

# Charlottetown Rural Family of Schools District Advisory Council

## April 27, 2017 at L. M. Montgomery

The following problems, priorities or questions evolved from the meeting discussions

### **Problem: Overcrowding**

- A. Overcrowding issues at Glen Stewart Primary, Lucy Maud Montgomery School, Sherwood and Stratford Elementary have not been addressed. The Public School Board (PSB) recommended infrastructure for these schools.
- B. DAC members would like clarification on exactly what was recommended by the PSB in terms of infrastructure.
- C. Cabinet was comfortable making some decisions on recommendations from the PSB just 15 hours after the Board meeting, however, since that time, Cabinet has been silent on recommendations related to infrastructure for Glen Stewart Primary, Lucy Maud Montgomery School, Sherwood and Stratford Elementary. DAC members would like to know why.
- D. When will parents of children at Glen Stewart Primary, Lucy Maud Montgomery School, Sherwood and Stratford Elementary hear of a plan for their children?
- E. When will the plan be implemented?
- F. When will students/teachers feel some relief?

### **Priority: Class Size**

- G. DAC members recommend that Minister Currie examine how class size is calculated within the province. Specifically, DAC members would like Minister Currie to request the Department of Education, and Early Learning start calculating student teacher ratio that would be more reflective of the classrooms on Prince Edward Island. The calculation not include administration, special educators (music, physical education, guidance counsellors, etc.) from the calculation, to allow the Department to report a ratio reflective of the classroom.
- H. These ratios/data should be communicated in an open and transparent format.
- I. DAC members would like Minister Currie to mandate maximum allowable class sizes for each kindergarten, primary, secondary, intermediate and high schools. As part of this mandate, DAC members would like to see a maximum of 15 students in each kindergarten classes.

## **Problem: Class Composition**

- J. DAC members would like Minister Currie to instruct the Department of Education, Early Learning to develop a strategy for schools to ensure that class composition for language arts and math are comprised with students who are working at a similar level.

## **Priority: Understanding the challenges our teachers face, understanding our student population.**

K. DAC members would like better understanding of the special needs of our students and the challenging environment our teachers work. They would like to know how many students are on the autism spectrum, how many students have diagnosed learning disabilities, how many are on the wait list for a possible diagnosis, how many are EAL, how many are not meeting grade level outcomes, how many have a diagnosed behavior problem, etc.

L. While respecting privacy, the information/data should be made public by school and by level (i.e. primary, secondary, intermediate and high schools levels)

## **Priority: Homework Policy Guidelines**

M. Homework is an issue that is being discussed among students. Currently, the Charlottetown Rural Student Council is gathering information from its student body which will assist them in identifying the key issues and challenges of this issue. This is directly connected to well-being and sleep requirements/deprivation issues and implications.

## **Key Discussion points from meeting:**

Members expressed their disappointment in the results of the school review process, in that, the overcrowding issues at Stratford, Glen Stewart Primary, Sherwood and LM Montgomery had not been solved.

Members requested a copy of the report's recommendations if available.

Reminder of the school survey process from May 1-19, 2017 where students, teachers and parents will complete surveys on the 2016-2017 school year.

## **Tuesday, March 7, 2017 at Sherwood Elementary**

Parker Grimmer, Director of Public Schools Branch was guest speaker to discuss the current organizational structure for the Public Schools Branch. This was an opportunity for DAC reps to share issues and concerns.

The Learning Partners Advisory Council discussion paper was discussed and representatives indicated that they would respond individually if they wished.

The meeting included a discussion and review of the statements of principle created at the last joint meeting with Colonel Gray DAC.

## **Wednesday, February 1, 2017 at Colonel Gray High School**

Briefings were arranged for the District Advisory Councils on the school review recommendations.

These briefings by Bob Andrews intended to help representatives understand why different recommendations were made and to give the representatives an opportunity to ask specific questions directly to Mr. Andrews. Both Colonel Gray and Charlottetown Rural DAC representatives were involved in this joint meeting. The joint meeting was held prior to the public meeting.

## **November 15, 2016 at Prince Street**

This meeting involved Colonel Gray DAC and Charlottetown Rural DAC coming together to brainstorm the six categories identified in the school review process. Statements of principle were created in each of these areas. These statements were submitted to Bob Andrews as part of the as part of the school review process for consideration as input in the process.

