



Chignecto-Central Regional School Board  
Regular Meeting  
04-00 Minutes  
April 12, 2000

The regular monthly meeting of the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board was held on Wednesday, April 12, 2000 at the Walter Duggan Consolidated School in Westville commencing at 7:00 p.m.

Present

Kaaren Barkhouse  
George Bruce, 8:20 p.m.  
John English  
Lloyd Gibbs  
Jim Grue  
John Henderson  
Tina Hurley  
Bernie Knockwood  
Ron Marks  
Marilyn Murray  
David Myles  
Robert Parker  
Mary Stevenson  
Marilyn Thompson  
Trudy Thompson

In Attendance

Karen Casey  
Ann Hamilton-Wood  
Elmer MacDonald  
Gary Miller  
Brian Murphy  
Robert Renouf  
Dale Sabean  
Helene Smith  
Harry Munro

Absent

Cheryl Cutler, with regrets  
Nancy Mosher, with regrets

The Chair, Mary Stevenson called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance.

Chair Stevenson expressed thanks to Ed Doucette, Principal of the Walter Duggan School for accommodating the board meeting and supplying sandwiches as several board members and staff had just come from a tour of the new elementary school in Pictou.

## Agenda

Moved by Marilyn Murray, seconded by Jim Grue

THAT THE AGENDA BE ADOPTED AS CIRCULATED.

MOTION CARRIED

## Minutes

With reference to the March 8, 2000 Minutes, George Bruce via Board Secretary, Helene Smith, made the following changes to the School Board Minutes:

Page 2 - the last paragraph under "Notice of Motion to Reconsider - Pictou West Site Selection

Delete the last sentence and replace with, "After commenting further, Mr. Bruce refrained from making the motion."

Page 10 - - in referring to the motion made by George Bruce, seconded by Robert Parker that reads as follows:

That the Board undertake a study to transfer the grade nine students from River Hebert District High School to the New Amherst Regional High School for the school year beginning September 2000. This would be done in accordance with ByLaw B (02).

Motion defeated

Mr. Bruce asked that the names of those who voted in favor be recorded as follows:

In favor: Robert Parker, Marilyn Murray, Mary Stevenson, George Bruce and John English.

Moved by Robert Parker, seconded by Bernie Knockwood

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 8, 2000 MEETING AS AMENDED.

MOTION CARRIED

## Rise to Order

Ron Marks asked to speak and was given permission.

He introduced and welcomed Elda Deagle, former School Board Member and Chairperson for five years of the Pictou District School Board.

Chair Stevenson welcomed Mrs. Deagle to the meeting.

#### Presentations

Communications Officer, Ann Hamilton-Wood, welcomed and introduced Jeffery Green, Grade XII student from Stellarton High School, who was nominated for the Superintendent's Award for his creative effective leadership as President of the Stellarton High Student Council.

Superintendent Elmer MacDonald presented Jeffery with this award and conveyed congratulations for his outstanding accomplishments at the school.

#### Business Arising From the Minutes

##### Tabled Motion by Marilyn Murray

The motion made at the March 8, 2000 School Board meeting made by Marilyn Murray and seconded by Jim Grue

**THAT TRANSPORTATION BE PROVIDED BY THE BOARD FOR ANY STUDENTS FROM THE RIVER HEBERT DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL WISHING TO ATTEND THE AMHERST REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND THE REQUEST FOR TRANSFER BE OPEN UNTIL SEPTEMBER 1**

was open for a vote.

Marilyn Murray, noting that since the River Hebert parents do not wish to have their children transferred to the Amherst Regional High School, asked to have the motion withdrawn.

There was unanimous agreement to withdraw the motion.

#### Five Islands School Closure Report

Assistant Superintendent of Operations, Dale Sabean, reported as follows:

As per the Board Procedure for School Closure (Policy B-01) and the applicable sections of the Education Act and Regulations, the Board initiated a School Closure

study for Five Islands Elementary School during the school year 1999-2000. A Study Committee was established to review pertinent aspects of affecting such a closure as well as to host a public meeting to gather community input.

