

NEWS RELEASE

October 28, 2019

School System Reviews Focus of School Board Meeting

The Newfoundland and Labrador English School Board held its regular public meeting Saturday, October 26, 2019 in St. John's, where trustees discussed a number of issues and made decisions relative to the business of the Board.

MPSH and HSH Feeder Systems Reorganized

Following a year-long series of consultations and review, the Board passed a motion to reorganize the Mount Pearl Senior High School and Holy Spirit High feeder systems. This will address enrolment pressures in some schools and incorporate the addition of a new intermediate school in Paradise, expected to open in the 2021-22 school year.

“Consultations began last fall with meetings with all school administrators and the 10 school councils involved,” said Board Chair Goronwy Price. “This was followed by two rounds of online consultations which saw over 1,000 people in those school communities provide their views on what should guide the Board’s decision. We listened, and subsequently identified a viable option which was communicated to the school communities earlier this year.”

The intermediate school in Paradise, now under construction, will be a Grades 6-9 school and will accept students from Paradise Elementary and Octagon Pond Elementary. It is important to note, however, that the new intermediate school will accept Grades 6 and 7 students in 2021, Grade 8 students in 2022 and Grade 9 students in 2023. This means students in Grade 7 and higher prior to September 2021 can continue within their current feeder system to allow them to remain with their class peers up until graduation. The following will be the grade configurations/feeder systems for Mount Pearl Senior High and Holy Spirit High, when the new school is opened.

Mount Pearl Senior High School System

- Elizabeth Park Elementary (K-6), will feed to Mount Pearl Intermediate (for 7-9), and then to Mount Pearl Senior High (10-12).
- Morris Academy (K-5), will feed to Mount Pearl Intermediate (6-9), and then to Mount Pearl Senior High.

- Octagon Pond Elementary will be reconfigured as a K-5 school, with Grade 6s moving to the new intermediate school in Paradise; remaining there until Grade 9, then proceeding to Mount Pearl Senior High for Grades 10-12.
- Paradise Elementary will be reconfigured to a K-5 school, with Grade 6s moving to the new intermediate school in Paradise until Grade 9, and then proceeding to Mount Pearl Senior High.
- Mount Pearl Intermediate will be reconfigured for Grades 6-9 (and no longer receive students from Paradise Elementary).
- Mount Pearl Senior High will be reconfigured for Grades 10-12, with Grade 9s attending Mount Pearl Intermediate.

Holy Spirit High School System

- Holy Family Elementary (K-6), will feed to Villanova Junior High (5-8) for Grades 6-8, then proceed to Holy Spirit High (9-12).
- Topsail Elementary (K-4), will feed to Villanova Junior High, and then to Holy Spirit High.
- Villanova Junior High will no longer receive students from Octagon Pond Elementary.
- The new intermediate school in Paradise is expected to be open for Grades 6 and 7 in 2021, incorporating Grade 8 in 2022 and Grade 9 in 2023.

Contingency Plan - Topsail Elementary/Villanova Junior High

Grade configurations and feeder systems for Elizabeth Park Elementary, Morris Academy, Holy Family Elementary and Topsail Elementary remain substantially unchanged. However, space challenges may continue at Topsail Elementary and Villanova Junior High for a few years (2020-23) and so contingency plans have been developed to address those potential issues. This information has been communicated to the school communities.

“There is rarely one option for change that suits everybody’s best case scenario, but we believe this provides all approximately 6,000 students with a top quality education, within proximity to their homes and friends, and makes every attempt to address issues identified in the consultations,” said Chair Price. “Above all, this is the least disruptive option for the majority of students and is designed to address parent concerns about overcrowding at certain schools and keeping class cohorts together as they move through to graduation.”

The complete story of the school review process for the Holy Spirit High and Mount Pearl Senior High feeder systems, from initial meetings with school councils in fall 2018, through the provision of an information booklet, to both rounds of consultation (and reports on results) can be accessed here: [.https://www.nlesd.ca/schools/schoolreview/index.jsp](https://www.nlesd.ca/schools/schoolreview/index.jsp).



