

# Three Oaks Family of Schools District Advisory Council

**Members for 2020-21:** Terri McNeill (Athena Consolidated), Julie Hogan (Elm Street Elementary), Andrea Wile (Elm Street Elementary), Damien Nichols (Greenfield Elementary), Kellie Arsenault (Miscouche Consolidated), Andrea Pickett (Summerside Intermediate), Barbara Forbes (Three Oaks Teacher), Emily McKenna (Three Oaks Student), Ashley MacDougall (Three Oaks Student), Maria McMahon (Three Oaks PEIHSF Regional Director)

**Vacant:** Parkside Elementary, Three Oaks Senior High

**May 18, 2021, Web Ex Meeting**

**Guest:** John Cummings, Director of Educational Services

## Discussion and Outcomes

### DAC Recommendations Discussion

- Student Well Being Team (SWT)
  - There is high turnover, and it has been a struggle to fill youth worker positions.
  - This high turn over is hard on the kids.
- Sports funding
  - Some schools have more sporting equipment than others and charge school fees.
  - Smaller schools may have fewer opportunities for students to engage in sports due to a lack of funding for equipment.
  - Engagement in sports plays into health and wellness. Having strong athletic programs with equipment is needed to expand these benefits.
- Playground equipment
  - Playground equipment is very expensive. Special needs playground equipment is even more expensive.
  - Schools would like more notice when a playground structure is going to be removed so that they have time to plan.
  - Fundraising is the main focus of many Home and School groups, which can make it hard to find members.
  - A fundraising mechanism for all schools in the Three Oaks family could focus on playground equipment so that schools are not competing for the same dollars.
  - Parents could partner with schools to write guidelines for future parent groups on how to fundraise for a playground.
- Cell phone use
  - The DAC would like to know whether there is a PSB policy for all schools on cell phone use in schools.
- Student learning needs
  - Some classes have a large number of students with learning needs and could use more supports.
  - The DAC would like to see resources for teachers to address challenges and mental health needs.
- COVID positions
  - The DAC is impressed with how the schools in their family are dealing with COVID.

- All schools managing COVID protocols differently.
- It has been extra work for teachers to monitor and implement COVID protocols.
- The DAC is hoping that the added positions will continue into the 2021-2022 school year.
- Funding for supplies
  - There is limited funding for planned delivery (i.e. craft supplies, activities)
  - Some classrooms are running out of supplies before the end of the school year.
- Student voice
  - There is a lack of student perspective on the Three Oaks DAC.
  - The DAC needs a stronger voice from students for next year.
- School food program
  - Social development and Housing is running the program through the summer.

## DAC Presentation to Director of Educational Services

- COVID positions
  - **Response: There will be some COVID related funding and staffing assigned in the new school year. An announcement will be made soon.**
- SWT
  - **Response: The department is looking at how to be more creative around vacancies (i.e. hiring different types of support if a certain position is difficult to fill)**
- Playground equipment
  - **Response: The Department of Fisheries and Communities has a Community Revitalization Program with grants for capital projects that enhance Island communities.**
    - <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/fisheries-and-communiti...>
    - The program has a focus on rural PEI but will consider projects in other locations.
    - Playgrounds have to be open to the public.
    - Applicants have to be incorporated non-profits, so a Home and School group would need to find an organization willing to partner.
    - Stratford and Cornwall have partnered with community groups to assist with constructing playgrounds at schools.
    - Grants for playgrounds typically go towards site prep. Parent volunteers for installation can help save money, as long as they are supervised by the company. There are also opportunities to save money by shipping through a local company.
    - It would be a great idea to document how to fundraise and build a playground for other parent groups. The Department will follow up with the PSB about compiling this resource.
  - **Response: Typically the PSB only maintains the playground structures, not replace. We have our carpenters (who are CSA trained in playground inspections) complete yearly inspections and provide maintenance and repairs as required. If a piece of equipment is deemed unsafe and unable to be reasonably repaired, they'll arrange to have the piece removed. Typically they will advise the school prior to the removal but only after the inspection. It would be challenging to provide additional notice of removal, as once a piece of equipment is deemed unsafe, it becomes a liability if left in place.**

- **The PSB would be very much interested in reviewing a resource that would be given to schools on the process for fund raising and building playgrounds.**
- Student learning needs
  - **Response: The curriculum works to incorporate student health and wellness to prevent mental health issues.**
  - **The DAC could have someone from English programs to speak to the group about how they approach curriculum development.**
  - **Mental health is a community issue, but the school can play a role.**
  - **SWTs are offering sessions for parents. The department will follow up about these options.**
  - **SWTs do focus on student well being, but mental health is sometimes more pressing.**
- Cell phone use
  - The Department will check with the PSB about their policies.
    - **Response: The PSB policy on the use of technology in schools is based on acceptable use. The DELL also has a Minister's Directive that provides further details.**
    - **PSB Policy: Digital Citizenship and Technology in Schools <https://edu.princeedwardisland.ca/psb/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/104-Dig...>**
    - **MD: Responsible Use of Communication and Information Technology [https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/md\\_20...](https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/md_20...)**
    - **Using the guidance from these documents, each school would provide students with further direction based on the age of students, various needs, curriculum delivery approaches, and any issues they may be having with technology use.**
  - Some high schools have a Bring Your Own Device program

