



ASD-W
Anglophone School District West

DISTRICT
EDUCATION
COUNCIL

1135 Prospect Street, Fredericton, New Brunswick, E3B 3B9 - www.asdw.nbed.nb.ca

11 April 2025

Dear Ms. Dixon and Ms. Carr:

Thank you for your letter expressing concerns over the initiative to augment flagpoles at Anglophone West School District (ASD-W) schools. As the proposer of this idea, I feel it important that I respond to you on behalf of the ASD-W District Education Council (DEC) as well as the Superintendent and his staff.

Each year, all DEC's within the province are required to submit to the department our requests for both major capital projects (by end of May) and capital improvements (by end of September). The first list contains projects such as new schools or major renovations while the latter list is designed to address issues with roofing, windows casings, doors etc. Last September, as we were about to submit our capital improvements list, I proposed that "we" should install three flagpoles at all of the ASD-W schools after noticing that there was great disparity amongst the various schools I had visited. Some had one pole, some had two poles, some had three poles and some had flag staffs attached to the building versus installed in the ground. There was no consistency.

The second part of this idea stemmed from the DEC Goals which we set each year. Since the establishment of the current Council in 2021, we have had the following as one of our goals:

"The Council will continue to become more aware of the history, culture and teachings of our First Nations and will support efforts to acknowledge and accept the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission."

We have addressed this goal, both the previous Council and the current Council, mainly through periodic presentations at our public meetings by our First Nations Councillor on various aspects of First Nations history and culture. However, as 2025 is the ten-year anniversary of the release of the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, I thought that perhaps a more demonstrative action should be considered. Thus, I linked the two items of improving facilities and reflecting one of our DEC goals to take shape as this flagpole initiative.

The district staff, through the Superintendent, were requested to ascertain the number of flagpoles (and type) currently at each of our schools as well as provide an estimate of the cost of increasing numbers to three at each school. That document was provided to the Council for review as part of our discussions on the matter. Funding, of course, was also discussed and as we did not want to impact the funds allocated to the district for capital improvements. It was suggested that the funding source should be the 'Self-sustaining Fund'. Funds in this account are derived from sources such as cafeteria proceeds, facility rentals, and international student fees and are at the discretion of the district with regard to how they are spent. It should be noted that any of our new facilities that are being built will have three flag poles as part of the construction costs.

The Council has discussed the flagpole proposal since September 2024 in at least seven of our meetings (working and public) and consequently it was time to make a decision. Thus, at our 23 January DEC public meeting, the following motion was made and approved by the Council:

- *I move that the district undertake, in a phased approach, a project to place three flagpoles at each ASD-West school using funds from the self-sustaining fund.*
- *As per the current provincial protocol policy on 'Flying and Displaying Flags in New Brunswick', two of the poles will be designated to fly the New Brunswick Flag and the Canadian Flag.*
- *The third pole may be used to fly the flag of First Nations communities or other flags to acknowledge special events.*
- *The first phase of this project will hopefully begin in 2025 and concentrate on schools where First Nations students attend in order to allow the flags of First Nations communities to be flown in recognition of the ten-year anniversary of the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.*
- *The Superintendent will provide guidance to schools on the flying of flags, noting the Office of Protocol requirements, similar to guidance already given on the use of the Honour Song*
- *This initiative is in concert with the approved DEC goals for 2024-25.*

You indicate in your letter that you view this initiative to be a symbolic gesture and as I mentioned at the outset of this response, it is indeed a demonstrative action that we are undertaking. It is also one with deep meaning intended to show that we are sincere in our efforts to heal and reconcile with our First Nations. It is truly important that this demonstration of support commence this year and that it continue going forward thereby living up to the words included in the acknowledgement statement of our government:

"We (I) respectfully acknowledge that New Brunswick is situated on the unceded and unsundered territories of the Wolastoqey, Mi'gmaq, and Peskotomuhkati peoples. We seek to repair and rebuild meaningful relationships with Indigenous peoples and honour these lands which hold the hopes of future generations."

There is one other item you mention in your letter concerning the lack of a ramp at one of the schools' entrances. Rest assured that if a ramp is required for the safety of students and staff, then the facilities team will address the matter with the school administration and attempt to resolve the issue using district or department resources as warranted.

Thank you again for reaching out with your concerns.

Sincerely,



Thomas K.D. Geburt
Chairperson District Education Council
Anglophone West School District