

Site Selection: Eastern Shore District High & Gaetz Brook Junior High New Construction Summary of Feedback

May 2021



Introduction

Government announced on March 18, that it would be seeking feedback from the community on the location of the new Eastern Shore Consolidated School in HRM. This new school would replace two existing schools Eastern Shore District High and Gaetz Brook Junior High.

Feedback Opportunities

Information was shared on March 25 by HRCE to school communities (Eastern Shore District High, Gaetz Brook Junior High, O'Connell Drive Elementary, Oyster Pond Academy, Porters Lake Elementary) on how to provide feedback to government about site selection for the new Eastern Shore consolidated school.

There was a website (hrce.ca/easternshore) that outlined opportunities to provide feedback on site selection that also provided information on the process and sites being considered. This information was promoted via Twitter by HRCE on April 7, 14, and 21st (Appendix A). An ad in the Chronicle Herald ran in the April 3 edition (see Appendix B).

Opportunities for providing input included participating in a virtual town hall (via ThoughtExchange), submitting input via email (DeptEdPolPlan@novascotia.ca), or providing a written submission via mail (Eastern Shore Site Selection c/o EECD PO Box 578, Halifax NS B3J 2S9).

To support the public feedback period, three key pieces of information were provided to the public:

- information from the Department of Infrastructure and Housing on their technical assessment of three sites (Appendix C),
- criteria for the school site from the Minister (Appendix D), and
- the Governor in Council Education Act Regulations which outline the site selection process (<https://www.novascotia.ca/Just/Regulations/regs/edgic.htm>).

The opportunity for feedback was open until April 23, 2021.

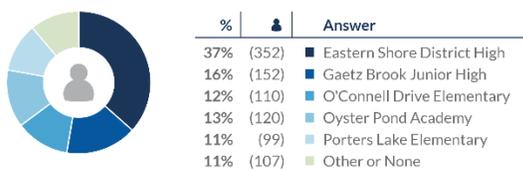
Participation

In total, there were 955 participants in the virtual townhall, sharing 1460 unique thoughts or opinions. There were also 130 email submission received and no phone calls or submissions via mail delivery.

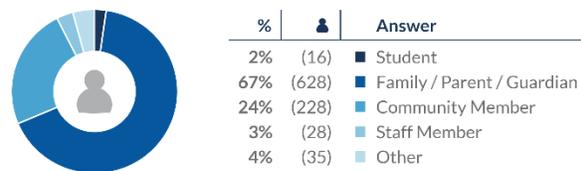


Of those participating in the virtual townhall, most respondents indicated they were most connected with Eastern Shore District High (37%), with the next highest group of respondents indicating they were most connected with Gaetz Brook Junior High (16%). Parents/Family/Guardians formed the largest group of respondents (67%).

What school are you most connected with?



What category best describes you?



Summary of Input Received

The virtual townhall provided an opportunity for respondents to contribute thoughts or feedback they wanted to share with respect to site selection. There were 1460 thoughts shared by 955 participants.

There were 130 email submissions received. The email submissions were focused in two main categories.

Comments received are categorized as:

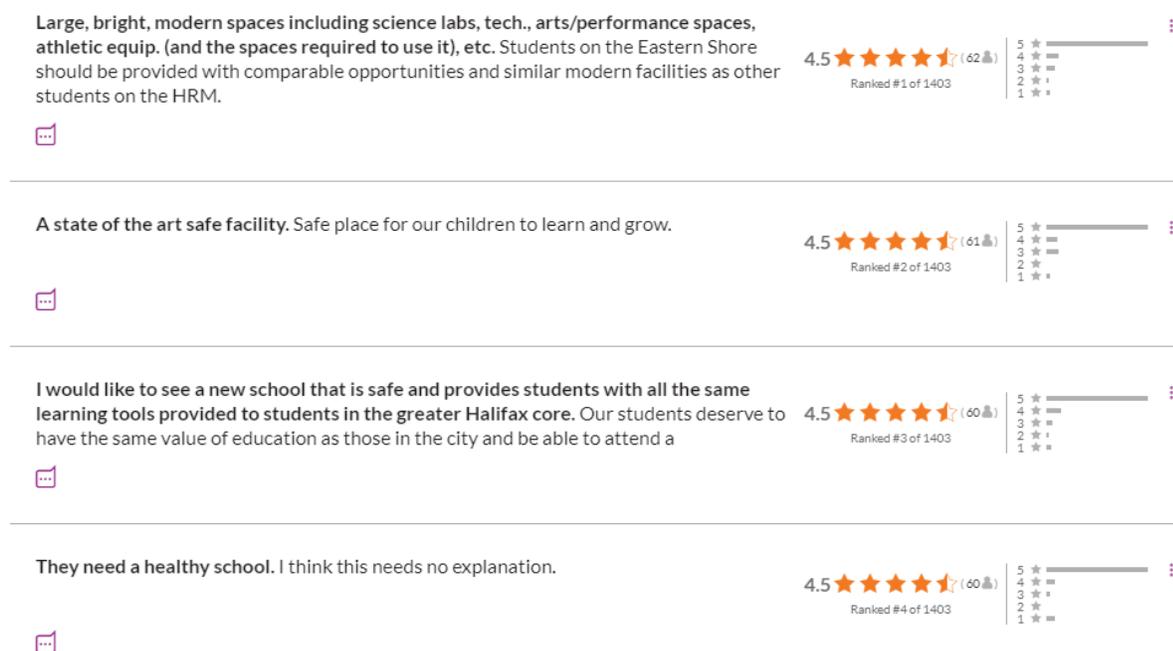
| Category | Virtual Town Hall Number of Comments (% of Total) | Email Submissions |
|---|--|-------------------|
| Input regarding the new school facilities, no site reference | 699 (48%) | --- |
| Input on a future site for the new school | 474 (33%) | 112 (86%) |
| No specific site mentioned, but don't want any more delays to constructions | 48 (3%) | 1 (1%) |
| General comment about the site selection process | 49 (3%) | 17 (13%) |
| General comment/Comment doesn't apply | 185 (13%) | --- |

*Note: there were five thoughts removed due to exact duplication by the same participant or for incomplete responses.

New School Facility

Many respondents shared feedback about their vision for the new school building including comments about their desire for a new, modern and safe facility, with access to programs and facilities for the students including suggestions such as science labs, arts/performance spaces, and IB and Skilled Trades programs.

The top thoughts shared related to the facility were:



Input on a future site for the new school

There were eight main themes arising from the thoughts and email submissions shared about a future school site.

| Theme | Number of Comments (% of Total) |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Supportive of building in the identified East Chezzetcook Site/ | 263 (45%) |
| Supportive of the current site (Musquodoboit Harbour site)/specifically against the East Chezzetcook site | 136 (23%) |
| Importance of a school being part of a community setting | 65 (11%) |
| Wants a site chosen that is central (no specific site provided) | 54 (9%) |
| No specific site mentioned, but importance for room to expand/grow/add other facilities | 30 (5%) |
| Does not want school built on East Chezzetcook site | 33 (6%) |
| Does not want school built on current site | 5 (1%) |

A selection of the thoughts shared from the perspective of supporting each site and where there was common ground, is shared below.

Side A

New spot chosen has room to grow and more central. Reinstating the decision that was already made. Chosen spot checked all the boxes get building already

★ 5.0 ★ 1.0

East Chezzetcook Build it!!!

★ 5.0 ★ 1.0

The location needs to be somewhere with room to grow. The East Chezzetcook Industrial park is a great location for this.

★ 4.9 ★ 1.0

What I would like to see "now" is a start of construction. This project has dragged on long enough and I feel the site selected is the best available. It's unfair that the vocal minority in Musquodoboit Harbour should be allowed to delay the school for so many people from so many other communities.

