

Common SENSE Notes – October 2009

SENSE Policy Group

Sustainability Education in Nova Scotia for Everyone (SENSE) is an active multi-stakeholder network promoting sustainability education in the formal, non-formal and informal education sectors in Nova Scotia. The mission of SENSE is for all Nova Scotians to be living sustainably. My action item from the SENSE gathering session on Friday October 2, 2009 was to submit the notes from the afternoon group discussion on POLICY. Please find included a transcribed outline of the discussions that I am circulating to all participating team members and copied to Janelle and Sam at SENSE. Please review the notes and "reply to all" if you have any additional input, clarifications and/or suggestions.

ACTION ITEM: Policy / Advisory Committee

TEAM MEMBERS: Janet Barlow asrts@ecologyaction.ca, Tamara Lorincz - nsen@cen-rce.org, Tarah Wright - tarah.wright@dal.ca, Sue Boutilier Sue.Boutilier@nscc.ca

MAIN ACTIVITIES AND ACTION STEPS:

Given the current focus on environmental goals and sustainable prosperity in the province through the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act (EGSPA), and the Department of Education's commitment to sustainability, it is suggested to explore the creation of some form of provincial government advisory body focusing on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). This group could be comprised of a broad spectrum of constituent groups representing formal, informal and non-formal education along the lifelong learning continuum including children, youth, adults and seniors and spanning early childhood education, elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels. The Earth Charter would be utilized as a central part of the values underlying ESD and the group could also help to clarify the language around ESD.

Originally when the notion of a provincial government advisory body was discussed the term "Advisory Council" was used. The possible model structure for an Advisory Council could be the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women. However, the existing "Minister's Round Table on Environment and Sustainable Prosperity" could represent another viable model structure. The "Minister's Round Table on Environment and Sustainable Prosperity" assists the province with meeting its environmental goals on environment and sustainable prosperity and includes a broad spectrum of members representing many sectors and many regions of the province. The Department of Education could explore using a similar structure to convene a Round Table on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

On a separate but related vein of policy activity, the Province of Nova Scotia is committed to consulting the public on all activities, proposed legislation, regulations and policy. It is suggested that the SENSE group could assist with such government consultation sessions relating to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

SENSE Structure

Staff Person – fundraise, coordinate meetings, sit on sub-committees, maintain webpage and administrative tasks

Advisory Committee – maintain network, form/direct/disband sub-committees, redirect requests

Advisory Committee will be made up of at least (11?) members which ‘must’ include representatives from:

- Business
- Environment
- Social justice
- Youth
- NGO
- Adult education
- First Nations
- Health
- (this is a brainstorm, final list to be determined)

Also ‘must’ have representatives from:

- Formal education
- Non-formal education
- Informal education

Regional Networking Meetings

Group members: Sue Boutilier, Debbie Nielsen, Wendy MacDonald, Sam Juru, Jolien Stockly, Janelle Frail

When: Fridays, leading up to spring symposiums to advertise the symposiums, spring and fall is best

Where: Cape Breton, Yarmouth/Digby, Amherst/Stellarton, return to areas already visited as well

Why: action items from meetings,

What: ideas:

- cross pollination of ideas, ‘expert’ from one community presents at next regional networking meeting
- have group from region list an action they will take based on the information shared at the meeting
- have specific outcomes from the meeting listed before hand; why are we meeting?
- action at local level
- action per individual, per family
- create sense of cohesion in the group
- see if there is a way we can support action at the local level
- make SENSE a PD day for teachers, see if Dept. of Education can provide a substitute for teachers to attend meeting
- include Dept of Education representative (provincial and regional) at meetings

Next steps:

- Janelle to send out evaluation to people who attended networking meetings to see what went well, what could be better, to see if people used the connections they made at the meeting, see if there is a way we can support action at the local level, etc.
- Sam will put together a networking meeting in late fall, spring
- Other thoughts: need some type of update from SENSE, what's going on etc. to answer the question: why do I belong to SENSE?
- Janelle will send out Oct. monthly member e-mail and mention meeting with Minister of Education

SENSE Symposium

Title:

Where have we been? Where are we going?
 Moving sustainability education forward in Nova Scotia
 Provincial Symposium

Objectives:

- Celebrating our successes to date
- Contributing to the provincial initiatives on ESD i.e. Second Nature and the Dept. of Education's new ESD priority
- Show casing best practices
- Sharing resources
- Marking the UN Year on Biodiversity 2010
- Recognizing the 10th Anniversary of the Earth Charter (UNESCO adopted as ethical framework for ESD)
- Recognizing the 10th Anniversary of the Millennium Development Goals (our international commitments to our brothers and sisters living in other countries)
- Marking the end of the UN Decade 2000-2010 Creating a Culture of Peace & Non-Violence for the Children of the World
- Celebrating the 1st Anniversary of the College of Sustainability

Target Audiences:

- Teachers, educators
- Students
- Government representatives
- Interested public community
- Multi-sector (including cultural, ethnic groups, businesses etc...)

Ideas:

- Making the links from global, national, provincial, local and individual
- Art contest
- Have a big SWAP at the event
- Walking the talk/modeling best practices
- Mindshift as a potential keynote

Committee Members:

- Tamara Lorincz
- Heidi Verheul

- Terri Peace
 - Collette Lambert
 - Marilyn Webster
 - Wade
 - Helen Smith
- (I might have missed others around the table)

Poster Idea:

- Big footprints to little footprints conveying image of our journey advancing ESD and reducing our ecological footprint

Possible dates:

- Sat. March 27
- Sat. April 24