



School Review Committee Response  
Sheet Harbour Consolidated Elementary  
January 2013

## **BACKGROUND:**

At the meeting of the elected School Board on March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012, representatives from the School Advisory Committees (SAC) of the Duncan MacMillan catchment area made presentations to the elected board requesting that their schools, Eastern Consolidated and Sheet Harbour Consolidated be put up for review. The essence of the requests was that the schools be closed when a new Primary to Grade 12 School is built in the area serviced by Duncan MacMillan High School. At that same meeting, the Director of Operations submitted a report (Report #12-03-1339) identifying these schools as well as Lakefront Consolidated for review. The elected board agreed to receive this report and the community requests and the three schools were put up for review in 2012/2013.

In accordance with the procedure for School Review as outlined by the Department of Education, a School Review Committee (SRC) was formed by October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012 to review the Identification Report and the Impact Assessment Report and prepare a response to the Impact Assessment Report. The Board- appointed Facilitator, Nancy O'Brien, held the first meeting on Monday, October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The committee included the members of the School Advisory Committee (SAC) of Eastern Consolidated as well as the principal of Duncan MacMillan High School, Molly Gammon. At times, we were joined by her designate, Vice Principal, Aaron Verge. The committee met a total of 6 times from October 2012 to February 2013 and communicated throughout the process via e-mail.

After the first four meetings, the SRC held a public meeting on Monday December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012 to receive input from the community concerning the Impact Assessment Report. In addition to 12 committee members, Board member, Bridget Boutilier, MLA, Jim Boudreau, Councillor, David Hendsbee, and Chamber of Commerce representative, Jack Marshall approximately 13 community members attended the meeting. (The recorded text of that meeting is attached as Appendix B.) The committee met after the public meeting to review the feedback received at the public meeting and to begin preparing their response.

## **RESPONSE:**

The Impact Assessment Report offers two possible outcomes for Sheet Harbour Consolidated Elementary.

- Possible Outcome #1: Sheet Harbour Consolidated Elementary remains open.
- Possible Outcome #2: Sheet Harbour Consolidated Elementary closes and students are moved to a new Primary to Grade 12 School:

After listening to the public, the community's elected politicians, and school staff this committee feels Sheet Harbour Consolidated Elementary should close when a new Primary to Grade 12 School is built. We cannot in good conscience advocate for this school to remain open. It is an old building with problems associated with its age. Moreover, it has not been maintained at a level that makes it an appropriate place to educate the children of this area. It is at the point where the board must deliver water to the school to maintain operation. These children require a safe, modern facility that offers them more.

Another concern of the SRC is the lack of security systems in the school. We realize that certain systems using close circuit televisions would require fund-raising by the schools but a basic front door camera and remote security latch has been provided to some of the schools in the HRSB. We wish to request that a review of the security needs of Sheet Harbour Consolidated be undertaken and that the HRSB provide a front door camera and latch.

The community strongly expressed their desire for a new school which would service all the students of the Duncan MacMillan catchment area. They recognize that the three elementary schools are beyond a reasonable life expectancy. The high school is equally in need of replacement. The fact that all school buildings in this area are in desperate need of replacement makes the consideration of movement to anywhere other than a new school unreasonable.

The HRSB voted to prioritize the construction of a new primary to grade 12 school built in the Sheet Harbour area and the people of this district want to see that project realized in an expedient manner. The SRC feels our students deserve a modern facility with state of the art technology and programs that will assist them in achieving an education that will ready them for the future. The community wants to see facilities that will promote a healthy lifestyle for the entire community. Sports fields, a new gymnasium, and up-graded playgrounds will be a benefit for all. The current gym roof leaks and the existing playground poses safety risks to the children due to its rocky landscape and the lack of a fence. We feel it is time to make this area of the HRSB a priority and meet the Department of Education's goal of providing equal and outstanding education to all students in the province. The state of the Duncan Family of Schools' buildings makes one question why this has not been done sooner.

One challenge that faces rural schools like ours is maintaining an established teaching staff. Teachers regularly travel from the city and when openings arise closer to metro, these teachers transfer. This makes programming a challenge. When teachers are

committed to a school for a prolonged period, they have more opportunity to develop their curriculums and to give more time to extra-curricular activities. They invest in stronger relationships with their students and the whole school benefits. We feel a new school will act as an incentive to teachers to commit to staying in the area and building and sustaining even better programs for our students. The committee assures the Board that our current staff members provide a good education for today's students but the sustainability of staffing remains an issue. It was also raised at the public meeting that providing a new school will also make living in this district more attractive to families and could help to reverse the trend of a decreasing population and economy.

