

Westisle Family of Schools District Advisory Council

Members for 2020-2021: Sandee MacLean (Westisle Composite High School), Coralee Stewart (Alberton Elementary), Jason Ramsay (Bloomfield Elementary), Chris Dunbar (M.E. Callaghan), Sam Shaw-Venoit (O'Leary Elementary), Tina Blanchard (St. Louis Elementary), Teena Callaghan (Tignish Elementary), Sheila Gaudette (Tignish Elementary Teacher Rep), Sakura MacLean (Westisle Student Rep), Meredith Rix (Westisle Student Rep), Dionne Tuplin (PEIHSF Regional Director), Dannielle Sprigg (Hernewood Intermediate)

Vacant: Eilerslie Elementary

June 3, 2021 – Web Ex Meeting

Guest: John Cummings, Director, Education and Lifelong Learning

Discussion and outcomes

Discussion of Westisle DAC recommendations for the Minister for 2020-2021

- Regional representative
 - This recommendation is being made based on issues with communication and an interest in lessening workload on administrators.
 - A regional representative would help alleviate the work principals take on related to property management and infrastructure, allowing the principal to focus more on educational matters, and teachers and students.
 - A regional representative could also advocate for the family of schools and would understand concerns related to local schools or bussing routes.
 - It could operate as a pilot.
- Mental health
 - Although teachers have attended training sessions on mental health, many teachers still do not feel equipped to address mental health in the school and in classrooms.
 - There needs to be training at the university level so that teachers can learn to recognize mental health issues.
 - The group would also like to see multiple options for addressing mental health beyond the PSB – including different organizations offering different types of training.
 - Group size should not be a barrier for offering training sessions. If 20 parents are not available, smaller sessions should be offered.
- Child Risk Impact Assessment (CRIA) for Safe and Caring Learning Environments policy
 - The DAC would like to see a CRIA assessment conducted on the Safe and Caring Learning Environments policy.
 - The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate recommends that a CRIA should be completed for any type of policy that affects children.
 - The Safe and Caring Learning Environments policy is not addressing the bullying problems at schools within the Westisle family.
 - There are no evaluations about what the students' experiences are like in the classroom or whether the measures put in place are working.

- It seems that the policy only represents the point of view of the administrators, not the view of the child or parent.
- The DAC would like to see more collaboration between schools, students and parents. A CRIA could be a good starting point.
- Principal and teacher evaluations
 - Currently, principals evaluate teachers.
 - There are no systems in place for students to provide feedback on teachers.
 - The current tools for evaluation should incorporate other variables.

Presentation to Director

- Mental health
 - **Response: John will reach out to UPEI to see if there are any possibilities for incorporating mental health into their program (response pending)**
 - John will reach out to the SWT about group sessions with parents, and look into possibilities of sessions with smaller groups
 - The DAC is concerned that decisions made within the school environment are not involving parents or students. This includes issues on whether to host parent sessions, or whether parents and students feel an issue has been effectively resolved. For example, a decision was made to postpone the session with the SWT and RCMP from June to September even though the bullying issue is a critical issue right now. There needs to be more collaboration among parents, teachers and the community.
 - **Response: The Student Well-being Teams deliver group activities for parents on a regular basis. The teams do like to ensure that there is sufficient number of participants before proceeding with sessions. However, it is possible to have exceptions to this and to possibly explore alternatives for delivery of the session. Anyone experiencing difficulty with a session not being able to proceed due to numbers can contact Elizabeth Kennedy at eakennedy@edu.pe.ca(link sends e-mail) to discuss the issue.**
- CRIA assessment on Safe and Caring Learning Policy
 - The DAC confirmed they have had conversations with the PSB on the policy.
 - The DAC will continue to advocate for the CRIA to be conducted on the policy.
 - The DAC would also like to the Youth Advocacy Group to work with students in the schools to explore ideas.
- Regional representative
 - **Response: Before implementing a regional representative, the management of the PSB should be given the opportunity to address the specific issues such as communication, property maintenance and bussing. It is not clear whether adding a new person is the best approach. It may be better to meet with the PSB management to see how the processes work and how concerns might be addressed.**
 - **Response from the PSB: All of our maintenance staff are mobile and although they have a "home base" they are on the road all day, where needed and do not remain at their "home base". There are two full time employees that have a home base that are Elmsdale but I would hesitate to say that any of the maintenance employees or the property services manager are specific to a location because they all travel daily to wherever is required. There are no transportation employees that have a home base in West Prince but the same logic would apply to them.**
 - John will follow up with Dave Gillis and connect him with the group on bussing issues.

