

January 25, 2020 409 sustainability presentation (Scott Oakes co-chair BCS PSSC)

Good morning everyone ,

While preparing this presentation and labouring over what to include and exclude to best cover 5 years of information ; I was reminded of a line from “The Entertainer” by Billy Joel. “ IF YOU’RE GONNA HAVE A HIT , YOU GOTTA MAKE IT FIT / SO THEY CUT IT DOWN TO 3:05. I’ve done my very best to condense.

→ I would like to take this opportunity to thank the community, district staff, presenters and District Education Council members for attending this important meeting to listen and discuss maintaining a sustainable educational model for Bath and surrounding areas.

My intention today is to show why finishing the stalled Bath Community School ~~renovations~~ is the most reasonable course of action from a fiscal , educational and community standpoint. To provide a clearer picture of the process thus far, a timeline created by district staff has been provided to the audience. I have also given a copy of communications between stakeholders and others to the DEC.

In the interest of brevity , I will not attempt to discuss all points relevant to this project , as I am sure you have been extensively briefed and have read our letter of September 19th , 2019. Although there are a few points I do feel should be discussed and expanded upon.

In October of last year, the Department of Education introduced “Succeeding at Home’ . Better known as The Green Paper. I see an opportunity to implement several key points of that document into a newly completed K-8 Bath Community School .

For example : We can and should be a host school for an updated second language program , whose curriculum includes play-based language instruction for pre-school aged children, that can be done in partnership with Step Ahead. Adoption of this program, or FLORA would also allow the recapture of students lost to mainstream French Immersion.

: I also see the chance to begin “Gradeless learning” as proposed by Minister Cardy. During completion of renovations , classrooms can be combined to better facilitate multi age classes.

: One other objective of the Green Paper I find interesting, is the Province’s desire to train more skilled workers and tradespeople. According to Dominic Cardy, one of the largest impediments to this is the lack of shop facilities available in schools and more accurately, the enormous cost of adding shops to current schools. Coincidentally , the building immediately to your right has a fully functioning shop just waiting to be utilized.

We have a willing and talented staff at BCS and an energetic , confident leader in Principal Mitchell Hemphill , ~~we~~^{they} are eager to take on any and all of these programs in Bath.

These pilot projects , in conjunction with our acclaimed Step Ahead Early Childhood Centre, which was created in a partnership between the Province of New Brunswick and the Honourable Margaret McCain , can serve as a template for rejuvenation of rural schools and communities throughout the province.

I have intentionally not focused this presentation on the financial aspects of our mid-life upgrade ; partially, because I am confident it will be addressed by other presenters , but also , because I believe over the past year there has been far too much talk regarding “ costs and unforeseen expenses ‘ to finish our school, and a distressingly small amount of discussion regarding the tremendous cost of delaying completion of BCS , has had on our children.

If there is interest in discussing numbers , prior to your decision , I would be happy to join that conversation.

We are asking you , to consider not only the financial aspects, but to also consider the impact to our rural community, and most importantly the ramifications your decisions will have on both the social and educational well being of the children attending this school .

Our goal, as it has been since the beginning, is to have a newly upgraded and renovated K-8 in tandem with our Step Ahead partners with maximized utilization of all community resources ; next door.

SO : HOW DO WE GET THERE FROM HERE ?

of students

With inventive and innovative programs , modest investment in infrastructure, stoppage of transfers, minor catchment area changes , timely intervention and the commitment to act now , we CAN finish this project and deliver on the promise of a better educational future for our children.

Thank You for Your Time

Scott Oakes BCS PSSC Co-Chair