The Study Group filed its report supporting closure of the school on January 19, 2000 with the Operations/PRT Committee who, in turn, presented the report to the Board on February 9, 2000. Subsequently, a public meeting to receive further input on the final report was scheduled for March 27, 2000.

Public Meeting - March 27, 2000

It was noted the enrolment of FIES will increase from current 9 to approximately 12 students for 2000-01 and is expected to remain constant for 3 years before again declining to 10 students in 2003-04.

Questions were raised with respect to the time students would board the bus in the morning. With current bus schedules, students going to Bass River would board the bus at 7:50 a.m. and arrive home at 3:40 p.m. Students who elected to attend Parrsboro Elementary would board the bus at 7:15 a.m. and arrive home at 3:40 p.m. (Note: The Parrsboro bus route could be shortened by approximately 15 minutes daily with rearrangements in Parrsboro.)

The routes over Economy Mountain or through the unpopulated area toward Parrsboro were both noted as concerns for passenger safety for these young children.

With an audience of approximately 25 parents and community members, strong support was voiced for retaining their community school and, to illustrate their commitment, parents volunteered to take on a number of school board responsibilities (e.g. transportation, cleaning, internet costs) if it would mean keeping the school open.

The group acknowledged the current student-teacher ratio as being well below the average and cited the success (academic, social, physical, emotional) of such a situation as well as the close-knit community support for the school.

Recommendations of the committee:

Whereas the Study Committee has found:

There was no significant educational benefits for closing  
Five Islands School  
There are no significant advantages in the form of additional  
programs or facilities  
The cost of running the school is relatively small  
(\$10,606 per year, plus a teacher)  
The school building is in good shape  
Closure would add significantly to the length of the  
students day  
School closure would divide the community by sending  
students to different schools  
The committee recommends that Five Islands Elementary  
remain open.

Moved by Jim Grue, seconded by Trudy Thompson

THAT THE FIVE ISLANDS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
REMAIN OPEN.

MOTION CARRIED

#### East River St. Mary's School Closure Report

Assistant Superintendent of Operations, Dale Sabeau,  
reported as follows:

As per the Board Procedure for School Closure (Policy B-01)  
and the applicable sections of the Education Act and Regulations,  
the Board initiated a School Closure study for East River St.  
Mary's Elementary School during the school year 1999-2000.  
A Study Committee was established to review pertinent aspects  
of effecting such a closure as well as to host a public meeting  
to gather community input. The Study Group filed its report  
supporting closure of the school on January 19, 2000 with the  
Operations/PRT Committee who, in turn, presented the report  
to the Board on February 9, 2000. Subsequently, a public  
meeting to receive further input on the final report was  
scheduled for March 28, 2000.

#### Public Meeting - March 28, 2000

It was noted the enrolment of ERSM will decline to four (4)  
students (Grades 2 and 3) for the 2000-01 school year as there  
are no new Primary students to replace the current four  
students leaving for Thorburn Consolidated (as they move  
into grade 4) but, contrary to the report, one parent reported  
there may be four youngsters who will be eligible for  
Grade Primary in the subsequent year (2001-02)

The notion of retaining this year's Grade 3 students to  
take Grade 4 to ERSM was voiced but not debated or  
discussed (this would have kept the population at 9

students for another year and then the four new primary students would yield an enrolment of 8 for the next year)

A copy of the February 9th Board Minutes was requested (A. MacDougall to fax out) in response to an article that had been carried in a local newspaper - the article referred to a Board Member suggesting "he could not support the report due to the lengthy time on a bus"

Noting the change in bussing to lessen travel time for students from ERSM attending Thorburn Consolidated (Grades P - 9), concern was also expressed for the time on the bus for East Pictou High students (Grades 10 - 12)

Questions were raised with respect to the time students would board the bus in the morning - even if the run will be reduced to approximately 60 minutes, will youngsters have to board by 7:05? 7:15? (Note: Thorburn starts at 8:25 a.m.; students generally arrive at approximately 8:15 a.m. in time to get undressed, settled, visit the washroom, etc.)

