



Superintendent's Message

June 2012

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Introduction/Update

As the end of June looms, we begin to turn attention to summer plans and preparations for another school year. In addition to two student features, this “Message” includes an update on the recent Board of Directors’ meeting, the new strategic plan and staffing changes to date.

Board News

Governance

The Handicapped Persons’ Education Act has been revised as the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) Act, meaning we should now refer to the legislation as the APSEA Act. While these amendments serve to update terminology, more substantive changes, particularly around governance, are “on the table”. Pending concurrence by the four provinces, the revised legislation governing APSEA may come before the House at the spring or fall sittings of 2013.

Budget

The Board has approved our budget for 2012-13. As per recent years, it represents another slight decrease over the previous fiscal year. Recognizing the financial restraints being experienced by our funding partners, our efforts to be “good stewards” and achieve efficiencies which minimize negative impacts on programs and services to children must continue.

The budget approval included the extension of the Autism project through the end of the 2012-13 school year.

Executive Election

The Board of Directors annual meeting saw the election of the following for 2012-13:

Chair – Alexander MacDonald, Deputy Minister, Prince Edward Island

Vice-Chair – Frank Dunn, Deputy Minister, Nova Scotia

Secretary – Darrin Pike, Deputy Minister, Newfoundland and Labrador

Treasurer – Wendy McLeod-MacKnight, Deputy Minister, New Brunswick

Program Advisory Committee Chair - Adrian Smith, Prince Edward Island

Financial Advisory Committee Chair - Terry Keefe, Prince Edward Island

The governance of APSEA, through the Board, Executive and standing committee structure, tends to function in a quiet manner, without much fanfare. Of course, its decisions and direction-setting policies are critical to the organization's ability to meet its mandate. Sincere appreciation is extended to the individuals who serve in these capacities.

Strategic Plan

The Board has approved the strategic plan for 2012-15 (**attached**), with the proviso that further adjustments may be necessary as the implementation unfolds. The new SP document reflects changes to the various statements and priority details, based on feedback to the earlier drafts. The response rate to the survey was very good, with especially strong participation by parents. As we “start afresh” in September, your continued support will be appreciated.

Staffing Update

While our staffing process continues, the bulk of our positions for 2012-13 have been filled, as shown in the summary below. The update notes staff who are new to APSEA, and those who are changing location or position for the 2012-13 school year.

Arnold Moeliker – DHH Itinerant Teacher (Kentville, NS)

Lorenzo Dredge – DHH Itinerant Teacher (Kentville, NS)

Debbie Davis-Maybee – DHH Itinerant Teacher (Truro, NS)

Margaret MacDougall – DHH Itinerant Teacher (Miramichi, NB)

Peter Papoulidis – DHH Itinerant Teacher (Saint John, NB)

Lisa Weir – DHH Itinerant Teacher (Saint John, NB)

Janice Gavin – Supervisor of Assessment/Short-Term Programs - DHH (APSEA Centre)

Sheri Stevens – DHH Short-Term Program Teacher (APSEA Centre)

Laura Getson – DHH Itinerant Teacher (Halifax, NS)

Annette Manuel – BVI Itinerant Teacher (Charlottetown, PEI)

Frank Murphy – BVI Itinerant Teacher (Sydney, NS)

Shauna Power – BVI Itinerant Teacher (Truro, NS)

Carrie Vroege – BVI Itinerant Teacher (Amherst, NS)

Melanie Weir – BVI Itinerant Teacher (Pictou, NS)

Mary Jean Bray – BVI Itinerant Teacher (Halifax, NS)

Sarah Kilfoil – BVI Classroom Teacher (APSEA Centre)

Cheryl MacNeil – BVI Preschool Itinerant Teacher (Nova Scotia)

Sarah Wells – BVI Itinerant Teacher (Fredericton, NB)

Beth Button – BVI Itinerant Teacher (Saint John, NB)

Special appreciation is extended to our retirees (John Kehoe, Mary MacLeod, Bernie Power and Lou Davis) as they embark on a new phase and all that it entails. May your retirement be all that you want and more!