The brainstorming session with both Colonel Gray and Charlottetown Rural included the following points:

### **EDUCATIONAL FACTORS**

#### **STATEMENTS OF PRINCIPLE:**

- School changes will increase or expand (and not limit or contract) access to French Immersion programming.
- Consider holding students back who are not meeting expectations.
- School review process should ensure that all students have equal access to all learning opportunities (music, arts, library, physical education) delivered by qualified educators, particularly for grades 9 – 12.
- School review process should make/create a new student/teacher/staff ratio that is reported to the public (not include administration).
- Recognizing differences unique to urban and rural schools.
- Partner with UPEI to teach/educate more French teachers (a need analysis should be done).
- Fix schools first, then the programs.
- Library needs and resource learning for better use of time, and efficient use of social time.
- From a high school point of view, course options should be the same from school to school so all students have the same opportunities and leave the school with the same level of knowledge/education.
- Make sure French Immersion is more accessible in rural areas.
- Ensure viability, quality and teaching skills in French Immersion programs.
- Recognize assessments are a moment in time: focus on learning, not on grades.
- Work towards standards (for example, progress monitoring).

- Support learning from failures – showing benefits of trying again to build resilience and encourage risk-taking.

## **DEMOGRAPHICS FACTORS**

### **STATEMENTS OF PRINCIPLES:**

- In order to support good planning based on demographics, school changes will eliminate any remaining multiple-zoned streets and neighbourhoods and maintain dual-zoned areas only for access to specialized programs.
- School changes will address overcrowded schools and schools expected to be overcrowded as the first and highest priority.
- Grandfather changes to schools vs. tearing off the band aid, especially the highest grades. Demographics not driving school populations rather specialized programs set school base (e.g. French, drama/music/art; science/math. “Centers of excellence” models).
- Address overcrowding first.
- Consider benefits of small schools in process.
- Remove option for double zones x 4.
- Newcomers’ choice of school. (EAL, facility size). Send students to schools where services meet needs.
- 10 year horizon not 5 years.
- Consider the inevitability that if a new school is not built now, it will be needed in the near future because of the growing population.
- School programming to attract and retain young/growing families in schools’ zones.
- Use existing spaces first.
- Address Charlottetown area (Colonel Gray Family and Charlottetown Rural Family) of schools first. Look at rural communities in 2018.

## **FACILITY FACTORS**

### **STATEMENTS OF PRINCIPLES:**

- A portion of facility cost savings calculated after school changes will be committed for making school buildings more energy efficient and environmentally sustainable: for example, installing solar panels.
- The Public Schools Branch will collaborate with other public services (beyond education) to plan for the use or adapted use of any schools or portions of schools that are deemed temporarily or permanently “surplus” after school changes: for example, identifying space for Public Health uses, skills training uses, cultural development use, and so on.
- Age of building facility and usage needs to fit the size of the school and the number of kids – bathroom/gym space.
- Make all buildings more accessible to mobility issues of children – access to space for play as well e.g. playgrounds with park benches (quiet space)
- All schools should be equally accessible and should account for students with physical disabilities (mobility ramps).

- Space for extra learning outside the classroom instead of taken out of class/social time e.g. for EAL or reading recovery.
- Ensure that all schools do not have structural/health related problems that will directly affect students due to the age of the building. Every classroom should have a window that looks outside (not into the boot room).
- Look for creative possibilities to expand green space (for example, new parking solutions so parking lots can be converted to green spaces).
- Public provincial base funding for all schools to have equitable playgrounds and play structures.
- Facilities for arts, culture, music, drama, performance.
- Ensure the light/environment/warmth creates a positive learning setting.
- Consider space required for special needs i.e. ADHD, space for prayer (social/emotional/cultural needs). Special needs per school a factor.
- Develop an appropriate building design including breakout rooms, safe rooms etc. and implement a plan to replace over a period of years (dealing with most problematic schools first).
- Cannot have staff and students in buildings that have been deemed unfit by government.
- Deal with issues such as asbestos in older buildings.
- Partnerships with other (UPEI) for facility use and extracurricular activities such as swimming.

## **FINANCIAL FACTORS**

### **STATEMENTS OF PRINCIPLE:**

- Cost savings calculated as a result of school changes will not be used as a rationale for cuts to the funding provided by the Department of Education, but rather used to improve educational system.
- The largest portion of operating cost savings calculated as a result of school changes will be committed for maintaining and increasing staffing, especially teaching staff and EA's.
- Ensure that programs (music, arts, etc.) do not suffer due to lack of funding. These programs are essential to a well-rounded student.
- Ensure funding for extra education beyond the classroom (tutoring, etc.)
- Revisit the teacher/student ratio.
- Effective allocation of dollars.
- Appropriate resources allocated to school maintenance without requirements to fund Repairs and Maintenance out of school/educational resources.
- Funded basic needs rather than coming from school/educational resources.
- Fund replacement of buildings as part of regular capital budgets.
- Fund enrichment and extracurricular programming appropriately and culture programming.
- Have a school-by-school maintenance plan budget.
- Recognize financial consequences of under-filled schools and address by rezoning.
- Ensure regular capital investment in expansion (as well as maintenance and replacement costs as mentioned by other groups).