This community feels stymied by the lack of support and vision of our governing bodies. It appears that the Halifax Regional Municipality and the government of Nova Scotia have written off development of this area. They have not provided support to increase our economy and at the same time justify their decisions based on a declining population. Of course the people will leave if there is no incentive to stay! We know our children want to be able to attain an education that will allow them to enter the workforce in their own neighbourhoods. We believe having a new school designed to provide programming to support their goals is essential.

It is apparent to the SRC that we are using this response to put forth a case for the new school but the public meeting gave us a clear directive that we should state loud and clear that the schools in this catchment area are no longer fit for use and that there is no suitable building available that is conducive to the educational needs of our students. Moving them to another facility is not a solution and we need the support of the HRSB to see that the Department of Education appreciates the situation and that all governing bodies step up and rectify this travesty. We ask the board to close Sheet Harbour Elementary **only after** a new school is built for primary to grade twelve students. Our kids are worth it.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Committee Members:**

- John Lowe – SAC Parent Representative (ECS) and Co-chair
- Lisa Hutt – SAC Representative (SHCE) and Co-chair
- Wanda Scott – Principal, Eastern Consolidated School and Sheet Harbour Consolidated Elementary
- Troy Smith – Vice-Principal, Eastern Consolidated School and Sheet Harbour Consolidated Elementary
- Molly Gammon – Principal, Duncan MacMillan High School
- Jennifer Lowe – SAC Parent Representative (ECS)
- Laurel Langer – SAC Parent Representative (ECS)
- Katie Tait – SAC Community Representative (ECS)
- Michelle Aucoin – SAC Staff Representative (ECS)
- Kim Parnell – SAC Staff Representative (EPA)
- Devin Ashley – SAC Staff Representative (ECS)
- Mike Robinson – SAC Staff Representative (SHCE)
- Janice Malay – SAC Community Representative
- Linda Lou Roy-MacDonald – SAC Grandparent Representative (SHCE)
- Vernon Logan – SAC Community Representative (SHCE)
- Nancy O'Brien – Board Appointed Facilitator

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Record of Public Meeting**

#### **SHEET HARBOUR**

**December 10, 2012**

**LISA HUTT:** Okay we are going to get started it looks like everybody is here is that is coming on this rainy night. So I would like to welcome everybody and thank you for coming out. My name Lisa Hutt. The co-chair to John Lowe for the Sheet Harbour and Mosher River School Review Committee. We also have most of our Committee sitting over there. We have Devin Ashley, Michael Richardson Robertson sorry Mike, Katie Tate, Weldon Logan Vernon sorry, that's why you didn't answer when I called you Weldon, I'm going to hang up now, Janice Malay, Michelle Aucoin, Troy Smith and Molly Gammon and Wanda Scott. We are missing a few members tonight and we have Nancy O'Brien with us who is a facilitator to our Committee. So we are going to move right along we have a short slide show presentation and at the end of that we'll open the floor to anybody who would like to speak. I'll say it at this time we'll reinforce at the end, you need to speak into a microphone this is all being recorded and at the end of this there will be a report filed and we are here to basically gather your information tonight not so much to provide it. So at the end of all this we need to submit a full report to the School Board and everything that is said here tonight we would like to have recorded, and that needs to be done through a microphone. If you change your mind you would like to speak you can see Linda Lou at the back and register, so we also have that recorded. We will move right along. I just want to flip through my things. The purpose of this is to determine the opinions of the school community regarding the school review by the Halifax Regional School Board. The school review process – School Advisory Council is appointed as the School Review Committee. The SRC is responsible to responding to the Elected Board regarding the school review no later

