

# EASTERN SCHOOL DISTRICT PERMANENT SCHOOL CLOSURE REPORT

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## ***Eastern School District Mission Statement***

*The Eastern School District is committed to excellence in education. In partnership with the community, we will provide a safe and caring learning environment in which all students have the opportunity to reach their potential and to face the future with confidence.*

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## Executive Summary

In September 2008, the Eastern School District (ESD) was asked by the Prince Edward Island Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development to complete a School Organizational Plan (SOP) and forward it to the Department by December 31, 2008. This request was prompted by the findings of the provincial enrollment analysis entitled, *Schools for Tomorrow: Building and Sustaining High Quality Education Programs* (Ascent Group 2008). This report indicated that the PEI public school system has dropped almost 10,000 students (-32%) since 1970. In the ESD alone, twenty of our elementary schools have lost between 30% and 50% of students in the past decade. Projections indicate that the trend will continue. Fourteen of our 20 schools in Kings County are projected to lose a further 25% or more of their students in the next decade. Similarly, 21 of 23 Queens County schools are projected to lose students during this period.

The impact on ESD schools has been significant. In our smallest schools, ten of which have 90 or fewer students, we are struggling to provide comprehensive programming in areas such as physical education, French, music, and resource-based learning (library). We are also having difficulty providing comprehensive student support services in areas such as guidance, special education/resource and Reading Recovery®. As well, our teachers in these schools, most of whom are teaching split classes, often do not have the opportunity to collaborate with others who teach the same grade/subject areas. We now know that this type of collaboration is a vital component of effective teaching, the absence of which compromises students' achievement.

As a result, it is recommended that we close eleven of our smallest schools, effective June 2009. These include Dundas Consolidated, Eastern Kings Consolidated, Fortune Consolidated, Georgetown Elementary, Grand Tracadie Elementary, Parkdale Elementary, Rollo Bay Consolidated, St. Jean Elementary, St. Peter's Consolidated, St. Teresa's Consolidated, and Tracadie Cross Consolidated Schools. We believe that by reorganizing the just over 700 students directly affected into larger groups, we will be able to provide more comprehensive programming and broader student support services. It will also mean that our teachers will have many more opportunities to collaborate. This decision will result in increased enrollments in Cardigan Consolidated, L.M. Montgomery Elementary, Montague Intermediate, Morell Consolidated, Mt. Stewart Consolidated, Prince Street Elementary, Souris Consolidated, Souris Regional High and West Kent Elementary Schools.

This School Organization Plan will be made public in January of 2009. The trustees of the Eastern School District will then seek public input for a ninety-day period. By May 31, 2009 at the latest, the ESD Board will forward its recommendations to the government of Prince Edward Island. The final decision regarding school closures rests with the Provincial Government.

Over the past thirty-five years, the manner in which schools in the Eastern School District have been organized has changed very little. We have now been overtaken by one of the most significant demographic changes in Prince Edward Island history. In the years ahead, we will continue to see serious declines in student enrollment. The impact on students and teachers has been significant and, if the status quo is maintained, students' achievement will be compromised. The recommendations to close eleven schools are made so this situation can be addressed. By reorganizing schools in this manner, student programs and services can be improved and teachers will have the opportunity they need to collaborate broadly and deeply with their peers.

## **PERMANENT SCHOOL CLOSURE REPORT**

### **Introduction**

Over the past thirty-five years, the manner in which Prince Edward Island (PEI) schools in Kings and Queens Counties are organized has changed little. In 1972, with few exceptions, the schools in Kings County were grouped within the Unit Four School Board, while those in Queens County were grouped in Unit Three. In 1994, these were amalgamated and the Eastern School District (ESD) was created. This entity presently consists of 43 schools which serve just over 13,000 students.

