Student Well Being Team Model.

- How does the SWB Team model complement existing mental health programs and services external to schools?
 - What about crisis intervention services?
 - What about transition to post-graduation?
 - Efficiency of in-take system.
 - Evaluations should include perspectives from youth and family served, SWB team members, schools, and others.
- Equity in Education
 - Issue: Inequities exist within the education system. Unless the system is actively centering equity and social and racial justice, it will continue to propagate harm.
 - Goal: Create an education system that is safe, equitable, and accessible for all PEI students.
 - Co-benefits
 - Reduce interpersonal and systemic racial and social injustice within the Island
 - Avoid complex and severe interventions down the road
 - Equitable access to education leads to better social and economic outcomes for individuals, communities, and the province as a whole
 - Objective 1: Equip all educators, staff, and students with an in-depth understanding of inequity – racial and social injustice, colonization, exclusion, discrimination, etc.; their manifestations; and their harmful impacts as well as the tools and resources to identify and address them
 - Objective 2: Identify and implement systemic changes to eliminate harm and barriers to just and equitable access
 - Recommendation #1: Eliminate data inequity to improve evidence-based policy making and education services delivery.
 - Recommendation #2: Adequately increase resources and capacities to provide necessary and appropriate support to students and their families who experience harm and inequities within the education system.
 - Recommendation #3: Eliminate exclusions of non-Western worldviews, knowledges, and ways of knowing in the curriculum delivery, curriculum content, educational resources, school activities, training, policies, etc.
 - Recommendation #4: Advance active reconciliation in education services delivery, curriculum content, educational resources, school activities, training, policies, etc., starting with the recommendations outlined in the TRC Calls to Action.
 - Recommendation 5: Identify and provide the appropriate resources, training, recruitment, capacities, etc., needed to design and execute the above.
 - Intersectional approach to identity, address, and resolve these problems, gaps, and needs must follow.

DAC Presentation to the Minister

- **Response: There are many ways that government is addressing mental health**
 - The government has included 12 new counselor positions in the budget for the upcoming school year. The department is committed to increasing these positions within the school system.
 - The last evaluation of SWTs was in the 2018-19 school year. There is a plan to roll out those recommendations for the 2021-22 school year. Another evaluation is set for the 2022-2023 school year.
 - The Department has heard from many schools about the need for family support service workers. This will be discussed with the department. There is some work with parents through the Triple P program, but there is more that could be done.
- **Response: There are ways the government is addressing equity in education**

- More virtual learning opportunities have been implemented in French schools in PEI. The Department is looking to provide more opportunities to English schools through the PSB.
- The department is repurposing one of its curriculum specialists to work exclusively on BIPOC content.

These points were made in the following discussion:

- Wait times are increasing and some students are re-entering the intake process after receiving services from the SWT.
- There is still an issue with staffing part time positions for school guidance counselors in the Bluefield family of schools, even with the 12 new positions added.
- The DAC would like to see the SWT referrals factored into the FTE calculation for guidance counselors in order to distribute counseling roles a different way. For example, if you had an area with more poverty or food insecurity, that area might have a greater allocation of counselors.
- The SWT wait lists are tracked by each team. If teams see a demand not met in a certain family of schools, additional resources could be directed.
- The DAC would like to see part time positions moved to full time so that interventions can be offered at schools on a full time basis.
 - **Response: The department will be advocating for more school guidance counselors. The PSB is confident they will be able to fill all counselor positions with qualified individuals in the new school year.**
 - **The department will also continue to work on improving wait times for the SWTs and addressing staffing challenges.**
- There is a need to break down silos between departments involved in SWTs to create a more streamlined process to implement programs and replace staff more quickly.
 - **Response: The department works with the other two departments (Justice and Health) as issues arise. The Program Lead position located in the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning works with the other departments to help coordinate the program.**
- The DAC would like to know who the BIPOC curriculum specialist will be. The DAC would also like to know how the curriculum specialist will support teachers in implementing BIPOC content in lessons.
 - **Response: The position will focus on diversity and initially the successful candidate will work with other leaders to address diversity in existing content and the development of additional resources.**

April 22, 2021, Web Ex

Guests: Terri MacAdam, Director of Student Services, PSB, Paula Annear, Human Resources Manager, PSB, Janet Perry-Payne, EAL/FAL Program Administrator, PSB and DELL

Discussion and Outcomes

Diversity and inclusion presentation

Terri spoke about inclusion of students with special needs, and inclusion of all students.

