

Anglophone West School District Education Council

Sustainability Study - Coles Island School

Executive Summary

March 19, 2015

Formal Communication with EECD

- October 28, 2014 - Informed Minister Serge Rousselle of the Council's intent to conduct a sustainability study of Coles Island School under Provincial Policy 409
- Study was launched following a vote at the October 23, 2014 Public DEC Meeting
- Policy 409 outlines 3 options for the DEC to consider
 - Option 1 - Maintain the Status Quo
 - Option 2 - Recommend a Significant Investment in Programming and Infrastructure for the school to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development
 - Option 3 - Recommend closure of the school to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development

Formal Communication With Parents

- Five formal letters written to parents/guardians of children at Coles Island School
- October 29, 2014: informed of the study and shared process and timeline
- November 17, 2014: invitation to Public Meeting #1
- December 12, 2014: Description of Public Meeting #2 as well as a description of alternate means for engaging in the sustainability study
- January 12, 2015: Reminder/Invitation to Public Meeting #2
- March 16, 2015: Invitation to Public Meeting #3 with a description of the streaming opportunity

Public Notice

- Advertisements were placed in the local newspapers
- Posters were placed in strategic locations in the community of Coles Island School
- Posting of relevant documents were placed on a district website specific to the Coles Island School Sustainability Study
- Monitoring of specific “Sustainability” email address, written mail and electronic message board on our website; the Superintendent corresponded regularly with stakeholders on this public discussion board
- An established timeline that was shared with parents and the public through the website was followed

Public Meetings

- November 20, 2014 at Coles Island School - Presentation of Information by School District 17 (Public Meeting #1)
- January 15, 2015 at Coles Island School- Presentation by Parents and Stakeholders (Public Meeting #2)
- March 19, 2015 at Nashwaaksis Middle School and streamed to Coles Island School- Review of Study and Vote on Motion (Public Meeting #3)
- Audio for Public Meetings #1 and #2 are available on our website; presentation slides and notes are also found on the website

Categories of Policy 409

- Public Meeting #1 allowed for a presentation of facts, with categories outlined by Policy 409
- These categories included
 - Enrolment and Functional Capacity
 - Health and Safety and Building Assessment
 - Educational Programs and Services
 - Provincial Assessment and Perception Data
 - School Benefits and Challenges
 - Transportation
 - Finances
 - Community and School Impact
 - Potential Options
 - Advantages and Disadvantages
 - Economic Development

Categories of Policy 409

- Various documents were created to help support the study with data and information; some of these documents were created during the study and posted publically on our website; other documents were created at the end of the study to help answer specific questions of the DEC; these are available in the final report
- These documents were used as a basis for study by DEC members and as a catalyst for conversation

Community Engagement

- The stakeholder and parent community were very engaged in the study
- There were a number of presentations to the DEC at Public Meeting #2
- A recurring theme of the stakeholders was a concern for long bus rides on potentially dangerous roads
- Stakeholders noted the quality education received by their children at this small, rural school
- Presentations and notes from the stakeholders and parents are included in the report
- A number of individuals participated in public, on line discussions (a part of the report)
- A petition is also included in the report

DEC Reflections and Considerations

- DEC Members took time to review documents and ask many questions of the Superintendent
- DEC met in a number of working sessions to continue the conversations and reflect on the information
- DEC Members would, on occasion, contact the Superintendent with questions related to the sustainability study(ies)
- Several members of the DEC traveled various bus routes (on a yellow school bus) in the Coles Island catchment area as well as adjacent routes towards Cambridge-Narrows and Chipman

Tonight and Tomorrow

- Final discussions as a Council
- Present a motion to act on the study information
- Conduct a vote on the motion
- Write to Minister Rousselle indicating status quo if voting for option 1, or
- Write to Minister Rousselle with the recommendation and the accompanying information package if voting for Option 2 (Requesting Significant Investment) or Option 3 (Requesting Approval for Closure)
- Write to the Parents/Guardians of the students at Coles Island School with the conclusion

Minister's Responsibilities

- If a closure is recommended by the DEC, Minister Rousselle will review the report and assess it for procedural fairness
- The Minister will need to reach a conclusion on the recommendation in a time frame of no less than 30 days and no longer than 60 days, as per Policy 409
- Upon confirmation of the conclusion from the Minister, the Superintendent will write to the parents/guardians and staff at Coles Island School