Twelve years have passed since the ESD first attempted to reorganize schools so that the District's programs and student support services met students' needs. The situation, for at least two reasons, is now much worse. First, the enrollment has continued to drop and the number of extremely small schools has grown. Twenty elementary schools in the ESD have lost between 30% and 50% of their students in the past decade. We now have ten schools with 90 or fewer students and 13 schools with populations smaller than that of the smallest school in the Western Board (130 students). Moreover, approximately 14 of our 20 schools in Kings County are projected to lose a further 25% or more of their students in the next decade. Similarly, 21 of 23 Queens County schools are projected to lose students during this period. Second, the teaching/learning process has become much more complex. For example, the most recent research findings indicate that the teaching of reading and writing at the elementary level calls for a great deal of technical expertise and very broad and deep teacher collaboration. It is very clear that if the academic performance of our students is to improve, then teachers at all levels and subjects need to work together as never before.

The problem, then, is as simple and complex as this. ESD enrollment has been dropping for twenty years. In our smallest schools, the quality of programming in areas such as physical education, music, and resource-based learning (library) is more difficult to maintain as is the scope of student support services such as guidance and resource/special education. Further, teachers, especially within the same grades and subject areas, are unable to collaborate to ensure that the curriculum is delivered as effectively as possible. If this problem is not addressed, the quality of our educational programs, the scope of our student support services, and the teaching/learning process will be further compromised. The purpose of this report is to propose a reorganization of ESD schools that will address this issue.

## Background

In November of 2006, the ESD asked the Department of Education to carry out an analysis of the declining enrollment in ESD schools. This was prompted by three developments. First, ESD educators had been, for some time, growing concerned about the quality of programming and the scope of student support services available to students in our smallest schools. As well, the vast majority of students in these schools were enrolled in very small split classes and the introduction of triple-graded classrooms was imminent. Second, the ESD had been asked to recommend to the PEI Government that it build an intermediate school in Stratford and the Board wanted more information about enrollment projections. Third, the Parents for Learning group in Souris had presented their report to the ESD which recommended closing Souris area schools and building a new K-12 facility.

The Department responded by commissioning a study which focused on the issue of declining enrollment across Prince Edward Island. The study was tabled in late August of 2008. Shortly thereafter, the Minister of Education asked the ESD to complete a School Organization Plan and submit to the Minister by December 31, 2008. The final report of the Provincial Enrollment Analysis, entitled *Schools for Tomorrow: Building and Sustaining High Quality Education Programs*, was sobering.

ESD Enrollment by School (Grades 1-9)				
School	Grades	2001 (Actual)	2008 (Actual)	Change
Belfast Consolidated	1-9	283	144	-49%
Birchwood Intermediate	7-9	447	317	-29%
Cardigan Consolidated	1-8	215	118	- 45%
Central Queens Elementary	1-6	264	182	-31%
Donagh Regional	1-9	166	141	-15%
Dundas Consolidated	1-8	78	69	-11%
East Wiltshire Intermediate	7-9	581	556	-4%
Eastern Kings Consolidated	1-8	83	55	-34%
Eliot River Elementary	1-6	439	411	-6%
Englewood School	1-9	239	187	-22%
Fortune Consolidated	1-4	129	53	-59%
Georgetown Elementary	1-8	93	94	--
Glen Stewart Elementary	1-6	646	647	--
Grand Tracadie Elementary	1-6	54	30	-44%
Gulf Shore Consolidated	1-9	331	218	-34%
L.M. Montgomery Elementary	1-6	404	244	-40%
Montague Consolidated	1-6	412	371	-10%
Montague Intermediate	7-9	351	326	-7%
Morell Consolidated	1-8	213	156	-27%
Mt. Stewart Consolidated	1-8	118	50	-58%
Parkdale Elementary	1-6	159	102	-36%
Prince Street Elementary	1-6	327	236	-28%

ESD Enrollment by School (Grades 1-9)				
School	Grades	2001 (Actual)	2008 (Actual)	Change
Queen Charlotte Intermediate	7-9	560	526	-6%
Rollo Bay Consolidated	5-8	126	34	-73%
Sherwood Elementary	1-6	571	473	-17%
Souris Consolidated	1-8	245	253	+3%
Southern Kings Consolidated	1-8	332	263	-21%
Spring Park Elementary	1-6	487	319	-34%
St. Jean Elementary	1-6	209	106	-49%
St. Peter's Consolidated	1-8	109	59	-46%
St. Teresa's Consolidated	1-8	62	47	-24%
Stonepark Intermediate	7-9	764	875	+14%
Tracadie Cross Consolidated	1-8	123	73	-40%
Vernon River Consolidated	1-9	236	137	-42%
West Kent Elementary	1-6	127	183	+44%
West Royalty Elementary	1-6	450	394	-12%
Westwood Primary	1-3	435	408	-6%

