

NEWS RELEASE

April 25, 2017

April Meeting Provides Hands-on Learning for Trustees

The Board of Trustees of the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District held meetings at Prince of Wales Collegiate and the District main office in St. John's during the weekend of April 21-23, 2017 to discuss a number of topics important to education. The sessions were engaging and included an inquiry-based learning presentation from educators, a review of a number of school systems in the District, discussion about school board elections, and professional learning pertaining to school board governance.

“Allowing trustees to become more familiar with their roles, our sessions of this past weekend also included important work to further the goals of our strategic plan and focus on student achievement,” comment Goronwy Price, Chair of the Board of Trustees. “When trustees come together there is a lot of work to accomplish, yet the focus remains on making decisions that are in the best interest of students and our public education system.”

The Board has been involved in a review of the Mobile Central High School system which includes a potential reconfiguration of the student catchment areas to accommodate an extension to Mobile Central High School. On Friday April 21, the Board received a presentation from a parent representative group and as a decision is not required until the 2018-2019 school year, the Board decided to continue with its review of the system to ensure proper due diligence has taken place. The Board voted to zone the Galway development area for the Mount Pearl Senior High system which also includes Morris Academy and Mount Pearl Intermediate. The Board also approved East Point Elementary as the name of the new school in the Virginia Park area of St. John's.

Trustees participated in a session about school board governance and also discussed school board election processes. As well, three teachers from Morris Academy known as the STEM Sisters, along with their principal, presented to the Board on their efforts to increase student engagement through inquiry-based learning. The STEM Sisters are Stephanie Collins, Angela Furlong Kelly and Lori Powell and these enthusiastic teachers use hands-on learning techniques to engage their students on the topics of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Their methods include engaging students in a variety of computer coding technologies such as Bee-Bot and SCRATCH. These technologies use inquiry-based learning and encourage students to use logical and process thinking to improve their problem-solving skills while achieving curriculum outcomes. Further information about the STEM Sisters can be found on their website: www.stemsistersnl.com.

“Experiencing some of the innovative work taking place in our schools and led by our teachers is an important function of trustees,” said Chair Price. “We have educators who are leading the way in providing hands-on, inquiry-based education which engages our students and ensures they think critically and logically about the problem sets presented. Most importantly, school data of Morris Academy illustrates that achievement rises

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when these techniques are used. Having the chance to see these methods first hand, to question the teachers, and then share this information with their own schools is a critical opportunity for trustees.”

The Board of Trustees for the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District is composed of 17 elected trustees responsible for the governance of 66,300 students and 10,000 employees.

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