

**Review of the Cape Breton Regional Victoria School Board Proposal
New Waterford Family of Schools**

Final Report

Submitted to: Cape Breton Victoria Regional School Board
Submitted by: New Waterford Family of Schools Student
Accommodation Study Group
Date: December 2014

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Abbreviations

BEC	Breton Education Centre
CBRM	Cape Breton Regional Municipality
CBVRSB	Cape Breton Victoria Regional School Board
SAC	School Advisory Council
SASG	Student Accommodation Study Group

Mandate

The Cape Breton Regional Victoria School Board (CBRVSB) established Student Accommodation Study Groups (SASG) for each Family of Schools. Family of Schools is the term used to describe a group of schools serving one particular geographical area within the CBVRSB. The purpose of each SASG was threefold:

- a) To continue the multi-part conversation of stakeholder engagement by soliciting input from educational and community partners on proposals designed to sustain required school facilities and to protect/maintain programs and services for students;
- b) To provide each Family of Schools' SASG with an opportunity to reflect on the proposals with a view to commenting/recommending the identified proposal or suggesting viable alternatives; and
- c) To afford educational and community stakeholders the opportunity to generate a response document on the evolving plan including recommendations for the consideration of the CBVRSB.

Overview

The following document has been prepared by the New Waterford Family of Schools SASG. The document follows the template provided by the CBVRSB.

The document will begin by identifying our group members and explaining our role in the New Waterford Family of Schools Scenario Evaluation Process. The analysis section will note our initial reaction to the scenario proposed by the CBVRSB. Next we identify the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed scenario. Following this, we note the unknowns and the additional information that is necessary to further analyze this proposed scenario. The document will then include a list of the potential impacts on students, program delivery, community, and staff. This document does not include an analysis of the costs of the proposed scenario as the costing process was completed by the CBVRSB administration and the SASG had no input into this analysis. Finally, our group will provide our overall evaluation of the scenario and a recommendation to the CBVRSB.

Student Accommodation Study Group

About Us

Our Family of Schools: Greenfield Elementary School
 Mt. Carmel Elementary School
 St. Agnes Elementary School
 Breton Education Centre (BEC)

Our Cape Breton Victoria Regional School Board Coordinators:

Tracie Collier
 Wendy King

Members of Student Accommodation Study Group:

<u>Member</u>	<u>School Represented</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>School Represented</u>
Joyce Morrison	Greenfield	Pauline Martin	St. Agnes
Ray Morrison	Greenfield	Chris Hillier	St. Agnes
Geoff Oliver	Greenfield	Janet Pheifer	St. Agnes
Audrey Boudreau	Greenfield	Colin MacNeil	St. Agnes
Glenn Campbell	Mt. Carmel	Kim Desveaux	BEC
Shawna Goodwin	Mt. Carmel	Bruce MacDonald	BEC
Mary McLeod	Mt. Carmel	Jacqueline Poirier	BEC
Marcie MacKinnon	Mt. Carmel	Dave Wilton	BEC
Nancy Sheppard	St. Agnes	Danny McGillivary	BEC
Arlene MacKenzie	St. Agnes		

Background and Assumptions

This SASG was formed at the request of the CBVRSB administration in May of 2014. The group was tasked with reviewing the CBVRSB proposed scenario for the New Waterford Family of Schools. The SASG's task was to provide an evaluation of the potential impact of the proposed scenario on the students, staff and community. The SASG has to the best of its ability looked at the possible implications of the proposed scenario, however, the group notes that there may well be other potential impacts that were not considered and as such, will release this report to the community for further input.

As background to the review it is important to note the CBVRSB document titled 'Looking Inward: Disposition of Scenarios to Family of Schools Suggested Solutions, April 2014' listed many possible scenarios for the New Waterford Family of Schools (see Appendix A). Members of the CBVRSB administration and staff analyzed the options and determined the scenario to be implemented for the New Waterford Family of Schools based on their own criteria.