During the past seven years almost all elementary and intermediate schools in the ESD have seen significant drops in enrollment. At present, the ESD has ten schools with ninety or fewer students, of these, seven have fifty or fewer students. These small schools present a number of challenges that may be grouped into four broad categories:

1. The quality of programming

It is extremely difficult to offer a fully-developed program with qualified personnel in areas such as physical education, French, music and resource-based learning (library), for examples, when there is only a fraction of a position, say 0.10-0.30, to deliver the curriculum.

2. The scope of student support services

It is extremely difficult to provide the proper range in terms of student support services in areas such as guidance, special education, resource and Reading Recovery®. In our smallest schools there are simply not enough resources and, sometimes, not the trained personnel to provide proper supports.

3. The teaching/learning process

Teachers in our smallest schools are routinely asked to teach split grades across a number of curricular areas, sometimes as many as four distinct subjects. They are almost always the only persons in the school responsible for specific subject areas. In other words, they are "stretched" across grades, across subject areas, and isolated from similar grade/subject peers. Further, it is often difficult for principals and vice-principals in these schools to provide much support as they also carry very heavy teaching loads. There is strong evidence that a vital component of effective teaching is having an opportunity to collaborate broadly and deeply with similar grade/subject area peers with access to the support and guidance of educational leaders.

#### 4. Student Diversity

In terms of healthy child development, it is important that our students be exposed to as much diversity with regard to other children and their experiences and characteristics as possible. Children's social and emotional development, as well as their academic growth, are affected by their classmates/playmates. The smallest grade sizes in our nine smallest schools range from 1 to 5 students.

The most effective way to deal with these issues is to reorganize our schools and create larger groups of students. In order to create the optimal in terms of organization of schools and groupings of students, the PEI Department of Education has suggested that a number of factors need to be considered. These are as follows.

#### Program Delivery

Researchers have identified a number of factors that consistently influence student achievement. These include a challenging curriculum, highly qualified teachers, elementary schools in the 300-500 student range, and small class sizes in the early grades (Darling-Hammond, 1998). Of course, economic and geographic realities must be taken into consideration. The present reality is that our nine smallest schools have small split classes. These schools have at least one grade with five or fewer children. Teachers in these schools are routinely asked to teach across at least two grades, sometimes more, and often are responsible for several curriculum areas. Further, teachers usually have little contact with similar grade and subject area teachers. Students' access to full-time support personnel such as guidance and resource teachers is limited; and programming in such areas as physical education, French, resource-based learning, and music is often a challenge.

In the ESD, there is a growing discrepancy in programming for students between what should be offered and what is provided our students in our smallest schools. As enrollments drop, the situation worsens, and increasingly, we cannot provide adequate access to programming and the type of teaching that the research indicates promotes academic achievement. If the ESD is to offer the optimal in programming and teaching, then we should have a minimum of two teachers per grade, as well as full-time specialists in each of the following areas: special education, guidance, resource-based learning (library), physical education, core French, music and resource.

#### Enrollment Trends

The challenge of declining enrollment was first publicly identified in the ESD some twelve years ago. Enrollment has and will continue to drop. We now have seven schools with 50 or fewer children, two schools with 70 or fewer students, and a tenth school with approximately 90 students. The eight smallest schools in the ESD have, on average, four grade one students; one school has a single grade one student while another has none. In future, the rural schools will be particularly hard hit. Over the next ten years the Souris, Morell and Montague families of schools are projected to lose approximately a further 25%, 28% and 25% of their students respectively. The Colonel Gray family is projected to lose about 15% of its population during this period, while the Bluefield family will lose about 6% and the Charlottetown Rural family about 5% of their populations.

