

Monday, April 24, 2017 at Kinkora Regional High School

Meeting was chaired by Donna MacLeod and recorded by Janet Payne.

The meeting included a lengthy discussion on revisions and edits on the summary notes from the previous meeting. The discussion summary had been completed by a department employee someone external to this group. It was decided that going forward the DAC reps would record their own summary. Janet Payne volunteered to do this.

A draft template was introduced by the engagement officer to be discussed at this meeting. The draft evolved from another DAC group. It has been used as a way to communicate recommendations/suggestions to the Minister/Deputy Minister., Public Schools Branch, Department, Principals Council etc.

Bailey Clark, student representative for Kensington High, agreed to chair the next meeting.

March 6, 2017 at Kensington Intermediate/Senior High School

Welcome/Agenda Review:

Pat Campbell, facilitator, reviewed the agenda items and it was approved by those in attendance.

Discussion items:

Assessments

- Concerns were raised about the long wait lists for psychological assessments and that there are not enough psychologists on the island to keep up with the demand.
- All students, (in particular, students in K-3), would benefit from Occupational Therapy supports, Speech Pathologists and Counselors which would support children and teachers in schools with recommendations.

Mental Health

- Pam Trainor is conducting research on gaps in mental health services. There will be 2 pilot families of schools (Westisle and Montague). This pilot is aiming to bring agencies together.
- Not enough information for students at all grade levels on what mental health issues are and how to deal with them (Elementary, Intermediate and Senior High).
- In order to end stigma around mental health, students need to be educated in the early years.

Transportation

- Time on bus (there needs to be a maximum). Lengthy discussion on the transportation issue in terms of length of time on buses particularly to get French Immersion options in certain areas.
- Currently, there is a review of schools in progress. It was suggested that a review of transportation would be recommended (routes, # of buses, etc.) to explore solutions for lengthy bus rides and to develop a policy around maximum time on a bus for Island children.
- Also, discussed was the number of students on a bus. It can be very crowded on a bus particularly when older students have to share a seat with two others.

Hub Model

- A hub model similar to the French schools model.
- Bring the capacity percentage up for low enrolment schools.
- Regardless of the size/enrolment of school, a hub model should be considered.

Elected Board Trustees (Janet Payne will send email to DAC members)

Discussion points around elected trustees:

- Current Liberal government did not keep their campaign promise to elect school board trustees.
- Despite the low turnout for previous trustee elections in the past (4%), there might be more interest given the increased interest, participation and engagement demonstrated in the school review process.
- Recommended that Kensington and Kinkora should each have a trustee representation rather than the current combination Kensington-Kinkora.
- Provincial Home and School have spoken in favour of elected trustees as well
- DAC could continue in a supplementary and advisory capacity.

Other

- Home and School has an open position for the KISH family – April 8th, 2017 is elections

DAC Positions

- Chair, Co-chair or rotating chair position – to be determined at next meeting
- Recorder – Janet Payne

DAC representatives will review their school community priorities with their Home and School prior to year end.

Next meeting agenda items:

- Discussion of HUB model (Janet Payne)- Information was sent out by Janet for reading on this topic.
- Discussion of need for interagency supports for each Family of Schools.
- Elected School board trustees-Janet sent out the following email to members that was sent to Minister Doug Currie, Susan Willis and Parker Grimmer:

At a regular meeting of the Kensington-Kinkora District Advisory Council on March 6/17 it was decided unanimously by all in attendance that: “The Kensington-Kinkora DAC is requesting that government suspend this school review process and hold elections for School Board Trustees immediately. While we are happy to participate on the DAC in a supplementary and advisory capacity, we need ELECTED School Trustees who with represent communities. We demand that the Kinkora and Kensington Families of Schools each have their own Trustee as was the practice in the past, and we sincerely hope that other DAC’s across the Island will speak out and demand the election of School Trustees as well.”

Thursday, February 2, 2017 Kinkora Regional High

This briefing was arranged for District Advisory Councils on the school review recommendations with Bob Andrews, School Re-Organization Project Manager.

Wednesday, November 29, 2016 at Queen Elizabeth Elementary

Parker Grimmer, rector of the Public Schools Branch, introduced the new structure created between the Department of Education, Early Learning and Culture and the Public Schools Branch by discussing the new organizational chart. The changes had taken place to deal with the overlapping of goals and responsibilities. Changes and recommendations were made in the summer and as a result, the Department of Education and the Public Schools Branch are more aligned.

The Public Schools Branch is focused on:

- People, services and accountability in the areas of corporate and finance issues.
- HR – teachers and staff and how they are trained, hired and supported.

- Policies that guide us need to be written, read, understood and discussed.
- Student services – resource teachers, special needs students all these services health and otherwise, are all bundled into the department.

Part of the PSB Director's responsibilities include listening and considering input from the advisory councils in establishing priorities for and with the Public School Branch.

