

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to Impact Assessment Report



**Prepared by:
ÉGPS Study Committee**

**Prepared for:
Halifax Regional School Board**

**Submitted:
January 2012**

**École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to
Impact Assessment Report**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
1.1 BOUNDARY REVIEW	2
2.5 POPULATION	7
2.7 CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION PLANNING	7
2.7.4 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	7
2.8 PHYSICAL CONDITION OF BUILDING	7
2.8.1 CONDITION OF BUILDING ENVELOPE, INTERIOR AND SYSTEMS	8
2.8.2 INDOOR AIR QUALITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	9
2.8.3 COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH MAINTENANCE, REPAIR AND OPERATION	9
3.1 CAPABILITY TO DELIVER PUBLIC SCHOOL PROGRAM	10
3.1.2 PUBLIC SCHOOL PROGRAMMING	10
3.2 EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS	11
3.2.1 BENEFITS OF THE P-9 CONFIGURATION	14
3.2.3 SCHOOL SAFETY	19
3.3 TRANSPORTATION	20
3.4 EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES	24
3.5 OPERATIONAL AND CAPITAL REQUIREMENTS	25
3.5.1 COMPLETED CAPITAL PROJECTS AT ÉCOLE GERTRUDE PARKER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	25
3.5.2 IMMEDIATE OPERATING NEEDS (5 YEARS)	25
3.5.3 CAPITAL INVESTMENTS ON CURRENT BUILDING	27
3.7 IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY	30
3.8 COMMUNITY USE OF THE SCHOOL	32
4.0 CAVALIER DRIVE	33
4.4 ENROLMENT	33
5.0 CONCLUSION	37
6.0 RECOMMENDATION	38
APPENDIX A – STUDY COMMITTEE DETAILED ANALYSIS OF PROVIDED ÉGPS FACILITY EVALUATION REPORT	39
APPENDIX B – STUDY COMMITTEE DETAILED ANALYSIS OF PROVIDED CDS FACILITY EVALUATION REPORT	42
APPENDIX C – CONTRIBUTIONS PROVIDED BY CAVALIER DRIVE SCHOOL’S SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL	44
4.0 CAVALIER DRIVE:	44
4.4.1 CAVALIER DRIVE SCHOOL PROJECTED ENROLMENT	44
4.4.2 BOUNDARY DETAILS	44
4.4.4. IMPACT OF THE REVIEW OUTCOME ON CAVALIER DRIVE SCHOOL	44
4.6.2 CONDITION OF BUILDING STRUCTURE AND SYSTEMS (REQUIRED CAPITAL UPGRADES)	44
4.7.2 TEACHING SPACES AND CURRENT USAGE	45
4.8 TRANSPORTATION	45
APPENDIX D – AGENCY LETTERS OF SUPPORT	46
BIBLIOGRAPHY	52

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to
Impact Assessment Report

1.0 Executive Summary

We share a common vision with the Halifax Regional School Board and its employees. The role of the school is paramount in the development of the whole child.

“Creating that dynamic learning culture is about more than words, more than shared belief; it’s about action.” (Halifax Regional School Board website-
<http://www.hrsb.ns.ca/content/id/219.html>)

“We also believe that our schools have a vital role to play by instilling in students the value of lifelong learning.” (Halifax Regional School Board website –
<http://www.hrsb.ns.ca/content/id/219.html>)

Those principles guided our preparation of this response, strongly opposing the recommendations of the Impact Assessment Report. We believe keeping École Gertrude Parker School (ÉGPS) open supports the vital role and embraces the only viable option for the success of our students.

Board staff suggested the closure of ÉGPS and the relocation of its student body to Cavalier Drive School (CDS). The reasons for this recommendation are compiled in the Impact Assessment Report. Our research has delved deeply into those same points and we have gathered specific details that both elaborate on and clarify the information, strongly supporting the opposite; École Gertrude Parker School must remain open. The main points for keeping the school open are summarized below.

1. Senior staff recommended the closure of ÉGPS based on the projected costs of repairs, upgrades and maintenance of the building. In this response, you will see the estimates are incomplete, not prioritized and often out of context. The current condition of the building and real-world repairs are significantly less burdensome than reported.
2. The relocation of the current school population to CDS would involve very little building reconfiguration, only small logistical arrangements and few scheduling challenges according to the Impact Assessment Report. It does not indicate detailed costs of reconfiguring the building for an influx of elementary students or of the potential impact on Leslie Thomas Junior High School should CDS be unable to remain a primary to grade nine school.
3. The Impact Assessment Report is short sighted and does not consider the overall Sackville population trend and the influence the closure of the school will have in the near future. A boundary review is required to better plan for the success of all students in the Sackville area.
4. Transportation studies and safe walking routes to the new location have not been specified in the Impact Assessment Report. Both walkers and newly-bussed students face unreasonable and unsafe challenges in negotiating their way to school.
5. Details on the impact of the delivery of the Provincial School Program have not been explained. Current specialists’ spaces, learning centers and recreational areas will require significant adjustments and will influence the delivery of the curriculum. Access to French Immersion and technical education will be impacted.

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to
Impact Assessment Report

1.1 Boundary Review

Before a properly informed decision regarding the closure of École Gertrude Parker School can be made, Sackville must be looked at as a whole with regards to elementary student population densities, elementary school boundaries and current strain on transportation resources and budgets due to misaligned boundaries. Admittedly, some areas are in a low of a population age cycle in elementary aged children while others are seeing a peak in this cycle. Once the whole picture (including both the Millwood High and Sackville High feeder systems) is taken into account, HRSB may well realize that closing schools in an area of Sackville where school aged child population is trending downward while overpopulating schools where trends are reversed would likely be short sighted and lead to further confusion of the Sackville boundaries in the near future.

During the identification process at last year's public submission meetings (March 30, 2011), there was confusion amongst the elected board members when discussing the Sackville area.

"We really need to take a look at the whole area all together, so I will be voting to review each of these schools. I'm very interested to see how it plays out. When we saw the boundary maps it was just absolutely crazy." "We really need to realign these boundaries and figure out the best way to be working, out in Sackville..." – Elected Board Member David Finlayson – March 30th, 2011

To which elected Board Member Gina Conrod stated her agreement with his point by stating, *"Ditto, he took my thunder, that was exactly what I was going to say"*

Elected Board Member Steve Brine further displays the boards frustration when discussing Sackville Centennial, *"...this community just boggles my mind..."*

During discussions centered on Cavalier Drive, David Finalyson suggests a boundary review outright, *"...is there any advantage to doing boundary reviews in lieu of (reviewing) this school? I'm looking at the map...from the point of view of wanting to redo that area (would a boundary review help more / less?"*

It seems clear from the statements above that many of the elected board members were requesting and expecting some form of boundary review as part of the school review process. Without further investigation into the Sackville area boundaries, making this irreversible change to École Gertrude Parker School would further muddle the Sackville boundaries by having many of our students bussed to Cavalier Drive School from within walking distance to Smokey Drive Elementary School.

"...the catchment areas actually criss-cross each other, what we would propose is that through the school review process, there would be new boundaries created...some of the students, most of them I project, would go to the Cavalier School...a portion of the population...may go to Hillside." - Charles Clattenburg, Director of Operations Services – March 30th, 2011

One of the problems with the school review process is that there is no opportunity to implement boundary reviews until after the vote has been tallied and a decision has been made to close a school. Not until this final decision is made is there a mechanism to

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to Impact Assessment Report

review the affected area. Implementing a school closure and student relocation without a full and complete understanding of the area would be irresponsible until the boundaries of all the neighbouring schools are reviewed and fully understood.

Boundaries of Elementary Schools in Sackville High Family of École

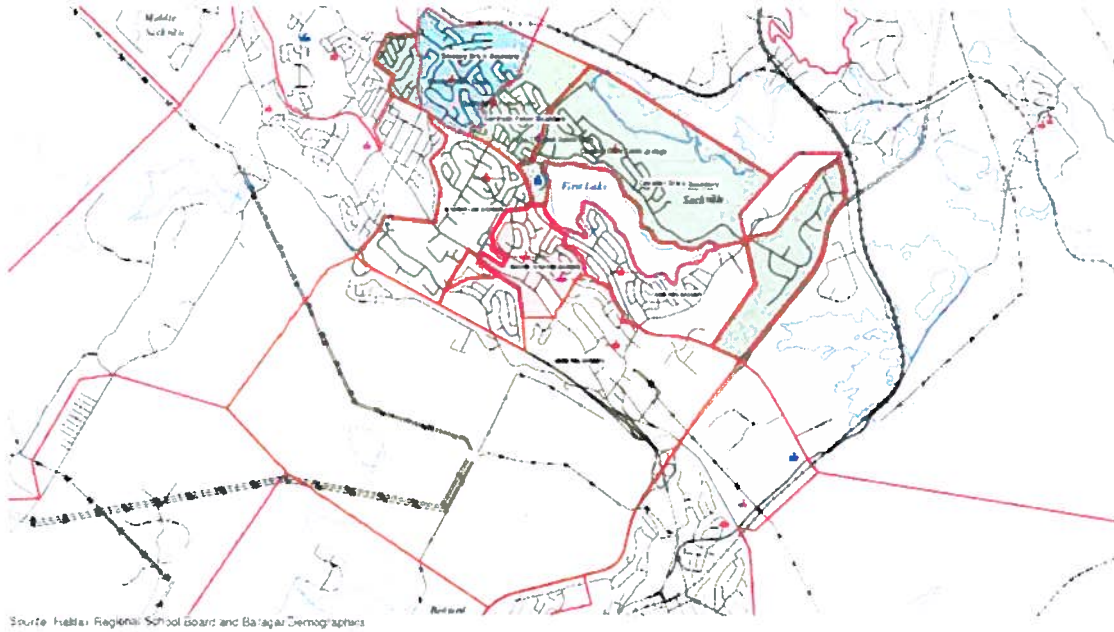


Figure 1 - Sackville High Family Elementary School Boundaries

When looking at the Sackville High Elementary feeder schools together (Figure 1), confusion surrounding boundaries is quite understandable.

Table 1 - Current School Capacities based on Imagine Our Schools (IOS) Data

School	Enrolment (2011)	Capacity (IOS)	% of Cap
Caudle Park Elementary	177	286	61.89%
Sackville Centennial Elementary	94	176	53.41%
École Gertrude Parker School	229	308	74.35%
Hillside Park Elementary	195	352	55.40%
Smokey Drive Elementary	234	330	70.91%
Sycamore Lane Elementary	237	330	71.82%
Cavalier Drive School	376	606	62.05%
Sackville High Family	1542	2388	64.57%

The study committee received confirmation in an e-mail from Jill McGillicuddy that ÉGPS was identified for review for the following reasons:

- 1) Current and projected enrolment for this school and neighbouring schools
- 2) Utilization
- 3) Program Delivery

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to Impact Assessment Report

Under the lens of these identification criteria, it is interesting to note that École Gertrude Parker, and it's closest neighbouring school, Smokey Drive, are ranked 1st and 3rd in capacity, while Hillside Park and Caudle Park (both of which were removed from the list for review) are ranked 2nd and 3rd last in population within the Sackville High family of schools. If both of the schools that are currently up for review in the Sackville area were to close (Sackville Centennial and École Gertrude Parker), the population inequality between the remaining schools would be further amplified (see Table 2).

Table 2 - Projected School Capacities Based on Imagine Our Schools (IOS) Data

School	Enrolment (2011)	Capacity (IOS)	% of Cap
Caudle Park Elementary	177	286	61.89%
Hillside Park Elementary	289	352	82.10%
Smokey Drive Elementary	234	330	70.91%
Sycamore Lane Elementary	237	330	71.82%
Cavalier Drive School	605	606	99.83%
Sackville High Family	1542	1904	80.99%

Currently the population of Sackville is seeing a shift in population density towards the Middle and Upper Sackville areas. This has left the Millwood High School feeder system exceeding its capacity (see Table 3). In the near future, any and all of Millwood Elementary, Sackville Heights, and Harry R. Hamilton are bound to have population increases due to the ongoing development of the former Sackville Golf Course and the developments being built around the new exit to Highway 101. Planning must be made as this area continues to boom, planning which must involve a full and clear understanding of the current available resources, their utilization, and their potential in these regards.

Table 3 - Current School Capacities Based on Imagine Our Schools (IOS) Data

School	Enrolment (2011)	Capacity (IOS)	% of Cap
Harry R Hamilton Elementary	478	440	108.64%
Millwood Elementary	414	352	117.61%
Sackville Heights Elementary	316	330	95.76%
Millwood High Family	1208	1122	107.66%

The HRSB obviously does not have a policy against bussing students from a highly populated area to an area that does not suffer from overcrowding issues as evidenced by the current boundaries. Unfortunately, these areas have been redistributed on an ad-hoc basis, causing much confusion to the Sackville High feeder system. With enrolments in this area down, these areas can be addressed and boundaries can be realigned to employ a better use of existing facilities and resources.

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to Impact Assessment Report

Currently, students in the Sunnyvale area are bussed from the Millwood side of Beaver Bank Road past Smokey Drive and École Gertrude Parker Schools in order to get to Cavalier Drive Elementary School (Figure 2 – Area 1).

