

Chignecto-Central Regional School Board

Regular Meeting

10-01 Minutes

October 10, 2001

The regular monthly meeting of the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board was held on Wednesday, October 10, 2001, at Thorburn Consolidated School commencing at 7:00 p.m.

Present:

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| Kaaren Barkhouse | Marilyn Murray |
| Robin Bourque | David Myles |
| Jim Grue | Robert Parker |
| John Henderson | Mackie Ross |
| Bernie Knockwood | Cheryl Samson (via video-conference) |
| Mark Lavers | Marilyn Thompson |
| Mary Macaulay | Trudy Thompson |
| Lawrence MacKinnon | Raymond Tynes |
| Ron Marks | |

In Attendance:

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Larry Elchuck | Dale Sabean |
| Ann Hamilton-Wood | David White |
| Gary Miller | Bruce MacIntosh |
| Brian Murphy | |

Board Chair Robert Parker called the meeting to order and welcomed members of the public in attendance. In a special “first” for the CCRSB, a welcome was extended to Board member Cheryl Samson who was participating in the meeting through the technology of video-conferencing. Ms. Samson was unable to travel to Thorburn and was participating in the meeting from Riverside Education Centre.

Approval of Agenda:

It was MOVED by Marilyn Murray, seconded by Trudy Thompson
THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED AS CIRCULATED.

MOTION CARRIED

Presentation:

The Assistant Superintendent of Operations, Dale Sabean, said that he was privileged to introduce to the Board a new bus safety program that was underway in the region's elementary schools. "Buster the Bus", a fully automated remote control robot shaped like a real school bus, was accompanied by Julie MacLeod, co-op student, bus driver Peter Christensen and Dick Beswick, Coordinator of Health and Safety. Ms. MacLeod and Mr. Christensen shared with the Board a presentation similar to the one being used in elementary schools. As the presentation unfolded, several Board members "volunteered" to join in the fun by participating in the presentation. The presentation concluded with the singing of "*Buster – The Little Yellow School Bus*".

Mr. Sabean indicated that Buster and company would visit each elementary school in the region over the next few months. The purpose of the program is to improve behaviour and deportment of students both on school busses and during bus loading and departure process and to increase public awareness of school bus safety concerns.

The Board Chair thanked Ms. MacLeod, Mr. Christensen and Mr. Beswick for attending the meeting. He indicated that the Board had enjoyed the presentation and he was certain that the children would too.

Approval of Minutes:

It was MOVED by Bernie Knockwood, seconded by David Myles
THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 12, 2001 BE APPROVED AS CIRCULATED.

MOTION CARRIED

Business Arising from the Minutes:

Notice of Motion

The Board Chair reported that at the meeting held on September 12, 2001, Board member Robin Bourque had served notice of motion. Mr. Parker clarified the by-laws that apply to a notice of motion and asked Ms. Bourque to proceed.

It was MOVED by Robin Bourque

THAT THE BOARD RESCIND THE BOARD MOTION OF OCTOBER 23, 1998 APPROVING THE SUBMISSION OF A REQUEST TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF TWO NEW HIGH SCHOOLS IN PICTOU COUNTY.

In accordance with Board by-laws, Ms. Bourque gave a brief explanation for the motion. She indicated that while she appreciated the work of the previous board during the public consultation process in Pictou County in the fall of 1998, she questioned whether the decision to construct two new schools best served the needs of all students concerned. Ms. Bourque asked that the Board rescind the motion in order that changes be implemented that would see East Pictou Rural High remain open. Upon conclusion of Ms. Bourque's comments, the Board Chair called for a seconder.

Motion seconded by Mary Macaulay.

In accordance with Board policy, there was no discussion or debate on the motion. The question was called immediately.

MOTION DEFEATED

**In Favour – Robin Bourque, John Henderson, Mark Lavers,
Mary Macaulay, Mackie Ross, Marilyn Thompson**

Correspondence:

The Communications Officer/Board Secretary reported on one item of correspondence received.

