



For immediate release
Wednesday, September 28

District Education Council launches capital planning process

Saint John – The District Education Council for the Anglophone South School District is kicking-off a process to enable long-term school infrastructure planning for inner city Saint John.

“Declining enrolments and population shifts in the inner city give us a chance to look at how we might be better using our elementary and middle schools over the longer-term, and whether it might be time for a new school in the area,” said Rob Fowler, Chair of the District Education Council. “As a district, we have to ensure our communities are served, that our students have access to safe and healthy learning environments.”

As outlined in the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development’s Policy 409, the District Education Council’s role is to submit the district’s multi-year infrastructure plan, including facility status reviews, trigger schools sustainability studies and major capital priority projects.

In response to this requirement, a study of Saint John inner city schools (kindergarten to grade eight) prepared by Ernst & Young recommends one new school (grades 6 to 8) be built, as well as several grade reconfigurations that will optimize district-owned facilities and vacate leased facilities.

There are currently seven schools in Saint John’s inner city (K-8), serving a total student population of 1,750. Overall, from 2001 to 2015, student enrollment has declined by 27%. The average age of the seven buildings is 58 years old.

The schools in scope are a mix of four K-8 schools (St. John the Baptist/King Edward, Hazen-White/St. Francis, Princess Elizabeth, Prince Charles), one K-2 school (M. Gerald Teed Memorial), one K-5 school (Centennial), and one 3-8 school (Millidgeville North).

The District Education Council will host a series of community meetings this fall to discuss the report’s recommendations. Meetings will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. according to the following schedule:

- Wednesday, October 19 – Millidgeville North School
- Wednesday, October 26 – Princess Elizabeth School
- Thursday, October 27 – Prince Charles School
- Tuesday, November 1 – M. Gerald Teed Memorial School
- Wednesday, November 2 – St. John the Baptist/King Edward School
- Monday, November 7 – Centennial School
- Monday, November 14 – Hazen-White/St. Francis School

According to policy 409, this first series of meetings is designed to present the report's findings and recommendations to the various school communities, as well as to respond to questions about process. Each of these meetings will be followed up with a second meeting approximately four to five weeks later to hear from the community.

The full Ernst & Young report is available on the district's website (<http://web1.nbed.nb.ca/sites/asds/Pages/welcome.aspx>). Stakeholders can also make electronic submissions to asds.schoolreview@gnb.ca.

"The long-range study brings to the forefront a number of situations we're aware of, and offers ideas for how we might resolve them and optimize our schools," Fowler said. "Now we have to take the time we need to analyze their recommendations in the context of our communities, something we'll do by engaging our students' families, staff and stakeholders in the planning process."

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