

## **Provincial Advisory Council on Education (PACE)**

**October 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> 2019**

**Department of Education and Early Childhood Development**

**2021 Brunswick Street, Halifax (PACE Boardroom)**

**DRAFT Minutes (Subject to approval of Council Chair)**

### **Mi'kmaq Acknowledgement**

The meeting began by acknowledging that it was Mi'kmaq history month. Followed by the reading of the Mi'kmaq prayer Seven Sacred Teachings.

### **Affirmation**

The acknowledgement was followed by an affirmation.

### **Approval of the Agenda**

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

### **Introductions**

The Chair introduced two new members to PACE Ashley Gallant and Shamus MacDonald. The remaining PACE members and guests did a round table briefly introducing themselves.

### **Deputy Minister Update**

Deputy Minister Montreuil gave an update on the Inclusive Education Policy implementation. The new policy has landed well in the public education system. To assess implementation progress, developmental evaluators have been contracted for a three-year period. Developmental evaluation creates measures and tracking mechanisms quickly as data and information emerge allowing for real-time implementation feedback. This approach will allow the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) to monitor what is unfolding and respond accordingly.

The Inclusive Education Policy has also provided a framework for Bachelor of Education programs in Nova Scotia.

Deputy Minister Montreuil stated that the second wave of inclusive education funding has been allocated. This provides an additional \$15 million in inclusive education supports to the Regional Centres / Board (see [https://www.ednet.ns.ca/sites/default/files/docs/inclusive\\_education\\_fact\\_sheet\\_2019-20\\_english.pdf](https://www.ednet.ns.ca/sites/default/files/docs/inclusive_education_fact_sheet_2019-20_english.pdf))

The grade 7 and 8 curriculum continue to develop and a new credit course is being piloted in Tri-County Regional Centre for Education. This experiential learning credit is based on the fisheries industry and aligns with business, safety and marketing components. There are plans to develop additional experiential learning programs in other Nova Scotia industries

Next, Deputy Minister updated PACE members on the before and after school program for the Pre-Primary Program (PPP) as well as a change in transportation that now permits Pre-Primary children to travel on the bus. These two developments in the program are in direct response to articulated barriers to program access.

It is expected that the new Transportation Policy will be completed before the end of the calendar year. Additionally, a policy informing political action in schools has been developed.

PACE requested an update on the status of bus transportation, particularly in Halifax Regional Centre of Education due to challenges experienced in September 2018. Deputy Montreuil described the investment and service improvement work completed to date.

### **PACE Professional Development Fund**

As a new committee, access to professional learning funds will occur for two years to aid in the committee's effectiveness and initial development. Following this period of establishment, PACE will be following the same structure and form of all government committees.

The Policy and System Support division is currently creating protocols regarding the PACE professional development fund. Professional development opportunities must be related to the mandate of PACE in improving student achievement and well-being, closing the achievement gap and promoting and advancing policies, programs and initiatives that strengthen an environment of equity for all learners and advance inclusive education. The protocols will include aspects such as fund oversight, access, distribution, reporting, and reimbursement.

Discussion ensued.

### **Meeting Dates**

PACE discussed meeting dates for the 2019 – 2020 school year. The choice of meeting frequency and duration is the choice of PACE, but there must be regular meetings based on agenda items. It was agreed that there would be a maximum of six meetings a year.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 1 and 2 in Antigonish. Subsequent meeting dates will be established at that time.

### **PACE Member Sharing**

PACE members shared some observations and experiences from their areas. An Africentric conference at Cole Harbour High on October 25 was recommended, the growth of student enrolment in HRCE including the recent purchase of the former Newbridge Academy building to accommodate enrolment growth in Conseil scolaire acadien provincial was mentioned, a request for a follow-up on reported racial incidents in school and a discussion on teacher and teacher assistant availability and qualifications.

The Chair concluded the discussion by pointing out the guiding question PACE should constantly refer to: *How can PACE support improving student well-being and achievement, to close the gap and raise the bar for all students in Nova Scotia?*

## **PACE Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct**

Chair Drew opened the conversation by stating the importance of the Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct. He reviewed the document in detail treating the discussion as part of the orientation process for new members and a reminder for other members. The discussion included a review of roles and responsibilities, confidentiality, appointment of members, the decision-making process and conflict of interest.

In particular, it was clarified that the terms of the appointed members from Conseil scolaire acadien provincial, the Council on Mi'kmaq Education, and the Council on African Canadian Education were the responsibility of their originating organization.

## **Professional Development**

PACE has agreed to attend a professional development session focused on the Social Determinants of Health. A draft agenda was reviewed and adjusted to suit the needs of PACE in supporting their mandate. The PD will be held at St. Francis Xavier University on December 2, 2019.

## **Inclusive Education Policy Update**

DEECD staff provided an update on the Inclusive Education Policy that was soft-launched in September 2019, with full implementation in effect September 2020. An update on Multi-Tiered System of Supports was also provided.

The Inclusive Education website under construction was shown.

The importance of student voice as part of the developmental evaluation was highlighted.

Discussion then focused on evidence of impact and creating the conditions for positive growth in the system. The Deputy Minister reminded PACE that the most important indicator of success is how the students are doing, not what the adults are doing. Impact over action.

## **Network Schools**

The Network Schools Application was shown to PACE. Through an application process, schools can access funds for the creation of professional learning networks focused on innovative and forward-thinking changes, primarily in Universal - Tier 1. Schools with similar inquires will be identified, connected, and supported by DEECD staff. The goal is to support schools in thinking about working differently to change the outcome for students. The funds are not designed to be an influx of resources year-over-year.

## **Pre-Primary Program Update**

DEECD staff provided an update on the Pre-Primary Program. The 2019 – 2020 school year is the third of a four-year implementation. To date, over 8 400 children have accessed PPP in 205 school communities. Five of eight Regional Centres / Board are fully implemented with the remaining 48 school communities coming on-line in 2020 – 2021.

*Capable, Confident and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework* was described as was a typical day in the Pre-Primary Program.

The initial PPP evaluation points to many successes, for example, the majority of children would not have attended early learning program if PPP was not available, families feel valued and felt children benefited from attending and the play-based approach supports learning and growth of children with diverse needs. Areas for improvement include before and after programming care, transportation, outdoor play, communication with families and educators on how play prepares children for success.

PACE discussed the availability of Early Years Educators, support for children with special needs, facility availability, and the Early Development Instrument.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for December, 1 and 2, 2019 in Antigonish.