

DAC members 2017-2018

Kaitlyn Visser (MRSH student), Deb Sioen (Vernon River), Leah Monroe (PEIHSF Regional Director), Patti MacKenzie (Cardigan Consolidated), Melvin Ford (MRSH), Shauna Mellish (Montague Consolidated), Stacey Newell (Montague Intermediate), Marcella Ryan (Belfast), Haley Zavo (Georgetown), Ashley Higgenbotham (Southern Kings), Allison Vandaele (MRSH student)

Jun 11, 2018 at Georgetown School

Montague and Morell-Souris DAC Ministerial Meeting

Present: Marcella Ryan, Patti MacKenzie, Debra Matheson, Melvin Ford, Ashley Higgenbotham, Deb Sioen, Hailey Zavo, Shara Kenny, Leanne Feehan, Johnathan Ludgate.

Guests: Minister Jordan Brown, DM Susan Willis, Dale Sabeau and Harvey MacEwen, Board Directors.

Discussion and Outcomes

School Review

- DAC members want the review process to be re-examined and the DAC's role in it to be defined.
- Direct conversations with the Board were very helpful, but the final public meeting was difficult.
- Meetings of each school and the Board would allow schools to be seen through an individual lens.
- Community members want to participate in the design of the process.
- Having a neutral third party facilitate meetings may be helpful.
- One Board member noted that the PSB is required to follow their policy which may need to be revised.
- Review needs to start at the school level in a non-confrontational way, using a process plan that is agreed to and used by all.
- The Minister suggested that rural schools and DACs work with their Regional Economic Councils on options to keep a rural school open.
- Community use of schools including libraries and the gym, can tie the community to the school for more than just the school day.
- Creating early years centers at schools can help bolster the use of schools in rural areas.

Resource Allocation and Class Composition

- This DAC feels the ratio formulas in the Minister's Directive do not reflect the needs of a class or school.
- Teachers and in-class resources should be allocated based on needs, not numbers.
- The Minister stated that in the last year, 161 new front line positions were created.
- The Minister noted that in the coming years, we may face a shortage of qualified EAs, and this is an area that will need some attention over the next 3 years.
- One member suggested that the EA certification process should be reviewed.
- It was advised that the current 1:400 model for school counselors needs to be re-examined and amended to reflect school needs, not just the population.

Student Well-being Teams

- As the teams rollout, the service model for mental health in schools will be different.
- The teams work to identify needs early and address an issue before it becomes a problem.
- The Deputy Minister acknowledged that the makeup of the teams could change as they evolve.
- One member shared his story of how the SWB teams intervened and credits them with saving his son's life. He asked that the rollout move as fast as possible to all families of schools.
- One member asked for more communication to parents about services the teams offer, and a parent engagement piece for those parents who are not engaged already.
- She noted that some parents may not want to go through the school to ask for assistance.
- Members were asked to send their input directly to the project team lead.
- The Minister spoke about 30 teachers who have been trained to teach other teachers about mental health literacy, how to identify signs that a student may be in crisis, and how to direct them to services.
- There is a new mental health curriculum piece in health and phys ed courses.

School Food

- A member spoke about the wide differences in socio-economic capacity in her school and its correlation with access to healthy food and food insecurity.
- They want to find a better way to feed kids healthy, local food.
- The Minister said Morgan Palmer has been extended to research school food models and school food policy.
- Potential programs could meet the needs of all students through community based food programs.

May 30, 2018 at Montague Intermediate School

Discussions and Outcomes

Late French Immersion

- A summary of the experience of a Kensington-Kinkora DAC member was circulated.
- It outlined the process that those parents went through to establish a Late French Immersion program in that area.
- They had similar cohort numbers (25) that the Montague DAC would need.
- Kensington-Kinkora District has seen falling enrollment in the LFI program, there are only a dozen or so students in the class now.

