

**Chignecto-Central Regional School Board
Education Services/Operational Services Joint Committee Meeting
December 17, 2014**

The Joint Committee Meeting of the Education Services/Operational Services Committees was held in the Board Room at Central Office on Wednesday, December 17, 2014 at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present

Education Services Committee

Wendy Matheson-Withrow, Vice-Chair
Vivian Farrell, Chair
Susan MacQuarrie

Operational Services Committee

Gordon Anderson, Vice-Chair
Adam Davies, Chair
Keith MacKenzie
Marilyn Murray

Other Board Members in Attendance

Ann Beaver
Ron Marks
Margie Nicholson
Trudy Thompson, Board Chair

Staff in Attendance

Lynn Blake, Education Services
Debbie MacDonald, Recording Secretary
Allison McGrath, Director of Human Resources
Scott Milner, Director of Education Services

Karla Mitchell-Smith, Chignecto Family of Schools Supervisor
Herb Steeves, Director of Operational Services
Ron Turnbull, Celtic Family of Schools Supervisor

Regrets

Jim Grue

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Davies called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ADOPTION / AMENDMENTS OF AGENDA

Moved by Trudy Thompson, seconded by Wendy Matheson-Withrow.
THAT THE AGENDA BE ADOPTED.

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Trudy Thompson, seconded by Wendy Matheson-Withrow

THAT THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 18, 2014 MEETING BE APPROVED AS CIRCULATED.

MOTION CARRIED

INTRODUCTION

Chair Davies thanked the hub school committees and board staff for their continuing work during this process. He noted the purpose of the meeting as previously stated is to allow the communities working on the Hub model an opportunity to provide and update and status of their potential proposal. This is an important part of the process and community members and Board Members are to be respectful, mindful and attentive and to be aware of the bylaws so that the minutes can be clear and concise. He added there have been a number of issues that have come to light recently but tonight the agenda is to have an update from each of the communities and Committees expect to stay to the agenda. Time allotments will be upheld so all committees have an opportunity to present to the committee.

HUB SCHOOL PROPOSAL SUBMISSION FORMAT

Director Milner distributed the power point he would be discussing on the Hub School Proposal Submission Format and Evaluation Rubric to those in attendance. He noted the presentation was shared at the December 3, 2014 CCRSB Committee-of-the-Whole Meeting.

The purpose of the presentation on December 3, 2014 was to provide the Board with an overview of the process to date and receive input in reference to the evaluation process. It also provided an opportunity to show the Board the amount of work done to date by the communities as well as Board staff. At the CoW Board Members were also shown how the Joint Committee Meeting of November 18, 2014 influenced this phase of the work. At that time the Board Members had an opportunity to have input into weighting various aspects of the evaluation process.

The document will require an introductory statement. There will be a defined process to submitting the information to ensure the process is clear and the submission format is standard for all the proposals. With an accepted proposal an agreement must be created for building use and that is a legal process. Director Milner noted the work has entailed taking the information stated in the provincial Hub Model Criteria and to create a proposal template so the committees will be able to submit their information into the standard format.

There will be mandatory minimum requirements with hub proposals and the intent is to make sure they are clear. It will be helpful in the communities' proposals to include additional information such as a Memorandum of Understanding with any proposed hub tenants which could strengthen a business plan application.

The Mandatory Minimum Requirements will include Overview, General Components, Operational/Regulatory Components, Educational and Financial Components. The intention is mandatory minimum requirements must be met in order to continue with the evaluation process.

Director Milner reminded the Committees that the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development last fall revised the school review policy. The hub concept guidelines and criteria are embedded in the review document and were released to the public last summer.

An important part of the on-going work by staff is how a proposal is going to be evaluated. The evaluation component will consist of an evaluation team, procedures for evaluation, the minimum mandatory requirements and those proposal components that will need to be rated. There are some general requirements, regulatory/operational, program, education, community and financial components that will need a rating or scoring as to completeness and potential for a successful business and hub model.

The proposed Evaluation Team could be comprised of the Director of Operations, Director of Finance, Director of Human Resources, Director of Education Services. It should also include an external representative from the community such as from the organization that audits the CCRSB financial statements. The Manager of Purchasing can act as Team Chair and a non-voting member based on their experience with evaluation of Request for Proposals and tenders. It is important to note in the evaluation process, there may be a suggestion, idea or component that the expertise doesn't lie with the evaluation team and may need to seek external advice to ensure everyone understands the business proposal.

