

NEWS

Schools study on hold: DEC chair



Rebecca Howland | Bugle Observer

The decision in the sustainability study held by the Anglophone West District Education Council (DEC) is at a stand-still.

Kimberley Douglass, DEC chair told the Bugle Observer on Wednesday there's little the council can do until the pandemic is over with and public meetings can resume.

"The legislation states we have to make our decision on the sustainability study at a public meeting," Douglass said. "So, until we can arrange that meeting, that's on hold."

The DEC held a series of public meetings, which gave parents and the district staff a chance to present information on the future of Northern Carleton schools. The sustainability study was prompted after asbestos was discovered during renovations of Bath Middle School, halting the project. The DEC study included elementary and middle schools in

Florenceville-Bristol and Bath.

The final meeting was scheduled at Carleton North High School on April 9. The DEC was to share its final decision and recommendation to the minister of education.

Douglass said the DEC does not have to worry about any deadlines in the legislation requiring a decision within a certain timeframe.

"There are some that would be critical if we were going to close a school this year, for instance," she said. "If we were studying a school that would be closed this year and the students would go elsewhere, it would be important to have the information to the minister in time for him to review in time for parents and students to be informed.

"That's not one of the options right now in the [Carleton North] study, so that's not of concern. Any decisions that are made will have to be delayed based on the time the minister has to look at the decision and that sort of thing."

Even though technology might be able to make a public meeting happen, Douglass isn't sure about the logistics.

"By legislation, we can't have a DEC meeting unless it can be a public one," she said. "We're hoping at some point technology will work [in our favour]. Where we're all in different places, it would require technology that will connect us and at the same time, broadcast it."