

## Policy 409 Sustainability Studies

I want to comment briefly on the format or guidelines for Policy 409 Sustainability Studies. I feel that a missing piece of information for the DEC members is feedback from the staff of the affected schools. Not only teaching and Administration staff, but all staff such as janitors, EA's, step ahead staff, etc. I think their needs to be some sort of consultation, or opportunity for input from them. Perhaps the staff can meet as a group and collectively submit a document to the DEC. Or 1-2 local DEC members meet with the staff as a group, and given the opportunity to speak freely, without fear of repercussions from their employer. One can argue that they are employees of the School District or Province and should not have an opinion, or voice their concerns. But I ask this. Who better to know what is best for the kids as a group, than the staff that are with them every school day"? Yes, they are employees, but they know these kids as a group better than anyone in this room. More importantly, they are educated professionals, and many are parents themselves. Their opinions are relevant and should be heard in any Policy 409 Review in this Province.

As for the situation at Bath, as you know, this is our second Policy 409 Review in 5 years, and I find it frustrating that the staff do not seem to be able to voice their opinion, I can't imagine how they feel.

There is still plenty of time for this to happen prior to the DEC's decision on March 19.

At the Policy 409 Review public Meeting #1 this past Nov 30<sup>th</sup>, this slide listing some of our schools' challenges was prepared and presented by The School District. These challenges, along with others are very real. No changing rooms for phys. Ed, intramurals, and after school games. Staff and visiting specialists meeting with students in hallways. No space for students that must leave the classroom, to highlight a few. All without any privacy whatsoever. I ask you to put your children, grandchildren, and neighbors in this situation. The community and staff accepted these challenges with the understanding that the Mid-life upgrade would be completed next door in 1 year. We are currently in year 2.

We know and recognize it was not the DEC's decision to stop the work and completion of this project, however you the DEC do have the authority and the opportunity to recommend to the Department of Education to finish this project that is nearly 75 % complete. The DEC and Province cannot lose sight of the financial investment to date, as well as the cost if the project is not completed. At the end of the day, this community and Province will have a 5-million-dollar parking lot, or a 7.5 million dollar fully functional newly renovated school. We certainly do not want or need a 5-million-dollar parking lot next door to our pool.

We all know that the completion of the work next door will require more capital investment, but we are asking you to recommend that the completion happen quickly. All the necessary work can be done in this calendar year. We also recognize that the School District and this Province have plenty of similar challenges in other schools. I want to emphasize that you can eliminate this entire list of identified challenges, and other challenges, for this community, staff and most importantly for the students and kids enrolled at Step Ahead. Even the first item on this list can be eliminated with minor changes to the catchment area. How often do you the DEC get the opportunity?

# School Challenges

- Smaller populations do not allow for flexible classroom compositions.
- Physical space is limited.
- Elementary gym for middle school students
- The library is not attached to school, it is in a portable.
- Office is a makeshift classroom renovated
- Storage, restrooms are shared with pre-k and middle students
- No changing rooms
- Speech therapy is done in the hallway by the bathrooms with the upstairs students (noise, no privacy, distracting to the students).
- ISD has to float around between offices to find private spaces to work with students.
- The SIW worker has no office or private space to work one on one with a student (in the computer lab right now, which does not work if there is a class in there).
- Teachers have no space to do assessments with students (other than sitting in the hallway, or if it's not a library day we could go outside to the portable, which is not convenient).
- The gym is small and does not accommodate middle school curriculum and sports.
- Kitchen is small and cramped, but the volunteers make it work!



*Excited. Involved.  
Prepared.*