

2012-13 SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT TO THE BOARD AND COMMUNITY ON 2011-12 PROGRESS

NOVEMBER 2012



Regional School Board
NOVA SCOTIA, CANADA

MISSION, GUIDING PRINCIPLE AND BELIEF STATEMENTS

MISSION

To engage all students in quality, equitable education within a healthy, safe and respectful environment.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

The South Shore Regional School Board is committed to cognitive, social, emotional, physical and creative development.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- Student learning is our primary focus
 - All students have the ability to learn
 - Students learn at their own pace and in different ways
 - School communities must be safe, supportive and socially just, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect
 - Education is a partnership among home, school and the community
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LETTER FROM NANCY

Dear Families, students, and community members:

It is with great pleasure that I provide you with the third annual Superintendent's Report to the Board and Community. In this report, staff and I provide an overview of key priorities and accomplishments for the past year, highlights of programs and services for students, and areas of success.

The 2011-12 school year marked the third of four years for the SSRSB strategic plan. We continue to focus on student learning and achievement, particularly in mathematics and literacy. This report provides you with an update of progress and highlights areas that continue to require attention. We are very pleased to have been able to maintain key supports, such a guidance in grades Primary to 12, as well as programs such as skilled trades. Services to students and their families have increased through the addition of a second SchoolsPlus program and the expansion of health services in middle and high schools through a partnership with South Shore Health.

Although enrolments are decreasing, the needs and interests of students continue to expand. One of our key areas of growth and excitement is integrating technology and moving to an inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning. This focus on student engagement is a vital component to ensuring students use technology effectively and appropriately. We want students to be at school and to be motivated.

We also continue to pay attention to operational efficiencies – heating, busing, etc., with the aim of making sure as much of the budget as possible is spent supporting student learning.

We are looking forward to serving you and your children in the upcoming year.

Respectfully,



Nancy Pynch-Worthylake
Superintendent of Schools



SSRSB STRATEGIC PLAN

2013 - 2016

The South Shore Regional School Board's 2013-2016 Strategic Plan was developed to guide the work done by regional and school staff, and to support the Annual Business Plan. The goal areas have been written to reflect our Mission, Guiding Principle and Belief Statements, and to allow for specific priorities to be developed by staff and the Governing Board for the Annual Business Plan.

Goal Areas:

1. Equitable Student Learning and Engagement:
 - a. Priority
 - i. Student achievement
 - ii. Safe, supportive and socially just learning environment
 - iii. Professional learning and communities of practice
 - iv. Instruction and assessment practices

2. Communications and Public Relations:
 - a. Priority
 - i. School based
 - ii. Regional staff
 - iii. Governing Board

3. Effective Board Governance
 - a. Priority
 - i. By-laws understanding and compliance
 1. Board Meetings
 2. Code of Ethics compliance
 3. Decision-making
 - b. Strategies:
 1. Develop a deep understanding
 2. Agreement on monitoring and evaluation tool
 3. Self and external evaluation

SCHOOL REVIEW

The results of the School Utilization Study were received by the Board in January, 2012, which included seven options for follow-up.

In February 2012, thirteen School Identification Reports were received by the Board. Ten schools were identified to continue through the review process. Of these ten, four were removed from the process based on a more detailed study.

In September 2012, six Impact Assessment Reports were received by the Board.

The six schools reviewed are:

- Gold River Western Shore Elementary School
- New Ross Consolidated School
- Mill Village Consolidated School
- Hebville Academy
- Pentz Elementary School
- Petite Rivière Elementary School



Study Committees have been formed at each school to prepare a response to the Impact Assessment Report. A public hearing will be held in January or February 2013. Final decisions will be made by March 31, 2013.

It is important for families to remember that school review does not automatically mean school closure. In some cases there will be no changes at all, and sometimes schools receive extensive upgrades and renovations to better serve students. School review can also look at programming and services, in addition to the actual building.