- Special needs:
 - Research assistants are looking at inclusion models across the country for students with special needs.

- They interviewed principals.
 - They are also working with UPEI and masters in education students.
 - A survey is being created for parents. Parents are also being invited to participate in an in person meeting.
 - There is also a separate research project focused on French immersion.
- All students:
 - The PSB is now working on developing their own guidelines for inclusion.
 - These guidelines went out for public consultation.
 - There was a strong response from PEERS Alliance.
 - The PSB is working on inclusion in hiring practices and teacher education, and making sure that every PSB policy now has a focus on diversity and inclusion.
 - The PSB also met with Black Lives Matter and USHR/BIPOC.
 - A consultant from North Carolina has provided teacher training on bias.
 - The Safe and Caring Learning Environments policy is available online
 - https://edu.princeedwardisland.ca/psb/parents_students/safe-caring-learning-environments
 - The PSB would like to know how to get the message out to students about this policy.
 - There are phone number sheets in principals' offices.
 - A social media campaign on the Student Services page asked students from K-12 what makes their school a safe and caring learning environment.

These points were made in the following discussion:

- The PSB would like to see more uptake on the PSB social media pages.
 - Information sheets should list all the PSB social media pages.
- The PSB would like to have more input from youth on the infographics.
 - Sparrow McGowan is the communications officer.
- It is important to include parents in information sharing on inclusion policies since young children are not on social media.
 - The PSB presented the policy to Colonel Gray Home and School.
 - The PSB talked about the policy on CBC morning.
 - The PSB is happy to talk with parents about how to move forward on the diversity plan.
- The PSB works with their networks to fill gaps in expertise on diversity that are not in house.
 - The PSB works with PEERS Alliance and Student Services.
 - There is an app called Nuwelcom that translates notices into a variety of languages. PSB job ads are being posted on this app now.
 - Looking at whether teaching could become a path to immigration.
 - The PSB attended the Newcomers Association job fair.
 - There could be opportunities for newcomers to work as bus drivers, but they have to have had their license in Canada for 5 years.
- In the past, all resource people were English. The PSB is working on having more services offered in French.
 - Working on having accommodations for hearing impaired individuals on social media and having sign language translation.
- It was suggested that social media accounts could increase their visibility by using tags.

English as an Additional Language

- Janet spoke about how the PSB/DELL has been looking at ways to welcome newcomer families since 2007.
 - There is an EAL/FAL Reception Centre attached to the Department and PSB.

- A language proficiency assessment indicates whether language supports are needed for students.
- There are more than 30 teachers and youth services working with newcomer students across PEI
 - There are 180 newcomer students in the Bluefield family of schools.
 - There are 2300 newcomer students across the province.
 - There are more than 80 countries represented that speak 50 different languages.
- An app called Nuwelcom was developed on Island to bridge the community for newcomer families.
 - This app translates PSB social media messages into 13 languages.
 - It also posts job ads in additional languages.
 - The app will soon allow for 2 way communication between schools and families in their target language
- All schools have access to the Welcoming Schools guide.
 - The guide includes information such as how to meet a new family, how to work with interpreters, how to engage families in school system, and types of food in other cultures.
 - Starting to see some schools have different food choices, flags from other countries, translating messages, and cultural celebrations.
 - Want to spread the message that we are adding onto PEI society.
- Raising awareness on diversity
 - A speaker was brought in at Colonel Gray.
 - Would like to do this at other schools.
 - Costly, but can have a lasting impact. There are still ripple effects at the school level.
- Offering EAL classes across PEI
 - This has been a challenge, but there is opportunity to offer high school EAL classes online to rural schools.
 - Having an online community allows students to connect through culture across PEI.
 - Bluefield has its own EAL high school teacher, but it would still be great to see them join the online community.
- There are diversity and inclusion courses and workshop available through the Public Service Commission.
 - More people need to take these. However, courses are currently only available to Public Service Commission employees. The modules are open to the public.
 - These courses talk about biases and stereotypes that we often don't realize.
- Immigration is going to grow on PEI. It is anticipated that there will be 20,000 new people over the next ten years.
 - It is very important for all schools to learn more about new people.

