



Cape Breton-Victoria Regional Centre for Education

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Meeting of the Regional Advisory Council

Memorial High, October 3, 2024 (7 p.m.)

In attendance:

Members

Allison Boutilier
Deborah Christiano
Lesley Shepard
Tannis MacEachern
Veronica Merryfield
Alex Paul
Kirt Winter

Unable to attend

Ashley Padelt-Robinson
Krista Smith
Georgeina MacKinnon

Regional Office

Susan Kelley
Lynn Crawford-Carter
Marjorie Graham

Welcome

Susan welcomed the group and did a land acknowledgement and followed up with an acknowledgement of the African Nova Scotian people. She then facilitated round table introductions. The agenda and previous meeting notes were distributed.

Feedback from the SAC Conference

Overall, the comments regarding the conference were very positive. There were questions around the Innovation Projects and what this would look like going forward. We talked about the Minister's visit to St. Anne's and Coxheath. There was some disappointment expressed that schools who did not get the grant did not get any funding at all after the work they did on the application. Here is the link for more information on the grant, which is available this year as well : <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/SAC>

Programs & Student Services Initiatives (Lynn Crawford-Carter, Director)

Student Advisory Council

Lynn explained that this was a group of student representatives from grades 10-12. The first meeting was held last school year. There is a diverse representation of the students we serve, on this committee. The students were interactive and very honest in how we as a region can better serve them.

Lunch Program

We have had very positive feedback with the new lunch program. Phase one began with 18 schools in CBVRCE, with a total of 26 by the end of October. Initially there was concern over some of the menu choices and this will continue to be monitored. We continue to operate our breakfast program in all schools and a 'grab and go' version is available to students who arrive late. Along with the pay what you can option, it is also possible to donate and get a tax-deductible receipt. As much as possible this is meant to be a "no waste" program so unused lunches are donated or if possible frozen. Also, extra lunches are ordered for students in the event that someone forgot, or we were not able to order in time. Assistance is available to parents who need help in signing up. We will provide this group with a list of resource contacts at our next meeting.

School Supports

Lynn discussed the organization of the Programs & Student Services department and shared their goals of Literacy, Equity and Numeracy. She assured the group that we have lots of supports in place in our classrooms (not just TAs) i.e. Behavior, Child & Youth, Learning, etc.

My Blueprint

This is a student based gnspes platform where students (emphasis on grades 7-12 although available to students as young as grade 3) can complete a survey to determine what areas of career interest they can explore as well as the requirements, what institutions provide training, job opportunities and salaries. It is a tremendous career exploration tool.

There were questions around how it is determined how many students are taking advantage of this and do parents know about this. There will be a communication going out to parents and we are able to track the number of students using the program.

The question was asked, do we have a Career Development Officer in every school? The answer is no but schools have access to a career developer, and we have a certified career developer working with My Blueprint. It was acknowledged that there is much value in a Career Developer as it can give students firsthand experience in what 'a day in the life of' a particular tradesperson (for example) may look like prior to the student deciding to follow that career option.

Purchase of School Supplies

This topic was raised and we discussed how we might coordinate this for all P-8 students in schools in our region. We are aware that many schools have a version of this already, but it was suggested that perhaps we might be able to standardize required supplies across schools providing more equity/inclusion. It was also discussed that we could buy in bulk at a discount. Supplies may be covered by SACs, donations, and/or a small fee. It could be coordinated as well by getting other agencies involved. We will ask the coordinator responsible for SAC's, Suzanne Aucoin, to take this to Principals who in turn can take to their individual SACs, to see if they are interested. The members of this Regional SAC can also take this to their SACs.

Food & Nutrition Policy

This is a new policy that has been developed and is available on our website. The other policy that will be coming out soon is the Student Code of Conduct and we encouraged the committee to give feedback online. We will send a link when it is available.

Additional Items

- Newcomers are boosting enrolment. It has been growing over the past four years but is beginning to stabilize. September 30th enrolment stands at 13,256.
- For the next meeting, discussion items will include cell phone policy specifics as well as accessibility update and discussion on the cleaning of schools. Lewis MacDonald, Director of Operations, will come to speak to the group.
- Going forward, we will alternate meetings between Sydney and North Sydney. We will poll for available dates for our next meeting which will be sometime during the winter and another in the spring.