than February 1<sup>st</sup>. Elected Board receive the report and holds a public meeting no later than March 24<sup>th</sup>. And the Elected Board makes final decision on whether or not the school closes by March 31<sup>st</sup>. Now we do have a tentative date for that public meeting which is Saturday February 23<sup>rd</sup> that the School Board has put out, but right now it is tentative. We will have more information on that. So the next steps; the Committee hears opinions from the community. The Committee prepares a report to reflect the community opinion. The Committee submits the report, the report will be available on the schools website or you can contact the school for a copy. Now this will not be done immediately, obviously we have until February 1<sup>st</sup> to do it. We will be working on it over the next month or so. The Elected Board will hold a public meeting at a later date and time prior to making their decision and the SRC will notify you as to when the meeting will be held. Proposed options, and this is basically what we are dealing with tonight, Sheet Harbour Consolidated Elementary remains open or the possible outcome number 2 is that Sheet Harbour Consolidated Elementary closes and the students go to a new primary to grade 12 school. So what we need from you, we need to hear from you, we want to have a clear direction for the School Review Committee to take in preparing the response to the report. We will also take any written submissions tonight or you can email them as well, we have a Gmail account set-up. So if you leave here tonight and say I wish I had could have spoke or now I think I have something to say, you can go through that email address and we will pick it up from there. So we do ask with your input tonight that this is not time to disagree or argue its respectful opinions and respect the fact that everyone has an opinion, and we are just here to gather that information. And everybody's information will be put in there. It is not an angry time or anything like that so we are going to be respectful to each other, and just compile and just try to come as a community to do what is right. So as I said before, when you when it is your turn to speak right now we have two registered speakers that doesn't have to be it see Lind Lou or if there is an available you can move to the microphone. We ask that you state your name, your relationship to the school whether you are a parent or community member. You have a 3 minute time limit now. That is kind of we were not sure how many people were going to be here, but 3 minutes is fair if you take a little more than that we may or may not cut you off so be prepared. You are also being recorded so we

need you to speak clearly and state your name clearly, and the recorder also asks that you spell your last name. It is easier for them as they are transcribing. Thank you for coming out and thanks for all the information you can provide tonight, remember this is your community your school, and we look forward to hearing everything. So if you have any questions regarding the presentation you can fire those out or you would like to speak you can move to a microphone. Okay Josie you were first on the list.

**JOSIE BARKHOUSE:** and I'm a parent, I have a child attending Sheet Harbour Consolidated. There probably was and I'm sure there were many meetings before this, but I'm wondering what they proposed to do with the kids between the time the school is built and the proposed shut down?

**LISA HUTT:** My understanding is that the school will remain open until a new school is built.

**JOSIE BARKHOUSE:** Okay well I do agree with the new school being built for the children from P to 12 and hope that goes through.

**JACK MARSHALL:** Good evening my name is Jack Marshall it is spelled MARSHALL. The Halifax School Board over the past few years has had a steady declining number of students enrolled in the educational system. This is most noticeable in the outlining areas. In the impact report Sheet Harbour Consolidated Elementary shows that this will continue in the Duncan MacMillan school boundaries until approximately 2019 school year. Then it should even out to approximately 275 students in the P – 12 area. One of the proposals put forward in the impact report Lakefront Consolidated was to move the Oyster Pond Academy catchment area to the West side of the Tangier River. One of the residents within the Tangier committee did a study earlier this fall and discovered that this would impact approximately 34 students from the primary to grade 12 area. If an announcement was made today that a new school would built from primary to grade 12 the earliest one could see a school built would ..... Would be the fall of 2015. At that time it is rejected that there would approximately 326 attending the new school providing that there is no change to the catchment area. Now if the catchment boundary takes place at the same time a new school opens, the population would drop by approximately

10.5% or approximately 290 students taken out of the school. Why should one be concerned about this possible change since it does not directly affect the current people attending who attend Sheet Harbour Consolidated Elementary who would benefit from a new primary to Grade 12 school being built. By not changing the boundary it would allow the new school to have to have much larger student body. The ability of a school to staff for special programs and extra-curricular activities is generally enhanced by a larger student population. This happens because more teaching staff would be allotted to the school in both full-time or part-time positions. With each individual student's exposure to certain subjects is defined by the curriculum offered by the School Board, the fact that art, music and gym teachers to name a few would be able to spend more time at the school with a larger population numbers. This would allow the teachers to become more familiar with their students therefore enhancing the abilities of those students who take part in these special programs. Now if the boundary is changed it would most likely reduce the number of programs it will offer to its students. Also with fewer students it would mean less teachers in the area. I recommend that you turn around and not change the Duncan MacMillan catchment area, because it has a big impact on what type of school would be built here. Thank you.

**LISA HUTT:** Thank you Jack. So that was our two registered speakers, would anybody else like to speak? Have an opinion we don't have a lot of answers if you have a question. We can try to have it addressed but that is not our whole purpose, but we are looking for any type of input or thoughts or opinions on what may happen with our schools. Doesn't give us a lot to work with for filing a report. Any ideas on why maybe a new school might benefit us what is wrong with the old school.