The current time for the ERSM bus to travel to Thorburn with the ERSM students only is approximately 45 minutes with 3 or 4 stops for student pickup (the ERSM students attend Thorburn one full day each cycle for Physical Education, Music, etc.)

Staffing a school which has only 4 students would serve to cause undue hardship on another school (Thorburn) since the two buildings are staffed as one unit; abeyance staff would not be a priority for this situation

It was suggested the school should remain open if the population decreased to 3 or 2 or 1 given the distance (45 - 50 km) and taking young children out of the community  
Recommendations from the Committe

- 1) The permanent closure of the East River St. Mary's Elementary School
- 2) The transportation proposal for the transport of students, Grades Primary to Nine at Thorburn Consolidated School [copy on file] be adopted
- 3) That any significant changes to the transportation proposal as per the copy on file [Appendix A] be discussed with the parents of the community prior to a decision being made and the routes altered.

As further noted in a letter sent to John English from

the School Advisory Council,

After the East River St. Mary's Parents Group attended our School Advisory Council meeting on April 5, 2000 and voiced their concerns about their school closure, we as a School Advisory Council support their recommendations to keep this school open and keep their current Grade 3's at the East River St. Mary's School.

We feel that the distance between the two schools, East River St. Mary's and Thorburn Consolidated, which are under the same administration, makes our situation quite unique.

We as a School Advisory Council ask that you consider the staffing for this teaching position come from outside the Celtic family so we can realistically move towards reasonable class sizes.

Moved by John English, seconded by Jim Grue

**THAT THE EAST RIVER ST. MARY'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
REMAIN OPEN.**

John English cited the following concerns:

- a) bussing and the need for shorter traveling time on the bus,
- b) staffing and the relationship to the staffing allotment to Thorburn Consolidated School,
- c) safety in terms of school bus vs. private conveyance
- d) possibility of boundary changes (i.e. students currently traveling to Sherbrooke)
- e) the need for a new study and report to reorganize the grade levels at this school.

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Brian Murphy, indicated that in terms of the staffing formula Thorburn and East River St. Mary's Schools are considered as one school.

In response to a question regarding the condition/safety of the facility, Mr. Sabean indicated that this has been looked at and the following work is required at a total cost of approximately \$15,000:

replace both floors,

do specific repairs to some walls, windows and the roof

some work on the playground.

It was noted that when the Board couldn't vote to transport high school students for one-half hour on a school bus, then it certainly could not be feasible to consider transporting young elementary children over twice the distance.

In response to a question about any parents from the area

offering to come in to clean the school, etc. similar to what is being done in Five Islands, it was noted that no such offer has come forward at this time.

It was further noted that there will be no abeyance from outside the Celtic Family.

In response to a question about the bussing schedule, Dale Sabean assured the Board that bussing changes would be done in the afternoon run from Thorburn regardless of the school being closed.

In response to another question about transportation, Mr. Sabean indicated that the Board is hoping to use private conveyance at East River St. Mary's, similar to what is being done in Five Islands.

**MOTION CARRIED**

Correspondence

Correspondence was reviewed as followed:

Nova Scotia School Boards Association

A memorandum was received from Sylvia Mattinson regarding the proposed Resolutions for the NSSBA Annual General Meeting 2000.

Chair Stevenson reviewed the two suggestions from the NSSBA along with the original resolution submitted by this board. In reviewing Recommendation 02, 2000 Ron Marks stated that the feeling around the table of the Board of Directors was that there is a need to focus on what is deemed to be the most important and, eventually, submit the resolutions on the top two issues. Superintendent Elmer MacDonald stressed that there still has to be a prioritization process for the five top resolutions to be brought forward.

It was agreed to accept the joint resolution from the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board and the Annapolis District School Board.

In reviewing Recommendation 03, 2000 it was felt that since there was no valid reason given for the strike-out that the board wished their resolution to stand alone.