Please visit www.ssrsb.ca and check out the Family Information tab to learn more about School Review and read the School Identification Reports and Impact Assessment Reports prepared for these schools.

PROGRAMS & STUDENT SERVICES

INQUIRY BASED LEARNING

SSRSB schools are exploring Inquiry Based Learning (IBL) as an opportunity to engage students at all grade levels. IBL facilitates authentic, real-world student learning and engagement in meaningful contexts. This leads to development of important 21st century skills and attitudes essential for post-secondary education and today's evolving jobs, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, innovation and entrepreneurship, and information technologies.

While all grade levels integrate IBL in their classrooms, grade nine classes are especially focusing on this teaching method. This student-influenced inquiry process is structured around complex questions and carefully designed products and tasks. The students work collaboratively with each other, their teacher and community experts to answer these complex questions. Their learning culminates with students sharing and celebrating their learning with a broader audience. There is national data to indicate that grade nine is a year where student disengagement becomes more prevalent. IBL brings relevance and purpose to classroom work, reengaging students and improving overall academic achievement.

When students are presented with opportunities to learn about relevant topics they are invested in, they are motivated to learn and solve problems. IBL provides real world issues and challenges students to find solutions to a variety of situations.

Some examples of Inquiry Based Learning:

Students were asked, is gold mining a feasible industry in Nova Scotia? Why or why not?

Grade nine students at South Queens Junior High have been working with architects on the design of the new South Queens Middle School

Inquiry Based Learning

South Queens Junior High School

2012-2013



Module Offerings at South
Queens Junior High
School 2012-2013

*South Queens Junior High School has embraced IBL,
creating a multitude of module offerings for students*

PROGRAMS & STUDENT SERVICES

SKILLED TRADES EXPANSION

The SSRSB is pleased to announce the addition of a second skilled trades site at Forest Heights Community School. In 2011 Park View Education Centre opened our first site and has been successful in delivering the programs to a group of very eager students. Programming at Forest Heights Community School will begin in September 2013 and include carpentry, electrical and plumbing curricula.

The SSRSB intends to continue the expansion of skilled trades programming across the region in the upcoming years.



Park View Education Skilled Trades Students

Students enrolled in the skilled trades program are taught by qualified and certified instructors. The program is a combination of theory, skill development and hands on trade experiences. Students are highly engaged, career focus and most often transition to post-secondary skilled trades programs.

PROGRAMS & STUDENT SERVICES

CHANGES IN THE WORLD OF ASSESSMENT

Starting in the 2012-13 school year the Department of Education will be changing its grade three and six mathematics and literacy assessments. The Nova Scotia Assessment: Reading and Writing and the Nova Scotia Assessment: Mathematics, administered in grade six will replace the Elementary Literacy Assessment and Elementary Mathematical Literacy Assessment. For grade three students, the Nova Scotia Assessment: Reading and Writing will replace the Early Language Literacy Assessment. There will no longer be a mathematics assessment for grade three students. Starting in the 2013-14 school year, the mathematics assessment will be given to grade four students.

The changes will streamline the assessment process while still providing valuable data for educators. Assessments are done in the fall to give teachers an idea of student abilities and areas that may require specific attention.

READING AND WRITING, AND MATH ASSESSMENTS IN GRADE 6

The Nova Scotia Assessment: Reading, Writing and Mathematics Assessments evaluate areas such as:

- Reading and writing tasks reflecting the end of grade five curriculum reading passages in the narrative, information, poetry/song, and visual text genres
- Reading comprehension questions in selected response format
- One letter writing task and one story writing task
- Mathematics questions that reflect the end of grade 5 curriculum outcome expectations
- Multiple choice math questions
- Problem solving math questions

