

HALIFAX REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD

Recommendation to Review Schools in Eastern Passage

PURPOSE: To receive approval from the Governing Board to begin the provincial School Review process for the schools in Eastern Passage.

BACKGROUND: In October 2014 the province approved the provincial School Review Policy for use by all school boards. The policy contains sixteen directives (A to P) boards must follow during a school review process.

Directive A states:

A school review may be considered when a Long-Range Outlook (LRO) has been completed by a school board, as required by the Education Act and outlined in Appendix A: Preparing a Long-Range Outlook.

The Governing Board approved the Halifax Regional School Board Long-Range Outlook at its regular Board meeting on April 22, 2015.

Directive B of the School Review Policy states:

To initiate a school review, school board staff will present a report called a Recommendation to Review to the governing school board identifying a group of schools for review. A review should include all schools that could be impacted by the outcome of a review or could expand the range of options for consideration. Under exceptional circumstances it may be appropriate to conduct a review of an individual school. A Recommendation to Review does not have to coincide with a particular calendar date.

HRSB staff has developed a prioritized list of actions by Family of Schools to address the Board's facility needs.

In the School Review Policy Directive A, there are six circumstances that may lead to a school review. These include:

- a school or group of schools is unable to, or projected to be unable to, provide a suitable and equitable range of learning opportunities for students, due to declining enrolment;
- reorganization involving a school or group of schools could enhance program and learning opportunities for students;
- reorganization involving a school or group of schools could optimize use of school facilities across the school board;
- a school's combination of teaching or learning spaces is not suitable to provide programs/is not accessible/does not serve the community, and retrofitting and/or enlarging the facility may be cost prohibitive;

- one or more of the schools in a group is experiencing higher building maintenance expenses than average for the school board and/or is in need of major capital improvements; and
- safety and/or environmental concerns are associated with the building.

CONTENT:

The schools in Eastern Passage have been identified for review in 2015-16.

A boundary review has been completed and brought forward this evening in Report No. 2015-10-44 for the new high school in Eastern Passage. The catchment area proposed in the report includes Eastern Passage Education Centre, Seaside Elementary, Oceanview Elementary and Tallahassee Community School within the Family of Schools.

Utilization of schools is a factor for consideration. The Long-Range Outlook data for these schools indicates that Eastern Passage Education Center and Ocean View Elementary Schools are underutilized and Tallahassee Community School is slightly over utilized, while Seaside is approaching optimum utilization. With the reassignment of Grade 9 students from EPEC to the new high school, there will be further negative impact to the underutilization of this school. It is estimated that EPEC will be at approximately 54% utilization when the high school opens.

Based on these factors, it is recommended that a school review occur for the following schools:

- Eastern Passage Education Centre
- Seaside Elementary
- Ocean View Elementary
- Tallahassee Community School

In accordance with the provincial School Review Policy, this Recommendation to Review Report includes the following information (see Appendix A):

- the rationale for the review, referencing information provided in the LRO plus any other relevant information;
- a proposed timeline for the review (in accordance with the timelines provided in the provincial School Review Policy); and
- the draft Terms of Reference for the School Options Committee (SOC) that will conduct the proposed review. These Terms of Reference define and guide the work of the SOC.

COST:

A consultant will be hired to facilitate the school review process. It is estimated that the cost of the review will be approximately \$10,000.

FUNDING:

Board Services Budget

TIMELINE: It is anticipated this school review process will be started in December 2015 and completed with a report to the Governing Board and final decision at the June 22, 2016 Board meeting.

APPENDICES: Appendix A

RECOMMENDATIONS: It is recommended that the Governing Board direct staff to initiate a review of the following schools:

- Eastern Passage Education Centre
- Ocean View Elementary
- Seaside Elementary
- Tallahassee Community School

It is recommended that the Governing Board direct the Superintendent to establish a School Options Committee to complete the review following the provincial School Review Policy.

It is recommended that the Governing Board approve the Terms of Reference for this review as being those included in Appendix A.