**AARON BOUTILIER:** I am a parent of a pre-schooler in this community. I do support the creation of a new P-12 school. I do want, my concern as a parent is that the school would be closed before a new school was built. In my mind I feel the only option then would be to send the students to Duncan MacMillan, and I don't really feel that that is an option for primary students. That school was designed for adolescents so it is not physically I am thinking of 4 and 5

year olds trying to get on toilets. So I would really want to see this school stay open until the new P-12 school is built. Thank you.

**LISA HUTT**: That is the kind of stuff we are looking for. Anybody else like to move up and have their say?

**KRISTA NAUGLER**: The mom of 3 and chair of the PTA. I have a lot to say and I will probably put a lot of it in an email, but a new facility is what we need. We need the children from Lakefront and Eastern to be a part of our community as they are and to also go to school together. Those kids need to be able to have a sports game they need to be able play a baseball game without have to use everyone in their school and still not having enough for one team. Our children here, it would be nice for them to be friends and grow up together and be able to attend school right from primary to 12 with the little numbers that we do have. I think water might be nice, it might be nice if we had a school that can supply the water so therefore, we have to take that into consideration before closing any schools is that if we don't have the water here to supply our children with and we can make note that they went for 3.5 hours last week without any water, then we can't bring new kids into this school and close other schools before we are ready to promise that. I think having a nice new facility with a proper playground or more playground equipment more opportunities for sports field, and other great things you see in the Halifax area and all the other P-12 or P-9 schools that we see around. Our children deserve those things too. No matter which part of HRM you live in, I think that this school old and it is used and it's out dated and doesn't meet the modern technology and all the standards. So we need to fight for that for our kids.

**LISA HUTT**: Thank you Krista. Next. Okay we'll look forward to some emails and if that is everything we'll close the meeting if there is nobody else. Oh, okay we'll hang on we have one that is trying to gather their thoughts. Everybody else, I done want to close if people are gathering we want to keep this going a little bit to get some information.

**JULIANNE HOGG**: Hello I am Julianne Hogg I have child in grade 5 and I'm really looking forward the idea of having a new school. I was lucky enough to grow up in the city and I did have a lot of programs and a lot of choices to choice from, and I do believe that if there are

more children here they can have different classes and different programs that I was lucky to be able to have. More options is always good it gives children more ideas what they can be in the future. It gives them more choices. I believe that exercise is so important to children there in this day and age of texting and videoing gaming their not getting enough exercise. I do believe that if we do have a bigger school there again a good playground and sports and the children may not have the opportunity at this present time to try out. I know there is a few different things but I think we could really have a great new school with lots of children and really make we could do things that the kids in the city are more fortunate to have. Our children wouldn't have to travel to New Glasgow or Musquodoboit or Dartmouth to be able to do these programs as they are now. It would save us money on gas and also we wouldn't have to worry about our love ones being on the road. It would make our community a lot better. Thank you very much.

**LISA HUTT**: Thank you Julie that was great. Not to put anybody on the spot but we do have some teachers here tonight, but we also have some elected officials if at any point they would like to also have some say. We have Jeff Boutilier....

**JEFF BOUTILIER**: Parent of two here at Sheet Harbour Consolidated. One in grade 3 and Grade 5. A new school would be a great opportunity for all the kids in the area and the surrounding areas. Not only that it may down the future be a great asset to new people coming to the area with the school. Because people look at the area and look at the schools that are in the area and the kind of turns them off, because of old problems: water, sewer, they don't have the opportunities for extracurricular activities in the school. There is no, the gyms are not very good. It would be a great asset for everybody even for people for after school if they opened it to the community for sports or drama or whatever. There is nothing here for young people older people so it would be nice to see it. Thank you.

**LISA HUTT**: Thank you Jeff. Anybody else, have their say. Mr. Boudreau Ms. Boutilier Mr. Hendsbee? Anybody like to show their support offerings opinions? Mr. Boudreau.

