

Provincial Advisory Council on Education (PACE)
November 4 – 5, 2018
2021 Brunswick Street (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development)
DRAFT Minutes (Subject to approval of Council Chair)

Mi'kmaq Acknowledgement

The meeting began with acknowledgment that this meeting is taking place in Mi'kma'ki traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

Affirmation

The acknowledgment was followed by an affirmation.

Introduction of Members

All members shared background on their experience and interests, and what they hope to bring to PACE. (See biographies at <https://ednet.ns.ca/PACEbios> .)

Approval of the Agenda

Council approved the agenda (see <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/PACE/documents>).

Meeting with Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development

Minister Zach Churchill joined PACE to thank everyone for taking on this responsibility. He emphasized that he is expecting PACE to provide strategic advice on key education priorities that support student achievement and well-being, with a particular focus on inclusion and equity. He shared government's education priorities and asked that PACE also identify key priorities important to them.

The Minister committed that PACE will be supported by giving access to department supports such as research, evidence and data to support members in developing advice. He also committed to provide funding for professional development. The Minister said he looks forward to receiving advice from PACE in person and in writing as appropriate.

Overview, Discussion of Legislative Mandate

Deputy Minister Cathy Montreuil provided general information on the role and mandate of advisory councils. A presentation was also given on PACE, as described in legislation (see <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/PACE/documents>).

PACE shall advise the Minister on matters relating to education, and, in particular:

- *Those matters referred to PACE by the Minister,*
- *Regional or local matters that reflect education, and*
- *Such other educational matters as PACE wishes to bring to the attention of the Minister.*

Beyond what is in legislation, general themes discussed included:

- PACE is an advisory council, like other advisory councils to the Minister or government. It is not a decision-making body, nor is PACE intended to replace school boards.
- Students should be at the centre of all discussions.
- PACE will have opportunity to give advice to the Minister directly.

- The focus is “big picture” issues, such as advice on policy and program development, not on operational issues within schools. **If contacted by families with questions about their children, families should be encouraged to contact the child’s teacher or principal. If the issue remains unresolved at the school level, then families should contact their regional education centre, or for families with children in Conseil scolaire acadien provincial, contact the board office.**

Action: At a future meeting, Council would like to receive information on other Councils that advise the Minister so that they can better understand how to complement and enhance the work of others, and not duplicate it.

Terms of Reference Development

Information was shared with PACE on the purpose of a terms of reference. Generally, terms of reference include information on:

- purpose
- key roles and responsibilities
- membership
- meeting frequency, locations, etc.
- reporting process

An overview of the PACE transition team report was also presented. The transition team was composed of 20 people, primarily from former regional school boards with several additional members invited to increase diversity on the transition team.

The transition team report is comprehensive, containing information on Foundational Principles, Representation, Terms of Reference, Code of Ethics/Conduct, Input and Communications, and Evaluation. The department generally accepted the objectives and principles running through it (e.g., PACE work should be culturally responsive, inclusive, forward-looking, etc.). However, some recommendations need to be adjusted because they are not in line with existing legislation or the form and function of other advisory councils.

Action: PACE will continue working on the terms of reference, based on the advice in the transition team report as well as an understanding of the role of an advisory council and existing legislation. The goal is to finalize the terms of reference at the December meeting. Once the terms of reference are approved, they will be posted on the PACE webpage. In the interests of transparency, the transition team report will also be posted. A letter from PACE will be included that explains differences between the advice given and the final terms of reference.

Future Meeting Schedules, Locations

PACE members recognized that members’ schedules and commitments vary. To help ensure all members can participate in most, meeting days will rotate, with some on the weekend and some on weekdays.

PACE members agreed, in its first year, to meet at least 6 times throughout the remainder of the school year, to be determined, based on agenda priorities and members’ schedules.

Meeting locations will also vary to reflect the provincial nature of PACE. Technology will be used as appropriate to increase participation without always travelling.

Action: The next meeting is scheduled for December 8, 9.

Bussing, Bussing Consultation Process

PACE deferred this issue to a future meeting. However, PACE members were clear that they wanted to advise on principles supporting any new policy (safety, inclusion, etc.), rather than operational issues.

Final Moment of Reflection