

2017-18 DAC members

Chandler Gard (Westisle Student rep), Ashton Grigg (Westisle Student rep), Teena Callaghan (Tignish Elementary), Doug Lyon (M.E. Callaghan), Kelly Shea-Rayner (Hernewood), Ellen Rennie (Alberton Elementary), Gwen Clements/Jason Ramsay (Bloomfield Elementary), Sherri Roberts (Westisle Composite High), Jennifer Perry (St Louis Elementary), Jeannie Burden (O'Leary Elementary), Paula Walfield (Ellerslie Elementary)

Monday, May 7, 2018, Westisle Composite High School

Ministerial DAC meeting Three Oaks and Westisle DAC

Present: Hon. Minister Jordan Brown, Deputy Minister Susan Willis, Doug Lyon, Ellen Rennie, Jason Ramsay, Kelly Shea-Rayner, Teena Callaghan, Chandler Gard, Leigh Dymont, Jeff Nichols, Julie Hogan, Marilyn Campbell
Regrets: Jeannie Burden, Jacqueline Lecky.

Discussion and Outcomes

Three Oaks priorities:

Student Supports

- DAC members feel the current EA allocation is not meeting the needs of students.
- They would like to see an increase in EAs, especially in the early grades.
- More resources in the early foundational years, could mean a reduction in the resources needed in the later grades.
- Teachers and parents are noticing increases in mental health issues and behaviours as well as lower language skills in the early grades.
- DAC members would also like to see reduced wait time to Psych-Ed assessments.
- The Minister spoke about how 3 more school psychologists have just been hired, with 2 more to be hired for September.
- It is anticipated that within the next 2.5 years, the wait time for assessments will be reduced to 1 year maximum.
- The Deputy Minister spoke of new investments in assistive technology, with 2 more staff added in that area.
- Some possible solutions raised to address student support:
 - Tutors in schools, and dedicated substitutes for schools, who can tutor on days not needed to substitute.
 - Ensure that the tools recommended by assessors are available and staff are trained to use them.
 - A Resource Expo, where teachers and EAs share their experiences and best practices.
- The Minister noted that the PD days are opportunities for grade level exchange and a chance to learn how to use new tools.
- Peer Helpers program to have older students mentor younger ones in literacy, math, etc. If this was linked to bursary hours, there may be more uptake. KISH and Queen Elizabeth have a program similar to this, and it has been very successful. DM Willis suggested it could be part of the Gr 10 volunteer requirement.

Early years assessments

- They currently follow the vaccination schedule, but there is a gap from 18 months to 4 years and there was discussion about adding an assessment during this time.
- Parents are sent a checklist from Public Health of things to look for, but if parents don't raise a concern or make an appointment, that child does not get further assessed.
- If parents do not do the at-home assessment, the child does not receive interventions.
- Progress Monitoring:
 - It was suggested to start with a cohort in Kindergarten that uses PM throughout K to 12.
 - If teachers start early and it is kept up to date, it would be less work to keep current.
 - One member suggested Progress Monitoring could be a tool for identifying needs and allocating resources, as it provides a fuller picture of the student.
 - One member who used Progress Monitoring in the 80s said it was a great way to identify deficits and see where resources were needed, but it was a lot of work to maintain.
- Parent engagement with at-home reading in the early years:
 - One member spoke about how work, sports, travel time, screen time all take time away from one-on-one reading at bedtime and basics 'at the kitchen table'.
 - Minister Brown spoke of new resources that encourage parents to place their child in an early learning centre, which could lead to better reading outcomes.
- The members agreed that if more spots were created at early learning centres, children would receive foundational learning, and parents could return to work/enter the workforce.
- Minister Brown said there are major investments made this year to increase access to high quality child care programs.

Digital Citizenship

- The Three Oaks DAC would like to see a policy on Internet usage, and education for both students and parents about being a good digital citizen i.e. living your online life with the same moral code that you do/should in your real life.
- Parents want a strategy to talk to their students about their online life, as well as a curriculum piece for in-school support of these messages.
- Minister Brown indicated that Department staff have been receiving training in this area and are working to branch it out to other staff as well.
- One member noted that this is like the new sex ed. Once considered a parent domain, it is now taught in schools to help students make good choices.