May 19, 2021 – Hernewood Intermediate Library

Guests: Heidi Morgan, Principal, Westisle Composite High School, Terri MacAdam, Director of Student Services, PSB, Melanie Profit, Student Well-being Social Worker and Team Lead, Andrea Garland, Counseling Consultant, Student Services, PSB.

Discussion and Outcomes

Course Selection

- Heidi Morgan gave an overview of the course selection process at Westisle Composite High School.
 - Course selection process starts in January, when the program of studies is updated by the department.
 - The school handbooks are updated with any changes to the program of studies.
 - This year they were provided in an online format.
 - The handbook has all courses that are being offered, including course descriptions, codes, and any pre-requisites.
 - Students are encouraged to choose their core courses first, followed by any courses of interest.
 - There are a wide range of courses offered, however not all courses in the handbook will be offered each year.
 - The courses offered each year is determined by the number of students who chose each course and staff FTE.
 - Students choose 8 courses plus an alternate in case the course isn't offered.
 - A course will continue on to the scheduling stage if 15 students choose it.
 - The scheduler puts students into courses. The schedule may be rearranged multiple times to reduce conflicts.

These points were made in the following discussion:

- Students in French immersion have fewer electives than other students due to French course requirements, especially in grade 10. Some students, by their choice, have had to drop French immersion in order to get science and math credits.
- Science, trades and advanced placement students also have fewer electives.
- There are some local course offerings that are not included in the program of studies. These include fisheries, small engines, marketing and agriculture.
- Students do not have a lot of knowledge about what courses are offered. Some courses in My Blueprint do not have course descriptions. There is interest in the topics of environmental science and political science but many students are not aware of the options.
 - Course descriptions are included in My Blueprint. If there are any courses that do not have descriptions, Heidi would like to know.
 - Students need to look into which courses are offered.
 - Students can gather a group of 15 in order to see a course offered.
 - If numbers are too low in a given year, the school tries to make courses work every second year if there is interest.
 - Students can take online courses through distance Ed out of New Brunswick, however, this format does not work for all students.
- The school can offer any course in the program of studies.
- Curriculum updates are the responsibility of the department.

- Courses that are outdated are not eliminated and generally are not replaced. If there is still interest in the course, it is offered.
- Course titles and descriptions cannot be changed in the program of studies. The teacher must stay within the curriculum and provide any updates using department or online resources.
- The school can't add new courses to the program of studies.
- There is concern that students do not select courses they are interested in because they are concerned that it won't be offered based on what they hear from their peers, and they might be put in another course they don't want.
 - If there was more promotion of certain courses, uptake would be higher since students would be more confident that it would be offered.
 - Some courses have been promoted through word of mouth by teachers and through posters.
 - The creative multimedia class is creating a video to promote different programs that are offered to share during course selection time.
- Other suggestions for promoting courses:
 - Homeroom slideshow before course selection
 - Posters
 - Pep rallies/school assemblies
 - Peer-led course fair (like a job fair) during lunch time
- Need to be mindful of how courses are promoted. It needs to be balanced so that some courses don't die out.
- If a student is put into a class they do not want, they have the option to switch. All switches take place within a week of each semester to ensure that students don't fall behind.
- Course selection this year took place over a 3-week timeline to give students time to speak with a guidance counselor or teacher.

PSB Safe and Caring Learning Environments policy and anti-bullying

- Terri gave an overview of the PSB Safe and Caring Learning Environments policy.
 - It was enacted in June 2018.
 - https://edu.princeedwardisland.ca/psb/parents_students/safe-caring-learning-environments
- The purpose of this policy is to establish expectations for making schools a safe and caring learning environment.
- The operational procedure was enacted in August 2018, and focuses on how to carry out the policy.
- Terri highlighted two definitions in the Safe and Caring Learning Environments operational procedure:
 - Progressive discipline: An approach that makes use of a continuum of prevention programs, preventative practices, interventions, supports, consequences and strategies which promote accountability and build upon positive behaviours.
 - This approach uses a restorative justice model. The PSB would like to see more of this.
 - School climate: The environment, values and relationships found within a school. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, included and accepted, and actively promote positive behaviours and interactions. Equity, inclusion and respect are critical components embedded in the learning environment of a positive school climate.
- A toolkit on the policy and operational procedures was sent to principals in early 2021.
- The policy and procedures follow the Education Act.

