

2017-18 DAC members

Leigh Dymont (TOSH), Marilyn Campbell (Athena), Julie Hogan (Elm St), Jacqueline Lecky (Miscouche), Sara Courtney (Parkside), Major Stewart (Greenfield), Andrea Pickett (SIS), TOSH students (not yet appointed), Virginia Doyle (PEIHSF Regional Director)

Monday, May 7, 2018, Westisle Composite High School

Ministerial meeting Three Oaks and Westisle DAC

Present: Hon. Minister Jordan Brown, Deputy Minister Susan Willis, Doug Lyon, Ellen Rennie, Jason Ramsay, Kelly Shea-Rayner, Teena Callaghan, Chandlar Gard, Leigh Dymont, Jeff Nichols, Julie Hogan, Marilyn Campbell. Regrets: Jeannie Burden, Jacqueline Lecky.

Discussion and Outcomes

Three Oaks priorities:

Student Supports

- DAC members feel the current EA allocation is not meeting the needs of students.
- They would like to see an increase in EAs, especially in the early grades.
- More resources in the early foundational years, could mean a reduction in the resources needed in the later grades.
- Teachers and parents are noticing increases in mental health issues and behaviours as well as lower language skills in the early grades.
- DAC members would also like to see reduced wait time to Psych-Ed assessments.
- The Minister spoke about how 3 more school psychologists have just been hired, with 2 more to be hired for September.
- It is anticipated that within the next 2.5 years, the wait time for assessments will be reduced to 1 year maximum.
- The Deputy Minister spoke of new investments in assistive technology, with 2 more staff added in that area.
- Some possible solutions raised to address student support:
 - Tutors in schools, and dedicated subs for schools, who can tutor on days not needed to sub
 - Ensure that the tools recommended by assessors are available and staff are trained to use them
 - A Resource Expo, where teachers and EAs share their experiences and best practices
- The Minister noted that the PD days are opportunities for grade level exchange and a chance to learn how to use new tools.
- Peer Helpers program to have older students mentor younger ones in literacy, math, etc. If this was linked to bursary hours, there may be more uptake. KISH and Queen Elizabeth have a program similar to this, and it has been very successful. DM Willis suggested it could be part of the Gr 10 volunteer requirement.

Early years assessments

- They currently follow the vaccination schedule, but there is a gap from 18 months to 4 years.
- There was discussion about adding an assessment during this gap.

- Parents are sent a checklist from Public Health of things to look for, but if parents don't raise a concern or make an appointment, that child does not get further assessed.
- If parents do not do the at-home assessment, the child does not receive interventions.

Progress Monitoring

- It was suggested to start with a cohort in Kindergarten that uses Progress Monitoring throughout K to 12.
- If teachers start early and it is kept up to date, it would be less work to keep current.
- One member suggested Progress Monitoring could be a tool for identifying needs and allocating resources, as it provides a fuller picture of the student.
- One member who used Progress Monitoring in the 80s said it was a great way to identify deficits and see where resources were needed, but it was a lot of work to maintain.
- Parent engagement with at-home reading in the early years:
 - One member spoke about how work, sports, travel time, screen time all take time away from one-on-one reading at bedtime and basics 'at the kitchen table'.
 - Minister Brown spoke of new resources that encourage parents to place their child in an early learning centre, which could lead to better reading outcomes.
- The members agreed that if more spots were created at early learning centres, children would receive foundational learning, and parents could return to work/enter the workforce.
- Minister Brown said there are major investments made this year to increase access to high quality child care programs.

Digital Citizenship

- The Three Oaks DAC would like to see a policy on Internet usage, and education for both students and parents about being a good digital citizen i.e. living your online life with the same moral code that you do/should in your real life.
- Parents want a strategy to talk to their students about their online life, as well as a curriculum piece for in-school support of these messages.
- Minister Brown indicated that Department staff have been receiving training in this area and are working to branch it out to other staff as well.
- One member noted that this is like the new sex ed. Once considered a parent domain, it is now taught in schools to help students make good choices.