Municipality of the County of Colchester

A letter was received from Mayor Michael Smith on behalf of the County of Colchester regarding municipal contributions towards playground improvements. While confirming that the municipality has made a commitment of \$180,000 towards playground improvements in Colchester County, Mayor Smith expressed concern that it was necessary for community groups,

volunteers and municipal units to make contributions towards the improvement of play spaces at schools.

A response drafted by the Assistant Superintendent of Operations, Dale Sabean, expressed the Board's appreciation for the municipality's contribution. Mr. Sabean had indicated that while contributions from many sources have assisted in the replacement of the playground structures, the Board has also made a substantial commitment of funds and human resources. It is hoped that other municipal units may follow the lead of the County of Colchester in helping the Board meet the needs of students.

The Board Chair thanked the County of Colchester for their contribution and it was recognized that other municipal units across the region have made similar contributions. When asked what the Board's commitment to playground improvement has been, Mr. Sabean indicated that over \$500,000 has been allocated to playgrounds over the past few years.

Committee Reports:

Committee-of-the-Whole

Board Vice-Chair Trudy Thompson reported on a meeting of the Committee-of-the-Whole held on October 3, 2001.

Black Educators Association

Assistant Superintendent of Programs and Student Services, Gary Miller, had welcomed and introduced Crystal States, Regional Educator with the Black Educators Association, and Glenda Talbot-Richards, Acting Coordinator of Race Relations. Ms. States was in attendance to update the Board on her responsibilities and the work of the Association. Also welcomed later in the meeting was Tracey Dorrington-Skinner, Chair of the Black Education Committee in the Truro area.

Ms. States had given a brief history of the development of the BLAC report and the subsequent establishment of the Regional Educators program. Ms. States reviewed her various roles in working with students, parents and teachers and indicated that her area of responsibility was to serve the same geographical area as the Board. Ms. States also responded to several questions raised by Board members some of which focused on accountability and how the implementation of the recommendations from the BLAC report are being evaluated and monitored.

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In light of the requirement to hold an in-camera session following the regular meeting, the committee reports had been kept very brief. Only one item from the Operations and Planning, Research and Technology Committee required detailed discussion.

New Truro Junior High

As a follow-up to discussions held at the August 22 Board meeting, Assistant Superintendent of Operations, Dale Sabean, had reported that the Truro P-9 Study Committee had met twice since that time and one of the meetings had been attended by the Deputy Minister of Education, Dennis Cochrane. As a result of those meetings, and information coming from the various school advisory councils, the Study Committee had recommended to the Board that the grade configuration for the proposed new Truro Junior High School be grades 6 – 9. The Study Committee also recognized that the need to make a decision related to the number of new or renovated elementary schools for the town of Truro was not as urgent and could be considered at a later date.

Mr. Sabean had requested that, in the interest of time, permission be given to begin the site selection process immediately. The Board had given its approval in principle and accordingly,

It was MOVED by Trudy Thompson, seconded by Jim Grue

THAT THE REQUEST TO CONSTRUCT A NEW TRURO JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL BE BASED UPON A GRADE CONFIGURATION TO INCLUDE STUDENTS IN GRADES 6 THROUGH 9 INCLUSIVE.

AND THAT, THE SITE SELECTION PROCESS FOR THE NEW FACILITY BEGIN IMMEDIATELY WITH THE SITE SELECTION COMMITTEE TO INCLUDE:

- **THE PRINCIPAL AND SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE FROM TRURO JUNIOR HIGH AND EACH OF THE FIVE TOWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS;**
- **A PARENT REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE SOUTHERN REGION OF TRURO;**
- **BOARD MEMBERS BERNIE KNOCKWOOD, MARY MACAULAY AND RAYMOND TYNES;**
- **A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN COMMUNITY;**
- **A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MILLBROOK FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITY;**

