

**Dr. J. H. Gillis Regional Feeder System School Review
School Options Committee**

Public Meeting 1

Tuesday, November 15, 2016 – 7:00 p.m.

Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School, Antigonish, Nova Scotia

Attendance

Committee Members:

Voting:

Deepak Prasad, Community Representative – SOC Chair
Maria Fraser, AEC School Advisory Council Chair
Karla Chisholm, AEC School Advisory Council Parent Representative
John Blackwell, DJHG School Advisory Council Parent Representative
Amanda MacDonald, HMM School Advisory Council Chair
Jacqui Briand, HMM School Advisory Council Parent Representative
Beth Maloney, SACS School Advisory Council Chair
Mary Anne Burke, SACS School Advisory Council Parent Representative
Minu Sharma, SAJS School Advisory Council Chair
Angela Penney, SAJS Advisory Council Parent Representative

Non-Voting:

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

1. Call to Order (B. MacEachern, Facilitator)

The Public meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. Record of Attendance

Regrets were received from Allan Armsworthy, Dr. J. H. Gillis School Advisory Council Chair

B. MacEachern, School Options Committee Facilitator, welcomed D. Prasad, School Options Committee Chair for opening comments.

D. Prasad opened the meeting with greetings on behalf of the School Options Committee. The Chair stated that the ultimate goal of the School Options Committee is to make our schools stronger so that when our students leave after Grade 12 they have the tools and skill sets required to be successful. The Committee encourages feedback from the public.

The Facilitator introduced Board Members in attendance:

Joanne Reddick, Mary Jess MacDonald, Jamie Samson, Anne Peters, Paula Paul, Chelsea Burke, Rosalee Parker, George Kehoe, Richelle MacLaughlin, Jim Austin, Barbara Quirk, Francine Boudreau along with Superintendent, Ford Rice and recognized Antigonish Mayor, Laurie Boucher.

3. Explanation of the Provincial School Review Process – Presentation attached as part of the public record.

The presentation included the following key elements and each was explained by the Facilitator:

- a. Role of the Facilitator
- b. Mandate of the SOC
- c. Objectives and Reference Criteria

4. Summary of Work Conducted to Date

The School Options Committee has met on the following dates:

- Wednesday, October 26, 2016
- Monday, November 7, 2016

5. Purpose of the Meeting

The purpose of the Public Meeting is to outline the school review process, present work completed to date and to receive feedback from the public.

6. Public Feedback

The Facilitator requested public feedback

1. April Weaver asked the Facilitator to clarify what is meant by P3.

The Facilitator explained that P3 stands for Public/Private Partnership. These partnerships are between private investors and the Province of Nova Scotia.

2. Rochelle MacKenzie, HM MacDonald SAC Member: Would like clarity on the interaction between the Boundary Review and the School Review Process and how the two are interacting. She has concerns on those not being made prior to the recommendation by the SOC.

The Facilitator outlined that the SOC are dealing with the Terms of Reference established by the Strait Regional School Board not the Boundary Review.

The Superintendent of Schools further explained that the Dr. J.H. Gillis Feeder System encompasses all the 5 schools in the feeder system, that's not to say there won't be conversations around boundaries going on with individual schools within the feeder system as we go through. The boundary review will be ongoing over the course of time – the overall boundary view will be articulated in the next long range outlook.

3. Paul Davey: What is the background of what the actual usage numbers are for the different schools.

The Superintendent of Schools provided the following utilization rates based on September 30th, 2016 enrolment:

- a) DJHG – 54%;
- b) SAJS – 81%;
- c) AEC – 69%;
- d) HMM – 77%; and
- e) SACS – 93%.

4. Peter Artibello asked about caps on usage.

The Superintendent of Schools outlined that the Provincial School Review Policy ensures that all boards use the same formula when identifying and calculating utilization rates for all schools. It is a consistent process throughout the 8 school boards in Nova Scotia.

5. Jane Ann Howard – Applauded the SRSB for involving the public in the meetings. If town student wanted to go to a county school –how does this happen?

The Director of Operations noted that the Board has a Transfer Policy that addresses the transfer of students within the board.

6. Rochelle MacKenzie: Do the projected numbers include students who have been granted transfer?

The Director of Operations noted that Baragar Systems completes the projects based on a number of factors including the home address of students.

The Facilitator further clarified that every child in the system is accounted for. The Committee will know if there are students crossing boundaries for whatever reasons.

7. Paul Davey: moved here from a system that had 'free entry' as opposed to catchment areas. Just wondering is there a particular advantage to having a catchment system.

The Director of Operations noted that the Strait Regional School Board covers up 20% of the area for the province of Nova Scotia – 11000 km² and catchment areas are required.

8. Peter Artibello: With all the work the SOC is doing, should the current government decide to change the Boards as they did with Health Care, would this make this process null and void?

The Facilitator indicated that the government is trying to decide what they are going to do with these P3 leases so whether it is the boards deciding or the government the decision still has to be made.

The Superintendent noted that the answer was in the question “if the government decides”

9. Eric Chisholm: Is this a financial efficiency audit (look at everything – staffing, bussing, buildings, uses) or a capital structure thing (renovations)?

The Facilitator – Transportation is part of it, but not looking at reconfiguration of transportation on a wholesale basis.

The Superintendent of Schools – In the Long-Range Outlook there are 3 major initiatives: boundary reviews, 4 feeder system reviews and Sr. High programming review. We are looking at everything, but the focus of this group is the 5 schools in this feeder system.

10. Eric Chisholm: Other schools rent space to subsidize the cost of running schools with empty space (i.e.: daycare) – would we be looking at something similar? Also, would it make sense to have one course offered in one school 1st semester and then at another school 2nd semester – this would allow schools to share books/resources. Is it just buildings we’re looking at or the whole efficiency of the system.

The Superintendent of Schools stated the Long-Range Outlook clearly articulates that we’re looking at system efficiency as opposed to one building / feeder system / or issue. The Strait Regional School Board is a strong supporter of community use of schools.

The Facilitator concluded by outlining that the SOC will follow the mandate outlined by the Strait Regional School Board and will be looking at the efficiencies of the facilities and what P3 schools will be needed once the leases are up in 2021.

7. Future Meetings

- a. Working Meeting
- b. Public Meeting – Mid - January, 2017. The date, location and time will be advertised in advance.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

**BOB MACEACHERN
SCHOOL REVIEW FACILITATOR**

**CHERYL MACPHERSON
RECORDING SECRETARY**