**JIM BOUDREAU**: MLA for this area. This is the third meeting that I had the opportunity to attend, and I also attended the meeting at the Board level back in the spring when the decision was made by the communities to ask for the process to begin. I'd like to make it very

clear to everyone that I am very supportive of the new school for this area. I see the facility I see the fact that the facilities do not meet the needs of community nor do they meet the needs of the students in particular. So I think that there is a definite need in this area and in this community and in the catchment area for a new school. As the MLA you will find me very supportive, and there have been many discussions that have taken place already. Once the process comes to an end and a decision is made by the Board and the community then we move in that direction. I know Lisa was trying to get me up here to say something, so I thought since I drove 220 km in 3 hours I thought I would take the opportunity to stand up after sitting that long. Thank you Lisa.

**LISA HUTT**: Thank you we appreciate your comments. Mr. Hensbee?

**DAVID HENSBEE**: Good evening David Hensbee, HENSBEE, municipal councillor for District 2 Preston, Chezzetcook and Eastern Shore. I've been monitoring the discussions about a brand new school for the Sheet Harbour region it was another district in the initial discussions over a year ago, but I've been monitoring the discussion the debate and the presentations that have been given to the School Board by various SACs and now we are just waiting for the formal process as it has been engaged now so I've been able to attend this is the second meeting I've been down to the one in Tangier I missed the one in Mosher River and I'm hoping to attend whatever future ones left in the process. Just to let you know that no matter what discussions, wishing and dreaming about a new facility and stuff, just want to let you know how that involves the municipality is once the schools announced by the province that there will be a school coming in at that time the municipality can make a formal request with the School Board to look at a joint use facility. At that point there would be a be more of a needs assessment done in regards to the aspirations on how to augment the school over and above the normal service delivery that a new school would have. That's what the municipality is waiting for at that point. I've been a part of the HRM's Community Facilities Master Plan discussions that happened over the last couple of years. That Master Plan is available on-line at the Halifax website. It talks about when new schools are being announced we look at that as a strategic partnership opportunity and we engage the communities at that time to see if we can

do any joint use enhancements to the schools. So we can look at that as a possibility, but until the province announces a new schools coming at that point it will trigger the municipality's opportunity to make that formal request to the provincial department with the School Board to venture into that. So I just wanted to let you know what that process is. I'm sitting at the mark and waiting for the gun to go off when the gun goes off the race is on. Any further questions or clarifications I will be free to answer them.

**LISA HUTT**: Thank you Mr. Hendsbee. Here comes Bridget Boutilier. Good thing I didn't put any pressure on.

**BRIDGET BOUTILIER**: Thank you. Elected Board Member and this is my third meeting. There is no question that I will support a new school. My children had gone to Duncan MacMillan when they had the air quality problem and went to Mosher River. I only wish I had seen the copies of the presentations that had been given to the School Board a year and half ago. I had requested them the written ones. Anybody here has any of those copies? Tana Mallet had given me one set of them or part of it she couldn't find the rest of them. Then I had to request it at the Board level, and they didn't have the recorded copies. Not the ones given at the Board meeting the ones when you went in and said about the impact. I am looking for them if anybody does have them I just kind of like to read them. Other than that if there are any questions most people here know I'm approachable anyway. You can ask me. I wish there were more people here, but there are things going on elsewhere in the community so they are there. But whatever each community, whether it be Mosher River, Tangier, I better correct myself Judy corrected me the other night and told me to stop call them Mosher River Tangier to call them Eastern Consolidated, Lakefront and Sheet Harbour Elementary. Whatever the groups decides it is what I am going to support, and like you just said they are planning the – the schools have to have their presentations ready for the Board in February, by the end of February and then in February Lisa mentioned earlier that there is a tentative meeting on a Saturday which will give more parents an opportunity to go, and I hope they attend. At that time the Board Members that I am there with now, there are 9 other members you are going to

be able to convince them on why we need a new school and work on them. Any questions just feel free. Thank you.

**LISA HUTT:** Thank you Bridget. So that is information we want to gather and rally for that February meeting. They are going to give the squeaky wheel the grease, right, that's the plan we have to fight for what we want and what we deserve. Anybody else would like to come to the mic? Linda Lou, I think I forgot to mention that Linda Lou was also one of our committee members, but she was working the door tonight.

**LINDA LOU ROY-MACDONALD:** The lady that was just up Bridget she said we need to convince the Board that we need a new school 1. The water here sometimes there is no water in the school, the roof is leaking, it's an older school it's been here for a long time. I think we would benefit from a new one, I think our children deserve it, I've only been here a year and a half and boy it's an eye opener from the city, being brought up in the city going to the schools in the city. The children are lacking a lot and missing out on a lot. There could be more programs brought into the school for after school kids that want to participate in sports or whatever instead of driving like someone said to New Glasgow or whatever. So I hope to see a new school and I'm for a new school and I think the Board needs to know that we are desperate for a new school because it lacks a lot.

