

Colonel Gray Family of Schools District Advisory Council

April 2017 Colonel Gray DAC meeting at Parkdale Elementary

Welcome and Introduction

Jane co-chaired the meeting with Pat and welcomed participants, with thanks to Jack for hosting. There were no new or substitute participants in the meeting, so there were no introductions needed. Documents related to the evening's discussion were distributed.

Approval of agenda and last meeting summary

The summary of the last meeting had been circulated by email and was circulated in hard copy. Members reviewed the agenda, with the understanding that the DACs are expected to become increasingly self-reliant and self-governing in their processes. Members expressed desire to return to key themes and priorities we discussed starting out as a Council, before being derailed by the school review process. Members changed the order of items on the agenda, asking Pat to review the DAC template for possible adoption prior to a review of priority statements.

Review template for possible adoption

Pat reviewed a template for notes and recommendations and questions that some other DACs have developed and are applying. She described ways this tool has been adapted to the needs of other Councils. She provided concrete examples from other DACs' templates. This was very helpful, and members decided to move into a discussion of priority statements designed to populate the template. Essentially, the DAC adopted the template by practically applying it.

Review priority statements

The discussion of the DAC's priorities.

At the end of the meeting there was some discussion of the need for response to the individual school priorities each DAC member was asked to present last year; there has been no feedback on these priorities.

Plan structure for the Colonel Gray DAC

The engagement officer is to meet with each DAC three times per year. The Colonel Gray DAC would like to plan a structure that maximizes and facilitates participation and attendance at meetings. Members agreed on a specific recommendation to government:

RECOMMENDATION: That government provide a resource person to our DAC and all DACs to support communications; preferably including responsibility to record notes and agreements from

meetings, if this is desired by the DAC, and additionally to communicate DAC discussion for public accountability.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be held near the end of May and will be co-chaired by Sandy and Allie, who will consult with Pat for possible dates and then poll DAC members using Doodle to select the date that is best for the most members. The meeting will be hosted at Queen Charlotte, as long as this is possible on the date selected. The co-chairs will invite agenda items and develop a proposed agenda, in consultation with Pat.

First on the agenda will be updates and responses related to our priority items as listed in the template.

There is an expectation that the Minister of Education will be a guest at a DAC meeting after the Legislature closes. Members suggested that Minister Currie be invited to attend the last 20 minutes of the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35, with thanks to host, co-chairs, and participants.

Wednesday, March 8, 2017 at West Kent Elementary School.

Parker Grimmer, Director of Public Schools met with the DAC.

The discussion was an opportunity for DAC members to have an understanding of the new organizational structure as well as an opportunity to discuss operational issues (staffing, facilities, transportation, resource support, etc.) with the Director. Mr. Grimmer acknowledged the work of the Councils and indicated his commitment to supporting them in their work in this collaborative model.

The discussion paper by The Learning Partners Advisory Council was discussed and introduced. It was decided that feedback to the paper to the Council would be completed on an individual basis if so desired.

It was decided that no further work would be done on the statements of principle created at our last joint meeting with Charlottetown Rural DAC.

The remainder of the meeting included a discussion on the following priority themes:

To ensure quality teaching and program delivery:

- Increase accountability for results and poor instruction.
- Challenges of having substitutes providing program delivery.
- Programming for student differences.

To ensure quality learning experiences for our children:

- Homework issues-is homework effective? What is the research to support hours of homework for high school students and what is meaningful homework for younger children.
- Students who are not engaged and have lost their passion for learning.
- Creative program delivery-variety of programs, experiential learning.
- Challenging students to succeed where they are.
- Need to cultivate curiosity and the drive to persevere.

Wait times for psychological assessments:

- The programming options for these test results.
- Shorten wait times for assessments.

Wednesday, February 1, 2017 at Colonel Gray High School

Briefings were arranged for District Advisory Councils on the school review recommendations. These briefings by Bob Andrews were intended to help representatives understand why different recommendations were made and to give the representatives an opportunity to ask specific questions directly to Bob 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.

Harvey MacEwen, Pat Mella and Susan Willis, Board of Directors for the Public Schools Branch met with the Colonel Gray DAC representatives to receive any comments and input on the recommendations.

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 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 5, 2016 at Spring Park Elementary

The DAC met with Bob Andrews in his role as Schools Reorganization Project Manager.

first meeting in the school review process was to ensure the process and steps were understood.

Mr. Andrews explained the five step consultation plan and the data that will be used for the review of schools.

The public would be invited to participate by providing 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 submissions, presentations, submitted reports.

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

District Advisory Council Members



Left to right: Berta Madrigal Abaroa; Jane Ledwell; Maryam Wagner; Erin Hennessey; Pat Campbell, Nicki Hyndman; Denise Spenceley; Vanessa Ford; Kent Nicholson; Jack Wheeler; Aaron Ryder; Sandra Sunil and Angus Orford

School Representatives:

Spring Park Elementary: Sheldon Opps

Prince Street Elementary: Jane Ledwell

Queen Charlotte: Allie Keedwell

St. Jean Elementary: Janna-Lynne Durant

Colonel Gray: Denise Spenceley

West Royalty Elementary: Vanessa Ford

West Kent Elementary: Kent Nicholson

Parkdale Elementary: Jack Wheeler

Birchwood Intermediate: Angus Orford

Student Representatives:

Jad Ghiz and Hailey Brake of Colonel Gray

Others:

Sandy Nicholson – Home and School Regional Director