

Report of the School Options Committee

for the

Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School Feeder System

March 13, 2017

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Introduction

The School Options Committee (SOC) for the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School feeder system were directed by the Strait Regional School Board to conduct a Review of the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School feeder system in accordance with the Provincial School Review Policy (2014) for the Province of Nova Scotia and in compliance with the Terms of Reference set by the school board.

The Terms of Reference for the SOC mandated the following:

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. J. H. Gillis Regional High School feeder system.

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 inform the board's final decision.*

Review Objectives:

The objectives of the Dr. John Hugh 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.

Long-Range Outlook

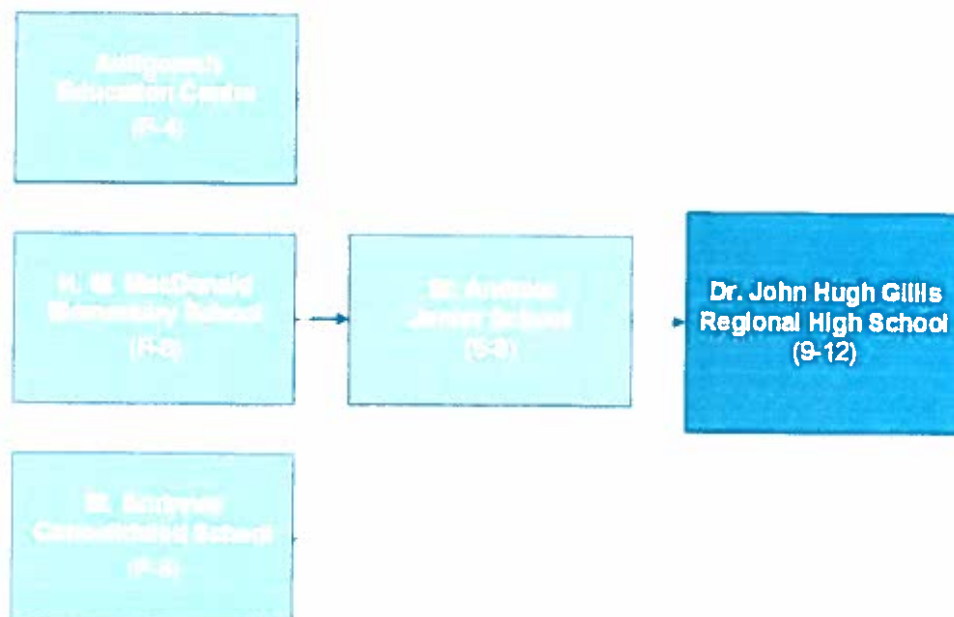
On April, 29, 2015, the Strait Regional School Board approved a ten (10) year planning document titled "Long-Range Outlook" that established a schedule for each planning area known as a feeder system. The Long-Range Outlook set a suggested schedule of school reviews over a four (4) year period from 2015 – 2019, following the Provincial School Review Policy enacted by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for the Province of Nova Scotia.

The Long-Range Outlook suggested the following review in 2016 - 2017:

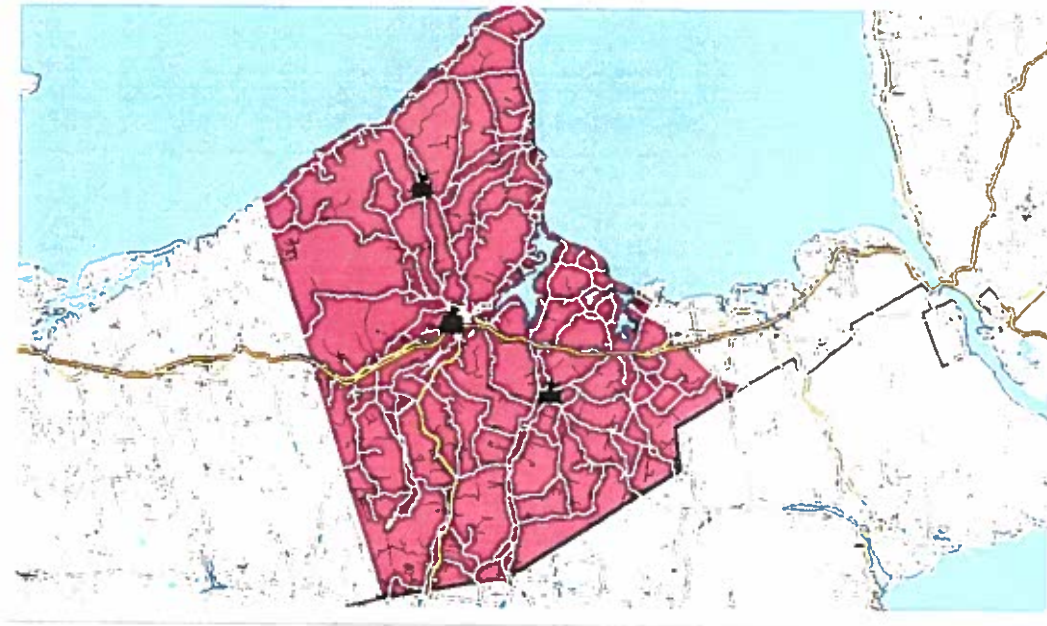
- Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School feeder system

