



**Halifax Regional School Board  
Ad Hoc Governance Committee  
Minutes  
January 29, 2016  
12:00 p.m.**

Meeting was held this date in the Board Lounge,  
33 Spectacle Lake, Dartmouth, NS

**PRESENT:** Dave Wright Christy Linders  
Cindy Littlefair

Denise Bell, Regional Education Officer  
Nancy Pynch-Worthylake, NSSBA

**REGRETS:** Melinda Daye  
Gin Yee

**STAFF:** Elwin LeRoux, Superintendent  
Lance Bullock, Senior Staff Advisor  
Natascha Joncas, Acting Corporate Secretary  
Athena Leclair, Administrative Assistant to the Corporate Secretary

**1. Call to Order**

The Chair, Cindy Littlefair, called the meeting to order at 12:07 p.m.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

**It was moved and seconded (Linders/Wright) to approve the agenda.**

**(CARRIED)**

**3. Approval of Minutes**

**It was moved and seconded (Wright/Linders) that the minutes/business arising from the minutes of the January 8, 2016, Ad Hoc Governance Committee meeting be approved.**

**(CARRIED)**

## ***Catch-Up***

Discussion about whether the Ad Hoc Committee package should be sent to the entire Governing Board a week prior to the meeting or be sent solely to the Ad Hoc Committee members. It will go to the whole board.

Elwin LeRoux noted he reached out to a few different superintendents. He spoke to Brad Saran in Wisconsin who is using Coherent Governance. Brad shared various articles with Elwin. Brad stated that he knew of no causal link between student achievement and governance. Brad stated they would not always be compliant on all their reports, without exception. E. LeRoux noted he has a phone call scheduled with the Chief Superintendent in Calgary.

E. LeRoux stated he also spoke with a Superintendent in Arizona – Andre Spencer who has used the Coherent model for six years. Andre stated he was struck by the clarity of the model, as well as the separation of duties. Andre noted to Elwin that there is a different relationship when there is a clear alignment and there are seldom issues in terms of role confusion. Andre also noted that he did not see any strong relationship between governance models and student achievement. Any governance model is about managing board members and staff. It is hard to assess student achievement in terms of board input. Andre noted that some tweaking is necessary to ensure you are driving the model and that the model is not driving you.

Christy Linders noted the funding model is different the United States have more input into their funding model i.e. bond issues. She also noted the Americans were intrigued at the level of management and involvement of the Education department in Halifax.

Cindy Littlefair noted that Charles Ungerleider, a professor at the University of British Columbia, referred her to the Halton district school board as he thought they might be practicing Coherent governance. C. Littlefair noted she received an email from Halton saying they thought they followed Policy governance, not Coherent governance. C. Littlefair also stated that she had spoken with Randy Quin of the Aspen Group who suggested she introduce Elwin to Andre and Brad.

## **4. Discussion Items**

### ***Review of meeting with ADM***

Nancy Pynch-Worthylake summarized the meeting with ADM. She noted that NSSBA got approval from their Board of Directors to move forward with researching governance models and for it to be a priority. The NSSBA will need help in terms of financial support and staff and therefore also got approval to use existing NSSBA funds as a funding source.

Dave Wright noted the NSSBA has funds that had not been used so the NSSBA also got approval from their Board of Directors as there is an agreement that this work would be valuable.

N. Pynch-Worthylake noted there is funding for 15 days of research. The approval of funding is linked to a new goal that NSSBA's Board of Directors approved yesterday.

D. Wright noted the new goal in the NSSBA's Strategic Plan is towards the advocacy and supporting of school boards whereas before it was always just implied. D. Wright also noted

that it is a multi-year process and that the funding is allocated for two more fiscal year. The funding will be used towards research, development of Professional Development materials, as well as supplying Professional Development and support to school boards.

N. Pynch-Worthylake noted the manner in which the work is proceeding is linked to the recommendations from the Auditor General's Report and the Minister's response on behalf of the school boards that recognized the NSSBA to lead some of the work. Therefore, the NSSBA can now work on behalf of the school boards which leaves control of the work in school board hands.

Denise Bell enquired if there are other activities going on in other boards around the province in terms of governance.

N. Pynch-Worthylake noted that the overview of other boards came from the REOs and was incomplete, she had to get direction from the board first and has not had any deep conversations. The HRSB is the one board that is stepping back and looking at the broader governance perspective, whereas other boards are requesting support in terms of more specific recommendations and recommendations around self-assessment. N. Pynch-Worthylake noted that she is not aware that other boards have undertaken a look at the broad governance perspective.

