Examine the option to establish Middle River School as a Model Rural School to spur on rural regeneration and social sustainability while building on the School Board's primary mandate – the delivery of programs and services to its anchor constituents- the primary to grade 6 student population at the Middle River School.

Considerations

As a longstanding multiage facility that has embraced the multiage pedagogy, the school fosters cooperation, independent learning, mentorship opportunities for students, high academic standards, and respect for learners in a safe, secure and supportive learning environment. With two site based classroom teachers to serve 23 students from Primary to Grade 6 the school community has enjoyed the services of physical education, music, resource, and French specialists to support the delivery of the Public School Program.

Over a number of years, the school and the community have initiated several place based curriculum enhancements. As a Green School whose garden program is now in its eighth year, Middle River is at the forefront of exploring and adopting green technologies and approaches. Not only is the school, its staff and the community striving to set a good example for the students, creative ways are being explored to reduce costs and sustain rural schools. The Middle River School Community recognizes that one of the factors involved in rural decline is a lack of employment. The community believes that students should have early exposure to successful local entrepreneurs and learn basic entrepreneurial skills at the elementary level. Participation in the Baddeck Market provided real life experiences in exploring employment opportunities. The
children performed market surveys, interviewed farmers and decided what to grow and sell at the Market. The students learned about business plans, marketing and promotion and learned how the government regulates industry. If pursued, initiatives of this nature would make it possible for more children to realize the potential of working and earning a living in rural Nova Scotia.

The building blocks of Social Sustainability exist within the community of Middle River.

- the school is the focal point around which community networks interact
- it is a small, safe, nurturing community that advocates for its residents and school age children
- it is an engaged community that is creatively exploring how to sustain a valued way of life.

As a community challenged by rural decline, the Middle River community is seeking its own solutions and giving its children a broader sense of what is possible in rural Cape Breton