

HALIFAX REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD Superintendent's Consultations Report

PURPOSE: To provide the Governing Board with an overview of the feedback received from the Superintendent's Consultations with School Advisory Council (SAC) members.

BACKGROUND: As part of the introduction of the new Superintendent, five consultation sessions with SAC members were organized during the winter months. Three were organized for Saturday, January 18 at our central office. One was held on Tuesday, February 4th at St. Margaret's Bay Elementary and one was held on Tuesday, February 18th at Oyster Pond Academy. SAC members were invited to register for any of the five sessions and approximately 150 people were able to take part.

CONTENT: Consultations were organized in a world-café style, facilitated by Tracey Jones-Grant, Coordinator, Diversity Management. This format allows for dialogue at tables in order to give every participant an opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas. The Superintendent and Senior Staff joined groups to listen and gain understanding of the ideas being recorded at each table.

Questions for the consultation were founded on two simple principles:

- a strength-based approach to consultation is most effective; and
- questions which explore possibilities and help identify unseen opportunities are most likely to engage people.

Three questions guided the consultation:

1. What do I value most in education?
2. Share how our mission statement comes to life each day at your school.
3. What possibilities should we embrace to strengthen learning and public confidence as we plan for next year?

Following the questions, SAC members were asked to consider how they could continue the conversation with other members of their SAC at future meetings. They were challenged to ensure SAC meetings allowed members to talk about the things they identified as priorities and to support the HRSB strategic plan.

Conclusions organized by questions:

1. What do I value most in education?

Participants shared many ideas about the things they valued in education. Most frequent among them were things such as communication, diversity, community, engagement and support. However, individuals also shared a broad range of ideas including respect, caring, quality learning environments, high quality

instruction, embracing all learners, technology, strong administration and commitment of staff.

2. *Share how our mission statement comes to life each day at your school.*

Participants noted that our mission comes to life in their schools through a safe school environment, dedicated staff, setting high expectations for students and staff, relationship building, extracurricular activities, celebrating success and teacher-student-parent-community involvement. Words that stood out in their frequency were opportunities, community, diversity, communication, parent involvement and teachers.

3. *What possibilities should we embrace to strengthen learning and public confidence as we plan for next year?*

There is a common theme of communication in the response to this question. What is important to recognize is that communication was explored in almost every aspect of our organization, from teachers giving feedback on student learning, through schools sharing their successes with their communities to global strategies for our organization as a whole. Most common words in the discussion were communication, community, parents, teachers, board.

How will this information be used?

It is impossible to represent the entirety of the information shared in the consultation in a few categories. Participants shared thoughts and ideas in a broad range of areas encompassing many aspects of learning, relationship building, supports for students, technology and school culture. The richness of the information is best appreciated in referencing it frequently rather than trying to condense it.

For this report and presentation, I will share several of the strong themes that emerge from the consultation. Firstly, it is clear that there is a strong desire from parents and the community to be engaged. We will develop strategies to have more conversations with parents, community and other educational partners. This could involve schools, Senior Staff and/or Governing Board members. Secondly, there is a strong desire from parents and community members to know more about teaching and learning in clear and concise ways. This will influence our work as we move forward. We have taken some steps in this direction with the Monthly Superintendent’s Report and new “Focus on Learning” item on the regular board meeting agenda. It will also influence our work as we update the School Reports to the Community.

COST: N/A

FUNDING: N/A

TIMELINE: N/A

APPENDICES: PowerPoint presentation

RECOMMENDATIONS: That the Governing Board accept this report for information.

COMMUNICATIONS:

AUDIENCE	RESPONSIBLE	TIMELINE
School Advisory Councils	Superintendent	April 24, 2014

From:

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School Advisory Committee Consultations 2014

Superintendent's Report

The Format





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Questions

- What do I value most in education?
- Share how our (HRSB) mission statement comes to life each day at your school.
- What possibilities should we embrace to strengthen learning and public confidence as we plan for next year?



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The homework I assigned -

“...think about what you control...”



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What did we learn?



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Themes

Constructive SAC
meetings with Bd reps

More
engagement
from the public

Strong potential for parent and community involvement

Look for ways to
strengthen
relationships with
community

More public
forums at school
community level

Tell parents
what should
be taught at
home

Engage parents in the
concept that there is
partnership in educating
children - not left to the
school alone

Learning

Clearly
communicated
bench marks

Tell parents
what students
need to work
towards

Parent
friendly
report cards

PR
campaign...

Jargon
free!

Communication

Need regular, genuine,
proactive dialogue b/w
school community and
Board (not only in times of
crisis)

Enhance
communication
with a positive spin



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How will we use this information?



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Thank you