

DAC 2017-18 members:

Dakota MacWilliams (Kinkora student), Robert Greenan (Kinkora student) Janet Payne (Kinkora Regional High), Janette MacQueen (Somerset Elementary), Bev Campbell (PEIHSF Regional Director), Krista Murphy (Amherst Cove Consolidated), Patricia Cole (KISH), Abby Christopher (KISH student), Bailey Clark (KISH student) To be appointed - Queen Elizabeth parent

**May 28, 2018 at Bluefield School**

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

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

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

## Discussion and Outcomes

### Bluefield DAC priorities

#### Resource Allocation

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Minister was asked to consider examining the current ratio of 400:1 for school counselors in his Directive as it may be outdated for the current school environment.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

#### School Food

- The DACs want a school food model for all PEI that is healthy, universal, equitable and has a food literacy component.
- They would like to have local chefs using local produce from local communities.
- They support the creation of an NGO that would oversee all aspects of school food.
- A student spoke about the disconnect between being taught about healthy eating but offered unhealthy food in the cafeteria.

- This DAC supports the continued work of Morgan Palmer in researching and establishing a healthy school food model.
- The Minister advised that her contract has been extended until March 2019.

## Kensington- Kinkora Priorities

### Psych-Ed Assessments

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

### Exemptions

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

**May 2, 2018 at Kensington Intermediate Senior High**

## Discussion and Outcomes

### Student Well-Being Teams

- Geoff MacDonald, Student Well-Being Project Lead, was introduced to the group and presented a PowerPoint (and its associated handouts) about the Student Well-Being Teams to the group.

- Highlights included:
  - Employing a multi-agency approach
  - Early intervention
  - Working upstream to build strength and resilience
- The SWB teams focus is:
  - Child centered
  - Easy access
  - Early intervention
  - Collaboration
- The teams are made up of:
  - Mental health therapist (who holds a Masters in Social Work in Mental Health)
  - School Outreach Worker (Child and Youth Care graduate)
  - School Health Nurse (RN)
  - Branch-based Counselling Consultant
- The number of each position for the Kensington and Kinkora Districts should be known by January 2019. The team will be in place in this District in September 2019.
- Some unique things about Kensington/Kinkora were discussed, including:
  - Small town notoriety and early grade labels.
  - Stigma of asking for/receiving help from school counselor (everyone knows). Some inappropriate use of language around mental health/illness.
  - Fewer like-minded peers if you are different – being unique stands out more.
  - Very high level of community engagement, but generally always the same parents.
  - Would like to find ways to reach out directly to parents who are not engaged: those who are working, need child care for meetings, other children to care for, juggling work/life balance, had poor in school experiences and may feel anxious to go into a school, even as a parent. Suggestions to go to houses to reach out in person, provide child care and food at meetings. This DAC would like to address privilege and getting a balanced voice at this Council as well at all school committees.
  - Students feel that they get 'stuck' in a clique. Not a lot of room to move out of a friend group as you grow and change.
  - Transitions: from school to school and into 'real world'.
  - Gossip
- Geoff was thanked for his presentation. He encouraged all DAC members to send him any additional information they feel he could benefit knowing.

## Zoning

- This remains an issue for this DAC, but they are not interested in pursuing it as a priority at this time.
- Further discussions to resume in the Fall of 2018. Transportation is also slated for more examination in the Fall.

## Report Card Review

- Report Card review will be happening in the Fall of 2018.
- DAC members are encouraged to keep the upcoming reports to use as markups of what they like, don't like, and to use as a template to suggest changes for when the questions for review come in September.

## Guidance Allocation

- Guidance allocation and staffing were discussed.
- The current allocation model for guidance is 400:1. The questions arises about how 400 was arrived at, especially given the changing dynamics of classroom composition and student needs.
- It was suggested HR personnel from the Branch come to talk about how the model was created and how it is implemented.
- There is a form for administrators to fill out that looks at school composition, not just enrolment, when requesting resources.
- None of the schools in the District have received their allocations for 2018-19 as of yet.
- The DAC is concerned that they may be facing further staffing cuts.