The impact on course offerings, teacher allocations and support staff assistance is considerable. Student-teacher ratios vary significantly within the ESD as the smaller schools are increasingly subsidized by the larger schools. For example, our two biggest intermediate schools

have student-teacher ratios twice that of our two smallest schools. If declining enrollment presented a challenge in 1996, and it seems clear that it did, then it is now more problematic than ever.

## Diversity

The research in developmental psychology and education is rich in terms of the importance of diversity in experience and interactions in a child's life. The children in ESD schools come from a variety of family situations, income strata, and cultural backgrounds. Further, our classrooms are made up of children with differences in ability, age, ethnicity, home language, family structure, gender, physical attributes, race, religion, resources, and socio-economic status. While schools cannot control some of the realities that impact our children such as poverty, family discordance, drug/alcohol abuse, and apathy, to name a few, we have to be prepared to address the diversity in experiences that students bring with them to class. We have a moral and pragmatic imperative to create school communities that are diverse and inclusive.

Research has done much to raise our awareness of the important role schools can play in mitigating the impact of social problems on student performance. It has been found that while socially segregated schools accentuate differences in student achievement, policies of inclusion and integration help eliminate these differences. The ability to work with and understand people of backgrounds different than your own is not only a sound educational goal but a democratic goal as well. If ESD students are to meet the challenges of living and working in a global and multicultural world, then we need to raise the achievement levels of all students, in particular, those students from lower income families. We also need to provide all students with the opportunity to maximize their social and emotional potentials. To put it in the vernacular, we want our students to "be all they can be". A diverse school community is one important way we can achieve this goal.

## Grade Level Configurations

Many of us in this province have grown up in the traditional elementary (1-6), intermediate (7-9), and senior high (10-12) configuration. The ESD also offers configurations of grades 1-3, 1-4, 1-8, 1-9, 4-6, 5-8 and 9-12. There are also many students enrolled in split grade classes. For example, almost all students in our smallest schools are in split grades. Little is known for certain about the effects of grade level configuration on student achievement. However, the social and emotional development of our students and the availability of program offerings are impacted. For some students, transitioning from elementary to intermediate to senior high can be difficult. Many believe that a grade 1-9 configuration is preferable to separating adolescents in a grade 7-9 configuration. Still others believe, and there are examples of this in PEI and across the Atlantic region, that all-grade or K-12 schools which care for and provide programs for very young children right up to adolescents taking senior high courses are best. There are also concerns about split grade classes. Over time, our single grade classrooms have grown increasingly heterogeneous. It is now more challenging than ever for teachers in split-grade classrooms to attempt to meet the diverse needs of all students across two and, in some cases, three grades.

While little is known about the effects of grade level configuration on student learning performance, the span of grades available in a particular school is an important consideration for educators when trying to optimize programming and resources. For example, several of our small schools have grade configurations of 1-8 or 1-9. While it is a challenge to offer the ideal in programming for the elementary students in these schools, it is extremely difficult to offer the



intermediate students programs such as band, late immersion and exploratory vocational programs as well as the resources, and experiences available in a large intermediate school. It is important that the manner in which we group our students and organize our schools ensures that our students have the opportunity to maximize their social and emotional potentials and not just their academic skills. This can be done through well-developed guidance, resource, and curricular programming and through comprehensive intramural and extra-curricular activities.

## School Size

In any report on school organization, the issue of school size is important. Generally speaking, the literature suggests that the ESD is likely well positioned when looking at school size. The results of several studies have indicated that the optimal student population should be:

- 300 to 500 students at the elementary level (grades 1-6)
- 500 to 600 students at the intermediate level (grades 7-9)
- 600 to 900 students at the senior high level (grades 10-12)

However, many researchers are quick to point out that the most suitable size is likely to vary from situation to situation, with a community's relative poverty or affluence a major factor. In short, the greater the number of limiting and challenging socio-economic issues being experienced by a community/locality, the smaller the school should be if more positive and equitable educational outcomes are to be achieved.

