SYDNEY FAMILY OF SCHOOLS

STUDENT ACCOMMODATION STUDY GROUP

FINAL REPORT

DECEMBER 2014

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INTRODUCTION

The looking Inward document was drafted in the fall of 2012 and released for public review and input in April of 2013. Public information sessions, information sessions for the NSTU and CUPE Unions, School Advisory Council focus groups, student focus groups, Principal's information and input sessions and public input sessions in each of the seven Families of Schools marked the efforts of the Cape Breton Victoria Regional School Board to engage the educational stakeholders in this planning process.

Looking Inward is a planning framework for long term facility provision and system sustainability in a time of changing demographics.

The original document contained 32 scenarios designed to start the conversation with respect to long term facility requirements within the School Board. With the completion of the first round of consultations, fifty additional scenarios were put forth for consideration. These were generated from the SAC focus groups, school based administrators and public input sessions. Two web based surveys generated another four hundred responses to variables associated with attempting to establish a long range plan that would be responsive to the challenges facing the School Board.

Staff reviewed all the scenarios , generated a series of proposals for further consideration, shared the input received with the School Board, and in April of 2014 released a document entitled" Looking Inward- Disposition of Scenarios to Family of Schools Suggested Solutions" . The document also contained proposals as to how school facilities within each Family of Schools could be configured to accommodate students on the long term.

Public reaction to the proposals for each Family of Schools was sought by once again engaging stakeholders in the process. Student Accommodation Study Groups were established in each Family of Schools. The mandate of each Student Accommodation Study Group (SASG) was threefold:

a) To continue the multi-part conversation of stakeholder engagement by soliciting input from educational partners on proposals designed to sustain required school facilities and to protect/maintain programs and services for students.

b) To provide the Family of Schools Student Accommodation Study Group with an opportunity to reflect on the proposals with a view to commenting/recommending the identified proposal or suggesting viable alternatives.

c) To afford educational stakeholders the opportunity to generate a response document on the evolving plan including recommendations for the consideration of the Board.

ABOUT US

Our Schools

Sydney Academy
Whitney Pier Memorial Jr High
Harbourside Elementary
Brookland Elementary
Sherwood Park Ed. Centre
Shipyard Elementary
Cusack Elementary

Our Student Accommodation Study Group has been meeting since April, 2014. We were provided with five (5) proposals to review with respect to the seven (7) schools that comprise the Sydney Family of Schools.

Our review and reflection on the five (5) proposals was supported by Susan Kelley, Director of Programs and Students Services and Rick Simm, Coordinator of Technology.

Student Accommodation Study Group members included:

Derek Mombourquette	Kelly Brewer
Shaun MacIntyre	Noreen MacKinnon
Kevin Deveaux	Chester Borden
Russell MacKinnon	Rhonda Crawford
Donna Dunn	Kerri Saunders
Lois MacIntyre	Stephanie Campbell
Art MacDonald	Bernadette MacNeil
Lynn Crawford	Ana Mae Muise
Arnold Burke	Neila Currie
Stephanie Black	Blaine Gallaway
J.E. MacLean	Coreen MacDonald
Ron Carew	J.M. MacPhee
N. MacAskill	Cathy Field-Currie

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Given the relative new facilities that exist within the Sydney Family of Schools, participants identified the following as the top three principles:

ADEQUACY
SUSTAINABILITY
EQUITY

Sustainability received more number one selections than did any other principle (25 %). With substantial enrolment decline in evidence in a couple of schools within this Family of Schools(Harbourside and Shipyard) and two P3 schools in the mix, this Student Accommodation Study Group will be tasked with identifying how best to utilize excellent school facilities to accommodate fewer students.

Complete list of Guiding Principles as identified by Sydney Family of Schools participants.

1. Adequacy
2. Sustainability
3. Equity
4. Integrity
5. Accountability
6. Transparency
7. Responsiveness
8. Stewardship

VALUES AND BELIEFS

Participants from the Sydney Family of Schools reinforced the belief that the primary concern of the Board and its educational partners is student learning / achievement.

Without the benefit of knowing what proposals were emanating from the disposition of 82 scenarios (as they relate to the Sydney Family of Schools), the belief and values statements set out in priority by the participants closely align with the proposals as articulated.

Following the recognition of the importance of the student learning/achievement value noted above, the next three guiding principles listed in priority include:

a) The need to manage the stock of school facilities
b) Establishing a new school community is an option to be considered
c) Parents/community members should be engaged in addressing issues facing the Board.

Complete list of guiding principles as identified by Sydney Family of School participants.

1. Student learning/ achievement is our primary concern

2. Need to manage the stock of school facilities

3. Establish a new school community is an option to consider

4. Parents/community members should be engaged in addressing issues facing the Board

5. Major consideration for transportation of students

6. Engaging parents helps improve the focus on education

7. Maintain a school in each community.

SYDNEY FAMILY OF SCHOOLS SCENARIOS

Scenario 20

Examine the feasibility of establishing Sydney Academy as a 9-12 school in accordance with the grade level configuration concept for existing grade 10-12 schools as enunciated in Kids and Learning First.

Scenario 21

Examine the feasibility of establishing one junior high school to serve all grade 7 to 9 junior high school students in the former City of Sydney including Whitney Pier.

Scenario 22

If Sydney Academy was to be reconfigured as a grade 9-12 school, examine the option of establishing either Sherwood Park or Whitney Pier Memorial as the junior high school for Sydney Family of Schools.

Scenario 23

Examine the option of converting one of the Board-owned elementary schools in Sydney (excludes Harbourside) into a junior high.

a) Reconfiguring boundaries to accommodate elementary students in 3 existing schools strategically located geographically
b) Consider converting one of the elementary schools to a Junior High

Administration Scenario 3

Examine the feasibility of establishing one Primary to grade 2 school, one grade 3-5 school, and one middle school grades 6-8 from south side of the Victoria Road overpass to Grand lake Road to Prime Brook (current catchment area for Cusack, Brookland, Shipyard, and Sherwood Park)to serve primary-grade 8 school children in the catchment area. Grade 9 to 12 students from this catchment area along with Whitney Pier students would attend school at Sydney Academy.

Public Scenario 12

Examine the option of converting one of the Board-owned elementary schools in Sydney (excludes Harbourside and Whitney Pier Memorial) into a Junior High

a) Reconfiguring boundaries to accommodate elementary students in 3 existing schools that are strategically located.
b) Consider converting one of the elementary schools into a Junior High.

Public Scenario 13

Examine the option of retaining the Late French Immersion at Whitney Pier Memorial.

PROPOSAL 1

All grade 9-12 students (with the exception of French Immersion) in the Sydney Family of Schools are to be accommodated at Sydney Academy.

INITIAL REACTION

Student Accommodation Study Group members recognized a need to do something to reduce excess square footage in the Sydney Family of Schools.

SASG members support the reconfiguration of Sydney Academy from a 10-12 school to a 9-12 school.

A refurbished Sydney Academy is positioned to accommodate and serve a grade 9-12 student population well into the future.

Student Accommodation Study Group members see a need to have all High schools adopt this configuration at the same time to mitigate against any potential inequities that might emerge should the Board elect to go with a 9-12 high school grade configuration.

Some uncertainty exists with respect to how grade 9 programming will be provided within a semester school setting.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

STRENGHTS	WEAKNESSES
The new grade level proposal is consistent with the Levin Report, Kids and Learning First and the Gunn Report.	Staggering the introduction of 9-12 across the CBVRSB could put pressure on decision-makers with respect to student transfers.
Space is available to house the grade 9 students	Parent perception of a High School environment for a 14 year old is a concern.
This proposal addresses the excess capacity issue.	Sports programs may be a challenge.

OPPORTUNITIES

Sydney Academy is positioned to accept Grade 9 students in 2015-2016 and beyond. Participants recognize an opportunity exists to introduce the grade 9-12 configuration across the school system for all High Schools at the same time.

IMPACTS

Impact on Students

Sydney Academy students engaged in the High School Focus Groups acknowledge that while it would be exciting and opportunistic for some students and a bit intimidating for other students, the time is right to reconfigure High School grade levels to include grade 9 students. Students requiring nurturing and support as well as those whose maturity and independence levels are well established will be encouraged by a caring and supportive staff and student body.

Initially, students from Whitney Pier Memorial Junior High and Sherwood Park Education Center will comprise the grade 9 class at Sydney Academy. The French Immersion students from Whitney Pier Memorial Junior High will attend Riverview High School. If fall-down proposals are accepted by the Board, future students to the grade 9 program at Sydney Academy will come from Harbourside P-8 school and the Sydney Middle School.

Students in grade 9 will be exposed to but not directly affected by the semester schedule used in High School. Grade 9 is viewed as a transition year for students and as such they will not be subjected to a school schedule that is a semester.

While it is recognized that a variety of sport teams exist at Sydney Academy, the addition of the grade 9 student population will increase the competitive level for spots on interscholastic teams and create a demand for gym time.

Program Delivery Spaces

Thirty classrooms along with a strong complement of program and educational support spaces are present in Sydney Academy.