Director Steeves reiterated the comment from Director Milner that a major purpose of the meeting is to provide background to assist the groups when writing their proposals. The guidelines from the province clearly stated what is needed in the proposals. Many of these guidelines are not uncommon from what would be found with other business cases or proposal, such as with a business loan application. The evaluation team will make a recommendation to the Board of the submitted hub proposals based on the criteria and their associated weight. The Board will make a final determination as to the viability and potential success of a hub model at the schools scheduled to be closed.

Director Steeves stated the best advice is to begin writing your proposal the best way you can in the best way you see fitting the purpose of your hub model. The over-riding intent of the proposal is to state what you think your chances of success will be, and why you think it will be successful and supporting documentation and information.

In the general overview, one of the items is that the hub proposal is to be submitted on a certain date and time. This in many ways can be considered a formal process with a legal document. It will be time stamped by the Board when the document it is received.

As stated in the provincial guidelines, there can be no aspect of the proposal that is illegal, is negative or will put the Board or school in disrepute. There are sufficient terms and conditions with each of the parties for the hub committees with each of the proposed tenants. This would include the possibility of termination.

Director Steeves highlighted several important items within the guidelines to be considered such as;

- Health & Safety and Security of Students – For example, we do not want elementary students to be mixing with the public during the instructional day, so the same washrooms cannot be used by the public.
- Volunteers – There is a CCRSB policy for volunteers at a school and that should be considered if a hub model is in operation during the same time.
- Insurance – Contact should be made with an insurance company to find how much insurance will be required with a hub model and its uses. This should also indemnify the school board.
- Education Component – The hub cannot compromise or infringe upon the school's ability to deliver the Public School Program (PSP). There are clear requirements in the PSP what is needed to be provided and the functional intent of educational services at a school is what needs to be there. An example is

an area to provide physical education. The three committees have been given the excess space to meet the functional requirements. All three schools have made compromises to meet the functional PSP and to enable a hub model on site.

- A hub model cannot interfere with the Board's strategy for student achievement.
- There cannot be competing education services in the building, such as a private school, as part of the hub model.

With these three locations the Board made a decision in March 2013 to close the schools. There was a request from some of the communities to propose a Hub model at the sites and the Board determined the schools would close on June 2015, depending on the submission and potential viability success of the business proposal.

An important component within a hub model proposal is the financial aspect. This likely is the most crucial part of any of the proposals. It must meet the Board's planned cost savings based on the Impact Assessment Reports for each of the schools upon their closure. The means to cover any additional costs with a hub model on site should also be identified through each of the proposals. The proposal should identify how they plan to meet future maintenance requirements.

There may be future maintenance requirements such as paving. The plan must identify how the committee is planning to maintain the facility. One approach is to create a sinking fund that is a percentage of the capital cost or depreciation that paid to the landlord from the tenant and in time when maintenance is required there will be money in the fund to cover the cost. An example could be when a heating boiler needs replacement based on its expected life span. The first thing to do in the proposal is to identify possible future maintenance items and the time frame they will be addressed as it may be possible to spread them over a number of years.

Another item to show is the source(s) of funding. Any supporting documents to show that you have potential support, such as from a bank, would be advantageous to include in the proposal. There should be tangible evidence in your proposal of where your sources are coming from, such as copy of grant application or approval. If based on grants, a multi-year approval would be of greater benefit than those that need annual re-application. With the evaluation and before a building use agreement is finalized, the Board would need to know the viability and sustainability of funding and revenue sources.

The next item stated there is no increase to capital/operational costs to the Board. An example may be if there was an increased parking area due to a proposal, the winter clearing and salting of the additional areas would be covered by the hub committee or its tenants.

Director Steeves highlighted the overview and the general components for a hub school evaluation as provided to the community groups. The Evaluation Committee will be looking within the proposals to identify such components as the key participants and to have the ability to find their name(s). Another option may be to present a Letter of Understanding of a potential tenant within the proposal documents. This will help in the evaluation process. The proposal will also require the reason why a particular business would be beneficial to the area such as meeting community or market needs in the area.

The description of a proposed hub model should clearly outline what it is, why it is good for community and the Board as a whole, how it meets the provincial criteria and why it should be accepted.

The benefit analysis should include both a quantitative cost analysis and qualitative non-financial cost analysis of the benefits. How these are a benefit to the community and the school board should also be clearly described.