A number of researchers have found that achievement in small schools (again most are talking in terms of schools of approximately 300 students) is at least equal, and often superior to, that of large schools. Further, it has been found that attitudes toward school in general and overall social behaviour are more positive in these schools. Currently, several jurisdictions in Canada have parameters defining small schools as having fewer than 100 students, and optimal schools as those having between 250-400 students.

Within the current model of schooling, the key to optimizing educational opportunities for students is their aggregation into larger school settings. Larger schools offer economies of scale in terms of programs and services and are generally located in communities where the infrastructure helps enrich educational opportunities. As well, larger schools offer greater levels of administrative and secretarial support and provide greater opportunities for collaboration among staff members. Generally, students in larger schools are assigned to single grade classes and have greater access to trained specialist teachers and the programs and services they offer (physical education, art, music, drama, guidance, resource centres, computer studies, etc.). Larger schools also provide greater numbers of student role models and increased academic competitiveness, both of which have been demonstrated to increase overall student achievement.

For ESD students, the optimal program should have, as noted, at least two teachers per grade. At 15-20 students per grades 1-3, and 20-25 per grades 4-6, this would mean an overall population of at least 210-270 students in a grade 1-6 configuration. With these student numbers, quality programs and student support services become possible. The larger population will enable the school to offer the intramural and extra curricular programs and experiences important to students' social and emotional development. This also permits the within-grade teacher collaboration that is essential to the teaching of all subjects, in particular literacy and numeracy. Until we reach the optimal size in all our schools, we may still be forced to offer split grades. However, as long as we have more than one group of students within each grade level, this collaboration is possible.

## School Capacity and Utilization

It is important to recognize that while many schools in the ESD are underutilized, the last comprehensive analysis of school capacity in the ESD was done twelve years ago. Since then, at least some of the underutilized space has been transformed into computer labs, teacher/educational assistant preparation rooms, resource-based learning (library) usage, etc. Further, class sizes twelve years ago, especially in the elementary schools, were much larger and have since been reduced. Therefore, it is difficult to determine with great accuracy how much space in ESD schools is underutilized. Measuring the number of students in the school against the capacity of the school is one approach. At 90% utilization, a school can probably be said to be at capacity. Conversely, a school at 50% utilization or less, undoubtedly has room for more students and/or alternative programming.

However, it seems clear that, as enrollments continue to drop, the amount of underutilized space, which is now significant, will grow. As measured by the provincial report on declining enrollment, only a handful of ESD schools are at capacity. Fully 22 of the ESD's 43 schools, all of them 1-6 or 1-9 configurations, are presently operating at less than 50% of capacity. Although some of this space has undoubtedly been used for support purposes, there is clearly an abundance of underutilized space. Certainly it is costly to maintain facilities that are not fully utilized. The money could be much better spent on academic programming.

## Quality of Building

The ESD is comprised of 43 schools of varying ages, size and quality. The age, condition and safety of buildings, cost and efficiency of operation, the potential for expansion, green space, accessibility for all individuals, adequate classrooms and specialized instructional spaces, and cost of unused and underutilized space are all important considerations when initiating a reorganization of this nature. In providing an overview of our facilities, the provincial enrollment report indicates that, although five of our facilities are in fair to average condition, the remainder are in very good to excellent condition. It is important that we focus not only on our students' needs at present, but also on the demands that will be placed on our buildings over the next ten to twenty years. Our schools will need to be efficient, welcoming, flexible and responsive organizations.

## Transportation of Students

The majority of the ESD's more than 13,000 students are bussed. Many transportation factors need to be taken into consideration when reorganizing schools. Chief among them are distances travelled, time spent on the bus, road conditions and, of course, safety. Of these, the factor that very often concerns parents the most, is the amount of time students spend on the bus.

Empirical research on the effects of school bussing on school children is limited. Little is known about the impact of the length of rides experienced by students, or the effects of those rides on school participation and academic achievement. While most students spend somewhere between 40-80 minutes per day on average on the bus, there are a number who spend more than 120 minutes each day travelling to and from school. Presently, the ESD does not have policy covering the amount of time spent on the bus, rather the staff try to ensure the duration is "reasonable". There is little doubt that the idea of young children spending two hours or more on a school bus every day does not appeal to many people. Many parents are concerned, and rightly so, by the impact that early mornings and long days will have on their children. There is also

much concern that children who are bussed may not have the opportunities that others do in terms of social and extra-curricular activities and sports events.