February 22, 2021, Three Oaks Senior High, Room 139

Guests: Benny Putt, Student Outreach Worker and Cory Snow, Student Outreach Worker, Student Well Being Team

## Discussion and Outcomes

### Student Well Being Team Presentation

- Benny Putt and Cory Snow gave a presentation about the SWT's work in the Three Oaks family of schools.
- They talked about how early intervention provides better outcomes for kids and teenagers.
- There are multidisciplinary SWTs in all 7 families of schools.
  - Phase 1 2017: Westisle and Montague Family of Schools pilot.
  - Phase 2 2018: Colonel Gray, Souris, Morell, and Bluefield Family of Schools.
  - Phase 3 2019: Charlottetown Rural, Kinkora and Kensington, and Three Oaks Family of Schools.
- SWTs consist of registered nurses, social workers, outreach workers, occupational therapists, and provincial supervisors in health, education, justice, and occupational therapy.
- SWTs collaborate with a number of partners.

- The vision of SWTs is: “Supporting Island children and their families to be the best they can be.”
- Guiding principles for SWTs are child centeredness, easy access to services, early intervention, and collaboration.
- SWTs hold formal one on one meetings, group interventions, brief interventions, and educational opportunities.
- Referrals received
  - 2018-2019 – 573 referrals
  - 2019-2020 – 914 referrals
  - 2020-21 (Sept-Dec) - 426 referrals
  - These numbers do not include parent or school group sessions or presentations/health promotion activities.
- Parent/student required to sign a consent form upon initiation of the service to enable information sharing between the 3 departments when appropriate and in the best interest of the student/parent.
- Referral process: Referral created -> forwarded to team lead and school counselor -> team lead gathers intake information -> triage and assignment -> consent for services obtained.
- Anyone can make a referral using the online system.
  - <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/service/make-student-well-being-tea...>
- SWTs connect with students in schools, at home, in the community, and at after-school programs.
- Changes with regards to the pandemic:
  - The impacts of the pandemic depend on vulnerability factors such as pre-existing mental health conditions and educational status.
  - There has been an increase in school refusal.
- What can parents do
  - Talk with students about the impact of COVID-19 on their lives and assess its potential relationship to their current mental health.
  - Complete a referral for their children if they have any concerns about their children’s mental health.
  - Early intervention may prevent long-term mental health consequences from this COVID-19 pandemic.

These points were made in the following discussion:

- The home office for the Three Oaks family of schools SWT is at Summerside Intermediate School.
- Home and school groups can help get word out about the SWTs and the referral process.

### Round Table Sharing of Home and School Updates

- Athena home and school is working on food safety training for volunteers with the breakfast program.
- Having a resource support only part-time at the school can be a challenge.
- There is a wait time for some services from the SWT.

### Elected School Boards Consultation

- The DAC will promote the survey through home and school.

**November 25, 2020, WebEx Meeting**

**Guests: Sterling Carruthers, School Health Specialist, Katelyn MacLean, School Food Project Manager, Steven Wilson, Project Coordinator**

## Discussion and Outcomes

### Healthy School Food Program Presentation

- The team gave a history of the Healthy School Food Program, including the pilot program from Feb-June 2020 and COVID-19 Food Security Program that took place while schools were closed.
- They outlined the goals of the program
  - Making healthy and affordable meal options available for all students
  - Providing support to ensure equitable access for all students
  - Providing food literacy opportunities for all students
- The pilot program has continued for the 2020-21 school year.
- The interim program started in September 2020. There are three models underway:
  - In-house food service
  - Food service by an external vendor using the Healthy School Food Program menu
  - Food service by and internal/external vendor using their own menu
- About 115,000 meals were ordered in the first six meal periods.
- The Healthy School Food Program will transition to a non-profit organization in September 2021.
- This organization will continue to receive funding and support from the provincial government, but will rely on food sales and donations to operate.
- Successes include overall acceptance of the program, healthy and affordable meal options are available for all students, using local foods, ensuring equitable access, and supporting local vendors and the economy.
- Challenges include the short time line from program start to implementation, working with different vendors, and having the same menu across all communities.
- The team is developing a new menu for January.
- The team has received lots of feedback over the past months. They are hoping to incorporate this feedback into the new menu.