**LISA HUTT:** Thank you Linda Lou. Anybody else? Okay if that is everything and if that is truly everything Lisa you have other opportunities and ways to submit your information if you would like and not a public speaker or think of something when you go home. The email address is on the school website, I believe yes it is. So you can look up the email address its Gmail. That is the one the committee picks up on. Don't email to the staff members and stuff that is not their area, this is a committee thing that is doing this, so direct your emails to that Gmail and we'll pick it up from there and we need that information to put this report together and like I said I like to reiterate we need to fight for our school we need to put it to them why we want the school why we deserve the school. So look forward to February. Oh Mr. Hensbee would like to speak. You need a microphone.

**DAVID HENSBEE:**.....

**LISA HUTT**: Would you guys mind doing that before you leave Linda Lou will have some paper at the door, just sign up that you attended in a legible form that would be perfect. Some people will be around after the meeting, but we will vacate the premises sooner than later, so thank you for coming out and like I said think about it food for thought send us an email. It doesn't matter if it is 10 pages long or 5 lines doesn't matter we need your information. Thank you so much.

## APPENDIX C

### Community Submissions Received Via E-mail

**#1.**

January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013

To whom it may concern,

My wife and I are writing to express our growing concerns over the conditions at Sheet Harbour Consolidated school in Sheet Harbour. We are aware that our school is currently under review and we would like to express our profound support for the closure of this school and the construction of a new school for our area. It is long overdue.

The current school was built in 1957 and there have been very limited improvements made in the years since. The only major change was the addition of the gym in the 1980's. Both my wife and I were students at Sheet Harbour Consolidated school, and now our children are students there. It is sad to see them sitting in the same classrooms we sat in and to know that there have been little to no improvements since we were there. The school is out dated. Resources are out dated. This puts our Children at a disadvantage when compared to other schools and it is not fair.

Our school does not have a proper library, classrooms are not updated with latest technology, and security features are not in place. This is 2013 and our children are basically going to school in a 1950's style environment. These conditions even limit our teachers and staff. Lunch time has become an issue because our school does not have a cafeteria. The children have to eat in their classrooms and are often rushed through their meals so that the teacher can get on with their lunch break. Microwaves have been removed from the classrooms due to safety and time constraints so now the Children are limited in what they can bring for meals. Once again, this is completely unfair to the Children.

Lately a new concern has come up. Serious water issues at our school. The school has run out of water several times because we have to have water shipped in to our school. HRSB has made no effort to look into repairing our current well and plumbing system, and have opted to truck water instead. This leaves the students with water that is of questionable quality. We, as well as other parents, do not allow our children to drink water from the school. When water runs out the toilets go all day without being flushed, hands cannot be washed properly, and the school is not being cleaned adequately. Our 5 year old has told us they use hand sanitizer to wash their hands because there is no water. I don't think I need to say how unacceptable this is. The health concerns alone are overwhelming! If this were a school in a more urban setting, parents would boycott HRSB. We are getting to the point we will be willing to do the same.

Our Children deserve the best education they can get in the best environment they can have. They deserve to be safe and comfortable and have all the resources necessary for them to learn and thrive. It

is time to be realistic with the reality that the three small schools in our area no longer need to be reviewed. They have been reviewed far more than enough. They now need to be closed, students merged, and moved into a new modern school. There has been enough discussion and debate over this issue. The parents are tired of it and the students deserve better. It is time to move forward.

Thank you for taking the time to read our thoughts.

Regards,

Jason & Heather Josey

**#2.**

January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013

To Whom it may concern,

We have been advised that our opinion on options regarding school closures in Sheet Harbour would be appreciated so that it can be presented to the review committee. It is our opinion, as parents with students in both Sheet Harbour Consolidated School and Duncan MacMillan High School, that these schools should remain open until the completion of the new P-12 school. This being said, we also feel that existing conditions at these schools are questionable and that Halifax Regional School Board must be held accountable for this. This is not just about buildings for us; it is about the children inside those buildings. It does not make sense to close down current schools before a safer, modern school is built. We think it is in the best interest of the students to allow them to continue going to school as they are, and move them only when the new school is ready. These schools have been functioning for the past few years as they are, so there is no reason that things can't continue this way for the sake of two or three years. HRSB will have to begin serious maintenance and upkeep of the current schools in the mean time, since we feel it is due to their neglect that conditions have been allowed to **deteriorate to their present state** in these schools in the first place. The students deserve to go to school under far better conditions than we have recently seen and experienced in Sheet Harbour.