READING AND WRITING IN GRADE 3

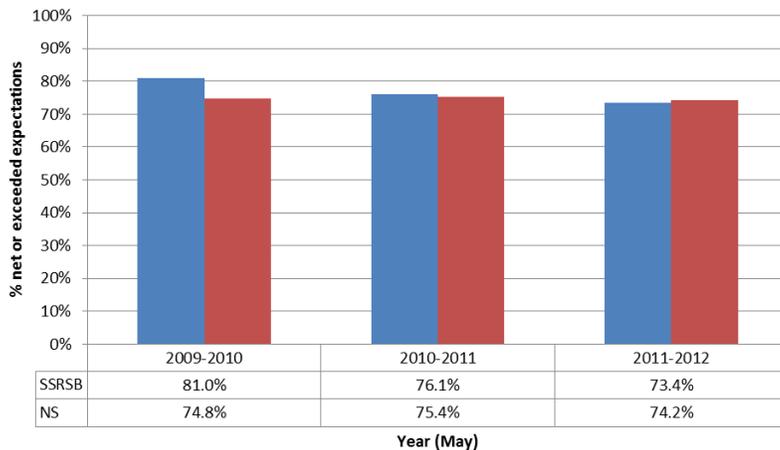
The Nova Scotia Assessment: Reading and Writing Assessment evaluates areas such as:

- Reading and writing tasks that reflect the end of grade two curriculum
- Reading passages in the narrative, information, poetry/song, and visual text genres
- Multiple choice and problem solving reading comprehension questions
- Reading comprehension questions designed to provide a broader range of challenge there by providing more information about individual student performance
- One personal narrative writing task and one procedural writing task

PROGRAMS & STUDENT SERVICES

2010-2011 PROVINCIAL ASSESSMENT RESULT COMPARISONS

EEMLA COMPARISON



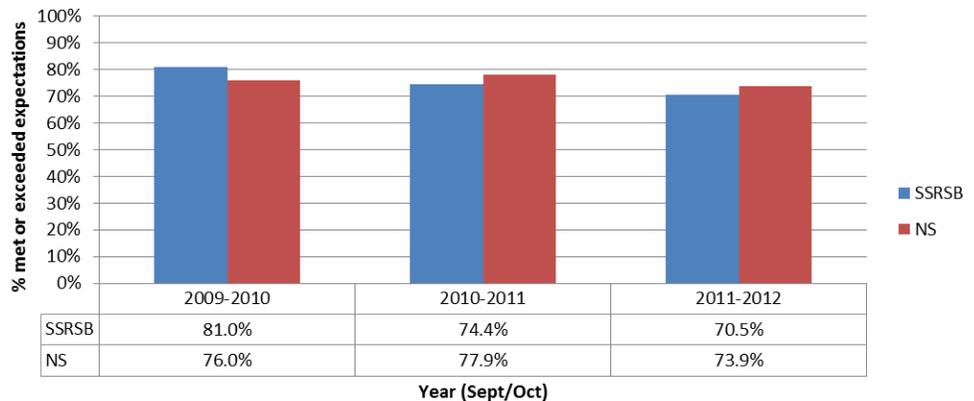
SSRSB Target Goal

By the end of 2012-2013, the percentage of SSRSB students meeting or exceeding the expectations of the Early Elementary Mathematical Literacy Assessment (EEMLA), administered in grade three, will continue to be at or above the Nova Scotia reported percentage.