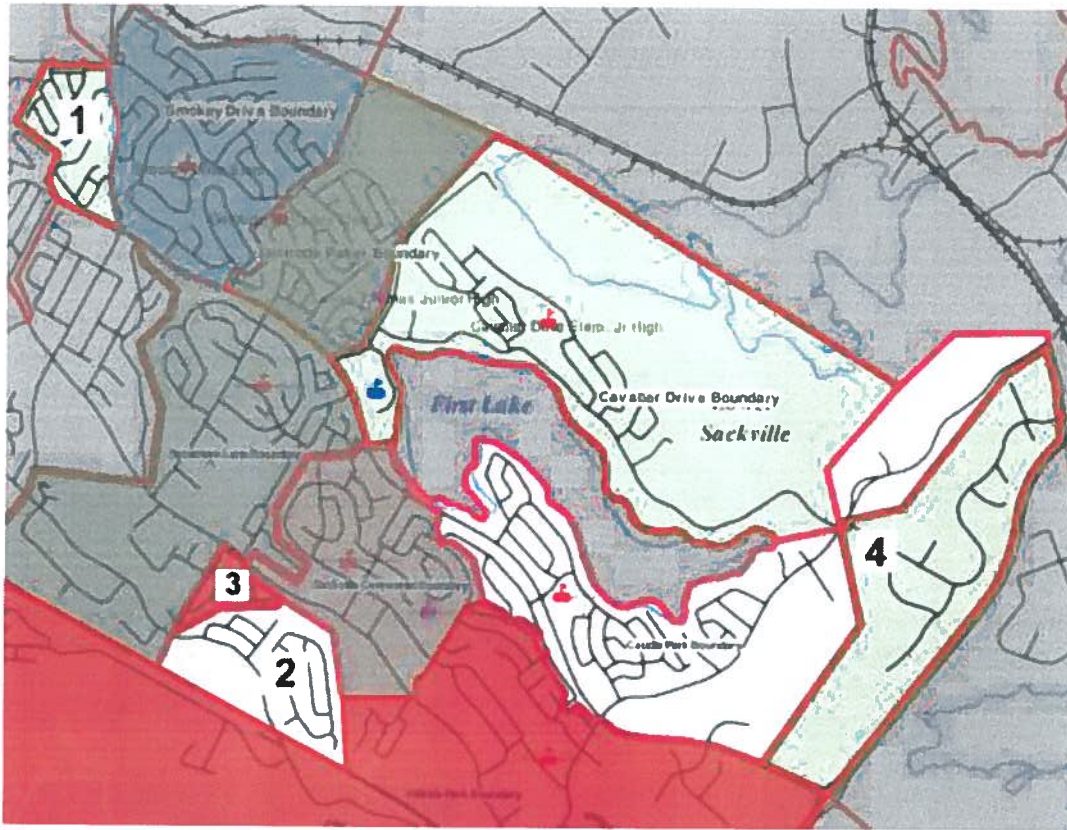


Figure 2 - Sackville High School Family Boundaries

Also, students in and around the Riverside Estates subdivision are bussed further distances than both Sackville Centennial and Hillside Park in order to get to Caudle Park Elementary School (Figure 2 – Area 2). Hillside Elementary also has a section of its boundary that is far removed and actually borders on all three of Sackville Centennial, Hillside and Caudle Park boundaries (Figure 2 – Area 3). Furthermore, the boundaries of Caudle Park and Cavalier Drive are the clearest evidence of Mr. Clattenburg's aforementioned statement regarding criss-crossing boundaries (Figure 2 – Area 4).

Currently in the Sackville High feeder system, École Gertrude Parker, Sackville Centennial, and Smokey Drive School are “bus free” schools, senior board staff have proposed closing two of these school, leaving only one walking school in the Lower Sackville area. The committee notes that the HRSB has identified the Sackville area as having an excess of schools, yet these closures would reduce the number of bus free schools to one, which appears contrary to HRSB philosophy. Currently, there are no “in-area” students attending ÉGPS who cross Sackville Drive, Glendale Drive, Beaver Bank Road, or Metropolitan Avenue; the four main streets that encompass our catchment area. In actual fact, all in-area students (including the French Immersion students who are in area but live in Smokey Drive School's boundary) are walking students - ÉGPS is a

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to Impact Assessment Report

completely bus-free school. There are however students in other parts of the Sackville High feeder system who are bussed across similar busy streets and other available school catchment areas in order to get to their receiving school (Cavalier Drive and Caudle Park are examples of this – see Figure 2). Also, under the current recommendation of students moving from ÉGPS to CDS, all former École Gertrude Parker students deemed to be walking students are set to cross Metropolitan Avenue, a very busy street with no crossing guard, to get to Cavalier Drive School.

HRSB is recommending further confusion to the Sackville area boundaries by suggesting bussing (at considerable cost to HRSB) current École Gertrude Parker Elementary children from within walking distance of Smokey Drive School to Cavalier Drive School. Unfortunately the number of affected students will not be known until an ongoing study by HRSB and Stock Transportation to determine the new walking / bussing boundaries is completed. After a full boundary review is done, it may well be discovered that the strain of overcrowding in some schools can be lessened while balancing out the populations in others by realigning school boundaries and reallocating existing transportation resources to better fit the newly streamlined boundaries. It may also be discovered that a more effective use of busses could be derived for the Sackville area, reducing the cost and the confusion alike. It would seem prudent to bus children from overpopulated areas like Millwood and Middle Sackville and shift them to schools which do not suffer from the problem of overcrowding. Until this review is complete, HRSB clearly does not have enough information to base a decision on closure of an all walking school and relocating its students (many by bus) to an outlying area of Sackville.

During the March 30, 2011 board meeting, HRSB staff and elected members alike stated clearly and repeatedly that they do not fully understand the Sackville area with regards to school boundaries. Before decisions regarding closure of our school can be made, the HRSB must provide justification of its decision to do so. Not having done the research through a Sackville wide boundary review would make it difficult to accept that the HRSB could fully justify its decision on any closure, particularly regarding a school with a population at 75% capacity (the highest populated school of any of the Sackville High feeder schools) in an area which is inevitably due to see a population revitalization through the natural and cyclic nature of population age diversity. Only once this information is gathered can the Board make a fair, educated decision on the fate of École Gertrude Parker Elementary.

2.5 Population

Any change to the facilities and their boundaries must take into account not only the current population distribution but the likely future population trends. While some demographics were considered in this report, the data were collected before the Ships Start Here campaign and the subsequent awarding of the federal shipbuilding contract to Irving Shipbuilding Ltd. It would be prudent to re-consider population projections in light of the largest federal government procurement project in history. Projections for this project call for 11,500 new jobs to be added to the local economy.

The impact of this on the schools under consideration needs further study before responsible decisions can be made for the future. The Impact Assessment Report supports this approach, stating that the “visioning process has not been initiated for the Lower Sackville area.” (IAR Section 2.7.3)

Further, École Gertrude Parker Elementary School is at 75 percent capacity (based on Imagine Our Schools data) already and could easily become 85-90 percent of capacity. The proposal for Cavalier Drive School would see that building at 99.83 percent immediately, and any bump in population as a result of the shipbuilding contract might easily see Cavalier Drive over-capacity in a very short time.

The most prudent and fiscally responsible course of action would be to reconsider the demographic projections for Sackville in light of the shipbuilding contract. Once a more accurate projection is available, a boundary review should be conducted to determine the best allocation of available resources.

2.7 Capital Construction Planning

2.7.4 Proposed Development

Although there are no proposed developments in the École Gertrude Parker School boundary, there is room for further development which would affect the Cavalier Drive School boundary. The Stonemount subdivision is relatively new and there is still room for further growth in this area. Though not directly impacting either ÉGPS or CDS, there is also continual development in the Millwood family boundaries and the Middle Sackville area. As stated previously in the report, these areas are already at or exceeding capacity. Dealing with this overcrowding issue could well affect either École Gertrude Parker or Cavalier Drive’s existing boundaries.

2.8 Physical Condition of Building

The completed “Facility Evaluation Reports” (FER) for both Gertrude Parker Elementary School and Cavalier Drive School were provided to the Study Committee in late October 2011. It is the assumption of the Study Committee that the provided FER are meant to

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to Impact Assessment Report

represent the Building Audit and Expenditure Plan noted in the Impact Assessment Reports for ÉGPS.

The proposed intent of the Building Audit and Expenditure Plan and the intent under which the Facility Evaluation Reports that were provided were based on entirely different criteria. The impact assessment report states that the intent of the Building Audit and Expenditure Plan was to list items "...required for the continued operation of the school" and "to ensure the future use of the building". These statements imply that HRSB's expectations for the report were to indicate maintenance and equipment concerns that were required to ensure long term viability of the facility and major equipment relating to the buildings environmental systems.

The Facility Evaluation that was provided to the HRSB and in turn the Study Committee was intended to detail renovations to the building that would bring the building, equipment, & infrastructure up to meet current construction guidelines for new schools, a significant difference. The costs required to turn ÉGPS into the equivalent of a brand new school are obviously much greater than the minimal costs required to keep the school running effectively.

The purpose of the FER was confirmed in discussion with Mark Gammon, one of the authors of the reports for both ÉGPS and CDS of Fowler Bauld & Mitchell Ltd. on November 14th 2011. The Study Committee was advised that the contract for the report was in fact issued to annotate the required changes that would bring the existing facility up to the current standards for the construction of new schools in 2011 /2012.

It was also noted during this meeting that the use of **bold font** in the report (intended to indicate items of immediate concern) was incorrectly applied. Please see Appendix A for a detailed expenditure list and assessment of actual immediate concerns, as well as items that have already been addressed through regular maintenance provided from the HRSB Operations department.

2.8.1 Condition of Building Envelope, Interior and Systems

A complete Building Audit and Expenditure Plan has been completed for Gertrude Parker Elementary School and will be provided to the School Review Committee. The intent of the document is to provide a review of the existing building and to provide a capital building estimate that would be required for the continued operation of the school. The report concludes that an investment in capital of approximately \$825,365 is required to ensure the future use of the building. (Impact Assessment Report - Page 12)

As stated previously - the difference between the intended BAEP and the provided FER, inflates the cost projections required to maintain the building to include unnecessary upgrades to Environmental, Electrical, Audio Visual & Security systems to the current standard for schools being constructed in 2012. The Study Committee agrees with the necessity of upgrades surrounding the safety and barrier free access systems in the building, and realizes that efficiency related projects may assist with the long term viability of the facility. However, it is the opinion of the Study Committee that other

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to
Impact Assessment Report

suggested upgrades which do not provide a direct measurable impact to the delivery of the teaching program at ÉGPS, are economically unfeasible and are fiscally irresponsible.

Capital building estimate as suggested by the IAR:	\$825,365.00
Actual Total of the provided by the FER:	\$825,635.00
Capital Building estimate as suggested by the Study Committee:	\$350,535.00

Refer to section 3.5 for more details and the justification behind the much lower capital building estimate.

2.8.2 Indoor Air Quality and Environmental Issues

The Study Committee was provided with two past investigations and reports ('96/'97) regarding indoor air quality and environmental issues. These reports indicated that there were no issues with air quality.

2.8.3 Costs Associated with Maintenance, Repair and Operation

Table 4 - Maintenance and Operations costs from IAR

Costs	2009/2010	2010/2011
Utilities		
Phone	\$4,056.00	\$4,056.00
Power	\$18,969.64	\$14,752.79
Fuel	\$10,830.63	\$7,900.90
Water	\$12,896.18	\$13,182.59
Maintenance	\$11,952.46	\$12,252.46
Caretaker and Supplies	\$82,673.57	\$85,750.03
Total	137,327.04	137,894.77

The Study committee compared the values provided in the Table 4 above with values from schools of similar size, student population and similar design to ÉGPS. It was discovered that the majority of the costs fell in line with similar facilities. It was noted that excessively high water usage in the building also appears to match the results from other buildings of similar design within the HRSB. Following a discussion regarding the high water costs with an HRSB Operations representative at the November 14th Study Committee meeting, steps have been taken to eliminate excessive water usage by the water closets in the washrooms. These cost savings should be effective immediately.

3.1 Capability to Deliver Public School Program

3.1.2 Public School Programming

The possible move of the French Immersion program from École Gertrude Parker School to Cavalier Drive School would make the program less accessible to a great portion of the communities it serves. It creates a number of concerns that warrant careful consideration, and impact students and families.

As Sackville's only Early French Immersion School, ÉGPS is an important part of several communities, with French Immersion students coming from several other school families as far away as Upper Sackville. There are currently 53 students registered in French Immersion who live out of area.

The current school sites and the boundaries around them are the result of cycles of family growth and settlement in Sackville over years when these schools were built. Today these booms are in Middle and Upper Sackville. There are new subdivisions, new streets, an on-ramp and dozens of individual lots being developed in Middle and Upper Sackville and within the French Immersion boundary of ÉGPS. This is the part of Sackville that is growing. But the buildings in these school families (such as Harry R. Hamilton) are full, and any replacement through new construction is years away.

Any effort to realign schools and populations should begin with a review of the boundaries and the areas from which the school's students come. Since the French program is only offered at certain schools, it follows that program sites should be as dispersed from each other as practicable to offer reasonable access to the greatest number of students.

Instead, the plan to move the early French Immersion program to Cavalier Drive School places it further away from Upper and Middle Sackville (and, closer to the nearest French Immersion School in Bedford) and will make the program less accessible for a growing part of our community. It will concentrate resources that are best dispersed.

Out of area parents already transport their children up to ten kilometres to attend ÉGPS. Moving the program will add an additional 2.4 kilometres to the morning commute for these families, and force them across busy thoroughfares.

Increasing the French Immersion in-area boundary to include three school boundaries makes it significantly more likely that more students will be enrolled in the program. With easier access to early French Immersion for a number of new students, it is likely enrolment will increase. This would mean the new CDS configuration, nearly at capacity, could immediately become over-full. Since out-of-area transfers are not guaranteed but are granted on case-by-case basis, this could in turn have the unintended effect of making the immersion program less accessible to the out-of-area parts of Sackville.

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to Impact Assessment Report

The limited access to the French immersion program could make it more difficult for families to get a younger sibling into the program and result in families having children in different schools or even in different school families.

Usually a school must be much less utilized than ÉGPS before being identified for review for possible closure. Referring to the Imagine Our Schools document, ÉGPS is considered 'ideally' sized (Elementary → 300). To the extent that ÉGPS has space, it is well suited to growing the French Immersion program as demand increases. There is room to grow the French Immersion program at École Gertrude Parker, but the suggested configuration at Cavalier Drive would be at capacity immediately and not allow any growth.

Cavalier Drive School's P-9 program is very desirable. If the French Immersion program moves to CDS, and it retains the P-9 structure, an unintended consequence would be that some students could possibly be kept out of the French Immersion program in order that they remain in the P-9 stream.

The plan to move the French Immersion program to Cavalier Drive School must be reconsidered. There are several potential impacts outlined here that have not been carefully considered. It makes the program more distant and less accessible for a growing part of Sackville, concentrates scarce Immersion resources and billets closer together, and closer to the centre of HRSB. It will make it more difficult for parents who have chosen early Immersion to place all their children in the program and creates a situation where the program will be immediately at capacity, limiting the out-of-area access to French Immersion resources just as Sackville and the Halifax region is set to grow again. It is hoped that a boundary review prior to any decision being made will show a better option, one that allows for better access to the early French Immersion program, and allow for the program to grow along with the Sackville area.

