

May 4th, 2017, Southern Kings Consolidated School

The meeting began with an update regarding questions asked from our March 28th meeting. Those responses were added to template. Terri MacAdam replied that they are in the midst of staffing and that the A+ program in Montague will likely continue. Parker Grimmer has been informed about our concerns with the current staffing model. DM Susan Willis stated that the staffing directives are online and the budget gets approved through the spring cabinet. The board will then get funds allocated and set up a meeting with principals to determine staff allocations. EA hours are determined through a student needs assessment process (SNAP) done in coordination with the schools resource teacher and this information is discussed with consultants to determine how many EA's are needed in a school.

DAC members have forwarded a question to Minister Currie asking if the current staffing model will be reviewed. This question was raised from a discussion about Minister Currie's public comments about his concern with the current staffing model.

DAC members also forwarded a question to Terri MacAdam and Julia Gaudet wondering if there is another model of support, similar to the A+ program, for students in K-2. The current A+ program is for students in grades 3-6.

Members had a discussion around how EA's are allocated in schools. Pat had explained the current system and the DAC's have forwarded a question to Julia Gaudet and Terri MacAdam asking if there could be a more flexible model for EA support throughout the year. Many students come and go out of schools and sometimes those students need support but because they were not part of the school's student profile then they do not easily get the support they need.

All parents, students and teachers were given a link to a survey to be completed by May 19th.

These surveys are reviewed by the principal's council who review the data. They met Jan. 10th, 2017 to review the previous year's data. Some of our DAC representatives expressed concerns that they have not received this survey and were told to contact the principal of their schools.

Homework was discussed at our meeting with concerns being mentioned over the excessive amount at all levels. DAC's were concerned for student well-being and their problems of balancing extra-curricular activities and homework.

DAC's were concerned with getting the conversation going for Late French Immersion in 2018. In order to get interest and gain numbers parents and students need to start getting informed about this program. DAC's have forward a question in our template to Renee Hurtibise regarding what are the next steps needed in order to ensure this program gets the interest needed to take off.

A new Student Support Pilot started June 2016 by Pam Trainor is in the works for Montague and Westisle family of schools. DAC's would like to know more information about this project and have forwarded a question on to Deputy Minister Susan Willis and Pam Trainor. Concerns were discussed that this program may require additional administrative time which could also take away from the human resources each school currently has. Many Administrators have a teaching assignment and if this program requires more of their time then it could mean more demands for teachers, larger class sizes, etc.

The lack of EA substitutes was a concern in many of the schools. Many of these absences are filled with non-certified EA's.

The A+ program has a waiting list of students who could benefit from this program. Not all students needing this program are able to get in this year. Pat informed the DAC's that besides this program, schools have access to consultants, counselling support, Behaviour Support Teams, and can apply for itinerant EA's.

Schools are still having large class sizes for their specialty programs of Gym and Music. Schools are combining their kindergarten classes for these subjects but have a cap of 18 for the classroom teacher.

Discussions were had regarding the inter-agency model. Many communities have a library but their schools do not have librarians anymore. DAC's have forwarded a question to Kathleen Eaton asking if we could look at an inter-agency model that would integrate community libraries into the school.

The amount of parent volunteers was discussed amongst the DAC's. Some schools have many and others do not feel that they are welcomed in their school.

All Minister's Directives and Policies are available online <http://www.gov.pe.ca/eecd/index.php3?number=1038312&lang=E>(link is external)

March 28, 2017 - Georgetown School

The meeting began with a discussion about the process on how the DAC can pass information back to the Department of Education/Public Schools Branch.

Pat presented a template to record questions or issues of the DAC. This would be filled in by the DAC and sent back to the Engagement Officer (Pat) and she would pass it along to the appropriate people to respond.

The DAC agreed to take their own minutes and have a rotating chair for future meetings. It was agreed that the host school would chair the meeting and prepare the agenda. The Engagement Officer may also add to the agenda.

The DAC members currently have 2 year terms.

There was some discussion about the Principal's Council and how it may be helpful for the DAC members to have access to information discussed at those meetings. It was agreed that having access to the agenda would be likely but we may not be able to have access to the minutes.

Google docs may be the best way to share information.

Update on the Inter-Agency approach to mental health. Pam Trainor was hired to complete a research project to identify the gaps within mental health, public health, justice, and family services. When the report is completed there will be an opportunity to have presentations at Home & School meetings.

Leah brought forward information about the School Food Policy. MRHS will be presenting a motion at the Home & School AGM on April 8 to allow schools to choose to NOT use the contracted organization (Chartwells). Currently Chartwells has a contract with all the schools (through a tender process) but some feel that the food is expensive and portions are small.

MRHS would like to look after their own cafeteria, supported through the current curriculum (foods, entrepreneurship). The school proposes to pilot the program for 1 year. Is insurance an issue?

Questions were raised on the continuation of the A+ program for next year and if the government will review the staffing model on allocation of teachers and EAs. Also lack of EA substitutes was raised. This will be added to the template.

Discussion was had around the proposed letter from the DAC regarding school closures and elected school board officials. After much discussion on the draft presented, Marcella agreed to re-draft and send out for review.

All agree that the school change policy has invigorated communities.

October 27, 2016 at Montague Consolidated

Presentation on potential delivery of French Immersion Programs in the Montague Family of Schools

Montague DAC representatives met with Parker Grimmer, Director of Public Schools Branch and Rene Hurtabise, Director of French Programs to discuss:

- I- French Immersion programs on PEI
- II- School population data
- III- Options for French Immersion program delivery

Key information points during discussion:

FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAMS ON PEI

a) Early French Immersion

French immersion is a school program designed to develop bilingual fluency in students as well as positive attitudes towards the French language and culture.

