



## **STAFF TECHNICAL REPORT**

### **Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School Feeder System School Review**

**April 5, 2017**

## Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Section A: Background</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Section B: Rationale for Review</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Section C: Terms of Reference – School Options Committee</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Mandate .....	4
Review Objectives .....	4
<b>Section D: Communications</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Section E: School Board Member Analysis</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Section F: Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School Feeder System</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Section G: Student Enrolment</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Historical Enrolment: 2000-2016.....	7
Projected Enrolment: 2016-2021 .....	7
<b>Section H: Building Utilization</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Capacity: .....	8
Utilization Rates: 2016 and 2021 .....	8
<b>Section I: School Options Committee’s Report and Recommendation</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Section J: Impact of Report and Recommendation</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Impact of Proposed Changes on Number of schools .....	10
Impact of Proposed Changes on Remaining School Facilities .....	10
Impact of Proposed Changes on Student Enrolment .....	11
Impact of Proposed Changes on School Capacity Utilization.....	11
Impact of Proposed Changes on Student Transportation.....	11
Impact of Proposed Changes on Budget .....	12
<b>Section K: Options Available to the Board</b> .....	<b>12</b>

## Executive Summary

Since its establishment in 1996, the Strait Regional School Board has experienced a 46% decline in student enrolment. Over the next 10 years, the enrolment is projected to decline another 22%. This projected decline will have a significant negative impact on future budgets allocated to the school board.

On January 4, 2017, the Board approved a document titled **Long-Range Outlook (2016-2026)** [SRSB Long-Range Outlook 2016-2026](#) that established a review schedule for each planning area known as a feeder system. The recommended options outlined for each planning area are intended to give direction to the Board and assist in long-term planning. As part of this **Long-Range Outlook**, the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School feeder system, comprised of Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School (9-12), St. Andrew Junior School (5-8), St. Andrews Consolidated School (P-6), H. M. MacDonald Elementary School (P-6), and Antigonish Education Centre (P-4), was scheduled for review in 2016-2017.

Adhering to the [Provincial School Review Policy](#), a School Options Committee (SOC) was established to conduct the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School feeder system school review. This committee was formed and its work was guided by the following four objectives:

- 1) Determine, prior to the decision notice date of April 30, 2017, whether or not the Antigonish Education Centre will be required after the lease is up on this Public-Private Partnership\* (P3) building;
- 2) Address the issue of excess space;
- 3) Reorganize the system to optimize the use of school facilities; and
- 4) Create scenarios/options consistent with the objectives and reference criteria identified in the school review process for the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School feeder system.

After a series of eleven (11) working meetings and three (3) public consultation meetings, the School Options Committee for the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School Feeder System School Review has recommended the closure of Antigonish Education Centre. This would result in the reconfiguration of the St. Andrew Junior School as a Primary – 6 school and Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School as a 7-12 school.

Using a combination of current and projected data, the option recommended by the School Options Committee for the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School feeder system was analyzed to ensure that no existing program spaces would be lost due to the closure of the Antigonish Education Centre. This included maintaining St. Andrews Consolidated School and H. M. MacDonald Elementary School as Primary - 6 schools; closing Antigonish Education Centre and reconfiguring St. Andrew Junior School from a 5-8 school to a Primary to 6 school; and reconfiguring Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School from a 9-12 school to a 7-12 school.

A standard format was followed to provide a consistent framework to compare the recommended option with the current configuration and outline the details for the schools involved. In order to determine future directions for schools in the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School feeder system, there are several key areas for the Board to consider in their ongoing deliberations. These include programming, student enrolment, staffing, operational costs, transportation, school utilization, as well as overall expenditures and savings.

\*Public-Private Partnership (P3) – is a lease agreement for Antigonish Education Centre between the Government of Nova Scotia and Ashford Investments.

## Section A – Background

### Long-Range Outlook

The initial Strait Regional School Board's Long-Range Outlook was approved on April 29, 2015. On January 4, 2017, the Board approved its updated ten (10) year planning document titled [SRSB Long-Range Outlook 2016-2026](#). This document established a review schedule for each planning area known as a feeder system. The review includes a series of recommended options for each planning area. The options proposed for each planning area are intended to provide direction to the Board and to assist in long-term planning. Each individual option will be fully considered by the governing Board Members before implementation.

## Section B – Rationale for Review

### Rationale for Review – Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School Feeder System

The Strait Regional School Board was notified that the Province of Nova Scotia had reached an agreement with the P3 Partner on an extension of the decision notice date required under the contract for Antigonish Education Centre. As a result of the new timeline, the Strait Regional School Board must communicate its decision regarding the Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School Feeder System school review to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development by April 30, 2017. This timeline aligns with the existing schedule previously established in both the previous, and current, Strait Regional School Board's Long-Range Outlook.