3.2 Educational Benefits

The Impact Assessment Report analyzed the effects on specialty and extra-curricular activities for students at ÉGPS and CDS in each of the configuration options. The two options presented in the report are examined here in greater detail.

1) ÉGPS remains open and CDS remains P-9 (as it is now)

In this option, both schools retain the best possible services for all students. Both schools currently enjoy small class sizes and a suitable number of resource and specialty areas. This is obvious from the data; however, there are a number of non-intuitive factors that make the current configuration highly desirable, such as, small schools benefits, P-9 benefits, special-needs benefits, French Immersion adaptation benefits, and Extra-curricular access.

Small Schools: ÉGPS can be classified as the ideal elementary school size (300) as defined in the Imagine Our Schools report. A significant amount of research has shown the importance of small schools and the benefits to education.

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to Impact Assessment Report

“Larger and larger units (schools) may be more financially viable, but they are not necessarily educationally better and do not take into account individual needs and differences.” (Hopkins and Ellis 1991).

It is clear that the School Board holds the individual needs of students as important. But the high costs of operating schools must be considered. Research has also shown that school closure typically does not lead to significant cost savings:

“...in four out of the fifteen cases of school closure studied, no financial savings were made and from the other cases, no conclusions could be drawn.” (Forsythe 1983).

An additional benefit of ÉGPS’s current utilization is that it enables future growth of the French Immersion Program.

One argument made in the Impact Assessment Report was that a larger school (such as the amalgamated ÉGPS and CDS), would allow teachers to become more familiar with their students, enhance the ability for extra-curricular offerings, and enhance the ability of students with special interests to be exposed to the subject(s) in more depth. On the contrary, Willms’ (2004) research demonstrated that, “The amount and quality of school resources was less important than students’ use of available resources.” His research confirmed that teachers in small schools are better able to encourage their students to make use of the resources available to them, leading to dramatically increased literary scores. Individual attention makes a big difference, and students who are “at-risk” stand to lose the most in these larger schools because they do not receive the adequate attention they require.

A number of studies all point to the many benefits associated with small schools. Borland and Howson (1993) summarize the results of their research:

“... Small schools are found to enhance interpersonal relationships, increase student extra-curricular participation, provide more opportunities for developing student leadership, have more effective school discipline and an improved school climate, have lower dropout rates, and have an advantage in the case of otherwise 'disadvantaged' students.”

In general, the research shows that small schools such as École Gertrude Parker promote better student-teacher relationships which lead to improved academic results. This advantage would be lost if ÉGPS were closed.

P-9 Benefits:

The current P-9 configuration enjoyed by CDS has shown to provide a number of substantial benefits. Throughout the literature, it is mentioned repeatedly that in P-9 schools, the younger students look-up to their older role models every day, and the older students enjoy being role models and mentors. This relationship helps build school community and reduces discipline problems. Middle school students in a P-9 school take on a different role of protector and role model instead of having to establish a new reputation upon entering a middle school.

P-9 schools have also been shown to dramatically improve student and parent

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to Impact Assessment Report

engagement in school activities. Students and parents remain part of the same school for 10 years which helps build a very strong bond to the school and its teachers. High levels of parent engagement benefit P-9 schools in many ways such as increased levels of volunteers and parental support. The student-teacher relationship is greatly improved as well. Teachers get to know every student over their 10 year education at Cavalier Drive School.

If École Gertrude Parker School is kept open, Cavalier Drive School would retain its Junior High component and all the benefits of the P-9 culture. Refer to Section 3.2.1 for a more detailed analysis of the P-9 configuration.

Special needs Benefits:

Cavalier Drive School currently provides a superior education service for its special-needs students. CDS is accessible and has a Learning Center that is sought after by parents of special needs children in the area and also from out of area. If ÉGPS remains open, this exceptional facility will remain at its current level.

French Immersion Adaptation Benefits:

École Gertrude Parker School has had the benefit of being a combined French Immersion and English school. This has led to the development of a highly desirable culture at ÉGPS. Students from both streams have learned to co-exist and appreciate the benefits and challenges of living in a school with two languages.

Students have learned to enjoy Christmas concerts given in both languages, enjoy assemblies in both languages, and co-exist in the hallways and playgrounds. This appreciation and acceptance for another language and culture does not occur naturally and has been guided and developed over time. All students from ÉGPS emerge as better citizens after their experience here. If École Gertrude Parker School remains open, this carefully nurtured culture will continue to flourish.

Extra-curricular Access:

All students who attend ÉGPS enjoy rich extra-curricular activities both at lunch and after school. Access is not restricted after school since ÉGPS is a walking school.

2) ÉGPS closes and CDS's Junior High component is moved to LTJH

Small Schools:

In this configuration, ÉGPS would lose all benefits of the small school community. See above for the benefits.

P-9 Benefits:

In this configuration, Cavalier Drive School would lose all benefits of the P-9 configuration. See Section 3.2.1 for the benefits of the P-9 configuration.

Special Needs Benefits:

If École Gertrude Parker School is closed, Cavalier Drive's Junior High special needs students will need to relocate. Transitions are extremely difficult for special-needs children. Teachers at CDS have gotten used to the children and know how to treat each

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to Impact Assessment Report

individual for their respective needs. Moving to a new school for these students would require rebuilding all of these foundations.

An additional complication is that LTJH is not barrier free. This would mean that special-needs students may have to be further separated by being bussed to AJ Smeltzer Junior High. Yet another disturbance for these students which further increases the negative impact on their academic ability. These effects are in direct contrast to the wishes of the Minister of Education. The Minister has stated that maintaining current levels of support for special needs students is a priority for Nova Scotia. Closing École Gertrude Parker School does not honour that directive.

French Immersion Adaptation Benefits:

If ÉGPS is closed, the French Immersion students will be moved to CDS. CDS does not have ÉGPS's established multilingual culture. The ÉGPS Early French Immersion students will be treated as outsiders and further segregated. This will be to the detriment of both the French Immersion students as well as the original ÉGPS English students.

Extra-curricular Access:

If ÉGPS is closed, a significant number of students would require bussing to CDS. This severely limits those students' access to after school extra-curricular activities.

RECOMMENDATION:

Option 1 (keeping ÉGPS open) provides a significant number of tangible benefits that cannot be realized with Option 2. With the well-being of the students in mind, keeping École Gertrude Parker School open and Cavalier Drive School in its current configuration (P-9) is the only acceptable choice.

3.2.1 Benefits of the P-9 Configuration

Cavalier Drive School is a great example of the forward thinking of HRSB planning and management back in 1986. The P-9 model has been shown in literature to increase academic achievement 11-18% and reduce bullying by a factor of 2.2. Our HRSB education goals are to increase education and make schools safe for students. CDS students have reflected this and it has been noted from the upstream teachers at Sackville High School.

The following provides a quick summary of the research the Study Committee was provided by CDS's School Advisory Council on the P-9 Configuration. However, there are many other sources available that show the CDS Model in HRSB is the best current and cutting-edge configuration that is being sought after across North America. Making changes to the present P-9 configuration at CDS would be going backward in educational policy 16 years to 1995 or further, create a drop in academic performance, and increase bullying. Negatively affecting the academic performance and increasing the risk of infractions are contrary to the mandate of the HRSB.

Education policy pushed towards the development of middle junior high schools in the past. Current Education policy literature from 1995 onward shows preference to a Eli-middle school system followed by high school. CEO Barbra Bryd-Bennett who is

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to Impact Assessment Report

responsible for 77000 students in Cleveland considered that the mandated move to middle schools for costs was not well thought out and moved 21 schools to a K-8 model with great results (See Barbara Byrd-Bennett (2002). Current educational policy is moving toward what Cavalier Drive School currently has captured. In Massachusetts, Superintendent Fred Foresteire says he is convinced K-8 schools provide “a better atmosphere where no child falls through the cracks.” We should be using the Cavalier Drive School P-9 as a model school to study for HRSB to adopt and repeat. The literature below can also be shared with your staff.

Attached are articles that can be read and distributed that provide education research that is peer-reviewed and published.

Culture and Community

The movement in the USA towards K-8 schools may have been based on a book by Tucker and Coddling, "Standards for Our Schools: How To Set Them, Measure Them, and Reach Them." Jossey-Bass Inc., (ISBN-0-7879-3894-7), where they review academic achievement, school configuration, and suggest moving from the middle school to K-8 configuration. They state, "...the feelings of anonymity in the middle school would be replaced by the feelings of community and social support found in elementary schools. The increased focus on academics found in the secondary school would begin to extend into the elementary grades. The older students in the K-8 setting would be able to tutor younger ones, a practice which would benefit both students. Finally, K-8 schools would serve the purpose of keeping children in their neighbourhoods at a time when they are vulnerable and need the support of their families." It has been found that the model of the Cavalier Drive School currently implements this K-8 relationship with "reading buddies" and a culture and atmosphere of friendly community. Now the k-8 model is sought after in 6 states (MA, PA, NY, OH, OK, TN, and MD). The extended period of time the parents are connected to a single school also is positive as the short period of time in a middle school does not allow parents to connect or be a part of growing/building a school.

Hall (2006) presented a study from the Goldman School of Public Policy from the University of California (Berkley Campus) for a school board in Richmond, San Francisco, California. Some results from the report are increased positive effect of academic and non-academic outcomes from K-8 schools. The study shows Figure 8 below reviewing many studies from major cities.

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to Impact Assessment Report

Baltimore ⁸	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-8 students had slightly higher test scores than middle school students. • Transitions between schools had negative impacts on academic achievement. • Benefits of one less transition persisted through high school.
Miami ⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sixth and seventh grade students in K-8 schools scored better on the language arts SAT-9 test. • Sixth graders' math scores in K-8 schools declined less than the scores of their counterparts in middle school.
Milwaukee ¹⁰	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-8 students do better on reading achievement tests. • Growth in language arts scores for K-8 students outpaced growth for middle school students. • School configuration accounted for only 25% of variation in scores.
Philadelphia ¹¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study results conflict. • One study found 8th graders performed better on standardized tests but did not control for individual student characteristics. • More thorough studies found no difference on test scores, GPA, or failure rates between K-8 and middle school students.
Pittsburgh ¹²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-8 students outperformed middle school students. • Gains were larger for African-American students. • The advantage shrank by eighth grade.

Figure 3 - Academic Outcomes by City (Hall – 2006)

Hall (2006) shows that K-8 students perform slightly better, have better attendance, discipline, and parent/student satisfaction.

Negative Behaviour

Moving students from a P-9 school to a combined Junior High has been shown to increase negative behaviour. In Figure 4 and Table 5 below extracted from Cooke (2005) shows a comparison of prevalence of infractions of only 6th graders when compared between 6th graders in a K-8 school (elementary) versus a 6th grader in a 6-8 school (middle). This study supports the statistically significant evidence over a sample set of 44,705 grade 6 students in North Carolina that, at young ages, the transition to junior high increases the prevalence of negative behaviour.

**École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to
Impact Assessment Report**

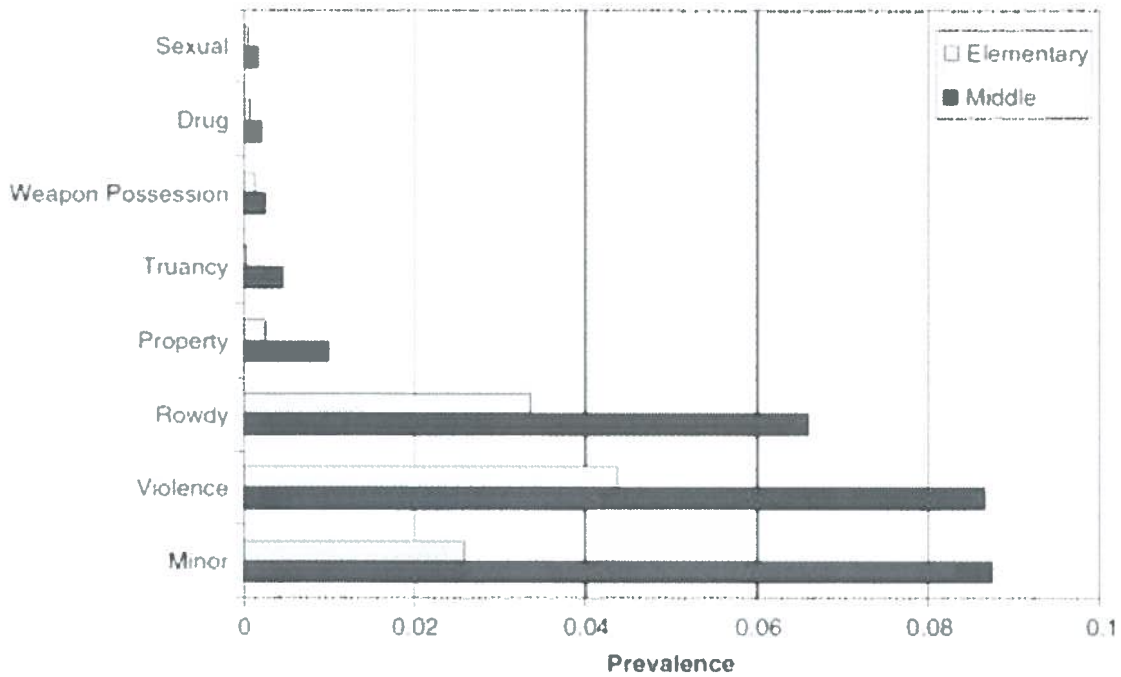


Figure 4 - Infraction Prevalence - Sixth Grade (Cooke - 2005)

In Table 5 the database of infractions is populated. Note that 16.5% of the students create 47.6% of the infractions. Cooke (2005) shows in his report that moving students to a middle school increases the probability of infraction by a factor of 2.2. Cooke's research suggests that multiple transitions from school to school has negative effects such as; decline in motivation, loss of self-esteem, decline in academic achievement, strains on interpersonal functioning, and increased risk of dropping out of school. This effect is not seen at Cavalier Drive School as a P-9 school feeding Sackville High. In fact, as noted, the teachers at Sackville High see a marked positive difference in students from Cavalier Drive School.