COMMUNICATIONS:

AUDIENCE	RESPONSIBLE	TIMELINE
School Principals of Schools in EPH Family of Schools	Director – School Administration	Prior to posting on web site
School Advisory Councils in EPH Family of Schools	School Principal	Prior to posting on web site
School Communities of EPH Family of Schools	Superintendent	After Board Decision

From: For further information please contact Ron Heiman, HRSB Director Operations Services at 902-464-2000 ext. 2144 or by e-mail rheiman@hrsb.ca.

To: Senior Staff – December 7, 2015
Governing Board – December 16, 2015

Appendix A

INTRODUCTION

The information in this report has been compiled according to Section 89 (1) of the Education Act and the provincial School Review Policy (Policy). This Policy can be found at www.ednet.ns.ca/schoolreview/11028_16Oct2014_School_Review_Policy_EN.pdf.

As per Directive A from the Policy, the Halifax Regional School Board developed and approved its Long-Range Outlook (LRO) in April 2015. Please review the LRO for data about schools referenced in this report. It can be found at www.hrsb.ca/about-hrsb/operations-services/long-range-outlook. For a printed copy, please contact the office of the Superintendent at 902-464-2000 ext. 2312.

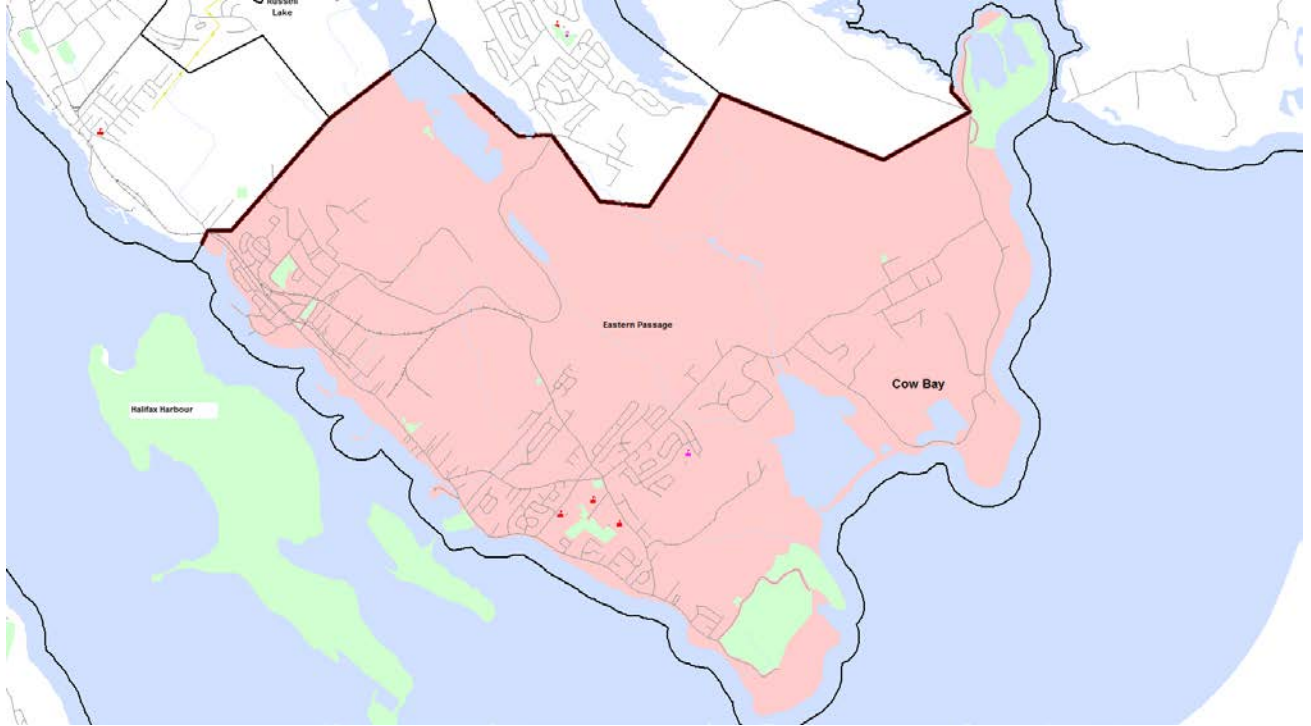
Directive B of the School Review Policy states the information that must be included in a Recommendation to Review. This includes:

- the **rationale for the review**, referencing information provided in the Outlook plus any other relevant information (where other information is included, sources must be cited as applicable);
- a **proposed timeline** for the review (in accordance with the timelines provided in the Policy); and
- the draft **Terms of Reference for the SOC** that will conduct the proposed review. The Terms of Reference define and guide the work of the SOC and must be prepared according to the template provided in Appendix D of the Policy.