Moved by Robert Parker, seconded by Jim Grue

**THAT THE TWO RESOLUTIONS, "EDUCATION PROGRAMS" AND "EDUCATION FINANCE" FROM THE CHIGNECTO-CENTRAL REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD STAND ALONE.**

**MOTION CARRIED**



[George Bruce arrived at the meeting]

#### Nova Scotia School Boards Association

A memorandum dated March 20, 2000 was received from Sandra Everett, Chair of the NSSBA Resolutions and Election Committee regarding the Members of the NSSBA Board of Directors for the Year 2000-2001, Voting Delegates, NSSBA Annual General Meeting 2000.

It was noted that the Voting Delegates from the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board for the NSSBA AGM would be Ron Marks, Kaaren Barkhouse, Jim Grue, George Bruce, Mary Stevenson, Marilyn Murray, Cheryl Cutler, and David Myles.

Moved by Robert Parker, seconded by Lloyd Gibbs

**THAT RON MARKS CONTINUE TO SERVE ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AS THE REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE CHIGNECTO-CENTRAL REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

#### Letter of Resignation

A letter of resignation from a custodian of a school was read. In his letter, thanks were expressed to the School Board and employees for their kindness and respect shown to him over the years.

#### Reports from Standing Committees

##### Committee of the Whole

Vice-Chair Robert Parker gave a report on a Committee of the Whole meeting held on April 5, 2000 as follows:

A presentation was heard on the "Gathering Strengths" Project at Truro Junior High School. Board Members were pleased to hear about this very positive project that is federally funded and shared between the Millbrook Band Council (students and community) and Truro Junior High School

Assistant Superintendent of Operations, Dale Sabean, explained the chronology of events which would have to take place in response to a request to have the Grade 6

students attend Cobequid Consolidated School rather than moving on to Central Colchester Junior High School commencing in September 2000. Following some discussion, it was

Moved by Robert Parker, seconded by Trudy Thompson

THAT A STUDY ACTION COMMITTEE BE ESTABLISHED TO LOOK AT THIS REQUEST FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF BOTH SCHOOLS WITH AN INTERIM REPORT TO THE BOARD (COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE) ON May 3, 2000.

MOTION CARRIED

Dale Sabean provided a summary of comments shared at School Closure public meetings held at Five Islands Elementary School and East River St. Mary's School. Both issues have already been dealt with this evening.

Correspondence was received from NSSBA regarding resolutions submitted and a request to consider a new wording to conform to resolutions submitted by another School Board. This has already been dealt with this evening.

Moved by Robert Parker, seconded by Jim Grue

TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE.

MOTION CARRIED

Finance/Human Resources Committee

Committee Chair Ron Marks reported on the meeting held on March 29, 2000. Information coming forward from the meeting included:

Teacher Assistants Presentation

Sam Matheson, Coordinator of Special Services, gave a presentation on the process for assigning Teacher Assistants and providing for the special needs of Autistic Children. A Staffing Chronology of Teacher Assistants was distributed.

The Committee agreed to accept the Staffing Chronology of Teacher Assistants with the assignment of abeyance completing the process early in the school year.

School Insurance Program

The Committee received information stating that the premiums for SIP will be increasing 10% in the new policy year. This is

the first increase since the inception of SIP in December of 1989.

**Criminal Reference Check Policy (HR-07)**

A Criminal Reference Check Policy (HR-07), which has been approved by the Human Rights Commission, was distributed to the Committee for review and discussion.

Notice was given that at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board he will move or cause to be moved Policy HR-07 for approval.

**Personnel Performance Program**

A presentation and update was given on the Personnel Performance Program with the final outcome including all job descriptions and evaluation processes compiled in one binder to be taken to the Board for information.