These points were made in the following discussion:

- The Newcomers Association does a buddy system that matches new families with those already living on the Island.
 - This allows people to share lived experience.
- Initiatives could be helpful to those moving from other parts of Canada.
- The Public Service Commission (PSC) offers diversity and inclusion courses to government employees.
 - There is also an online workbook module introductory course on diversity and inclusion.
 - This is the link: [https://psc.gpei.ca/diversity-training-workshop\(link is external\)](https://psc.gpei.ca/diversity-training-workshop(link is external))
 - The PSB is working to get information about diversity and inclusion courses out to the school system.
- Having simple communication about where students can go if they experience racism is critical. This should include who they can talk to and feel safe.

- The PSB meets regularly with the Mi'Kmaq community.
- There is an evaluation about the SWTs taking place.
 - Teams are most part very effective.
 - The steering committee is looking at why there is a large staff turnover.
 - There is a provincial shortage of employees and school counselors.
 - There is also a national shortage of people who work in the school system.
- It would be good to have BIPOC navigators support and accompany BIPOC students in schools.
 - A student program might be more feasible than trying to hire all BIPOC staff across PEI.
- The DAC can support seeing teaching becoming a pathway to immigration by writing to their MPs.
 - The PSB has met with the provincial Office of Immigration.
 - They speak on behalf of the province on federal immigration.
 - If teaching was a pathway, there are people here who would love to be substitute teachers.
 - Some could offer teaching in the French language.
 - It would also increase diversity in schools.

Elected school board consultation update

- It was noted that if school board elections take place alongside provincial elections, that those who do not hold Canadian citizenship cannot vote.
- The Engagement Officer will follow up on any planned communication or summary of findings on the outcomes of the elected school board consultation, and the anticipated timeline for the new system.
 - The group noted that they would like to see something similar to the Town Hall meeting about the operations plans for opening of schools.
 - It was also noted that this might increase engagement in voting.

Home and school/student council updates

- At Gulf Shore, the school counselors are all too busy. It is anticipated that half of the kids need interaction with a counselor.
 - There is need for additional staff to alleviate the pressure (at least double)
 - Student numbers are not reflective of student needs (i.e. poverty)
 - Early Years Centres should have some mental health resources.
 - There needs to be more early intervention.
- At Bluefield High School, students are not aware of the SWT and tend to go to school counselors instead.
- East Wiltshire has 2 full time school counselors that see more than a third of the student population on a regular basis, which means that there are over 200 students split between two staff.
 - There is a low level of stress that exists all the time.
 - Early intervention is integrated in the curriculum.
 - Schools goals day is going to focus on early intervention.
- Schools with food cupboards include Gulf Shore and Westwood. East Wiltshire used to have a program.
- Equitable access to school is another important issue.
 - One example is chronic, mental or physical illness that keeps a student out of school.
 - There is a resource teacher for learning disabilities, but it would be helpful to have a behavioural resource teacher too.

- Assessments are taking a really long time.
- There isn't enough staff to fulfill the recommendations for everyone that needs it.
- The Engagement Officer will look up the current wait times for assessments.
 - **UPDATE: The waitlist is an Island wide waitlist and is done by date of referral, not by schools. The wait is about 1 1/4 years right now.**
- There needs to be more awareness in schools about SWTs. Infographic posters would help.
 - Student Services could partner with SWTs when they visit classrooms.
- The principal at Bluefield High School would be able to share more about existing diversity and inclusion groups in the school.
- At Gulf Shore, some teachers integrate diversity and inclusion into the curriculum.
 - Guest speakers from underrepresented groups have been easier to schedule in small cohorts (i.e. watching short videos)
- Some classes at Bluefield High School integrate diversity and inclusion very well, such as French sociology, Law, English in grade 11, and Leadership.
- At East Wiltshire, there are some teacher driven initiatives, but there is room for improvement.
 - Student council made sure there were welcome signs in all languages of students who attend the school.
 - There was a guest speaker, but not access for all students to listen to the speaker.
 - There needs to be improvement in the social studies curriculum, it talks about civilization from northern European perspective.
 - The social studies in French has a lot of good information on the First Nations.
- The Engagement Officer will follow up about any planned revisions to the curriculum.
 - **UPDATE: All curricula are on a revision plan. BIPOC outcomes are being added to a variety of curricula, including social studies. Please note that revisions are subject operational capacity. For example, nine EEPS staff were redeployed last year to teach in the school system and revisions were impacted.**
- Gulf Shore received a leadership grant from PEIHSF to host a virtual event.
 - This is something that could be considered in future years for other schools.