Rationale for Review:

The province approved construction of a Grade 9-12 high school in Eastern Passage and a Boundary Review has been completed for the school. The catchment area includes Eastern Passage Education Centre, Seaside Elementary, Oceanview Elementary and Tallahassee Community School within the Family of Schools (as shown below).

Map 1-Eastern Passage Education Centre and elementary feeder schools catchment area

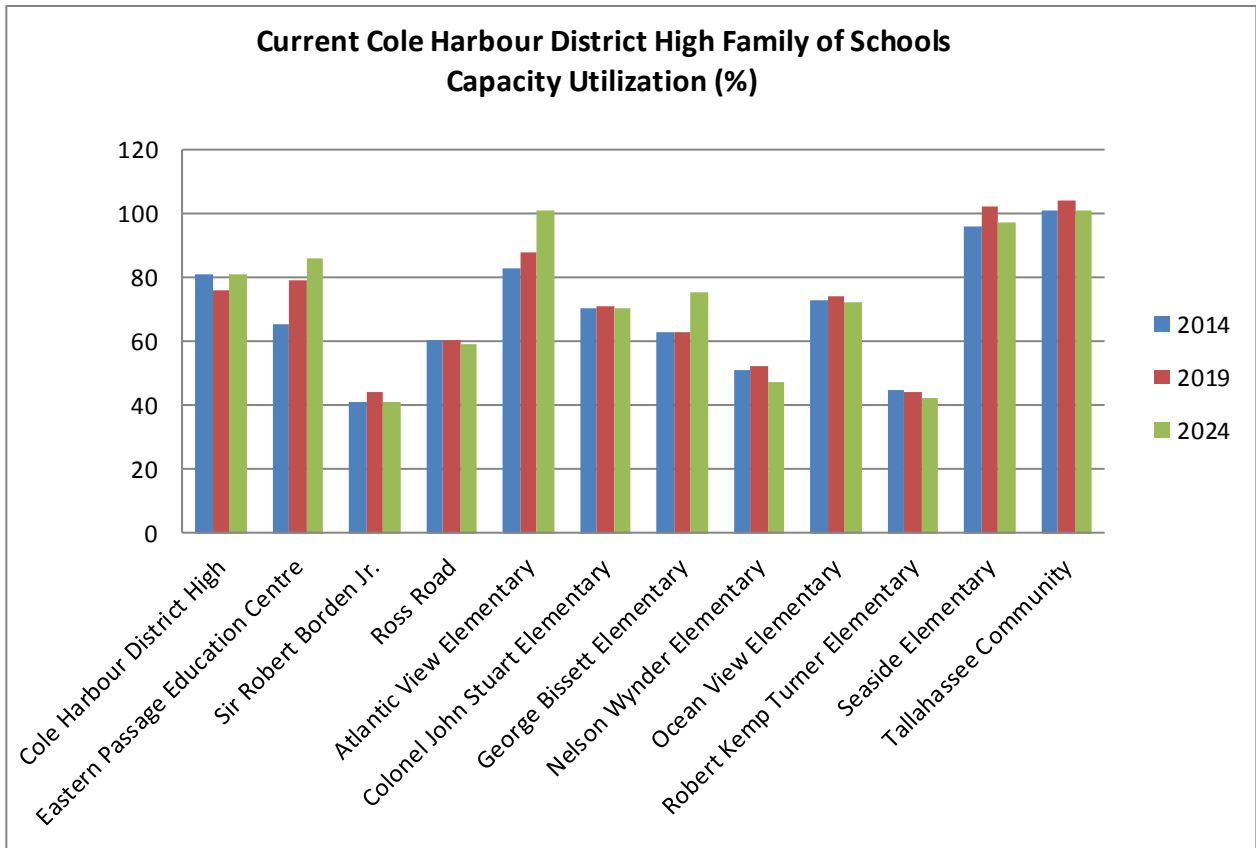


Source: Halifax Regional School Board & Baragar Demographics

Utilization of schools is a factor for consideration. The Long-Range Outlook data for these schools indicates that Eastern Passage Education Center (EPEC) and Oceanview Elementary Schools are underutilized, while Tallahassee Community School and Seaside Elementary School are both projected to be slightly above optimum utilization. With the reassignment of Grade 9 students from EPEC to the new high school, there will be further negative impact to the underutilization of EPEC. It is estimated that EPEC will be at approximately 52% utilization when the high school opens, due to reassignment of Grade 9 students (see Figure 3 below).