Table 5 - Infraction rates for sixth graders in trimmed sample 2000-2001 (Cooke - 2005)

	Middle School Incidence	Elementary School Incidence	Middle School Prevalence*	Elementary School Prevalence*
Overall (count)	0.476 (18,833)	0.161 (824)	0.175 (6,943)	0.085 (437)
Violence	0.130	0.057	0.087	0.044
Drug	0.002	0.001	0.002	0.001
Weapon possession	0.003	0.001	0.003	0.001
Truancy	0.006	0.0002	0.005	0.0002
Rowdy behavior	0.147	0.064	0.066	0.034
Minor	0.170	0.034	0.088	0.026
Property	0.011	0.003	0.010	0.003
Sexual	0.002	0.0004	0.002	0.0004

* At least one infraction during the school year.

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to Impact Assessment Report

The normalized infraction rate in Table 5 shows:

- 2.28x more violence
- 2x more drugs
- 3x more weapons
- 30x more truancy
- 3.67x more property damage

It has been noted that Cavalier Drive School has fewer suspensions, fewer discipline actions, and less threats of violence. Negatively affecting the academic performance and increasing the risk of infractions are contrary to the mandate of the HRSB.

Cooke also shows that the probability of bad behaviour in boys in Figure 5 is much less in grades 6, 7, 8, and 9 when in a K-8 school as compared to a middle school.

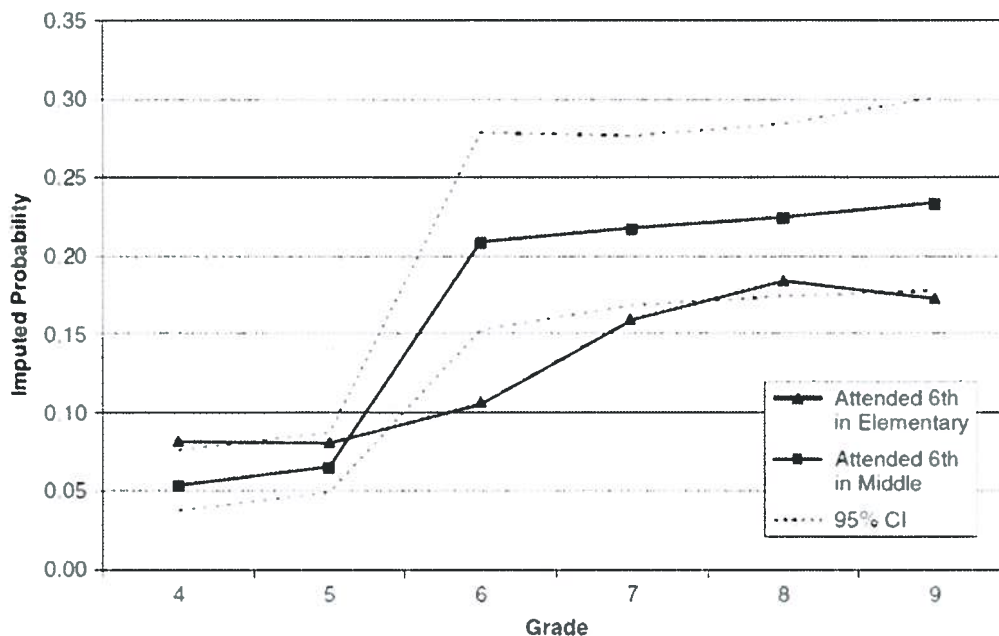


Figure 5 - Probability of at least one infraction (Cooke – 2005)

Academic Performance

Alsbaugh (1998) in Table 6 below shows in his paper the statistically significant drop in educational achievement between K-8 grade 6 students and middle school based grade 6 students. This effect continues and can be tracked into High School and noted with increased drop out rates where students from a K-8 program have a drop out rate of around 3% as compared to over 5% for students proceeding from middle school.

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to
Impact Assessment Report

Table 6 - Mean Achievement Levels and Gains and Losses in achievement from Grade 5 to Grade 6 (Alspaugh - 1998)

School group	Academic area				Average
	Reading	Math	Science	Social studies	
K-8					
Grade 5	292.50	290.25	300.00	289.31	293.02
Grade 6	300.00	300.63	302.38	298.69	300.42
Gain (loss)	7.50	10.38	2.38	9.38	7.40
Linear MS					
Grade 5	300.06	303.00	316.38	309.06	307.13
Grade 6	299.19	301.38	306.94	301.00	302.13
Gain (loss)	(.87)	(1.62)	(9.44)	(8.06)	(5.00)
Pyramid MS					
Grade 5	303.38	306.63	311.44	307.06	307.13
Grade 6	299.50	301.69	301.00	298.06	300.06
Gain (loss)	(3.88)	(4.94)	(10.44)	(9.00)	(7.07)
Average achievement	299.11	300.60	306.35	300.53	301.65
Average gain (loss)	.92	1.27	(5.83)	(2.56)	(1.55)

Note: MS = middle school.

The benefits of the P-9 configuration currently enjoyed by Cavalier Drive School are significant and have a broad scope. The study committee feels it is evident that if École Gertrude Parker School closes, the P-9 configuration at Cavalier Drive School cannot be maintained. Cavalier Drive School will lose all of the P-9 benefits that are discussed above. This negative impact on the students is contrary to HRSB's mandate.

3.2.3 School Safety

To ensure that the maximum educational benefits are realized, the safety of all students must be ensured. School safety is at the forefront of every parent and teacher's concern for our children no matter what school is being reviewed. If ÉGPS were to close, a number of safety concerns have been raised. The Study Committee thought it necessary to evaluate student safety if ÉGPS were to remain open.

One area that is of concern at all elementary schools is the drop-off area. The ÉGPS drop-off area is now a safe area thanks to the hard work of school staff and the SAC. ÉGPS has worked with Metro Transit to confirm no buses stop in front of the school between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:20a.m., peak drop off times for our students. Further to this initiative we have implemented preventative measures by installing pylons at the entrance and exit of the upper parking lot during these peak hours and have communicated to parents to park their vehicles on the adjacent side street to alleviate congestion. We have installed a "safe zone" across the upper parking lot so our children can proceed safely down the hill from the drop off zone without threat of incidents from oncoming traffic.

For students walking to school, or those crossing the street after being dropped off, safety from passing cars is always a concern. ÉGPS has taken significant steps to help keep our students safe. We are able to overcome this challenge as a large volume of our parents walk their children to the school each morning. With parental involvement the volume of

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to Impact Assessment Report

un-chaperoned children traveling to and from school is significantly reduced. This further increases the safety of the ÉGPS students.

After reviewing Section 3.3, it is clear that CDS is currently experiencing challenges with its Drop-Off zone. Adding 229 students to that school would lead to increased congestion and reduce the safety of the drop-off zone even further at Cavalier Drive School.

During the winter months, drainage and ice build-up is a concern for all schools in HRM, or in Canada for that matter. HRSB/HRM have addressed any drainage issues. During the 2010/2011 winter season we had an incident of ice build up due to blocked drainage. This issue was a direct result of poor snow removal by our designated contractor, and has since been resolved. The implementation of these actions has led to ÉGPS having less ice and being a safer facility for students.

Our school continues to make strides to improve the safety and security of our children, completing brush removal in 2010 around the wooded areas surrounding our school boundaries. This has increased visibility on our school grounds and improved the line of vision for monitoring our students. ÉGPS has increased exterior lighting, reducing the volume of vandalism at our school and has been successful at demonstrating this reduction in damage by maintaining an outdoor classroom for the last five (5) years. In addition our school has installed a new video intercom station in 2011 preventing unauthorized personnel gaining access to our facility.

In addition, there are numerous other ways that ÉGPS strives to provide a safe environment for our students. Examples of this include, friendship agreements, role play, and student pledges to help address bullying or group dynamic challenges. ÉGPS has increased the number of teachers/volunteers on duty during recess and lunch breaks.

If ÉGPS closes, the over crowding of the playground facilities will lead to reduced safety for students. Over crowding can lead to more accidents, more fighting, and a reduced ability of on-duty teachers to monitor all the students.

It is clear that keeping École Gertrude Parker School open allows the students to remain in a safe and friendly environment.

3.3 Transportation

1) ÉGPS remains open (and CDS remains P-9 as it is now)

École Gertrude Parker School is a walking school. With the exception of one bus that accommodates some students with special needs, no students are bussed.

This is the preferred outcome of the Study Committee. Presently, in-area students of ÉGPS are within easy walking distance. The streets used to walk to school are in a residential area. In-area students walking to school are able to do so without having to cross busy streets or use isolated paths. The present situation is aligned with the Master

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to
Impact Assessment Report

Plan Recommendations by *Imagine Our Schools* and recommendations made in a number of reports on safe and active school travel.

Currently, students living in the Sunnyvale Subdivision are bussed to Cavalier Drive School when École Gertrude Parker School and Smokey Drive School are closer. With a boundary review, these students could become part of ÉGPS thus increasing our school population and saving the effective cost of transportation.

2) All students of ÉGPS are transferred to CDS; ÉGPS catchment area students walk to CDS, Smokey Drive catchment (French Immersion) students are bussed to CDS

A significant concern surfaces when considering the transportation of ÉGPS students to CDS: *safety*. Young ÉGPS students would have to walk more than the maximum distance allowed under the current Department Of Education (DOE) walking distance guidelines without sidewalks, across a busy bus route that only has a yield sign, and across a Junior High schoolyard.

Table 7 below is a selection of addresses in the ÉGPS catchment area and the walking distances to Cavalier and Smokey Drive as presented by Google Maps.

Table 7 - Comparable Walking distances to neighbouring schools

Address	Shortest Walking Distance to Cavalier Drive School	Shortest Walking Distance to Smokey
4 Rankin Drive	2.7 km	1.6 km
140 Rankin Drive	3.4 km	1.8 km
140 Riverside Drive	2.5 km	1.9 km
240 Riverside Drive	2.9 km	2.3 km
4 Nordic Crescent	2.4 km	0.55 km
12 Nordic Crescent	2.5 km	0.6 km
152 Nordic Crescent	2.5 km	0.95 km
4 Nappan Drive	2.0 km	0.85 km
128 Nictaux Drive	1.5 km	1.4 km

The routes chosen are the shortest distances without the use of the paths. The Study Committee does not deem the paths that connect certain roads as viable routes due to safety concerns. Consistently, the RCMP gives the public warnings about using shortcuts. In the ÉGPS community, there have been people mugged while using these paths and for safety reasons they should not be mandated as proposed routes in order to keep the walking distances under the guidelines.

Most of the paths that would be proposed as walking routes are not in plain view and are popular hangouts for teenagers. One of the paths that would cut a considerable distance off of travel routes cuts through the Leslie Thomas Junior High School parking lot. This is dangerous for several reasons. A parking lot is not a safe walking route due to moving vehicles.

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to Impact Assessment Report

Furthermore, snow removal remains a concern. According to HRM priorities, “residents [should] please allow 18 hours after the end of the snowfall for crews to plow sidewalks on school routes and bus routes.” (HRM) Presently, we do not have the guarantee from HRM that these back paths would be considered part of the “school route” by their standards and therefore it could take up to 36 hours before snow could be removed. (www.halifax.ca/snow) This HRM policy suggests that if HRSB insists on counting the paths as a school route, there is a possibility that after every snowfall, students will be forced to walk on the streets to reach school. This would push their walking distance to be greater than the DOE guideline and force them to walk on streets that may not be completely plowed.

The Study Committee is concerned about the traffic on Metropolitan Avenue. ÉGPS students would have to cross this busy street in order to complete their walk to CDS. Metropolitan Avenue is the location of Fire and Emergency Service Station #9. This means that Metropolitan Avenue has emergency vehicles using it regularly. Elementary age children do not always have the knowledge or quick thinking to be able to respond to emergency situations safely and efficiently. They may not know where to go and what to do if they hear emergency vehicles approaching as they cross the street.

If École Gertrude Parker students must walk to Cavalier Drive, HRM will need to make several changes. Currently, the corner of Nictaux Drive and Metropolitan Avenue does not have a stop sign. Drivers only have a yield sign which does not often slow them down. This will be a danger for students that will need to cross this busy street to go to and from school. HRM will also need to put crossing guards in place to ensure the safety of our children. The walking routes to CDS are on a Metro Transit route and there are four intersections that students will have to cross to get past this dangerous and busy section of their walk. These intersections will require crossing guards.

Whether the ÉGPS students use paths or use the streets to get to CDS, they will need to walk by Leslie Thomas Junior High School. The Study Committee feels that any route that requires elementary students to pass by LTJH is unsafe. It exposes our children to an unsupervised gathering place and necessitates children as young as four navigating a busy parking lot at peak hours.

“For a myriad of reasons (e.g., convenience, comfort, safety concerns, lack of walkable routes), the number of children being driven to and from school has skyrocketed in recent years, while walking and other active forms of transportation have plummeted.” (National Active and Safe Routes to School Summit, page 1). The Study Committee believes that moving all of the students of ÉGPS to CDS will intensify a problem that already exists.

According to Halifax Regional Municipality’s (HRM) Active Transportation Plan, “...many [people] won’t [use active transportation] due to time constraints, lack of facilities at their [destination], or concerns over safety. However, if safe, well-connected routes... were available that encouraged active transportation, then it would be more viable.” (<http://www.halifax.ca/TDM/activetransportation/index.html>) Our concerns are

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to Impact Assessment Report

reiterated in the HRM Active Transportation Plan. If there are time constraints, concerns over safety and less connected routes, parents will likely drive their children to school.

More students would be driven to school due to the walking distance thus decreasing the number of children using an “active school route.” Cavalier Drive School has a constant and significant concern with the number of cars dropping off children at the school. As a CDS policy and recent school newsletters indicate, CDS administration is repeatedly reminding parents “that they are not to be entering the school yard with their vehicles. Children should be dropped and/or picked up on Cavalier Drive or around the corner on Cavendish Drive for safety reasons.” This problem will only be exacerbated when École Gertrude Parker’s 65 out-of-area students and many in-area students will also be dropped off.

For a number of reasons the Study Committee believes that many parents of the in-area students will feel compelled to drive their students as well. In December 2007 a report was submitted to the DOE on student walking distance.

(http://www.ednet.ns.ca/events/walkingdistance/documents/student_walking_distance.pdf) The report recommended that walking distance be decreased to 1.5 km. The Study Committee feels that students with a walking distance of more than 1.5 km will likely be driven to school. This would increase the traffic at Cavalier Drive School.