The risk analysis should outline the potential risks and how they will be dealt with. There can be many risks when operating a business or as a landlord. For example, if there are studies or figures that can back up assumptions being made in the proposals which indicates how a risk will be addressed they should be included.

The Implementation Strategy Timeline will be the key in the proposal. As an example, if there will be time needed to conduct renovations at the building, this should be stated. If the business plans shows revenue projections initially being less than required but having a growth potential, these too should be included with supporting rationale.

Directors Milner and Steeves asked for any questions for clarity.

Denise Miller, Maitland Hub School Committee, asked when the submission format would be ready for the committees. Director Milner responded it should be mid-January. In the meantime each of the headings in the presentation will most likely be the same in the proposal submission and the hub committees can use these. These are from the July 2014 provincial guidelines and criteria.

Rick Parker, Wentworth Hub School Committee asked Director Steeves about future maintenance costs and if the Hub Committee would be responsible to cover the entire costs of these items. Director Steeves responded at this stage, the Hub Committee would be responsible for these costs. The provincial guidelines and criteria indicate there must be no increase in costs for the school board or province in regards to the plans for the school. The plans are school will be closed, the board would not be incurring any costs and the savings realized. A hub model at the school should not change that financial situation.

Mr. Parker stated the issue quite clearly is that school boards have not spent enough money on maintenance over the years. Tough choices have been made to support the classroom. At the CCRSB every year eight million should be spent on maintenance and the Board is normally only spending one million.

Mr. Parker continued stating although 90% of Wentworth Elementary School is used by the school board, the hub committee would still be responsible for the entire school when there is only 10% available for the hub model. Director Steeves agreed there is a small amount of space available and noted again if a successful hub model is not operating in the school, then there would not be educational services and the school building would be closed as planned.

Catherine Yuill, Maitland Community Hub Committee asked why there would be no board members on the Evaluation Team. Director Steeves responded they do not want to put any one Board Member in what could be a difficult situation based on a level of knowledge different than other Board members. It may be more important to have all members provided the same information at the appropriate time.

Ms. Yuill asked if all Board Members would see the entire application or only a portion after it has been evaluated by the committee. Director Milner responded the intent is the Evaluation Committee would do their work and present the recommendation to the Superintendent in its entirety. The Superintendent will then present it to the Board.

Director Steeves stated the proposals in their entirety will be available to all Board Members by request.

PRESENTATIONS

MAITLAND COMMUNITY HUB COMMITTEE

Ms. Catherine Yuill, Chair of the Maitland Community Hub Committee presented an update on their progress.

Ms. Yuill began by stating the community wants the multi-age education to remain in the small community of Maitland. It is important to everyone in the community.

She noted their goal is to mitigate \$130,000. The committee has two primary mitigation strategies:

1. To mitigate \$75,000 of the \$130,000 by adjusting staffing levels for a small rural school primarily by asking the school board to consider a shared principal and a shared administration model.
2. Creation of revenue generating hub model with a barrier to divide the school and the hub so there would be no intermingling. After consultation with the fire marshal, this will require an additional fire exit.

She noted the correspondence received on December 9, 2014 showed less space and no washrooms than what the hub committee expected. This will require discussion as this was not the square footage the committee has been working towards for the hub model.

She noted there was recently a call for expression of interest. One tenant will be the Community Hub Association (CHA) operating a thrift store.

In closing she stated they are planning to have 80% occupancy for at least the first five years. They are looking into some community planning to add to the community and connect with seniors. She went over the financial summary to date.

Ms. Yuill thanked those in attendance for the invitation to present.

Chair Davies asked Board Members if they had any questions for Ms. Yuill for clarification.

Board Member Nicholson commented on the amazing job done by the Maitland Hub School Committee.

Board Vice-Chair MacKenzie asked about the \$75,000 for staffing. Director McGrath responded this would have to be looked into further because of the NSTU Teacher Provincial (collective) Agreement with clauses on administration.

Chair Farrell, Education Services, asked Director Milner to explain the reasons why the space allocation may have changed for the Maitland Hub Committee.

Director Milner noted since our last meeting, Education Services through staff visited the school and looked at the requirements of the Public School Programming. Two spaces will be needed for the library, music, resource, itinerant/circuit staff, early literacy and mathematical intervention support. Without the use of these two rooms, it would be a problem offering all of the above to the students.

Ms. Miller stated a storage room was mentioned previously as an available space for some of these programs as determined by the principal and teacher which is why the hub proposal committee has included the two classrooms along with washroom in its plan for the hub model.

