

Superintendent's Report Le rapport du surintendant Asset Aknutmaq



Monthly report to the Board

Sept. 27, 2017

It is my pleasure to welcome students and their families back to school this September. As I write this, we have 6,335 students registered and are expecting approximately 150 international students. Welcome back to staff, School Advisory Council (SAC) members, volunteers and all those who make our school system a great place!!

I had a wonderful experience at the Acadia First Nations Pow Wow on Sept. 9. The day was filled with celebration, laughter, music, dance and song. The community opened its celebration to all and the inclusive nature of the day's events was very powerful. I highly recommend attending a Pow Wow in our local community.



Teachers have their first Collaborative Learning Team meeting on Sept. 27. This professional learning structure is made up of small groups of teachers working together to discuss curriculum, examine teaching techniques and review student data. This work leads to improved learning and supports for students.

I would like to invite all SAC members to a workshop on the evening of Nov. 7 at Forest Heights Community School. This workshop will build on the two sessions from last school year, with a focus on building capacity of SAC members. I look forward in seeing you there!

The SSRSB Chair, Mr. Payzant and I spoke at the Bridgewater Chamber of Commerce this month. We provided general information to the Chamber on our school system. The attendees were particularly interested in the use of school facilities and the idea of co-location of services for community, youth and their families.

This month I met with the Bridgewater Chief of Police and RCMP Staff Sergeants to review the new Nova Scotia Provincial School Police protocol. This is a signed agreement

between Boards and police outlining roles and responsibilities of our partnership.

The Provincial Student Attendance and Engagement Policy was released by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development this month to be implemented Oct. 1. Principals have discussed the implementation of the policy and will be communicating their expectations to students and parents in the coming weeks. Visit www.ednet.ns.ca/student-attendance-and-engagement-policy for more information.

Parents/guardians, please ensure your civic address and other family information and demographics are accurate at your home school(s). If a change in address or contact information occurs, it is very helpful for us to have that update as soon as possible.

Orange Shirt Day falls on Sept. 30.

This is an important day to bring increased attention and awareness to the history and impact of the residential school system in



Canada. Between 1870 and 1996 more than 150,000 First Nations, Inuit and Metis children were taken from their homes to attend these schools with the expressed purposes of assimilating Indigenous children into mainstream culture. Children were not permitted to practice traditional spiritual and cultural beliefs, and physical, emotional and sexual abuse were common. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission highlights the importance of education and reconciliation for all Canadians. More information is available at www.orangeshirtday.org/.

As we move into October, I want to recognize Mi'kmaq Heritage Month and First Nations communities in our school board. Please join celebrations/ceremonies as you are able.

Scott Milner, Superintendent of Schools



Celebrate Attendance Awareness Month!

September is Attendance Awareness Month.

The Province of Nova Scotia's Attendance Policy was released on Sept. 20 to go into effect on Oct. 1. Its main messages are that student absenteeism is an area of growing concern. More than 25 per cent of students miss 16 or more days of school each year. Attendance is a priority because any time a student misses class, it is a missed opportunity to learn. The policy sets clear expectations for students and families without adding to the workload of teachers.

We all know the importance regular attendance plays in achieving success. Two SSRSB schools - Chester District School and Dr. John C. Wickwire Academy have done considerable work over the past while to improve attendance. After analyzing research, data, patterns and long-term studies, they implemented clear communication strategies

with students and their parents/guardians showing the impact missed days have on achievement. As well, after a certain number of absences, an "attendance team" works with the student and their parents/guardians using a caring, supportive approach. The schools also work with parents/guardians on ways they can help. These techniques have been effective and research is continuing so that further improvements can be seen.

Strategies for improving attendance include:

- building positive relationships with each student and their family
- effectively communicating with parents/guardians
- recognizing and reinforcing good and improved attendance
- strategically emphasizing attendance at key points throughout the year

Did you know? The SSRSB operates and maintains 106 school buses.

Winner of the 2017 Nova Scotia Council of the Federation Literacy Award

One of the South Shore's own is the recipient of the Nova Scotia Council of the Federation Literacy Award!