It is important to note that our SASG group did NOT choose the final scenario – nor did we have input into the selection process. At no point was the SASG given an opportunity to evaluate any other proposed scenario for the New Waterford Family of Schools. Our only task was to review the following scenario:

Proposal: Administrative Scenario 4

Examine the feasibility of constructing a new 6-8 wing on the Breton Education Centre site; reconfiguring the portion of the building to house the grade 9-12 and demolishing those portions of the existing facility deemed to be excess to a reconfigured building. All New Waterford, New Victoria, and River Ryan primary-5 students would be housed in Greenfield Elementary.

Note: This proposal was developed by the CBVRSB Administration with a full business case and forwarded to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development as part of the 2014 School Capital Construction Submission proposal by the School Board on May 6. As has been indicated from the inception of Looking Inward, there are concomitant actions that must occur. If the board was successful in attaining a capital project, it would serve as a placeholder until the scope of the project could be fully defined.

Additional Information

As we set forth to evaluate this proposal we asked questions and were provided additional information upon which to base our analysis. The following are some key pieces of information/assumptions that impacted our analysis:

Grade Configuration

As part of this review the group was informed that the CBRVSB is planning to make Board-wide changes to the grade configuration structure. The term "reconfiguration" is used to describe changing the grade levels within a particular school. In the case of BEC, the proposal calls for a High School with a Grade 9-12 configuration and a Middle School with a Grade 6-8 configuration both located under one roof with a single administration. With respect to the elementary schools the grade configuration will move from being a Grades Primary to 6 configuration to the new Grades Primary to 5 configuration.

They will be implementing the following middle school model:

Elementary (Grades Primary – 5)

Middle School (Grades 6 – 8)

High School (Grades 9 - 12)

We were informed the proposed change of grouping and/or locating Grade 6 with Grades 7 and 8 would be happening throughout the CBVRSB. This information is relevant to our scenario as the configurations will match other local schools. The difference in our case is that the scenario we have been asked to evaluate includes locating both the Middle School and the High School in one building (this is not happening throughout the CBVRSB).

Table 1: New Waterford Family of Schools Grade Configuration: Current and Proposed

Grade Configuration Current and Proposed		
School	Current Configuration	Proposed Configuration
Mt. Carmel	Grades Primary – 6	Closed
St. Agnes	Grades Primary – 6	Closed
Greenfield	Grades Primary – 6	Grades Primary – 5
Breton Education Centre	Grades 7 – 12	Grades 6 - 12

Timeframe

Questions from our group with regard to timeframe resulted in the following response: a potential start date 2015/2016 fiscal year with expected occupancy September 2018. The project would unfold over two/three fiscal periods. A slide of the blueprint for the planned alteration of BEC was outlined to the SASG. It indicated the following schedule:

Phase 1: Demolition of the administration offices, library, and the home economics wing. These services would be relocated to another section of the building during the construction phase. It would be business as usual in one section as construction was going on in another.

Phase 2: Demolition of Grade 7 wing

Phase 3: Construction/gym renovation.

New Build versus Alteration

Our group questioned whether the proposed changes to BEC would mean the renovated BEC was a new school according to the CBVRSB guidelines. We were informed BEC will not be a 'new' school but an 'altered' school. The CBVRSB clarified the difference in relation to BEC stating that because a portion of BEC would be retained (gym) it falls into the 'Additions/Alterations' category as opposed to 'New School'.

Elementary Capacity Plan

The capacity for Greenfield is 500 students. With the implementation of 2014-15 Nova Scotia Provincial classroom student cap of 20 students per classroom for all Grades Primary – 3 classrooms, Greenfield's capacity will be reduced to 440 students. There are presently 530 students in New Waterford Family of Schools Grades Primary - 5. Thus, locating all New Waterford Family of School's elementary students will result in a significant elementary capacity issue.

According to Lewis MacDonald, CBVRSB Coordinator of Facilities Management, there has not been a capital request to address the elementary capacity relating to the proposed scenario. The necessary renovations to Greenfield would require a minimum of 4 additional classrooms; additional washrooms; as well as increased parking area for staff and visitors. The current proposal includes only a request for the monies to alter BEC. If this proposed scenario is to be implemented as presented to the SASG, the monies/commitment will need to be put in place to complete a Greenfield alteration at the same time.