As indicated in the *Imagine Our Schools* plan “Walk-able schools encourage safe communities and provide students with needed daily physical activity...HRSB should...sustain and develop walk-able school strategies for current and future school sites.” (p. 33). This is supported by the *National Active and Safe Routes to School Summit* in their final report of October 6, 2011. Nova Scotia was one of four provinces to participate in this study concerning active transportation. With the closure of ÉGPS, Stock Transportation has indicated that 70 students who currently walk to school would be bussed thus decreasing the amount of students with active routes to school and increasing costs for HRSB. (The Study Committee could not determine the effective costing due to incomplete reporting from HRSB). Furthermore, according to DOE guidelines the students from Rankin Drive, Riverside Drive, Kipling Drive, and Nordic Crescent (more than half of Gertrude Parker’s catchment area) will also need to be bussed due to walking distance guidelines. This will increase bussing costs incrementally.

For all CDS students, the lunch period will need to be increased to ensure that former ÉGPS students can make it home and back for lunch. As stated by the DOE Student Walking Distance Review “With a 75 minute lunch hour a good healthy secondary grade student would barely get home before they needed to return to school in order to be on time for afternoon classes, and therefore, had no time to eat lunch.” Although lunchtime supervision is now free to all families, eliminating the option to go home will be cutting out time that supports family unity.

In conclusion, the Study Committee strongly recommends that École Gertrude Parker School remain open. The safety and transportation of students is a major priority. Mandating ÉGPS students to walk more than guidelines suggest by crossing busy streets

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to Impact Assessment Report

without stop signs and coming in contact with emergency vehicles is unsafe. Mandating ÉGPS students to walk on isolated paths that put them in contact with unsupervised Junior High and High School students and to use parking lots in conjunction with these paths is unsafe. Presently, in-area students of École Gertrude Parker School are within easy, safe walking distance. This is the preferred outcome of the Study Committee.

3.4 Extra-Curricular Activities

1) ÉGPS remains open and CDS remains P-9 (as it is now)

Should École Gertrude Parker School remain open, our students would have the opportunity to continue in any of the early morning clubs or activities as well as all after school clubs and activities. Participation by parents and the community would also continue, to help enrich the education of our Gertrude Parker students.

2) ÉGPS Closes and students are moved to CDS

"It should be noted that the delivery of extra-curricular activities at any school is dependent on the staff at the school in any given school year. Extra-curricular activities are often offered over lunch periods or after school." (Impact Assessment Report)

In the Impact Assessment Report it states that the delivery of extra-curricular activities at any school is dependent on the staff at the school in any given year. With the small numbers at École Gertrude Parker School our teachers are able to provide the extra time and effort needed to deliver strong programs which are suitable for their individual needs. Our teachers are able to provide a diverse range of activities to our students because of their own array of interests and knowledge. We offer our programs before school (breakfast programs, math tutoring), at lunch (intramurals, Hackmatack, choir and band), after school (running club, homework club, girl's club, floor hockey, etc.), and early evening (seasonal events; Halloween, Christmas and Valentine dances, French and English book fairs, Literacy and Math nights). We have had parent nights which included behavioural information sessions, homework sessions; parent & child/workshops which included fun nights (dance), fitness, nutrition, and germ busting sessions all given by qualified personnel in conjunction with the Cobequid Health Board.

Other activities and sessions École Gertrude Parker School students have been able to partake in are: Terry Fox run, Cookies with Santa, Christmas cram-a-car food drive, Christmas shopping, ice cream socials, Valentine candy grams, walk to school week, skipping club, book buddy program, annual fun fair, bike rodeo, DARE program, and babysitting program, etc.

As stated in the Impact Assessment Report, ÉGPS students are provided the opportunity to participate in a significant number of programs. It has not been stated in the report however, how important and connected our school is to the community. Our school provides programming in a supportive, safe, nurturing environment that caters to the social and emotional needs of all the students. ÉGPS's ability to do so sets all of the students up with the basic necessities to enable them to be successful.

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to Impact Assessment Report

If ÉGPS were to close and our students were to move to another school (CDS), many of our students would not have the opportunity to continue in any of the after school activities, as many children would be bussed. A smaller school size ensures that all students are given a chance to continue with all aspects of their education. School Boards should be looking into the move to smaller schools (for children), rather than moving them into to larger schools.

With the closure of École Gertrude Parker School, students would not only be forced out of their school, but also forced out of their community, which these students call HOME!

3.5 Operational and Capital Requirements

3.5.1 Completed Capital Projects at École Gertrude Parker Elementary School

Roof replacement - \$83,900.00

Positive Latching - \$5,176.46

3.5.2 Immediate Operating Needs (5 years)

After careful review of the Facility Evaluation Report (FER) prepared by Fowler Bauld & Mitchell Ltd and the Impact Assessment Report (IAR), the Study committee compared the values provided in IAR - Section 3.5.2 “Immediate Operating Needs (5 Years)” with values provided by the FER. We identified a number of instances in which inflated values appear to be present in the IAR. The inflated values are of concern as they do not properly reflect the true expenditure likely to occur during the course of the next five years.

Replace gym roof: (Discussed in FER FBM Project No. 2011-023, Page 2)

The value suggested to replace the lower roof section of the building is inflated without justified documentation provided to the Study Committee. The estimated value for the replacement of the BUR roof, provided in the FER is \$35,235 compared to the value suggested by the IAR of \$80,000.

During our discussions with representatives from the operations department, we inquired about any current reports of leakage or failures on the lower (older) section of ÉGPS’s Roof. HRSB operations reported that there were no open reports of failure in the gymnasium roof. When queried regarding the number of failures that would have to occur before HRSB operations would consider replacing the roof in its entirety, it was indicated that numerous reports of failure would have to be reported, investigated, and an attempt at repair made before consideration would be made to replace the existing roof. As there are currently no reports of roofing failures, it is the opinion of the Study Committee that numerous failures of the roof are unlikely to occur in a five year timeframe. This requirement to replace the lower roof at ÉGPS should be listed as a longer term maintenance item (20 years), rather than an immediate operating need.

Replace Entrance Doors: (Discussed in FER FBM Project No. 2011-023, Page 4)

It was noted in the FER that “the aluminum frame of the SW entrance (Administration) exterior doors show heavy signs of deterioration at the floor”. The FER goes on to

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to
Impact Assessment Report

suggest that a replacement of the South-West (Main) entrance exterior door frame was recommended at an estimated cost of \$1,700. This value is significantly different from the \$8000 value proposed in the IAR.

Install mag holder on fire doors:

The Study Committee is unsure of the source for the requirement reported in the IAR to install magnetic holders on “fire doors” as this item was not included in the FER. This item was not identified as either an immediate or long term requirement by Fowler Bauld & Mitchell Ltd. As such, it should not be included as an immediate or long term operating cost for ÉGPS.

Repoint brick: (Discussed in FER FBM Project No. 2011-023, Page 4)

The estimates to repoint areas of brickwork that require repair are reasonably close between the FER reporting a value of \$29,200.00 and the IAR at \$29,900.00. It is stated in the FER that approximately 20% of the mortar joints would require re-pointing to prevent the infiltration of water into the building. The Study committee suggests that this may be an over-estimate of the work required. The amount of work required should be reassessed by an independent contractor or HRSB operations.

New boiler plant: (Discussed in FER FBM Project No. 2011-023, Page 21)

As confirmed in a meeting with representatives from the HRSB Operations department, there is a desire to migrate away from “Volcano” fire tube boilers in favour of new, more efficient and easier to control models. The conditions for a replacement of the entire boiler system would have to be specific, as only repairs would be considered during the school year to maintain the heated operation of the building for delivery of the teaching programs. The notation of the Boiler Plant in the FER was solely due to it being near the end of the designed lifespan. It should also be noted that the Oil Burner component has already been replaced which would increase the longevity of the existing system. In the event of a boiler system failure, HRSB operations confirmed that replacements would occur only during extended school breaks. The circumstances required for replacement along with the current condition and functionality of the boiler plant lead the Study Committee to reallocate the replacement of the existing equipment as a 20 year priority.

Table 8 - Suggested 5 year immediate operating needs

Immediate Operating Need	Value Estimated in HRSB IAR	Values Proposed by the Study Committee
Replace Gym Roof	\$80,000	\$35,235
Replace Entrance Doors	\$8,000	\$1,700
Install Mag Holders	\$8,000	\$0
Repoint Brick	\$29,900	\$29,900
New Boiler Plant	\$175,000	\$0
Total	\$300,900	\$66,835

It should be noted that the total value (\$293,276.46) presented on page 23 of the IAR was inconsistent with the addition of the preceding values shown here in Table 8. This inconsistency was carried forward and used in the IAR tables that attempted to illustrate the cost implications of operating ÉGPS and/or CDS.

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to Impact Assessment Report

The study committee met with Chris Northrup of the HRSB operations department to clarify the general practice surrounding the immediate operating needs suggested in the IAR. He advised that it was unlikely that many of these expensive upgrades would take place within the suggested five year timeframe. He confirmed that the operations department records currently show no issues with either the lower roof or the building's boiler systems, which account for the bulk of the indicated immediate operating costs.

It was noted by Mr. Northrup that the operations department wishes to move toward energy saving and cost effective equipment in general, and that ongoing studies are being completed to that end. Until those studies are made available, it will be difficult to know what efficiency related projects should be undertaken to ensure a reasonable return on investment and what grants may be available from the Nova Scotia Government to supplement the costs of energy efficiency upgrades.

It should also be noted that a number of the "Safety" related issues as well as the preparation and repair of half of the masonry control joints has already been undertaken and completed under regular ongoing maintenance.

Taking into account the considerations above with respect to the Boiler Plant and the Lower Roof Section, and including items that indicated some urgency from the FER provided we would suggest that the immediate operating needs in the next five years be closer to \$66,835. This amount is further reduced due to the over estimation of the required masonry work – some of which has already been completed.

3.5.3 Capital Investments on Current Building

A complete Building Audit and Expenditure Plan has been completed for Gertrude Parker Elementary School and will be provided to the School Review Committee. The intent of the document is to provide a review of the existing building and to provide a capital building estimate that would be required for the continued operation of the school. The report concludes that an investment in capital of approximately \$825,365.00 is required to ensure the future use of the building.

Based on the FER, the study committee estimates the long term (20 Year) capital costs for the facility to be closer to \$350,535 (for a detailed breakdown – see Appendix A). This value is representative of a portion of the maintenance and upgrades suggested in the FER with amounts pertaining to unnecessary upgrades and energy efficiency projects removed. Even if the values for the energy efficiency projects were retained, the effective cost would be greatly reduced due to return on investment. The Study committee was unable to obtain reports regarding current energy efficiency projects so we are not able to verify what the return on investment would be.

The Impact Assessment Report states that the Building Audit and Expenditure Plan was to list items "... required for the continued operation of the school" and "to ensure the future use of the building". The Study Committee has demonstrated that many of these recommendations are not necessary; therefore, including them in the report would be flawed.

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to
Impact Assessment Report

Until a boundary review can be conducted we strongly recommend that École Gertrude Parker School remain open, as the bulk of the immediate operating needs will be easily maintained in the short term without substantial expenditure.

3.6 PROPERTY SERVICE EFFICIENCIES

The projected cost savings to the Board for each possible outcome of the review are listed below. Please note that administrative cost savings are not included in the calculations below.

This is the table from the impact assessment report with correction to errors.

**Possible Outcome: Gertrude Parker Elementary remains open
(Reflecting Corrected Values)**

	Immediate Capital Costs - 5 yr	Long Term Capital Costs - 20 yr	Annual Operating Costs	Students	Annual Operating Costs/Student
Gertrude Parker	\$300,900.00	\$621,165.00	137,894.77	229	\$602.16
Cavalier Drive	\$15,000	\$2,135,356.00	\$233,027.60	376	\$619.75
Total Costs	\$315,900.00	\$2,756,521.00	\$370,922.37	605	\$613.09
Overall Cost Savings	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	

* Current student populations listed as of (JAN 2012) & cost calculation corrected

** Costs adjusted to be consistent with IAR and FER values.

**Possible Outcome: Gertrude Parker Elementary remains open
(Adjusted To Reflect Study Committee Recommendations)**

	Immediate Capital Costs - 5 yr	Long Term Capital Costs - 20 yr	Annual Operating Costs	Students	Annual Operating Costs/Student
Gertrude Parker	\$66,835	\$350,535.00	137,894.77	229	\$602.16
Cavalier Drive	\$15,000	\$2,135,356.00	\$233,027.60	376	\$619.75
Total Costs	\$81,835.00	\$2,485,891.00	\$370,922.37	605	\$613.09
Overall Cost Savings	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	

* Costing has been adjusted to reflect Study committees values from section 3.5

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to
Impact Assessment Report

**Possible Outcome: Gertrude Parker Elementary closes students attend Cavalier Drive
(Reflecting Corrected Values)**

	Immediate Capital Costs - 5 yr	Long Term Capital Costs - 20 yr	Annual Operating Costs	Students	Annual Operating Costs/Student
Gertrude Parker	0	0	0	0	0
Cavalier Drive	\$15,000	\$2,135,356.00	\$233,027.60	605	\$385.17
Total Costs*	\$315,900.00	\$2,756,521.00	\$370,922.37		
Overall Cost Savings	\$300,900.00	\$621,165.00	\$137,894.77	N/A	

**Possible Outcome: Gertrude Parker Elementary closes students attend Cavalier Drive
(Adjusted To Reflect Study Committee Recommendations)**

	Immediate Capital Costs - 5 yr	Long Term Capital Costs - 20 yr	Annual Operating Costs	Students	Annual Operating Costs/Student
Gertrude Parker	0	0	0	0	0
Cavalier Drive	\$15,000	\$2,135,356.00	\$233,027.60	605	\$385.17
Total Costs	\$89,835.00	\$2,485,891.00	\$370,922.37		
Overall Cost Savings	\$66,835.00	\$350,535.00	137,894.77	N/A	

There are a great number of issues with the cost savings as presented above. One major problem is that the annual operating cost for Cavalier Drive School have not been increased in any way to reflect the 229 students (an increase of approximately 38% in population) that will be transferred into one or both of these schools. While some operating costs are fixed, the addition of 229 students and associated staff will increase the operating costs of these schools, as these students will require extra resources. It is difficult for the Study Committee to determine what these additional costs will be, but to include no increase is not justifiable.