Jocelyne Boutilier was recognized for her outstanding achievement and excellence in literacy. An amazing feat for a young parent who struggled through most of her early years taking care of her three younger brothers and raising two children of her own. As a result of the heavy obligations she was under, Jocelyne had to leave high school. She hoped to return, but began losing confidence in herself and her ability to complete her education.

Despite this, Jocelyne decided to enroll at the Lunenburg County Adult High in Bridgewater. With the support of her teachers, her dedication and strong work ethic, she excelled. Now she holds her high school diploma and was accepted into three highly competitive nursing programs. She received an entrance scholarship to attend Dalhousie University's nursing program, where she is now enrolled.

"It's such an honour to be recognized for my efforts," said Jocelyne. "I never dreamed I would receive a diploma or attend university.

I have to thank my teachers who were so supportive of me and encouraged me every step of the way!"

Honourable
Labi Kousoulis
presenting
award to
Jocelyne



together
against bullying

together...we can accomplish great things!

A great show of support was seen across the region for our first **together** campaign - **together: against bullying**.

The concept of the **together** campaign is that by deliberately working together we can do anything we collectively put our minds to - such as standing against bullying.

Although too numerous to include every one, we received pictures from many of our schools, teachers and students showing how they stand against bullying and show “togetherness”.

Many anti-bullying activities were held and pictures/highlights were posted around social media using the hashtag #togetherSSRSB. An event was held at the Board office to announce the launch of the ***together*** campaign and many children from Small World Learning Centre came, looking great in pink! Local community organizations were also very receptive to the idea of working together for the well-being of our families, children and community.

Future **together** initiatives and events will occur throughout the year.





Pre-Primary Program on the South Shore

The pre-primary program will begin on Sept. 27, 2017 in two elementary schools across the region. New Germany Elementary is in its third year of its early learning program, which will soon be called a pre-primary program.

Chester District Elementary is offering two classes for the 25 children enrolled, with four early childhood educators. New Germany Elementary is offering one class for the 24 children enrolled, with two early childhood educators. West Northfield Elementary is offering one class for the five children enrolled, with one early childhood educator.

Parents are looking forward to sending their four-year olds to pre-primary as research has shown great benefit to children. It offers a play-based curriculum and outdoor play education with social and emotional skill building experiences.

“Our environment becomes a safe place to create, use our imaginations, be curious, make mistakes and realize our full potential. When [children] enter the primary class in September, they will have the right tools to be fully engaged and successful in their learning,” said Allison McLeod, early childhood educator.

Preparing for September

During the summer months, our operations crew are hard at work cleaning, painting, waxing and more to ensure schools are ready to reopen in September. In addition, they finished the roof work at New Ross Consolidated School, prepared pre-primary spaces at Chester District Elementary and West Northfield Elementary, and painted the playground equipment at Bayview Community School, Newcombville Elementary, West Northfield Elementary, Dr. John C. Wickwire Academy and New Germany Elementary. At Bridgewater Elementary School, work to expand a learning centre was completed and work on a sensory room is underway.



UPCOMING EVENTS	Sept. 30	Orange Shirt Day
	Oct. 9	Thanksgiving Day (no school)
	Oct. 11	Programs & Student Services Committee meeting
	Oct. 11	Corporate Services Committee meeting
	Oct. 18	Committee of the Whole meeting
	Oct. 25	Regular Board meeting, South Queens Middle School

Upgrades complete at Park View Education Centre (PVEC)

The four-year renovation of PVEC is complete and the newly upgraded school opened on schedule to students on Sept. 7, 2017. Almost \$14 M was spent to renovate PVEC, much less than it would cost to build a new school, but it **looks** brand new!

teaching spaces, education labs, learning common spaces, clearly marked parking, gender- neutral washrooms, a refreshed gymnasium and cafeteria, and more.

A sneak peak of PVEC was held on Sept. 6 for elected officials and the response was very positive!

An open house will be held later this fall for other interested members of the community.



Flexible learning spaces

The 39-year-old school was identified by the South Shore Regional School Board as needing capital upgrades in 2012. The Province of Nova Scotia approved the SSRSB’s funding request and in 2013, renovations began.

The project encompassed three broad areas: safety, infrastructure and teaching space upgrades. The finished project included upgrades to the interior, windows, mechanical and electrical components, ventilation,



Board members, the Town of Bridgewater and the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg view PVEC