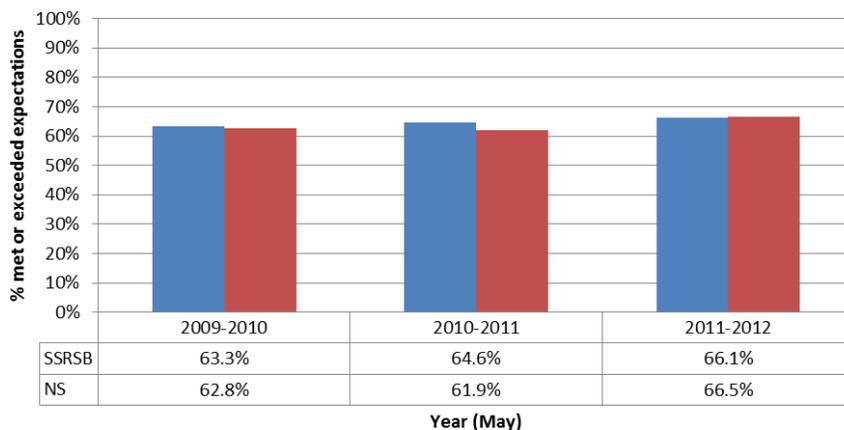
SSRSB Target Goal

By the end of 2012-2013, the percentage of SSRSB students meeting or exceeding the expectations of the Elementary Language Literacy Assessment (ELLA), administered in grade three, will continue to be at or above the Nova Scotia reported percentage.

ELLA READING COMPARISON



EMLA COMPARISON



SSRSB Target Goal

By the end of 2012-2013, the percentage of SSRSB students meeting or exceeding the expectations of the Elementary Mathematical Literacy Assessment (EMLA), administered in grade six, will continue to be at or above the Nova Scotia reported percentage.

PROGRAMS & STUDENT SERVICES

SCHOOLSPLUS EXPANSION, HEALTH PARTNERSHIPS AND COMPREHENSIVE GUIDANCE - WORKING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

We are very pleased to have added a significant number of supports to students and families, effective for the 2012-13 school year. The SSRSB received funding for a second SchoolsPlus site to now include Queens County, Bridgewater town schools and the New Germany family of schools. The funding allowed us to hire additional outreach workers for the SchoolsPlus program to support students and families, build and administer programs and coordinate services with other agencies such as addictions, justice, community services and public health. The SchoolsPlus program has been effective in helping many students and families experiencing difficulties.

The SchoolsPlus expansion and the addition of four mental health clinicians allocated from South Shore Health, will continue to improve mental health support to students. These additions compliment and strengthen the work of our Primary to grade 12 guidance counselors who work to support and counsel individual students and to promote healthy and safe school environments. We are very fortunate to benefit from strong and effective collaboration with South Shore Health as we work to coordinate and focus services for students from various agencies and departments.



PROGRAMS & STUDENT SERVICES

SUPPORTING STUDENTS DIAGNOSED WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY

Currently there are over 450 students with diagnosed learning disabilities across the SSRSB. In September 2012 we added a Learning Disability Facilitator to our regional student services staff to assist schools from Lunenburg and Queens Counties. The role of this Facilitator is to work with classrooms teachers to build capacity to provide differentiated instruction and adaptations as appropriate.

As part of increased services we conducted an initial survey with students, families and teachers in a school receiving support on their priorities. Here's what we found:

Families

- All families expressed that their primary desire for their children is independence, access to materials, technology use and self-esteem.

Teachers

- Support in making materials (textbooks) accessible
- Technology integration and consistent availability

Students

- Be able to show that they are smart
- Access to books electronically
- Have peer accepted technology to use within the class at their desk



A student, teacher and parent workshop on the benefits of yoga for children with autism

PROGRAMS & STUDENT SERVICES

RCH

The Student Support Worker (SSW) Program continues to run in the South Shore Regional School Board with three SSWs serving schools. The SSWs have decided an increase in whole school support through organizing in-class presentations on topics which include African and Mi'kmaq history, racism and discrimination would be a goal for the 2012-13 school year.

The SSRSB recognizes that as instructional leaders, principals set the tone for climate and culture within their schools. Therefore, as part of the administrator's meetings this year a portion of each meeting will focus on social justice issues. This will provide an opportunity for administrators to become more engaged with these issues and bring back what they learn to the schools.



Talking sticks activity at North Queens Community School

CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying, like all other forms of bullying, negatively impact on students, staff and the school environment. SSRSB takes all forms of bullying, including cyberbullying, very seriously. Students involved in cyberbullying receive consequences under the student code of conduct and also participate in an educational component around bullying and cyberbullying.