The Study Committee believes that a proper reassessment of the Cavalier Drive School FER would result in similar reductions in the proposed expenditures over the 20 year time frame, thus allowing HRSB to further reduce identified expenditures. Please see Appendix B for a comparative analysis of items listed in the FER.

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to Impact Assessment Report

The Study Committee is concerned that the IAR provides no evidence that *any* cost analysis of the impact of students being directed to Leslie Thomas Junior High has been initiated by the HRSB. These incremental costs would need to be assessed and evaluated before a fully informed decision could be made which impacts LTJH.

3.7 Impact on the Community

Neighbourhood public schools play a significant role in communities – serving children, youth and families, providing public space, offering programs, hosting events, and building social connections. Schools are key in developing community connections and pride in the accomplishments of community members.

When students are displaced because of a school closure, they often face longer days, travelling by bus or family vehicle to a school outside the community rather than walking to the neighbourhood school. The transportation schedules for these students present obstacles to both extra-curricular activities at their new schools and to programs in their home communities. After-school play dates with classmates become more difficult to arrange as well. The lack of quality in-home child care in the receiving school's area also becomes a concern to families who chose not to have their children in Excel. While the government and school boards often encourage walking to school as a form of healthy exercise and an environmentally responsible choice, school closures remove that option for many children.

École Gertrude Parker School's catchment area is comprised of a widely diverse population. Its 229 students come from low, medium and high income households, different cultures and various religious backgrounds. The Early French Immersion program which has been located at ÉGPS for the past 10 years adds a unique aspect to École Gertrude Parker School. Both the English and French speaking children have come together to become one. The English students look forward to receiving special "caught being goods" for speaking French and the French Immersion children can be heard speaking French throughout the school unprompted.

The École Gertrude Parker community has a strong tradition of parental involvement. Those attending the school have a feeling of ownership. This sense of community ownership translates into parents at École Gertrude Parker School giving freely of their time and skills. Volunteers help out in the library, classrooms, Parent Teacher Organization, as well as the School Advisory Council to name just a few. Every year, local businesses and church organizations make donations to special events and programs organized by the school such as Cookies with Santa, the breakfast program, and March Bingo.

With children attending school away from their home and community or neighbourhood, it is often more difficult for parents to volunteer at school, attend events, deal with medical issues their child may experience, and connect with teachers. When children see their parents and caregivers active in their school, it reinforces the importance of

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to Impact Assessment Report

education in their lives. Many of these parents would not be able to participate if the school were outside their neighbourhood due to lack of transportation. The experience of having parents involved in their school will encourage children in the future to become active participants in their own children's' school and community.

École Gertrude Parker School is conveniently located next to one of Lower Sackville's HRM ball fields. This large area provides ample space for a variety of physical activities, using both the ample green areas and asphalt areas. During good weather conditions, gym classes are held outside. Excel also uses the large playground and surrounding areas as part of their daily exercise program. The school playground is also used in the summer for a program which offers structured playtime for school-aged children. When comparing the playground and play space at Cavalier Drive, Gertrude Parker has by far the better playground.

According to the Impact Assessment Report for École Gertrude Parker School (Page 24): *"The school was utilized by the community during the 2010-2011 school year; however, it is anticipated that the community use functions that occur at Gertrude Parker Elementary School could occur at neighbouring facilities"*

For many years, not for profit groups have used the facility for after hour community programs. École Gertrude Parker School is home to Girl Guides of Canada, Sackville United Soccer Association, and Scotia Soccer Club. In the past it has also been used by basketball groups and HRM to name a few. When these groups became aware of the possible school closure, they were concerned for the lack of available space that would be left in the community. HRSB must keep in mind that the groups who use the building are school aged children with early bed times and can not use the school late at night. They must also keep in mind that a group can't be in a school after the caretaker has left which means there is only a small window of time that a school can be used in the evenings. If ÉGPS was to close, that would mean more services being provided in less space and available time.

The loss of a school has significant implications for the broader community as well. In addition to the impact of losing the public space and social connections provided by the school, school closures present a significant deterrent to families staying in the community or moving into it. School closures affect property values, businesses, and community viability overall.

The prices of the majority of homes in this area make it appealing for young families and first time buyers. Homes are located near many services as well as the parent schools for ÉGPS. Removing the school would negatively impact the market value of real estate in the area. The more amenities a neighbourhood can offer potential buyers, the better. When we begin to remove the very things that create a community, we diminish its overall appeal and thereby lessen its appeal to potential buyers. It is clear that the closing of ÉGPS will have a definite impact on the demographics of our area.

In conclusion, the closure of École Gertrude Parker School would have a significant negative impact on the community. It has become very evident through the Study

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to Impact Assessment Report

Committees research, that École Gertrude Parker School provides a unique experience for children's socialization due to the blended family which has been created, as well as helping to develop community identity. In addition, closing ÉGPS will directly affect the many community groups who access the school, as well as having adverse effects on the many families who live in the area.

3.8 Community Use of the School

École Gertrude Parker School provides one of the first Excel programs within the HRSB. It has been in existence for 15 plus years and has expanded from approximately 20 students (with 2 workers), to in excess of 50 students (with 4-5 workers). Excel provides care for students before and after school.

The Excel program includes recreational time (gym), science and nature (classroom) and arts and crafts (classroom) on a daily basis.

Since Cavalier Drive School has an Excel program currently in existence, it will be a challenge to provide the quality of care that École Gertrude Parker's Excel program presently provides to the additional 50-60 Excel children.

Things that will change should CDS and ÉGPS combine.

At present, CDS's Excel program has approximately 60 children. They occupy 1 room (designated as an Excel room) and have to "borrow" another room every day, (30 students per room). Should École Gertrude Parker School and Cavalier Drive School combine, Excel will lose their 1 room, and approximately 110 students will not have any permanent Excel room. Currently at ÉGPS, we have 2 designated Excel rooms which can be shared with the school during non-Excel time.

The current start time for Excel at CDS is 7:30am. ÉGPS's start time is 7:15am. This reduction in service coupled with the increased travel time necessitated by transporting students (by bus, by car, or walking) a significantly increased distance from their homes would equate to a notable effective reduction of services.

As the gym is used by the Junior High component of CDS, Excel very rarely has recreational time in the gym. At École Gertrude Parker School, Excel enjoys the use of the gym every day from 4-6pm.

CDS has a very small playground area. Additionally CDS's playground area and green space (soccer field) are physically separated by the school itself. ÉGPS students enjoy a very large green space and playground, in which students are visible at all times.

In the event of a closure of École Gertrude Parker School, delivery of the Excel service will suffer a significant, negative impact.

4.0 Cavalier Drive

4.4 Enrolment

The Impact Assessment Report analyzed the current and projected enrolment and the required configurations of both École Gertrude Parker and Cavalier Drive Schools. There are three potential configurations identified:

1) ÉGPS stays open

In this configuration, both ÉGPS and CDS would continue to successfully deliver the required educational support services and public school program. Both schools have classroom sizes averaging 20 students per classroom based on the figures in the Impact Assessment Report.

ÉGPS would retain its current main classrooms, resource rooms, and specialty rooms; continuing to provide a rich environment for learning.

CDS would retain its current main classrooms and specialty rooms. The ratio of specialty to main classroom space provides a very rich environment for learning. Of particular mention is the Learning Center facility at Cavalier Drive School. This facility is currently providing special-needs students with an environment suitable for their education. There are currently no other comparable facilities in the Sackville area. In addition, the higher ratio of specialty rooms is justified due to the Junior High component of CDS. Junior High education creates a need for more specialty rooms such as Band Room, Sciences Lab, Computer Lab, Family Studies Lab, etc.

2) ÉGPS closes and CDS retains its Junior High component

According to the Impact Assessment Report, a total of 20 classrooms are required to provide service for the elementary students. The Junior High students would require an additional 6 classrooms (see table below). This would bring the total main classroom requirement for this configuration up to 26 classrooms. The IAR incorrectly states that only 25 classrooms would be required. This may be achievable only by exceeding the recommended classroom size limitations.

The requirement for 26 classrooms is a minimum for this potential outcome. As the original ÉGPS English students move into grades 7/8/9, the Junior High component required for this outcome will increase. In addition, the relocation of the French Immersion program to the Cavalier Drive area is anticipated to create an increased enrolment in French Immersion. With all of these growth factors, there is significant probability that the number of classrooms required will grow well beyond 26.

Table 9 - Cavalier Drive School Enrolment 2011-2012

	Classroom 1	Classroom 2	Total
Grade 7	21	20	41
Grade 8	23	20	43
Grade 9	25	25	50
Total Student Enrolment			134

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to
Impact Assessment Report

Table 10 - Cavalier Drive School Projected Enrolment 2012-2013

	Classroom 1	Classroom 2	Total
Grade 7	23	22	45
Grade 8	21	20	41
Grade 9	23	20	43
Total Projected Student Enrolment			128

In order to meet the requirement for at least 26 classrooms, all classroom areas at CDS that have been converted to specialty areas would need to be converted back into classrooms. This includes: Core French, Band Room, Learning Center, Computer Lab, and Music Room. In addition, one of the spaces never intended as a classroom would have to be converted into a classroom area to meet the needs of the expanded population. One of the following spaces would need to be converted: Science Lab, Art Room, Family Studies Lab, or Tech Ed. Lab. In total, 7 specialty/resource areas would have to be converted into regular classrooms.

The school would continue to provide the programs, but the impact on delivery is unknown. For the entire population, most services could continue with the use of services like mobile music room. While the programming could be delivered in the existing educational spaces under this scenario, scheduling challenges, with respect to specialist teachers, would be evident. The resulting impact would be in direct conflict to one of the three identifiers provided for closure.

But other services such as the Learning Center are not as easily distributed. With an increased population, the increased demand of resources would necessitate an increase in the Resource/Learning Centers facilities. Unfortunately, the expanded population will greatly reduce all space previously available for resource. The Study Committee is concerned that the Resource/Learning Center capabilities would be negatively impacted in this environment. Any reduction to the Learning Center would cause a significant impact to the students.

In addition to the reduction in the Learning Center, the needs of the Junior High students could be under-served with the likely loss of Junior High specialty rooms (Science Lab, Art Room, Family Studies Lab, or Tech Ed. Lab), leaving them fewer options in preparing them for High School.

Currently, both ÉGPS and CDS provide programming with specialty areas (Music, French, Resource, Learning Center).

The following are the points to consider if ÉGPS were to close and its population moved to CDS:

According to the Public School Program “experiential learning in music develops psychomotor, intellectual and verbal abilities as well as musical abilities.” Using a variety of musical instruments and listening to a variety of pieces may be experiences that are impacted without a designated instructional area. Scheduling Band and Music for a larger population will necessitate sacrifices of the “music-instructional –space”. Logistics would limit delivery of the program.

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to
Impact Assessment Report

“Daily French instruction and a classroom designated for French are necessary for creating and maintaining an atmosphere facilitating language acquisition.” and “Language must be presented and practiced in context.” (P J-1 – Public school Program) Combining the populations and streamlining certain services may require the use of the French room as a full time classroom. This would negatively impact the delivery of the program.

“Children need not only develop physical skills but experience a learning environment that values activity and a healthy lifestyle.” (Q -1 – Public School Program) Consolidating both school populations will affect the physical education scheduling and may require the use of outdoor facilities to support the current level of programming. CDS does not currently have outside facilities to support a large elementary program. In addition, a scheduling challenge would be created with an increase elementary population, increase the number of classes that use the gymnasium simultaneously and would impact the streamlining of the program.

The technical educational space in CDS is not supportive of other provincial programs outside of its current mandate and would not be a flexible space to support the combining of school populations.

The combined case load for Resource and Learning Centre would increase creating a stronger need for spaces to support students who currently require special services. The proposed plan necessitates reducing the current spaces at CDS. The current space in CDS designed for the students with special needs is a model of support and could incorporate new clients with a variety of needs, but only if this space is maintained; otherwise programming would be negatively impacted.

3) ÉGPS closes and CDS's Junior High component is moved to LTJH

The current P-6 enrolment between ÉGPS and CDS is 476 students. According to the Impact Report, 20 classrooms would be required for the P-6 students. With the gym and library, the total used space would be 22.

This would leave 9 spaces available for specialty or resource. To achieve this configuration, the 19 existing classrooms would be used. In addition, one of the Junior High specialty rooms would be converted into a regular classroom.

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to Impact Assessment Report

In terms of classroom space, this configuration seems viable for Cavalier. However, the resulting Elementary School size of 476 would now greatly exceed the limit of 300 proposed in the Imagine Our Schools report:

Imagine Our Schools Recommendation: Size to meet the needs of the community and to create viable learning environments. Elementary (300 students), Junior High (500 students), High School (1,000 students), P to 9 schools (750 students).

HRSB staff response: Agree. In recommending capital construction, staff will consider the ideal size as it applies to educational outcomes, walkability, location, and community needs.

A final option to consider for this configuration is the impact to Leslie Thomas Junior High. An Impact Assessment was not performed for LTJH in the event of accepting the CDS Junior High students. However, in the Imagine Our Schools report, the 2011 enrolment of LTJH was shown at 299 students. The Provincial capacity for LTJH is given as 428. With this population, LTJH can only accept 129 additional students. Unfortunately, Cavalier has 135 students that would have to be relocated to LTJH. Implementing this configuration change and student relocation would have LTJH immediately exceeding capacity, leaving no room for further growth.

A final note about this configuration is the impact to the special-needs Junior High students from Cavalier. In this configuration, these students would be relocated to LTJH. LTJH does not have facilities with accessibility appropriate for all students. Even for very basic needs, such as building access, LTJH does not have a suitable accessible entrance. The main door has steps and the rear door is not well maintained and has very uneven ground. The absence of a suitable Learning Center at LTJH would place the special-needs students transferred from CDS at a severe disadvantage, particularly compared to the exemplary facilities currently available at CDS.

RECOMMENDATION:

Option 1 - ÉGPS stays open is the only possible recommended configuration. Option 2 is not feasible due to insufficient classroom/resource/specialty space at Cavalier. Option 3 is not suitable due to insufficient capacity at LTJH.

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to
Impact Assessment Report

5.0 Conclusion

Throughout this response, the Study Committee has provided an analysis of each of the sections from the Impact Assessment Report. A constant thread throughout the analysis became evident: a significant amount of information is still required before an informed and justified decision can be made.