School Food

- Many students in this District come to school hungry, and are supported by breakfast and lunch programs and teacher donations.
- There is a lack of consistency in programs, some schools have many volunteers and no resources, and some have a lot of money and food, but no volunteers to run the program.
- This DAC would like a consistent model of food provision and delivery for all Island schools.
- They support the work of Morgan Palmer on how to get more local food into schools, and would like to see her work continue.

Westisle DAC priorities:

Transportation

- Some students, including K-3 students, spend up to 3 hours a day on a bus.
 - The transportation subcommittee meeting discussed adding a new bus route to reduce travel times.
 - This idea was supported with research on possible routes and shared with the Public Schools Branch.
 - The second issue of late busses was identified as way to allow more students to participate in extracurricular activity.
 - A student DAC member survey, indicated that a high number of respondents would participate in extracurricular activities if there was a late bus.
 - This was also costed out and the Public Schools Branch is examining the possibilities. It is hoped there will be some known outcomes for these issues by end of the school year.
- There was discussion about how budgets for extra-curricular bussing impact students in this District. Deputy Willis said this is an issue in all Districts.
- School budgets cannot support all activities, and administrations rely on fundraising to bridge the gap.
- There was a suggestion to reach out to the Department of Rural and Regional Development to examine possible funding to address some of these transportation issues.
- DAC members would like a position in this District to oversee transportation in this area. Members feel that decisions based in Summerside are not close enough to their communities.
- The discussion turned to the cost of referees and officials for sports events. It was suggested to reach out to PEISAA about training local officials so the cost of travel could be reduced.

Choice in Courses

- DAC members feel that if the high school schedule was amended to 5 classes a day, students could have more electives and more exposure to different areas of interest.
- Mitch Murphy is coming to the next DAC meeting to discuss this with the membership.
- Current curriculum is 110 hours, and a 5 period day would be 90 hours. A 5-period day would require curriculum overhauls, and it may mean additional courses to make up lost class time.
- The Minister said they are looking into this issue, and developing some potential new models, including half credit courses.

Support for Student Well-being Teams

- DAC members are thankful the Student well-being team is in their District.
- They feel that dedicated administrative person could allow the clinical team lead to focus solely on cases and not administration.
- They presented a letter of support and request for further resources allocated to the SWB teams.

April 30th, 2018 at Westisle Composite High

Discussion and Outcomes

School Calendar

- Members are concerned about the value of PD and Union days during the school year, and its impact on the school calendar, student learning and consistency.
- There are few months where students have full week of school.
- This also puts a burden on families to provide child care while the students have the day off and parents are working.
- One member provided some research on other Canadian jurisdictions and how they handle PD and other school days off.
- This will provide a jumping off point for further discussions on how to possibly re-align the school calendar on PEI to better keep the learner at the center.

Transportation Subcommittee

- Members of the Transportation Subcommittee reported the outcomes of the meeting held on April 13th to address the concerns re: long bus rides and after school bus runs.
- The PSB has received the input and suggestions and is working to see how to meet the needs identified.
- There was acknowledgement that if the late bus run is approved, it will take some time to build traction and usage.
- Should it be approved, there will need to be a marketing plan encouraging use by students and parents.

Policy Input

- Members were reminded to send any input on the Safe and Caring Schools, Community Use of Schools and the School Cancellation Policies to the PSB.
- A member expressed the desire to have the opportunity to discuss policies at the DAC table and formulate responses as a group.
- In future, when timing is in favour, policy input will be discussed at the DAC meetings.

Report Card Review

- Report Card review is coming in the Fall. Members were asked to start thinking about what they would like to see on a report card and the information they value.
- They were encouraged to save the upcoming report cards to use as templates for the Fall consultation.
- All members indicated that they would like to see more meaningful and concrete feedback on both where they are succeeding and where they could focus some effort.
- They would also like a more robust picture of their child as a whole.

