



**March 5, 2016**

*Programs & Human Resources Committee*

**1. OPENING**

The Programs & Human Resources Committee meeting of the Newfoundland & Labrador English School Board was held on Saturday, March 5, 2016. The meeting was called to order at 12:45 by the Chair, Fred Douglas.

Members present: Fred Douglas, Chair  
Newman Harris  
Guy Elliott  
Eric Snow  
George Sheppard

Regrets: Kim Cheeks  
Don Brown

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

The Chair, Fred Douglas, welcomed the trustees and staff and thanked everyone for making the time to attend the meeting.

**2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**MOTION:** Moved by George Sheppard, seconded by Newman Harris, and carried unanimously that the agenda be adopted as presented.

**3. CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES**

**MOTION:** Moved by Guy Elliott, seconded by Eric Snow, and carried unanimously that the minutes of the January 23, 2016 Programs and Human Resources Committee meeting be adopted as presented.

#### **4. BUSINESS ARISING**

No business arising.

#### **5. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **5.1. Promotion of Positive Mental Health**

Mr. Jeff Thompson provided a brief introduction to the topic and highlighted its connection to the Safe and Caring Schools goal of the District's strategic plan. He indicated the presentation will have three components: 1) the District focus and work from a Programs Division perspective, 2) the District focus from a Human Resources Division perspective, and 3) a focus on some work at the National level.

Ms. Heather Hillier, Senior Administrative Officer, provided an overview of the work of the District's Mental Health Working Group and shared the focus areas for 2015-16 in a draft background paper on the topic. The District has done an environmental scan of the activities/initiatives schools are using to promote positive mental health and has partnered with Dr. Stan Kutcher from Dalhousie University who is an internationally recognized expert in this area. In addition to providing training on Mental Health First Aid for our school principals, efforts are going into identifying research supported programs/initiatives that schools can use to support their work in this area. As well, efforts are going into exploring modules that can be adopted into the health program in K-6 and in intermediate and high schools.

From a national level perspective Jeff indicated that this is a priority topic for school jurisdictions across Canada. Some school districts (i.e., Ontario and British Columbia) seem to be further ahead on this matter because of intense work over the last number of years. For example, in Ontario every school district has a Mental Health Coach that supports a Mental Health Leadership team to proactively implement a number of strategies and initiatives. However, the work being done in our District certainly positions us in the middle of the pack so to speak. As our work with the Mental Health Working Group continues, we'll become even better positioned to promote positive mental health.

Mr. Gerald Buffett provided an update on the work being done within the Human Resources Division. The District currently has 14 of its Human Resource staff trained on Mental Health First Aid by the Mental Health Commission of Canada program. This program has a focus on educating, identifying signs, supporting and reducing the stigma associated with mental health problems. The Human resources team is working daily with our 8500 + employees and having this Mental Health First Aid expertise is invaluable in supporting and informing our employees.

**6.** The next meeting will be held April 16, 2016 or at the call of the Chair.

#### **7. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 1:45pm. Motion to adjourn by Newman Harris.