- Terri reviewed the operational procedure with the group, and reviewed the safe and caring learning environments procedure incident response guide which provides direction for students and staff in the case of an incident.
 - The operational procedure highlights responsibilities of students, parents/guardians, teachers, and principals.
- The PSB is working to get the policy out to schools. Work from this year included:
 - Re-introducing the policy to staff.
 - Linking the policy to the PSB website and school websites.
 - Posting the incident response guide in accessible places in schools.
 - Completing the code of conduct.
 - Working with schools to find ways to make school feel safe and caring
 - This includes celebrating diversity.
 - A diversity consultant will be hired soon.
- At Hernewood, the policy was reviewed with staff.
 - It will be taken to Health/English classes and students will work to put the policy into student-friendly language and infographics.
- A school in Summerside had students put tiny signs with positive notes around the school.

These points were made in the following discussion:

- The DAC raised concerns that parents are not being involved enough in the implementation of the policy at the school level.
- The DAC also expressed concerns over retaliation for students that report incidents to teachers or school administration.
 - It was suggested that students could reach out by email with their concerns.

Andrea Garland described her work in supporting schools in the Westisle family and spoke about how mental health literacy is included in the curriculum.

- She noted that the curriculum is available online for each grade.
 - <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/education-and-lifelong-...>

Melanie Profit spoke about online safety for students, including how the SWT is working to make students and parents more aware of the implications of sexting and access to adult content.

- She described the importance of limiting screen time for children, and the need to reach out to students in grade 4 rather than grade 7.
- A joint presentation with the SWT and RCMP has been rescheduled to the fall to ensure strong attendance from parents.

April 8, 2021 – Hernewood Intermediate School Library

Discussion and Outcomes

Elected school board consultation update

- An independent consultant ran the consultation.
- Many DACs would like to see local representation on elected school boards.
- Westisle DAC was the only group that suggested the idea for a local superintendent.

- The Engagement Officer will let the DAC know when the findings of the consultation are made available.

Home and school/student council updates

- M.E. Callaghan Home and School is wondering if the government has a long term plan to replace bus drivers. Many drivers in the region are nearing retirement.
 - **RESPONSE: Yes, as acknowledged in many media interviews with CBC and others, of the PSB's 256 regular school bus drivers, 174 of them (that's 68% of our entire staff) are eligible to retire within the next 5 years. This is significant for ALL areas of the province. To attempt to address this need we have developed relationships with organizations such as Skills Canada and PEI's Rural and Regional Development division to help offset the cost of driver training, and we have advertised in many locations including newspapers and social media in an ongoing attempt to encourage new drivers. See <https://www.theguardian.pe.ca/news/local/48-pei-residents-take-training-...>(link is external) and others.**
 - We have even developed an in house driver training program to help address this issue. This received front page coverage in Island newspapers. <https://www.theguardian.pe.ca/news/local/peis-bus-driver-shortage-inspir-...>(link is external)
 - **This is definitely one of the biggest challenges facing our system and a great deal of work, as referenced above, has been underway to address it.**
- The Home and School was also wondering if it would be possible to have an itinerant bus driver pilot project (similar to substitute teachers) for next year.
 - **RESPONSE: The PSB currently has 4 itinerant bus drivers actively working right now. Thus far, things have gone well and we are hopefully optimistic that we can expand upon these numbers in the future.**
- There are still quality issues with the food program. The menu is better but uptake is low.
- O'leary Home and School hosted staff appreciation events.
 - They are changing some of the menu items for the breakfast program.
 - There is a lack of people on home and school.
 - They are looking to host a parent/child night. This will include a parent information session with activities for kids followed by some combined activities.
 - They are also planning a virtual bingo fundraiser.
 - The Home and School would like to know how communication between other Home and School groups and schools is going.
- Hernewood Home and School held a meeting held to discuss some issues related to bullying at Hernewood.
 - The meeting was attended by parents, teachers, administrators, the student well being team (SWT), a counselling consultant, and students.
 - Students shared about some of the issues that need to be addressed.
 - The group discussed what their ideal school might look like.
 - The group created a resolution to provide for outdoor and mental health breaks/training once a week.
- Bloomfield Home and School is running their breakfast program.
- Westisle is looking into switching the Parent Council to a Home and School Group.
 - There were issues with trying to set up a meeting between students and the school administration to discuss course offerings. The meeting did not happen.
 - The DAC would like to have a presentation on course selection and time structure from an administrator perspective.