Volunteering is for Everyone

- by Jenna Leblanc



My name is Jenna Leblanc. I go to ARHS (Amherst Regional High School) in Amherst, Nova Scotia. I am in grade 11. I volunteer at the Lillian Allbon Animal Shelter once a week. I look after cats. I clean cages, feed cats, mop, sweep and wash dishes. On Sunday, May 27 I walked in a walk-a-thon to raise money for the Animal shelter. I got sponsors and raised \$90. I walked with Mom and Mary and our dogs Miley and Tucker. After we walked, they had a barbecue to thank us for our support.

I like volunteering at the Animal Shelter.

Student Spotlight: Kennedy Weir

- submitted by Monique Carr, Teacher, École Millidgeville North School



Kennedy Weir was born with CHARGE Syndrome, a syndrome characterized by very specific developmental anomalies and the leading cause of deaf-blindness in infants and children. As a result, she has numerous medical and physical challenges in life; however, not once did her positive spirit falter in light of these difficulties. Three years ago she arrived in middle school with a big heart and a delightful personality. Looking back at the 14 year-old, grade eight student's middle school experience, we can only delight and feel inspired by her accomplishments and successes.

Kennedy arrived at her new school in grade six, with the idea that she could be a part of any club or activity she desired. Teachers and students in the school quickly learned that she was a young girl of her word. During her grade six year, she was a member of the Newspaper Club, Sign Language Club and Celebrate Committee, where she was responsible for decorating the school throughout the year and acknowledging actions and successes of fellow students.

She was actively involved in fundraisers at the school, working especially hard to raise funds following the devastating 2010 earthquake in Haiti. She graduated from the Babysitting Course and was a vibrant member of the Cheerleading squad. Kennedy's enthusiasm for all things was acknowledged at the end of grade six, when she was awarded the Spirit Award at the year-end Awards Night.

During grade seven, Kennedy continued to impress everyone around her. Nothing seemed to slow her down! As a member of the Sign Language Club, she continued teaching students and staff sign language. She also made the Cheerleading team for the second year in a row and represented the school in various cheer competitions. She spent countless lunch hours in the library, acting as an assistant to the librarian, and learning to play the guitar as a member of the Guitar Club. Kennedy also participated in the school's Talent Show where she performed a dance routine.

Kennedy's positive impact on her peers and on the staff at her school continued during grade eight as well. She still worked with the Sign Language Club, demonstrated more of her talents when she sang in the annual Talent Show, and maintained her position on the school's cheerleading squad. She was recently recognized by the Provincial Cheer Association for her determination and motivation with the team.



Throughout the year, Kennedy was a member of the middle school choir and a participant in the CanWest Spelling Bee. She continued to play a key role in raising funds at the school.

This year, her efforts helped raise funds for the city's annual Empty Stocking Fund. Kennedy recently earned the Student of the Month Award in her class for demonstrating the qualities of a responsible student.



In addition to her involvement in activities at the school, Kennedy has been an active member of IACT (InterAction Children's Theater) since 2007. Through her involvement with IACT, Kennedy continues to develop and expand her interests in the arts. Her immersion in this company has allowed Kennedy to develop skills in theater performance, improve her self-expression and self-confidence and participate in group activities.

Kennedy began receiving APSEA services at the age of six months. Through APSEA, Kennedy has received support from an itinerant teacher for students who are deaf/hard of hearing, as well as the support from an itinerant teacher for students who are blind/visually impaired and the services of an interpreter since grade one. APSEA has provided help, education and support over the years, which have proven to be essential and positive influences on the wonderful and inspiring young woman Kennedy has become.

Looking Ahead

As the weather warms, we look ahead to summer camps (BVI: 2-6 July and DHH: 5-10 August), the start of new MSVU cohorts, the sign language immersion program (13-17 August), and the annual Interpreter Workshop (20-22 August).

On behalf of the APSEA Board of Directors and Senior Management, thank you for your efforts over the past year. We look forward to working with you again in 2012-13.

Let's all have a safe and happy summer!

Bertram Tulk, EdD
Superintendent



Atlantic Provinces Special
Education Authority (APSEA)

Strategic Plan

2012 – 2015

The Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) is an interprovincial co-operative agency established by the Ministers of Education of New Brunswick, Newfoundland-Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

MISSION

We provide educational services, in collaboration with our partners, to support children and youth from birth to 21 who are blind/visually impaired (BVI) and/or deaf/hard of hearing (DHH).

