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NEWS

Schools' future to be unveiled May 21



Rebecca Howland | Bugle Observer

The recommendation on the Carleton North area school sustainability study will be made in a couple of weeks.

The meeting scheduled for March 19 was delayed for weeks due to COVID-19 restrictions. A public meeting for Anglophone West district education council (DEC) to recommend a future for Carleton North schools will be made via an online public meeting on May 21.

"Had we not had a change in our routines the last couple of months, we would have been finished by now," said superintendent David McTimoney. "We're very fortunate to have had finished public meeting number one and public meeting number two for each of the four schools that we are engaged for this sustainability study."

Legislation on sustainability studies requires the DEC to host a series of public meetings to present government's view on the outcomes, the public can voice opinions, and a final session to hear the DEC's decision and recommendations. Minister Dominic Cardy will have the final decision.

The study includes Florenceville Middle, Florenceville Elementary, Bath Community School, and Bristol Elementary. The study was prompted after asbestos were found in Bath Middle School during renovations, bringing them to a halt.

There are three options the DEC can vote on: keep the status quo, invest in renovations, or recommend closures. That decision will then be recommended to the minister of education.

During the streamed meeting, Woodstock DEC representative Heather Hogan questioned the numbers presented during one of the previous public meetings surrounding what it would take to complete the renovations at Bath Middle if the DEC chose to continue with them and the time it would take.

"I was just looking back on my notes, I believe our meeting was Jan. 25 when we did meeting number two and at that time, I believe it was [MLA] Andy Harvey who had made some comments that the school was 75 per cent complete and the work could be done in six months," Hogan said. "I believe it was a million-plus. I know the numbers you had been given by DTI have been consistent but not the same numbers that Andy Harvey was presenting because his statements were in a public venue, I think it's

really important we determine whether or not there has a meeting between you two to discuss those numbers because they were worlds apart."

McTimoney said the information he has collected from staff at the district, department of education and early childhood development, and department of transportation shows the building is 40 per cent complete, \$3.2 million has been spent and \$4.15 million will be needed to complete it. McTimoney said another \$1 million could be added if they were to include the building of parking lots.

The superintendent said he obtained the information prior to the pandemic and the best case scenario for time to complete the renovations would be seven and half months and about 11 months if there were difficulties.

McTimoney said he was looking forward to the May 21 meeting.

"It'll be nice to bring the study to its conclusion," he said. "We've done a lot of work in preparing the council, informing them on the details as much as we can. We've done a lot of work on collecting and organizing the information and preparing it in a report for that so if the vote is anything but status quo, we'll have something to send to the minister."

McTimoney encouraged people to attend online.

"I think it'll be good for those in the Carleton County area, if they're interested, to tune in to that meeting and hear first hand the final conversations and of course, the motion and vote," he said. "I think it could be something of interest to those who have been following along as the study has moved along

A link for the May 21 DEC meeting will be posted on the Anglophone West School District [website](#) and shared via the Anglophone West [Twitter](#) account.