

Kensington / Kinkora Family of Schools District Advisory Council

Members for 2020-2021: Julie MacLeod (Kensington Intermediate Senior High), Cavelle DeWitt (Queen Elizabeth Elementary), Krista Murphy (Amherst Cove Consolidated and PEIHSF Regional Director - Kinkora), Paul Quinlan (Amherst Cove Consolidated Teacher), Janet Payne (Kinkora Regional High), Jessica Larsen (Kinkora Regional High Student Rep), Jeanette MacQueen (Somerset Consolidated), Darby McCormick (PEIHSF Regional Director – Kensington) Mya Welton (Kensington Intermediate Senior High Student Rep), Megan MacDonald (Kensington Intermediate Senior High Student Rep)

May 6, 2021, Web Ex Meeting

Guests: Bethany MacLeod, Deputy Minister, Department of Education and Lifelong Learning, John Cummings, Director of Educational Services, Department of Education and Lifelong Learning

Discussion and Outcomes

Home and school/student council updates

- Kensington Intermediate Senior High
 - Hosted a successful food drive that included competition between classes. The drive outlined specific items needed by the Kensington local food bank.
 - The school is cycling through youth service workers. As of March, the school was on their third youth service worker. This makes it hard for students to develop good relationships with the worker.
 - Parent teacher interviews were virtual.
 - Parents could select google meet, phone call, or email as options.
 - Most parents selected email, which created a lot of work for teachers to prepare.
 - There are approximately 20 new students that have enrolled during the school year from Ontario.
- Kinkora
 - There hasn't been a recent meeting.
- Amherst Cove
 - The Parent Council has been a great support to the school.
 - The parents brought forward a program called Monkey Minds from Alberta. This included an anxiety meditation workshop for each classroom that was led by a virtual teacher.

Presentation to the Deputy Minister

The DAC made the following recommendations to the Deputy Minister:

- The DAC is in full support of Home and School Federation resolution for elected school boards, and ensuring that all families of schools have an elected representative.
- The DAC would also like to ensure that the Education Act is amended to support decision-making by elected trustees.
 - **Response: The elected school board consultation has ended. The department has received feedback from consultant that was collected from DACs, partners, and the general public. The department is in the process of reviewing the recommendations. Once a decision has been made, legislation will be developed in the fall to allow elected school boards to begin in 2022.**
- The DAC was wondering if other schools in the province have been seeing more students arriving in PEI public schools during the school year.
 - **Response: There have been many anecdotal statements from across the Island. PEI is the only jurisdiction where schools have remained open for the whole school year, and families seem to be moving in.**
 - **The PSB and CSLF have been petitioning for extra resources.**
- The DAC noted that they are interested in knowing about school staffing levels for the next school year. It was also noted that their schools felt supported by the extra COVID funding this year, and that it made a difference for the teachers and students.
 - **Response: The department budget will be finalized in the legislative assembly soon, to enable administrators to make school staffing decisions.**
- The DAC would like more transparency about the dual school zone. They would like families moving into the area to know about their choices and options for schools. It is not always clear when parents are trying to determine which schools they are zoned for.
- The DAC identified that while having a fulltime counsellor at every school would be ideal, smaller schools sometimes need to make sure that resources are best distributed based on the needs of that individual school. Small rural schools often have unique ways of meeting needs within their school, which may not be identical to what happens in larger centres
 - **Response: The government is still committed to adding counselors to the school system, but understands that there is a shortage of counselors on PEI. The government understands that sharing a counselor with another school is not ideal, and is open to conversations with smaller schools about having professionals that offer part time counseling alongside part time resource supports.**

February 18, 2021 WebEx Meeting

Guests: Kelly Stavert, Mental Health Clinician, Student Well Being Team, Michelle Shanahan, Student Well-being Outreach Worker

Discussion and Outcomes

Student Well Being Team Presentation

- Kelly Stavert and Michelle Shanahan gave a presentation about the SWT's work in the Kensington and Kinkora 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.
- 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
- 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.
- 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 has been an increase in school refusal.
- 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 follow up discussion

- What if a parent does not provide consent for their child to access services?
 - If a child is under 12, they need parent consent to access services of the SWT.
 - If a child is above 12, the SWT can provide services without parent consent, as the student themselves can provide consent if they are capable of doing so.
 - There are other levels of intervention if there are concerns for the child’s well being.
 - School counselors and youth workers may be involved.
 - Child protection services is an option if a child is in danger.
- The SWT at Kensington and Kinkora provided services for 10 weeks before COVID hit in March 2020. This is the first time starting a new school year with KISH-Kinkora.
- The SWT would appreciate any feedback from parents, students about things they would like to see, or things the team could do.