To determine a clear direction for the future of the Sackville area, a boundary review must be undertaken. This review should be performed before any decision on school closure is reached, this will ensure resources are effectively utilized for the maximum benefit to both the students and the HRSB going forward.

The Study Committee remains concerned about the inconsistencies presented in the Impact Assessment Report. Aside from the inaccurate allocation of items listed in the Facility Evaluation Report, the Study Committee discovered there were several over-estimations and errors in the projected timeline regarding required repairs. Additionally, the provided Facility Evaluation Report was farther reaching than its intended purpose, identifying unnecessary upgrades to bring the facility up to current new construction building standards.

Attempting to streamline facilities and resources undermine educational benefits. Combining school populations creates unintended effects to delivery, accessibility and academic achievement.

Through in depth research and discussion, the Study Committee identified several other implications resulting from the closure of École Gertrude Parker School. These include but are not limited to; safety concerns, transportation, French Immersion Culture and accessibility. Of particular note, the lack of any information regarding the effects on Leslie Thomas Junior High School points to areas that have not yet been explored.

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to
Impact Assessment Report

6.0 Recommendation

It is the recommendation of the École Gertrude Parker Study Committee that the elected board members refuse closure of École Gertrude Parker School as indicated in the HRSB's current recommendations. Secondly, we propose that the HRSB assess the area through a Sackville-wide boundary review, and revisit the Sackville High Family of Schools once all of the required information is collected. Only then can the study committee see that an agreeable, well-informed, and responsible outcome can be reached.

Appendix A – Study Committee Detailed Analysis of provided ÉGPs Facility Evaluation Report

ÉCOLE GERTRUDE PARKER SCHOOL (ÉGPs) "Necessary Improvements" as Listed in the Facility Evaluation Report (FER) Prepared by Fowler Build & Mitchell Ltd. June 3rd 2011 (Bold font recommendations are of immediate concern, as annotated within the FER)		Estimated Costs cited in FER	Completed as of January 31st 2012	Necessary Maintenance With 5 Years	Necessary Within 20 Years	Non Critical to Building Envelope or Equipment	Efficiency Improvement Project	ÉGPs Study Committee Comments Per Each Line Item
BUILDING ENVELOPE (1)								
1	Cost to replace existing BUR (Lower, Gym) roof (3915 sq ft).	35,235.00			35,235.00			Cost Listing within IAR Conflicts Directly with the FER
2	Re-point brick where required, approx. 20% of mortar joints.	29,200.00		29,200.00				Appears to be an Over Estimate
3	Prepare and re-caulk all masonry control joints	6,400.00	2,000.00	4,400.00				This item has been partially completed, late fall 2011
4	Provide aluminum cover to protect joints.	2,000.00	600.00	1,400.00				This item has been partially completed, late fall 2011
5	Raise grade 1'-0" at North Multipurpose Rm wall (700 cu ft)	2,000.00	2,000.00					Solution suggested by Study Committee, to cut off exposed weathershield, confirmed by HRSB Operations representative, at negligible cost
6	Correct SE entrance exterior doors binding immediately	900.00	900.00					Corrected shortly after discovery of existing safety issue
7	Replace fractured Jumbo face brick (approx. 40 bricks)	800.00			800.00			Cost migrated to 20 year outlook as it does not present an immediate threat to the building envelope.
8	Replace SW entrance exterior door frame	1,700.00			1,700.00			Requirement within IAR differs from the FER (Door vs. Door Frame)
9	Replace rotted wood fascia with cement board	200.00			200.00			Standard maintenance item.
BUILDING INTERIOR (2)								
10	Replace remainder of corridor VCT with new 12" VCT tile (approx. 2490 sq. ft.)	8,100.00				8,100.00		This Line Item is Non Critical to Building Envelope or Equipment within a 5 or 20 year timeframe
11	Seal cracks in terrazzo floor and chips in stair nosing with an epoxy resin.	3,500.00				3,500.00		This Line Item is Non Critical to Building Envelope or Equipment within a 5 or 20 year timeframe
12	Chemically clean terrazzo floors in student Washrooms (approx. 1257 sq. ft.)	1,000.00				1,000.00		This Line Item is Non Critical to Building Envelope or Equipment within a 5 or 20 year timeframe
13	Refinish stage strip wood floor (approx. 256 sq. ft.)	900.00				900.00		This Line Item is Non Critical to Building Envelope or Equipment within a 5 or 20 year timeframe
14	Replace damaged/stained ceiling tiles totaling (20x tiles)	400.00				400.00		This Line Item is Non Critical to Building Envelope or Equipment within a 5 or 20 year timeframe
15	Strip and re-paint Interior doors	10,000.00				10,000.00		This Line Item is Non Critical to Building Envelope or Equipment within a 5 or 20 year timeframe - Appears to be a significant over-estimation
16	Install lever type handles in all classrooms (Door Handles)	8,500.00				8,500.00		Cost migrated to the 20 year outlook to enhance building accessibility
17	Install power-assist door operator at main entrance	5,600.00				5,600.00		Cost migrated to the 20 year outlook to enhance building accessibility
18	Paint toilet partitions.	1,200.00				1,200.00		This Line Item is Non Critical to Building Envelope or Equipment within a 5 or 20 year timeframe

#	"Necessary Improvements" as Listed in the Facility Evaluation Report (FER) Prepared by Fowler Build & Mitchell Ltd. June 3rd 2011 (Bold font recommendations are of immediate concern, as annotated within the FER)	Estimated Costs cited in FER	Completed as of January 31st 2012	Necessary Maintenance With 5 Years	Necessary Within 20 Years	Non Critical to Building Envelope or Equipment	Efficiency Improvement Project	EGPS Study Committee Comments Per Each Line Item
	ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS (3)							
19	Provide two additional panelboards and add receptacles in teaching areas.	16,000.00				16,000.00		This Line Item is Non Critical to Building Envelope or Equipment within a 5 or 20 year timeframe
20	Trace and identify all branch circuits. Update panel info	5,000.00				5,000.00		This Line Item is Non Critical to Building Envelope or Equipment within a 5 or 20 year timeframe
21	Replace damaged wiring devices	1,500.00		1,500.00				Damaged Wiring devices should be repaired to maintain safety
22	Provide occupancy sensors in all utility rooms and selected.	5,000.00					5,000.00	Full ROI unavailable for this efficiency improvement project
23	Upgrade the interior lighting system efficient luminaires	60,000.00					60,000.00	Full ROI unavailable for this efficiency improvement project
24	Replace the entire emergency lighting system to satisfy the NBC.	12,000.00			12,000.00			Study committee wonders if a retrofit can not be accomplished rather than replacement.
25	Replace all exit signage with new units.	5,000.00			5,000.00			Exit signage should be "de-Retrofitted" back to original lighting (incandescent) to alleviate issue.
26	Replace the fire alarm system with horn/strobe signaling	15,000.00			15,000.00			Cost migrated to the 20 year outlook as only the most recent facilities have incorporated this technology
27	Provide Call Back Buttons in each teaching area.	3,000.00				3,000.00		This Line Item is Non Critical to Building Envelope or Equipment within a 5 or 20 year timeframe
28	Provide a complete video surveillance system	17,500.00				17,500.00		This Line Item is Non Critical to Building Envelope or Equipment within a 5 or 20 year timeframe
	PLUMBING SYSTEMS (4.1)							
29	Estimated cost to replace existing gate valves (Water)	7,000.00			7,000.00			Cost migrated to the 20 year outlook as valves will not likely be replaced until actual failure occurs
30	Fire stop unprotected piping penetrations (Water)	6,000.00			6,000.00			Cost migrated to the 20 year outlook as firestopping is unlikely to occur until new equipment is installed
31	Video inspection of underground Sanitary & rainwater pipe	3,500.00				3,500.00		This Line Item is Non Critical to Building Envelope or Equipment within a 5 or 20 year timeframe
32	Insulate water entrance piping	500.00					500.00	Full ROI unavailable for this efficiency improvement project
33	Replace water closets	25,000.00					25,000.00	Adjustments to improve water efficiency have already been implemented
34	Replace urinals	14,000.00					14,000.00	Full ROI unavailable for this efficiency improvement project
	HEATING SYSTEMS (4.2)							
35	Provide new boiler plant	175,000.00			175,000.00			Cost migrated to the 20 year outlook as boiler system will not likely be replaced until actual failure occurs
36	Clean and repair radiation	10,000.00				10,000.00		This Line Item is Non Critical to Building Envelope or Equipment within a 5 or 20 year timeframe
37	Repair insulation on gym heating mains	1,000.00					1,000.00	Full ROI unavailable for this efficiency improvement project
38	Provide new oil tank and associated piping	15,000.00			15,000.00			Cost migrated to the 20 year outlook as it should be included when the boiler system is replaced or actual

#	"Necessary Improvements" as Listed in the Facility Evaluation Report (FER) Prepared by Fowler Bauld & Mitchell Ltd. June 3rd 2011 (bold font recommendations are of immediate concern, as annotated within the FER)	Estimated Costs cited in FER	Completed as of January 31st 2012	Necessary Maintenance With 5 Years	Necessary Within 20 Years	Non Critical to Building Envelope or Equipment	Efficiency Improvement Project	EGPS Study Committee Comments Per Each Line Item
	AIR DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS (4.3)							
39	Replace insulation on intake/exhaust duct for main AHU	5,000.00				5,000.00		This Line Item is Non Critical to Building Envelope or Equipment within a 5 or 20 year timeframe
40	Clean, seal and balance ductwork	35,000.00			35,000.00			Cost migrated to the 20 year outlook as it should be completed for maintenance purposes when time & budget
41	Repair/replace fire dampers	10,000.00			10,000.00			Cost migrated to the 20 year outlook as it should be completed for maintenance purposes when time & budget
42	Replace damaged exhaust hoods	500.00			500.00			Cost migrated to the 20 year outlook as it should be completed for maintenance purposes when time & budget
43	Provide new air handling system for gym	75,000.00				75,000.00		This Line Item is Non Critical to Building Envelope or Equipment within a 5 or 20 year timeframe
44	Provide new boiler room ventilation system	7,500.00				7,500.00		This Line Item is Non Critical to Building Envelope or Equipment within a 5 or 20 year timeframe
45	Provide new direct digital control (DDC) system	90,000.00					90,000.00	Full ROI unavailable for this efficiency improvement project
	FIRE PROTECTION (5)							
46	The underside of the stage requires additional sprinkler protection	3,000.00			3,000.00			Cost migrated to the 20 year outlook as it should be completed for maintenance purposes when time & budget
47	A BFP is required on the sprinkler system	15,000.00			15,000.00			Cost migrated to the 20 year outlook as it should be completed for maintenance purposes when time & budget
48	sprinkler system replacement given New Ventilation system.	70,000.00				70,000.00		This Line Item is Non Critical to Building Envelope or Equipment within a 5 or 20 year timeframe
	Totals	825,635.00	5,500.00	36,500.00	350,535.00	237,600.00	195,500.00	
	Maintenance and repair totaling:							

Appendix B – Study Committee Detailed Analysis of provided CDS Facility Evaluation Report

#	CAVALIER DRIVE SCHOOL (CDS) "Necessary Improvements" as Listed in the Facility Evaluation Report (FER) Prepared by Fowler Bauld & Mitchell Ltd. June 3rd 2011 (Bold font Items indicated as per in the FER Report)	Estimated Costs cited in FER	Same Requirement Identified at (ÉGPS)	Unique Requirement for (CDS)
	BUILDING ENVELOPE (1)			
1	Cost for a quality re-coating of the metal roof	96,600.00		96,600.00
2	Seal separated laps in Gymnasium vapour barrier	1,000.00		1,000.00
3	Cost to replace existing metal roof with a new metal roof.	1,288,000.00	1,288,000.00	
4	Asbestos abatement when soffit requires replacement	0.00		0.00
5	Replace missing downspouts and gutters	3,000.00		3,000.00
6	Replace entire gutter and downspout system	11,000.00		11,000.00
7	Re-caulk required control joints	1,000.00	1,000.00	
8	Re-point required brick mortar joints & Damaged Face Brick	4,000.00	4,000.00	
9	Replace existing exterior steel doors and frames (totaling 3)	5,000.00		5,000.00
10	Install power-assist door operator with push buttons at main entry and vestibule doors for barrier free access	5,600.00	5,600.00	
11	Paint exterior lineal metal soffit	1,000.00		1,000.00
12	Reattach loose slats	0.00		0.00
	BUILDING INTERIOR (2)			
13	Refinish stage strip wood floor (approx 719 sq ft)	2,516.00	2,516.00	
14	Replace tile treads on Stair 131. (Immediate Concern)	200.00		200.00
15	Replace damaged 2'x4' ceiling tiles totaling 30± tiles	600.00	600.00	
16	Replace damaged tectum ceiling tiles in totaling ±24 sq ft	290.00		290.00
17	Replace damaged/missing vinyl base (approx. 120 lineal ft.)	200.00		200.00
18	Replace missing ceramic tile wall base where required (approx. 10 tiles)	100.00		100.00
19	Provide separation without a rating at Janitor rooms (Missing Value)	0.00		0.00
20	Install lever type handles in all classrooms.	14,000.00	14,000.00	
21	Provide lever faucets in washrooms	4,050.00		4,050.00
22	Replace damaged wall tile in shower stalls	700.00		700.00
	ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS (3)			
23	Replace damaged wiring devices	1,500.00	1,500.00	
24	Replace gymnasium fixtures with new energy efficient type	8,000.00		8,000.00
25	Provide occupancy sensors to control lighting in all utility rooms and areas	3,000.00	3,000.00	
26	Replace the emergency lighting system single heads with dual units	2,000.00	2,000.00	
27	Replace all exit sign age with new units	5,000.00	5,000.00	
28	Replace the fire alarm system and provide horn/strobe signaling units	20,000.00	20,000.00	
29	Provide new PA system complete with Call Back Buttons in each class	21,000.00	21,000.00	
	PLUMBING SYSTEMS (4.1)			
30	Replace existing gate valves on domestic water	13,000.00	13,000.00	
31	Install backflow preventer on boiler make up water	8,000.00		8,000.00
32	Fire stop unprotected piping penetrations	11,000.00	11,000.00	
33	Video Inspection of underground Sanitary	3,000.00	3,000.00	
34	Replace water closet in staff washroom	2,000.00		2,000.00
35	Upgrade barrier free water closet seats	2,000.00		2,000.00
36	Replace water closets	21,000.00	21,000.00	
37	Replace Urinals	9,000.00	9,000.00	

