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Carleton-Victoria

Presentation to DEC – Bath Community School Sustainability Study

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Thank you for taking time to meet here today to listen to why we all believe that the Bath Community School's Major Renovation and Addition Project needs to be completed immediately.

Each of you have a tremendous responsibility as District Education Councillors to make the right decisions to improve the great education system our citizens benefit from throughout New Brunswick and specifically here in the Carleton North catchment area.

Small Schools do Produce Big Results

Many of you may have received your education at a smaller school,

I know I did.

I attended Juniper Elementary School for my elementary school years where we had 120+ students throughout six grade levels. I went on to the Florenceville Middle School and then to Carleton North High School. Throughout this journey it was not the size of the school that shaped me who I am today, but it was the teachers, district staff and other educational personnel who taught me many things, including

- the basics of education (Reading, Writing, Math Social Studies and other courses including agricultural leadership among others;
- a strong work ethic and respect for our teachers, educational personnel, parents, and for other students.

My wife attended schools in Bath and later at Carleton North High School and we are proud of our three children also attended Bristol and Florenceville schools throughout their public school years.

I am very proud that our grandson is now attending pre school right here in Bath through the Step Ahead Early Learning Centre.

For many generations young New Brunswickers received their education in **one room school houses** across our province where students went on to become leaders in our society across Canada and around the world. This is where our parents and grandparents received their formal education and we must honour this proud tradition while continuing to adapt to new educational realities.

Bath schools have provided a solid foundation to the people of this area for many generations, resulting in many of its graduates going on to prominent careers throughout the world as Industrialists, Bankers, Surgeons, Union Leaders, doctors, nurses, teachers, engineers, tradespeople, scientists, lawyers, farmers, and the list goes on.

It was not the bricks and mortar that shaped generations of monquarters to move confidently out into the world, but it was the teachers and other educational workers in small town schools who brought out the best in those they served.

Bath schools have provided for a safe and secure learning environment for students from Upper Kent to Moose Mountain, to Killoween, to Kilfoil, to Johnville, Holmesville and Carlow as these students travelled a great distance to come together in Bath to receive a high quality public education.

I was first elected to represent the great people of Carleton-Victoria in October, 2014 and just days after on October 23rd the DEC approved a 409 Sustainability Study for the Bath Middle School. The future sustainability of maintaining a K-8 school in Bath immediately became a top priority for me.

Small Schools can and will Produce Big Results.

Initially the DEC was only looking at the Bath Middle School in their 409 study, but parents, staff and the community got together and looked at the bigger picture and the Elementary School was added to the study. Parents, staff and community members made a huge sacrifice for the greater good in adding the Bath Elementary School to the 2015 sustainability study.

The PSSC promoted the New Born to Grade 8 community based concept (an educational campus) to be located in the former Bath Middle School.

This concept was approved by the DEC and recommended to the Minister of Education in April, 2015.

The Minister and government of the day accepted the DEC's recommendation to maintain a K-8 school in Bath and moved the project into the multi-year capital budget process.

Minor renovations were completed by the District to the Bath Middle School so that all students could attend the K-8 school for the 2015/16 school year.

The first step was for DTI do contract out a Building Assessment Study with a Capital budget of \$ 75,000, in order to determine if the building was structurally OK to proceed to Major Renovations. This detailed study came back to DTI in 2016 with a positive recommendation to move to the second phase of Design and Architectural Work.

This project received a Capital approval for \$ 250,000. In the 2017/18 fiscal year to contract out the tender design and architectural work. This work occurred throughout 2017 so that the project would be ready for tender for the 2018/19 fiscal year.

A total of \$ 3.8 million was budgeted to fund the Major Renovation and Addition Capital Project which spanned two government fiscal years because the capital construction for this project went from June, 2018 to June, 2019. This amount consisted of \$ 2.6 million in the 2018/19 for the 2018/19 and \$ 1.2 million for the 2019/20 fiscal year.

