

November 1, 2017
Programs & Human Resources Committee

1. OPENING

The Programs & Human Resources Committee meeting of the Newfoundland & Labrador English School Board was held on Wednesday, November 1, 2017. The Chair, Kevin Ryan, called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m. He welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Members present: Kevin Ryan, Committee Chair
John George
Jennifer Aspell
Scott Burden
Lester Simmons
John Smith
Bruce Cluney
Hilary Primmer

Regrets: Hayward Blake

Also in attendance: Tony Stack, Director of Education (Interim)
Lloyd Collins, Assistant Director of Education, Human Resources
Lucy Warren, Associate Director of Education (Programs) (Acting)
Cathy Martin, Administrative Assistant, Programs

Prior to the adoption of the agenda Trustee John Smith asked to add School Council Elections to the agenda. A vote was taken and the motion was carried. (John Smith/Lester Simmons)

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

MOTION: Moved by Bruce Cluney, seconded by John Scott, and carried unanimously that the agenda be adopted as presented with the addition of Item 5.4.

3. CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

MOTION: Moved by John George, seconded by Scott Burden, and carried unanimously that the minutes of the September 13, 2017 Programs and Human Resources Committee meeting be adopted as presented.

4. Business Arising

4.1. Political Activity Policy Discussion Guide

The Committee agreed the Political Activity Policy needed further discussion. Lucy Warren will prepare a draft Political Activity Policy document highlighting the parts that need further clarification then engage in a discussion. The Committee requested a Working Session Meeting for Sunday, November 25, 2017.

5. New Business

5.1. Human Resources Update

Mr. Lloyd Collins provided an update on the following:

- Now conducting Occupational Health & Safety Committee Training during our schools' closeout days for Professional Development. Christine Harte-Power is working on OH & S policies. Committee to review at our next meeting before moving forward to the Board.
- Back at the table on Monday, November 6 2017 with NLTA in Provincial Bargaining.
- A draft policy on Condolences in the case of the passing of staff members, trustees and/or family members of the same will be tabled for consideration at the next meeting.

5.2. Grade 9 Math – CDLI

The Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI) has traditionally offered high school courses. The organization's original mandate was to provide access to core subject academic and honors courses for students in small and/or remote schools. Over time, CDLI has enhanced its high school course offerings to include electives in areas such as music, art, and skilled trades. This has enabled students in small/remote schools to avail of courses in specialty areas they could not access otherwise.

Declining student enrolments in most rural areas have resulted in smaller schools. The inherent challenge with that is providing the teacher expertise that is needed to address all subject areas, particularly in junior high, as the number of students, and subsequently, teachers, decline. One area of particular concern is Grade 9 Mathematics. It is well known that mathematics is the subject area that creates the most challenges for students in junior and senior high. Our achievement data confirms that the majority of students identified as being academically at-risk experience difficulty with math. The Grade 9 Mathematics course includes key foundational concepts and skills that equip students to be successful in the senior high courses. Consequently, grade nine is a critical year for students to have a highly-qualified mathematics teacher. However, in small schools with a few staff members that level of expertise may not always be available.

Thirty-seven schools in the District have eight students or less in Grade 9 this year. Twenty of the schools have less than five students. In schools with such small numbers, it is likely that some of the teachers assigned to Grade 9 Mathematics may not have a high level of training in the subject. Thus, it is likely that grade nine students in some of the schools could benefit from accessing their math course through CDLI.

The suggested next step is to survey principals and school councils in the thirty-seven schools identified to seek feedback on the proposal of Grade 9 Mathematics being offered through CDLI.

5.3. Early French Immersion: Sacred Heart Academy, Marystown

Ms. Lucy Warren shared an overview of Marystown School System – Early French Immersion that she had presented earlier to the Canadian Parents for French and the School Council of Sacred Heart Academy. There are concerns in Marystown about the numbers for Early French Immersion at Sacred Heart Academy. French Immersion program is optional, approved by the Department of Education. Retention rate in French Immersion overall is around 60% -70% but lower retention rates are occurring in the Marystown School system. The problem is that with a lower population trend in Marystown their overall enrollment has gone down. Eleven students currently signed up for this year's French Immersion program, will require dedicated resources for the next 13 years. District has approved LFI Kinderstart to go ahead and a decision on the viability of the class will be made in the Spring.

Intent was to expose the Committee to this situation and illuminate the potential need for policy direction from the Board going forward. Parents are asking us to identify a number for a feasible French class.

5.4. School Council Election

Trustee Smith raised the issue of School Council Elections and would like to see a policy in place with a set of guidelines for principals.

MOTION: Moved by John Smith, seconded by Kevin Ryan, and carried unanimously that the Programs and Human Resources Committee could look at preparing a draft policy on School Council Elections.

6. The next meeting will be held at the call of the Chair. It was decided that the Programs and Human Resources Committee would hold a Working Session at the next Executive meeting on November 25, 2017.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 1:40 pm. Motion to adjourn by Bruce Cluney