- The SWT works with 15 schools (as most staff overlap between KISH-Kinkora and TOSH body of schools), and understands that every school has their own culture, needs, and different levels of supports.

Round Table Sharing of Home and School Updates

- Kensington Intermediate Senior High is finding it challenging to enforce cohorts with students when they leave the school for their lunch break.
 - The itinerant teacher was a huge help for students deal with anxiety.
 - The changes to the healthy school program menu have been positive.
 - Winter wellness day was during exam week for senior high students. It would be good to try and schedule this for a different time next year.
- Somerset Consolidated had their winter carnival last week.
- There are no updates from Kinkora Regional High at this time.

Elected School Boards Consultation

- The Kensington and Kinkora DAC attended the elected school boards consultation in February.
 - The representatives for the DAC communicated that the Minister and Cabinet should revise the Education Act and designate decision making authority regarding educational matters to an elected Board of School Trustees, one for each Family of Schools, with School Board Elections to coincide with provincial government elections, as per the 2018-06 PEIHSF resolution.
- A concern was raised that the elected survey design is biased and designed to direct respondents towards selecting the hybrid elected/appointed option as their preferred option.
- The DAC re-stated that they fully support the 2012 report on elected school boards.
- It was also noted that changes to the Education Act would be needed alongside elected school board reform so that the elected representatives can be involved in decision-making in a meaningful way.
- A member of the DAC agreed to draft a recommendation and share it with the group for feedback.

Student Investigation and Search Policy Consultation

- A concern was raised about how in the updated policy, the school can't phone the police directly about an issue. They need to call the school board first. This may create additional red tape when dealing with issues that need to be addressed immediately.
- A member of the DAC will send this concern to the PSB.

November 24, 2020 WebEx Meeting

Guests: Sterling Carruthers, School Health Specialist, Katelyn MacLean, School Food Project Manager, Steven Wilson, Project Coordinator

Discussion and Outcomes

Healthy School Food Program Presentation

- The team gave a history of the Healthy School Food Program, including the pilot program from Feb-June 2020 and COVID-19 Food security program that took place while schools were closed.
- They outlined the goals of the program:
 - Making healthy and affordable meal options available for all students.
 - Providing support to ensure equitable access for all students.
 - Providing food literacy opportunities for all students.
- The pilot program has continued for the 2020-21 school year.
- The interim program started in September 2020. There are three models underway:
 - In-house food service.
 - Food service by an external vendor using the Healthy School Food Program menu.
 - Food service by and internal/external vendor using their own menu.
- About 115,000 meals were ordered in the first six meal periods.
- The Healthy School Food Program will transition to a non-profit organization in September 2021.
- This organization will continue to receive funding and support from the provincial government, but will rely on food sales and donations to operate.
- Successes include overall acceptance of the program, healthy and affordable meal options are available for all students, using local foods, ensuring equitable access, and supporting local vendors and the economy.
- Challenges include the short time line from program start to implementation, working with different vendors, and having the same menu across all communities.
- The team is developing a new menu for January that includes some favourites from the past.
- The team has received lots of feedback over the past months. They are hoping to incorporate this feedback into the new menu.

