

# **Curriculum Committee**

## **Annual Report**

**2007-2008**

### **Mandate:**

The Curriculum Committee studies the curriculum of schools and all proposed changes in the curriculum and reports the findings and recommendations to the Provincial Executive.

### **Committee Members:**

Mario Eleftheros – Chair, Patsy Height-Lewis, Marlene MacDonald, Gérard Allain, Kathy MacLean, Glen Pulley, Thomas Riga, Meg Richardson – Provincial Executive Liaison, Ron Brunton – NSTU staff liaison

### **Curriculum Committee Calendar for 2007-08:**

The committee held three meetings: October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007; January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007; and April 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008

## **Summary of Meeting Activities**

### **October 12th, 2007 Meeting:**

During the first meeting for the curriculum committee some of the topics for discussion were; the availability of English Language Arts resources and professional development for teachers in the Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial resolutions from annual council 2007 which dealt with curriculum, the Student Information System and a follow-up from the Time to Learn Time to Teach forum. The committee also conducted a review of several NSTU policies.

On this day the committee invited Ann Blackwood, Director of English Program Services, Department of Education, to meet with us. One of the main topics centered on the introduction of the new age for students to enrol in grade primary in the 2008/09 school year. Ms. Blackwood stated that there are several areas of focus for grade primary such as professional development and curriculum development. More information in regarding this should come from the Department.

Ms. Blackwood discussed the progress of a university offering a certificate in Family Studies. Mandatory Physical Education in high school is closer to becoming a reality and she explained that changes will be in effect by next year.

In another topic of discussion Ms. Blackwood confirmed that the Department of Education is taking a serious look at the number of outcomes in all grades and subject areas. She indicated as well, that, the Department has already reduced science outcomes from P-10 by 50%. The

Department has also developed curriculum guides for some subject areas in combined classrooms.

### **January 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting:**

During the committee's second meeting of the year the topics for discussion were; the new P-10 science curriculum, science classes offered in high school, the grade primary age change and progress on the provincial report card. The committee also conducted a review of the curriculum resolutions for Annual Council 2008.

The committee analysed of the provincial report card. Discussions centered on the various programs used to create report cards by each board within the province. Talked then focused on the possibility of having a uniform reporting system that would be used by teachers regardless of which board they were employed.

The science curriculum was also a topic that the committee investigated. Discussions centered on the reduction of science outcomes from primary to grade 10; overall the outcomes have been reduced by 50%. Focus then shifted to high school course selection. In terms of science courses available there are few options for students entering high school. The committee studied the feasibility of offering different levels of science 10, similar levels to those in math and English.

The committee also studied the curriculum resolutions for Annual Council 2008. The grade primary age change has been a constant topic of discussion at every curriculum committee meeting. Progress on professional development and resources for this age change have been ongoing by the Department of Education.

During our meeting the committee invited Tom Henderson, Director, Evaluation and Testing with the Department of Education. Mr. Henderson was joined by Sara Lafrance, his counterpart with the French Program Services division and by Janet Porter, English Program Services.

The group from the Department of Education took us through the junior high literacy assessment website, which can be found at <http://jhla.ednet.ns.ca>. The website contains useful information about the literacy assessments including information on preparing for the assessments and links to the French assessment site and the elementary assessment website.

As a group we discussed the possibility of changing the date of the assessments for grade 9 students to a year earlier. Mr. Henderson also mentioned that funding for literacy support in schools is based upon the information gathered from the assessments results. Assessments will continue in grades 3, 6, 9 and 12 as they have in the past.

The members of the Department of Education also mentioned that the Public School Program document is currently being reviewed which may result in some changes in the future.

### **April 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting:**

The committee began the meeting by studying the developments regarding the grade primary age change. After this the committee reviewed all council resolutions dealing with curriculum. This also included a referred resolution from 2007 annual council. The committee discussed and prepared their responses to the resolutions.

The committee ended their meeting by examining various curriculum related issues. They included; reduction of math outcomes, issues smaller high schools have in providing the same courses as larger high schools and on-line learning.

**Recommendations to the Curriculum Committee for 2008-09:**

1. That the Curriculum Committee continues to monitor the implementation of the primary entry age change.
2. That the Curriculum Committee continues to invite Ms. Ann Blackwood, Director English Program Services and other members of the Department of Education to meet with it.
3. That the Curriculum Committee discusses with representatives from the Department of Education the need for on-going support for new teachers and teachers new to courses or grade levels.

**Committee Costs:**

The Committee costs for 2007-08 were \$5,062.55; the budgeted amount was \$6,000. Costs were lower primarily because the Committee's third meeting did not involve a presentation from Department of Education personnel and was therefore held Friday evening – Saturday morning rather than during the day on Friday.

**Committee Chair for 2008-09:**

The Committee wishes to recommend to the Provincial Executive and the Nominating Committee that Kathy MacLean serve as the 2008-09 Chair of the Curriculum Committee.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Mario Eleftheros**