- **TOWN OF TRURO COUNCILOR DIANE BENNETT-COOK;**
- **CCRSB CENTRAL OFFICE STAFF – CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION COORDINATOR KAREN CASEY AND FAMILY OF SCHOOLS SUPERVISOR KERRY GEDDES (non-voting members, Karen Casey to serve as Committee Chair);**
- **REGIONAL EDUCATION OFFICER DAVID WHITE (DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION REPRESENTATIVE);**
- **NOVA SCOTIA SPORT AND RECREATION REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE JIM CAMPBELL**

MOTION CARRIED

It was MOVED by Trudy Thompson, seconded by Marilyn Murray
TO ADOPT THE COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE REPORT AS PRESENTED.

Board member Raymond Tynes indicated that he had spoken with former Board Chair Mary Stevenson who was a member of the original Truro P-9 Study Committee. Mr. Tynes asked that, as a courtesy, he would like the Board to extend an apology to Mrs. Stevenson that she had not been invited to attend the recent meetings of the Committee to discuss the Truro Junior High project.

Board member Mary Macaulay objected to Mr. Tynes' request indicating that she was the elected representative from the town of Truro and she felt a precedent would be set by inviting a previous board member to participate on current committees. The Board Chair indicated that Ms. Macaulay's objection would be noted and that he and the Vice-Chair would take Mr. Tynes' suggestion under advisement.

MOTION CARRIED

Finance and Human Resources

Ron Marks, Chair of the Finance and Human Resources Committee, reported on a meeting held on September 26, 2001.

2001-02 Priorities - Finance and Human Resources Departments

Copies were distributed of the 2001-02 Finance Department priorities and Human Resources Department priorities.

SAP Update

An update was given by Brian Murphy and Robert Renouf on timelines, staff involvement and go live dates. Finance/Procurement implementation is currently underway with a go live date of April 1, 2002. Human Resources/Payroll is scheduled to commence January 1, 2002 with a projected go live date of August 1, 2002.

Staffing Report

Dr. Brian Murphy, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, reported that copies of the staffing report for the 2001-2002 school year had been circulated to Board members at the Committee-of-the-Whole meeting held on October 3, 2001. In summarizing the report, Dr. Murphy indicated that the staffing process had begun earlier than in the past few years and as a result, approximately 98% of teaching positions were filled prior to the start of school in September. It was also reported that 28% of the teachers hired for this school year were new to the CCRSB system.

Dr. Murphy indicated that the staffing report included detailed information on the number of teachers projected to retire over the next 12 years. It was also reported that due to a number of retirements and other staffing changes this year, the Board was in the position to offer approximately 50 new permanent contracts to teachers in the system.

Operations Central Depot

Copies had been distributed of a proposal for an Operations Central Depot which had been discussed with the Deputy Minister at an earlier meeting. Mr. Renouf had reviewed the proposed timeline for construction of this new facility and suggested a completion date of October 2002. The Deputy Minister is looking at alternatives and Dale Sabeau, Assistant Superintendent of Operations will be having discussions with the Department of Transportation and Public Works to discuss the possibility of establishing a joint facility with them.

It was MOVED by Ron Marks, seconded by Jim Grue
**TO ACCEPT THE REPORT OF THE FINANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES
COMMITTEE FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES.**

MOTION CARRIED

Operations and Planning, Research and Technology

Chair of the Operations and Planning, Research and Technology Committee, Marilyn Thompson, reported on a meeting held on September 19, 2001.

Technician Deployment

Larry Elchuck, Assistant Superintendent of Planning, Research and Technology, had distributed and reviewed the schedule for deployment of computer technicians to schools in the region.

