

Education System Overhaul Recommended

By Maurice Rees

Dr. Avis Glaze an internationally recognized expert hired last fall to report on the province's education system says the province's education administrative model needs to be refocused and realigned to ensure student learning and achievement come first. The review was the first in 20 years to look at how public schools are administered, including elected school boards and their central office administration, along with administration at the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD).

In her report, Dr Glaze said, "In many cases, Nova Scotia students are performing below average compared to the rest of the country and the lack of clarity and coherence in the system is contributing to that."

Dr. Glaze met with more than 500 stakeholders during 91 consultations across the province. Another 1,500 people responded to an online survey on the issues. The report says right now the administrative system can seem like nine disconnected bodies: the department and eight individual school boards, often with conflicting priorities, and unclear roles and responsibilities. That has led to a model that distracts from achievement and learning for the province's 118,000 students.

"The administrative system should be realigned to reflect a unified, coordinated, province-wide focus on students to help them reach their full potential, regardless of where they live or their personal circumstances," said Dr. Glaze. "And any savings that are realized from this plan must be directed to the classrooms."

- Some of the recommendations include:
- Eliminate the seven governing regional school boards to reduce conflicting priorities and foster a coordinated provincial approach to challenges in the system.
 - The seven regional administrative boards retain their boundaries and names, and operate as regional education offices.
 - Non-core administrative roles should be reviewed as part of a shared services model to reduce administrative costs and create a more nimble, unified system. Examples might include: IT, payroll, facilities, finance, freedom of information and protection of privacy and access to information and privacy operations, and human resources.
 - Superintendents should become regional executive directors of education. They would be responsible and accountable for student success, education programming and policies in their schools. They will report directly to the deputy minister of EECD and oversee the regional education offices.
 - Maintain the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) board structure, with the superintendent responsible to both the deputy minister and CSAP board. CSAP should control cultural and linguistic matters, while also following provincial curriculum guidelines.
 - Ensure a local voice with the creation of vibrant school advisory councils (SACs) in all communities with greater influence and ongoing input to the minister, drawing on parents, students, principals, and community members.



- Ensure the voice of Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotians is heard at the ministerial level. The Council on Mi'kmaq Education (CME) and Council on African Canadian Education (CACE) should have enhanced roles, providing policy counsel to the minister.
 - Move teaching support specialists (literacy leads, math mentors, etc.) out of board offices and into classrooms four days a week, with the fifth day dedicated to assessment of progress, collaborative planning and preparation for the next week.
 - Take assessment responsibility away from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and establish an independent Student Progress Assessment Office (SPAO) to develop high-quality student assessments and report directly to the public.
 - Establish an education ombudsperson — an independent officer to investigate and resolve concerns or complaints on administrative decisions and practices that affect education
 - Create a provincial college of educators, an independent body to license, govern, discipline and regulate the teaching profession, and to improve public confidence in the education system.
 - Remove principals and vice-principals from the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU) and into a new professional association. Seniority, pension, and benefits should not be impacted and there should be an option for those administrators who may wish to return to teaching and the union.
- "Nova Scotians are doing innovative work in schools, but the conflicts, burdens and inefficiencies in the system itself are getting in the way of teachers, principals, and students," said Dr. Glaze. The full report can be found at: www.ednet.ns.ca/adminreview

**Deadline for the
March issue of
The Shoreline Journal
is February 20**



Great Village Elementary School Notes

By Linda Harrington

The following nine children will be registering for school on February 7th, the first step to beginning school in September 2018: Kara Cooke, Ben Smith, Emma Hamilton, Lika Spencer, Isaac Lomond, Rylan Thompson, Isaac MacGillivray, Jaxen Young and Alea Shipley Richards.

These children will return for an orientation to school in the spring. The number of teachers and classroom assignments for the school is based on student enrollment with the final decision being made by Ian MacLeod (Family of Schools Supervisor). When this information becomes available, it will be shared with our school community.

This month a warm welcome is sent to Crystal Burry, the new GVES Administrative Assistant. Tami Canning accepted a term position at the School Board office. Best wishes to Tami in her new assignment. This month, Shyla Jordan, a Grade 4 student, also moved from GVES and is now attending Debert Elementary.

Whenever possible, students are outside for breaks and need hats, winter mitts and snow pants on cold weather days. Each Friday when conditions permit, classes take turns walking through the field next to the school for supervised coasting on "Penny's Hill". Students are required to wear snow pants for coasting. Students should also be prepared for the possibility of outdoor Physical Education classes each Monday and Thursday.

Parents are reminded that when busses do not travel on unpaved roads in the morning, the regular practice is that the busses will not travel on these same roads in the afternoon, even if the road conditions improve throughout the day.

Please continue to check labels to prevent nut and nut products from being brought to school.

Tyson, from the Discovery Centre, has been to GVES a few times lately. Just before Christmas Break, Tyson shared a presentation explaining the science behind

some magic tricks and illusions. This month, he set up his "planetarium" in the gym. Each class had a chance to go in the big dome to view the night sky where many constellations were visible. Through the magic of time travel, students were also able to visit distant planets and the moon. Next month, Tyson will spend time in each classroom to share an interactive presentation on a science topic being studied at that grade level.

At the end of the month, Chris Kennedy delivered "Unity through Drumming!" presentation to each of the classes. The presentation showcased drums from many cultures including, Cuban, African, Middle Eastern, European, Pakistan, Brazil, and First Nations. Students first learned about each drum's history, sounds, and construction. Then, with each student playing a drum, the class created rhythm using the various voices of the collection of drums. The

performances were impressive!

Students meet in Peace Groups throughout the school year to learn and practice strategies to support a peaceful environment. Each Peace Group includes students from all grade levels. This month, students learned about "empathy". Students practiced "reading" body language by guessing an emotion that was being acted out by another student. After hearing the book, *The Invisible Boy*, by Tracy Ludwig, students shared what they could do to make others feel more valued and appreciated. More activities are being planned to encourage students to show understanding and caring about how another person is feeling. Showing empathy will make our school a better place for learning and playing.

Watch for information about special activities each day of "Peace Week", February 12-16th.

Unspoken words Wistful words of love

I would love you
if you would let me.
I would love you
if i could.

I would love to
have you love me.
But i am afraid that
If i should
That someday you may
Leave me
With a heart and soul
I cannot mend
But i will always promise
To be a loving caring
Friend!

God bless and thank-you
Thomas a. Marshall (ex-navy)
15/01/18

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