These points were made in the following discussion:

- Air quality continues to be an issue in the family of schools. Some of the issues stem from using old standards in air quality tests.
- The DAC would like to see:
 - More connections made between SWTs, schools and parents.
 - More community involvement in schools, and better dialogue between schools and parents/students.
 - More collaboration with feeder schools.
 - More accountability in decisions made at the school level.
 - Mental health is an ongoing concern, yet there seems to be little change in addressing this at the school level.
 - The DAC discussed how to empower students to change school culture and make school a safe place for all students.

Busing funds

- A teacher at Westisle noted that busing funds are determined by number of students rather than distance travelled leaving Westisle. This leaves the family of schools short on transportation funds and creates packed busses.
- The Engagement Officer will follow up with the PSB to provide an explanation of the funding model for bussing in the Westisle family of schools.
 - **RESPONSE:**
 - **Extra curricular busing.**
 - **It is a very detailed calculation but all schools (with comparable grade compositions) are based on the same formula which allows for an increase to schools farther from a city center because kms are used for the calculations. In the Westisle family of schools it would be to Summerside. For each school there are two calculations that are done and one is for the student allotment (based on enrollment) and there is a KM allotment.**
 - **Elementary - student allotment + km allotment that is based on two trips for the entire population to travel to the nearest city center, including the necessary number of drivers and buses based on the enrollment of the school.**
 - **Intermediate & High School - the student allotment remains the same but the km allotment changes to be per student being allowed a trip to the nearest city center as opposed to it going as an entire school since there is more trips that would occur at the intermediate and high school.**
 - **Every day busing:**
 - **Many factors are taken into consideration when considering distribution of transportation resources - some of which include route distances, time aboard buses, bus capacity, student ridership, wheelchair and special needs considerations, among others.**
 - **Currently, there are approximately 2,000 students in the Westisle Family, which is approximately 10% of the PSB's student population. There are currently 48 buses assigned to the Westisle family of schools, which is approximately 20% of the buses in the PSB.**
 - **Regarding the specific concern cited, we are unaware of issues of overcrowding on any bus in the Westisle Family. In fact, as the percentages above would indicate, the ratios of students per bus in the Westisle family are among the very best in all the province. If there is a concern of overcrowding on any PSB bus, the driver and impacted**

school(s) have been directed to advise our transportation division immediately.

- The Engagement Officer will also ask about the system of seniority for bussing routes and how many electric busses are being allocated to the Westisle Family of Schools.
 - **RESPONSE: Yes. Seniority is a cornerstone of the bus drivers collective agreement. Any time there is a permanent vacancy, it is posted and seniority is a key consideration in how it is awarded. If there are concerns with any article in the collective agreement not being followed, drivers are encouraged to speak with their supervisor, their union, and/or our Human Resources division to rectify.**
 - **RESPONSE: Politicians have announced that all PSB buses will eventually be electric. The roll out strategy is still a work in progress, but one key consideration is the charging stations and infrastructure needed to support this initiative. Current discussions are to house our next 12 in Summerside where they can be centrally charged and maintained, with ongoing conversation to expand to all other areas of the province as time and budget will allow.**