Ms. Yuill noted in other schools a similar number of students are being educated with fewer rooms. They would like to have information provided on how this allocation was determined for Maitland. Why does Maitland require four classrooms while another school might require only three rooms?

Chair Farrell suggested Directors Milner and Steeves meet with the Community Hub Association to try and resolve this issue. This meeting will be setup through Ms. MacDonald, Executive Secretary to the Director of Operational Services.

Ms. Yuill also noted access to the school can be very challenging.

Chair Davies thanked the Community Hub Association for Maitland for their presentation.

RIVER JOHN CONSOLIDATED

Presenters for River John Support our School Committee were Robin Campbell and Valerie Suidgeest. Ms. Suidgeest stated the committee is working hard to develop the North Shore Scholar Ship Discovery Centre and Makerspace Community. This will be play based education at its best, but, first of all it will be a school.

Mr. Campbell went over the proposed budget to date. He noted fundraising is continuing as well as a website will be launched in the new year for further donations. He stated at least seventy letters have been sent out with positive feedback from seven businesses. Two potential tenants may be the RCMP and NSCC.

Ms. Suidgeest noted there is currently a Licensed Pre-School in the building which has been operating for approximately ten years. This would need to be reconfigured in order to have the Discovery Centre and Makerspace Community. They would like to live up to the Ivany report and have CCRSB become a partner and co-creator of the project.

She listed some of the things that will be part of the Discovery Centre and Makerspace Community such as Forestry, Agriculture/4-H, Community, Fishing, Discovery through Shipbuilding, etc.

Ms. Suidgeest and Mr. Campbell thanked the committee for the opportunity to present their proposal.

Chair Davies invited Board Members to ask questions for clarification.

Board Member Murray asked how the RCMP would be involved. Mr. Campbell responded they would require a small office for writing reports and possibly meeting with someone in the community. Board Member Murray also asked about NSCC. Ms. Suidgeest advised a survey was sent out to the community to get their thoughts on NSCC offering a course. Ms. Fitch noted it would be a two year program. The first year would be an upgrade with a course being held during the second year.

There was some discussion on the use of the washrooms in the school during the day if the public were to be present at the Discovery Centre.

Board Member MacQuarrie advised she had visited the school and the pre-school and that it is exactly what the province is looking for to get children ready for school.

Board Member Nicholson noted it was a great presentation.

Director Steeves noted it would be helpful to include letters and expressions of interest from potential tenants in the proposals.

Ms. Harvey advised a meeting was held with the Fire Marshall and he advised the area which will house the boat would need fire shutters that would drop down so that if there was a fire it would not be able to go from the first floor to the second floor.

Chair Davies stated this information would be a crucial part of the proposal.

Director Steeves noted in the plan it shows the Elementary Computer Lab. This is not part of the public school program and the reason it is there now is because there is excess space to house the lab. He added the pre-school may be valuable and important to the community, but, also is not part of the Public School Program. The proposal should state where this is being located once there is a Discovery Centre and Makerspace Community in the school and the day care's current and projected revenue.

Director Milner stated to everyone present to remember the conduit of communication. Any comments or questions are to go through Ms. MacDonald who will ensure it gets to the right person. He stated we are doing our best to respond as quickly as possible.

Vice-Chair Farrell stated committees have been using assumptions of potential available space to work on their proposals. The school board was not in a position to discuss the availability of space until the criteria was set by the Department of Education. Once the information was received, the Board sent out correspondence and floor plans to show the space available in each of the schools to house their hub model.

Board Member MacQuarrie stated since there is a difference in square footage is there any way to give schools more time to complete their proposals.

Chair Davies advised this will be discussed at a later time.

WENTWORTH SUSTAINABILITY ASSOCIATION

Presenters for the Wentworth Sustainability Association were Linda Patriquin and Rick Parker. Mr. Parker advised copies of their presentation will be sent electronically. He began by stating he is envious of the ideas from the other two hub schools. Envious in some ways they have space to work with as Wentworth does not have the space. In fact, only one classroom is available for the hub school model. He noted they are still struggling with the reality that the school is nearly fully utilized and in reality if the catchment area was enforced our class size would be actually very close to the provincial average. As well bussing is a frustration.

Mr. Parker stated he would like to respond to the letter of October 31, 2014 the Wentworth Sustainability Association received advising the committee how the board interpreted the provincial guidelines and criteria for a school hub model. The Wentworth Sustainability Association would require \$244,796 to operate the school.