Moved by Ron Marks, seconded by Bernie Knockwood

**TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE FINANCE/HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Operations and Planning, Research and Technology Committee**

Committee Chair, George Bruce reported on the Committee meeting held on March 22, 2000 as follows:

1) Karen Casey outlined a pilot project currently in the planning stages for students at Parrsboro High and Advocate District Schools. The project involved three teams of students and three teachers who will work collaboratively in a problem-based learning project. This project provides access to an innovative technology enhanced delivery of curriculum, and has been made possible with the support of Knowledge House and Intel. The project runs from April 17 to May 19, 2000 and focuses on "real-world" projects.

2) Karen Casey distributed School Advisory Council Letters of Agreement for:

Cobequid Educational Centre  
Douglas Street Elementary School  
Maitland District Elementary School  
Uniacke District School

She noted that these letters have been reviewed by staff and

are consistent with provincial guidelines.

Moved by George Bruce, seconded by Kaaren Barkhouse

THAT THE SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL LETTERS OF AGREEMENT FOR COBEQUID EDUCATIONAL CENTRE, DOUGLAS STREET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, MAITLAND DISTRICT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND UNIACKE DISTRICT SCHOOL BE ACCEPTED.

MOTION CARRIED

3) Chair Bruce welcomed a delegation from the Cobequid Elementary School Parent-Teacher Group requesting that grade 6 students be retained at Cobequid Elementary School.

This was dealt with under the Committee of the Whole Report.

4) Dale Sabeau distributed copies of a letter received from the Colchester Transportation Cooperative Limited requesting that the agreement in place with the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board be extended to the end of June 2000. This agreement was initiated as a pilot community transportation project (for the period November 1, 1999 to March 31, 2000) to service students that were being transported by three private vehicles and one specially equipped accessibility bus.

Moved by George Bruce, seconded by Jim Grue

THAT THE AGREEMENT WITH THE COLCHESTER TRANSPORTATION COOPERATIVE LIMITED BE EXTENDED TO THE END OF JUNE, 2000.

It was noted that the current system in place is status quo.

MOTION CARRIED

Moved by George Bruce, seconded by John English

THAT THE REPORT OF THE OPERATIONS AND PLANNING, RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE BE RECEIVED.

Concern was expressed over the naming of the new elementary school in Pictou before it had gone to the Operations/PRT Committee and that this must be avoided in the future as the Board does have a policy in place that must be adhered to.

## MOTION CARRIED

### Programs and Student Services

Committee Chair Trudy Thompson reported, as follows, on a meeting held on March 22, 2000:

#### Small High School Report: Follow-up

In December 1999 the Board referred this report to the Programs and Student Services Committee for consideration of a number of options for sharing programs and services between small high schools. Oxford Regional High and Springhill Jr./Sr. High were selected as the first schools to examine. An interim report, developed by the Family of Schools Supervisor for Chignecto, Gary Clarke, and the two principals, was presented to the Committee and has been distributed to all members. The Committee received the report for information, asked that the principals involved share the report with their School Advisory Councils and asked that the information be communicated publicly.

The Committee has requested Mr. Miller to report back on the progress the schools make in implementing options suggested in the report.

#### Technology Education/Family Studies Report

The Committee accepted the "Technology Education and Family Studies Report" prepared by Cecil Smith, the Board's seconded Consultant for Vocational/Technical Education. This report has already been distributed to all Board members. The Committee directed that the "no cost" recommendations identified in the report be referred to staff for action. The Committee agreed that the recommendations in the report requiring special funding be presented to and addressed by the Board in the context of 2000-01 Board priorities.

In response to a question about the Phase II Schools getting funding, Mr. Miller noted that these were captured in the report and it would be further discussed at the budget meeting.

#### Education Week Board Nominee

On behalf of the Board, the Committee has recommended to the NSSBA that Ralph Blaikie, Coordinator, Student Services, be recognized by the NSSBA at the Education Week Award Ceremony on April 17th. The theme for this year's Education Week is: "2000: The First Year, Preparing for a Century of

Challenge and Change in Curriculum".

Moved by Trudy Thompson, seconded by John Henderson

TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE PROGRAMS AND  
STUDENT SERVICES COMMITTEE.

MOTION CARRIED.

Nova Scotia School Boards Association

Ron Marks noted that three sets of minutes had gone out to board members in the last school board package.