Discussion of Westisle DAC recommendations for 2020-2021

- The DAC would like to communicate that despite the declining uptake and issues the healthy school food program is facing in their family of schools, they see the value of this program and are interested in seeing improvements to make it successful.
- The DAC would like the new non-profit to speak to the food providers in the West again.
- The DAC would like to develop a recommendation for a regional representative position.
 - The DAC reviewed a previous motion for a regional representative for the Westisle Family of Schools.
 - This representative would act as a liaison between principals and the PSB.
 - The Engagement Officer will look into whether there was a response from the government when the motion was previously submitted in June 2019.
 - **RESPONSE: No response to the motion was given by the government at that time.**
- The DAC would like to recommend removal of the GED requirement to address the shortage of bus drivers. This recommendation could include a long-term plan to replace drivers.
 - The Engagement Officer will ask about the reason for the GED requirement.
 - **RESPONSE: Regarding timing, this coincided with the school board amalgamations and becoming the Public Schools Branch. When government assumed control of the board, all positions in the PSB essentially became government positions. A standard for government jobs has been grade 12.**
 - **Please note however that at present, we do not require a Grade 12 certificate for a driver to become a substitute with the PSB. A grade 12 is required to attain a permanent position. When drivers come to us without their grade 12, we advise of this requirement and offer to put them in contact with supports that will help them attain their GED while they are subbing for us.**
 - **As an educational institution, we value education highly. In the case of a bus driver, there can be a high degree of paperwork required: incident reports, routing sheets, WHMIS information, direction for special needs students, etc. Similar to most other positions within government, a functioning degree of literacy is required, and this grows every year. And also similar to other positions within government, we have used a minimum of Grade 12 as the certification that gives us this confidence.**
- The DAC would like to recommend UPEI teacher training on mental health.
 - Also would like to see mental health teaching in schools be expanded to parents.

- Bringing Mental Health to the Schools course for parents and students.

February 17, 2021, Web Ex Meeting

Discussion and Outcomes

Healthy School Food Program

- There are still issues with the food quality for schools within the Westisle family.
 - There was more uptake of the program in January, but this has decreased again.
 - The biggest issue affecting the food quality is the distance from the vendor to the schools.
- The DAC would like to know more about the tendering process for vendors for the next school year, including when restaurants can bid.
 - The DAC would be interested in finding out about the hurdles that businesses face that may have prevented them from putting in a bid.
- The DAC is also interested in determining whether a school model could work for the Westisle family of schools.
- The DAC is concerned that if low uptake continues, that kids needing the program will not have access to it when the non-profit model comes out next year.
- The DAC values the healthy school food program and would like to find a way for it to work in West Prince.
- The DAC would like to set up a meeting with the school food team to determine next steps related to the Westisle family of schools.
 - The DAC would also like some data and numbers from the program.

Curriculum

- Some curriculum in the schools is outdated.
 - Mental health and environmental topics are not being covered in the curriculum.
- What is happening on paper and what is happening in the school are two different things.
 - Is there a way to bridge this gap?
- There is currently very little mental health education, and the Student Well Being Teams (SWTs) are not connected to the curriculum.
 - Are there ways that the SWTs could connect into the curriculum?
- Teachers often need to fill in the gap on mental health in their classrooms.
 - Many teachers do not have training in mental health, and do not learn this in their formal education.

Responsibilities of Principals and Job Descriptions

- Principals have a lot of responsibilities and often lack the time to meet with students and provide guidance for teachers.
 - A separate teacher mentor could help.
- The current model of communication in the school system is not working well.
 - Schools tend to operate in a closed loop.
 - There needs to be another avenue where parents and communities have more involvement and communication with the schools.
 - There is a lack of parent and community volunteers to support schools.
- How can the DAC support teachers, principals, students, and parents?

- What is the role of the DAC when it comes to these issues?
- Having a regional representative for the Westisle family of schools could help with communication.
 - There is a regional disconnect that is leading to a number of issues in the Westisle family of schools. A lot of time is wasted trying to find solutions to these issues.
 - Support staff for the Westisle family have been leaving the region for years.
 - This position would free principals and allow them to work more within their schools.
- The DAC would like to develop a recommendation for a regional representative position.

Guidance Counselor Shortages

- The position for a guidance counselor in the Westisle family has been posted numerous times but there have been no qualified applicants yet.
 - **Response: There is still a shortage of counselors Canada wide so the PSB is undertaking a recruitment strategy to address our shortage.**

Elected School Boards Consultation

- The DAC members attending the consultation on March 3 will report back to the DAC at the next meeting.
- The issues the DAC would like to raise at the meeting include:
 - How to entice people to vote.
 - Regional representation: ensuring input from all regions across the Island.

Other Business

- Bus transfers have been an ongoing concern in the Westisle Family this year with COVID protocols.
 - Some students are on the bus for over an hour again.
 - There is a shortage of bus drivers.
 - The DAC would like to recommend removal of the GED requirement to address the shortage of bus drivers.