### Location and Access

The location of a school is important in relation to where its students and their families reside, where other schools are located and its proximity to other facilities such as arenas, sports fields, parks, community centres, etc. Collaborating and sharing with other schools and having access to other facilities create options which can lead to increased efficiencies, more equitable distribution of available resources, and broader program opportunities for students.

Fortunately, the geographical area covered by the ESD is relatively small. Many of the smallest schools in the ESD are situated, not surprisingly, in communities where the population has dropped and will continue to do so. Other organizations are dealing with what is turning out to be one of the most significant demographic upheavals in PEI's history. Recently, we have seen a number of churches close and communities amalgamate. There has also been a call for the further amalgamation of small communities. It is very important, though, to recognize that schools not only serve communities, they connect communities. Having students from different communities converge to a single school helps build character, collaboration, team work and fellowship. Most importantly, schools are social institutions that bring together boys and girls from different backgrounds, religions, cultures and neighbourhoods. Schools, themselves, are communities.

Clearly in the ESD, a new balance needs to be struck. On one hand, we need to ensure that the number of students in each school is enough to permit every student the opportunity to maximize their social, emotional, and academic potentials. In other words, we need to group our students in schools in large enough numbers so that they can be taught in the most effective manner and have access to the programs and services that will help support their social and emotional development. On the other, we need to ensure that our students are educated as close to their homes and communities as reasonable so that their engagement with their school and learning is not compromised.

## Recommendations

It is clear that any large system should periodically evaluate its structure and organization to determine if these are consistent with the system's goals and objectives. It has been over twenty-five years since the organization of ESD schools has changed. Much work needs to be done; however, it seems unwise to try to "catch up" all at once. Certain situations need to be addressed immediately, especially where our smallest schools are concerned. However, our enrollment projections indicate that in other areas, challenges will arise over the next five to ten years.

In this report, it is recommended that eleven schools be closed and that they be closed by the September 2009 academic year. In terms of the closures, if the ESD is to close schools for September 2009, the ESD must release this report within 30 days, there must be 90 days of public consultation, and the ESD must make recommendations to government by May 31, 2009. The government will make the final decision.

If every student is to maximize her/his potential, we will need to focus on the relationship between teacher and student. For the students, we need to do everything we can to ensure that their academic potential is fully realized, that they have the opportunity to interact in appropriate and rewarding ways with others, and that they develop a healthy and positive view of themselves. For the teachers, we need to make every effort to see that their curricular responsibilities are reasonable, that the range of students they teach is manageable, and that they have opportunities to collaborate with their colleagues as suggested by the most recent research. Put another way, we want every child to have the opportunity to grow academically, socially and emotionally. We want our teachers to grow professionally, to have the opportunity to employ the most effective teaching techniques, and to collaborate broadly and deeply with their peers.

In conclusion, it must be said that our smallest schools have traditionally done a very good job of educating our students. However, enrollments have dropped and resources and teacher time have been, at least to some degree, reallocated. In many of these schools it has become extremely difficult to continue to offer students programs and support services they would find in a larger setting. It has grown almost impossible to ensure that our teachers get the peer collaboration and support they require. Change is difficult but if we are, to put it bluntly, to do "the most good for the most kids", then it is necessary. The following recommendations are presented with these ideas in mind.

# **SOURIS FAMILY OF SCHOOLS**

## **Recommendations**

1. The Eastern Kings Consolidated School be permanently closed. All grade 1-7 students will be enrolled in Souris Consolidated School and all grade 8 students enrolled in Souris High School.
2. The Fortune Consolidated School be permanently closed. All students will be enrolled in Souris Consolidated School.
3. The Rollo Bay Consolidated School be permanently closed. All grade 5-7 students will be enrolled in Souris Consolidated School and all grade 8 students enrolled in Souris High School.
4. The Souris Consolidated School be rezoned to a grade 1-7 configuration. A detailed rezoning report will be made public by December 2009 with implementation to take place September 2010. All grade 8 students attending Souris Consolidated for September 2009 will be given the option of attending Souris High School.