Current Elmsdale School – Future Use

The Committee had discussed future use of the current Elmsdale District Elementary School, and the former Milford Elementary School building. Based on those discussions,

It was MOVED by Marilyn Thompson, seconded by Marilyn Murray
**THAT THE NOVA FAMILY OF SCHOOLS OFFICE BE RELOCATED TO THE
CURRENT ELMSDALE SCHOOL FOLLOWING THE RELOCATION OF THE
STUDENTS TO THE NEW SCHOOL FACILITY AND THAT THE MILFORD
BUILDING BE DECLARED SURPLUS.**

MOTION CARRIED

Request for Use of G.R. Saunders Property (Unused by School)

Dale Sabean, Assistant Superintendent of Operations, had introduced a request from a homeowner to use a small unused parcel of land directly behind her property adjacent to the G. R. Saunders school property in order to improve and landscape the area. Following some discussion it was agreed to defer the decision until the G. R. Saunders School Advisory Council had an opportunity to provide input on the request.

Update on Truro Junior High School Physical Education Program

Mr. Sabean advised the Committee that the arrangement for the Truro Junior High School students to use the gymnasium at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College was running smoothly. However, the College has been asked to revisit the fee structure for the use of this facility. If a mutual agreement cannot be reached, it was indicated that it might be necessary to look at an alternate arrangement.

Capital Construction Update

The Committee had been brought up-to-date on each of the new capital construction projects. It was noted that plans are on schedule for the opening of the new Elmsdale District Elementary School early in October. It was also noted that as a result of meetings with the Deputy Minister, senior staff and board members on September 5, 2001 where concern was raised over the site selection and preferred site for the Pictou East Project, it was agreed that the School Steering Team would not meet again until a report was received back from the Department of Education. Invitations to join the School Steering Team for the Pictou West Project are being prepared in consultation with the Facilities Planning Division of the Department of Education. It was hoped the team would be in place within the next month.

It was MOVED by Marilyn Thompson, seconded by Kaaren Barkhouse
**TO ADOPT THE REPORT OF THE OPERATIONS AND PLANNING,
RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE.**

In response to a question, Assistant Superintendent of Operations Dale Sabean reported that negotiations have been completed to purchase the land required to construct the new high school facility in Brookfield. Mr. Sabean indicated that the Department of Education hopes to call tenders for an architect very soon.

Also in response to a question as to whether the provincial cabinet has approved the construction of a new Truro Junior High, Mr. Sabean reported that the motion approved earlier in the meeting regarding grade configuration would be forwarded to the Department of Education immediately and that will hopefully precipitate some action on behalf of the province.

Mr. Sabean reported that the new Elmsdale facility is substantially complete. Teacher in-services are scheduled for the week of October 15 and the building will be open to students on October 22.

MOTION CARRIED

Programs and Student Services

Committee Chair John Henderson read a report from a meeting held on September 18 that, in his absence, had been chaired by Committee Vice-Chair Cheryl Samson.

Draft Elementary Report Card

Staff had presented in detail information on a draft elementary report card that will be piloted in several schools in the region this school year. It was reported that the card was designed to report on “outcomes-based” education as mandated by the Department of Education. Parent input, comments, and reaction at each pilot site will be strongly encouraged. The Committee will receive a report on the pilots in the spring of 2002. It is hoped that a common elementary card will be in place in the region in September, 2002.

Student Support Worker Program

The Committee had accepted the Student Support Worker Handbook (Draft #2) as a working document for staff. It was indicated that the guidelines would be reviewed and amended as required next spring and then twice yearly thereafter.

Other aspects of the Student Support Worker program had been discussed. The Committee agreed to advise the Finance / Human Resources Committee, and the Board, that the continuation of the Student Support Worker Program, beyond the lapse of HRDC funding next February, will be a priority Committee recommendation for the 2002-03 budget. Other financial questions regarding wages, travel and employee benefits were referred by the Committee to the Finance / Human Resources Committee for review and appropriate consideration.

Middle School Education

It was reported that the presentation by principals on Middle School education has been re-scheduled from the October 3rd to the November 7th Committee-of-the-Whole. A number of principals of Middle Schools with various grade configurations will discuss the challenges and rewards associated with program delivery in their schools.