January 25, 2021 at Westisle Composite High School Library

Guests: Melanie Profit, Team Lead, Student Well Being Team, Pam MacKinnon, School Outreach Worker, Student Well Being Team

Discussion and Outcomes

Student Well Being Team (SWT) Presentation

- Melanie Profit and Pam MacKinnon gave a presentation about their work in the Westisle 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 Westisle SWT health staff are supervised by Community Mental Health so can have a dual role with their mental health support.
- 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, 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.
- 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.
- For the Westisle Family
 - There are currently 147 referrals/open files.
 - The greatest reason for referrals is anxiety/depression.
 - There are also referrals related to school truancy and family life issues, behavior concerns, medical, etc.
 - Current groups being offered by the Westisle SWT include active parenting of teens groups, DBT, CBT, Triple P, social skills, emotional regulation, lunch buddies, and anxiety groups.
 - Westisle Composite High school has a walk-in clinic.
 - The Westisle SWT very involved with community and with other services providers.
 - The Westisle SWT has a unique relationship with community mental health.
- Changes with regards to the pandemic:
 - Anxiety was very high in students, parents, school staff.
 - There were social struggles due to the cohort system, but also a decline in some bullying issues.
 - There was also an increase in school refusal.
 - The SWT hosted more one-on-one sessions, less group sessions.

These points were raised in the following discussion:

- SWTs give students and parents a voice in the school system.
- SWTs work to build connections between the home and school.
 - Youth workers have the ability to transport clients so can involve them in after school activities, appointments, community, etc.
- SWTs help teachers and staff understand what students are going through.
 - Educating staff to take a more holistic lens with their students by focusing on mental health as well as, shifting from the focus of solely academics and preparation for high school/university, etc.
 - Teachers may not have the background or knowledge in mental health. B.Eds. do not require a mental health course.

- A child's education is important, but mental health problems need to be addressed so that they are able to learn.
- Younger generations may understand the importance of mental health more clearly due to earlier interventions in the school systems.
- Some high school students struggle with missing their classes even though they would benefit from education/groups to assist in managing anxiety/mental health.
 - There needs to be a realization that if they invest in mental health, it will help them to cope and improve their learning.
- Schools are starting to get better at upstream mental health education in the classroom, but it takes time. Repetition is important, along with a culture shift.
- It is challenging to get parents to come out to parent sessions/presentations.
- Curriculum changes related to mental health are coming.
- SWTs find the greatest support with Guidance and Student Services. Some administrators and teachers are more supportive than others.
 - There are challenges with getting word out about the SWTs in the schools.
 - The SWT should collaborate more directly with the students, and have a greater presence in the school.
 - The SWT used to do presentations to grade 7 & 10 students and they are involved in mental health literacy days.
 - The peer helping class has weekly meetings and a training day at the start of each school year. These could be opportunities to build student connections with the SWT.
 - The SWT is open to suggestions on how to increase collaboration with the student body.
- There is no discussion at this time about adding other professionals to the SWTs, such as health coaches or naturopaths. Nurses do most of the teaching on diet, sleep, media usage, etc.
- There are other provinces in Canada (ie. Alberta, NS, etc.) who have forms of student wellbeing teams in their schools.
- Current referral times for the Westisle Family is approximately two weeks at this time and may increase depending on waitlists in the future.
- There are no guidance counselors at St. Louis and Hernewood. This is related to a shortage of Master of Counseling professionals in the province. It was also highlighted that there is a significant shortage of helping professionals on the Island at this time.
- School refusal is a large problem on the Island that is a very complex issue.
 - Covid has contributed to this, as some are blaming "covid".
 - Social anxiety causes many students to avoid school, and parents are struggling to get children to attend.
 - There is a lack of parent resources to help them address mental health with their kids.
 - There are also issues related to bullying, self-esteem, and social media, etc which contribute to children not attending.

November 23, 2020 at Westisle Composite High

Guest: Dr. Tamara Hubley-Little, Director of English Education, Programs and Services

Discussions and Outcomes

English Curriculum Presentation

Dr. Tamara Hubley-Little gave a presentation about the background and steps for curriculum development from policy to implementation.