★ 5.0 ★ 1.0

build it on the chosen site, with room for additional facilities stop this delay!!!

★ 4.9 ★ 1.1

We need a new school and the location in East Chezzetcook or further West is ideal and central to the majority of kids that will be attending. Location has been decided so get it built now

★ 5.0 ★ 1.1

The land suggested is more central to the bulk of the population. Proceed as planned in the "Industrial Park" More central especially when other community services may be added.

★ 5.0 ★ 1.1

The new school should be built in East Chezzetcook

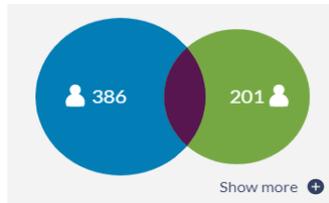
★ 4.9 ★ 1.0

The new site already chosen has room for many additional shareable facilities

★ 5.0 ★ 1.1

The kids are the ones suffering and need a new school sooner than later! E. Chezzetcook has room for so much growth and development! They need more space, new facilities and the sooner the better!

★ 5.0 ★ 1.2



Side A/B Common (high)

They need a healthy school. I think this needs no explanation.

★ 4.9 ★ 3.9

Modern technology. That is current school needs to have current technology for students to use and expand their opportunities

★ 4.7 ★ 4.1

Large, bright, modern spaces including science labs, tech., arts/performance spaces, athletic equip. (and the spaces required to use it), etc. Students on the Eastern Shore should be provided with comparable opportunities and similar modern facilities as other students on the HRM.

★ 4.8 ★ 4.3

I would like to see a new school that is safe and provides students with all the same learning tools provided to students in the greater Halifax core. Our students deserve to have the same value of education as those in the city and be able to attend a

★ 4.8 ★ 4.2

up to date technology in programming/infrastructure large spectrum of course availability

★ 4.7 ★ 4.4

A state of the art safe facility. Safe place for our children to learn and grow.

★ 4.8 ★ 4.1

the students need quality facilities the equivalent of all others in NS The students need quality facilities the equivalent of all others in NS

★ 4.7 ★ 4.0

Up to date technology/programming This is the way the future is headed. Students need to be able to have the same opportunities as all other students in the province and country.

★ 4.8 ★ 4.0

Up to date technology which requires reliable digital connectivity Digital connectivity is about accessing learning materials, exploring different ways of learning, fostering innovation, connecting to jobs, inclusion

★ 4.6 ★ 4.2

More course options To broaden interests

★ 4.5 ★ 4.3

Side B

ESDH should be kept where it is. GBJH should also. Rebuild both schools. There's no reason there needs to be joint schools. Schools in town get separate ones. ESDH is a good location for students

★ 1.0 ★ 4.8

The current location is the preferred location. Moving the school site outside of Musquodoboit harbour will lead to even longer bus rides for students.

★ 1.0 ★ 5.0

I believe moving the school to the new location will destroy the small communities.

★ 1.0 ★ 5.0

Leave the High School where it is! The current location in MH is central. Why is consolidating ESDH and GBJH a problem that students to the east must pay for?

★ 1.0 ★ 4.9

The school should remain within the Community of musquodoboit harbour. Travel distance and time needs to be considered. Regardless of how many kids use the surrounding facilities it is important to surround the school with opportunities for students.

★ 1.0 ★ 4.9

ESDH should not be located in an industrial site. There is no community there. It will add another 10 mins to an already over 1 hr bus ride for students coming from the eastern Edge of the catchment

★ 1.1 ★ 5.0

The existing Eastern Shore High School property is approx 9 acres, with another 15 acres plus surrounding it. There is by far enough land to build on Use what you have, in comparison to, let say Citadel High, the room on the land is there for this type of structure...