## **Rationale**

### **Program Delivery**

The three smallest schools, Eastern Kings (58 students), Fortune (53 students), and Rollo Bay (34 students), have a total population of 142 students. When we combine all the grade 1-7 students in the four schools, it results in a consolidated school of approximately 333 students. Souris High School in a grade 8-12 configuration will serve about 340 students.

This will enable the ESD to provide full-time specialist teachers in the areas of physical education, French and music. It will also enable us to provide a full-time guidance and resource program. As well, with approximately three classes per grade level, our teachers will have the opportunity to collaborate with one another so that they can maximize their teaching efforts. We can also ensure that their curricular loads are manageable. Moreover, we are presently offering a pilot project at Souris Consolidated for all area grade 7-8 students. It involves enriched activities, or mini-courses, in the areas of art, information technology, and vocational training. All of the grade 7-8 students in Rollo Bay have chosen to attend Souris this year for this program, while a number of Eastern Kings students have done so.

### **Enrollment Trends**

All five Souris and area schools have experienced and will continue to experience significant drops in enrollment. Since 1997, Eastern Kings has lost 50% of its population while Fortune (58%) and Rollo Bay (75%) have had a similar experience. Souris High has lost about 23% of its population during this period while Souris Consolidated has lost only about 9 percent. Ten years ago, there were just over 1,000 students in the Souris family of schools. That number has dropped by 34% to about 670 students. By 2017, there are projected to be just fewer than 500 students in the Souris family of schools. In ten years, the population of the Souris family of schools will be about half of what it was in 1997.

## Diversity

The diversity in this family of schools relates to family socioeconomic status. There is a significant variation in terms of family income. However, by concentrating the students in both schools in grade 1-7 and 8-12 configurations, students from all communities will have the opportunity to learn from one another.

## Grade Level Configurations

By configuring the schools into 1-7 and 8-12 facilities, we can assure that each existing facility can comfortably address students' needs. The reconfigured Souris Consolidated will have sixteen single-grade classrooms with two to three classes per grade. Class sizes will range from 19-21 at grades 1-3 to 17-24 at grades 4-7.

## School Size

This decision will mean Souris Consolidated will serve 333 students and Souris High will serve 340 students. These numbers are ideal and will permit, at a reconfigured Souris elementary school, full-time guidance, physical education, music and special education/resource programs. It will also permit full-time core French and resource-based learning (library) program, a .66 Reading Recovery® program and a full-time position to deliver short courses in the areas of visual arts, career exploration, and information technology.

## School Capacity and Utilization

Both Souris Consolidated and Souris High have the capacity to meet the needs of these students. Presently, Eastern Kings, Rollo Bay, and Fortune are at 47%, 48%, and 28% capacity respectively. Souris Consolidated is at 36% capacity and Souris Regional High at 60% capacity. By closing the three smallest schools, we can improve the capacity of both Souris Consolidated (to somewhere between 60-80%) and Souris High (to somewhere between 75-90%). In 2010, this will also permit the enrollment of all area kindergarten children in Souris Consolidated.

## Quality of Buildings

In the provincial declining enrollment report (Ascent Group, 2008), Souris Regional High was described as in good condition while Souris Consolidated was rated in very good condition. As noted, the provincial government should shortly evaluate both structures to determine if an extensive renovation or a new K-12 facility will best meet the needs of Souris and area students.

## Transportation

Souris Regional High and Souris Consolidated are both situated just off the main highway in Souris. They are both fully accessible, central, and safe in terms of dropping off and picking up students. All grade 9 students in the area presently attend Souris Regional High with approximately 80% of these students bussed.

Eastern Kings (96%), Rollo Bay (100%) and Fortune (90%) all presently have very high percentages of bussed students. The longest bus ride we presently have is just over 60 minutes each way. I suggest that we use some of the resources realized in these closings to ensure that the longest trip is no more than 60 minutes each way.