- She outlined the purpose and basic principles of the public education system, followed by the role of the provincial curriculum and the four key stages for program planning that encompass kindergarten to grade 12.
- She also outlined curriculum shifts in the following components:
 - Front matter
 - Essential graduation outcomes: as of 2015, competencies have been adopted
 - Specific curriculum outcomes: the number of these outcomes has been reduced to help students have meaningful learning
 - Elaborations
 - Assessment and evaluation
 - Resources: this component has been updated
 - Achievement indicators: these have been established to make sure learning is comparable across classrooms
 - Weighting and pacing guides: these have been added to provide information to teachers on how long to spend on certain aspects
 - Bloom's taxonomy: creativity has now been placed at the highest level
- CAMET competencies adopted in 2015 include citizenship, communication, personal-career development, creativity and innovation, critical thinking, and technological fluency.
- The five phases of curriculum development were outlined:
 - Phase 1 – Framework Development
 - Phase 2 – Curriculum Development
 - Phase 3 – Curriculum Implementation
 - Phase 4 – Curriculum Publication
 - Phase 5 – Curriculum Maintenance
- The process of curriculum design includes
 - Essential graduation competencies
 - General curriculum outcomes
 - Specific curriculum outcomes
 - Achievement indicators
- For classroom application, teachers develop instructional and assessment plans that allows them to make decisions about how to teach and assess students while meeting specific curriculum outcomes.
- Significant program developments include integrated curriculum, English language arts and integrated curriculum, intermediate curriculum delivery renewal, and flexible learning expansion.

These points were raised in the following discussion:

- The intermediate curriculum delivery renewal is focusing on the following:
 - Engaging and relevant curriculum
 - Increasing opportunities for teacher and student relationships by reducing the number of transitions for students in the day. This also gives more time to engage in coursework and materials. They are moving away from 40-45 minute blocks to 60 minutes blocks.
 - Transitioning away from number of minutes to percentage of day focused on a component. There will be flex time to meet individual school needs.
 - Working to make sure that each school has the staff and the curriculum ready for a shift in the program of studies.
 - Trying to build consistency across schools.

- It is a 3-year process, and the Department has started to implement some of these changes already.
- Outdoor curriculum and mental health
 - PE does have outdoor education components.
 - The Department is providing exemplars to teachers on how to use the environment for educational purposes.
 - The curriculum is in pilot this year with teachers. Students of piloting schools can expect to see this introduced in PE and health curriculum this year.
 - The curriculum on outdoor education and mental health have not been published yet. They will be published once implemented.
 - There was an in service for all k-12 teachers on mental health this year.
- Curriculum selection in high schools
 - Program of studies provides parameters that ensure graduation requirements are fulfilled.
 - Students register for courses, which are offered if numbers are high enough.
 - Any concerns around outdated courses or lack of access to courses of interest should be discussed with the school administration.
 - Flexible learning opportunities and online learning may help students access courses of interest not offered in their school.
 - It can take up to five years to update the curriculum for one course depending on the extent of the revisions.
- Involvement in setting priorities in curriculum development
 - The graduation requirements were reviewed back in 2016 and updated.
 - Consultations involved groups such as home and school, cultural associations, industry, and UPEI.
 - Students were not involved in the consultation process to update the graduation requirements.
 - Students were involved in the piloting and evaluation of the Bridge Ed Program.

COVID-19

- The DAC would like to know whether ventilation systems were tested with students in the school. There have been complaints about headaches, temperature, and heating/cooling. The DAC would also like to know whether the federal funding will be used to upgrade ventilation in schools.
 - **UPDATE: There are no plans at this time for any upgrades to ventilation systems related to the COVID federal funding.**
- The DAC would like a summary of how the federal funding for schools is being allocated across schools in PEI.
 - **UPDATE: This is being worked on, the allocations will be shared once this information becomes available.**
- The DAC would like to know whether the Department is looking at how end of year schools trips might proceed under COVID 19 parameters (for example, can schools go on cross-island tours and stay overnight at camps).
 - **UPDATE: The PSB has not yet begun to look at year end trips. Currently, we are following our own PSB guidelines for school field trips as well as following direction from the CPHO.**
- Water stations have now been installed in all schools in the Westisle family.
- The Department does have a plan for what would happen if schools need to close due to COVID. It is anticipated that there will be a joint DAC meeting, similar to the meeting at the start of the school year about school operational plans, at a later date.