Objectives

- § To enable students to pursue their education in either French or English.
- § To develop skills for employment in which the working language is either French or English.
- § To enable students to live in either English or French communities with linguistic and cultural ease.

Time allocation

Starting at the kindergarten level, all or most of the instruction is given in French in all subjects. An English language arts program taking up 25% of the school day is introduced at Grade 4. An approximate breakdown of time allocated to the French components in elementary school is as follows:

Kindergarten, Grades 1-3 - a minimum of 90% French instruction

Grades 4-6 - a minimum of 65% French instruction

INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

Grades 7, 8, and 9: French Language Arts 12-18%

Social Studies 13-15%

Math 13-15%

Science 13-15%

Health Education 4-6%

* A minimum of 50% of courses in French must be provided to Intermediate Immersion students.

HIGH SCHOOL a minimum of 25% of courses in French is required.

b) Late French immersion

Late French Immersion is a French-as-a-second-language program which offers instruction in French during approximately 75% of the school day in Grades 7 and 8 and 50% in Grade 9.

Beginning at grade seven, the program is intended for students who have had French in a core French program environment during elementary school years. English language arts continue to be offered as in the regular English program. Exposure to the French language continues through to the completion of high school but on a decreasing time basis. Those subjects that are offered in French at the various grade levels are as follows:

Grade 7: 75 % in French with the following courses combined: French, math, social studies, science, and health education

Grade 8: 75 % in French with the following courses combined: French, math, social studies, science, and health

Grade 9: 50% in French with the following courses combined: French, social studies, science, and health education

Grades 10-12: 25% of courses in French. LFI and EFI students have the same course selection.

c) Research specific to entry-point in French Immersion

There has been much research to evaluate the student French language competencies of both Early and Late French immersion programs. Generally, there is a tendency that Early French Immersion students will globally perform better than Late French immersion students in reading comprehension and in both oral expression and comprehension. However, their results are similar in written expression. (Rebuffot (1993), ACPI (2004).

Generally research on bilingualism and second language learning converges robustly on a simple take-home point: earlier is better. There may not be a sharp turn for the worse at any point in development, but there is an incremental decline in language learning abilities with age (Birdsong & Molis, 2001; Hakuta, Bialystok, & Wiley, 2003).

Options for French Immersion Program Delivery

1. Starting Early French Immersion at another school

Registration numbers would suggest that approximately 30-35% of the whole student population for the Montague Family of schools is choosing Early French Immersion. This is a high number consistent with what we see in other school zones in the province and the number of students would not likely increase by offering another program. We would basically take the same number of students but divide it between two locations.

Dividing the Early Immersion program between two schools is possible but it would need to divide itself very evenly with a forecast of 40 students per grade level to allow for optimal use of human resources. Otherwise, we may have a school with a low number of students per Grade level which may cause more combined grades and certainly less collaborative planning opportunities at the school level.

If we take the 235 students currently in FI at Montague Consolidated, it may take out up to 100 students from that school and put them in another school. There are some programming and staffing consequences and a potential loss of expertise in dividing instructional resources between two locations.

2. Starting a Late French Immersion program

Table 3 indicates that there would be approximately 90 students per year in Montague Family of schools not registered in Early immersion and therefore could select a Late French Immersion option. Based on provincial statistical history, a Late French Immersion program could be an option for approximately 30-35% of the population. A Late French Immersion could be viable if it can draw on all students of the Montague Family of schools. LFI that draws only on students from Montague Intermediate catchment area would most likely not have sufficient numbers.

Location also needs to be a consideration and the most logical choice for a LFI program would be at Montague Intermediate as the school has the capacity to accommodate more students if necessary and from a staffing perspective, there would be teachers who could be utilized to teach in both EFI and LFI programs. From a staffing perspective, it would appear to be the most efficient use of human resources. Support services such as library services, extra-curricular activities, school culture would also benefit from a central location for both EFI and LFI program.

There are some potential consequences that need to be considered if the decision is made on starting a Late French Immersion program in the Montague area.

- What could be the impact on student population for the schools that do not offer the LFI program?
- What could be the impact on student population in the Early French Immersion program at Montague Consolidated?
- What could be the impact on instructional staff in the area that are not teaching a French Second Language programs?
- What is the cost for the province of starting a new Immersion program in the area (learning materials, library support, training and professional learning etc.)

4. Next steps?

- Identification of principal options
- Survey of population
- Impact assessment
- Decision

October 12th, 2016 at Vernon River Consolidated

The Montague DAC met with Bob Andrews as guest speaker, in his role as Schools Reorganization Project Manager. This meeting was to ensure the DACs to have opportunities to understand the information.

Mr. Andrews explained the process of the upcoming five step consultation plan and as well, the data that will be used for the review of schools.

The public was invited to participate to provide 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 feedback, presentations, submitted reports. DAC representatives chose to work in their individual school communities rather than work as a DAC group.

District Advisory Council Members



School Representatives

Tammy Cann, Southern Kings Consolidated

Marcella Ryan, Belfast Elementary

Susie Myers, Montague Consolidated

Kari Doiron, Montague Intermediate

Deb Sioen, Vernon River

Haley Zavo, Georgetown Elementary

Patti MacKenzie, Cardigan Consolidated

Sherry Blue, Montague Regional High - Happily married mom of two boys, office clerk at PEI's Finest Golf. Priority: contributing to the goal of excellent education in our school system for every child.

Student Representatives

R.J. Gordon, Montague Regional High

Lexi Mooney, Montague Regional High

Others

Regional Director of PEI Home and School Federation - Leah Munro