

Provincial Advisory Council on Education (PACE)

February 21 & 22, 2020

Mi'kmaq Acknowledgement

The meeting began by acknowledging that it is taking place in Mi'kma'ki traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

Affirmation

The acknowledgement was followed by an Affirmation.

Approval of the Agenda

Council approved the agenda

Deputy Minister Update

Deputy Minister Montreuil provided an update on the invitation for schools to establish collaborative learning networks. More than 20% of public schools submitted an application for funding to support school teams in their professional learning, focused on strengthening universal practices at Tier 1, within an Inclusive Education framework. Schools have framed a theory of action grounded in research on effective inclusive schools and have identified the supports required to address the problem of practice. Schools with similar inquiries will be identified and connected.

Deputy Minister Montreuil spoke about working with the Nova Scotia Educational Leadership Consortium (NSEL) and the Public Schools Administrators Association of Nova Scotia (PSAANS), and other partners to strengthen instructional leadership professional learning modules and identify other areas for developing and supporting ongoing leadership capacity building. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) is drafting a standard protocol to respond to racist and homophobic incidents in schools. The Deputy spoke about a consistent framework for naming, taking action and following up with education using a restorative approach.

In support of Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), a website and professional materials for educators will soon be released.

Deputy Minister Montreuil shared that all 4-year-old children in Nova Scotia will have access to a Pre-Primary Program in September 2020. This access includes transportation. She spoke about the importance of this early support in strengthening access to improved educational outcomes.

As a component of the accreditation of Bachelor of Education programs in Nova Scotia, the Deputy Minister is meeting with university education program faculty to discuss program contents and efficacy. Program content of bachelor degree programs are based on the six Nova Scotia teaching standards with a new cohort of students starting in September 2020. The new BEd programs are rooted in the practices and research on inclusive education.

Deputy Minister Montreuil shared the recent results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). PISA measures 15-year-olds' ability to use their reading, mathematics and science knowledge and skills to meet real-life challenges (<https://www.oecd.org/pisa/>). Nova Scotia students are performing well in reading, science and mathematics. Canadian results are among the strongest in the world. We continue to look at jurisdictions who do well to see what we can learn in terms of our curriculum and instructional practices.

African Nova Scotian Education Framework

Mr. Augy Jones, Director, African Canadian Services Division, described work being completed on the African Nova Scotian Education Framework, including the framework's attention to system improvement and focussed work to bring voice of community to this work.

Mr. Jones spoke to the draft framework pillars:

- "Knowing them (students) as they are known"
- Educational Programming
- Empowering Parents and Families
- Equitable Access and Involvement for African Nova Scotia Support Staff
- Authentic Self-Identification

There is a commitment to address the disproportionality as seen in the disaggregated data in student achievement, Individual Program Planning and other data points. The framework speaks to increasing excellence in scholarship, supporting students from beginning to graduation and leading forward for positive impact on student engagement, well-being and achievement. There was a discussion to identify the key components of the strategy that are new approaches in Nova Scotia and the indicators that are being tracked to ensure students benefit. The benefit to having a province-wide framework was also identified.

Inter-University Research Network

Mr. Patrick Kakembo, Executive Lead, Education Research and Best Practices in African Nova Scotian Learners, provided information on the Inter-University Research Network (IURN). IURN was created in 2016 to support local research into student achievement and effective strategies to close the achievement gaps. Research in the network is done in through a partnership of university researchers and Nova Scotia teachers, administrators and education workers. The network is focused on the Nova Scotian context to address, identify and communicate effective strategies that address the underachievement of many African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaw learners, learners experiencing generational poverty and those with special needs.

PACE was provided a summary of completed and on-going major research completed on behalf of IURN.

Social Determinants of Health Professional Learning Presenter Recognition

PACE agreed to submit letters of thanks and recognition to the St. Francis Xavier professors that planned and provided professional learning for PACE members on the Social Determinants of Health, once completed at the April meeting.

Approach to Affirmation and Reflection

PACE agreed to take a moment of reflection and statement of impact upon the completion of the Affirmation at each meeting.

PACE Member Sharing

A variety of topics were discussed:

- The attendance of secondary students at school during examination days.
- Support for Gaelic studies.
- Technology Access Program.
- PACE agreed to provide correspondence to the Minister's Office after each future meeting that provides a brief synopsis of items discussed, advice given to the DEECD and recommendations to the Minister.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for April 19 & 20 at the office of the Nova Scotia Education Common Services Bureau.