School Food

- Many students in this District come to school hungry, and are supported by breakfast and lunch programs and teacher donations.
- There is a lack of consistency in programs, some schools have many volunteers and no resources, and some have a lot of money and food, but no volunteers to run the program.
- This DAC would like a consistent model of food provision and delivery for all Island schools.
- They support the work of Morgan Palmer on how to get more local food into schools, and would like to see her work continue.

Westisle DAC priorities:

Transportation

- Some students, including K-3 students, spend up to 3 hours a day on a bus.
 - The transportation subcommittee meeting discussed adding a new bus route to reduce travel times.
 - This idea was supported with research on possible routes and shared with the Public Schools Branch.
 - The second issue of late busses was identified as way to allow more students to participate in extracurricular activity.
 - A student DAC member survey, indicated that a high number of respondents would participate in extracurricular activities if there was a late bus.
 - This was also costed out and the PSB is examining the possibilities. It is hoped there will be some known outcomes for these issues by end of the school year.
- There was discussion about how budgets for extra-curricular bussing impact students in this District. Deputy Willis said this is an issue in all Districts.
- School budgets cannot support all activities, and administrations rely on fundraising to bridge the gap.
- There was a suggestion to reach out to the Department of Rural and Regional Development to examine possible funding to address some of these transportation issues.
- DAC members would like a position in this District to oversee transportation in this area. Members feel that decisions based in Summerside are not close enough to their communities.
- The discussion turned to the cost of referees and officials for sports events. It was suggested to reach out to PEISAA about training local officials so the cost of travel could be reduced.

Choice in Courses

- DAC members feel that if the high school schedule was amended to 5 classes a day, students could have more electives and more exposure to different areas of interest.
- Mitch Murphy is coming to the next DAC meeting to discuss this with the membership.
- Current curriculum is 110 hours, and a 5 period day would be 90 hours. A 5-period day would require curriculum overhauls, and it may mean additional courses to make up lost class time.
- The Minister said they are looking into this issue, and developing some potential new models, including half credit courses.

Support for Student Well-being Teams

- DAC members are thankful the Student well-being team is in their District.
- They feel that dedicated administrative person could allow the clinical team lead to focus solely on cases and not administration.
- They presented a letter of support and request for further resources allocated to the SWB teams.

April 28, 2018 at Summerside Intermediate School

Discussion and Outcomes

School Food

- Morgan Palmer was welcomed to the meeting. Morgan has been working on a local school food initiative and was asked to attend to present her findings and possible pathways forward. Morgan partnered with 3 schools – Tignish Elementary, East Wiltshire and Morell High – to examine the current models of food service they provide, and if local food could be more present on school menus.
- TOSH has a breakfast program and a lunch via cafeteria services by an outside provider. Teachers and administrators identify students who, for whatever reasons, are regularly not able to supply their own lunch, and the measures that are taken to make sure these students are fed.
- The most pressing issue is that on April 30th, the TOSH cafeteria will close until October for renovations, and a new plan has to be put in place for those students who relied on the breakfast program and lunch provided by the teachers/admins via the cafeteria. Food trucks are coming daily to replace the cafeteria for the general population, but they are not sure how this will affect the students in need of lunch and unable to purchase/provide it on their own. Community and church groups are working with the parents and administrators to try and ensure those students aren't hungry for their remaining days at TOSH.
- There was discussion about a whole school approach to food – curriculum pieces for culinary arts students, carpentry, and agriculture and science classes; having students create and cultivate gardens, learn to harvest, prepare and serve food; opportunities for learning from professional chefs.
- Morgan posed the idea of creating some infrastructure – a not-for-profit – that could manage and oversee school food for all of PEI. Their mission would be to provide all students with healthy school food, made locally by professionals. It would not be focused on turning a profit. Morgan also talked about developing new policy and goals around defining healthy school food, including a meal-based policy that included the need for minimally processed food.
- Food insecurity is an ongoing issue for this DAC, and they are supportive of Morgan continuing in her role to further explore school food options for PEI.