Meanwhile, the District has also begun a consultation processes focused on the Waterford Valley High School and Holy Trinity High School feeder systems, necessitated by enrolment pressures. Review and consultation will continue in the coming months.

Additional School System Reviews

The Board of Trustees also identified other school systems to be reviewed in the 2019-20 school year, including school systems in zones 6, 7, 9 and 10.

“The Board has made a deliberate decision to focus primarily on how school system reviews will enhance programming for students,” said Chair Price. “There will always be other factors which come into play but, first and foremost, decisions will be based on how we can realign the systems to provide students with improved programming and services to help them to be successful in school, and in life.”

The following school systems will be reviewed by staff for potential catchment area realignment, grade level configuration, and/or closure as applicable:

- **Zone 6: Stephenville High School System:** Pertaining to Stephenville Primary (K-3), Stephenville Elementary (4-5), Stephenville Middle School (6-8), St. Thomas Aquinas (K-8), Pathfinder Learning Ctr (10-12), and Stephenville High (9-12).
- **Zone 7: Dorset Collegiate School System:** Pertaining to Brian Peckford Primary (K-3), Green Bay South Academy (K-6), and Dorset Collegiate (7-12).
- **Zone 9: Glovertown Academy School System:** Pertaining to Charlottetown Primary (K-3) and Glovertown Academy (K-12).
- **Zone 9: Phoenix Academy and Gill Memorial Academy School Systems:** Pertaining to Sandstone Academy (K-6), Phoenix Academy (K-12), and Gill Memorial Academy (K-12).
- **Zone 10: Marystown Central High School System:** Pertaining to Donald C. Jamieson Academy (K-7), Sacred Heart Academy (K-7), Pearce Junior High (8-9), and Marystown Central High (10-12).

Initial contact has been made with school administrators/school councils, and the parent communities. School communities will be advised of next steps as the consultation and review process continues. Following initial information gathering, options will be presented to the school communities, consultations will be held, and the results will be presented to the Board. The Board will then decide, in a public meeting, at a later date, whether to proceed with each of these school system reviews. Final decisions on any school systems reviews are expected in the spring. No options have been yet formulated and no decisions have been made.



Financial Management System

The Board also voted this weekend to authorize the use of up to \$2.7M to acquire and implement a Financial Management System to deal with issues raised in the September 2018 Auditor General's report if, within three months (ending January 31, 2020), the shared services option is not deemed to meet the needs of the school district.

“The Board Executive had a very open and frank discussion with the Provincial Government about our need for a fully-integrated system that meets all the needs of the school district and puts automated financial controls in place to address issues raised by the Auditor General last year,” said Board Chair Goronwy Price. “Our most recent submission for funding was made one year ago and, since that time, the government has been exploring the feasibility of integrating District functions into the financial system utilized by core government. Government has indicated it recognizes and appreciates that we need a system that meets a wide range of complex needs, and will complete their review within the next three months.”

Chair Price said that if no viable shared services option can be presented, the Board will move forward with the acquisition of its own system.

Other Business

CEO/Director of Education Tony Stack provided a presentation to trustees, and the public, about recent efforts to address peer violence, healthy eating in schools, and student transportation.

The Board was also advised of the formal establishment of a steering committee to review the delivery of Deaf and hard of hearing services in the province. The committee, led by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD), will include the District, as well as the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA), the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of the Deaf, and the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, Newfoundland and Labrador. Families will be engaged in the review and will have an opportunity to provide their input and perspectives. This is the latest in a series of actions taken as part of a review of Deaf and hard of hearing services to determine how services can be better delivered, and what level of resources is required. Those actions include the hiring of a Provincial Director of Programs - DHH Services in September 2019. This is a new District position, which is working directly with Deaf and hard of hearing itinerant teachers throughout the province on improving service delivery.

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