The project went to tender as scheduled on May 3rd, 2018 and the tender was awarded to Simpson Building Contractors Ltd. on June 25th, 2018 in the amount of \$ 3,822,300.

Construction started soon after the end of the 2018 school year and the students moved back to the Bath Elementary School for **one year only** so that the Major Renovations and Addition Project could be completed as scheduled.

The contractor started on the exterior work as defined in the project such as the addition, water and utility excavation work, exterior fire escape, curbing and paving, and other exterior work.

The objective was to finish all the exterior work prior to winter so that the interior work could be done in late fall and over the winter and completed in the spring of 2019. So that the school would be completed for a summer, 2019 transfer back to the Department of Education & Early Childhood Development.

As the construction crews began their interior work they soon realized that they could not work with the asbestos problem they encountered. DTI hired a consultant to determine next steps and work stopped in November, which also coincided with the provincial election and a change in government.

I asked for a meeting between the contractor, DTI and Education officials to discuss next steps and we met at the school on December 21, 2018. It was decided to remove all the asbestos from the middle floor in order to determine costs for removal of the other two floors. This work was done in January, 2019 and an estimate was forwarded to DTI from the contractor in early February.

After several meetings with government officials I received notice from the government on August 9th that this project was cancelled. A demolition tender was issued by DTI, which was later rescinded by the government in order to allow the DEC the necessary time to look at this issue.

I want to thank the current government for taking a second look at this issue.

I mention this summary of events that led us on this emotional roller coaster of a journey from October, 2014 to today to highlight that everyone; from the parents, students, staff, the Bath community, the former DEC, the District, myself and the former government all had the right intentions and motives in moving this project to completion.

We received information from consultants, engineers, accountants and educators and collectively made decisions to move forward with the mid life upgrade at the Bath Community School. However, unexpected circumstances during construction, which is very common in mid life upgrades, resulted in a change of scope of work for construction, resulting in additional capital costs.

NOW we need to move forward.

The Project is 75 % complete. The exterior work is done and much of the interior work such as the installation of new windows and a new sprinkler system, have also been completed.

\$ 4.1 million has been spent to date on this project. If the project does not proceed then the asbestos will have to be removed from the building anyway during the demolition. This will result in additional demolition costs including asbestos removal, and the Bath community will end up with a \$ 5 million dollar parking lot.

1/3 of the asbestos has already been removed and paid for. Why not remove the remaining 2 floors and complete the interior work so that this school can continue to serve the greater Bath area for the next 20+ years. To me it is a wise financial investment to complete this project immediately and have the students return to the Bath Community School as soon as possible for the next school year starting this fall.

I have always believed that the Bath area needs a renovated K-8 community school to provide a high quality learning environment for our children. The K-8 Bath Community School is in a safe location, is close to many recreational facilities and is home to the essential Step Ahead-Bath Early Learning Centre. The K-8 Bath Community School is also an important institutional anchor in the village, serving as a focal point and heart of our community.

The community of Bath have clearly spoken on the importance of having a K-8 community school through the sustainability study in 2015. The DEC has previously voted this project as its # 1 priority and the former Liberal Government approved and budgeted for this project to be completed.

We cannot turn the clock back now after five years of hard work by parents, staff and members of the greater Bath community, who fought hard in the best interests of their community to have this project completed. We have lost the last 14 months and we cannot lose any more days in completing this project.

The Project is 75 % complete and will require an additional **net \$ 2.0 to 2.5 million** to finish compared to demolition costs.

Considering the amount spent to date it would be a tremendous waste of taxpayer's money to abandon this project now. The provincial government will see cost savings from capital avoidance and operating costs at the Bath Elementary School once it is deemed surplus and disposed of.

I encourage the DEC to look at curriculum and school catchment changes as completing the Bath Community School will provide options to district staff in both of these areas.

This major renovation project can be completed in 6-7 months and I urge you to recommend the completion of the Bath Community School immediately; so that students and staff, who have sacrificed enough, can return to the newly renovated Bath Community School asap.

“It is never too late to do the right thing”