#	CAVALIER DRIVE SCHOOL (CDS) "Necessary Improvements" as Listed in the Facility Evaluation Report (FER) Prepared by Fowler Bauld & Mitchell Ltd. June 3rd 2011 (Bold font Items indicated as per in the FER Report)	Estimated Costs cited in FER	Same Requirement Identified at (EGPS)	Unique Requirement for (CDS)
	HEATING SYSTEMS (4.2)			
38	Provide new boiler plant	190,000.00	190,000.00	
39	Clean and repair radiation	17,000.00	17,000.00	
40	Provide new oil tank and associated piping	15,000.00	15,000.00	
41	AIR DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS (4.3)			
42	Clean and balance ventilation system	17,000.00	17,000.00	
43	Repair/replace fire dampers	25,000.00	25,000.00	
44	Provide new boiler room ventilation system	9,000.00	9,000.00	
45	Provide new DCC control system	155,000.00	155,000.00	
	FIRE PROTECTION (5)			
46	Provide fire protection in the dust collection system	1,000.00		1,000.00
47	Underside of the stage requires additional protection	3,000.00	3,000.00	
48	Back-Flow Preventer is required (On Sprinkler System)	15,000.00	15,000.00	
49	If vapour barrier in ceiling space is found to be combustible, ceiling space requires fire protections	20,000.00		20,000.00
50	If ventilation system is upgraded then much of the sprinkler system would have to be replaced	100,000.00	100,000.00	
	Totals			
	Maintenance and repair totalling:	2,135,356.00	1,971,216.00	164,140.00

Total Amount Suggested by the FER	2,135,356.00
Total Amount Suggested by the IAR	2,115,856.00
	19,500.00

Appendix C – Contributions provided by Cavalier Drive School's School Advisory Council

4.0 Cavalier Drive:

4.4.1 Cavalier Drive School Projected Enrolment

At present, we feel the projected enrolment figures are out of date. Since the assessment report was compiled, the Irving Shipbuilding contract has been awarded to HRM and needs to be taken into consideration in the projected enrolment statistics. House sales have increased in HRM in the past few months and the Cavalier Drive area is a desirable housing area in which to live.

4.4.2 Boundary Details

Hillside Park Elementary is mentioned. The context is unclear and we are assuming this is an error.

4.4.4. Impact of the Review Outcome on Cavalier Drive School

The only acceptable possible outcome in receiving students from Gertrude Parker is to keep our Junior High component. Please see attached Section 3.2.1 on the benefits of a P-9 school.

4.6.2 Condition of Building Structure and Systems (Required Capital Upgrades)

The Building Audit and Expenditure Plan does not include a cost assessment of changes that would need to be made to the building and grounds should the enrollment at Cavalier be increased significantly or should it be converted into a P-6 School. The Impact Assessment Report states: "The potential receiving school, Cavalier Drive, would not require capital improvements to accommodate the potential student population". This is not factual. The playground the way it exists cannot accommodate the large number of children proposed, the drainage of the existing area would need to be re-assessed, and the interior of the building would need to be re-configured if it were to become a P-6 school. The well-equipped Family Studies room and newly renovated Tech Ed room would need to be stripped and made into classrooms as well as other interior adjustments not to mention the structural changes that would need to be made at the proposed receiving Jr. High School, Leslie Thomas.

4.7.2 Teaching Spaces and Current Usage

The information contained in this section is not accurate. The classroom numbers do not match the existing classrooms. The Science Lab, The Visual Arts Room, the Tech Ed. Lab and the Family Studies Room are not rooms set aside for specialty areas as stated. They are used as specialty classrooms as well as everyday Jr. High core subject classrooms such as English, Health and Social Studies. The Computer Lab could not be used as a classroom as it is only half the size of a standard classroom. If classrooms were to be re-arranged, Cavalier could have the potential of 4 or 5 available classrooms but at present music and french have their own classrooms and we feel that the quality of their programs would be compromised if they lost their classroom space.

4.8 Transportation

Our concern with the added number of students proposed for Cavalier Drive is that safety would become an issue because of increased traffic. We already have a very congested roadway with children being driven to school and buses entering and exiting the school parking lot. At present, parents are not allowed to access the parking lot for dropping off their children and safe road space is limited. To increase the number of parents driving their children to school would only increase our safety concerns about an already congested roadway.

Also the added cost of transportation for bussing children to Cavalier Drive cannot be justified when there is another elementary school with potential room for more children within walking distance of Gertrude Parker

Appendix D – Agency Letters Of Support



MEMORY LANE FAMILY PLACE ASSOCIATION

22 Memory Lane
Lower Sackville, N.S. B4C 2J3
Tel – (902) 864-6363
Fax – (902) 864-4998
Email – children@accesswave.ca
www.memorylanefamilyplace.com

January 27th, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Proposed Closure of Gertrude Parker Elementary School, Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Memory Lane Family Place Association to advocate with respect to the proposed closure of Gertrude Parker Elementary School.

The Sackville Family Day Care Program, which operates from the MLFPA is a 32-year old non-profit, in-home child care program in the community of Lower Sackville. Our mandate is to place children in approved family day care homes, many of which are located in the Gertrude Parker School district. Over the years, we have been fortunate to offer subsidized child care to families experiencing financial challenges. Many of these families have lived/live in the Gertrude Parker School District. While we service families with children from the ages of 8 weeks to 12 years, our highest enrolment over the years has been consistently among the school-age group. Gertrude Parker is one of our most active areas accommodating these children and families.

We are proud that we have been able (and continue to be able) to match families who need child care with homes in their school district.

Closure of this school would have a definite adverse impact on the lives of many. Parents would be scrambling for their affordable, accessible child care. Children would no longer have the opportunity to be provided quality care in their own neighbourhoods and the number of approved child care homes would decrease. Many of the women who care for these children are able to remain in their homes, care for their own children and earn an income. Our own organization, as well, would feel the effects of this school closure. Gertrude Parker is one of our partners in the delivery of anti-violence programs.

If I can be of any further assistance in supporting others who advocate for the reversal of this proposed closure, please feel free to contact me.

Most sincerely,
Memory Lane Family Place

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Joyce Beaudry".

Joyce V. Beaudry
Executive Director

"Over 30 Years of Caring"

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to Impact Assessment Report

Mickie McDow
Community Recreation
Coordinator



1000 Sackville Drive
Sackville, NS B4C 2P4
Tel: 902-551-1111

902-551-1111
902-551-1111
902-551-1111

Email: mcdow@hrm.ns.ca
www.halifax.ca

January 11, 2012

To Whom It May Concern,

Re: Proposed Closing of Gertrude Parker Elementary

As the Recreation Coordinator for the Sackville area, I have had the opportunity to use Gertrude Parker Elementary for our Summer Day Camp program for a number of years.

The location and amenities of Gertrude Parker make it an excellent location of hold a program of this nature. The playground and its' small wooded area make the school a very appealing location to hold a summer program. Children in the area can safely walk to and from the program. As well, the school is situated on a bus route, which not only makes access to the program easier for families, but allows us to easily supplement programs with bus trips to offsite locations.

The Reciprocal Agreement that the Halifax Regional Municipality has with the Halifax Regional School Board assists Recreation and Leisure in the ability to provide recreational opportunities to the residents of Sackville at an affordable cost. Rent to Recreation and Leisure is given at low cost or no cost, thus allowing us to make our programs affordable.

Currently, the ability to expand affordable recreation programming to the residents of Sackville is at a standstill. Rental opportunities for programs after school hours are nonexistent. All schools in the area are with booked for school usage or for community based programming after hours. This is a good thing. Community is utilizing the space that their tax dollars pay for. However, a problem can exists when community growth and changes in recreation trends occur and the infrastructure and/ or usage policy do not keep up. It is my opinion, that this is the problem facing Sackville. Closure of a school and thus access to community usage, in Sackville would only compound this problem.

Keeping Gertrude Parker Elementary accessible to the community of Sackville would be a step towards a more active, healthy community.

Yours in Recreation,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mickie McDow".

Mickie McDow

Community Recreation Coordinator

Sackville and Area

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to
Impact Assessment Report



**PO Box 565
Lr. Sackville NS B4C 3J1**

<http://www.scotiasoccer.com>
Information/Message Line 902-861-0000
Fax 902-864-2680

January 26, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

RE: Gertrude Parker School

On behalf of our membership at Scotia Soccer club we would like to say how disappointed we are that the above named school is on the list for closure in the Lower Sackville area.

We are a well established Soccer Club in this area and we use the gyms for soccer practice and having a lot of young players we require early times in the evening 6-8pm. There are hardly any schools in the area to accommodate as many groups who require an early time. It is not easy to find facilities to begin with and taking one away will only hinder groups who will have no alternative but to cancel some groups because there is no space to practice in.

We certainly hope that you will look at such aspects as these young children having no where to enhance their activities.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Diana Noel'.

**Diana Noel
Club Administrator**

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to
Impact Assessment Report



Beacon House Interfaith Society
470 Cobequid Road / PO Box 513
Lower Sackville Nova Scotia B4C 3G4
www.BeaconHouseNS.org
(902) 464-0547

22 December 2011
Gertrude Parker School
100 Stokil Drive
Lower Sackville, NS B4C 2G5

Dear Ms. Michelle Wright,

On behalf of Beacon House, the staff, the approximate 250 volunteers that make it work, the Board of Directors and most importantly the nearly two thousand souls in our community who need the food bank and our services “Thank You”. A huge thank you to all of your members for a most generous donation provided on the 6th December and all of the good work you do with us and the community throughout the year.

Your support makes a difference in the quality of our program. We use cash donations to purchase dairy, produce and meat products. These are items that are important to any diet and almost impossible to have donated in any other manner.

I would like to wish you and all of your members a very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year 2012.

Sincerely,

Peter Landry, Chair
Board of Directors

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to
Impact Assessment Report

January 30, 2012

Attention: Halifax Regional School Board
Re: Ecole Gertrude Parker School

I am thankful for the opportunity to share about my experiences with Ecole Gertrude Parker School. It has been six years since I stepped through the doors of the school to serve breakfast three mornings a week. I am part of a team of seven women from LifeSong Christian Church who believe in community and what it means to live in community, to support and encourage each other through life.

Each of us works full time and has no children attending the school and every week we look forward to arriving before 7:30am to prepare and serve breakfast to an average of 40 students a day. Some come for the food, some just for the social connection and some come for both. Many of the children bring their stories of celebration and heartache - birthday parties, sports activities, pets dying, family members being sick, and the list goes on. Serving at the school has become about more than just serving a meal, it's about people and relationships.

When we first got on board with the breakfast program we were welcomed with open arms and quickly felt at home and part of the school. We weren't outsiders coming in, we became part of them. We came to identify ourselves with the school and cared about it as a whole, children and staff alike.

I don't live in proximity to the school but have seen through my time there what a vibrant contribution Gertrude Parker is to the community. Just as we desire to make a difference in our community, Gertrude Parker is making a difference as well. Who we are in contributing to the health and well being of a community cannot be measured by charts and graphs but through the stories told.

Gertrude Parker is part of the landscape and fiber of our community and I am glad that I have the opportunity and privilege to partner with them in making our community a better place to live.

Sincerely,

Pamela Whalen
Breakfast Coordinator
LifeSong Christian Church

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to
Impact Assessment Report

January 3, 2012

Attention: Halifax Regional School Board

I am writing this letter in support of Ecole Gertrude Parker School to remain open and continue to educate the children of our Lower Sackville community. There are many families rooted in this area and by closing our school, many families and children will be dispersed and sent adrift.

At the beginning of September 2011, I began my 21st year of volunteering at Ecole Gertrude Parker School. When my first child attended in September 1990 I began helping with the Safe Arrival program. Over the years I have continued to volunteer through the library (as the volunteer coordinator), reading programs, PTO (as President, Secretary and Treasurer), fun fairs (as coordinator), dances, book fairs, ice cream socials, the bike rodeo, class trips, classroom helper etc. I was an original member of the Site based planning committee, and have been on the School Advisory council since it began (as a parent member and now a community member). I have seen Ecole Gertrude Parker School grow into the school it is today – one with a great administration, great teachers, supportive parents and families and wonderful children! We are a community and a family. I continue to volunteer here, long after my two children have now graduated from university. Why, because our school has always had a gigantic WELCOME MAT at the door.

I was fortunate enough to begin working with the EXCEL program with HRSB in 1998 at Ecole Gertrude Parker School and have seen many children pass through the doors of Ecole Gertrude Parker School. This school has instilled a passion for learning and for achieving personal success in our children.

Closing Ecole Gertrude Parker School would be a grave injustice to the children and families of our community.

Sincerely,

Nora Neilan
Excel Coordinator,
Gertrude Parker Elementary

École Gertrude Parker School Formal Response to
Impact Assessment Report

Bibliography

“The effective small primary school: some significant factors. School Organisation 11 (1)” - Hopkins, D., Ellis, P.D. (1991).

“The rural community and the small school”. Pergamon - Forsythe, D. (1983).

"Reading Achievement in Canada and the United States: Findings from the OECD Programme of International Student Assessment ". Ottawa: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada - Willms, J. Douglas. (2004).

"On the Determination of the Critical Level of Market Concentration in Education." Economics of Education Review 12, 2 (June 1993): 165-69. EJ 465 340 - Borland, Melvin V., and Ray M. Howson.

"Criticism of middle schools fuels renewed interest in a school configuration of yesteryear" *The School Administrator*, American Association of School Administrators, (March 2002).

"Standards for Our Schools: How To Set Them, Measure Them, and Reach Them." Tucker, Marc S.; Coddling, Judy B. Jossey-Bass Inc., San Francisco, CA (1998).

"West Contra Costa Unified School District K-8 Schools Analysis", Hall Goldman School of Public Policy, University of California, Berkeley (2006).

“Achievement loss associated with the transition to middle school and high school.” Journal of Educational Research, 92 (1), 20. - Alspaugh, John W. (1998).

“The Negative Impacts of Starting Middle School in Sixth Grade” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 27(1) JOHN WILEY & SONS INC, Pages: 104-121 - Cook, (2008).