VISION

We support families and the public school system in the education of children and youth who are blind/visually impaired (BVI) and/or deaf/hard of hearing (DHH). Our professional commitment focuses on providing comprehensive educational opportunities, which lead to the highest potential for independence, self-sufficiency and productive, fulfilling lives.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Key organizational principles guide the design, implementation and evaluation of educational services. We are:

- child-focused and family-centered
- collaborative, involving the student, family, teachers and other professionals
- supportive of independence and self-advocacy
- committed to equality of educational opportunity
- research and evidence-based
- accountable for learning outcomes
- guided by provincial policies, procedures and guidelines
- future-oriented, flexible and innovative

APSEA Strategic Plan 2012-15

Priority 1: Communication				
Objective/Outcome	Actions	Timelines	Indicator(s)	Responsibility
1.1 Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to communicate effectively and regularly with internal and external stakeholders.	a. Research and evaluate the communication needs of APSEA staff.			
	I. Complete an “Internal Communication” survey to identify issues and concerns in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communication flow • coordination/sharing of knowledge • barriers to effective communication • media effectiveness 	Oct. 2012	Completed report of external consultant’s analysis.	
	II. Establish internal communication priorities based upon identified gaps.	Jan. 2013	Report presented to Senior Management for feedback.	
	III. Design a communication plan to address the core needs of the organization through appropriate defined media.	June 2013	Present communication plan to the Board.	
	b. Research and evaluate the communication needs of parents and partners.			
	I. Complete “External Communication” survey.	Sept. 2014	Summary analysis of the survey.	
	II. Establish communication priorities with external partners based upon identified gaps.	Jan. 2015	Completed report of priorities/gaps.	
III. Design a plan for communications with external partners using appropriate media.	June 2015	Present communication plan to the Board.		

Priority 2: Strategic Management

Objective/Outcome	Actions	Timelines	Indicator(s)	Responsibility
<p>2.1 Identify opportunities to maximize operational effectiveness and efficiencies.</p>	<p>a. Review business processes in:</p>			
	<p>I. alternate format services</p>	<p>Dec. 2012</p>	<p>Alternate Format (AF) Production Tracker developed and implemented.</p>	
	<p>II. library services</p>	<p>June 2013</p>	<p>AF Production Report developed.</p>	
	<p>III. assistive technology - develop a framework, policies and procedures for the delivery of AT services</p>	<p>Dec. 2013</p>	<p>Review of open source library software complete.</p>	
	<p>IV. assistive technology - review expenditures and analyze needs for technology and equipment</p>	<p>March 2014</p>	<p>Report on recommended software to Senior Management.</p>	
	<p>V. audiology – review FM amplification repair and replacement data (expenditures, trends, timelines)</p>	<p>Dec. 2012</p>	<p>Develop document and implement SET3 model with APSEA staff and AT partners.</p>	
<p>VI. audiology – analyze costs and benefits associated with dispensing hearing aids</p>	<p>June 2013</p>	<p>Recommendations for the 2014-15 budget.</p>		
<p>V. audiology – review FM amplification repair and replacement data (expenditures, trends, timelines)</p>	<p>June 2013</p>	<p>Report and recommendations to Senior Management.</p>		
<p>VI. audiology – analyze costs and benefits associated with dispensing hearing aids</p>	<p>June 2014</p>	<p>Report on hearing aid dispensing costs/benefits to Senior Management.</p>		

	b. Review external partnerships and identify options to utilize APSEA expertise to address unmet needs (such as alternate format partnership with Department of Education (NS), provision of services to Labrador Innu Education and Nunavut).	Dec. 2013	Present report with recommendations to the Board for consideration.	
2.2 Review and update APSEA policies, procedures and guidelines and develop new policies as needed.	<p>a. APSEA policy framework will be reviewed and updated.</p> <p>I. Establish priority areas for updating of existing policies and development of new policies.</p> <p>II. Review and revise policies, procedures and guidelines as necessary.</p> <p>b. Review and revise APSEA regulations, based on policy updates, as required.</p>	<p>Dec. 2012</p> <p>June 2013</p> <p>June 2014</p> <p>June 2015</p>	<p>Policy Framework presented to the Board.</p> <p>Priority areas approved by the Board.</p> <p>Recommend revisions to the Board via the appropriate Committee (Program, Financial).</p> <p>Summary report to the Board.</p>	