February 25, 2021, Web Ex

Discussion and Outcomes

Input for the Provincial School Board Model

- The DAC discussed the contents of their shared document to determine what to share at their school board model consultation meeting.
- Some points to consider in the new model:
 - Suitable number of elected trustees: one from each family of schools for the PSB (10) + 5 additional appointed positions (for BIPOC individuals)
 - Should also consider a youth advisory position.
 - Electoral districts: based on feeder area for each family of schools.
 - Election date: coincide with Provincial elections.
 - Method of voting: same methods offered for Provincial Elections voting process.
 - Candidate eligibility: Canadian citizen, 18 years of age, live in the district for which they will represent for a minimum of six months prior to election.
 - Increasing civic engagement: use of social media platforms. Candidates provide a paragraph about why they want to be a trustee.
 - Nomination process: What was the previous nomination process? References?
 - Methods to increase voter turnout: Use of social media platforms, should increase if voting for provincial election at same time.

- Some questions to ask when creating the new model:
 - Will the government get rid of PSB trustees in the new structure?
 - What decision-making power will trustees have?
 - Will trustees be paid positions?
 - Will the DACs still exist?
 - Should trustees need to be a parent with a child in the school system?
 - What can be done to increase voter turnout?
 - If school board elections take place with provincial elections, how will that work alongside appointed trustees?
 - Could there be online voting?
 - How would the workload be divided between trustees that represent different sized of school families?
- The DAC decided to use the questions from the school board model online survey to continue working on their shared document.

Student Investigation and Search - Policy Consultation

- The DAC compiled all their emails into one document to submit for the consultation.
- The new policy is more robust and brings things up to date.
- The DAC sees the benefits of having a written policy, especially for the younger grades.
- The DAC discussed section 4.2 of the policy, about discretion of when the police should be involved.
- The DAC would like to see a commitment to training administrators and employees on the new policy with an equity/inclusion lens.
 - There needs to be training on unconscious bias, racism, and disabilities to help staff learn how to reflect on their decision-making and make sure no additional harm is done to students when determining whether to involve police.
- The DAC agreed that records should not be kept in a cumulative file for all to view, since this can propagate bias against a student.
- Section 3.2 does not provide not clear guidance on how to define a credible source of information. There could be teacher and student bias in claims or decisions.
 - In practice, action is taken based on a collaborative discussion.
 - The policy should define what credibility means.

Accessibility/Anti-Racism Discussion

- There is a self-directed session being offered at the next professional development day about how to be an anti-racist teacher.
 - An update will be provided at the next DAC meeting.
 - The Engagement Officer will follow up to find someone to speak to the DAC about inclusion and diversity.
- Some schools within the Bluefield DAC are discussing racism and diversity with their students through black history month, leadership classes, and diversity week.
 - These types of initiatives are largely driven by individual teachers.
- The DAC is interested in equity, diversity and inclusion work within broader provincial government.
 - The Engagement Officer will follow up with the PSC to determine how this might be taking place, and whether the Department of Education is involved.
 - Member of the DAC will check on individual school initiatives and ask the following questions:
 - 1. Have there been any initiatives around diversity and inclusion at your school?

- 2. What has worked well and what hasn't worked well?
 - 3. What accommodations would you like to see in your school to ensure everyone has equitable access to education?
 - 4. What mental health resources would you like to see in your school?
 - The DAC will start a google doc and add to it for a discussion at the next DAC meeting.
- There needs to be more consideration of students with health conditions in schools.
 - Online learning could be a piece of this, as long as students have access to internet.
 - Technology needs to be provided if student doesn't have it.
 - Need to think about kids who have supports in schools, how will they receive those supports if schools shut down again?
 - The Engagement Officer will ask about plans for how EAs will support students if schools were to be shut down again due to COVID.
- There is a need to identify the barriers to make sure that everyone has equal access to education.

Update on Counselor Ratios/Positions and Joint Resolution

- **UPDATE “All but one school in the Bluefield Family to date has received additional counseling time from the new 13 FTE. The new FTE was added to current counselors in the schools who were not counseling full-time. The only school as of today that didn't receive any of the new counseling FTE is Gulf Shore in the Bluefield Family.”**
 - The Engagement Officer will follow up and ask whether the 13 FTE includes other positions such as youth workers and autism support counselors.
 - Members of the DAC will follow up with each of their schools to see what supports they received.
- The DAC will start a draft joint resolution in a shared document to present to the other DACs.