School Food Program

- The presentation from the School Food Program Team on November 3 gave some context to the challenges that the program has had in the Westisle Family of Schools. It was helpful to know that the team is taking their feedback seriously in their roll out of a new menu in January.
- There are still issues with food quality, temperature, portions, and types of food served.
- The DAC would like to communicate that despite the declining uptake and issues the program is facing in their family of schools, they see the value of this program and are interested in seeing improvements to make it successful.

School Breakfast Programs

- Hernewood is looking to offer their breakfast program 3 days per week. The volunteers are in place to prepare food and have it delivered to classrooms.
- All the other schools in the Westisle family have their breakfast programs running. Many offer cold breakfast items 2-3 days per week, and hot breakfast items once a week. Some schools deliver items to classrooms for volunteers or teachers to distribute, while others have students pick items up at a table, depending on the layout of the school and age of the students.
- Distributing food in the classroom can be time consuming, and sometimes cuts into teaching time.
- Funding can be an issue for snack and breakfast programs. Members of the DAC offered to share information about funding and discounts they have received from organizations and suppliers.

October 6, 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 prefer to meet in person rather than through WebEx.
- The DAC would like to meet at least six times this year.
- The DAC will decide whether to have a group chair later.
- The DAC would like to be meaningfully consulted by government on key issues.
- The DAC would like to ensure that the issues discussed at the DAC meetings get to the Minister.
- The DAC would like to focus on how to improve the Westisle Family of Schools.
- Questions raised by members at DAC meetings will be addressed during the meeting or following the meeting and directed to the appropriate individual or group (i.e. Department, PSB, Minister).

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

- Some concerns were raised about music and sports programs in schools.
 - **UPDATE: The PSB values both sport and music programs in schools. Like other programs in schools, there have been adjustments made to comply with safety requirements from CPHO. Singing is permitted provided that masks are worn and people can maintain a 6 ft distance. Instruments are permitted, and depending on the instrument, certain provisions are in place to ensure student and staff safety.**
- Teachers are struggling with the limitations of school operational plans and the extra duty and cleaning requirements. Sustainability is a concern. There needs to be additional support for teachers.
- There is a lack of opportunities for parents to meet with teachers and the school community. Communication with parents has been a huge challenge. Facebook and email should not be the main ways to get information to parents. Texting would be a valuable tool.
- The cohort system is negatively affecting social lives of students, especially junior high students. Some students are becoming isolated due to the cohort system. There was no opportunity for students to bond with their cohort groups this year.
- Ordering and installation of water filling stations is taking too long. Parent Council has purchased a water filling station but has not been able to get it hooked up yet.
 - **UPDATE: Other schools on the Island are also experiencing delays in getting water filling stations installed.**
- It has been challenging to make breakfast and snack programs COVID friendly. The extra measures required put more pressure on teachers to distribute food. As a result, the breakfast programs have not started in most schools within the DAC.
- The current educational system is not designed for COVID. It is important now to be innovative and creative, and to re-think education models and structures. It is important to look at things like outdoor education. There is an opportunity for PEI to lead the way in taking this opportunity to change things.
- It is important to engage parents and let them know they can voice concerns to make changes that will benefit families, schools and communities.
- The Healthy Lunch program has started. There are concerns about the quality of food.

Topics for discussion for the upcoming school year

- School Curriculum
 - The current model of school was created for past conditions.
 - There needs to be updates to the curriculum and course offerings to reflect current issues like climate change, new jobs, treaty rights, etc.

- The curriculum should address loss of culture within schools by inspiring Island culture and heritage through music and storytelling.
- Addressing Diversity
 - This is related to school curriculum
 - PEI has become a very diverse culture. There needs to be some uncomfortable conversations about racism.
- Mental Health
 - This needs to be addressed at the junior and senior high levels.
 - There needs to be more support for student and teacher mental health (i.e. safe spaces, teaching stress coping strategies)
- Psych Ed Assessments
 - Students with learning disabilities are waiting too long to get tested, and as a result, cannot read.
 - What is the current wait time for Psych Ed Assessments?
- Absenteeism
 - Absenteeism is increasing. We need to determine why this is happening and how to address it.
- Roles of Principals
 - The mandate of principals is to help teachers and to grow and invest in them.
 - However, with increasing responsibilities, this is challenging for principals to accomplish.
- School maintenance
- Communication
 - Establish better communication and building trust between parents, schools and department.