

# ANGLOPHONE WEST SCHOOL DISTRICT

## DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL

### Coles Island School

#### Sustainability Study #2 – Unofficial Notes

Thursday, January 15, 2015

<p><b>Council Members Present:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sheila Gallagher – SD 01</li><li>• Norma Shaw – SD 02</li><li>• John Slipp – SD 03</li><li>• Miriam Grant – SD 04</li><li>• Andrew Corey – SD 05</li><li>• David Bowen – SD 06</li><li>• Vacant Position – SD 07</li><li>• Ron Buck – SD 08</li><li>• Jane Buckley – SD 09</li><li>• Kimberley Douglas-SD 10–Vice Chair</li><li>• Donald Gould – SD 11</li><li>• Elizabeth Nason – SD 12</li><li>• Mark Noël – SD 13 – Chair</li><li>• Tim Nicholas – First Nations</li></ul> <p><b>Council Member Regrets:</b></p>	<p><b>ASD-W Staff Present:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• David McTimoney, Superintendent</li><li>• Carol Clark-Caterini, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and DEC Secretary</li><li>• Shawn Tracey</li><li>• Philip Cliff</li><li>• Catherine Blaney</li><li>• Ed Hogan</li></ul> <p><b>Guests:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community</li></ul>
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- Students of Coles Island School performed O’Canada for the audience.
- Students from Chipman Forest Avenue School told why their former school should remain open.
- Mr. Steven McCready was the spokesperson for part 1 of the Sustainability Study presented by the community. Mr. McCready thanked the District Office Staff for presenting a very professional presentation and additional credit was given to Gina Dunnett, Data and Accountability Supervisor for her outstanding job and wealth of knowledge. Mr. McCready commented that she was a walking computer.
- Amy Zink presented for her group and she understand that the student to teacher ratio is small but there are many positive effects to this advantage. Ms. Zink reminded the audience that Lincoln School and Geary School is only about 8 kms away from a neighboring community. Ms. Zink commented that the class sizes were not made available until this morning and that maximum does not always mean optimum. With enrollment of 1-2 more students, Coles Island School would be at class size. The 2010 UNESCO Study as quoted on the NB EECD website states that it is not simply classroom based. An example of this is the 10 week swim program, geocaching, artists in residency and grades K-5 combined in these activities
- 1.2 M was spent by Government from 2008-2011 for Early Childhood Centre’s. This program offers better integration into schools. The Care n’ Share program located in Chipman is a partner with the Coles Island Community and they feel that there is a conflict with the Assessment results. Some parents feel that their child should deserve a higher quality of education, but they do not realize that the Assessments may be obscured by a class size being small and a special needs student is marked 0 which changes the test results to a lower grade. French Immersion is wanted here in Coles Island but we know that it is out of our reach.

- The Parents & Families Committee thanked the community for their hard work during the Christmas holidays on the Sustainability Studies to save Coles Island School. This Committee also thanked the District Education Council and District staff for their travels to Coles Island School. This Committee showed pictures of an accident that had happened that day on the same road that students would be travelling on buses to schools in Chipman. There are no restroom on the bus, for younger students. The Committee showed slides of winter weather conditions and our buses travelling on the road to Chipman with truck traffic. A graph of an average student's day was shown with the mention of a lack of student physical activities due to their time travelling. In some cases, it is longer than regular work day for a parent. Especially a Kindergarten child that may only be four years old. The travel time on the bus would be 1 hour each way to Chipman. Cambridge Narrows Community School was an option but most of the children go to Chipman so they would keep family together in one school. Student participation and involvement in other activities after school, but having to travel out of the community would cause a hardship to get to activities and the parental engagement with their children matters. When there is parent engagement, students are motivated and at a higher level of academics.
- Coles Island School is small but necessary. A slideshow was presented showing; family picnics, bus safety, Thanksgiving brunch, swimming lessons, artists in training, baskets weaving, students showing swimming certificates, Christmas concert in 2014, Christmas dinner, the Breakfast Program, teaching safety, a maple bush visit, Christmas bazaar, St. Martins sea caves, Kings Landing visit, black duck marsh, learning with Technology, Hopewell Rocks, skating, Kingswood, visit to a farm, Remembrance Day ceremony, science fair, fun at school and after school activities at CIS, and a visit to the Legislature of NB. A lot is going on at this small school!
- A market study reports a policy paper this week discussing education on wheels, student safety and travel. St. Mary's University in Halifax refers to students spending too much time on a bus which causes them to be tired, this cuts into their time. Mr. Paul Bennett reminded Councilor's that Chipman Elementary School and Cambridge Narrows Community School are also rural schools that are most likely on a list with functional capacity lower than 60%. Coles Island Schools are NB citizens too.
- Part III was presented by Jeremy Beam. Mr. Beam lives in Coles Island area and he loves the lake, and area. This catchment area includes over 40 new homes, with 18 homes with beach frontage. Local tradesmen are busy and this growth means more jobs, according to Jeremy. The buying trend in the Coles Island Community with just two homes means approximately 7 additional children to Coles Island School. People love a bargain and with the low property taxes, \$4000.00 taxes with 200 feet of water. People love beautiful lakes, smaller schools, country setting, a good road with Moncton and Fredericton a half hour closer. In the past the McCreadys Irving closed for a 2 week period in the winter, this would not happen now. Half of the students have moved to the area in the past 10 years. Enrollment numbers will go up and not down. The students learn to cook at school and the cooking that was provided for the DEC was all done at the school in hopes of saving our school. Mr. Beam would like to personally thank all the staff of Coles Island School for the great work that has been done for their children. He thanked the DEC members for attending and seeking to understand why Coles Island School is small but necessary. A suggestion was made to increase the capacity of the school by adding a Seniors Complex in the school. In addition, every school in the Province has waste, so why not cut the school to half the size to resolve this problem. Coles Island School could be a part of Moncton's school shortage crisis. A student teacher ratio comparison was shown with data showing the smaller school had a positive impact. Our province is poor and truthfully, we may have too many educators. Give teachers more technology and more EA's. A suggestion was made to cut building cost or collect income from a senior rental per year.
- Mr. McCready felt that education falls behind with their educational materials provided to rural communities. Internet should be accessed with modern technology in rural area schools in NB.