He further noted that the Ad Hoc Committee on Board Stipends sent a report to the Commissioner without any recommendations and he had reported that the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board recommended keeping the status quo.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Elmer MacDonald outlined the highlights of his printed report [copy on file] that was circulated to Board members and the media in attendance and that will be sent to all schools and School Advisory Councils.

In presenting his report, Mr. MacDonald reported on a meeting held with the Department of Education to receive budget profile sheets for the fiscal year 2000-2001 and gave a preliminary assessment of the information. In referring to the cut of 400 full-time-equivalent positions across the Province, Mr. MacDonald stated that that statement was wrong! He noted that calculations by this Board indicate that province-wide there will be at least 1000 full-time-equivalent positions reduced.

Director of Finance, Robert Renouf, distributed copies of the profile sheets [copy on file] from the Department, walked through the sheets with board members and responded to questions, stating that we have more questions than answers at this point in time. In response to a question, Mr. Renouf indicated that the Formula Funding Review Group met three times but had no involvement in this report.

It was noted that senior staff would be working diligently for the next few days to assess the impact on the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board.

[Mary Stevenson left the Chair and Vice-chair, Robert Parker, took the Chair. He thanked Mary for making a gallant effort to

attend the meeting because she hadn't been feeling well earlier in the day.]

Mr. MacDonald reviewed the remainder of his report.

Under Planning, Research and Technology Department with regard to International Students for the 2000-2001 school year, Mr. MacDonald stressed that we have a need for the Homestay Program in both Pictou and Cumberland Counties.

In response to a question about International Students, Mr. MacDonald indicated that we are not proceeding with the Sable Building at this time.

Under Chignecto Family with regard to the opening of the new Amherst Regional High School, Mr. MacDonald noted that there are concerns with the availability of equipment.

#### Public Question Period

Debbie Reid (New Glasgow) commented about the recent news and loss of jobs, asking what is more important - teachers or board staff? She further noted that our primary concern should be students and, therefore, we need teachers in the classrooms. She asked if the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board is trimmed to the bone.

In response to this question, Mr. MacDonald indicated that the board is staffed as directed at the time of amalgamation.

He noted that as services to youngsters have grown, there is more need for support staff that serve a very valuable and important role. There is a need for training in all aspects ~ professional development for staff and students in the classroom.

In response to a question about the staffing of central offices in other school boards, Mr. MacDonald stated that it is unfair to compare one School Board with another. The Chignecto-Central Regional School Board has an expanded central office to support all areas of five families. It was a value judgment to have people out in the field as opposed to housing everyone in one area.

He reminded people that the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board is the only board having a balanced budget each year since amalgamation.

It was noted that it is most important that teachers be the last people to be cut.

Shaun Poirier (President of the School Advisory Council at G. R. Saunders) spoke about the B/E/S/T Program at the G. R. Saunders School and the positive results that have emanated from that program. She stressed that the program should at least be kept even if it cannot be expanded. Mr. MacDonald noted that the program is very near and dear to him as well and it will have to be considered very carefully when planning programs for next year.

Rose MacKenzie asked about the fact that there will be no bus purchases for next year and how the board plans to transport students to the new P3 Schools. It was pointed out to her that there would be bus purchases.

Ralph Welton (Municipality of Cumberland County) stated that the Council had issued invitations to School Board members to visit the schools in Cumberland County at the Council's expense and wondered why no school board members had taken him up on the invitation. It was pointed out that some board members had already toured the Cumberland County Schools and that other school board members had jobs and simply did not have the time, although the invitation was appreciated.

George Bruce indicated that when he travels to E. B. Chandler School in Amherst on May 10 for the next public school board meeting he plans to tour some of the schools and invited anyone who wished to join him.

#### Date of Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Board will be held on May 10, 2000 at the E. B. Chandler School in Amherst.

#### Adjournment

On motion from Lloyd Gibbs, the meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Helene C. Smith,  
Board Secretary

Mary Stevenson,  
Board Chair



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