## Psych-Ed Assessments

- Earlier access.
- Shorten list – if families pay, they should get reimbursed by the Department.
- Allocate EAs to students that teachers identify are in need, not having to wait until diagnosis received. Look at how a child is functioning in class vs. having a diagnosis.

## Exemptions

- A student member would like to see the Dept reinstate exemptions for high-achieving students (85-90 average pre-exam).
- This would encourage students to work hard all term to reap that benefit, and also take off the anxiety of facing a text worth 30% of your mark.

## Staffing Models

- How are resources allocated, and how can that be re-designed to keep learners at the centre?
- How can we get more EAs and other student supports in schools earlier?

## Ministerial Meeting

- Will be held on Monday, May 28th at Bluefield High School at 6:30PM. Priorities chosen were:
  - Psych-Ed Assessments
  - Exemptions
  - Staffing Model

**Feb 27, 2018 at Kinkora Regional High School**

## Discussion and Outcomes

### DAC vacancies

- The membership was reviewed, still needing the Queen Elizabeth parent rep.

## DAC decision-making

- The DACs role in decision making is evolving as they build capacity to offer advice to the Minister and to identify K-12 educational priorities which impact all learners.

## Information Sharing

- Meeting dates and minutes of the PSB Board, information about the Principal's Council and the Learning Partner's Advisory Council will continue to be shared with the DACs.

## Assessments and Reporting

- The Task Force report from 2005 included a recommendation to design and implement learning assessments at Grades 3, 6 and 9.
- It was noted from student's point of view, assessments play a role in student mental health and self-confidence.
- Report Cards for early grades are begin re-designed to reflect more of what parents are seeking from the assessments, and the DACs will receive a request for input and participation.

## Zoning

- The DAC can work together to request for a zoning review in the District at a regular meeting of the PSB Board of Directors. The next meeting is in April 2018.

## Transportation

- Westisle DAC is organizing a subcommittee with DAC members and PSB personnel to look at new strategies to address transportation and bussing concerns in their District. It was suggested that this may be a model for this DAC to follow, should the members decide to pursue this priority.

## Student Wellbeing

- Demonstration projects in Montague and Westisle were discussed. The SWB team will rollout to the Kensington-Kinkora District in Sept 2019. In advance of this, the DAC requested that a member of the SWB team be available to present to the DAC in the Spring.

## Digital Stewardship

- A Digital Stewardship project is being developed to provide information and guidance to parents and students on being a good digital citizen, as well as advice in how to parent your child's online life. DAC members expressed interest about wanting some supports in this area.

## Policy Development

- DAC members are encouraged to participate in PSB policy development. Members will continue to receive requests for input as they come.

## School Goals and Surveys

- DAC members are encouraged to reach out to their principals and ask for a copy of the School Goals and the School Survey information gathered yearly.
- These goals and information could be very helpful in DACs deciding where to focus their priorities.

## Staffing

- Members expressed concern about the staffing process for next year, and are concerned that they could face cuts.
- DAC members would like to receive information about how staffing and resource allocations will be made, and if DACs, school principals and teachers will be consulted in the decision making process.

**November 21, 2017 at Amherst Cove Consolidated School**

## Discussion and Outcomes

### Role of the DAC

- The role of the District Advisory Councils, including the mandate and responsibilities, as well as the term appointments and process for the appointments, was discussed with information sheets to support the discussion.
- Concerns were brought forward regarding the role of the Councils, and whether they have any decision making power.

### Access to Information and Engagement

- Members expressed their feeling of disengagement with the PSB Board meetings. As a solution, they will now be informed with the dates, times, locations and process for getting items on the agenda.

### Assessments

- Members would like to receive some background information about when the assessment process began, and why Grades 3, 6, 9 and 11 were chosen.

### Zoning

- DAC members want the zoning of Kinkora/Kensington to be clearer, and have boundaries in place that support and enforce the idea that where you live is tied to where you go to school.
- This is an area of continued DAC concern and desire for action.

## Transportation

- DAC members would like a review of the times and routes in their District to ensure students are best served by the current routing and usage.

## Elected School Board

- Members feel that elected trustees for communities would be a better model for community engagement and accountability. It was felt that trustees would have local, easier access to represent the needs of communities. This priority carries over from last year.