Mr. McCready told a story of an iPad being used for pictures and math. Currently the process is uninteresting with the present delivery system being used; this could be improved. Other Provinces do not want to come to NB based on the stats that are provided today.

- Coles Island School is a school of excellence where we teach inclusion. The District Education Council delivers facts and figures and stats and percentages, we deliver children. 50 school have been closed in NB in the past 10 years. We used to have 367 school but currently have 317 schools. 14% of schools have closed in the past 10 years. 740M budget 10 years ago; now the budget is 1.012B which is an increase of 272M increase of 36% after they closed 14 % of our schools. NB still has less than 50% in literacy rate, 60% do not have adequate math skills, and we have to go through RTIPPA to access prisoner information that costs \$200,000 - \$300 000 to keep one federal female prisoner. To keep a child in Coles Island School costs \$1350.37, reported to be more than the provincial average. I do not believe by sending children from 4-10 years old to Chipman is going to solve our Provinces debt.
- Melissa spoke referencing her 4 children at Coles Island School. Her family moved from St. John for the small community setting. Her husband works in the west and she relies on neighbors to get children to school if needed. 3 Children have ADHD and would not get on the bus or sit still on a bus for that long of a drive. This will make for a shortened time for her to spend with her children to bath, supper, homework and bed. Another speaker told of their families move to Coles Island from Ontario. They fell in love with this part of province, and Coles Island School was good for their elementary daughter but 50 minutes spent on a bus ride to neighboring schools in Cambridge Narrows Community School, Chipman, or Sussex would not be. They are a bilingual family and they would like to send their child to a French Immersion School but would have look at the Oromocto area.
- Ross Wetmore, MLA introduced Gary Crossman from the Hampton area who has attended several Policy 409 studies. Mr. Wetmore is the elected MLA for this area and he expressed his appreciation to the community. Mr. Wetmore felt that the Anglophone system and Francophone need to work together, especially in the busing departments and he challenged the DEC to step up and encourage this.
- Mr. Crossman has been a part of the 409 process which has been under scrutiny for some time, many people describe this policy as outdated. Coles Island School is the heart of this community, this school has several classrooms that can be adapted to assist with many needs, with daycare, and with gym. When we consider the development of mining and potash, several new jobs, and many new families settling into the community, we may need to add on to the building and not rush in closing this school. Mr. Crossman advised to get relevant information, consider time to review information; have we given enough time to community to study this 409. The Premier has committed to developing a 10 year education plan that will address the unique challenges and opportunities, including rural area schools. Any 409 study would be premature and a mistake before the Education Plan is released.
- Mr. Wetmore was sympathetic of the time children would need to spend on a bus. He reminded the community that there would be no lay-offs for teaching staff as they will be re-located, but he was not sure about CUPE staff. He asked for confirmation of how much money would be saved annually, and he reminded the Councilors of the 10 year plan, and that the amount of money cannot be the only consideration. Social environment and families need to be considered. A petition with a total of 600 names were submitted from concerned citizens of Coles Island School to the NB Legislature.
- Mr. Parkhill reminded the Councilors that the “E” in DEC, should stand for Education not Economics.
- A representative from the local fire department referenced that there were no seatbelts in buses, and there has been eight motor vehicle accidents so far this year on highway 10. Vehicles stopping

for flashing lights were recorded in readers digest as the number one area of concern with student's safety.

- Councilor Ron Buck asked how many student in this area are not bussed. A response that all students were bussed. Clarification was given that one parent indicated that her child was not bussed as the road on Route 10 is not safe.
  - The local Church representative spoke about the Community Church and Coles Island School working hand in hand together. An after school program called "Kids Club" is held at the church and the bus used to drop students off in the yard, but when busing was no longer an option, the club met on weekends. Once per month the church will use the school gym for youth in the community. Valuable life lessons are taught while having fun at same time. If one partner is removed there is loss and suffering to the other. We will all feel negative effects of loss.
  - Care and Share family Resource Centre, Tiffany Webber, works for a non-profit organization that assists children and parents free of charge. In 1996 they secured the Baptist Church, but outgrew this facility and needed to move to the Community Centre, then the Pentecostal Church. In 2007 they needed to move again due to the attendance at Coles Island School. Currently they do not have this program available at the Cambridge Narrows Community School or Jemseg due to a lack of interest. Families attending this program would have to travel to Sussex 34.8 kms, or Chipman 41km / 30 minutes. The Care N' Share serve approximate 41 different families and a total of 77 children. Daycare is one of the programs offered and if an additional day is needed, the school will accommodate them with a room. Sessions for parents – Talk With Me, nutritionists, bullying, routines, Nobody's Perfect, Kids Talk, cooking, EMG response, all programs are free of charge. Items are also sent home with families to use. The Board of Directors feels that there is an opportunity for a Coles Island community member. Coles Island School is a safe, clean environment and school benefits as well by assisting a teacher with a program, such as proper hand washing. Believes if school closes this will hurt families in community and with any changes she hopes that they make room for the Car and Share.
  - Mark thanked everyone for their presentations and the DEC members for travelling to the meeting. If there are any questions, some Councilor's will be behind to answer their questions
  - **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.
- ❖ **Documents, notes and presentations from this meeting are included in the final report.**