

Colonel Gray Family of Schools District Advisory Council

Second meeting topics

21st century skills

- Let's focus on creating curiosity within the learner with engaged lessons
- Create a culture of learning—what do we consider?
- The curriculum has to be reviewed to include multi-disciplinary approach
- We need learning environments that suit 21st Century learner. For example: technology incorporated into every lesson
- A shift from knowledge-based instruction to more problem-based, task-based learning to promote higher-level skill development
- We have an opportunity to become innovators and agents of change to move from traditional approaches of program delivery

Recognize need to re-organize distribution of students

- Consider age of building in conjunction with considerable decline in enrolment as criteria to reorganize schools
- It is difficult to be creative/flexible/adaptable when dealing with over-population and building challenges
- Explore programs to help with overcrowding issues such as introducing mid-French Immersion for feeder schools
- Adequate staffing, resources and class composition issues need to be considered when reorganizing schools
- Effective allocation of resources – Can the re-allocation of student population achieve this?
- There must be political will for change

Curriculum, assessments and scheduling

- Continued support and resources for Progress Monitoring
- We need to foster a culture where “good” is not good enough
- We need more project-based learning experiences and enrichment opportunities for all learners
- Is the focus on assessment taking away creativity and enjoyment of learning, particularly for the younger children?
- Desire to look at other models of the school day, time-tabling and school calendar. Pilot different models
- Math should be taken as a full-year course

- Curriculum and instruction that includes teamwork, project-based, engaging – not just memorizing work

Transitions: Ensuring school system prepares students from one level to the next

- Prepare students to compete in post-secondary institute of their choice
- Ensure feeder schools will have programs available to them such as Late French Immersion and band despite declining enrolments
- Academic standards need to be clear and there needs to be consistency in academic expectations from school to school

Student Wellness and Engagement

- #1 concern is anxiety and mental health. More training and resources needed for teachers in dealing with anxiety and mental health e.g. mindfulness strategies
- Provide teachers with the tools to engage with innovations in pedagogy
- Stress to get good marks – more focus on getting the marks to go to university than on learning
- More hands-on activities and group work to make school more engaging
- High achievers need to have more challenging work and enrichment activities
- Parents needs skills and resources to act on their role in creating/dealing with anxiety of their own child
- Enforce the school nutrition policies as set out by the Healthy Eating Alliance

Other:

- P.E.I. is a small province. Education system is small. It could be excellent
- Consideration of school trips/extra-curricular when planning PD days
- Structure PD in a way that's effective for teachers and students (new model, maybe first week of school is PD, last two days before Christmas)

First meeting themes

- Student Wellness and Engagement- Mental health a huge issue, especially the effects of anxiety. There is a lot of pressure on students during exams and there is a great need to help students develop coping skills for stress and anxiety in their lives.
- Transitions: want government and teachers to ensure that the curriculum that is delivered to our children in the school system on P.E.I. challenges and prepares them to compete in the universities of their choice, and the global economy that they will be entering upon graduation
- Scheduling: desire to look at other models of school day, time-tabling, schedules, etc.

- 21st century learning: let's focus on creating curiosity within the learner through engaged lessons. We need to develop a flexible, adaptable system that allows students to understand why they are learning.
- Rezoning: there is a need to consider rezoning and some school closures. Stonepark has 790 students. Birchwood has 212.

Learning environments

- School buildings need to be more accessible in the evenings and on the weekends.
- How can our neighbourhoods be engaged with the school spaces that supplement the learning of the community with the investment of our province in life-long learning?
- Storm days – start one week earlier and if no storm days, finish school earlier. Consider solutions to deal with instruction missed, as a result of storm days. Student attendance must be monitored.

Programming for student differences

- Class composition issue for high achieving students who get bored waiting for others. Need learners to be self-regulated and self-initiated. There are no Enrichment programs in Elementary.
- Montessori Method provides individualized programming for each student – we have tried to create a system one size fits all.
- Concerns around students being pulled out of class for resource support.
- There is a great need for support for E.A.L. students.
- There is a great need for mental health support in schools.

Assessments

- There is a curiosity crisis in the school system because students have to focus on assessment.
- Disappointing that students are still doing tests on memorizing definitions – exams should require understanding the concept. Is assessment about getting the mark or absorbing the information? There seems to be a disconnect between the learning and the marks. If we want to test cognitive skills, we need assessments that look different to test student's problem solving skills.
- The middle of the semester would be a better time for assessments – if students are found to be struggling early, then help can be focused on those students.

Curriculum

- Students in the I.B. program work on assignments throughout the year which helps students focus on learning rather than marks. I.B. teachers provide feedback on draft projects for student learning, then mark the final project.
- Students want to be more informed about the outcomes of the curriculum.
- Curriculum needs to be more project oriented and group work. Teacher librarians are important to support project-based learning.

- What supports are in place for high-achievers? Need a curriculum so that students can complete at the universities of their choice. An interest for a knowledge exchange being established with other schools and/or Home & Schools to share knowledge of co-curricular funding activities that are available.

Student wellness and engagement

- There is a lot of pressure on students for marks, to succeed in high-stakes assessments. Grade 11 math assessment created high pressure. During exam week there is a large amount of pressure for students.
- In grade 12, students are trying to get their grades up to get accepted into the university of their choice. One-on-one conferencing between students and teachers provides an opportunity for discussion on outcomes, how the student is learning and what the student needs to learn.

Parent wellness and engagement

- Parents need support to help their children develop coping skills. Competition is a fact of life – students should be taught to be resilient enough to handle the stress without having it affect their health.
- Parents want to know what type of continuing education and learning occurs at PD days, in the form of information sessions or updates before or after the events are held.