February 9, 2021, Bluefield High School Cafeteria

Meeting chair: Cailin Deacon

Guests: Amanda Petrie, Team Lead, Student Wellbeing Team Bluefield Family of Schools, Chris Noseworthy, MSW SWT Social Worker

Discussion and Outcomes

Student Well Being Presentation

- Amanda Petrie and Chris Noseworthy gave a presentation about the SWT's work in the Bluefield family of schools.
- They talked about how early intervention provides better outcomes for kids and teenagers.
- There are multidisciplinary SWTs in all 7 families of schools.
 - Phase 1 2017: Westisle and Montague Family of Schools pilot.
 - Phase 2 2018: Colonel Gray, Souris, Morell, and Bluefield Family of Schools.
 - Phase 3 2019: Charlottetown Rural, Kinkora and Kensington, and Three Oaks Family of Schools.
- SWTs consist of registered nurses, social workers, outreach workers, occupational therapists, and provincial supervisors in health, education, justice, and occupational therapy.
 - There are 7 members on the Bluefield SWT.
- SWTs collaborate with a number of partners.

- The vision of SWTs is: “Supporting Island children and their families to be the best they can be.”
- Guiding principles for SWTs are child centeredness, easy access to services, early intervention, and collaboration.
- SWTs hold formal one on one meetings, group interventions, brief interventions, and educational opportunities.
- Referrals received
 - 2018-2019 – 573 referrals
 - 2019-2020 – 914 referrals
 - 2020-21 (Sept-Dec) - 426 referrals
 - These numbers do not include parent or school group sessions or presentations/health promotion activities.
 - 106 referrals were received from September 2020 to January 2021 for Bluefield Family.
 - There are 7 groups currently running in 6 different schools within the Bluefield Family.
- Parent/student required to sign a consent form upon initiation of the service to enable information sharing between the 3 departments when appropriate and in the best interest of the student/parent.
- Referral process: Referral created -> forwarded to team lead and school counselor -> team lead gathers intake information -> triage and assignment -> consent for services obtained.
 - Parents can choose whether to go through the school counselor or use the referral process. Either way the parent/student will be directed to the right service.
- Anyone can make a referral using the online system.
 - <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/service/make-student-well-being-tea...>
- SWTs connect with students in schools, at home, in the community, and at after-school programs.
- Changes with regards to the pandemic:
 - The impacts of the pandemic depend on vulnerability factors such as pre-existing mental health conditions and educational status.
 - There have been mixed reactions to COVID from students, some students are struggling while others are excelling.
 - The SWT finds it is more difficult to find spaces to work in. It can be challenging to read facial expressions during one-on-ones with students while individuals are wearing a mask. Facilitating group sessions while maintaining separation for cohorts can be a challenge.
 - There has been an increase in school refusal and more requests for online learning.
 - There has been an increase in separation anxiety.
 - Zoom for Health is being used by SWTs for sessions with students.
- What can parents do
 - Talk with students about the impact of COVID-19 on their lives and assess its potential relationship to their current mental health.
 - Complete a referral for their children if they have any concerns about their children’s mental health.
 - Early intervention may prevent long-term mental health consequences from this COVID-19 pandemic.

These points were made in the following discussion:

- The number of members on SWTs at each family of schools are based on school population size.
 - The DAC could advocate for inclusion of other factors such as poverty level in determining these numbers.

