

November 5, 2013
Programs & Human Resources Committee

1. OPENING

The first Programs & Human Resources Committee meeting of the Newfoundland & Labrador English School Board was held by on Wednesday, November 5, 2013. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by the Chair, Milton Peach.

Members present: Fred Douglas, Chair
Milton Peach, Board Chair
Gary Baikie (Teleconference)
Goronwy Price
John McCarthy
Eric Snow
Rick Martin

Regrets: Kim Cheeks

Also in attendance: Darrin Pike, CEO/Director of Education
Jeff Thompson, Associate Director of Education
Gerald Buffett, Assistant Director of Education, Human Resources
Heather Hillier, Senior Administrative Officer
Elaine Forma, Administrative Assistant, Human Resources

The Chair, Fred Douglas, welcomed the trustees and staff to the meeting and thanked all for making the time to attend the first Programs and Human Resources Committee meeting of NLESD.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

MOTION: Moved by Eric Snow, seconded by Rick Martin, and carried unanimously that the agenda be adopted as presented.

3. CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

There were no minutes as this was the first meeting of the Programs and Human Resources Committee.

4. BUSINESS ARISING

No business arising.

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Terms of Reference- Roles and Responsibilities of Programs & Human Resources Committee

The Programs and Human Resources Committee was presented with a draft of the new Terms of Reference by the Chair. It outlined the areas of responsibility and matters for which the committee will make recommendations to the Board of Trustees of the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District.

Gerald Buffett indicated that the tabled draft has been prepared based upon consultation with the governing documents of each of the Labrador, Western, Nova Central and Eastern School Districts, The Schools Act, including by-laws and previous terms of reference.

The Chair appreciated the work that has gone into this document in a very short period of time.

Trustee Price commented on Item #3 of the Specific Responsibilities and how the committee would contribute to the Board's Strategic Plan. The CEO indicated that the Strategic Plan is board wide and not a Programs and Human Resources function. The Chair indicated that some of the dialogue at committee meetings might be helpful in developing the Board's Strategic Plan, specifically as it relates to Programs and Human Resources.

With regards to Item #3 of the Specific Responsibilities, Trustee Baikie suggested the addition of the word "retention" so that it reads "Ensure processes are in place to support recruitment, retention, and selection of staff,....". All were in agreement with this change.

MOTION: Moved by Rick Martin, seconded by John McCarthy, and carried unanimously that the Programs and Human Resources Committee recommend to the Board, approval of the Terms of Reference as tabled at the November 5, 2013 meeting of the Programs and Human Resources Committee of the Board.

5.2 Inventory of Policy by Division

The Chair presented the committee with the list of Programs and Human Resources Policies across the former School Districts that will need to be consolidated. He noted that the document in the package has been updated from what was originally emailed to the committee on November 1, 2013 so that it prioritizes those policies which are most significant and need to be addressed first.

Jeff Thompson outlined that it is our objective to cover off as many policies as possible during the first year. However, due to the work involved in the more complex policies where consultation may be required, it will not be possible to work on all policies. Therefore, the decision was made to work on those policies which can be done relatively quickly.

A discussion was held around how we will ensure that new policies accurately reflect the needs of the province as a whole. It was stated that in consolidating these policies we are merging the best practices from the predecessor boards and will have reasonable representation from all four regions. Most of these existing policies would have been well established and included consultation of the various stakeholders when first created. The CEO confirmed that no policies will be worked on here that have not previously gone out for consultation from the previous boards.



The Chair indicated that there is no recommendation on this point as it is for information purposes only. This process needs to be fluid as there may be ongoing changes to the order of importance in the policy list.

5.3 Consideration of Draft Programs Policy – Volunteers in Schools

The Programs and Human Resources Committee reviewed the Volunteers in Schools draft policy. This was presented by Mr. Jeff Thompson and outlines the appropriate procedures to be followed when placing volunteers in schools. It has been prepared based upon consolidation of the applicable policies and procedures of the four predecessor school boards.

There was a discussion around how we can ensure that these measures are being followed. It was noted that while we can't be absolutely sure, this is something we can follow up on. The CEO noted that we could set up a tracking system but it is still up to principals to ensure the policy is followed. Trustee McCarthy proposed an audit system which was well received. In the end, we can only make sure that our principals are aware of the policy and the importance of following the policy.

There was also discussion surrounding the practicality of this policy in some smaller communities, especially the ease of obtaining a Certificate of Conduct, and the effect it would have on our schools. There would also be a shortage of volunteers if the policy was too restrictive.

A discussion was held regarding whether we would require a Code of Conduct from all volunteers or just those in Medium and High Risk settings and how often we would require renewal of the Code of Conduct. Trustee Price indicated concerns with the interpretation of the Code of Conduct and what is allowable. It remains a judgment call.

It was decided that a Code of Conduct would only be required for those volunteers in Medium and High Risk settings.

After further discussion on what would be an acceptable practice, it was decided that a Code of Conduct for volunteers in Medium and High risk settings would be required every two years. All volunteers would be required to complete a Criminal Offense Declaration every year.

MOTION: Moved by Goronwy Price, seconded by John McCarthy, and carried unanimously that the Programs and Human Resources Committee recommend to the Board, approval of the Volunteers in Schools Policy as tabled at the November 5, 2013 meeting of the Programs and Human Resources Committee of the Board.

5.4 Consideration of Draft Human Resources Policy – Respectful Workplace

The Programs and Human Resources Committee reviewed the Respectful Workplace draft policy. This was presented by Gerald Buffett and outlines the conditions for a respectful working environment for all employees of NLESD, including unionized, non-unionized, and management employees, as well as all post-secondary students on work-terms and internships.

It has been prepared based upon consolidation of the applicable policies and procedures of the four predecessor school boards and from the harassment and discrimination policy of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.



Gerald walked through each section of the policies indicating the former district that it was taken from. He noted that as already discussed, we wanted to take the best from each of the previous policies. He also noted that there has been ongoing litigation with regards to Respectful Workplaces and stressed the importance of this policy in terms of ensuring NLESD is not left open to future litigation.

There was discussion regarding the words "inappropriate" in bulleted items 1, 2, and 4 under the definitions of Harassment. Gerald indicated that this word is not included in government policy. It was agreed that the word would be removed.

There was also discussion regarding the word "offensive" in bulleted item 3 under the definitions of Harassment. It was decided that legal advice would be sought prior to removing this word.

MOTION: **Moved by Gary Baikie, seconded by Eric Snow, and carried unanimously that the Programs and Human Resources Committee recommend to the Board, approval of the Respectful Workplace Policy as tabled at the November 5, 2013 meeting of the Programs and Human Resources Committee of the Board.**

The next meeting will be held November 23, 2013, subject to final confirmation.

6. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