A new space for Family Studies and Tech. Ed. has been constructed. These spaces will be able to accommodate these elective components of the grade 9 program.

No late French Immersion program exists at Sydney Academy.

The pod system utilized to organize student grade level groups at Sherwood Park would be lost in the movement of the grade 9 group to Sydney Academy.

Community

This proposal will have no negative impacts on the community served by Sydney Academy. Community groups, recreation and sport activity, service clubs and other socially minded organizations will continue

to operate as in the past in accordance with School Board Policy with respect to community use of schools.

Parents might initiate additional transfer requests to the Riverview Family of Schools if the grade level reconfiguration proposal was staggered when implemented by the Board.

Staffing

The new collective agreement would provide protection and ease of procedure for teaching staff in the event of position changes or displaced staff.

Implementation Timelines

While Sydney Academy is positioned to house the grade 9 student population participants in the Study Group believe it to be advantageous to implement the 9-12 change at a point when all High Schools are in a position to make the move. Changes in enrolment, demographics, and staff formulas for high schools have resulted in a modification of the projected date that Riverview High School would be positioned to accommodate the grade 9 student population in that Family of Schools. The movement of grade 9 students to High Schools across the system could occur as early as September 2015.

COSTS

Operating Costs

With the retrofit completed at Sydney Academy, the operating costs for 2012-13 were $ 584,000.00.

Capital Costs

The major addition/alterations project for Sydney Academy is completed. All instruction and support spaces are in place to accommodate grade 9 students.

Transportation

Transportation is currently in place to bring grade 10-12 students to Sydney Academy from the outlying perimeters of the Sydney Family of Schools catchment area as well as for program purposes. Currently the Academy is served by 14 buses during morning and afternoon runs.

Grade 9 students from Whitney Pier as well as grade 9 students being transported to Sherwood Park would require transportation services if Sydney Academy was configured as a grade 9-12 school.

UNKNOWNS WITH RESPECT TO THIS PROPOSAL

There may be implications for staffing with regards to school closures/reconfiguration and combinations.

Possible challenges with composition of sport teams if reconfiguration is not done all at once.

Boundaries may be an issue.

PROPOSAL 2

Examine the option of converting one of the Board-owned elementary schools in Sydney (exclusive of Harbourside) into a Middle School (grades 6-8)

INITIAL REACTION

Participants recognized that Brookland, Whitney Pier Memorial, and Sherwood Park are excellent facilities that support very well the existing grade level configurations housed within them.

In examining Brookland as a potential middle school, it was noted that other elementary schools including Shipyard Elementary and Cusack Elementary within the former City of Sydney should be considered as well.

Sherwood Park would not require any addition or alteration if retained as a Middle School.

Brookland as configured would require an addition/alterations (yet to be determined) to support a Middle School Program. An estimate is contained in Appendix I.

Sherwood Park is an excellent facility worthy of consideration as a Middle School when the discussions are taking place prior to the lapsing of the initial P3 lease agreement.

As a Middle School, Sherwood Park has endless possibilities including housing all grade 6-8 students from within the Sydney Family of Schools.

Some Student Accommodation Study Group members believe that the challenges articulated in Looking Inward (pg. 54) with respect to converting a board owned elementary school into a Middle School are a consideration when addressing this proposal.

Some Student Accommodation Study Group members questioned why the largest number of Elementary School students (housed at Brookland) are being considered for displacement under this proposal rather than one of the smaller Elementary School populations.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

** Sherwood Park

Strengths	Weaknesses
Appropriately constructed for middle school	6.6 million dollar purchase price tag
-regulation classrooms (22) in 4 pods	1.1 million current annual lease payment

-cafetorium
-full size soccer field
-adjacent to Baille Ard Trail
-lockers
-family studies labs (2)
-tech Ed labs (2)
-computer lab (1)
-music room with stage access and
Practice rooms
-art room with kiln
-science labs (4)
-learning resource (2)
-library and media center
-use of excess space – program support
-virtual classroom
-schools plus
-steps to success
-no refurbishment needed
-sinking maintenance fund until 2020
- technology replacement fund until 2020

2012-2013 excess capacity 46%
5 year projected excess capacity
range as 6-8 school 25-45%

Brookland

Strengths

* 20 - 900 square foot classrooms
3 learning support spaces
1 learning resource space
Student services and itinerant office
1200 square foot music room
Library 1820 square foot
Seminar and multi-media room
Cafeteria 2110 square foot
Gym – 2 station 5264 square foot

Weaknesses

-limited identified space for expansion
-no playing field as part of school space
(adjacent community field)
-need to reconfigure interior space and/or
add program space
-tech education
-science classroom
-youth health center
-family studies
-need to address existing spaces
(size/ location) for
art room
- gymnasium - not regulation size
- no spectator viewing area
- new equipment needed

Potential cost savings as this is a Board owned school and would not require the province to carry a lease or exercise an option to buy.

Notes

* classroom spaces contain bank of computers
Program space consistent with Elementary
School Program

OPPORTUNITIES

To determine the long term advantages of retaining a P3 school ready to accommodate a Middle school student population versus the scoping of a project to ready an existing Board owned facility to receive a Middle School student population.

IMPACTS

Students

The potential of a move from Terrace Street to Cottage Road would not be a burden for students.
The school spirit generated through spectator participation in sporting events held in the gym would be limited at the Brookland site.

Some Student Accommodation Study Group Members believe that the transition for students will be too much.

Most students at Brookland would have to be bussed to the new Elementary School.

Program Delivery Spaces

The challenge for the Board is to make alterations to the existing elementary building that will allow for a student population of between 300 and 400 to be accommodated in classroom settings while at the same time creating appropriate program spaces for students at the Middle school level. This does not imply the reproduction of existing Junior High spaces.

Community

Sherwood Park Education Center provides a venue for a local church service, engages a business professional to provide food and catering services and is the home of activities that are social, recreational, cultural and athletic in nature. The setting of the school encourages the promotion of community involvement in nature through the use of surrounding nature trails that are utilized by the student body and the community at large. Not including Sherwood Park in the long term facility plans of

the Board would pose a potential jeopardy / loss to the community with respect to retention of these services/uses that the community has grown accustomed to over the past 17 years.

Potential negative impact on Sydney Day Care as a community business as they lose their elementary programs for lunch and after school programs.

Staffing

The proposed Middle School solution would see a staffing complement of 20.

The new Collective Agreement provided a procedure for dealing with displaced staff in filling positions.

Implementation Timeline

Two interconnected challenges need to be addressed prior to the establishment of time lines for the creation of a middle school. If Sherwood Park was identified as the site for the Middle School and the Province was on Board with exercising one of the continuation options a plan could be set in place in the school year following the decision to establish the middle school. (November 2015 is notification date for Sherwood Park)
If Brookland was deemed to be the preferred site for the Middle School, the project plan to ready the site from a program perspective, securing project funding and completion of the alteration project would need to be accomplished prior to establishing the timeline for establishing the Middle school at this site.

COSTS
Operating Costs

The operating costs for Sherwood Park for 2012-13 were $ 488,000.00

The operating costs for Brookland for 2012-13 were $325,000.00

Capital Costs

The establishment of Sherwood Park as the site of the Middle school would come with no capital costs from the perspective of an Addition / Alteration. However, if the province was to buy the school from the P3 partner at the end of the lease the capital cost would be 6.6 million. If the Province was to exercise the option of extending the lease, no amount has yet been determined as to the annual lease payment. This will not be known unless the Province determines which route it will follow by November 2015.

With respect to Brookland potentially being the site for the Middle School, the addition/alterations required have been scoped out. All program spaces lacking in the Middle School space allocation

program currently under the Design Requirements Management for Brookland have been identified relative to the space currently in existence at Brookland. An estimate has been generated based on new construction and refurbishment costs at today's rate (See Appendix I).

Transportation

The current level of student transportation within the Sydney Family of Schools would increase if Brookland was to become the middle school. In addition there would be a change to the site to which several groups of students would be transported as well as the level (number and age) of ridership on the respective bus routes in the morning and afternoon.

UNKNOWNS WITH RESPECT TO PROPOSAL 2

1. If Sherwood Park will be recommended for retention when the P3 lease is reviewed by November 2015.
2. How smooth is the transition from a P3 lease?
3. What new boundaries would be set?
4. What would the operating costs be after renovations?
5. How would this project be prioritized with respect to other capital projects to be put forward by the Board?
6. What would be done to address the loss of sport facilities that Middle School students have access to at existing Middle (Junior High) school facilities?

FALL-DOWN FROM PROPOSAL # 2 WITH RESPECT TO REMAINING ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Current P-5 students attending Shipyard plus some Brookland P-5 students based on boundary realignment would attend Shipyard.

Initial Reaction

- surprised that Brookland would be considered as a middle school when it is currently full of P-6 students.
- unsure if all P-5 students could be housed in Cusack and Shipyard.
- recognize that major boundary changes would need to be made in order for P-5 students to be accommodated in one of two P-5 schools.
- increased bussing would be needed.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Shipyard

Strengths	Weakness
Newer building (2002) No additions/alterations required	Schools to serve multiple areas of Sydney as opposed to neighborhood communities (e.g. Shipyard) Increased transportation required to get students to school. Class cap will influence the number of groups to be accommodated.