- There were evaluations of the SWTs in year 1 and year 2. SWT staff, principals and teachers completed these evaluations. Families were not included in those evaluations, but this is a priority for future evaluations.
- SWTs work with K-12 students (no preschool).
- Currently, there is a wait time for service with the Bluefield SWT.
 - The DAC would like to advocate for additional staff for SWTs, but needs more information about where to advocate, since the money for SWTs comes from Education, Justice, and Health.
- There are different levels of intervention along a continuum, leading to different possibilities for services.
- Presentations in classrooms could be viewed as early intervention. Sessions include internet safety, managing emotions, social skills groups.
- SWTs attend all student services school meetings at all 7 schools in the Bluefield Family.
 - There are 1-2 members at Bluefield High School at any given time.
 - SWTs spend more time at bigger schools because there are more students.
 - SWTs try to make connections with administrators and counselors in the schools on each visit.
 - The referral process ensures students at all schools receive the services they require.
 - Anyone under age of 12 needs parental consent, which can limit the presence of SWTs in younger grades.
- Information sharing is on a need to know basis. SWTs make sure that the parent/student knows what information is going to be shared.
 - If any information puts a student or someone else at risk, SWTs will always share this information.
 - Clinical judgement used case by case, to determine what is beneficial to the student.
- The online referral system uses a triage system, with higher risk cases addressed more quickly.
- There is no position on the SWTs that works specifically with parents or families.
 - The DAC could advocate for a family outreach worker to work with families in the younger schools. The Bluefield SWT spoke to Standing Committee about this need.
- SWTs can occasionally pick up students for transportation to and from school. They focus more on working with the family so that they can take their own child to school or find a solution.
- Students can drop by the SWT office any time and give their perspective on their work. The team is open to ideas from students and collaboration.
- Early intervention is especially important at the junior high level when students are beginning to understand mental health.
- Awareness of SWTs is still an issue.
 - SWTs just launched Twitter, Instagram and Facebook account.
 - Collaboration with student councils could help.
 - Presentations about SWTs could be given later in the year.
 - A partnership with peer helpers at East Wiltshire could be developed.
- The SWT team is not culturally diverse.
 - It was suggested that SWTs could connect with community groups, to provide a community navigator as a resource for students and families.

Round Table Sharing of Home and School Priorities

- East Wiltshire parents are happy with the SWT and connections they are making within the school.
- Westwood parents are happy with the crosswalk. However there needs to be more awareness about traffic safety and for cars to slow down in the area.
 - Westwood is also working on fundraising for their playground fund.

- Central Queens is working on how to fundraise during COVID.
 - The Home and School is working on activities for teacher appreciation week, which is a challenge with COVID.
 - People have been told to reach out to the DAC with their feedback on the Student Investigation and Search Policy.
- Elliot River has confirmed funding for renovations and expansion of the school. The tender will be going out in the spring.
 - There are plans for an elevator to be installed, along with work on the school's ventilation system.
 - There have been ongoing transportation issues with lighting and sharing property with Town of Cornwall.
 - Extra cleaning staff from COVID has been on a month-to-month contract. They are hoping these contracts can be confirmed to the end of the school year.

Update on the Home and School Resolution on Counselors

- There was a resolution put forward by the Home and School Federation a few years ago about changing the ratio for counselors. The Department did not change the ratio at this time.
 - **UPDATE: As of last year all schools had at least a 50% counselor which for some schools is over the ratio. There is still a shortage of counselors Canada wide so PSB is undertaking a recruitment strategy to address our shortage.**
- The team decided to wait instead of rushing to meet the Home and School Federation deadline for resolutions.
 - The team decided to try and understand problem more deeply so they can frame the issue differently.
 - The DAC would like to develop a broader resolution about this issue.
- Considerations for the resolution:
 - Presentations to the Economic Welfare Committee take place in the spring about specialist positions in the schools.
 - Increasing access to psych assessments.
 - Where did the 13 new counselor positions go?
 - **UPDATE: All but one school in the Bluefield Family to date has received additional counseling time from the new 13 FTE. The new FTE was added to current counselors in the schools who were not counseling full-time.**
 - Having 0.4 and 0.6 counselor positions at schools based on student population is not ideal. Need to account for travel time related to the position, and higher turn-over meaning less consistent relationships with students and schools.
 - Staff allocation should not be based just on numbers, but other factors such as poverty, etc.
 - The DAC would like to determine whether there is a better way to define ratio.
 - This might involve looking at other jurisdictions that use different methods that could work here.
 - The DAC would like to create a resolution collectively with other DACs who share the same concerns.
 - The Engagement Officer will share a draft with the other DACs to see if they are interested in providing feedback and submitting a joint resolution to advocate together.
 - Access Open Minds has some good resources on youth mental health.
 - <https://accessopenminds.ca/who-we-are/>(link is external)
- The DAC is very interested in meeting with the Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning later this year if there is an opportunity.