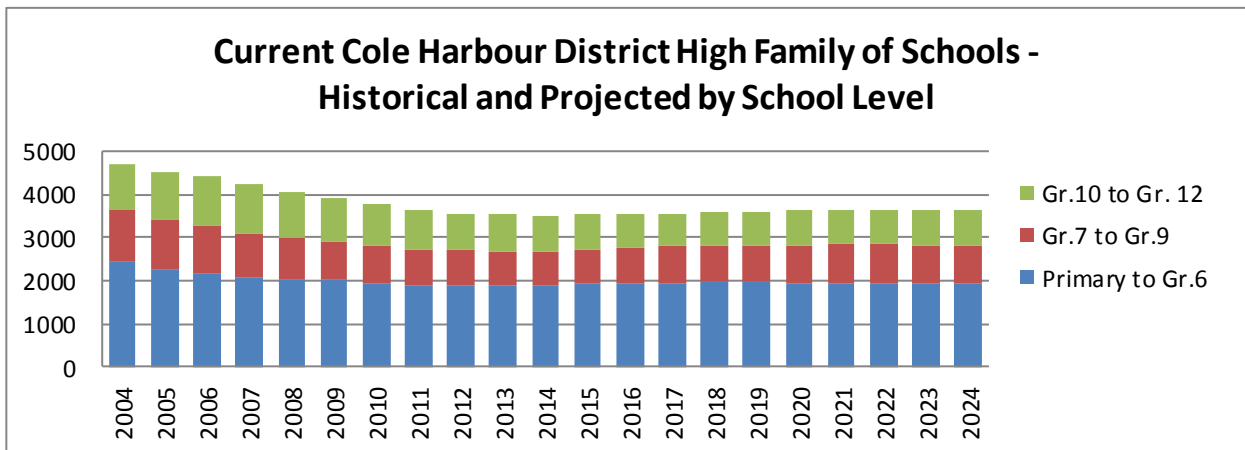
The School Review Policy Appendix C: Calculating Capacity and Utilization states the optimal utilization rates for elementary and junior high schools as 100% and high schools as 85% of calculated capacity. A review by a School Options Committee would result in an improved utilization of these schools.

Figure 1



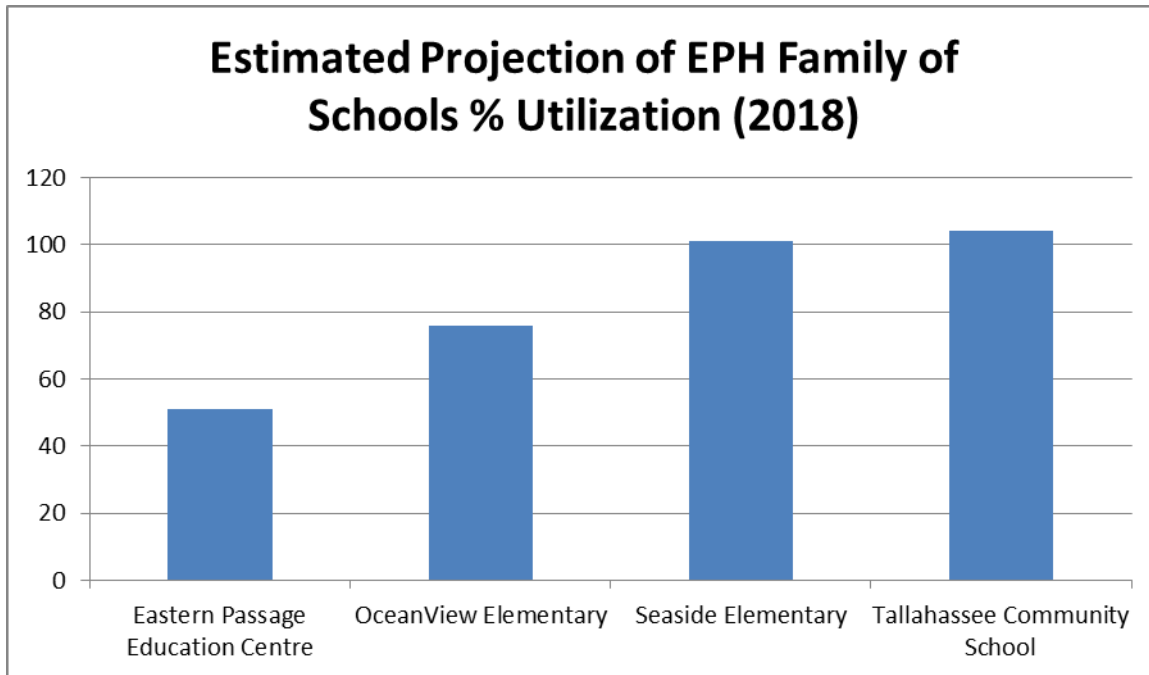
Source: Halifax Regional School Board Long-Range Outlook pg. 145