The SSRSB believes technology is an important part of our education system and can enhance student learning. As technology becomes an even more integral part of our schools we welcome the opportunity to help students develop positive ways of being a digital citizen. Educating students on the impact of their spoken and written words helps everyone understand how damaging bullying can be.

As part of the provincial awareness campaign around cyberbullying, students were asked to submit an idea or theme to be used by the Department of Education. The selected student submission came from Bayview Community School in Mahone Bay. Grade six student Evan Hennigar, along with a group of friends, created a video titled "People not profiles" and will work with professionals to develop materials to be used provincially.



Evan Hennigar and friends with Education Minister Ramona Jennex at Bayview Education Centre on the day of the campaign announcement

OPERATIONS

SSRSB OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT RECEIVES INNOVATION AWARD

At a recent Nova Scotia School Maintenance Advisory Conference, the SSRSB received the provincial trophy for suggesting an innovative idea in Operations. Our Trades staff made a special tool that enables doors and hinges to be straightened, re-adjusted and re-used, saving time and money.

The creation of this innovative tool speaks to the creativity and dedication of our Trades staff. Congratulations!



PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

Our Operations Department is working on a planned approach to preventative maintenance that will be at the forefront of our work for the next few years as we look for ways to reduce costs and increase efficiency. Unless we think about new approaches, it will be a challenge to change the way we work in a way that maximizes our efficiency in this important area.

A 3-year phased approach for preventative maintenance has been initiated with centralized scheduling and management of key regulatory systems. As training advances and comfort levels increase with this approach, decentralized implementation will be added as schools become ready. A task list of over 800 items has been entered into the current work order system. These tasks will be assigned to Building Operators, Custodians, Trades People, Grounds Crew as well as the Facility Maintenance and Custodians and Grounds Managers to ensure our facilities are maintained at a high standard level across the region. It is anticipated that considerable efficiencies and savings could be realized over the next few years. The benefits include:

- Improved tracking of regulatory compliance requirements
- Work shift focus to approximately 80% preventative as opposed to reactive
- Fewer breakdowns of equipment
- Focus on efficiency not repair
- Increased confidence and if problems occur, staff can quickly isolate what isn't the problem
- Support better planning of resources including labour and material

OPERATIONS

CAPITAL PROJECTS

New South Queens Middle School

Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal awarded the contract to design and build the new South Queens Middle School to Maxim 2000inc. Work began in late August and includes deconstruction of the former Queens Memorial Arena, Construction of the new school, deconstruction of the existing school and construction of a new sports field. The school is scheduled to open in September, 2013 and the estimated duration of the project is 24 months, including demolition of the existing school and construction of the new sports field. This school will be a unique design and equipped for 21st century instructional strategies.



Premier Darrell Dexter turns the sod with grade seven student Shanyn Whynot at the official sod turning event for the new South Queens Middle School

North Queens Roof Replacement

A major capital repair project, involving the replacement of the roof on the old section at North Queens School has been completed.

Forest Heights Community School

In addition to the new skilled trades centre, FHCS will receive many capital upgrades including a new roof, efficient lighting and a new sprinkler system.

Bluenose Academy

The new P-9 school in Lunenburg officially opened in March and is now in the final warranty process. The shop is in the final stages of readiness and some construction workers are still on-site. We expect final work to be completed by March 31st, 2013.



Bluenose Academy mosaic located on the floor in the main foyer.

TRANSPORTATION



SSRSB TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT IS GOLDEN!

SSRSB receives the Gold Nova Scotia Pupil Transportation

Achievement Award for the third year in a row from the provincial government. The awards are presented for exceptionally high scores in a number of safety and performance related areas. Evaluations are conducted on a points system with inspectors looking at driver training, accident reporting and frequency, fleet preventative maintenance, fleet body maintenance, stops per mile/luggage and passenger loads, trip inspection and hours of work, garage cleanliness and safety practices and finally bus cleanliness and appearance.