★ 1.1 ★ 4.9

I think the school should stay in the community it is already in I think this village thrives because its here and removing it would take away buisness

★ 1.0 ★ 4.9

Is it fair to disenfranchise students coming from the East because they are a smaller group of students compared to Lake Echo who have closer schools The children attending ESDH from Lake Charlotte already have a long enough bus ride, and have no closer schools to attend

★ 1.2 ★ 5.0

I am full against the school consolidation, the public was given 2 options just a new high school or consolidation, there needs to be 2 new schools I have 3 children this is going to effect, I am from the area and came through this school system. It will be a detriment to a portion of the students

★ 1.1 ★ 4.7

Conclusion

Many individuals who provided feedback regarding site selection were focused on the opportunity a new facility would provide to the students of Eastern Shore. The building of the school was viewed as long overdue and there was an interest expressed in moving forward with the construction of the school, regardless of the site chosen.

For those that indicated a specific preference for a particular site, the majority of responses indicated a preference for the East Chezzetcook site (45%) with a smaller percentage indicated support for the existing site or a site in the same general area (23%). About 6% of responses specifically stated they did not want the school built in East Chezzetcook, with about 1% indicating specifically that it should not be built on the existing site, or that general area. About 11% indicated support for a site that was part of a community setting and 5% wanted to see the school build in an area where there was room to expand and add other facilities. A central location was mentioned in 9% of the feedback comments.

Appendix A – Sample of Tweet

 **Tweet**

 **Halifax Regional Centre for Education**
@HRCE_NS

ICYMI, @nsgov is seeking feedback from the greater Eastern Shore school community as it considers where to build the new Eastern Shore Consolidated School. Learn more about how to participate at hrce.ca/easternshore.

Eastern Shore Consolidated School Site Selection

The Province of Nova Scotia is seeking feedback from the greater Eastern Shore school community as it considers where to build the new Eastern Shore Consolidated School.

Visit hrce.ca/easternshore to learn more or participate in a virtual town hall.

Email your feedback to DeptEdPolPlan@novascotia.ca

Or write to:
Eastern Shore Site Selection c/o EECD
PO Box 578
Halifax, NS
B3J 2S9

Feedback will be accepted until **April 23, 2021**.



9:30 AM · Apr 7, 2021 · Hootsuite Inc.

Owls Head debate goes to Supreme Court

FRANCIS CAMPBELL
THE CHRONICLE HERALD
fcampbell@herald.ca
@franciscampbell

The spirited Owls Head debate spilled over into the Nova Scotia Supreme Court and the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal on Thursday morning. In the end, Justice Justice J. Simpson challenged Justice Rankin's March 2019 decision, as then minister of Lands and Forestry, to remove 200 hectares of Crown property at Owls Head from the protected areas plan and to enter into side negotiations that would support a pulp-mill development instead.

"The minister had a process in place that led to the parks and protected areas plan," said Simpson, representing the judicial review applicants, Bob Bunnell and the Eastern Shore Forest Watch Association.

"The decision to remove Owls Head from the plan, absent any notice or consultation with the public, was a material departure from the established process," Simpson said.

Simpson said it seems the minister and the treasury and policy board was bound to a single outcome. "Given to remove the park from the parks and protected areas plan so that the minister could not obtain a valid private transfer."

Simpson argued that Rankin and the Lands and Forestry Department never assessed the property for its economic and ecological value, but instead entered into a decision to sell the four pieces of property in question for a proposed \$226,000 a piece based on the land being undevelopable.

"The minister is proposing to sell this Crown land for the very purpose of being developed and providing, presumably, development benefits for the province and yet it's being



An aerial photo of Owls Head Provincial Park near Little Harbour, N.S., on Wednesday. Geologists say the formations present in the park are layers of metamorphosed sandstone, gouged from glacial action thousands of years ago.

TIM KROCHAK • THE CHRONICLE HERALD

soil for a price based on it being undevelopable," Simpson said.

COASTAL BARRIERS AND WETLANDS

The land, located about 80 kilometres east of downtown Halifax, includes a variety of coastal barriers and wetlands, exceptional hydroic-shaped topography and a home to the piping plover and the humpback whale, two species at risk, according to court documents submitted by the province.