December 2, 2020, WebEx Meeting

Meeting chair: Stephanie Arnold

Discussion and Outcomes

Follow up from Legislative Assembly Presentation

- The DAC spoke about three priorities: transportation, mental health, and loss of learning. The DAC would have also spoken about support staff issues that some schools are facing if they had known about this issue sooner.
- The Standing Committee on Education and Economic Growth would like to thank the Bluefield DAC for the presentation and all the work went into it. The Committee will have a work plan meeting in the New Year to discuss where their priorities are going forward and to build off the work that was done this fall.

Round Table Sharing of Home and School Priorities

- Westwood
 - Their Home and School meeting was cancelled.
 - They would like more information on the family outreach support position to be added to the Student well-being team.
 - **UPDATE: This position unfortunately was not approved by the budgetary process.**
 - The lack of support for speech therapy is a concern.
 - If COVID were to increase on the Island, they would like to see schools closed as a last resort.
- Elliot River
 - Their Home and School meeting was cancelled.
 - They would like more details on 4.3 million on capital repairs
 - The elevator and accessibility issues have not been addressed yet. They plan to escalate this issue if it is not addressed soon.
- Gulf Shore
 - Had 2-3 meetings so far.
 - Discussed using the leadership grant application for an anti-racism initiative. The deadline is Dec 11 for the grant.
- Bluefield did not have their Home and School meeting.
- East Wiltshire brought up racism and accessibility as topics to carry forward.

Concerns to be Carried Forward

- Transportation
 - The crosswalk at Westwood Primary was painted, crossing lights were added, and there are now more students walking to school.
 - Gulf Shore is hoping they will see a paved shoulder next year.
 - 15 extra bus drivers have been hired.
 - It would be good to check and make sure that the bus planner is consistent with the information held by the schools.
 - Transportation can be looked at again by the DAC in the spring.

- Mental health
 - There is a tendency to see the Student Well-Being Teams more at high school levels than elementary levels.
 - A family outreach position is needed at the elementary levels.
 - Survey results from PEITF found some difficulties at the start of the year, but that teachers seem to be doing well overall.
 - This issue needs to stay on the forefront, as some teachers are still struggling.
 - There are psychological supports for teachers (i.e. Starling Minds through the PEITF), but some teachers may need support from elsewhere.
 - There was training on mental health for teachers at the beginning of the school year.
 - All schools at the Junior High level have students moving from class to class now. This helps students pay attention more and creates less stress for teachers.
 - Having masks on all day at the high school level has been harder on teachers and students.
 - PATHS program and mental health
 - There are two schools using PATHS. Other schools can choose which resource to use for mental health. There are no plans to roll it out in all schools at this time.
 - There are a number of students at Englewood with significant mental health issues, and a part-time counselor is unable to meet these needs.
 - A CBC article says there are 34 schools without a full time counsellor
 - <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-legislature-scho...>(link is external)
 - The DAC would like to take the position that there should be a minimum of one full-time counsellor per school
 - Three DAC members agreed to work together on a Home and School resolution to support this.
 - The Engagement Officer will check to see how many of the 13 new counsellors will address the gap in the Bluefield Family of Schools.
 - **UPDATE: This work is not yet finalized thus we do not yet have details to share. The PSB is working hard to make those determinations and will communicate with schools soon.**
 - The DAC discussed how allocation of guidance counsellors is determined.
 - The Minister's Directive outlines this requirement, and it is up to the principals to determine how these positions are allocated within their schools.
 - Small allocation budgets have led to increased stress for teachers especially around duty (which COVID has exacerbated)
 - The Engagement Officer will look into the formula to determine how allocation of guidance counsellors is determined
 - **UPDATE: MD-08, section 3(9) outlines that one instructional position shall be allocated to Education Authorities for every 400 students enrolled. https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/md_20...**
 - Student Well-Being Teams
 - There is a need to communicate and promote the services available from these teams to students and parents.
 - There is also a need to reduce stigma around seeing a counselor or youth worker
 - The DAC will check with school administrators and students to see how the school relationships with these teams are going, and determine if there are any consistent themes or gaps.

- The Engagement Officer will see if the Student Well-Being Team for the Bluefield family of schools is available to speak at the next DAC meeting.
- Loss of learning
 - The DAC would like to know how the government is supporting remote learning for the students that are isolating in Charlottetown due to the positive COVID case.
 - Parents want to see the contingency plans for what happens if there is a COVID case in a school, including how quickly remote learning is put in place.
 - They would also like to know whether individual school plans determine how testing and isolation proceeds in each school if there is a positive case, or if the Department of Education or PSB has a plan that determines how this will proceed in all schools.
 - The Engagement Officer will check with Charlottetown DAC on how remote learning is going.
 - The DAC would like to take the position that if there is an increase in COVID cases on the Island that schools close as a last resort.

