Public Scenario 16 Victoria North Family of Schools

Examine the option of expanding North Highlands Elementary (P-6) and Cape Smokey Elementary (P-6) to P-8 facilities and reconfigure Cabot High School to a grade 9-12 school facility.

Considerations

Both North Highlands Elementary School in Asby Bay and Cape Smokey Elementary School in North Bay Ingonish are primary to grade 6 schools constructed under the P3 program for school construction and opened in 2000. Each building is configured the same, is comprised of 30573 square feet of space, and each has a student capacity of 175 students. Student enrolment in each school has dropped since each facility was opened in 2000. In 2012-2013 Cape Smokey had excess student capacity of 43% and North Highlands had 44% excess student capacity.

To address the excess capacity issue, climate, longer bus rides, and to retain elementary and middle school age children longer in their community school,
parents and community suggest that expanding the existing facilities from P-6 to P-8 is an option worthy of consideration.

Expanding the grade level configuration at each school would, by the time the change was completed, increase the number of students by approximately 25-30 over projected enrolment at each site. In any given year it would be reasonable to expect the P-8 student population at North Highlands to be 10-115 and Cape Smokey to be 125-130.

To accommodate the increased grade level span in each school the Board would have to recommend to the Department of Education that each school be purchased from the private sector partner, that minor program space changes be identified and funded from the capital renovations account of the Department of Education and that all existing furniture, fixtures, equipment, and technology be retained at the school site. While the gymnasium size in each school is not consistent with the space allocated for a gymnasium in a junior high school, it would be adequate for program units given the number of students in each grade level to be served in each school.

A need would exist to refurbish one classroom into a science demonstration/lab setting and the technology education facility would need to be established.
Multi-graded or multi-age groups would continue to exist at both schools and the special funding for remote schools would be needed to offset the small numbers that would be present at both schools with a nine grade span in evidence (p-8). This P-8 grade configuration would enable a middle school philosophy to be implemented if this was the new policy direction of the Board.

This scenario would result in the retention of Cabot High School as a grade 9-12 school.