"On top of all this, the minister purposely held the decision and the decision-making process hidden from public view," Simpson said.

Lawyer Jack Townsend, representing the minister and the department, responded to a direct question from Justice Chris Batters by saying that the department has no legal

obligation to inform the public that it was selling in acting as though the land in question was provincial park and subsequently entering it over for another purpose.

Townsend said there is nothing in the Parks Act or the regulations that hold the government to public consultation should it decide to remove the status of a provincial park.

"There isn't a process," Townsend said.

Moreover, Townsend said Owls Head is not a park, simply a park reserve, which is property set aside that at some point may or may not become a park.

URGED TO RALLY

As Brotherton previewed the beginning of the court proceedings, Batters of Little Harbour at Owls Head was urging about 100 people outside the law courts to be taking to rally against

the government's "unfair, secretive" decision to sell Owls Head provincial park to a developer.

"I was told the decision was made in secret and that we all can be proud of an environment that will be sustainable, an environment with an ecosystem that will provide clean air, clean water, for the next generation," Batters said.

"Owls Head provincial park cannot be compared to other parks that have had golf courses built on them. We know through science-based fact that Owls Head is a rare ecosystem that has not been touched for 10,000 years, since the last ice age."

Batters said selling game birds on the shores of Owls Head park can capture carbon 38 times faster than the tropical rain forest, provide shelter and food for young creosote and bird species from our native waters.

"The value of this land is priceless," Batters said. "If we don't stand up and protect it, it will be gone in a heartbeat."

PREMIER DEFENDS DECISION

Up the street, Rankin defended his 2019 decision, saying he would not do anything differently if he had the opportunity to do it over again.

"Staffed out a process of how we would determine a project on Crown lands," Rankin said after question period at the House. "Because it was in a category list for potential consultation projects, it was brought to my attention and public board and that cabinet committee decided that it should be looked at for a potential project."

That is what happened.

The premier said she and Nova Scotia's ministers with that

decision "so we have to make sure we're listening to all Nova Scotians, including the petition that was brought forward by those in the community who want to see us entertain a project."

Gary Berrill, leader of the New Democrats, said it's a "primary level of hypocrisy" for him now to present himself as a person of environmental concern while unequivocally supporting a "secret, behind-the-scenes" selling of Owls Head from the protected areas plan.

Berrill said Rankin missed an opportunity to show himself as a person of substance on the environmental file "by reversing the government's mistaken decision on Owls Head."

In a statement released Thursday, Light House Link said the Liberal government's decision on Owls Head was "reasonable, rational and evidence-based," and completely within its jurisdiction.

"In contrast, the arguments brought forward by the applicants are an attempt to stall any further progress on the ecosystem destination planned for the Eastern Shore, have delayed the project for over a year, and, unfortunately, have kept local residents from getting a needed job," the company statement said.

The company characterized the judicial review application as premature because the land has not been sold, nor was in the province's possession and "would be sold" until the province is satisfied with the results of the public consultation, which is essentially similar to what the applicants are saying "won't" do.

Simpson asked the judge to strike down Rankin's 2019 decision and to send the matter back to the lands and forestry minister.

Brotherton deferred her decision.

Sir John A., Tallahassee schools pick new names

THE CHRONICLE HERALD

Sir John A. Macdonald High School in Upper Tantallon and Tallahassee Community School in Eastern Passage are dropping their current names.

The Upper Tantallon school will be renamed Bay View High School. The Eastern Passage primary to Grade 4 school will be called Horizon Elementary School.

The changes were announced on the Halifax Regional Centre for Education's website on Wednesday.

Both schools' names were mired in controversy. Sir John A. Macdonald was named after the first prime minister of Canada, whose policies on the creation of the residential schools system and treatment of First Nations has led to reconsideration of monuments and statues in his honour.

