

Morell / Souris Family of Schools

April 14, 2016 Meeting Topics

21st Century Skills: Digital Literacy Skills

- Students need internet access available for their personal devices as free internet is everywhere in real world environments
- Schools need to ensure technology is available and used in the classes so students can develop the skills they need for the future
- Students need to be able to critically evaluate content of media and develop responsible communication when using media

21st Century Skills: Career and Life Skills

- Students need to know what career opportunities are out there
- Career fairs so students can see their learning as relevant
- Project based learning to develop life skills e.g. budgeting
- Community involvement in schools e.g. fishing, farming, health care

21st Century Skills: Learning and Innovation Skills

- The grade system needs to be changed. Why do we need 12 years in school if you are academically strong or inclined to do hands-on trades?
- Encourage problem solving skills
- Flexible and diverse teaching/learning styles

Literacy: needs to be a priority for province. There is an overall literacy problem

- Graduates are without the tools they need to be good employees
- Consistent program delivery and common assessments across the province to improve/support teaching practice
- Create good policies to empower all partners to work together to achieve success
- To improve literacy, roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders must be clear. Government: responsibility starts here to ensure accountability and provide enough resources. Students: Have a voice in their own program. Parents: Have a clear understanding of their children's academic growth. Education has to be valued and parents empowered. Principals: Have to enforce policies consistently and be transparent. Must have flexibility to make decisions.

Assessments:

- The Department needs to be accountable for supporting student excellence
- Province wide standards are needed to ensure consistency from school to school

Staffing:

- Maybe small schools need to group their students differently in terms of skill levels rather than age or grade. Being small could allow for a creative lens on school structure and organization.
- Staffing model is based on dollars attached to staff and not based numbers and needs of students
- Education funding is a priority. Do not stretch resources – add to them. Education is an investment.
- Class composition needs to be considered

Reorganization of Schools

- Morell Consolidated, Morell Regional and Mount Stewart Consolidated had a preliminary study completed a few years ago which was partially funded by the government, ELSB, and local Home and Schools. Recommendations were to have one school K-12 or a K-6 school and a 7-12 school, merging Mount Stewart and Morell schools to keep kids in their communities. A decision would need to be made on which schools to use. The purpose was to be proactive for when time came for a decision to be made.

February 11, 2016 Meeting Key Themes

- Literacy: Literacy needs to be a priority for the whole province. There is an overall literacy problem on PEI. It is reflected in the graduates who are coming out of the system without the tools they need to be good employees.
- 21st century: There was discussion around 21st century skills and the question: Why are we doing the same things we did for generations? One parent indicated that she was shocked to see the same worksheet that her child completed as she did when she was in school. We have to find jobs that computers can't do. Leadership and creativity are needed. Imagination, cooperation, discovery and more hands-on learning.
- Assessments and challenges of assessments: province-wide standards are needed to ensure consistent from school to school. Does the department feel they have done enough to improve the assessment results to create excellence they expect from students?
- Staffing: maybe smaller schools need to group their students differently in terms of skill levels rather than age or grade. Being small could allow for a creative lens on school structure

Assessments

- Provincial standardized tests say what a child does that day. It causes stress.
- Teachers need to be consistent in their marking and assessments. All grade level teachers need to mark the same, with common tests across schools.
- Grade 11 Math exams were a big topic of discussion. Parents upset and students stressed out. Results affected scholarships. Students concerned about low results. Was it the

instruction? The test? They wanted to know what instruction helped those students who aced the test. Students felt it was often a very broad mystery why students got the marks they did. Assessments should not have such a large % of overall mark attached to them

- There needs to be a variety of ways to assess different students. Why are we assessing in one mode when students learn in different ways? Shouldn't they also be able to demonstrate their knowledge in a variety of ways?

Curriculum

- Kindergarten testing is appropriate but should be done by an adult they know. Kindergarten assessments. Have early childhood educators involved when possible.
- Is placing students the best outcome? How does that help? Parents wonder if their child got the best of what they should have.
- Every high school student should have the chance to do well. More consistent teaching methods from one high school to the next.
- Literacy needs to be a priority: we need more accessibility to literacy for all ages ...How do we involve parents and community in this?
- Students miss out on valuable life lessons because they are only limited to so many courses need more diverse programming
- We need to bring back our focus to the fundamentals of language mastery, writing mechanics, and basic problem solving skills

Programming for student differences

- There is pocket of students who find work hard or have learning needs but are undiagnosed, how do we bridge the gap?
- Parents are needed to pay tutors for their child to meet grade level.
- Little focus on advanced students who don't need help.

Leadership

- Staffing: let's create class size standards and stick to them. Some felt kindergarten needs to be 1 to 12 – no more
- Government should focus on literacy as an overall goal for PEI funding in education and community with a province wide goal. Small schools could organize according to reading levels and reading groups.
- Do our teachers feel encouraged and motivated by administration? Principals have to lead the school environment and have positive well-being for staff and students.
- Need interagency supports, such as occupational therapy, speech language therapy, nurses to support schools

Student wellness and engagement

- Can school work be more creative programming and understanding rather than memorizing? We are memorizing our work, not understanding or applying our knowledge. When learning science, do science rather than memorizing it from a book.

- What can happen each morning to make students wake up and want to go to school?
- Student and parent involvement is important in creating new ideas for programming

Parent wellness and engagement

- More funding for Home and School committees to have literacy, math etc. nights to engage parents, students and staff
- Home and School is so busy with socioeconomics (food, clothes etc.) it is hard to be involved in educational directions
- The staffing formula needs to be more public for parents to understand