Student Well-Being Teams

- Geoff MacDonald, Project Lead for the Student Well-Being Teams had hoped to be able to come tonight, but had another commitment. He will come to the next available meeting.
- Copies of his presentation were handed out and discussed.
- This District will get a SWB team in September 2019. All DAC members are encouraged to reach out to Geoff to let him know the unique issues that his team may face in this District.

Homework

- Brochures that outline the homework framework for K-12 were handed out and discussed.
- The 3 pillars are practice, production and performance, with differing goals within.
- This can be a good jumping off point to enrich discussion on a possible homework policy for the province.

Policy Input

- Members were reminded to participate in the development of the Safe and Caring Schools, Community Use of Schools and School Cancellation Policies currently under review.

- All input can be shared directly to the Public Schools Branch.
- Report Card review is coming in the Fall. Members were asked to start thinking about what they would like to see on a report card and the information they value.
- Members were encouraged to save the upcoming report cards to use as templates for the Fall consultation.

Digital Citizenship

- The April 16th, 2018 panel on Digital Citizenship was very successful, and has planted the seed for this DAC to push for more student and parent resources for safe, positive online living.

Ministerial Meeting

- The DAC reviewed their priorities in preparation for the meeting with Minister Jordan Brown on May 7th, 2018.
- They will focus on:
 - Digital Citizenship,
 - Student In-School Supports and
 - School Food.

February 13th at Elm Street Elementary

Discussion and Outcomes

DAC membership

- There are a few gaps, as well as members not engaged. We will identify students from TOSH, and reach out to lapsed members to see what their intentions are.

Wellbeing

- The rollout of the student wellbeing team for this District will be in September 2019.
- Members are looking for resources in community that that parents and students could access before the teams are in place.

Cyber parenting

- There will be a session at TOSH on April 16 with a panel of guests discussing how to parent your child's online life.

DAC engagement

- All requests for DAC input and engagement from either Branch or Department staff will be forwarded directly to DAC members.

Principals Council

- Members asked for information about what they are discussing. Meeting notes will be shared.

Homework

- There was discussion about differing levels of homework in the schools, with seemingly few guidelines.

Selecting Priorities

- Over the next few weeks, DAC members will talk together to select the priorities in the District to offer advice to the Minister, or take action as DAC to work with Branch and Department staff to effect change, or both.

Nov 30, 2017, Summerside Intermediate School

Discussion and Outcomes

Role of the DAC

- The role of the District Advisory Council, including the mandate and responsibilities, as well as the term appointments and process for the appointment was discussed, with support material.

Review of DAC Priorities

- DAC members reviewed a priorities spreadsheet they created before discussion started on each priority.
- The top priorities remain student mental health, food insecurity, assessments and EA supports.

Student Mental Health

- A brief update was presented on the Student Well-being teams Demonstration taking in place in Montague and Westisle Districts.
- It was noted that this may be a good time for this DAC to offer some advice to the program leads on issues that are facing students in this district.

Cyber safety

- DAC members want to ensure students are safe and making good decisions while online.
- DAC members considered ways they could advocate for this priority.

- They suggested that cyber/social safety could become part of the Health curriculum, or become part of a series of presentations by outside agencies.

Food Insecurity

- This remains a key issue for this DAC.
- A provincial school food program is not only needed, but critical for all students in this District and across PEI.

Psycho-Educational Assessments

- There is concern about the long wait times for student psychological assessments.
- DAC members also indicated a lack of supports and resources available in school to match a student's diagnosis, including electronics, adaptive technologies and resource teachers.

EA supports

- There is need for more EA supports in schools and classrooms providing one to one support.