Principles – Beliefs – Values

Before the formation of this SASG the CBVRSB held a meeting of SAC members. This meeting included all CBVRSB SACs. The purpose of the meeting was to decide upon the guiding principles, beliefs and values for the various families of schools. The SAC committee members in attendance from our family decided upon the principles, beliefs and values that we used to guide our decisions. The problem with this process was that the members present were/are not necessarily the same members of the current SASG. In addition to this, based upon the feedback of those in attendance at the above noted meeting, the lists were generated based upon ranking lists provided by the CBVRSB. The consensus was that while those present did in fact participate in individual rankings, there was little or no discussion about the statements. Therefore, we will include this section in our report – with the caveat that – this SASG accepted the principles/beliefs and values as presented. Yet, as the group did not participate fully in the process, we chose only to base our analysis on the ONE principle of EQUITY. The notion of equity was the one guiding principle that dominated our discussions.

The following is the list of principles/values and beliefs as presented.

Principles*

1. Equity
2. Adequacy
3. Responsiveness

Beliefs/Values*

As noted earlier, the following beliefs and values were agreed upon by members of the SAC members present at a meeting prior to the formation of the SASG. These beliefs and values were presented to our group as a guide upon which to base our decisions. The following are the beliefs and values:

- Ninety (90%) percent of New Waterford respondents (at the above noted SAC meeting) identified student learning/achievement as our primary concern and as such rated it the top value statement.
- Participants value the significant role parents play in the school life of their children and believe in the importance of the role of the school in the community.
- Participants further agree that parents and community members should be engaged to address the challenges faces by the Board.

- Transportation was not a major concern for the New Waterford participants.
- There is recognition that school buildings in New Waterford are old. Rather than management of buildings, there needs to be consideration for replacement.
- The need to maintain a school in a community and the belief that constructing a new school community should be considered, were lower on the list of priorities for these participants.

*As the SASG did not participate fully in the process, we chose only to base our analysis on the ONE principle of EQUITY. The notion of equity was the one guiding principle that dominated our discussions.

CBVRSB Proposed Scenario

As noted, the CBVRSB administration chose only **ONE** possible scenario for the New Waterford Family of Schools. Our task was to evaluate the proposed scenario and highlight its impact on New Waterford. There was no choice of scenarios for our evaluation.

The following is the scenario proposed by the CBVRSB administration:

Examine the feasibility of constructing a new Grade 6-8 wing on BEC site reconfiguring the portion of the building to house Grade 9-12 and demolish those portions of the facility deemed to be in excess to a reconfigured building. All New Waterford, New Victoria, River Ryan, Scotchtown, and Ligan Grades P-5 would be housed in Greenfield Elementary School.

Initial Reaction

The introductory meeting of our SASG was positive. The group acknowledges that the New Waterford Family of Schools is being effected by both population loss and aging infrastructure. The group agrees that the New Waterford Family of Schools is in need of change.

In order to fully explore the proposed scenario, the SASG prepared the following list of its identified strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths

Strengths of altering BEC:

- Maintaining the BEC identity provides continuity for the community;
- The "new" BEC was submitted as the # 1 priority of the Board on the priority list of the CBVRSB capital projects;
- Maintaining the current location will eliminate the time consuming and difficult tasks of site selection and land acquisition;
- The current location is close to tennis court, soccer field, walking track, skateboard park and rink thus, allowing these facilities to be incorporated into the school experience;
- New infrastructure would be up to date and energy efficient;
- Larger modern and technologically updated classrooms;
- Retention of existing gym space at BEC assures that as much gym space as possible is maintained (if the entire facility at BEC was replaced, because of the CBVRSB's new build guidelines, there would an actual reduction in gym size);
- While the new BEC library will be structurally different in that it will have a smaller amount of shelf space but it will include a technology information space as well as a multi-media space, an office for the librarian and some book storage space;
- Aligns with the Board's consideration of changing its school grade level configuration. The Grade 6-8 Middle School and Grade 9-12 High School both housed at BEC;
- There is potential to bring in other partners to expand the current build plan. As an example there is potential for the community to partner with CBRM, the New Waterford and District Community Centre, and the Province of Nova Scotia to add additional uses to the altered building (a community theatre, alternative energy, etc.);
- Currently there are many unused classrooms resulting in excess capacity at BEC. This proposal will rectify this situation;

- The alteration costs include the demolition of the original BEC thus mitigating an expense for the Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM) if another site was chosen and the old property returned to the Municipality.