The following are important points of consideration:

- The Board is projecting enrolment to continue to decline;
- As funding to school boards is directly connected to student enrolment, revenues are anticipated to continue to decline;
- The Board has identified a significant excess space issue which is projected to increase; and
- The reorganization involving schools within the Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School feeder system would optimize the use of school facilities within the feeder system.

## Section C – Terms of Reference – School Options Committee

On October 5, 2016, the Strait Regional School Board approved the following motion:

*That the Strait Regional School Board initiate a school review of the Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School feeder system and that this review will follow the Provincial School Review Policy of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for the Province of Nova Scotia.*

The Board also approved a motion to establish a School Options Committee (SOC). The School Options Committee (SOC) will conduct a review of the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School feeder system. This review is to consider and make written recommendations to the Board respecting the Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School feeder system.

### **Mandate:**

The review must meet the requirements of the Provincial School Review Policy including:

- conducting a review with public consultation of the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School feeder system as requested by the School Board, according to the objectives and within the parameters provided by the Board; and
- submitting a Report and Recommendation to the School Board which will help inform the Board's final decision.

### **Review Objectives:**

The objectives of the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School feeder system school review include:

- Determine, prior to the decision notice date of April 30, 2017, whether or not Antigonish Education Centre will be required after the lease is up on this P3 building;
- Address the issue of excess space;
- Reorganize the system to optimize the use of school facilities; and
- Create scenarios/options consistent with the objectives and reference criteria identified in the school review process for the Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School feeder system.

## Section D – Communications

The Strait Regional School Board's Coordinator of Communications assisted the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School Feeder System School Options Committee (SOC) throughout the process.

Notices of public meetings were publicized in the following manner:

- SRSB website;
- SRSB Twitter;
- SRSB Education News Email Group;
- Shared with parents/guardians via school distribution and a PowerSchool Alert;
- Radio announcements on 101.5 The Hawk and CJFX/98.9 XFM;
- Advertisements were placed in The Inverness Oran, The Guysborough Journal, The Casket and The Reporter on the following dates:
  - First public meeting (November 2, 2016 and November 9, 2016)
  - Second public meeting (January 18, 2017 and January 25, 2017)
  - Third public meeting (February 8, 2017 and February 15, 2017; with the exception of the Guysborough Journal, the ad appeared in the February 8, 2017 and February 22, 2017 issues)

In addition, an advertisement inviting community/business representatives to serve on the School Options Committee (SOC) for the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School feeder system was placed in the October 12, 2016, issue of The Inverness Oran, The Guysborough Journal, The Casket and The Reporter.

All information pertaining to the work done by the Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School Feeder System SOC is available at the [Dr. J.H. Gillis Regional High School Feeder System School Review](#) section of Strait Regional School Board website.

## Section E – School Board Member Analysis

Throughout the school review process, members of the Strait Regional School Board have been listening closely to the community and all concerns raised both at the public meetings and through written submissions. Opportunities were provided to members of the Strait Regional School Board to:

- Attend all public meetings of the School Options Committee (SOC) for the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School Feeder System School Review;
- Read / review the School Options Committee's Final Report and Recommendations;
- Read / review the School Options Committee's Minority Report;

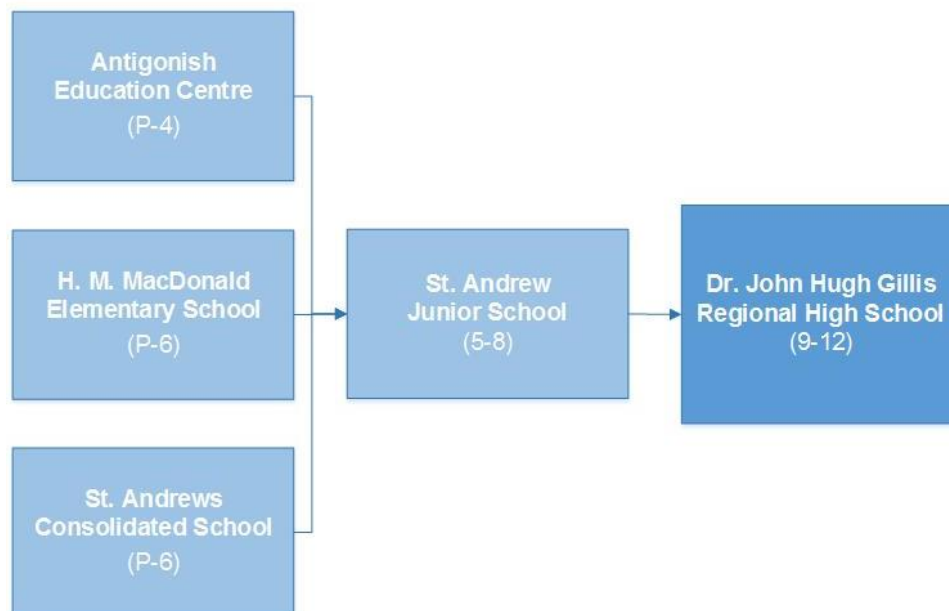
- Read / review a copy of all approved minutes of the School Options Committee's public meetings and working committee meetings;
- Read / review all email correspondence from the general public;
- Participate in Board study sessions; and
- Participate in a tour of Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School.