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

The Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School feeder system includes five (5) schools in the town and county of Antigonish. It is presently comprised of two grade Primary to 6 schools, St. Andrews Consolidated School and H.M. MacDonald Elementary School, a Primary to 4 school, Antigonish Education Centre, a Grade 5-8 school, St. Andrew Junior School, and Dr. J.H. Gillis Regional High School for grades 9 to 12.



The following is a map of the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School Feeder System:



**Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School Feeder System Utilization Rate
(Long Range Outlook 2016 – 2026)**

School	Utilization Rate
Antigonish Education Centre (P-4)	69%
Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School (9-12)	53%
H. M. MacDonald Elementary School (P-6)	77%
St. Andrew Junior School (5-8)	81%
St. Andrews Consolidated School (P-6)	93%

Board Motions

On October 5, 2016 at the Regular Monthly meeting the Strait Regional School Board approved the following two motions:

Motion #1:

The Strait Regional School Board initiate a review within the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School Feeder System and that this review will follow the Provincial School Review Policy adopted by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for the Province of Nova Scotia.

Motion #2:

The Strait Regional School Board authorize through the Superintendent of Schools to establish a School Options Committee (SOC) to conduct a review of the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School Feeder System.

The review of the Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School Feeder System was initiated with the approval of the above motions.

With the Boards approval, the Superintendent of Schools formed the School Options Committee (SOC) to conduct the review in accordance with the Provincial School Review Policy (2014) following the Terms of Reference contained in the "*Recommendation to Review: Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School Feeder System*" (Appendix A).

School Options Committee: Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School Feeder System

School Review Facilitator:

- Bob MacEachern

Voting Members - School Advisory Council (SAC) Representatives:

Community/Business Rep	Deepak Prasad (Chair of SOC)
School Advisory Council – AEC (Chair)	Maria Fraser
School Advisory Council – AEC	Karla Chisholm
School Advisory Council – DJHG	John Blackwell
School Advisory Council – DJHG (Chair)	Allan Armsworthy
School Advisory Council – HMM (Chair)	Amanda MacDonald
School Advisory Council – HMM	Jacqui Briand
School Advisory Council – SAJS (Chair)	Minu Sharma
School Advisory Council – SAJS	Angela Penney
School Advisory Council – SACS (Chair Designate)	Beth Maloney
School Advisory Council – SACS	Mary Anne Burke

Non-Voting Members:

Principal – AEC	April Weaver
Principal – DJHG	Wanda Fougere
Principal – HMM	Jason Dayman
Principal – SAJS	Glenn Austen
Principal – SACS	Kirk Johnstone
School Review Facilitator	Bob MacEachern
SRSB – Coordinator	Kevin Walker
SRSB – Director of Operations	Sherman England

Meetings:

Working Meetings:

The School Options Committee has met on the following dates:

- Wednesday, October 26, 2016 (Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School)
- Monday, November 7, 2016 (Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School)
- November 22, 2016 (H. M. MacDonald Elementary School)
- November 28, 2016 (St. Andrew Junior School/Antigonish Education Centre)
- December 6, 2016 (Town Hall – Antigonish)
- January 9, 2017 (County of Antigonish – Meeting Room)
- January 30, 2017 (St. Andrews Consolidated School)
- February 6, 2017 (St. Andrew Junior School)
- February 13, 2017 (Via conference call)
- February 21, 2017 (Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School)
- March 6, 2017 (Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional High School)

Public Meetings:

- Public Meeting 1, November 15, 2016 at Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School
- Public Meeting 2, January 26, 2017 at Antigonish Education Centre
- Public Meeting 3, February 22, 2017 at St. Andrew Junior School

A summary of public contributions were taken by the recording secretary at each public meeting and were subsequently approved by the SOC. The approved minutes and presentation material is found in Appendix C.

Summation of Work:

Since the formation of the SOC on October 26, 2016 the committee has held eleven (11) Working Meetings and three (3) Public Meetings. Throughout this time the committee has had the opportunity to tour the existing facilities to review information, receive public input in preparation of making a recommendation to the Strait Regional School Board as required in the Terms of Reference which specifically requests that the committee:

- 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.

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 –	Grade Primary - Six
• St. Andrews Consolidated School –	Grade Primary - Six
• St. Andrew Junior School –	Grade Primary - Six
• Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School –	Grade Seven - Twelve.