A+ program

- This program offers alternative education for elementary grade students, primarily Grades 4-6, but Grade 3 students have also participated.
- In years past, the intake happened 2-3 times per year.

- Students usually spent 8-10 weeks in this alt ed. model, learning coping mechanisms that allow them to transfer back in to their assigned classroom.
- In recent years, students have been requiring longer stays in A+ before transferring back to class.
- This has meant that there are fewer intakes during the year, and not as many spots opening up to new students.
- This DAC believes that there need to be more A+ teachers/spots available to allow for earlier interventions.
- They also would like to know the number of students in this program across the province, and how this District compares.

Principals Council

- A second meeting was held in May 2018.
- This meeting focused on reviewing the information on assessment gathered at the last meeting.
- Principals spoke about wanting more participation in deciding their school goals.
- These are currently given to all schools by the Department of Education, Early Learning and Culture.

Policy Input

- There was a recent request for input on the Public Schools Branch Alcohol and Drug Policy.
- The Report Card review is slated for the Fall.

School Food

- Morgan Palmer was unable to attend the meeting due to a death in her family.
- A brief update on her work was given.
- Her contract has been extended until March 2019 to continue her research and planning into a school food model for PEI.

Ministerial Meeting

- The topics for discussion on June 11th will be:
 - School Review Process
 - Class Composition and Resource Allocation
 - Wellness Team input
- The DAC also will support the priority of School Food that Morell/Souris will present.

Feb 22, 2018 at Cardigan Consolidated School

Discussion and Outcomes

Student Wellbeing

- Geoff MacDonald, SWB Team Lead, shared a presentation to the DAC on the SWB teams.
- DAC members offered feedback on their personal experiences so far.
- Geoff invited them to contact him directly with any additional input.

Late French Immersion

- The process in place needs a communications plan and collaborative strategy between the PSB and the Home and Schools/DAC and CPF to work together to try a different approach for next year.
- The model that Kensington used to secure LFI was requested.

Principal's Council Update

- They met in November with a focus on assessments.

DAC engagement

- Report Card review – this is currently getting underway, and the committee is seeking feedback from DAC members on report cards.
- Digital Stewardship- A program is being designed to support parenting your child's online life. DAC members would like a presentation in the District.
- FI Policy Input - This input was requested via Karen Redmond at the PSB. Any further policy changes, creations, amendments will also be sent to DAC members for input.

School Goals

- DAC members are encouraged to ask their principals for access to the School Goals information, as it may help guide current and future goals for the DAC.

School Surveys

- Members are encouraged to ask principals for the current data for their school and District, as this may also be a guide for DAC goals.

Nov 29, 2017 at Montague Regional Senior High School

Discussion and Outcomes

Role of the DAC

- The role of the District Advisory Councils, including the mandate and responsibilities, term appointments and process for the appointments, was reviewed with information sheets to support the discussion.

Late French Immersion

- There was concern and frustration that recent public LFI meeting produced a low turnout.
- There was discussion about the potential of a parent survey to be sent out to measure interest for LFI for not just next year, but in coming years as well.
- It was suggested to look at how Kensington rolled out their model of LFI, and if that can be applied to Montague.

A+ program

- Members wanted to know if this program is going well and if so, can it be expanded?

EA supports

- Many DAC members felt that not enough is being spent on these direct front line services for students, and that there are not enough qualified substitute EAs.

Information about the Principals Council

- The role of the Principal's Council was explained. Members requested meeting outcome information be shared.

School Food

- Students don't not want to eat the current school food options. They feel it is generally unhealthy and too expensive.
- Discussion centered on initiatives that are taking place in some Island Schools around school food and some government programs that can help support those projects.

Student Well-Being

- There was a discussion around the new Student Well Being Demonstration in the Montague District this year. The DAC would like to offer advice to the PSB and the Dept on how that rollout is feeling at the parent level, and any advice they can offer to streamline the program before it rolls out to the next series of Districts by 2019.