Current P-5 students attending Cusack plus some Brookland P-5 students based on boundary realignments would attend Cusack.

Initial Reaction

- surprised that Brookland would be considered as a middle school when it is currently full of P-6 students.
- unsure if all P-5 students could be housed in Cusack and Shipyard.
- recognize that major boundary changes would need to be made in order for P-5 students to be accommodated in one of two P-5 schools.
- if Mira Road students attending Brookland would return to Mira Road or be accommodated at Cusack or Shipyard.
- increased bussing would be needed.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Cusack

Strengths	Weakness
Refurbished and expanded facility (2012) No addition/alteration required	Schools to serve multiple areas of Sydney as opposed to neighborhood community (e.g. Ashby) Increased transportation required to get students to school

			Shipyard	Cusack
Total P-5 enrolment in 2014-2015	-	814		
Total number of grade level classrooms in Shipyard including language class and Cusack including science room			16	19
Total number of instructional groups that Are needed using class cap: P-3 = 26 4-5 = 12		38		
Ability to accommodate students between two schools using 2014-2015 enrolments	-	- 3		

*By 2016-2017 enrolment for P-5 were expected to be nearing 775 which would make P-5 split between two schools manageable.

**The proximity and location of Mira Road School could provide relief to Shipyard and Cusack in dealing with the P-5 student population in Sydney if Mira Road School was to be considered part of the Sydney Family of Schools.

IMPACT

Students

a) P-5 students from the north end and south end of the city will be redistributed to either Cusack or Shipyard based on new boundary definitions.
b) Grade 6 students who previously attended Cusack and Shipyard will be housed in a middle school setting at Brookland or Sherwood Park.

Program Delivery

P-5 students who will attend Shipyard/Cusack will be housed in facilities that enable the public school program to be effectively delivered by qualified elementary school teachers bolstered by itinerant specialist in an elementary school environment.

Community

The P-5 student population redistribution emanating from the boundary review will result in the formation of a new school community. Parents of P-5 students will be called upon to establish ties with and support of a new school community in a familiar setting if Brookland was to be identified as the middle school setting.

Staffing

Based on the 2013-2014 student enrolment the staffing compliment would look like this:

Cusack	classroom staff	20	plus itinerants
Shipyard	classroom staff	19	plus itinerants

Each school would have a full time principal and vice principal.

The class cap supplement is assigned in this situation with respect to funding of staff.
No classroom staffing efficiency or saving is expected from the implementation of this scenario. A slight administrative saving will be generated from the reduction of one facility member.

Timetable for Implementation

While the expected implementation date could be as early as 2015-2016 from a space/enrolment perspective, the decision with respect to the future of Sherwood Park could impact this date.

Operating Costs

Operating costs for Cusack for 2012-2013 totalled $244,000. In realigning the student population to P-5 and filling the school to capacity no change (other than price increased for supplies/services) is expected.

Operating costs for Shipyard for 2012-2013 were $364,000. In realigning the student population to P-5 and filling the school to capacity, no change (other than price increases for supplies/services) is expected.

Capital Costs

Both Cusack and Shipyard will not require an infusion of capital funds as both facilities are size and program appropriate for P-5 students.

Transportation

In 2013-2014 students were transported to the following schools within the Sydney Family of Schools utilizing buses for morning and afternoon runs:

Brookland	4 buses
Cusack	10 buses
Shipyard	5 buses
Sherwood Park	10 buses

Redistribution of students resulting from the boundary review will not increase the number of buses but rather the ridership on those buses as there would be one less site to service.

PROPOSAL 3

P-8 students from Harbourside catchment area plus grade 7 and 8 immersion to be housed at Harbourside

Initial Reaction

- recognized two P3 schools comprise part of family and that the leases will lapse by 2020. (Harbourside is one of these)
- surprised that both Sherwood Park and Whitney Pier Memorial (2 existing junior high schools) may not be part of the group of buildings to be retained as junior high/middle school facilities.
- cost of renovations for one or both buildings in Whitney Pier needs to be a consideration.
- recognition that Whitney Pier Memorial Junior High could not serve as P-8 school without a substantial classroom addition and major refurbishment.
- this proposal would mean a bigger school for elementary students
- Harbourside gym does not have spectator space.
- confined space at Harbourside for parking and play areas.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Strengths	Weaknesses
Harbourside is a great facility and can handle the P-8 student body including French Immersion	Initially it was thought that one additional transition for French Immersion students would be needed if grade configuration is delayed in Riverview Family of Schools. This is no longer the case.
- Option exists under P-3 agreement to request program enhancement to facility	Loss of facility/program spaces associated with relocation of WPMJH students
- Option exists to request province to purchase/ renew lease for Harbourside	Smaller gym space (5180 sq. ft.)
- P-8 students retained in Whitney Pier	Need to enhance/convert existing elementary classroom space to provide appropriate program spaces for middle school
- Enables middle school concept to be implemented	Purchase cost of Harbourside if option to purchase was executed (5.1 million)
- Retention of French Immersion in Whitney Pier	Increase transportation for grade 9's to Sydney Academy

- newer facility in Whitney Pier is retained	Loss of Gym time for community use
	Potential loss to local business (including boys and girls club lunch service)
	Parking issues
	Concern about the size of the soccer field
	Scheduling issues
	Cafeteria space
	Potential loss of special needs space

OPPORTUNITY

To reduce system square feet by redefining use for WPMJH.

To establish P-8 school for Whitney Pier and South Bar students plus neighboring French Immersion students.

Establish one system administrative/support office space in Whitney Pier.

Work with P-3 partners to reconfigure/enhance program spaces to accommodate P-8 student population from program perspective.

IMPACTS

Students

Whitney Pier Memorial Junior High school students are impacted the most by this proposal.

To avoid an extra transition from grade 5 and 6 and to protect immersion programming we must be consider beginning immersion for grade six students in the Sydney Family of Schools.

Grade 7 and 8 students would be housed in Harbourside School under a newly configured P-8 structure under this proposal. Grade 9 English program students would be housed in Sydney Academy and need to be bussed to Sydney Academy.

French Immersion grade 7 and 8 students would continue to be housed at Harbourside while grade 9 students would travel to Riverview High School to continue their immersion program.

Grade 7 and 8 students who attend Whitney Pier Memorial Junior High will lose larger program spaces that they have grown accustomed to as program spaces reconfigured at Harbourside will be smaller (E.g. Tech Ed, Family Studies, Gymnasium.

Program Delivery Spaces

Some existing program spaces (classrooms) will need to be reconfigured into program appropriate spaces for grade 7 and 8 program offerings. Changes required include the creation of a Family Studies area, creation/adaptation of a Tech Ed area, Youth Health Center space, science classroom, provision of lockers and the designation of an area of the school to house French Immersion students.

Students who previously attended WPMJH would have been instructed in designed program space consistent with the standards of the 1970's and 1980's. The gym area was designed as a junior high gym with a curtain to create two instructional spaces in 7500 square feet of space.

Community

Currently the residents of Whitney Pier and South Bar benefit from two excellent school facilities that provide multiple opportunities for and are extensively used by the community members and groups.

Under the proposal Whitney Pier Memorial Junior High would be lost to the community as a school. The repurposing of the facility as an administrative and support services center would require the building be reconfigured and retained.

Staffing

This proposal calls for the reassignment of staff to cover both the grade 7 and 8 English program and the grade 7 and 8 French Immersion program. Approximately 12 additional teachers would be required to service student needs under this proposal at Harbourside. That would bring the teaching compliment up to 28 plus itinerant staff if existing formulas were applied. The school would have a principal and two full-time vice principals.

The new Collective Agreement provides a procedure for dealing with displaced staff in filling positions.

Implementation Timeframe

While Sydney Academy is now positioned to accept grade 9's from SPEC and Whitney Pier Memorial Junior High, one might expect that such a change could occur when all high schools are ready possibly as early as 2015-2016.

Time is required to request and obtain permission from the Department and the P3 partners for an enhancement to Harbourside to effect program facility changes prior to grades 7 and 8 being accommodated there.

COSTS

Operating Costs

In 2012-2013 the cost to operate Harbourside and Whitney Pier Memorial Junior High were as follows:

Harbourside	$ 344,000
Whitney Pier Memorial	$ 459,000

Capital

As Harbourside is a P3 school and its retention fits within this proposal, a need would exist to request a capital enhancement project to enable grade 7 and 8 students to be appropriately accommodated at Harbourside. The scope of this project would be identified through a detailed program space review. Costing for this project will be scoped out for consideration by the Department and P3 partner.
Transportation

Grade 9 students would be transported to Sydney Academy with the exception of French Immersion grade 9's who would be housed at and transported to Riverview at the time the overall grade configuration is implemented.

Primary to Grade 8 students would experience little or no change in transportation.

UNKNOWNS WITH RESPECT TO PROPOSAL 3

1. What are the costs involved in renovating Harbourside to create a P-8 facility?
2. Is a lease extension or outright purchase the preferred retention option of Government?
3. Whether or not consideration would be given to making Harbourside P-5 and all Middle School students would attend Sherwood Park?