These points were made in the following discussion

- Some parents have expressed concern that people would know that they had not paid any money for their meals. It would be good to communicate that no one knows if someone does not pay.
  - The team will incorporate this feedback into their communications.
- Some kids are not eating certain types of food.
- There were some technical issues at the beginning of program implementation (i.e. cold spaghetti) but food quality is improving and kids are willing to try the food again.
  - The team is working with environmental safety officers to make sure the food being served is safe. They are also working on improving food temperatures and quality.
- Participation a bit lower with high schools because students often leave the property for lunch. Portion sizes for high school students may be a bit too small.
  - The team is looking at promoting the lunch program in high schools as a grab and go.

## Review of key topics

- Virtual learning
  - If schools have to go back to virtual learning, is there enough support for teachers?
  - Athena is using PD days to help prepare teachers for teaching virtually, and teachers would take more learning opportunities if they were available.
  - Athena Home and School is going to host a virtual mini session on December 3 for parents on how to help your kids learn virtually.
- Fundraising
  - Elm Street Elementary recently installed a new playground.
  - There are concerns around potential vandalism on the new playground equipment.
  - The school is wondering who is responsible for protecting this investment? Is it the PSB/school, or the parents that should fund things like playground lights and security cameras?
- Food
  - Food insecurity continues to be an issue.
  - Sessions for parents
  - Currently exploring online opportunities for these sessions.
  - Park Street and Elm Street have partnered in the past to provide information to parents on variety of topics, such as homework and mental health.
- The DAC would like to look at forming a district level fundraising group for schools.
- The DAC would also like to focus on mental health. This is a continuing concern, especially if schools were to go back to online learning.

### October 1, 2020, WebEx Meeting

**Guest: John Cummings, Executive Director, Department of Education and Lifelong Learning**

## Discussion and Outcomes

### Working Together

- The Engagement Officer will continue to develop the meeting agenda and organize DAC meetings.
- The DAC would like to receive the meeting agenda ahead of the meeting in order to contribute to it. The DAC would also like to receive a list of topics that other DACs are working on.
- The DAC would like to meet once a month through a mix of online and in-person meetings. All in-person meetings will follow COVID group meeting protocols, with the understanding that plans may change due to CPHO guidelines.
- The DAC also agreed to the following ways of working together:
  - Ways of working together can be changed at any time.
  - Everyone has a role in enforcing the ground rules.
  - Speak up if you tend to be more quiet, speak less to give others a chance to share if you tend to speak more.
  - Listen when others speak, and don't interrupt.
  - Seek first to understand before jumping to conclusions.
  - When uncertain about someone's intent, ask questions to try and understand where they are coming from.
  - Treat each other with kindness and tolerance.

- The DAC will consider having a meeting chair from within their group. Anyone who is interested will email the Engagement Officer.

## DAC Overview

Anne Rooban, Engagement Officer for the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning, gave an overview presentation on the role of the DACs.

- Mandate of the DACs is to help shape an education system that is focused on and meets the needs of learners. The role of DACs is:
  - to advise the Minister of Education on educational priorities for the District;
  - to engage school communities in discussions;
  - to foster collaboration among school councils, home and school associations and the community.
- Responsibilities of membership:
  - Report concerns of your local Home and School to the DAC;
  - Provide leadership in identifying priorities to focus on;
  - Work collaboratively with members;
  - Report back to your local Home and School the discussions and outcomes of DAC meetings.

## School Operational Plans

- The school operational plans are working well at the schools, students are wearing their masks, wiping down their desks, and are separated in the cafeteria.
- Transportation and bussing is going well.
- Sometimes there are different rules at different schools (i.e. some schools allow students to use microwaves while other schools do not).
- Students are adapting well with the changes at school.
- Enforcing cohorts at lunch is a challenge for older students, as they still hang out with who they want to outside of the school.
- Many students are absent from school due to symptoms from the common cold who are waiting for COVID tests. Students have been missing more school time than usual this year.

## Topics for Discussion

- Mental Health
  - How to support students with anxiety if there is a second wave of COVID.
- Outcome Measures
  - Parents would like to have clear expectations from teachers on outcome measures for this year. The new curriculum has not been communicated yet.
  - **UPDATE: The Department has adjusted the curriculum to reflect the time students have missed and address any potential gaps in learning. Students are being assessed at their current grade level while acknowledging the gap.**
- School Contingency Plans
  - Parents would like to have more information about these plans if COVID cases occur in schools.
- Fundraising
  - What does fundraising look like for schools, during COVID and otherwise?
- Healthy School Food Program

- Issues include menu selection, use of plastic packaging, and competition from existing school hot lunch programs.
- Members will share additional topics that come from their upcoming Home and School or Student Council meetings.