Strengths of maintaining Greenfield:

- Location. Maintaining the current location will eliminate the time consuming and difficult tasks of site selection and land acquisition;
- Building is suited for a Primary-5 learning environment (with the addition of a classroom wing and site/traffic modifications);
- Greenfield has a dedicated cafeteria space;
- Existing lease enables the Board to request the Department to ask the P3 partner to enhance the current facility (by adding a classroom wing and addressing the traffic issue);
- Option exists to recommend purchase or lease renewal in order to establish Primary-5 school setting;
- Greenfield if retained as P3 partnership school means the technology is replaced every 4 years; and
- Greenfield is approaching the 20 year age mark. While an aging building is cause for concern, this school like all P3 Schools benefit from continuous maintenance and ongoing capital repair because of the existence of a 'sinking fund' that comprises part of the original lease and allows the P3 partner to attend to any capital deficiency that occurs along the way. With the sinking fund, capital expenditure is made on P3 buildings as needed. The objective with this arrangement was to stem the aging process in buildings thus retaining their usefulness, longevity and value. No deferred maintenance.

Weaknesses

Weaknesses of altering BEC:

- Reduction of physical space at BEC will limit/jeopardize community use (BEC currently houses golf simulation, fitness center, Coal Bowl, etc.);
- Loss of the Audio-Visual (AV) Room at BEC will have a serious negative impact on both in-class and community events;
- The phased in demolition/construction will impact the students. During the construction/demolition years there will be issues ranging from basic inconvenience to those of student safety and distractions from the construction process;

- Adding another Grade (Grade 6) will further strain current gym usage schedule both for in-class and extracurricular activities;
- Adding additional Grade (Grade 6) will add to the administrative workload;
- The Youth Health Center Space will be included but will be smaller than the existing space at BEC. A case must be built at the visioning stage of the new BEC process of the important role the Youth Health Center plays in the life of the school noting that BEC was the first Youth Health Center established and opened under the Children and Youth Pilot Project for the Eastern Region; and
- Reconfiguring the grades will have an impact on students. However, as this is a board-wide initiative, we have been assured that the transition to a 'Middle School' format will happen throughout the CBVRSB.

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Weaknesses in maintaining the Greenfield location:

- The number one weakness is that there is no current plan in place to accommodate the elementary students at Greenfield. If the movement of St Agnes and Mt. Carmel students is to occur, there will need to be additional space added to Greenfield. This will result in significant costs. The BEC submission did not include these costs. So, even if the BEC project is approved, there have been no requests for additional space at Greenfield. The number one weakness of this proposal will be the 'wait and see' impact on the elementary students. It is NOT acceptable to this SASG to house grades Primary and One (or some other combination) in another location (eg. FJ Angot Building) – as this will result in many 'challenges' such as separate administration, operating costs, transportation for gym times, etc. The proposed scenario must include a plan for the elementary students;
- Eliminating Mt. Carmel and St. Agnes will result in increased bus use. New Waterford has a predominately walking population. Under the proposed scenario, the distance to school will be increased for many students, resulting in transportation issues and increased bus requirements;
- The increased numbers of students – especially as many students noted above will now require transportation (bus/drive) will further stress the traffic problem at Greenfield. While there has been an initial look at the traffic patterns and site opportunities, detailed analysis of the situation would be required if the expansion was to go forward including changes to parking space, bus loops, and drop-off/pick-up points. If a second access/egress road was constructed to the site, some of the existing and potential concerns with respect to traffic issues could be minimized. This proposed scenario can only be considered if an alternative exit/entrance to Greenfield is developed;
- Greenfield has limited staff/visitor parking;

- Reducing the number of elementary schools from 3 to 1 will result in a significant loss of gym space. This will have a significant negative impact on both curricular and extracurricular activities. It is not simply a matter of 'better scheduling' for the gym use. We have included a detailed listing of the activities currently using the facilities (Appendix B). It is clear that the elementary gyms are extremely important asset to the community;
- While the dedicated cafeteria is a strength, the limited size results in staggered lunches for the current student body. This is a serious problem as some children have a very late lunch. Adding additional students will further compound this problem; and
- Increasing the number of children will require additional playground infrastructure at Greenfield Elementary. The SASG agrees that the playgrounds from both Mt. Carmel and St. Agnes should stay in their respective areas – as these are important community assets.

