To examine in more detail the cost efficiencies of sustaining smaller school facilities as opposed to consolidating small school student populations with other school facilities within the Family of Schools.

Considerations

Building on an approach to rural development that is rooted in the philosophy of social sustainability and recognizing that the notion that 'bigger is not necessarily better', an opportunity exists for school facility planners and policy makers to look at the efficiencies that exist in maintaining smaller school facilities currently in operation.

The absence of a School Review Process and the generation of a dialogue between the Cape Breton Victoria Regional School Board and its Families of Schools members provides a window of opportunity for the several small schools still in operation to be examined from an efficiency perspective without the threat of closure hanging over their heads.

In the case of Middle River School, the time is right to examine the actual building operating costs, transportation costs and staffing costs with a view to establishing
the total costs for the provision of the Public School Program to students served by the school. Capital requirements to sustain the school would also be identified and would be costed after discussion between the School Advisory Council and the Operations Staff of the Board. This would enable the Board to plan effectively for school improvements in the future that would enhance the provision of programs and services rather than being used as criteria for identification of a school for inclusion in a school review process.

Actual costs would also take into consideration any designated funding received by the Board as part of the existing funding formula.

Actual operating costs associated with any possible consolidation could be generated and compared to figures associated with sustaining the Middle River School. This approach could apply to any small school or segment of a student population in other schools throughout the Board.

The outcome of the cost efficiency study in this scenario for the Middle River School would be shared with the community via the School Advisory Council.