Priority 3: Programs and Services

Objective/Outcome	Actions	Timelines	Indicator(s)	Responsibility
3.1 Review and update criteria for service eligibility.	a. Articulate current model. b. Research : I. current service delivery models internationally II. implications of changes in the field c. Write updated policy and procedures. d. Establish a communication plan to disseminate and communicate eligibility criteria to APSEA staff and external stakeholders.	Jan. 2013 March 2013 May 2013 June 2013	Summary document presented to PAC Research document presented to PAC. Presentation to Board. Written communication plan to PAC.	
3.2 Establish a framework for measuring student success.	a. Review current practice. b. Research student success indicators for DHH and BVI populations internationally. c. Establish benchmarks for student success. d. Develop evaluation frameworks to ensure best practice and evidence-based programming for DHH and BVI populations.	Dec. 2012 March 2013 March 2014 May 2014	Summary document presented to PAC. Research summary document presented to PAC. Completion of a benchmark template. • Internal and external validation Completion of evaluation framework document. • Internal and external validation	

<p>3.3 Build capacity based on professional competencies to maximize support to the public education system.</p>	<p>a. Utilize research, and trend data to project skill set requirements in the following service areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Guidance, Career and Transition II. Itinerant teacher III. Preschool IV. Orientation and Mobility V. Interpreting <p>b. Analyze current competencies and expertise for each position.</p> <p>c. Identify gaps in expertise based on identified competencies.</p> <p>d. Develop professional development plans for staff, based on identified gaps.</p>	<p>March 2013 June 2013 June 2013 June 2013 June 2013</p> <p>June 2014</p> <p>June 2014</p> <p>June 2015</p>	<p>Completion of a document specifying the projected skill set for each of the identified areas.</p> <p>Summary document: Analysis and Identification of Competencies and Gaps</p> <p>Presentation of plan to PAC.</p>	
<p>3.4 Establish a process to outline the progress of students with their development of the braille code.</p>	<p>a. Develop a Braille Common Curriculum for Atlantic Canada</p>	<p>June 2013</p>	<p>Submission of the Braille Common Curriculum for Atlantic Canada to CAMET.</p> <p>Development of an implementation plan for internal and external stakeholders.</p>	

Priority 4: Human Resources

Objective/Outcome	Actions	Timelines	Indicator(s)	Responsibility
4.1 Update the performance management process.	a. Review and update job descriptions. b. Research current performance appraisal methods and select the most appropriate method(s). c. Establish performance criteria consistent with job descriptions for each position and incorporate into the performance appraisal process. d. Implement the performance appraisal process.	by June 2013 June 2013 June 2014 Sept. 2014	Complete/update job descriptions. Analysis document. Complete performance criteria. Complete performance appraisal document and present to staff.	
4.2 Determine future human resources needs.	a. Complete a detailed analysis of future human resource needs, which considers anticipated retirements, service delivery, student population trends and other relevant factors.	June 2013	Human Resource needs document.	
4.3 Update staff orientation practices	a. Review existing procedures for staff orientation and develop an orientation manual for the staff website.	June 2015	Outline of modules (Sept. 2012). Information on staff website (uploaded as completed).	

Priority 5: Research and Innovation

Objective/Outcome	Actions	Timelines	Indicator(s)	Responsibility
5.1 Develop and foster a culture of using evidence-based research to guide practice.	<p>a. Use research to guide programming and delivery of services and to develop future innovative programming.</p> <p>I. Develop a policy on research.</p> <p>II. Design a research ethics framework.</p> <p>III. Provide opportunities for training in research methods.</p> <p>IV. Identify and prioritize areas to be researched.</p>	<p>March 2014</p> <p>January 2013</p> <p>June 2014</p> <p>Sept. 2014</p>	<p>Research policy document to PAC.</p> <p>Ethics framework to be included in the policy.</p> <p>Implementation plan to the Board.</p> <p>Document summarizing areas to be researched.</p>	