PROPOSAL 4 - Consolidate administrative offices at the Whitney Pier Memorial facility

Initial Reaction

1. Some members question why Whitney Pier Memorial Junior High was identified as the potential new Administrative Building as opposed to Cusack, Brookland or Shipyard for all the Board staff.
2. Concern was expressed that the facility (WPMJH) appears to have more space than would be needed for an Administrative Center.
3. Some members wondered if the age of the building was a consideration.
4. Its location could be too remote for use by some staff.
5. Some members wondered if cost saving through staff reductions would be an outcome of consolidating central office staff in one location.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Satisfies goal of having all staff at one location	Loss of major facility for community use
Reduces upkeep of multiple locations	Middle school students would be displaced
Convenient for meeting purposes	Building would need costly makeover to convert it to office space.

OPPORTUNITIES

To bring all administrative staff together under one roof

To reduce excess square footage in the system.

IMPACTS

Students

In repurposing the facility, the grade 7 and grade 8 student population would be displaced to Harbourside while the grade nine student population would attend Sydney Academy.

PROGRAM DELIVERY

Harbourside was designed and constructed as an Elementary School. To effective and efficiently house a Middle School student population, Harbourside would need to be reconfigured internally by converting some existing classroom space to specialist areas.

COMMUNITY

Whitney Pier Memorial Junior High School current serves as the hub for many community, cultural, social and physical activities and initiatives. One of the considerations suggested for this facility would be the creation of a plan that would enable continued use of the lower level for shared use with the community.

STAFFING

Under this proposal all staff currently serving Whitney Pier Memorial Junior High Students would be relocated to other facilities. The new Collective Agreement contains a procedure for dealing with displaced teaching staff.

TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMEMTATION

Harbourside would need to be identified as a recommended facility as part of the long term facilities plan for the School Board. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development would need to be notified by Board to advise the P3 partner of the desire of the Board to continue to utilize Harbourside into the future. A decision would need to be made by the Province of Nova Scotia to either negotiate the lease for the School or buy it from the P3 partner at the end of the initial lease.

A capital project would have to be 'scoped out' for Harbourside and a capital funding source confirmed to enable the P3 partner to effect the necessary internal modifications to Harbourside to accommodate the Middle school students.

Should a new grade level configuration be adopted, the composition of the grade level may be adjusted at Harbourside and Whitney Pier Memorial while waiting for renovations to be completed.

COSTS

Operating Costs

No change in operating costs is anticipated at this time if both facilities are retained as per proposals 3 and 4 for the Sydney Family of Schools

The 2012-13 operating costs were as follows

Harbourside	$ 344,000.00
Whitney Pier Memorial	$ 459,000.00

CAPITAL COSTS

A cost analysis to create a single administrative facility will need to be conducted if the Board endorses proposal 4 as part of the Long Range Facilities Plan.

TRANSPORTATION COSTS

If the grade 9 students are configured in a 9-12 school, the grade 9 students would attend Sydney Academy. This may require additional buses to transport these students.
Students attending the French Immersion program in the Riverview Family of Schools will need to be transported there.
Some existing bus routes and ridership will change. No significant increase in transportation costs is anticipated.

UNKNOWNS WITH RESPECT TO PROPOSAL 4

1. What upgrades would be necessary?
2. What is the cost of refurbishing the school for office use?

PROPOSAL 5 - Return Sherwood Park Education Center to the private sector partner when the initial lease expires.

INITIAL REACTION

Some Student Accommodation Study Group members acknowledged that Sherwood Park is the facility in Sydney (excluding Whitney Pier) that fits the program needs of a Middle School and that it would be a regressive step to give it up.

Some Student Accommodation Study Group members would prefer to see proposals developed the would either: include the retention of all P3 Schools

Or

Exclude all P3 schools from the proposals

STRENGHTS	WEAKNESSES
Potential cost savings	Loss of first class facility that can accommodate grade and French Immersion

OPPORTUNITIES

To reduce the excess square footage.

IMPACTS

Students

Students will lose the grade level pods
Some Family of Schools Student Accommodation Study group members believe upcoming students should continue to benefit from the excellent Middle school facilities at Sherwood Park

Program Delivery/Spaces

Smaller gym space would exist if an elementary school was converted to a Middle School.
Loss exceptionally good specialist areas designed for Middle School (Tech Ed., Science labs, Family Studies, Art and Music facilities)
Loss of Mi'kmaq Learning Support Area
Schools Plus space would have to be found in new Middle School facility.

Community

Sherwood Park Education Center provides a venue for a local church service engages a business professional to provide food and catering services and is the home of activities that are social, recreational, cultural and athletic in nature. The setting of the school encourages the promotion of community involvement in nature through the use of surrounding nature trails that are utilized by the student body and the community at large. Not including Sherwood Park in the long term facility plans of the Board would pose a potential jeopardy / loss to the community with respect to retention of these services/uses that the community has grown accustomed to over the past 17 years.

Potential negative impact on Sydney Day Care as a community business as they lose their elementary programs for lunch and after school programs.

Staffing

The proposed Middle School solution would see a staffing complement of 20.

The new Collective Agreement provided a procedure for dealing with displaced staff in filling positions.

Timetable for Implementation

The current lease for Sherwood Park does not expire until 2020. Notification must be provided to the P3 partner by November 2015 indicating the intent of the Province with respect to the future need for this facility after the initial lease expires.

COSTS

Operating Costs

The operating costs for Sherwood Park for 2012-13 were $ 488,000.00

The operating costs for Brookland for 2012-13 were $325,000.00

Capital Costs

The establishment of Sherwood Park as the site of the Middle school would come with no capital costs from the perspective of an Addition / Alteration. However, if the province was to buy the school from the P3 partner at the end of the lease the capital cost would be 6.6 million. If the Province was to exercise the option of extending the lease, no amount has yet been determined as to the annual lease payment. This will not be known unless the Province determines which route it will follow by November 2015.

Study group members noted that there will be costs associated with replacing Band Instrument, Phys. Ed equipment, and technology currently owned by leaser of the facility.

Transportation

The current level of student transportation within the Sydney Family of Schools would be maintained. What would change is the site to which several groups of students would be transported as well as the level (number and age) of ridership on the respective bus routes in the morning and afternoon. It should be noted that if Brookland was to become the middle school almost all students who currently walk would be bussed to either Cusack or Shipyard.

UNKNOWNS WITH RESPECT TO PROPOSAL 5

Is Government willing to continue the lease or buy this facility?

ALTERNATE PROPOSAL 1

Maintain Sherwood Park Education Center as the Middle School for grades 6-8 English Program students in Sydney with the exception of students from Harbourside Elementary School

AND

Establish Sherwood Park Education Center as the French Immersion Center for students from Sydney, New Waterford, and Glace Bay Families of Schools

AND

Keep Whitney Pier Memorial Junior High as the P-8 School to serve all English Program students in the Whitney Pier and South Bar catchment areas

AND

Identify Harbourside Elementary School as surplus to the needs of the School Board and recommend to the Department of Education that it be returned to the P3 partner.

AND

Convert Brookland or Shipyard to Board offices and rent out any surplus space

AND

House grade Primary to grade 5 students from Brookland or Shipyard in one or the other remaining facilities along with Cusack Elementary.

RATIONAL FOR ALTERNATE PROPOSAL 1

Sherwood Park Education Center is the only P3 school within our Board designed specifically for a middle school student population. No additions or alterations would have to be made to the facility to accommodate a Middle School student population. Program spaces are 'right sized' for a middle school student population. (Labs, Learning Resource spaces and computer lab). The gym area is spectator friendly and accommodating. Family Studies and Tech. Ed. areas are currently incorporated in the building. Music and Art facilities are consistent with building design and program space requirements. Sherwood Park Education Center is situated next to accessible green space to support program enrichment. A regulation size soccer field is part of the school facility. A baseball diamond is incorporated into the playing field. Lockers are available for Middle School students.
With 22 classroom spaces, the school can house the grade 6-8 student population comfortably as well as providing a home for the late French Immersion Program currently at Whitney Pier Memorial Junior High School. This would ensure maximum utilization of the school facility.

ALTERNATE PROPOSAL 2

Extend the lease of Sherwood Park Education Center by five (5) years while waiting to secure capital funding to address the refit issues required to change an elementary school space into a middle school.

RATIONALE FOR ALTERNATE PROPOSAL 2

Sydney Family of Schools Student Accommodation Study Group members recognize that much planning must be done by the Board with respect to the preparation and presentation of capital request for school facility improvement and enhancement. This group also acknowledges that if a change in organizational management relating to the number and configuration is to take place within the Board, the Province of Nova Scotia must be positioned to respond to capital requests coming from our school board and indeed all school boards across the province.

The Study Group recognizes that the date (November 2015 for Sherwood Park) to identify P3 schools for inclusion in the long range facility plan for the Board is rapidly approaching. The Sydney Family of Schools Study Group members believe it prudent to have the Board request that the Province renegotiate the retention of Sherwood Park for a 5 year period to allow sufficient time to explore the feasibility of establishing a Board owned facility as a Middle School and ensuring that the Province is fully committed to funding the needed Program space enhancements to an existing elementary school facility as part of the process of creating a Middle School learning environment.