Weaknesses of closure of Mt. Carmel Elementary and St. Agnes Elementary:

- Greenfield currently does not have the capacity to accommodate all students Grade Primary to 5;
- Loss of school identity;
- Mt. Carmel has an incredibly successful Joy Program – that is delivered to all Grade 6 students. Will BEC be able to accommodate this program? Will the program be able to grow to accommodate all Grade 6 students? When the vision for the new BEC is being articulated, the history of the Joy Program- the work of Sister Shirley Bruce and others - the commitment of the Minister(s) to provide an annual discretionary grant and the benefit derived by students must manifest itself in the request for space consideration even though there is no provision for such space in the Design Requirements Manual;
- Loss of gym space for students in course and extracurricular activities. All New Waterford Family Schools utilize their gyms at full capacity. Gyms are used both evenings and weekends;
- Loss of access to the community gym space. The community currently rents the Mt. Carmel Auditorium for community events. It is unlikely that the alterations to BEC would permit the use of the gym by the community. The CBRVSB policy currently does not allow the use of gym facilities for events in which alcohol is served; and
- Land and buildings for both Mt. Carmel and St. Agnes will revert back to CBRM which will lead to a huge financial burden on the community as the vacant buildings become a fire/security hazard.

Unknowns

There are many unknowns at this point. The following unknowns are relevant to the decision making process:

1. Will the renovation of Greenfield be approved/funded and thereby insure the elementary students are able to be accommodated? If renovations are not approved will there be the use of 'portables' or the possibility of further separation to other buildings?
2. Will the funding for the BEC alteration be approved?
3. How will the community adapt to loss of gym access?
4. How will all students be accommodated with such little gym space?
5. How will the traffic pattern at Greenfield be modified to ensure the safety of the children at Greenfield?
6. Will the bus routes be adopted to ensure that all students arrive at school before the start of class? This currently is an issue in the New Waterford Family of Schools.
7. Will space be provided to continue the Joy Program? Will there be enough senior volunteers to deliver this program to the increasing number of Grade 6 students?
8. Will there be interest from other levels of Government and community to support the building of an auditorium at the BEC site?
9. What will become of the vacant schools? How will the CBRM manage the former Mt. Carmel and St. Agnes sites?
10. What about staffing? Will the current staff of Greenfield remain in their positions? Will the Mt. Carmel and St. Agnes staff be forced to compete for any newly created positions at Greenfield and BEC?
11. To what extent the facilities can be used for community functions, such as weddings and/or fundraisers that involve the serving of alcohol?
12. Under the new grade configuration will the Grade 6 classes still have recess and/or access to playground facilities?
13. How will all weekend and afterschool activities be accommodated by reduced gym space?

Impacts

The following are potential impacts to students, program delivery and community as a result of implementation of the proposed scenario:

Students

1. If both Mt. Carmel and St. Agnes are closed without plans to accommodate the increased student body at Greenfield, then the group has concerns that the BEC proposal will be revised to include the Grade 5 students at BEC.
2. Grade 6 will be now a part of the Grade 6-8 grade configuration. This will have an impact on the students
3. Grade 6 students will now be moving to a much larger school.
4. Grade 6 will no longer have access to playground facilities.
5. Grade 9 students will now be a part of the Grade 10-12 configuration. This will have an impact on the students.
6. Transportation issues will be significant. No longer will many students be 'walkers'. First time on bus for many students.
7. Will Teen Youth Health Center, Fitness Center, and Library have adequate space?
8. Potential loss of gym access for extracurricular physical activity.

Program Delivery

1. Capacity for band especially at Greenfield.
2. Reduced gym capacity could negatively impact program delivery
3. Would programs such as Joy survive?