Tallahassee, which opened in 1992, was named after a southern U.S. Confederate ship that in 1864 sailed into Halifax Harbour, then considered a neutral port, after raiding Union ships during the Civil War. After refueling and refitting its guns, it used the dangerous Eastern Passage to escape its Union pursuers.

The new names were chosen with the consultation of private-park school advisory councils, students, staff and community, as outlined in HRCCE's naming or renaming schools policy.

Both name changes will

take effect in September when classes resume after the summer break.

"We are pleased with how smoothly the process went," Amy Beaudry, chair of the Sir John A. Macdonald school advisory council, said in the release. "As a community, we understand the importance of ensuring inclusivity at the school and creating a space where everyone feels safe and welcome. The name change for our school is important for achieving that goal."

Michelle Myers, chair of the Tallahassee Community School SAC, said they strive to be inclusive for students, their families, staff, and the community.

"We are proud of the research we conducted in relation to the origins and history of our school name," Myers said in the release. "It has been a deep learning experience for us all. By renaming our school, we are eliminating a barrier that can be interpreted as racist and solidifying our commitment to being part of the solution to build an equitable society."

She added that the new name, Horizon Elementary School, reflects the school's geographic location and fits with the Island View family of schools in Eastern Passage.

Another school, Rocky Lake Elementary in Bedford, was considering a name change but has decided to keep the current name. It was originally a temporary name bestowed when it opened in September, she says.

"Students, staff and our school community said they felt strongly that a positive identity had already been established under our existing name and that Rocky Lake Elementary truly represents a safe space for all students and staff to learn and grow together," Sean Casey, principal of Rocky Lake, said in the release.

"Four potential school names were put to a vote and the overwhelming decision was to keep Rocky Lake Elementary (RLE) as our official name."



Sir John A. Macdonald High School, in Upper Tantallon, has announced that the school will change its name.

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Eastern Shore Consolidated School Site Selection

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Or write to:
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PO Box 578
Halifax, NS
B3J 2S9

Feedback will be accepted until April 23, 2021.



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Appendix C – Site Options Comparison – Technical Overview

Eastern Shore District 7-12 Site Options Comparison – Technical Overview

March 23, 2021

The Department of Infrastructure & Housing - Building Project Services division (IAH) has performed technical reviews of two sites and a high level review of another, as possible locations for the new Eastern Shore District grades 7-12 school. It is our opinion that the existing Eastern Shore District High and Gaetz Brook Junior High sites can marginally accommodate the school program, with no room for the inclusion of potential government services or community growth. The Real Estate Division of Transportation and Active Transportation along with IAH reviewed the catchment area for Gaetzbrook Jr. High School and Eastern District Shore High School in Musquodoboit Harbour. Based on the criteria of growth opportunities, the only crown land that fits the criteria identified by the Minister was the industrial park site. We were unable to identify any other comparable crown owned land suitable for a school in the catchment area. The industrial park site can accommodate such other facilities, in addition to the consolidated school. The rough building massings shown for each site are in response to the Education & Early Childhood Development school Space Allocation Program for the projected maximum enrolment of 655 students, and considered:

1. terrain
2. building size
3. parking
4. student drop-off/pick-up
5. hard surface outdoor play
6. sports field
7. power
8. water
9. sanitary sewer
10. storm sewer