Questions from the discussion included:

School Calendar

- The calendar is set by a committee but he commented that the DAC could play a part or be able to give feedback in the future. Currently, the committee is made of Education stakeholders with representation from the PEI Home and School Federation, Teachers' Federation, CUPE, etc.
- The number of days is set in policy called a Minister's Directive and is influenced by the teachers' contract. The calendar has a set number of instructional days that it must have in each school year.
- Closures due to weather or other issues may impact offering of PD in extenuating circumstances such as extended closures like the 2014-2015 year when the spring PD was cancelled.
- The deputy minister of the department recently reinstated the Provincial PD committee to provide recommendations to the Calendar Committees.

5 block/period

- Some students like 4 (75 minutes) block while others prefer 5 (50 minutes) block. One student was concerned that with more periods/blocks, there will be less students per class. More blocks/day would definitely mean more homework.

Homework

- The students were concerned that there are too many expectations for them and there is not enough hours in a day to do homework while having time to engage in other activities.
- The high expectation is good according to the students, but they (teachers) have to be realistic.
- Students pointed out that they are unable to complain about the amount of homework since the teachers themselves have their own outcomes to meet. The teacher could think that he/she is assigning a 20 minutes homework but depending on different students, it may take 20 minutes while others may take 1 hour since they put more effort in this homework.

Accountability of schools for poor provincial test scores.

- Question was asked: Who exactly is accountable for these poor grades and are the right people not teaching the right subjects?
- Also, that the kids in French programs score lower in math than kids in English programs.
- One rep noted that if we can create a relationship where students are learning and tomorrow's leaders are created, then we are doing our job.

Student/teacher or teacher/parent relationships

- Parents are concerned of how they can be supported when they feel that their kids are not doing well or when they don't have a good relationship with the teacher.
- Parker noted that the role of the DAC is to be critical both in a positive and negative ways while showing respect and being respectful. This works on both sides. The DAC should encourage parents to give feedback to teachers. Silence is not an option. Parker stated that the survey done last year was started through the DAC conversations with the students having the highest rate of participation.

Libraries

- There was concern raised that Queen Elizabeth School does not have a Librarian. One DAC member does the school lunch and volunteers in the afternoon as a librarian since the school does not have a librarian.

Other discussion notes

- Teachers need to be trained in the subject areas that they are teaching. The course they are teaching should be their major.
- Schools must be held accountable for perpetual low scores in the provincial assessment.
- The low assessment scores indicate a need for improved program delivery and instruction.
- Parents need support and direction when they feel that their child is not getting the instruction they are entitled to.
- Students are requesting support to assist them in being able to complete their assignments.
- Students need to see a way for teachers to communicate when there are exams so they do not overlap. For example iCloud and calendars.
- When assigning homework, teachers need to realize that some students spend more time completing their homework in order to meet outcomes than others.
- Travelling tourism certificate program summer jobs should count towards program credits.

During the discussions, it was suggested that Tammy Hubley-Little, Director of Leadership and Learning, could be a guest speaker in the future to discuss a number of the areas discussed throughout the evening.

Monday, November 7, 2016 at Kinkora Regional High School

This meeting was to give the public an opportunity to provide input on options for change. This DAC choose to work individually with their individual school communities in the review process rather than a group as a whole.

October 6, 2016 at Kinkora Regional High

The DAC met with Bob Andrews in his role as Schools Reorganization Project Manager. This first round of meetings 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 notices, presentations, submitted reports.

District Advisory Council Members



School Representatives

Janet Payne, Kinkora Regional High - *Mother of seven, residing in Kinkora, her background in education and counselling, and current career as a counsellor at CDS and sessional instructor at UPEI, has given her the opportunity to see how prepared our children are when they enter the world of post-secondary education and employment. Her #1 priority: Ensure that government fully understands the value of small schools and provides a commitment to the future for KRHS. #2: The mental health concerns of our children are better addressed with additional staff and services available at the school level.*

Heidi Lawless, Somerset Elementary - *Kinkora resident with three children, running a potato processing farm and primary teacher. Her priority: re-zoning as we have several families in the community that are being bussed to schools in other communities when there is one five minutes away.*

Patricia Cole, Kensington Intermediate Senior High

Bev Campbell, Queen Elizabeth Elementary

Krista Murphy, Amherst Cove Consolidated

Student Representatives

Olivia Mullins, Kinkora High - *grade 12 student at Kinkora Regional High, interested in pursuing business and law in post-secondary. Her priorities: mental health of students and seeing small schools offering the same diverse course selection as larger schools.*

Janette Kerry, Kensington Intermediate Senior High

Madeline Mullins, Kinkora High

Bailey Clark, Kensington Intermediate Senior High

Regional Director of PEI Home and School Federation - Trevor Moase / Bev Campbell