ALTERNATE PROPOSAL 3

Consider Whitney Pier memorial as the middle school site closing Sherwood Park

AND

Maintain Harbourside as a P-5 school closing a Sydney Elementary School

RATIONALE FOR ALTERNATE PROPOSAL 3

The original scenarios in Looking Inward took into account the need for a junior high or middle school to serve the student population of Sydney including Whitney Pier. Based on the 2014 September 30 enrolment figures if a middle school was to be established to serve the middle school population plus the existing late French Immersion student population that facility would need to handle a student capacity of 643. If the French Immersion numbers were not included the capacity required would be reduced to 515.

While Whitney Pier Memorial Junior High opened in 1978, it remains a viable, vibrant junior high school comprised of 75211 square feet of space. The school's instructional spaces are compatible with the facility requirements for a middle school containing all instructional spaces to accommodate a middle school curriculum. The gymnasium is a standard size two station instructional area with viewing area for athletic events.

Retention of this facility as a middle school to serve middle school students from the Sydney Family of Schools would result in considerable savings for the school board and province. There would be no need to develop a business case for the purchase of Sherwood Park Education Center (6 million dollars) or to enter a renewal lease option (current lease 1.1 million per year).

The Board could explore the option of re-purposing another board owned facility (other than Whitney Pier Memorial Junior High) as a single central office facility if this proposal was to receive the support of the Board.

Harbourside is equipped as a new school to accommodate the P to 5 student population without making any costly renovations to a facility to create middle school instructional spaces. Even with the class cap Harbourside has a capacity for 625 students. Based on the September 30, 2014 enrolment a P-5 configuration at Harbourside could house all current Harbourside P-5 students (316) plus the P-5 student population at Cusack (303).

In 2000 a new Whitney Pier School was configured when Eastmount, Don Bosco, Elmwood, Jamieson, and South Bar came together to form the new Harbourside P3 school community. The former school buildings have been torn down or put to alternate use in the community. As such a need exists to build

a business case for the retention of the Harbourside School P3 in the Whitney Pier community. Failure to do so would result in the need to request government to construct a smaller school to replace Harbourside, use the alternate facility and displace that student population or transport st6udents to an elementary site 'over town'.

ALTERNATE PROPOSAL 4

To avoid an extra transition for students from grade 5 to grade 6 and to protect the French Immersion Program, we recommend the Board consider beginning French Immersion for Grade six students should a Middle School service delivery model be adopted by the Board.

RATIONALE FOR ALTERNATE PROPOSAL 4

Historically the Late French Immersion Program started in grade 7 and continued to grade 12. The program is intended for students interested in becoming fluent in the oral and written components of the French language. Student participants in the Late French Immersion program come from schools where instruction was provided in grades 4-6 core French or grades 4 and 5 core French and grade 6 Intensive French.

While Early French Immersion has been offered in school systems across the Province dating back to the 1970's, the Cape Breton Victoria Regional School Board has elected to focus its efforts and utilize its resources to strengthen and expand the late French Immersion offering within its jurisdiction.

Curriculum guides and instructional /resource material have been developed and made available through the Department of Education for the Early French Immersion Program to support the goals and objectives of the Program. The existence of guidelines, instructional materials and resources from grade Primary to grade 6 bodes well for the introduction of a grade 6 French Immersion Program should the Cape Breton Victoria Regional School Board institute a Middle School service delivery model.

French Immersion programs benefit the cognitive and social development of students as well as increase proficiency in speaking and writing the language. Upon graduation from the program in grade 12, graduates are positioned to take post - secondary courses with French as the language of instruction and consider entrance to employment opportunities where French is the language of work.

Other school board jurisdictions across Canada such as British Columbia whose grade level service delivery model is Primary to grade 5, grade 6-8 and/or Primary to grade 8, and grades 9-12 begin Late French Immersion offerings at the grade 6 level.

The primary consideration in any reconfiguration of grade levels within a public school system is to limit the number of transitions students experience during their public school years. Students participating in Late French Immersion Programs under the Cape Breton Victoria Regional School Board have received instruction in Core French in grades 4-6 or Core French in grades 4 and 5 and Intensive French in grade 6. The students transition to French Immersion at one of three Junior High French Immersion Centers and then transition at grade 10 to one of two High Schools offering French Immersion.

If a Primary to grade 5, grades 6-8 and grade 9-12 model was introduced across the Cape Breton Victoria Regional School Board students wishing to enter the Late French Immersion Program could be faced with an additional transition at the grade 6 level prior to their transition to the Late French Immersion Program.

The research and literature reviews suggest that student transitions from one school to another be held to a minimum to insure the appropriate cognitive and social development of students is not compromised.

We recommend that the School Board seriously consider the implementation of the late French Immersion Program at grade 6 if the Primary to grade 5, grades 6-8 and grades 9-12 service delivery model is to be implemented system-wide under the jurisdiction of the Cape Breton Victoria Regional School Board.

ALTERNATE PROPOSAL #5

The concerned parents of Brookland Elementary School believe that Alternate Proposal #5 for the Sydney Family of Schools addresses the issues facing the School Board in their efforts to provide suitable and sustainable program space for Primary to Grade 12 within the Sydney Family of Schools.

This proposal:

reduces excess space
generates a cost saving
enables the Board to reduce the number of buildings
enables the consolidation of administrative space
expedites some aspects of P3 decision-making
most importantly it puts the students first by placing the
students in age appropriate/space appropriate instructional spaces.

The proposal reads as follows:

Sydney Academy	9-12
Cusack Elementary	P-5
Brookland Elementary	P-5
Whitney Pier Memorial	P-8
Sherwood Park	6-8 (Plus Immersion and 0.25 of Adm.)
Shipyard	Convert to Board offices (0.75 of Adm.)

RATIONALE

With the submission of Alternate Proposal #5 for the Sydney Family of Schools, we believe that the children within the Sydney Family of Schools will be well served- an objective consistent with the goals of the Board.

The reconfiguration of Sydney Academy to include grade 9 students provides an opportunity for students to transition smoothly to High School.

Sherwood Park Education Center enables the Sydney Family of Schools to establish a Middle School program in a facility designed to support such a program. This facility has a properly sized gymnasium, science labs, Tech.Ed. program spaces, Family Studies labs, Fine Arts areas and an abundance of green space.

The establishment of Whitney Pier Memorial junior High as a Primary to grade 8 school retains the Primary to grade 8 student population in the community, allows for Primary and Middle School education to be offered in a P-8 setting, program spaces are consistent with the needs of a Middle School, the facility can be refurbished for a reasonable capital expenditure (2.35 m) and valued community partnerships and community use of the facility could be sustained.

We see the use of Cusack and Brookland as P-5 elementary schools to serve the P-5 students from the areas south ,east and west of the Victoria Road overpass as an efficient and effective solution to the challenges facing the School Board. For elementary students in this portion of the Sydney Family of School we see the proposed alternative as:

. utilizing both elementary facilities to near 100% capacity.
. placing student in facilities suited for a P-5 student population.
. utilizing the facilities that in tandem are the cheapest to operate.
. negating the need for additional classrooms at Shipyard.
. enabling a multitude of children currently walking to school to continue to do so(Cusack and Brookland) thus negating the need for additional bussing.
. permitting parents an opportunity to continue to enjoy the support and benefit of neighborhood child care services.
. enabling the Board's Administrative Offices to be consolidated within the Sydney Family of Schools but in a little different configuration.

ALTERNATE PROPOSAL 6

PROPOSAL

Sydney Academy	9-12
Whitney Pier Memorial Jr. High	6-8 (Plus French Immersion)
Cusack School	6-8 (North end, South end, Ashby, Shipyard)
Brookland and Shipyard	P-5
Mira Road	Possible Board Office
Harbourside and Sherwood Park	Surplus to needs of the Board

RATIONALE

This proposal recommends the reconfiguration of Sydney Academy from a 10-12 to a 9-12 school. This would allow the grade 9 students to make a smooth and easy transition to High School. This configuration also enables the establishment of the Middle school concept at two Board owned school sites within the Sydney Family of Schools.

Whitney Pier Memorial would be reconfigured to a Grade 6-8 Middle School for Whitney Pier students plus the French Immersion students from Sydney, Glace Bay and New Waterford. This facility has the appropriate program space to allow for the conversion to a Middle School. This retains a school presence in Whitney Pier, maintains a facility used extensively by the community, retains the community partnerships that have flourished in that community for many years and retains the French Immersion Program in that school community.

With the recent completion of the Cusack School expansion, the grade 6-8 students from Ashby, Shipyard, north end and south end could be accommodated. Some of the new space could be converted into specialist program space to accommodate the Middle School program needs. This could be done far less expensive than the purchase price or lease renewal costs for the P3 schools.

All elementary school students from P-5 from all areas within the Sydney Family of Schools would be housed in Brookland and an expanded Shipyard. Both of these school buildings were constructed for elementary age students and as such they have all the needed program and student support spaces. This would also keep the largest elementary school population from moving to another site.