| | Industrial Park | Existing Eastern Shore District HS | Existing Gaetz Brook JH | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|--|--|--|-------|-----------|-------|-------------|----------|-----------|--------------|--------------------|---|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----------|----------|----------|--------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Location | Off Hwy 107 and Motts Drive in East Chezzetcook | 35 West Petpeswick Road, Musquodoboit Harbour | 6856 Highway 7, Gaetz Brook | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Property ID (PID) | 00346346 | 00593012 and 41332420 | 00368662 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Size | Total parcel size of 88 acres, 17 +/- acres reviewed | 9.15 acres | 12.66 acres | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Availability | Owner: Nova Scotia Business Inc. | Municipally owned. 2 private parcels req'd at a possible cost of \$100,000 | Municipally owned | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Site Capacity | In addition to the school, other facilities can be accommodated in reviewed area. | Only the school program can be accommodated. | Only the school program can be accommodated. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Costing for Services to Site | <table border="0"> <tr><td>Power</td><td>N/A</td></tr> <tr><td>Water</td><td>\$150,000</td></tr> <tr><td>Sewer</td><td>\$1,200,000</td></tr> <tr><td>Roadways</td><td>\$200,000</td></tr> <tr><td>Total</td><td>\$1,550,000</td></tr> </table> | Power | N/A | Water | \$150,000 | Sewer | \$1,200,000 | Roadways | \$200,000 | Total | \$1,550,000 | <table border="0"> <tr><td>Power</td><td>N/A</td></tr> <tr><td>Water</td><td>N/A</td></tr> <tr><td>Sewer</td><td>\$100,000</td></tr> <tr><td>Roadways</td><td>\$25,000</td></tr> <tr><td>Total</td><td>\$125,000</td></tr> </table> | Power | N/A | Water | N/A | Sewer | \$100,000 | Roadways | \$25,000 | Total | \$125,000 | Further analysis required |
| Power | N/A | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Water | \$150,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sewer | \$1,200,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Roadways | \$200,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | \$1,550,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Power | N/A | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Water | N/A | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sewer | \$100,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Roadways | \$25,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | \$125,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| On-site Development Costs | Sloping north portion, increasing development costs. South portion flat | Flat site with minimal on-site development costs. | Further analysis required | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Full document found at: https://www.hrce.ca/sites/default/files/hrsb/esd_7-12_site_options_comparison-23mar2021.pdf

Appendix D – Letter from Minister



Education and Early Childhood Development
Office of the Minister

PO Box 576, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3J 2S9 • Telephone 902-424-4236 Fax 902-424-0990 • ednet.ns.ca

March 23, 2021

In December 2020, after public consultation, the Halifax Regional Centre for Education (HRCE) recommended to the Minister, the consolidation of Gaetz Brook Junior High School with the Eastern Shore District High School. Subsequently, the Minister received approval, in principle, for the construction of a new consolidated school building to replace those existing schools.

Therefore, the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) requested the Department of Transportation and Active Transit undertake the technical evaluations necessary to provide a recommendation for an appropriate site for a new consolidated school to accommodate the student populations of Gaetz Brook Junior High and Eastern Shore District High School.

The Site Selection Process for new school construction is set out in Sections 14-15 of the *Governor in Council Education Act Regulations* (the *Regulations*). Subsection 14B(3) of the Regulations sets out the priority order for the evaluation of potential replacement school building sites where a new school is replacing one or more existing school sites, as follows:

- (a) existing sites;
- (b) real property vested in Her Majesty in Right of the Province or held by the regional centre;
- (c) real property available for acquisition or use by the Province.

The additional requirements of the Minister for the site selection process for the new consolidated school are:

- in accordance with clause 14B(3)(a), the existing sites for Gaetz Brook Junior High and Eastern Shore District High location must be evaluated for suitability to accommodate the new consolidated school and facilities as required for the school program.
- suitable crown-owned land located within the school catchment areas from existing sites be considered as a priority for the new site under clause 14B(3)(b).
- any proposed site must be able to accommodate not only the new consolidated school but also allow for the potential inclusion of future co-located government facilities and community growth and development at the site.

The Minister has requested that Halifax Regional Centre for Education provide any information to the Department of Transportation and Active Transit regarding requirements of the school program or school community that would impact DTIR's recommendation for a school building site.

Prior to providing me with its recommendation, I request that the Department of Transportation and Active Transit work with the Department of EECD and the HRCE to provide information to the public on the site selection process and its findings in respect of a proposed recommended school building site.

Sincerely,

Derek Mombourquette
Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development