Figure 2



Source: Halifax Regional School Board Long Range-Outlook pg. 145

Figure 3



Source: Projected utilization using data from the Halifax Regional School Board Long Range-Outlook 2015 pg. 145.

Based on these factors, a reorganization involving this group of schools could optimize use of school facilities. This reorganization could also enhance program and learning opportunities for students.

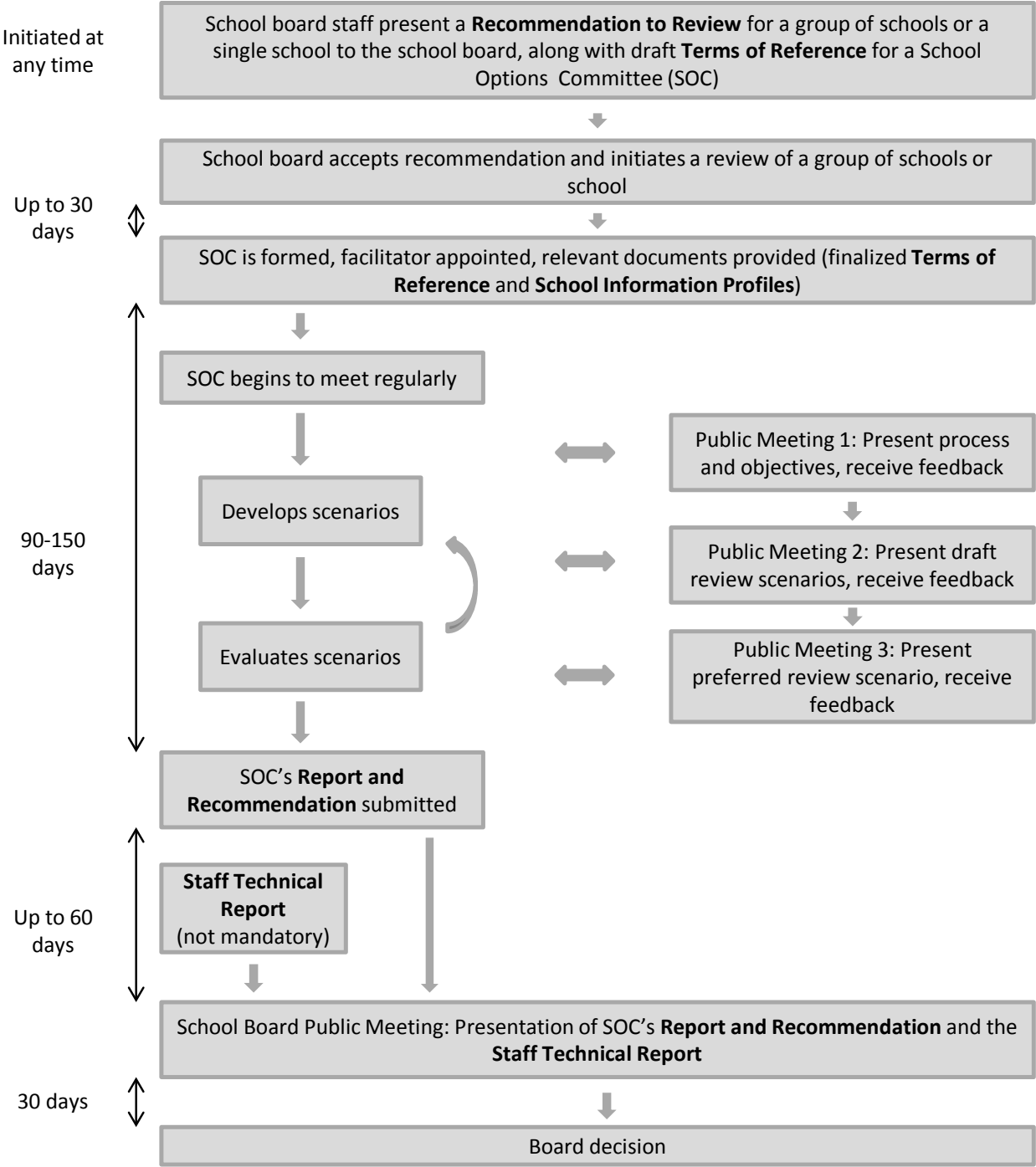
Timeline for Review:

Upon approval by the Governing Board, the timeline of the Review will follow the requirements of the School Review Policy. The proposed milestone dates for the Review process are as follows.

December 16, 2015	Governing Board approves recommendation to initiate a review of the schools in Eastern Passage
January 15, 2016	Facilitator appointed by Superintendent (within 30 days of approval to review)
January 15, 2016	School Options Committee (SOC) formed and begins to meet regularly (within 30 days of approval to review).
February 22, 2016	first public meeting
March 21, 2016	second public meeting
April 18, 2016	third public meeting
May 25, 2016	(SOC) submits report and recommendation to the Governing Board through Superintendent
June 22, 2016	Decision by Governing Board

Figure 4 - School Review Timeline

SCHOOL REVIEW PROCESS



Source: School Review Policy

School Options Committee (SOC) Terms of Reference

Date: December 16, 2015	
School(s) under review:	Eastern Passage Education Centre Ocean View Elementary Seaside Elementary Tallahassee Community School

Mandate:

As per approval by the Governing Board, the mandate of the School Options Committee will be to:

- perform a Review of the four schools in Eastern Passage following the requirements of the provincial School Review Policy;
- provide a written report with recommendations, consistent with the review objectives and reference criteria, to the Governing Board through the Superintendent; and
- include in the report
 - grade configuration of each school and
 - which school(s) has been identified for permanent closure (if any).

Review Objectives:

The circumstances identified in the provincial Policy that have led to this review are:

- *“reorganization involving a school or group of schools could optimize use of school facilities across the school board”;* and
- *“reorganization involving a school or group of schools could enhance program and learning opportunities for students.”*

Therefore, the objective of the School Options Committee is to reduce excess capacity through a reorganization of the schools to optimize the use of school facilities in the Eastern Passage High Family of Schools while exploring options to enhance program and learning opportunities for students.

Reference Criteria:

The following should be considered when reviewing options within this Family of Schools:

Grade configurations,

- On May 22, 2013, the Governing Board approved a motion to require staff to consider various grade configurations during boundary reviews, school reviews and facility planning, and to include a community consultation process whenever considering grade reconfiguration.

Class size and composition,

- Class size shall follow provincial guidelines with regards to funding parameters for class size as determined by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Maximizing use of school facilities

- The School Review Policy Appendix C: Calculating Capacity and Utilization states the optimal utilization rates for elementary and junior high schools as 100% and high schools as 85% of calculated capacity. These rates should be considered as targets for options being developed by the SOC.

Limiting factors such as transportation time limits, geographically isolated schools.

- The HRSB Student Transportation Policy F.005 defines requirements for student transportation. Consideration must be given to determine impacts to student transportation caused by revisions to school boundaries or grade configurations.