Thank You,

Jason & Heather Josey

### **#3.**

As a taxpayer, former SAC chair and member, former disciplinary committee member, and parent of five children who have attended various HRM schools, I have strong feelings about the need for a new school in the Duncan MacMillan family of schools.

As nostalgic as the Eastern Shore Consolidated school and the Tangier schools are, they need to be closed because it is not economically feasible to keep them open. Duncan MacMillan High School is ancient and has numerous air-quality issues. It NEEDS to be closed for the health and good education of the students here in this area. And the sooner the better. I truly believe that the students here are not getting, despite some great teachers, the quality education that they could be getting, and certainly not comparable to some of the other rural schools in Nova Scotia (which I have visited).

I am definitely in favour of closing all three existing schools as soon as possible in order to be replaced with a new comprehensive school as soon as possible.

Thank you,

Barby Cochrane

### **#4**

Good Day, I'm writing to voice my opinion on the school review for Sheet Harbour Consolidated. I have 2 children that attend that school, a boy in grade 2/3 and a girl in grade 1. My husband and I recently moved to the eastern shore to start our own business but I was so nervous about my children attending a school outside the city. When I 1st enrolled them I had my apprehensions but after the 1st year I realized that the teachers and staff were outstanding. The only thing I was turned off by was the look and feel of the school my children are in. With of course the water situation (running out on many occasions) as well as the smell I notice of must and/or mold certain times of the year this is just a gross feeling we have, along with other parents. We want our kids to be in a safe and clean environment to learn and grow. New surroundings for our children would give a new meaning of school to the kids as well as the staff. I really think this area and school are ready for a change. A new P12 school would not only be a great addition to staff, students and parents, but also to the community of Sheet Harbour.

Sincerely, Michelle & Trevor Munroe Parents

**#5.**

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Alana Gammon and I am a business owner and resident of Sheet Harbour. I also have two children that attend the Sheet Harbour Consolidated school. I am writing this letter today to show my support for a new P-12 school for Sheet Harbour. I am aware that the SHCS school review committee has proposed two options. I would like to show my support for option number two, the Sheet Harbour Consolidated School remain open until the new P-12 is built.

Our current school has many issues that justify building a new school. The current location has no cafeteria, inadequate library and space for support services. The gym roof needs to be replaced and the current well does not support the requirements of the school. A larger student and staff population would mean more extra -curricular activities. The larger student population would also help with the development of social skills, students would be dealing with more members of their peers. With families only having one school to support, volunteer opportunities would be easier met.

A modern and up to date facility means more access to technical and specialized opportunities to improve learning. I also feel a new school would be very attractive to families looking to relocate to Sheet Harbour.

These reasons are just a few that support a new school for the Sheet Harbour and surrounding area.

Sincerely,

Alana Gammon

**#6**

Jan 23

Attention: Lisa Hutt.

I am a concerned resident of the Sheet Harbour area who has nieces and nephews going to both the Sheet Harbour Elementary and High school. It was only a few months ago during a Christmas Concert at the above mentioned school that residents were told they could not use the washrooms as there was no water. I am 60 years old and I went to this high school when I was 12, so it is at least 50 years old. I

was told by my sisters and brothers who have children and grandchildren attending this school this has happened on several occasions. This is unacceptable these children need to be able to wash their hands when they need to.

I understand there are two options under review with the committee, #1 is to keep the consolidated school open and #2, is to keep it open until the new P-12 is built and then closed. I strongly support Option # 2, to keep open until the new P-12 school is built.

I do hope the review committee will do the right thing and support a new school to be built for our children.

Linda Findlay

**#7.**

## **Attn: Sheet Harbour Consolidated Review Committee**

### **Re: New P - 12**

Nova Scotia is poised to become a major employer of all design and construction professions, from fabricators and fitters, electrical professionals, woodwork professionals, mechanical professionals to design engineers and architects, to name a few.

All of these professions require training which starts with a “finding out process”.

Good, to standard Nova Scotia schools have an array of introductory trade related courses and the facilities to give all students a feel to “find out” if one of these many careers interest them.