Mira Road School in the Riverview Family of Schools could be considered for new Administrative Office space.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Sydney Family of Schools has enjoyed unprecedented capital investment in its school facility infrastructure over the past two decades.

Sydney Academy has been completely refurbished restoring the infrastructure so as to breathe new and continuing life into a 55 year old facility.

Since amalgamation in 1995-96, new elementary schools have been constructed to serve the Shipyard, downtown central and southend, as well as Whitney Pier. Cusack Elementary constructed in 1980 has been expanded to house all students from the Ashby/Grand Lake Road catchment area.

Of the seven (7) schools serving the students in the Sydney Family of Schools, only Whitney Pier Memorial Jr High has not been impacted as of yet with an infusion of capital dollars to improve aging infrastructure.

Two of the school facilities within the Sydney Family of Schools are owned by private sector partners. Decisions with respect to the need for retention of these facilities in the post 2020 time period will be addressed prior to November 2015 in the case of Sherwood Park and by November 2016 for Harbourside.

The capital considerations associated with the P3 schools are two fold:

a) An option to purchase exists within the initial lease agreement. The purchase price for each facility is reflected in Appendix I. The implications for the province would be finding the capital cashflow to purchase these facilities without substantially increasing the capital debt of the province.
b) An option to re-negotiate a lease extension also exists. If the P3 schools are identified by the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board as essential to the long term facilities sustainability outlook, the lease extension option could be explored.

With student capacity of 3,610 and an existing student population of 2,692 , three (3) of the seven (7) Sydney Family of Schools facilities have excess student capacity of 40% or greater.

Appendix I identifies preliminary capital cash estimates for various considerations when addressing future capital requirements for options under review and consideration by the Student Accommodation Study Group.

Additional cost estimates will be developed as the Alternate Proposals (4) are explored. Included in the preparation of the estimates will be cost implications for the amortization of capital currently being carried by the province for recent capital investment in infrastructure in the Sydney Family of Schools.

SOLUTIONS SUMMARY

In right sizing the facilities required to house approximately 13,000 within the seven (7) Families of Schools under the jurisdiction of the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board, the objective is to reduce the excess capacity within the school buildings and to generate optional cost savings where

possible. When calculated last, $1.3 million in excess of revenue received was being utilized to sustain excess capacity.

While not all proposal options have been costed, the Solutions Summary contained in Appendix II provides a comparison of the five (5) proposals given to our group for review and consideration with one alternate solution emanating from the deliberations of our Study Group.

Either solution would see the facilities to serve the student population within the Sydney Family of Schools be reduced from seven (7) school buildings to five (5) school buildings under the long range outlook.

The outcome of the implementation of the suggested proposals would see Sherwood Park Education Centre not recommended for retention and Whitney Pier Memorial Jr High being re-purposed.

This solution has:

- A capital requirement of $6.8 million
- A total operating cost saving of $840,000
- Addresses excess capacity issues

The Alternate Proposal would result in the recommendation not to retain Harbourside and to re-purpose Brookland.

This solution has:

- A capital requirement of $9.55 million
- A total operating cost saving of $535,000
- An allowance of partial consolidation of Administration Offices at Brookland

Both solution summaries contain a recommendation to reconfigure grade levels as follows:

1 – High School	9-12
1 – Middle School	6-8
1 – Primary – Middle School	P-8
2 – Elementary Schools	P-5

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

Sydney Academy December 1, 2014

Participants: 101 registered

Participants at the Public Input Session for the Student Accommodation Study Group for the Sydney Family of Schools made comments and asked questions with respect to the following fifteen (15) categories:

1. Grade Configuration

One parent expressed concern that the proposed consolidation of elementary schools within the Sydney Family of Schools will result in larger class sizes.

Another parent expressed concern with four year olds (new primaries) being housed in a P-8 school with 14 year olds.

Four parents/participants spoke to the grade level configuration plans. Two individuals voiced concerns about Grade 9 students being part of a High School.

Two other participants believe that 10 year olds should not be with 14 year olds as would be the case in some middle school settings.

Three participants wondered if a solid time frame exists for implementing a new grade level configuration.

Two individuals questioned the impact grade configuration would have on staff.

2. Funding

One parent indicated that members of the public are aware of the financial pressures faced by the Board.

One parent suggested there are huge transportation costs associated with the implementation of these proposals.

One participant drew an analogy of declining enrolment and educational finances to "David and Goliath".

One parent suggested that the school board office be inter-dispersed amount schools that have a lot of excess capacity. This would help reduce excess capacity and reduce overall operating expenses.

To reduce costs, one participant suggested Mira Road students (Riverview Family of Schools) could be housed at Shipyard, Riverside, or Brookland.

3. Facility/Infrastructure

One participant questioned what administrative building would be combined.

One parent indicated Brookland Elementary School is at/near capacity and has the highest number of walkers. This parent found it difficult to understand how infrastructure such as this could be considered for some other purpose and why elementary students could, possibly, be displaced and sent to another elementary school.

One parent, in speaking about Sherwood Park, indicated that identifying Sherwood Park as surplus to the needs of the Board would be like returning a Cadillac and retaining a Chevette. This parent believed that other areas of the Board would have newer middle school infrastructure and it would be lacking in Sydney if Sherwood Park was returned to the P3 partners, thus creating an inequity.

One participant reminded those in attendance that new infrastructure was developed in Whitney Pier in 2000 with the opening of Harbourside. Four Whitney Pier schools plus South Bar community school closed and a new school community was created at Harbourside.

One participant noted that the province wants school boards to move to increased lab time (40%). Whitney Pier Junior High has sufficient lab space to accommodate this.

One individual questioned why the focus for change centered on Brookland when all three elementary schools were 1.5 km apart.

Another participant wondered why Brookland students (420) would be displaced as oppose to Shipyard (199).

4. Enrolment Decline

One participant noted that Shipyard experienced major enrolment decline and attributes some of that to boundary issues.

One individual indicated that school closures will occur because of declining enrolment. This individual believes young staff will leave the area as a result of staff reductions and the decline will continue as a result.

5. Program Considerations

One parent asked if French Immersion could be implemented at Sydney Academy beginning at Grade 9.

One participant spoke of the exceptional Fine Arts offerings provided to students under the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board. This individual suggested that music room facilities as they exist in junior high schools are worthy of consideration for retention.

Three participants spoke to the importance of retaining French Immersion at a Whitney Pier school site.

Another participant expressed concern about proper sized gymnastic spaces being in place for middle school students if junior highs are abandoned.

6. Student Consideration

One parent indicated that, in her opinion, the classrooms at Brookland were inappropriate for junior high aged students.

One participant indicated that if Sherwood Park is closed, the gym at Brookland would be too small to host tournaments and sporting events.

Three participants spoke to the issue of physical activity, obesity, and larger numbers of students being bused to school.

One participant suggested that student needs, other than academics, should be considered. The green space at Sherwood Park and the access to cultural and other experiences should be part of any service delivery model.

One participant questioned the effectiveness of some student support programs, ie STEPS.

One parent compared cost of cafeteria lunches vs lunch program at Whitney Pier Memorial Jr High.

One participant suggested that the existing shorter lunch times and shorter recesses should be lengthened to encourage good eating and activity habits to contribute to good health.

7. Capital Requirements

One parent expressed skepticism at the estimate to renovate Brookland as a middle school for $500,000.

Another parent noted that there was no reference in the report to additional capital investment that would be needed as a result of increased busing.

8. Transportation

Three parents noted that the potential closure of Brookland would increase, substantially, the number of students being transported to school outside of their home community.

9. Impact of Proposals on Other Facilities (Partners)

One participant indicated any plan should consider the change Membertou students will experience as a consequence of grade configuration. These students would be joining a middle school setting at a different point in time.

One participant objected to the Cadillac/Chevette analogy believing the comparison of older/newer facilities to be invalid.

One participant spoke to the relationship between the Whitney Pier Youth Club and Whitney Pier Memorial Junior High fearing that this relationship could be jeopardized with closure of Whitney Pier Memorial Junior High.

Another individual noted that the Community Centre relies on After School Programs and child care for students in neighbourhood schools.

10. School Boundaries

Two parents raised concern about the impact school boundaries have on the numbers of students attending certain schools in the Sydney Family of Schools.

One of the parents spoke of the decline in enrolment at Shipyard noting that students from upper Alexandra Street and Boulderwood subdivision are bused to school in Sydney River.

Another parent spoke to the impact boundaries between Mira Road and Brookland have on student numbers at these schools.

One parent indicated it was not clear whether traditional or new boundaries would be utilized in establishing school catchment areas.

11. Support Services

Three individuals raised issue of what elective program spaces should elementary schools (Brookland/Harbourside) be used as to support middle school programs. Multiple labs (Tech, Family Studies, Science) currently exist in junior high buildings. There was a concern that students would have fewer support program spaces if the elementary setting were reconfigured.

12. Community Use

Four participants noted that Whitney Pier Memorial is a community school that is extensively utilized. It enjoys the support of the Whitney Pier Youth Club and is home to many sporting, cultural, and community events.