The Board will carefully consider all of the information received prior to making a final decision.

## Section F – Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School Feeder System

### Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School Feeder System

The Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School feeder system is located on 1,291 square kilometers of land which includes the Town of Antigonish and a portion of the County of Antigonish. It is comprised of a Grade Primary to 4 school, Antigonish Education Centre, two Grade Primary to 6 schools, H. M. MacDonald Elementary School and St. Andrews Consolidated School, and a Grade 5-8 school, St. Andrew Junior School, whose students attend Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School for Grades 9 to 12.



## Section G – Student Enrolment

From 2000 to 2016, student enrolment in the Dr. J.H. Gillis Regional High School feeder system has declined by 27%.

### Historical Enrolment: 2000 – 2016

School	2000	2016	Decline	% Decline
Antigonish Education Centre	634	502	132	21%
Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School	1,130	740	390	35%
H. M. MacDonald Elementary School	131	111	20	15%
St. Andrew Junior School	811	566	245	30%
St. Andrews Consolidated School	285	267	18	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,991</b>	<b>2,186</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>27%</b>

It is projected student enrolment in the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School feeder system will decline by another 7% by 2021.

### Projected Enrolment: 2016 – 2021

School	2016	2021	Decline	% Decline
Antigonish Education Centre	502	470	32	6%
Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School	740	656	84	11%
H. M. MacDonald Elementary School	111	118	+7	+6%
St. Andrew Junior School	566	541	25	4%
St. Andrews Consolidated School	267	248	19	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,186</b>	<b>2,033</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>7%</b>



## Section H – Building Utilization

In accordance with the Provincial School Review Policy (Appendix C), school boards are required to determine the capacity and utilization of each school as part of their Long-Range Outlook. Application of a standardized formula provided in the policy and used by all school boards in Nova Scotia was used to determine current and projected utilization rates for schools in the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School feeder system.

### Capacity:

School	Capacity
Antigonish Education Centre (P-4)	725
Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School (9-12)	1,391
H. M. MacDonald Elementary School (P-6)	144
St. Andrew Junior School (5-8)	700
St. Andrews Consolidated School (P-6)	288

### Utilization Rates: 2016 and 2021

School	Utilization 2016	Projected Utilization 2021
Antigonish Education Centre (P-4)	69%	65%
Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School (9-12)	53%	47%
H. M. MacDonald Elementary School (P-6)	77%	82%
St. Andrew Junior School (5-8)	81%	77%
St. Andrews Consolidated School (P-6)	93%	86%

## Section I – School Options Committee’s Report and Recommendation

### Report and Recommendation:

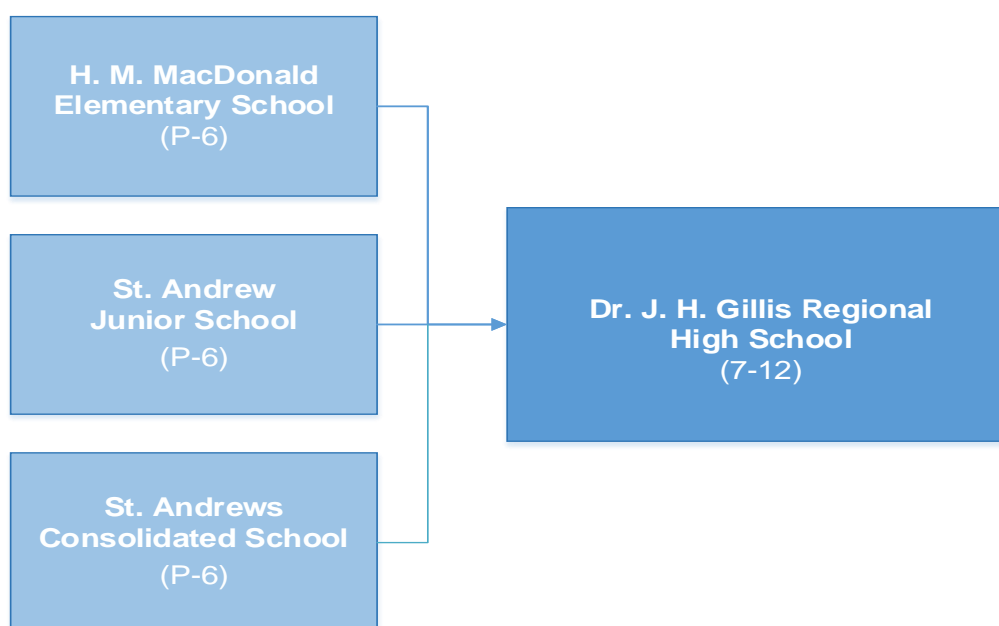
That the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School Feeder System School Options Committee supports the closure of Antigonish Education Centre as it addresses the utilization question in the Terms of Reference for the Recommendation to Review document established by the Strait Regional School Board;