Student Choice and Transitions

- Every effort will be made to ensure there is a Dept. representative at the next meeting to discuss student choice.

- This led into a conversation about student transitions and lack of continuity of teachers in the classroom.
- One member related how her child has had 6 new teachers this year.
- At a time when transitions and consistency are both identified as areas of focus, it seems unfair to students to not have a consistent teacher all year.
- Another example mentioned is a teacher transitioning out of the classroom during the school year to begin work at the Branch or Department, leaving the students to deal with several substitutes for the remainder of the year. Members do not feel this is learner-centered.
- A better staffing and HR model needs to be in place that keeps the learner at the center of all classroom decisions.

Ministerial Meeting

The members discussed and chose their priorities to present to Minister Jordan Brown on May 7th. They will focus on:

- Transportation
- Student Choice
- They will also offer their support to Three Oaks priorities of school food and Student In-School Supports (Earlier intervention and allocation of resources).

February 6th, 2018 at Westisle Composite High

Discussion and Outcomes

Transportation/Bussing

- Parker Grimmer, Director of the Public School Branch and John Cummings, Director of Corporate Services PSB attended this section of the meeting to discuss transportation concerns with the DAC members.
- There is a DAC request to examine the idea of an express route for the longest riders.
- Members will gather information on potential partnerships and/or resource allocation to add additional runs after school.
- Creation of a Transportation Working Group including members of the DAC, District bus drivers, District principals, Branch staff and other identified stakeholders to address transportation and bussing issues in the District, and create solutions that will work for all students in the Westisle District.
- Have a plan in place for September that will address some of the transportation needs and concerns in the District.

5v4 classes per day

- Draft a letter to be sent to the Department of Education, Early Learning and Culture supporting the membership's view that 5 periods per school day would offer better learning for high school students and allow for more student choice in course selection, especially for students in French Immersion.

CEO

- Draft a letter to the Department of Education, Early Learning and Culture outlining concerns with the current format and teaching of CEO and its designation as a graduation requirement.

Student Well-being

- Lorna Hutt, SWB Clinical Lead in the Westisle District, presented on the progress of the SWB team.
- Members will draft a letter of support for the SWB team and their desire for additional supports in their District, including an additional mental health counsellor per team with a focus on behavior, as well as dedicated administration support for each team.

School Calendar

- Consider requesting at a DAC member sit on the School Calendar committee to advocate for change.

Nov 2, 2017, Westisle Composite High School

Discussion and Outcomes

Role of the DAC

- The role of the District Advisory Council, including the mandate and responsibilities, as well as the term appointments and process for the appointments were reviewed, and support material shared.

Student Well-being Team in Westisle District

- The Westisle team has to date seen just over 40 clients since its inception in September, with referrals still coming in.
- The overall feeling from staff and clients is positive that this demonstration continue its model of service.
- DAC members requested a presentation from the SWB team about the process and progress.

Class Time length

- DAC members would like to develop in a plan supported by students, parents, teachers and administrators to pilot a 5 period day, as a way to increase student course choice and schedule flexibility.
- A Westisle student rep is planning to organize a student debate as part of one of his classes to see what the students would think about this initiative.

Graduation Requirements

- Discussion surrounded CEO and Wellness as graduation requirements. Questions included:
 - Is there any data that supports the need for these to be required?
 - What was the rationale for making them graduation requirements?
 - Are there any measured outcomes?

Policy Input

- DAC members cited the recent PSB call for public input on the School Suspension Policy as an opportunity missed for DAC members to offer advice and input.
- The process could be reviewed to include the DAC voices before the public ask.

Transportation

- Bussing remains a high priority for this DAC.
- The concerns raised include:
 - not enough drivers, need for more level B drivers,
 - bussing to extra-curricular activities and
 - offering late bus runs to allow students to participate in after school programs.
- The Engagement Officer suggested a meeting between the DAC and Transportation staff at the PSB to discuss these priorities and concerns.