One participant noted the importance of day care to working parents.

13. Process Concerns

One participant questioned why student voices were not being heard as part of this process.

One participant noted there was no information in the report showing historical data or projected trends with respect to enrolment and future facility needs.

One participant indicated the desire to keep involved as the long term outlook is developed.

One participant believes the Board is simply going through the motions.

One participant indicated there was a lot of information to absorb, called for more meaningful consultation and expressed concern about the process.

One participant disagreed with the strengths identified for Sherwood Park contending that students are restricted from using some of the outdoor facilities (ie. Soccer field). An opposing position was also voiced.

One participant questioned the number of youth who had been polled with respect to their thoughts on proposed changes.

14. P3 Issues/Concerns

One participant questioned whether the Board is prepared to purchase the P3 schools. Upon learning that the Province of Nova Scotia is responsible for the provision of schools to regional school board, a call for conversation with government was requested as the future of these facilities was viewed as important in establishing a long term facilities plan. A request to have the outcome of the deliberations made public was also called for by a speaker.

One parent indicated that the potential changes for Brookland to a middle school appears to be a consequence of the P3 process.

One individual believed that it was unfair to include and utilize capital costs associated with the buy-out of the P3 schools when comparing buildings.

One individual indicated the Board should have addressed the facilities issue over the years to avoid the current situation.

One individual indicated that the advantages of leasing vs renovating board owned schools was not clear.

15. Statements of Agreement

Two individuals expressed support for Alternate Proposal 1.

Two individuals expressed a desire to see Brookland retained as an elementary school.

Another individual would like to see Brookland's boundaries expanded to absorb some of the Cusack students and retain Brookland as an elementary school.

One individual noted that school closures have been with us in the past. There is a realization that programs for students need to be made secure and school closures may be needed to achieve this.

One individual noted Whitney Pier Memorial is one of the board's best kept secrets.

Sydney Family of Schools
Alternate Proposal 6

- To re-configure Sydney Academy from a 10-12 to a 9-12 high school.
- To re-configure Cusack Elementary from a P-6 to a 6-8 middle school to serve students from the Northend, Southend, Shipyard, and Ashby regions of Sydney.
- To establish Whitney Pier Memorial as a middle school to serve Whitney Pier students Grades 6-8 as well as French Immersion students from Sydney, Glace Bay and New Waterford.
- Utilize Brookland and Shipyard as the two elementary schools to serve all P-5 elementary students from the Sydney Family of Schools including Whitney Pier.
- Mira Road, in the Riverview Family of Schools, could be considered for Board offices.

Rationale:

This proposal would address all the excess capacity issues identified in the Sydney Family of Schools.

Capital expenditures required to implement this proposal would involve building a classroom wing at Shipyard as all other program amenities are currently available in Shipyard.

The two P3 schools would be declared surplus to the facility needs of the Board and major saving with respect to either a purchase price or re-negotiated lease would ensue for the province.

Busing would be required to transport elementary students from Ashby and Whitney Pier to Brookland and Shipyard. Much of this busing would be re-routing of existing runs with a different ridership. Additional cost would also be incurred where a few new bus routes would be instituted.

An opportunity exists to look at Mira Road School as a location to consolidate Board offices as the facility appears to be an unsuitable location for young children.

This Alternate Proposal 3 was submitted following the public input session for the Sydney Family of Schools held on December 1, 2014.

Additional Input
Post December 1, 2014 Public Session

1. Sherwood Park

The Sherwood Park Staff and School Advisory Council submitted a Case Study supporting Alternate Proposal 1 as part of the Sydney Family of Schools Draft Report.

The Case Study reinforced the strengths of Sherwood Park from a facility perspective identifying the spaces available in Sherwood Park, the utility of the spaces, and how all available space is currently used for the benefit of the students being served.

The proponents of this Case Study note that the flexibility of the space in Sherwood Park is not evident in Brookland. The fear is that a movement of the middle school (if adopted by the Board) to the Brookland site would result in a lose of programs.

Three specific program considerations were identified as being a concern if a move had to made away from Sherwood Park.

1. Music – The Music Room at Sherwood Park is the largest instructional area for music in the Sydney Family of Schools. The Junior High Band and Grade 6 full rehearsal have between 60-65 members (and their instruments).
2. 2 Learning Centres would be required based on the current numbers of students (38)
3. Fear was expressed that return of Sherwood Park would also mean the return of instructional material (Tech Ed, Family Studies, Band Instruments).

The Case Study quotes the Design Requirements Manual recommended spaces and notes that Sherwood Park is so configured and could become a Middle School setting consistent with established norms and standards.

The Case Study identifies that high numbers of Sydney students who attend Whitney Pier Memorial for French Immersion.

The Staff and SAC posed three questions for the Board's consideration prior to decision making time:

a) Will the Board investigate the possibility of moving French Immersion to Sherwood Park Education Centre?
b) Where would Elementary Band practice be held if Sherwood Park closes?
c) Would it be possible for the members of the Board to tour the schools in the Sydney Family of Schools?

The Case Study submission is Appendix III.

2. Alternate Proposal 5

This Alternate Proposal was received from the Brookland Concerned Parents group.

3. Alternate Proposal 6

This proposal was received from Patricia O'Neill.

APPENDIX I

CAPITAL CONSIDERATIONS

School	Scope	Cost
Sherwood Park Education Center	Purchase Price	$6,600,000
Harbourside Elementary	Purchase Price	$5,100,000
Harbourside as a P-8	Renovations for Tech lab, Science lab, Family Studies, lockers, washrooms, and site considerations	$600,000
Shipyard Elementary	2 additional classrooms	$600,000
Whitney Pier Memorial as a P-8	incl. cafeteria addition, new bus loop, site considerations (playground & parking), accessibility, washroom & classroom renovations	$2,350,000
Whitney Pier Memorial as a P-5	Incl. washroom & classroom renovations, playground area	$450,000
Brookland as a 6-8 middle school	Renovations include learning center, lockers, washrooms, art room, Family Studies, Science Lab, Tech Lab, Music Practice rooms, Stage Risers & site considerations	$500,000

APPENDIX II

SOLUTION SUMMARIES

	Suggested Solution	SASG Alternate Solution
Grade Configuration	Sydney Academy @ 9-12	Sydney Academy @ 9-12
	Cusack@ P-5	Cusack@ P-5
	Shipyard @ P-5	Shipyard @ P-5
	Brookland @ 6-8	Sherwood Park @ 6-8
	Harbourside @ P-8	Whitney Pier Mem @ P-8
School closures	SPEC	Harbourside
	WPM	Brookland
Capital Required	$6,800,000	$9,550,000
Operating Costs	$2,356,000	$2,710,000
Total Operational Cost Savings	$840,000	$535,500
Excess Capacity Considerations	None	SPEC > 40%
Administration Considerations	Allows for full consolidation of Board admin offices @ WPM	Allows for partial consolidation of Board administration offices (3 of 4 buildings) @ Brookland

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APPENDIX III

SHERWOOD PARK EDUCATION CENTER

In 1997, Sherwood Park was the first high technology school in Canada and part of a private/public partnership in funding. It was built to standards set out by the Nova Scotia Department of Education. Approximately 18% of our students are First Nation students. Language instruction is available in English, Mi'kmaq, and French. Sherwood Park is a community based school that is used on weekends for church services.

SPEC STAFF AND STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL SUPPORT:

Alternate Proposal # 1 which would see Sherwood Park become the middle school with French Immersion, Brookland P – 5, Cusack P – 5, Shipyard converted to Board Offices, WPM as the P – 8 school, with Harbourside turned back to its owners.

In response to Proposal 2, which would see Brookland converted to a 6 – 8 Middle school, we feel that it would be a challenge to provide the same level of service there that the students presently enjoy at SPEC. We fear that we cannot fit into Brookland without losing programs.

Each classroom at SPEC has five computers and the computer lab is equipped with twenty-five work stations. At Sherwood Park, we have a full Cafetorium, Guidance Office, Mi'kmaq Liaison office, Library, as well as:

13 home rooms (four of which are fully equipped Science Labs, which are necessary in the delivery of the 40% lab time required by the Department of Education.)
2 Learning Centers, (38 students we require a minimum of two classrooms, and a sensory room)
2 Resource classrooms
2 Learning Disability Classrooms
1 Steps to Success Classroom
1 Mi'Kmaq Language Classroom
1 Virtual Art Classroom
1 Schools Plus Classroom
1 Nursing room/Addiction services
1 Large music room, which is the only one in the Sydney Family of Schools large enough to accommodate full band instruction. The music room also has 3 practice rooms.
1 Gymnasium, with 2 full stations, locker rooms, bleachers to accommodate tournaments.
1 Cooking Lab with four kitchens
1 Textile Room, fully equipped
1 Tech Education Lab,
Art Room, fully equipped with Mac computers and a Kiln.

It would not be fair to the middle school students if programs and services were cut. The school was built to accommodate approximately 650 students. Now, we have 2 Learning Centers, 2 LD classes, Steps to Success, Schools Plus, and a Virtual Art Classroom. Our enrollment increased by 50 in 2014-2015, and this is projected stay the same.