- and that the recommendation meets four (4) of the four (4) review objectives set out in the Terms of Reference;
- with Antigonish Education Centre being identified for permanent closure and the remaining four (4) schools being configured in the following manner:
  - H.M. MacDonald Elementary School – Grades Primary - Six
  - St. Andrews Consolidated School – Grades Primary - Six
  - St. Andrew Junior School – Grades Primary - Six
  - Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School – Grades Seven - Twelve.

## Section J – Impact of Report and Recommendation

### Impact of Proposed Changes on Number of Schools:

If the School Options Committee's Report and Recommendation is approved by the Strait Regional School Board, the closure of Antigonish Education Centre in 2021 would result in four (4) schools in the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School feeder system with the following grade configurations:



### Impact of Proposed Changes on Remaining Schools:

Although each school could accommodate the projected enrolment in 2021, an addition to St. Andrew Junior School of approximately 5700 ft<sup>2</sup> is proposed. In addition, a reconfiguration of some existing spaces at St. Andrew Junior School is also required. This addition and reconfiguration would ensure all program spaces currently available at Antigonish Education Centre could be accommodated in the newly re-configured P – 6 St. Andrew Junior School. The design and construction of this addition would be completed in consultation with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Although no addition would be required for Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School, a re-location of the administration area to the first floor and an expansion of the cafeteria would be desirable.

### Impact of Proposed Changes on Student Enrolment:

The School Options Committee's Report and Recommendation will result in increased student enrolment in two of the four remaining schools in the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School feeder system.

School	Projected Enrolment 2021
Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School (7-12)	997
H. M. MacDonald Elementary School (P-6)	118
St. Andrew Junior School (P-6)	670
St. Andrews Consolidated School (P-6)	248

### Impact of Proposed Changes on School Utilization:

The School Options Committee's Report and Recommendation would create a more balanced utilization of space in the four remaining schools.

School	Projected Utilization 2021
Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School (7-12)	72%
H. M. MacDonald Elementary School (P-6)	82%
St. Andrew Junior School (P-6)	*84%
St. Andrews Consolidated School (P-6)	86%

\*Utilization rate for St. Andrew Junior School includes proposed addition.

In 2021, the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School feeder system will have the capacity to accommodate an additional 1,215 students, should the status quo remain.

### Impact of Proposed Changes on Student Transportation:

The School Options Committee's Report and Recommendation would not result in any significant bussing changes.

In accordance with the Strait Regional School Board's Long-Range Outlook (2016-2026) a Student Transportation / Boundary Review is scheduled for the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School feeder system.

### Impact of Proposed Changes on Budget:

The closure of Antigonish Education Centre would result in an annual operational savings of \$529,000.31 (based on 2015-2016 numbers).

School	Current Configuration	Recommended Configuration
Antigonish Education Centre	\$529,000.31	
Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School	\$783,286.32	\$783,286.32
H. M. MacDonald Elementary School	\$116,935.32	\$116,935.32
St. Andrew Junior School	\$549,161.54	\$549,161.54
St. Andrews Consolidated School	\$211,493.12	\$211,493.12
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,189,876.61</b>	<b>\$1,660,876.30</b>

The operational savings of Antigonish Education Centre will be offset by the incremental operational costs associated with the proposed addition to St. Andrew Junior School. In addition to operational savings, potential savings will also be realized through a reduction in a number of staffing positions, both NSTU and CUPE.

## Section K – Options Available to the Board

As noted in Directive N of the Provincial School Review Policy, *“the governing school board is responsible for making a final decision with respect to the outcome of the review.”* As such, the governing board of the Strait Regional School Board may decide to:

- accept the Report and Recommendation of the School Options Committee of the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School Feeder System School Review and vote to close Antigonish Education Centre;
- identify another school(s) in the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School feeder system for potential re-configuration and/or closure. This option enables the Board to realize savings earlier than 2021 as the school(s) identified would not be P3 buildings; or
- recommend no changes or “status quo” for the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School feeder system. The governing Board of the Strait Regional School Board would require a recommendation to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development to purchase Antigonish Education Centre when the lease expires in 2021.