He noted they are frustrated and disappointed the school board would give such an unrealistic goal and feel they have been set up to fail. There is no way to succeed.

Chair Davies reminded Mr. Parker the Board is working from the point the criteria was received from the Province.

Mr. Parker continued stating the committee feels they are caught between what the Province requires and the interpretation from the school board. It is inconsistent and they feel the province is not requiring such an unachievable amount. He added last December the committee expressed their concerns to the Superintendent Clark and at that time Mr. Clarke stated he hoped any guidelines by the province would be a wide application.

Chair Davies stated we have to be careful when talking about items before the guidelines came out in July.

Mr. Parker advised the Board a meeting will be held with the three hub committees in January with Minister Casey to discuss concerns and for clarification. They are hoping she will encourage the school board to partner with these small communities. He noted following the meeting with Minister Casey the Wentworth Sustainability Association will be formally requesting a meeting with the Board to present other information separate from the hub model.

Ms. Patriquin stated in light of the physical space correspondence they are wondering if Maitland needs four classrooms when Wentworth only needs three. If it takes four then there would be no excess space to have a hub model school. Board Member MacQuarrie also asked why Maitland requires four classrooms and Wentworth only needs three?

Director Milner responded that Wentworth is pressed for space and the program has been condensed to accommodate the hub model. The fourth class is required as part of the Public School Programming. Through scheduling, working with staff and education services, the school can schedule itinerants, library services, music, and French circuits in the three available spaces.

Chair Davies stated this is an issue to be discussed at the January Joint Meeting of Education and Operational Services. He thanked them for their presentation.

PROPOSED SCORING RUBRIC

Director Milner stated as part of the evaluation process there needs to be a common language or understanding of how the components will be evaluated and how the team will evaluate what is presented. The evaluation team will be looking for backup and supporting documents within the proposal.

Ms. Fitch asked about the weights that will be applied to each item in evaluating the proposals. Director Milner noted that board members rated each item and then an average was taken. Director Steeves noted it is important to explain the way it will be rated so each committee will know where the emphasis should be in each proposal.

Chair Farrell noted the financial aspect will be weighted high as well as the educational aspect.

Director Milner informed the committees of a link on the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board website containing all the information as well as minutes from the joint meetings.

TIMELINE

Director Steeves went over the proposed timeline. The next meeting of the joint committees from Educational and Operational Services will be held on Wednesday, January 21, 2015.

On Tuesday, February 17, 2015 the committees will be invited to attend a joint meeting to provide a further update as to the status of their hub proposal.

The Board must receive the proposals no later than Monday, March 30, 2015. There should be an opportunity for the three committees to present an Executive Summary of their proposal to the full board shortly thereafter.

The Evaluation Team will evaluate the proposals during April and May. The Joint Education/Operations Committee receives the Evaluation Committee results and recommendations during the last week and may take these and proposals back to a joint meeting on or by May 26, 2015.

The Superintendent will present the results of the proposal evaluation to the Board on June 3, 2015 with a final decision on June 10, 2015. This is a tight timeline and it may be difficult to delay the decision from the Board.

If the hub model proposals are not accepted the schools will be closed as planned at the end of the school year in June 2015.

COMMENTS

Director McGrath questioned if there may be a misunderstanding related to the financials. Her understanding is there are minimum requirements related, and assuming minimums are met, there is a subsequent rating process.

Director Milner responded stating there are financial, regulatory and educational minimum components. For example, as a minimum the proposal is to show how the identified costs savings will be met. Upon meeting the minimums, the then proposal goes to a quantitative analysis. The evaluation team will look at the proposal information to determine how viable and potentially sustainable the hub is.

Chair Davies noted the evaluation "checklist" comes from the guidelines and criteria received from the Province.

Ms. Fitch stated it is the interpretation of the checklist which is why the committees have requested the meeting with the Minister of Education.

There was discussion on the costs required to operate the hub model and if the Board would be paying anything to help the groups. Director Steeves noted that as stated earlier, the CCRSB would not be in the schools and they were closed this would result in a cost savings to the Board.

Mr. Parker asked about the subsidy provided to small schools from the province. Director Steeves noted the loss of the subsidy was already subtracted or "netted out" to arrive at the cost savings. The explanation can be found in each of the schools' Impact Assessments. In the event the school(s) close, the province will also save money.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by 8:50 p.m.