## **TRANSPORTATION FACTORS**

### **STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES:**

- Whenever possible, school zone boundaries shall be set to privilege the shortest possible walks and bus rides to schools.
- The Public Schools Branch will engage municipal/community leaders and expert planners to help collaboratively solve traffic flow problems that are identified during the school review.
- Students in areas with public transit get bus passes (after an age threshold –e.g. Grade 6 or 7).
- Identify central pick-up locations and have students walk a certain distance to the stop. Issues with TC kids (TransCanada Highway).
- Students within a defined distance (with appropriate infrastructure) should be expected to walk. Collaborate with municipalities.
- Partnerships with private parking lots or other safe zones to develop centralized pick-up spots to ensure reduced costs. (Safety issues and reduced parental driving). Students bussed to nearest school not bussing past schools.
- One-way streets in congested school.
- Maybe visit the idea of a “human school bus” in urban areas where appropriate. (Community engagement).
- Contract bussing out of Public School Board. Too much is dictated by bussing.
- Expand the length that kids are walking.
- Remove dual stops. Overcrowding issues.
- School start times differ based on routes/availability.
- Time drop off for cars at school.
- Set time limit for students on buses per day (e.g. maximum 45 minutes or differentiated times based on age).
- Visit and address the issue of overcrowded buses. (Some buses are over capacity while other buses are empty).
- Consider the possibility of combining bus routes between families of schools e.g. Colonel Gray plus Rural.
- Express routes, different sizes of buses.

## **PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY FACTORS**

### **STATEMENTS OF PRINCIPLE:**

- School changes will result in investment to facilitate community use of schools: for example, security and/or custodial supports that allow school gyms to be used more often by community groups.
- School changes will privilege maintaining or increasing (and not narrowing or limiting) the socio-economic, cultural, and linguistic diversity of each and every school community.
- Zoning exceptions should be strictly determined by specific circumstances affecting the well-being of the child and should be reviewed on a case by case basis. Open-door policy for after-hours use with supports/resources for security and custodial needs.
- Examine working integrated models for school and community spaces (such as French language schools).
- Distance from school and transportation factors affect parent engagement.
- Public uses of public spaces to be encouraged.
- Encourage paperwork/contract to promote compliance and safety in school facilities.
- Study use of government using buildings for other uses i.e. schools.
- Supports in place for children who may have multiple changes/schools as part of this review.
- New organization of populations encourages/increases diversity in all areas.
- Encourage other ways to get parents and community involvement.



- Multicultural events to show diversity in school put by the community.
- Parent programs after school for example, learning English/French or how to help with homework.

## October 3, 2016 at Stratford Elementary

The Charlottetown Rural DAC met with Bob Andrews as guest speaker in his role as Schools Reorganization Project Manager. This meeting was to ensure the DAC members have opportunities to understand the information.

Mr. Andrews explained the process of the upcoming five step consultation plan and as well, the data that will be used for the review of schools.

The public was invited to participate to provide viable options as it pertains to the school review process. Recommendations would then be made by Mr. Andrews and presented to the Board of Directors after hearing from the public.

Consultations were carried out by public meetings, web based notices, presentations, submitted reports.

It was determined as a result of a suggestion made from the Colonel Gray DAC group that the next DAC meeting include a combined meeting with Charlottetown Rural DAC. Both DAC groups agreed to this meeting.

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## District Advisory Council Members



Front (left to right): Lisa Garland, Jennifer Spencer, Taylor MacBeath and Emma Heustis. Back row: Melanie Belik, Kate Liu, Brent Byrnes and Lindi McQuillan

**School Representatives**

Donagh Regional: Lisa Garland-Baird

Sherwood Elementary: Jennifer Spencer

LM Montgomery Elementary: Melanie Belik

Charlottetown Rural: Kate Liu

Stratford Elementary: Lindy McQuillan

Glen Stewart Primary: Brent Byrnes

**Student Representatives**

Charlottetown Rural: Taylor MacBeath and Emma Heustis

Regional Director of PEI Home and School Federation: Tami Lewis