

Good evening District Education Council, Superintendent, Parents and community members for taking the time out of your evening to show your support.

We would like to thank the District for the time constraint for presenters to have their presentations ready tonight, right after the Christmas break while trying to spend quality time with children and their families.

We are speaking on behalf of the Parents and families that are involved in the Coles Island School. We do understand "numbers" and finances. However, all children are valuable beyond a dollar amount.

Some of our kids are on the bus by 7am and not returning home until after 4:20pm. The bus from Chipman is currently full. Chipman Elementary students are dismissed at 2pm (with the option for parents to pick their child up) but bussed home at 3pm, with the middle and high school students. Which is a cause for concern for parents of 5 year old's on a bus with high school aged kids. With little ones comes little bladders and no bathroom facilities available and none between the communities. When there is a behaviour problem which forces the bus driver to return to the school, our kids could be an additional hour or longer, later returning home. Another concern of a full bus, is that there is more chaos distracting the bus driver, who then loses some focus on the roads. The narrow, twisty roads and high traffic of transport trucks is dangerous and will become more of a concern when the expansion of the Chipman Mill comes into place. We understand even city school buses are sometimes en route for an hour and my experience minor fender benders. Their accidents may not be nearly as serious, catastrophic or fatal as a bus driving highway speeds of 90 km/hour. **(pics of buses)**

By the time our young children would return home, have supper with their family, homework, bath time. It is time for bed with little to no play time, family time or fitness time. It is known that a child between the ages of 5 and 10 should get a minimum of 10-12 hours of sleep a night and one hour of moderate exercise a day. This is all missed by being on a bus of up to 3 hrs in the run of a day. Long bus drives will cause more behaviour problems bullying, fighting...tired kids, bored kids. Even kids without behaviour problems can act out. Kids with behaviour problems will exhibit an increased number of occurrences and more severe problems which puts the safety of others at risk. **(pie chart for hours in a day comparing how many hours we actually need to get everything done, see insert of pie chart, explain)**

Sending our young children out of our community will cause them to be anxious or stressed by travelling on unfamiliar roads and to an unfamiliar place. They will also endure a longer commute to school than the average adult commutes to work causing our children to be away from home over 9 hours each day...longer than the average work day...at 4.5 years old. (slide) Point a to point b, home to school. The car ride from the furthest home to Chipman would be one hour. That is a two hour round trip for a parent to collect their child in a time of sickness or injured and then taken to emergency (if needed).

Also, Cambridge may be an option, but our middle and high school kids go to Chipman now, sending our elementary kids in opposite directions doesn't make sense and neither does moving our middle and high school students.

Currently at Coles Island School, we have nearly 50% volunteer involvement compared to student enrolment. We would like to mention we always have former Coles Island students volunteer their time

at the Annual Christmas Bazaar and Annual Silent Auction. We currently have an 8 member PSSC with usually 100% in attendance at meetings. We also provide a hot lunch program that we volunteer and prepare on site, we don't need to have our hot lunch brought in by an outside facility as many larger schools do. Chaperones on field trips and at school activities such as the Christmas dinner and Breakfast for students and staff. These are all positive family-like activities in an environment for our children to grow in these first vital years of their education. Having to travel out of our community would make it nearly impossible and cause hardship to families to be involved with our children's school. According to an article "Parental Engagement" from the Department of Education of Ontario. "Parental engagement matters. It says that study after study has shown us that student achievement improves when parents play an active role in their child's education and that good school's become better school's when parents are involved. It is recognized that parent engagement is a key factor in the enhancement of student achievement and well being. Students are more likely to be motivated, to earn higher grades, to have better behaviour and social skills, and to continue their education to a higher level when their parents are actively engaged in supporting their success at school." (slide)

We have a short slide show to present to you. We would like to make a note that all pictures have been granted permission by the parents of the students.

**(slides with quote from article of Mr. Bennett)**

The Atlantic Institute for Market Studies, known as AIMS, has published a Policy Paper this month and was just released within the past few days titled Education on Wheels: Seizing Cost and Energy Efficiency Opportunities in Student Transportation. Paul Bennett is the co-writer of the report and is a professor at St. Mary's University in Halifax and has a long career centred around education. Though this Policy Paper seems to focus on urban communities, in an interview with ATV News, Bennett said: "What we've got here in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick is too many students are on the bus too long."

Regarding students on longer bus rides, he also said:

"It certainly makes you tired. You are not able to focus. It eats into your private time. You can't participate in activities at school."

It seems to us that Mr Bennett would disagree to sending our kids on a bus for over an hour.

Chipman Elementary and Cambridge Narrows Community School's are also on "the list" with functional capacity level below 60 percent. This means they also will be involved in a sustainability study in the near future. It would be irresponsible for the DEC to make decisions which could cause our kids to be displaced numerous times in their education. Please do not close our school not knowing what the near future holds. **Our rural students are important New Brunswick citizens and need to be treated with understanding and respect.** (slide)

Thank you

\*\*\*keep slide of the DEC Logo, CIS Logo and Districts Logo. While questions are being made\*\*\*