Community

1. Mt. Carmel Gym is used extensively by the community. What will happen to the gym if school is closed?
2. The AV room at BEC is also used extensively by the community: Remembrance Day, Sea Cadets, and concerts. There may be a need to get other agencies involved eg. CBRM, Nova Scotia Government, the community and others to insure BEC will have an AV Room. If there is an expressed desire to follow-up on the suggestion to include a Theatre in the new BEC, this work needs to begin immediately as the funding would need to be in place when the design of the building is being done.
3. Vacant and abandoned buildings of both St. Agnes and Mt. Carmel pose a threat to the safety of the community. As well as a financial burden on the municipality.
4. If playgrounds are to remain at existing locations, on site of closed schools, who would be responsible for upkeep?

Recommendation

As noted, our SASG was given only ONE possible scenario from the CBVRSB. The following is the proposed scenario:

Examine the feasibility of constructing a new 6-8 wing on the Breton Education Centre site; reconfiguring the portion of the building to house the grade 9-12 and demolishing those portions of the existing facility deemed to be excess to a reconfigured building. All New Waterford, New Victoria, and River Ryan primary-5 students would be housed in Greenfield Elementary.

Our SASG made every effort to explore this scenario and its possible outcomes. This document highlights what we believe are the most relevant considerations. Based on our analysis we make the following recommendation to the CBVRSB:

Recommendation 1:

The plans for the altered BEC and expanded Greenfield must proceed in concert. It is critical to revisit the space issue at Greenfield. The scenario currently proposes housing all Grades Primary to Grade 5 students at Greenfield. However, the current facility cannot handle the increased student population. It is not possible to accept the alterations at BEC without knowing how the elementary students will be accommodated at Greenfield. The CBVRSB refers to the 'family of schools' – and as such a plan must be coordinated – a plan for the 'family of schools'.

Recommendation 2:

The CBVRSB facilitate discussions with the community and other possible partners on the addition of key assets to the BEC alteration. It is imperative that these discussions take place in the early days – before the alterations begin. There is great potential to add additional benefit, such as an audio-visual room, a theatre, a fitness centre, etc. to make BEC a true community asset.

Recommendation 3:

The traffic situation at Greenfield must be reviewed and resolved. The proposed scenario will require an additional entrance/exit point and other immediate changes to ensure the safety of students, staff and community.

Recommendation 4:

The loss of gym space will have a negative impact on the community. It is our recommendation that a working committee be formed to fully explore the impacts and prepare a plan to address the needs of the community.

Recommendation 5:

The SASG have the opportunity to make a presentation to the CBVRSB.

Student Accommodation Study Group Draft Report
New Waterford Family of Schools
Public Input Session

Breton Education Centre

November 19, 2014

Participants: 46 registered

The New Waterford Family of Schools Student Accommodation Study Group had one (1) proposal to consider as it met to reflect on how students served in the New Waterford Family of Schools could be best accommodated in the future.

Proposal

To reconfigure a new Breton Education Centre to a 6-12 school to accommodate 6-8 middle school and 9-12 high school
and
to house all New Waterford and area Primary to Grade 5 students at Greenfield Elementary.

Input responses have been summarized in the following eight (8) categories:

1. Grade Configuration

Two parents indicated that it was their preference not to have Grade 6-8 in the same building as Grade 9-12.

Another parent expressed dissatisfaction that Grade 6 students would attend the new Breton Education Centre under this proposal.

One parent expressed strong disagreement with this proposal as the proposal included a Grade 6-12 configuration, retention of Greenfield and no elementary school in New Waterford.

2. Community Use

Participants in the input session recognized that the schools of New Waterford form a major support network for many social, cultural and athletic initiatives held in the town.

One participant suggested the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board facilitate a discussion with municipal and provincial partners for community space within a new Breton Education Centre.

While it was recognized by one speaker that new schools often had cafeteriums which double as a cafeteria for school use and an auditorium for community use, it was also noted that such centres often do not have appropriate lighting and sound to stage various co-curricular, extra-curricular, and community productions.

One participant indicated it was important to sustain school facilities for after school programs like Brownies and Girl Guides.