These points were made in the following discussion:

- Some schools are finding a lot of waste with some items, due to large portion sizes or dislike of the meal.
 - The Healthy School Food Program Team have discussed the menu with many people. The team realizes that this initial menu was a bit too unfamiliar to students, leading to pushback. The team took this feedback and is working to create a new menu that is more accessible and relatable to students.
 - The team plans to relaunch a new menu for January 2021. They will be promoting this change through emails, Facebook, and within the schools.
 - The team is working with Canada's Smartest Kitchen to develop the recipes in December for use starting in January.
- There have been challenges with online platform. The most vulnerable families are having the greatest difficulty in navigating the website for ordering. Is there a way for the school to put the order in for those students?
 - Many schools have had teachers or administrators ordering meals to the office to distribute to students, or registering students so they receive meals.
 - The team is working with the PEI Newcomers Association to assist parents with getting kids registered in the program.
 - There is a Healthy School Food Program email address and phone line to help parents and walk them through the process.
 - Phone: 902-438-4895
 - Email: peischoolfood@edu.pe.ca(link sends e-mail)
- The team is open to ongoing feedback from DACs.
- The DAC noted that there has been good client service from the PEI Healthy School Food Program.

- The team mentioned that they would appreciate any efforts by the DAC to help promote the re-launch of the program in January.

Key Topics for the School Year

- The extra costs associated with running the school breakfast program under COVID protocols is a concern.
- KISH has lost revenue that normally comes from the cafeteria due to the Healthy School Food Program.
- The DAC would like to see the student councils across PEI connect to talk about what types of activities they are hosting within COVID protocols to keep school spirit up during COVID.
- The DAC would like more information about the plans in place if COVID gets into the school here.
- It was recommended that the DAC should keep asking for school zone clarity to ensure that small schools remains open and to make sure parents know their options when registering their kids.
 - There is concern over the lack of transparency regarding the dual zone and lack of awareness of parent choice when registering in the dual zone.
- It was also recommended that the DAC should strongly encourage this government to fulfill its promise regarding elected trustees for each family of schools.

September 30, 2020 WebEx Meeting

Discussion and Outcomes

Working together

- The Engagement Officer will continue to develop the meeting agenda and organize DAC meetings.
- The DAC may work with other DACs if topics of shared interest align.
- The DAC also agreed to the following ways of working together:
 - Ways of working together can be changed at any time.
 - Everyone has a role in enforcing the ground rules.
 - Speak up if you tend to be more quiet, speak less to give others a chance to share if you tend to speak more.
 - Listen when others speak, and don't interrupt.
 - Seek first to understand before jumping to conclusions.
 - When uncertain about someone's intent, ask questions to try and understand where they are coming from.
 - Treat each other with kindness and tolerance.
- Questions raised by members at DAC meetings will be addressed during the meeting or following the meeting and directed to the appropriate individual or group (i.e. Department, PSB, Minister).
- The DAC will consider having a meeting chair from within their group. Anyone who is interested will email the Engagement Officer.

DAC Overview

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

- The 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.

School Operational Plans

- Cohorts have been difficult to enforce in larger schools. Many students are not sticking to their cohorts outside of school hours.
- Mask wearing is going very well. There has been no difficulty in enforcing this rule.
- Cohorts and movement within the school has been working well for smaller schools. Kids are wearing their masks in the hallways and cafeterias. Some schools are working on giving more time for students to access the doors.
- Teachers have been good at using google classroom and providing online materials for kids at home with cold symptoms that are waiting for COVID tests or results. This has improved a lot since the spring.
- Transportation on busses is a concern. Maintaining cohorts is a challenge, and there are some students that are resisting the rules.
- Student councils are finding new ways to do events, such as grade 9 orientation activities.

Topics for Discussion for the Upcoming School Year

- School operational plans
 - Adapting and adjusting as things change.
 - What happens if schools were to shut down.
- Healthy School Lunch Program
 - Menu choices. There has been a lot of food waste on some days, as some food items are unpopular with kids.
- Elected school boards
 - Request to return to the elected school boards, as promised by current government.
 - **UPDATE: Movement forward on elected school boards was held up by COVID. There will be more details released soon.**
- School zoning and mapping
 - Ensuring that changes to legislation and zoning do not impact schools negatively.

These points were made in the following discussion:

- The Somerset Home and School applied for additional funds for their breakfast program. The breakfast program is being served in the classrooms, meaning that consumption and costs have increased and they may run out of funds by Christmas. They are wondering if there is any update on their request?

- **UPDATE: The Department will have to review this request and consider whether additional funds will be given.**
- Members will send any additional topics that come from meetings they attend (i.e. Parent Council, Home and School, Student Council)