STRENGTHS OF SHERWOOD PARK

1. Sherwood Park is a P-3 building, and was built with the best of materials and use of space. It is extremely well maintained
2. Soccer field/Baseball field – A full size regulation soccer field is adjacent to the school. This is used for soccer games during the school year. It is also used as a baseball field.
3. Gym with bleachers able to accommodate sports tournaments and large gatherings throughout the school year. Also full size change rooms with lockers.
4. Baille A'rd Trail – This nature trail is adjacent to SPEC. Students use this 3 km trail for many things. Phys Ed will take students on walks, and students are supplied with snow shoes during the winter. Teachers use the trails as a living classroom. The trail is available to students and teachers from other schools who wish to use it. The equipment is stored at SPEC.
5. Pods – The classrooms at SPEC are set out in four pods.
6. Lockers – Every student is provided with private locker space.
7. Bathrooms are located in all pods. Every bathroom is sized to accommodate growing adolescents, and bathrooms are completely accessible to all.
8. Music Room – Adjacent to the stage, this large, fully equipped room offers a pleasant atmosphere for musicians and choirs, and has ample storage space for equipment. There are four soundproof practice rooms at the back of the music room. The stage is equipped with a production room and sound-board. Currently our Music Room hosts 3 different music programs: Junior High Band, Explore Music grades 7-9, and grade 6 full rehearsals (60-65 students). It is the only place in the Sydney Family of Schools which can house the full rehearsals for all bands. The rehearsal space at Sherwood Park is unlike most music rooms in the board. When it was designed there was absolutely nothing overlooked. The classroom itself is a wide open space which is versatile for the delivery of our programs. It can host a full rehearsal of up to 80 students comfortably.

   It has 3 separate glass rooms that line the back of the classroom. These rooms are in continuous use. They are used for practice rooms, recording space, small ensemble work, breakout rooms, songwriting circles and composition space.

   Moving to a space designed to house an elementary program is unsuitable for the junior high or middle school program delivery. Currently our storage space for our junior high equipment would take up the teaching space provided for the elementary school. When factoring in Harbourside becoming P-8 you will also incur the loss of another Band Room and further storage space.

   From our understanding, the majority of instruments and gear are the property of the owners of the P3 School. If this is the case we would be losing essentially all of our instruments and gear.
9. Textile Art and Design – Grade 7 Curriculum

   Child Studies - Grade 9 Curriculum

   At SPEC we have modern equipment that allows our students to experience a more enriched curriculum. Our students work on one of the 10 Husqvarna Prelude 360 sewing machines in class, plus we have 4 older Husqvarna Number 1+ sewing/embroidery machines we use as needed depending on class sizes. We have 3 Husqvarna sergers and 3 state of the art Husqvarna Designer SE embroidery machines along with Husqvarna 5D Professional Design Software which allows our students to take advantage of the latest equipment on the market and to merge their technology skills with the practical skills learned in the classroom environment while meeting the outcomes of the grade 7 curriculum. We also have a needle felting machine that allows our students another method of embellishing their work.

10. Foods and Nutrition – Grade 8 Curriculum
    This classroom at SPEC provides an exceptional opportunity for students to learn the skills needed to make foods and follow recipes as well as explore proper nutrition and Canada's Food Guide. Here at SPEC we have 4 kitchen units which support a class of 16 students maximum.
11. Design and Technology Program This program offers students a unique opportunity to learn about communication, manufacturing and transportation technologies through computer based modules and hands on applications. These specific courses include: fluid power, controls and sensors, artificial intelligence, exploratory electronics, flight simulation, robotics and automation, engineering and stress analysis, CNC milling, auto exploration, animation, computer graphic design, digital video editing and radio broadcasting. Aside from the module based work, students also work collaboratively to solve technological problems by designing practical solutions to these problems.
12. Steps to Success
    SPEC offers programs that enable all students to excel. Some students, for various reasons, have great difficulty functioning in the regular classroom. The students in STEPS usually exhibit behavioral problems, and fear of failure in the regular class. The STEPS program gives a student the chance to continue his/her education in the school setting.
13. Art Room – Kiln with ventilation system, fully equipped. When SPEC was built, the art room was strategically placed to have the advantage of natural light for most of the day.
14. Mi'Kmaq Language teacher – SPEC offers Mi'Kmaq language instruction for the native students from Membertou.
15. Mi'Kmaq Liason Officer is located in the school to assist native students with academic and social issues.
16. Learning Center 1 has a break-away room for students who need a quiet place. Learning Center 2 has a fully equipped kitchen and laundry facility for teaching Life Skills to the Learning Center students.
17. In each pod, the walls between two classrooms can be opened to create a space with 1852 sq. feet to accommodate presentations, etc.
18. Schools Plus was initiated in the Cape Breton Victoria-Regional School Board in 2011 and Sherwood Park Education Center was chosen as the hub-site for this agency in the Sydney family of schools (9 schools in total: 6 elementary, 2 junior high and 1 senior high).
19. Presently, SPEC houses Virtual School, with one teacher using a classroom in Spruce Hall.
20. Clubs and sports teams. As with every school, SPEC has a variety of sports teams and clubs.
21. In keeping with the original concept of a high tech school, SPEC has enjoyed ongoing technology upgrades. Our facility continues to be on the cutting edge of technology.

EXCERPTS FROM DOCUMENT DC350 NOVA SCOTIA DESIGN REQUIREMENTS MANUAL FOR SCHOOLS:

Junior High/Middle School

3.1.13.6.1 The school building for early adolescent learners will provide structures that encourage flexible grouping of learners, flexible schedules and variety in learning experiences which will include classroom learning as well as many small group settings. Flexible areas will facilitate interdisciplinary learning and teaching. The junior high/middle level school building will feature a number of gathering spaces that may be

used for physical activity, performances, recreation, socializing and community meetings.

The building design must recognize the growing independence of the learners while providing spaces for a variety of interactions between the learners and school personnel. There will be spaces for small group meetings, for mentoring, counseling, and advising learners. Teachers will require a variety of meeting and working spaces as team planning and teaching are encouraged at these grade levels. There will be a least one such gathering space on the school grounds.

SPEC contains a variety of flexible spaces to meet this requirement. Brookland's layout is not flexible and contains many uniform spaces of fixed dimension – a feature not easily adapted.

Grouping of Spaces and Space Requirements

4.5.1 The cluster school groups instructional spaces are to form a small "school within a school" creating a more personal environment. The cluster is often a repeated geometrical form with a shared focus. The focus area may be an "extended learning" area for small group work, for the use of communications technology, or a shared space for gathering. The cluster organization helps to reduce the apparent interior scale or size of the building, which can often be overwhelming to students and teachers alike. It helps to personalize space for students and offers greater opportunity for professional exchange between teachers. Depending on the flexibility of the classroom design, the cluster arrangement can also facilitate independent study, multi-age teaching, group-work and team teaching.

4.7.6 Short corridors are a requirement.

4.7.7 Flexibility in space utilization is required to offer opportunities for individual, small group and large group work.

SPEC is designed using the "pod" as a starting point. Each pod has a central open gathering space that is quiet and pleasing, and contributes to a calm atmosphere before school. The space is also used as an alternative learning space when appropriate. The pod layout keeps corridors short. This type of floor plan is not easily adapted to uses other than middle/high school education.
Brookland's layout is a standard double-loaded long corridor. While this layout is the least expensive to build it does little to contribute to providing flexible learning and gives one the feeling of being in a hotel. This layout is most easily adapted to residential uses.
Sherwood Park is an appropriately designed space for a middle school model.
This submission supports the CBVRSB maintaining Sherwood Park Education Center as a middle school. This may involve more work on the part of CBVRSB, but it will better accommodate the needs of our middle school students.

ANALYSIS

The School Advisory Council and staff at SPEC feel that there is a logical case for the province to maintain it as the Middle School for the Sydney area.

There is no renovation cost associated with Sherwood Park. It is a first class facility, in excellent shape. The school could simply welcome the grade six students to the building, and house them in their own

educational pod. The SAC and staff feel that programming will be lost if we are moved to an elementary school.

SPEC – All of our students come from our catchment area, and Membertou. We have a few students attached to the group home on Upper Prince Street, and once and awhile we have a Steps student from outside our catchment area. Of our approximately 340 students, all but a few live in our catchment area.

WPM – A lot of the students at WPM come from the catchment area of SPEC. These are approximate numbers, but we feel that the breakdown is as follows, give or take a few either way.

Whitney Pier catchment area: approximately 159 students

Sherwood Park catchment area: approximately 151 students

Outlying areas (French Immersion): approximately 27 students

QUESTIONS FOR THE BOARD TO CONSIDER:

1. Will the Board investigate the possibility of moving French Immersion to SPEC?
2. Where are you planning to have elementary school band practice if SPEC is closed?
3. Would it be possible for the members of the School Board to tour the schools in the Sydney Family of Schools? It may help them to make these very difficult decisions.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns.

THE NEEDS OF OUR STUDENTS ARE PARAMOUNT IN THIS PROCESS!