Membership:

The Superintendent will request that the School Advisory Councils from each of the schools named in the Review appoint one member to the School Options Committee. This representative cannot be an employee of HRSB.

Facilitator: To be appointed by Superintendent

Voting SOC members:

Eastern Passage Education Centre:

- SAC Chair or designate-
- Parent Representative-

Ocean View Elementary:

- SAC Chair or designate-
- Parent Representative-

Seaside Elementary:

- SAC Chair or designate-
- Parent Representative-

Tallahassee Community School:

- SAC Chair or designate-
- Parent Representative-

The Superintendent will assign staff to support the SOC. The primary role of staff is to provide information. Staff may include central office employees and Principals (or designates) of schools involved in the Review. All HRSB employees assigned to support the Review process are non-voting members of the SOC.

Procedures:

Election and Authority of the Chair

The Chair will be elected by the committee at the first meeting.

The Chair will have authority to prepare an agenda, schedule meetings and close meetings as deemed appropriate.

Meeting Dates & Times

Meetings will be held on <date>, from <start time> to <end time>, unless otherwise communicated to Committee Members by the Facilitator or Chair. The length of meeting will be based on the content of the agenda.

Location(s)

Meetings will be held at *Eastern Passage Education Centre* unless otherwise decided by the SOC.

Agenda

The Facilitator will prepare the agenda with consultation from the Chair. The Chair will ensure that the agenda is followed. The agenda will focus on planning, problem solving, and decision making agenda items over informational agenda items. The agenda will include:

1. Agenda review
 - o recording attendance
2. Updates
 - o follow up from previous action items
 - o reviewing all Open Action Items
3. Agenda items
 - o priority order
 - o including an open period if time permits
4. Closure
 - o Facilitator reviewing action items
 - o preliminary agenda items for the next meeting
 - o Facilitator sharing observations as process reporter
 - o Confirming time and location for the next meeting.

Minutes

A uniform template (action sheet) will be used to record action items. The Facilitator will fill out the action sheet (including a summary of the topic discussed, a decision/action to be taken, deadline/person responsible, action item completed) during each meeting. This sheet will constitute the minutes and will be placed in the team binder at the end of each meeting. When confirmed at subsequent meeting, an electronic copy will be sent to the Director Operations Services as the official minutes and subsequently posted on the Board web site.

Open Action Items List

The Facilitator is responsible for maintaining the list of Open Action Items from one meeting to the next. The items on the list are typically reviewed during the update portion of the committee meeting.

Decision Making

Decisions will be made according to the Terms of Reference provided by the Governing Board.

Confidentiality

Committee work (including discussions and opinions) shall stay within the team unless consensus to do otherwise is reached. Committee members are never to identify "who said what" outside the team meeting, unless agreed to by the team.

Meeting Cancellation

It may be the case that the committee requires time to read information they receive or prepare information for meetings. In such cases, the Chair in consultation with the Facilitator may cancel the meeting. All Committee Members will be contacted with sufficient notice.

Absenteeism

When a Committee Member is not able to attend a meeting, he/she is expected to notify the Chair or Facilitator. Chronic absenteeism is harmful to the team and will be discussed by the whole team if a member misses more than three meetings in a row. The Chair may request that the Superintendent replace a Committee Member for chronic absenteeism.

Norms for meetings

Meetings norms are to be generated by committee members. These are intended to be a list of things which help/hinder constructive team work.

Schedule

The timeline will comply with the School Review Policy.

Public Meetings:

As per Directive J in the School Review Policy, the SOC will hold at least three public meetings for the purpose of presenting the work of the SOC and to seek input and feedback about the review scenarios under consideration.

The Facilitator will ensure that notices of public meetings are posted at least 2 weeks prior to the meeting, through the HRSB Communications office. Notice will be posted in a local newspaper as well as by the Board web site, social media and other means available.

The meeting will be facilitated by the Facilitator who shall ensure that the content of the public meeting will include as a minimum:

- *Explanation of the School Review Process*
- *Mandate of the School Options Committee*
- *Summary of work conducted to date*
- *Objectives and Reference Criteria of the Review*
- *Opportunity for members of the public to speak*

A summary of public contributions will be taken by an SOC member and approved at a subsequent SOC meeting. Approved summaries will be posted on the Board's web site.