Another spokesperson indicated that the locations to stage wedding receptions and community social events are becoming fewer and fewer. The policies of the School Board with respect to use of school facilities and insurance issues should be revisited. A new collaborative approach should be explored voiced another individual. Another individual suggested rules with regards to use of facilities should be relaxed.

Participants expressed a willingness to work with the school site/vision committee to ensure that every avenue is explored to acquire appropriate space when the new Breton Education Centre facility is announced and begins to take shape.

One individual suggested the community component of the new Breton Education Centre facility should be enhanced similar to venues like the Dartmouth Sport Plex.

3. P3 School

Several speakers addressed the Greenfield P3 School situation as part of the input process.

Like the proposal from the Study Group, two individuals thought it important to have the Greenfield expansion project parallel the Breton Education Centre initiative.

The Greenfield project should ensure that there is sufficient classroom space to house all Primary to Grade 5 students, comfortably, stated another parent.

Another individual wondered when it would be reasonable to expect some indication on the future of Greenfield. If it was sustained as a P-5 school for the New Waterford Family of Schools, when could the expansion announcement be expected.

Another individual suggested the school board should have a contingency plan in place in the event Greenfield is not funded as part of the continuing capital plan.

4. Enrolment

There was recognition that Breton Education Centre was constructed for a much larger student population than it currently serves.

One speaker noted that 2200 students once occupied Breton Education Centre while today less than 600 students attend the school.

Another individual asked if any thought had been given to moving the Grade 10-12 students from New Waterford to some other high school where there is excess capacity.

5. Job Loses/Staffing

One speaker indicated that the proposal, as presented, did not indicate the degree to which classes would be merged and jobs lost.

A second individual wondered what impact the merging of Mount Carmel and St. Agnes would have on savings, on student numbers, and how staffing would be impacted.

6. Instructional/Support Spaces

Several speakers recognized that Breton Education Centre and all the elementary schools in New Waterford are aging facilities. There was a recognition that, while lots of space exists, there is a need for new technologically rich instructional space similar to other areas within the school board.

One speaker indicated a need for sufficient classroom space to ensure classes are not overcrowded.

The Arts were important to four speakers and all spoke about the significance of the A/V Room to the performing arts.

One speaker indicated that a new school would be “awesome”.

Two individuals spoke to the fitness centre and golf simulator which occupy excess space within the schools.

Two individuals spoke to the need for the school community to explore opportunities that will support the skilled trades. Trade program offerings and Co-op Education were

identified as worthy of some consideration.

One individual spoke to the increased role the International Student Program could have on the provision of space within a new school.

7. Issues With The Proposal

a) Work of the Study Group

Positive Perspective

Two individuals voiced high praise for the work of the Student Accommodation Study Committee. One individual noted that the Study Group identified the importance of maintaining the gyms, identified the need for partnerships to ensure valued community spaces were retained, and made a commitment to follow through to ensure the best possible facility was put in place to replace an aging Breton Education Centre. Another individual called for the community to support the efforts of the Study Committee as more work needs to be done.

Negative Perspective

Two individuals expressed dissatisfaction with the position taken by the Student Accommodation Study Group in their Draft Report.

One parent indicated the people of New Waterford should stand their ground, maintain a school in the town and hold on to the A/V Room, Gym, and Coal Bowl.

A second parent advocated for a new elementary school in New Waterford, was not in favor of retaining Greenfield, and believes people should speak strongly against the proposal.

8. Other

1. Bullying

One parent raised the issue of bullying in the schools.

Post Public Meeting Input

1. As part of a group of families trying to raise young children in New Waterford, my concerns are:
 - Space for growth of population (Alberta plants – once built – there is no more work – where do people come? HOME)
 - Our community is why I am here! Losing our community resources and facilities WILL cause a decrease in population. Must haves in the community include facility for weddings, extra-curricular activities, AV community room, recreation facility, playgrounds!
 - Will there be enough room to have the basketball practices, girl guides, etc... (where will we house the Coal Bowl players?)
 - Why Greenfield? A P-3? Why not one owned by us?
 - What will happen to the playgrounds? (named after family/community leaders)

2. Adult student ed – this lost?
 - Why build onto Greenfield where it's a high traffic area. We should keep Mt. Carmel (positives are traffic access, gym, playground, etc.)