We are very proud of our drivers and bus garage staff on achieving this very high standard for a third year in a row.

Did you know...

- Last year, our buses transported 6300 students daily and traveled a total of 3,238,035 kilometers over 87 routes. Each regular route travels an average of 37,218 kilometers per year.
- Buses continue to become more and more computerized requiring our mechanics to receive specialized training. Our mechanics have received over 20 hours of diagnostic training and this will continue to be in the fore-front of our professional development program.



TRANSPORTATION



ROUTE REVIEWS

Two comprehensive route reviews were conducted in the New Germany and Bluenose Academy catchment areas. These reviews ensured that equitable service was provided to students across the Board and to ensure that all regulatory and policy requirements were met. The New Germany subsystem route review increased efficiency and ensured our compliance with all regulatory requirements. The route review for Bluenose Academy also resulted in these achievements

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION & SCHOOL BUS DRIVER COMMUNICATION

We have made enormous strides towards increasing the communication between School Administrators and our School Bus Drivers. This has led to a decrease in student management issues and a sense of involvement for our School Bus Drivers. Our Drivers deal with student management and behavior issues every day on our buses. It helps Drivers and students when there is strong communication between the Drivers and School Administration. As a result, drivers are part of the school team and issues are dealt with quickly and there is often a decrease in student discipline.



TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

VIRTUAL EDUCATION

Here in SSRSB, we are striving to ensure our high school students are prepared to learn now and in the future, in a virtual environment. We work collaboratively with the Nova Scotia Department of Education to support the Nova Scotia Virtual School. The NSVS is a common provincial online learning platform; providing for the delivery of several high school courses for our students. For more information check out <http://nsvs.ednet.ns.ca/m19/>

To further support these efforts in our board, we have created the Virtual Learning Project. The VLP is a collaboration of 17 teachers, from our six high schools, who are enriching their programs with technology and digital resources. We continue to build on this innovation to support student learning now, and to equip our students with the skills and knowledge they will need for post-secondary study or to contribute to the workforce, in a world infused with technology. At this time, the NSVS is a high school initiative, but there are plans in 2014-15 to bring the course offerings to grades 7-9. Currently, there are six students in SSRSB enrolled in course from the NSVS, next semester this will increase to 14 students. Across our province, approximately 600 students will take a NSVS course, this number is expected to double in 2013-14.

INSCHOOL

PowerSchool and TIENET are the two key components to the iNSchool initiative. iNSchool is a provincial initiative leveraging technology to support our efforts to improve student achievement. In the spring of 2012 our board began the implementation of TIENET, to enable our teachers to organize and manage extended student services, such as documented adaptations and individual program plans (IPPs). The implementation of this innovation is going well in SSRSB. We anticipate rich data from this system, which will further inform our work in supporting principals and teachers as they work with students, parents and their communities to improve learning outcomes for our students. If you want to learn more, <http://www.inschool.ednet.ns.ca>



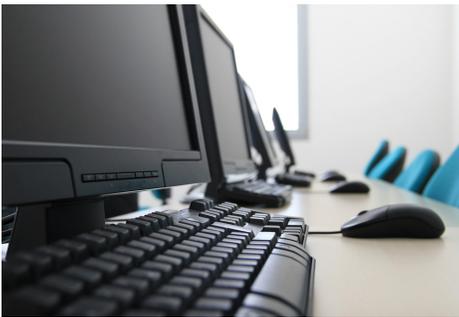
TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

OUR VISION FOR TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

Throughout SSRSB, we are striving to create learning environments that support digital technology. In the spring of 2011, we began this initiative with a move to provide wireless internet connections for every student and teacher in all our secondary schools. This work included an investment in hardware for our schools, as well as an increase in bandwidth. With the number of mobile devices projected to surpass the world's population, we are asking, how do we leverage mobile computing platforms for the purpose of learning? We can now extend learning beyond the classroom walls - communicating with teachers and experts all over the world, researching any topic, creating and publishing new content, and collaborating with each other anywhere, anytime.