Sheet Harbour schools have none.

Not a mechanic shop,

Not a fab shop,

Not a design shop,

Not even a wood shop.

In late 1996, Duncan MacMillan was closed for a year due to environmental problems.

- The fix? - one year later they opened the windows to freshen the air (The kids were instructed to wear winter coats) and the Industrial arts design and wood shop was removed.

- This was the cure for the “bad air”.

- 16 years have passed, and not one aspect of any trade facility was replaced.

Keep in mind that we are at least 90 minutes drive on a bumpy road to the nearest sort of vocational facility.

As we all know, many of us have difficulty to excel at theory, text based courses like, science, math and english lit.

In Sheet Harbour, any student who would otherwise excel in classes that incorporate 3 dimensional design and build - like any wood, metal, mechanical or electrical training facility have absolutely no where to go in the curriculum to find that hands on trade related training that so many schools in the rest of the province offer.

What is the cost of **not** having that?

Once again - the 90 minute drive to the nearest vocational facility.

Are our young people expected to move away from home and go blindly into a trade program that they have had absolutely no previous taste of, while students from other areas would be years ahead due to having some training and going into a field they already know they like?

This is Halifax county - the richest county in Nova Scotia where career long opportunities await on the horizon and our Sheet Harbour school hasn't one single trade facility where those future professionals can find themselves.

Every job site in Canada requires basic safety training, whether you are an engineer or a floor sweeper. This training is completely lacking in Sheet Harbour schools since there are no facilities in which to apply them.

Again, what is the cost of churning students through a sub standard facility in a place that on the other hand in flogging the largest construction contract in it's history?

This situation screams complacency and severe lopsidedness.

If any sod is turned for a new school in this province, it **needs** to be in Sheet Harbour.

The communities affected by a new school in Sheet Harbour are 100% behind the centralization. Let there be no more excuses.

Sheet Harbour needs to be #1 on the list and the first for a new school.

Sincerely,

Chris Snow,  
Harrigan Cove

**#8**

December 11, 2012.

To Whom It May Concern,

Please accept this letter in response to the decision to review our school for closure. I am in favor of a new school being built for our student population, however I feel our current site should remain open until a new school is built.

As the resource specialist at Sheet Harbour Consolidated I am concerned with the amount of space that is available for our on-site specialists and visiting specialists. The location of the Resource and Learning Centre rooms at our current school site is a matter which needs to be addressed.

Currently our Resource room is a small room within the computer lab. It is not sound proof and can become very noisy when a class is using the lab. Throughout the year I am required to administer assessments to students. If a class enters the computer lab during an assessment I have to stop the assessment and find another location in the school to work. This is not the ideal testing environment and could affect achievement results but it is the only option I have!

The Learning Centre also deals with daily interruptions due to the fact that it is located next to the music room. This room is not sound proof and students are disrupted by loud noise from the music room on a daily basis.

Most of the students who are on the Resource and Learning Centre caseloads are easily distracted and have difficulty working in such environments. Due to the size of our school and the space that is available we have no option but to work where there are distractions and interruptions of many kinds.

We have many visiting specialists at our school such as APSEA Itinerant teachers, School Psychologists, Speech Language Pathologists, Sever Learning Disability Specialists, and School Social Workers. Because we do not have a designated room for them we are continually trying to find a 'free space' within the school for them to work. They frequently use the computer lab, music room, library and gym office when available. Often they have to move from room to room to accommodate other schedules through the day when they are visiting.

I feel that a new school should be built with proper space for on-site specialists and designated work space for visiting specialists. This would greatly enhance the teaching and learning experience for both the staff and students at Sheet Harbour Consolidated.

Sincerely,

Shelley Leslie

Resource Specialist  
Sheet Harbour Consolidated

**#9**

Dear members of the school board council,  
I am writing this letter as a parent of Sheet Harbour Consolidated School.  
I have two children that attend this school and there are a number of issues with the school one being water ,mould ,and no cafeteria .I feel as a parent our children are being sacrificed due to lack of opportunities our school offers.

I believe our children deserve better opportunities and with a new school these can be met. This would create better school morel for our children .I believe our new school should be P-12 with running clean drinking water .With a new school this will create new opportunities for our community ,instead of people moving away from the area people may stay . Communities revolve around schools which we have lack of .In closing we ask that our school to remain open until our new one is built.

Sincerely,  
Lorraine & Jeffrey Boutilier