2. Is there a Science 'Heavy' high school in Cape Breton/Sydney area? Could New Waterford be that school? Or ARTS? What can we 'specialize' in? Bring in interest/students

Appendix A: New Waterford Family of School Scenarios

New Waterford Family of School Scenarios (an excerpt from the Looking Inward Document)

Scenario 24

Upon receipt of feedback on Proposal 1 and Proposal 2 from the Department of Education, convene a meeting of educational stakeholders and community members in New Waterford to share the results and plan a go-forward position.

Scenario 25

Revisit the recommendation to return Greenfield to the P3 Partner at the conclusion of the first lease, retain the facility for use as a P-5 school utilizing the existing (but renovated) Breton Education Centre to house grades 6-8 and grades 9-12 in separate sections of the building. This would result in the identification of St. Agnes School and Mt. Carmel School for inclusion in the school review process for possible closure.

Scenario 26

Examine the feasibility of constructing a new elementary wing on the Breton Education Site, reconfiguring a portion of the current building to house Breton Middle School (grades 6-8) and demolishing excess portions of the current Breton Education Centre building. This scenario assumes that grade 9-12 is relocated to either the Greenfield site or some newly constructed and/or renovated site in the New Waterford area.

Administration Scenario 4

Examine the feasibility of constructing a new 6-8 wing on the Breton Education Centre side reconfiguring the portion of the building to house the grade 9-12 and demolishing those portions of the existing facility deemed to be excess to a reconfigured building. All New Waterford, New Victoria, and River Ryan primary-5 students would be housed in Greenfield Elementary.

Administration Scenario 5

Examine the option of retaining Greenfield Elementary as a P-3 school to serve the New Waterford, River Ryan, and New Victoria Primary-3 student population and recommend the construction of a new school to serve the grade 4-6 student population from the aforementioned communities. This scenario assumes a solution for the secondary

students currently served by BEC will result from the engineering study currently underway at Breton Education Centre.

SAC Scenario 6

Given that the engineering study for Breton Education Centre has been completed share the outcome of the study with the Department of Education with a view to obtaining direction/project approval for either an addition/alteration project or a new school to replace Breton Education Centre.

SAC Scenario 7

Examine the option of retaining the Greenfield (P3) School with a view to expanding it to a Primary to grade 8 facility to serve New Waterford and Area and construct a new school facility to replace Breton Education Centre. The new facility would house grade 9- 12 students.

SAC Scenario 8

Examine the option of retaining Greenfield P3 School converting it to a 9-12 facility and construct a new P-8 facility to serve all primary to grade 8 students in the New Waterford Catchment Area.

SAC Scenario 9

Examine the option of creating two new schools in the New Waterford and area Family of Schools - one P-8 school and one 9-12 school to replace St. Agnes Elementary/F.J. Argot, Mt. Carmel and Breton Education Centre while at the same time recommending that the Greenfield P3 school be returned to the private sector partner at the end of the 20 year lease period based on fiscal analysis.

SAC Scenario 13

Examine the option of constructing two new schools in New Waterford- one to serve the Primary to Grade 6 student population and another to house the Grade 7 to grade 12 student body- and return Greenfield Elementary School to the P3 partner at the conclusion

of the initial lease.

Appendix B: Current After School Hours Usage of Schools in the New Waterford Family of Schools

Mt. Carmel Gymnasium:

Girl Guides, weddings, birthday parties, community and fundraising events, yoga, aerobics, banquets, tournaments, school related activities, seniors' walking club, common school basketball, Christmas concert, Fox Chaisson Basketball Tournament, men's basketball, and church functions.

Greenfield Gymnasium:

Common School Basketball, men's volleyball, Christmas Concert, Cheerleading, and Running Club

St Agnes Gymnasium:

Mini Coal bowl, Common School Basketball, men's basketball, Police Boys' Club floor hockey, Soccer, New Waterford Minor Hockey Field Training, Afterschool program, Christmas Concert, and Running Club.

BEC Gymnasium:

Jr and Sr high basketball, cheerleading, Coal Bowl, New Waterford Small Ball, school dances.