C. Linders asked if there is any sense of perplexity or did the other boards understand.

D. Wright noted there were good conversations and a lack of understanding was not evident.

N. Pynch-Worthylake noted that it all comes back to how the board is holding its staff accountable.

E. LeRoux noted he did not think any board would be surprised due to the Auditor General's Report that came out in November. If anything, boards should be happy that there is a strategic approach that is not isolating.

C. Littlefair noted that the HRSB has charged the Ad Hoc Committee with doing the research and that the HRSB needed to think about how best to proceed, independently or join with the NSSBA.

N. Pynch-Worthylake noted that the NSSBA Board of Directors knew that she was invited as a guest to the meeting so that is transparent in terms of the relationship.

D. Wright asked when staff would be hired for the review at NSSBA.

N. Pynch-Worthylake has hired the person who has agreed to do the research piece of the governance review. The rest of the work will be to create a plan. CSAP was way out ahead in terms of self-assessment work, and has donated the work that they had done. The same could be done with HRSB's work on governance. Dave McKinnon at Acadia, the Dean of Graduate Studies, Education, will be doing the literature review.

### ***Review of other Boards***

N. Pynch-Worthylake noted the review is very much preliminary. Structurally, all boards have regular board meetings plus some have working sessions and standing committees which vary from two to six committees.

N. Pynch-Worthylake noted that the consistent practice among boards is the presentation of a Superintendents Report. Directors often report to a standing committee and whether they report to the whole board varies as the committees recommend. N. Pynch-Worthylake stated that governance framework seemed to be related to doing things as they have always been done. She also noted there is no consistency in how a governance policy framework is interpreted or applied.

C. Littlefair asked if we should go forward with the SWOT analysis.

D. Bell noted we could do a SWOT analysis but focus solely on the Halifax region.

N. Joncas noted it is important to have the SWOT analysis as part of our due diligence.

***Please refer to SWOT analysis***

### ***Review of EECD powers over Ad Hoc Committee***

D. Bell noted the informal discussion with the Deputy revealed that the Deputy would prefer the HRSB to not make a recommendation and adopt a new governance model before the NSSBA completed their research and worked collectively with other boards through NSSBA to develop a governance framework.

### ***Additional Comments***

C. Littlefair enquired to how the Ad Hoc Governance Committee will proceed, whether to continue independently or team up with the NSSBA.

N. Joncas referred to the mandate and how it refers to making a recommendation, if possible, to the board.

C. Linders noted she would like one more meeting for a SWOT analysis for Policy Governance.

E. LeRoux asked if Nancy knew a timeline for the NSSBA and when they might have a recommendation to the province on a governance model and if she knew how the boards might participate.

*L. Bullock leaves at 1:26 p.m.*

N. Pynch-Worthylake noted the timeline would coincide around the next school board election. She suggested that the committee stay the course and give her and Dave a bit of time to get a work plan developed. The NSSBA Board of Directors might get their own Ad Hoc Committee

that might include external people, other than their board members. She stated she would be fearful if the HRSB's Ad Hoc Committee decided to stop its work based on the NSSBA's meeting as it might be premature.

E. LeRoux noted that we should be mindful, that often when a group of people are trying to learn together, having three experts in the room is not a strong understanding. He also stated that if the HRSB gets too far ahead of the NSSBA, it might be destructive to getting a stronger model. E. LeRoux suggested moving forward, but cautiously.

N. Pynch-Worthylake noted that she has been upfront with the Board of Directors at the NSSBA that the NSSBA is working to increase the value to its membership. She also noted they need a strong action plan to support yesterday's decision.

D. Wright noted that the NSSBA will come forward with a recommendation.

C. Littlefair noted both the NSSBA and HRSB will stay their courses.

N. Joncas will present on Policy Governance at the next Ad Hoc Committee meeting.

D. Wright noted the entire Governing Board needs to do a SWOT analysis of the current status quo model.

E. LeRoux noted he will circulate articles on governance and leadership for education and learning.

**5. Decision Items**

**6. Next Meeting**

Friday, February 12, 2016 at 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

**7. Adjournment**

**It was moved and seconded (Linders/Wright) that the meeting be adjourned.**

**(CARRIED)**

Meeting adjourned at 1:38 p.m.