September 24, 2020, WebEx Meeting

Guest: John Cummings, Executive Director, Department of Education and Lifelong Learning

Discussion and Outcomes

Working Together

- The Engagement Officer will continue to develop the meeting agenda and organize DAC meetings, bring forward concerns raised by other DACs, and help elevate concerns to create a coordinated response.
- The DAC will use the chat feature to establish order of speaking in virtual meetings. The person wanting to speak next will add a question mark to the group chat, and the engagement officer will invite individuals to speak in that order.
- A member from the DAC will act as the meeting chair on a rotating basis.

DAC Overview

Anne Rooban, Engagement Officer for the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning, gave an overview presentation on the role of the DACs.

- Mandate of the DACs is to help shape an education system that is focused on and meets the needs of learners. The role of DACs is:
 - to advise the Minister of Education on educational priorities for the District;
 - to engage school communities in discussions;
 - to foster collaboration among school councils, home and school associations and the community.
- Responsibilities of membership:
 - Report concerns of your local Home and School to the DAC;
 - Provide leadership in identifying priorities to focus on;
 - Work collaboratively with members;
 - Report back to your local Home and School the discussions and outcomes of DAC meetings.

These points were made in the following discussion:

- The Bluefield DAC webpage needs to be updated for the 2020/21 school year.
- The main DAC page needs to be updated to include the role of teachers on the DACs.
- The Department encourages DACs to focus on cross-school topics. Issues specific to schools can be noted in minutes, brought as a concern to the Department or PSB, and addressed outside of the DAC meeting.
- The DAC will carry on as it did in the past. There is potential for a school governance review at some point.
- DACs do make an impact on the school system, and movement on bigger issues has been seen in the past.

School Operational Plans

- Transportation at the schools in the Bluefield DAC have improved
- Communication
 - The wrong times for transportation are being provided to parents new to the portal system, and parents have to call the schools to get the correct information.
 - The school is unable to access the information in the online portal that parents are accessing.
- Safety issues for active transport
 - People are driving too fast at crosswalks.
 - Kids are having difficulty getting past the roundabouts in Cornwall.

These points were raised in the following discussion:

- Home and School meetings can be held in schools provided they take place after the regular school day and provided they can meet the guidelines.
- Directives in other jurisdictions have changed so that more than one symptom is required for individuals to be barred from attendance. Is this something PSB is looking into?
 - UPDATE: Yes, the PSB is in constant communication and collaboration with CPHO around the questions and pressure points identified by schools, parents and communities. As CPHO determines new or different direction, the PSB will communicate with schools.
- Parents would like more clarity and communication on the school contingency plans. They would like more information about the plan details.
- Parents would like to see more standardization in terms of the process required when they keep kids home due to illness. Clear expectations would help ensure everyone experiences the same process.
- Teachers now have modified curriculum and are using google classroom. If a student is missing extended time, student referral teams are putting plans in place for that student.

PEI Assembly Submission

- The Bluefield DAC is developing a document to present to the PEI Assembly.
- The three core issues of focus are:
 - Loss of learning;
 - Transportation;
 - Mental health (for staff and students)

- This presentation was supposed to take place this Tuesday. It will be postponed to at least the second week of October so that DAC members can gather additional feedback from their Home and School Associations.
- The DAC will continue to work on their Assembly submission through Google Docs.

Topics for Discussion for the Upcoming School Year

- Ongoing implementation of school operation plans for COVID.
- Transportation.
- Loss of learning.
- Mental health for students and teachers.
- Making the PE education system anti-racist.
 - The DAC would like to explore the possibility of using parent leadership grants through Home and School as part of its approach to address this topic.
- Accessibility issues.
 - There are significant issues at Eliot river school.
 - The Engagement Officer will raise the issue of accessibility with the other DACs.
- School cleanliness.
 - This was a topic two years ago relating to the calculations for janitor staff required for primary schools being the same as for middle and high schools.
 - There was discussion about putting this to a resolution but it didn't happen.
- Topics brought up at Home and School meetings will be added to DAC topics for discussion.