Summer School 2001

The Committee had received, and was pleased with, the Summer School 2001 report prepared by staff. 397 students, chiefly at the middle/junior high level, at five (5) sites received summer instruction. All but three (3) students were successful.

Student Trips

Due to the terrible tragedy in New York on September 11th, the Committee deferred approval of all student travel by air. In October, the Committee will revisit similar approvals granted earlier

this year that have yet to occur. This subject will be discussed again in detail at the Committee's October meeting.

It was MOVED by Cheryl Samson, seconded by John Henderson
**TO ACCEPT THE REPORT OF THE PROGRAMS AND STUDENT SERVICES
COMMITTEE.**

MOTION CARRIED

Superintendent's Report:

In the absence of Superintendent Elmer MacDonald, the Board Chair indicated that Mr. MacDonald's printed report had been circulated to all Board members. It was suggested that any questions arising be brought forward at a future meeting.

Nova Scotia School Boards Association:

Ron Marks, CCRSB representative to the NSSBA Board of Directors, reported on meetings held on September 20 and 21. The Board of Directors had passed a motion to approve the concept of a Nova Scotia School Trust and had established a six-person committee to develop a detailed plan for the program.

Mr. Marks highlighted several other items discussed at the meeting including a report on the internal analysis process, standing committee membership for the upcoming year and reports from the committees. Information had also been brought forward on the cancellation of the advanced studies program in the province, the employee pension plan and a financial report relating to the School Insurance Program.

New Business:

Board Planning and Priorities Session

The Board Chair reported that plans have been made for the Board members to participate in a planning and priorities session on October 26 and 27 at the Debert Hospitality Centre. As part of the discussion, some board members indicated that they had not received the proposed agenda via e-mail. It was agreed that paper copies would be made available. Members were asked to contact the Chair or Vice-Chair with their comments on the proposed agenda. Mr. Parker indicated that he would be taking a poll at the earliest opportunity to determine how many people planned to attend.

Principal – Pictou West

Board Chair Robert Parker reported that the selection process for the principalship of the new Pictou West high school had been completed and that Preston Lockhart was the successful candidate. Mr. Lockhart is presently the principal of Westville High School.

Communications Officer/Board Secretary

Mr. Parker announced that Communications Officer/Board Secretary, Ann Hamilton-Wood, had tendered her resignation from the Board effective October 19, 2001. Ms. Hamilton-Wood had advised that she had accepted the position of Director of Public Relations with the Cumberland Health Authority. On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked Ms. Hamilton-Wood for her service to the Board and assured her she would be missed.

Public Question and Answer Period:

The Board Chair reviewed for the members of the public in attendance the rules for public question period by indicating that comments should be limited and questions posed as quickly as possible.

Everett Jeans shared several comments and then asked if the reduced size of the site proposed for the new school for Pictou East would have an impact on the sports facilities and the number of teams available for student participation. In response, the Board Chair indicated that information presented to the Board earlier in the evening by the Deputy Minister of Education showed that the site would in fact be very close to the preferred size of 25 acres.

Helen MacGregor asked whether the Board or the Department of Education makes the final decision on the site for a new school. Mr. Parker responded that the Board is required to submit three proposed sites as chosen by the appropriate site selection committee. Following proper assessment by the Department of Education and the Department of Transportation and Public Works, the Department of Education chooses the site. Ms. MacGregor asked if the Department of Education asks for input from the Board and Mr. Parker responded that questions are asked but as long as the preferred site is one of the original three, the Department can make the final choice.

Rose MacKenzie showed the Board members two photographs of the area behind the proposed site in the Parkdale area, one of which had been altered to show a school-type building. She asked the members who had voted against the motion to rescind the October 1998 motion to pay particular attention to the pictures.

Adjournment:

The Board Chair reminded the Board of a special in-camera meeting to be held on Thursday, October 11, 2001 at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Room in Truro.

On motion, the meeting adjourned.

Robert Parker, Board Chair

Date

Ann Hamilton-Wood
Communications Officer /Board Secretary

Date