This is critically important for our graduating students who will find new demands in the workplace or post-secondary, requiring high levels of technological skill and knowledge for even the most basic jobs. We are striving to promote and support anytime, anywhere learning for our students and staff. Our focus this year will be on providing digital resources to our students and teachers, as well as the opportunity to learn how best to use these new tools. A key emerging issue is the role of teachers in helping students to be responsible and respectful users of social media and other applications from the internet. We are excited about these and other challenges as we move forward with anytime, anywhere learning in SSRSB.



Our challenge has become, how do we change to support learning that includes students bringing their own technology (BYOT) to school?



HUMAN RESOURCES

Through increased accountability in the Human Resources department, work on performance management systems and supporting employees to remain in a productive, safe and healthy environment, they are achieving their goals.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND HIRING PRACTICE

Performance management related templates, policies and procedures have been developed for all employee groups and scheduling has been put in place so all employees are on a regular review cycle. Short listing criteria were reviewed again this year and conditional hiring has consistently occurred in areas of practice.

In addition, we are working with our Coordinator of French Second language to screen all applicants for French assignments and we are working towards leveling all current employees.

ENSURE A SAFE AND HEALTHY WORK ENVIRONMENT

The early and safe return to work program has been extended to include illness as well as injury for all employee groups. As the program grows, we are noticing increases in employee initiated calls for support to remain at work. The WCB demerit has decreased \$0.25 from January 2012, equating to over \$95,000 in total premium savings.



Grade 1 teachers professional development day

HUMAN RESOURCES

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVISION

Human Resources Department policies have been reviewed, consolidated and re-formatted into a concise and user-friendly format. Accountability has been clearly outlined and where substantial revisions were undertaken, the opportunity for stakeholder feedback was given.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Our hiring practice has changed this year, where the Director of Human Resources approves all positions of Coordinator level and below. This process is also mirrored for requests from staff. This has allowed for tighter timelines, more consistency in the classroom due to expedited filling of vacancies and more efficient processing of employee pay and benefits.

Stringent controls on the process are in place and reviews of all hires are done to ensure a fair and consistent process. Qualification standards are met or conditions are placed on hires and follow-up is scheduled. The department is working diligently to ensure the quality of all hires, while maintaining the integrity of the process in a documented format.

LOOKING FORWARD

The 2012 – 2013 year presents many challenges and opportunities. As all Collective Agreements expire, we look to expanding attendance awareness and support and are beginning to revise the performance management process for teachers to align with current best practice and Board goals. The collaborative environment within our departments allows for meaningful discussion and complete sharing of knowledge and ideas to create the tools and processes that will best support our staff and students.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

	2010-11 Actual	2011-12 Actual	2012-13 Budget
Revenue			
Province of Nova Scotia	\$61,138,077	\$54,870,833	\$52,797,142
Government of Canada	329,733	423,002	330,203
Municipal Contributions	15,218,223	15,450,794	15,600,000
School Generated Funds	2,665,910	2,830,789	3,000,000
Board Operations	800,780	1,009,572	935,138
Total Revenues	\$80,152,723	\$74,584,990	\$72,662,483
Expenditures			
Board Governance	\$272,412	\$279,216	\$222,298
Regional Management	2,415,480	2,143,723	2,121,165
School Management & Support	6,790,040	6,824,154	6,803,087
Instruction & School Services	33,345,030	33,084,672	31,204,574
Student Support	9,873,293	9,937,617	9,493,541
Adult & Community Education	300,957	325,960	326,864
Property Services	14,525,568	9,779,725	9,087,925
Student Transportation	6,079,647	5,780,174	6,036,038
School Generated Funds	2,614,921	2,830,789	3,000,000
Other Programs	3,468,701	3,754,961	4,366,991
Defined Benefit Pension Plan	(390,400)	(350,600)	
Total Expenditures	\$79,295,649	\$74,390,391	\$72,662,483

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