## Location and Access

As noted, both Souris Consolidated and Souris Regional High are centrally located in terms of this family of schools. They are within metres of each other which is also a significant advantage.

Souris Hospital and Eastern Kings Sportsplex are in the town as are most of the shopping and recreational facilities.

## Summary

There has been a great deal of discussion between and among parents and educators as to the future of education in Souris and the surrounding areas. I think the Parents for Learning report was very well done and my recommendations lean heavily on this work. I feel strongly that a single facility with a single administration is essential if students in this area are to have the opportunity to maximize their academic, social, and emotional potentials. If these recommendations are followed, 2009 will see two schools, a grade 1-7 configuration and a 8-12 configuration serving about 675 students in total. This number will drop by approximately 27% in just eight years. At that point, if we don't build a single facility now, we will have two small schools, each enrolling about 250 students. Unfortunately, one of these will be a senior high. There is no time like the present to deal with this demographic reality.

# **MORELL FAMILY OF SCHOOLS**

## **Recommendations**

1. The Tracadie Cross Consolidated School should be permanently closed. These students should attend Mt. Stewart Consolidated School.
2. The St. Teresa's Consolidated School should be permanently closed. These students should attend Mt. Stewart Consolidated School.
3. The St. Peter's Consolidated School should be permanently closed. These students should attend Morell Consolidated School.

## **Rationale**

### **Program Delivery**

This decision will result in Morell Consolidated serving a population of 190 students in grades 1-8 and a reconfigured Mt. Stewart Consolidated with 158 students, also grades 1-8. Although these totals are slightly less than ideal in terms of numbers, it means we can offer enhanced programs and services in each school. For example, at Mt. Stewart with a student/teacher ratio of 12 students per teacher, we can offer enhanced programs in physical education, music and resource-based learning (library), and stronger support services in guidance and special education/resource. Teacher collaboration and administrative support for teachers will also be greatly enhanced. The same will be true for Morell Consolidated.

### **Enrollment Trends**

Over the past ten years, St. Peter's, St. Teresa's and Tracadie Cross have lost 50%, 28% and 36% of their student populations respectively. At present there are 179 students enrolled in these three schools.

Over the next decade, enrollment for all schools in this family of schools will continue to drop. In five years, the Mt. Stewart/ St. Teresa's/Tracadie Cross group will consist of 135 students and the Morell/St. Peter's group will consist of 170 students. At that point these two groups could be consolidated into a single 1-8 school serving about 300 students. This is an ideal size. Of concern is the continued drop in Morell High School's enrollment. Over the next decade this school will lose over 1/3 of its population. During this period it will grow increasingly difficult to offer a full range of high school programs for these students. Broader and deeper collaboration with Montague Regional High and Souris High, and the implementation of distance learning are two of the new realities facing Morell Regional High.

### **Diversity**

The new grouping of students in the Morell family of schools will result in two grade 1-8 schools feeding into a grade 9-12 senior high. All students in the communities now served by the Morell family of schools will be enrolled in two feeder schools serviced by a single 9-12 senior high school. This will ensure that all the students in this area from different cultural backgrounds, income strata and family situations will help enrich the learning of one another.



## Grade Level Configurations

The grade level configurations in both consolidated and senior high schools will be unaffected. However, in Mt. Stewart, there will be eight single grade classrooms and only two split grades. In Morell, there will be seven single grade classrooms and four split grades. At Mt. Stewart, class sizes will range from 11-17 at grades 1-3, and 14-22 from grades 4-8. At Morell Consolidated, the class sizes will range from 15-16 at grades 1-3 and 16-20 for grades 4-8.

## School Size

As noted, the reconfigured Morell and Mt. Stewart Schools will now be approaching the ideal in terms of student population. However, for both schools, the increased enrollment will permit enhanced programming in resource-based learning (library), music and physical education as well as much stronger support services in administration, guidance, and special education/resource. Further, the number of teachers and the grouping of classes will permit the broad and deep collaboration required to deliver the curriculum

## School Capacity and Utilization

St. Peter's, St. Teresa's and Tracadie Cross are significantly below capacity, as are Mt. Stewart and Morell Consolidated. There are enough classrooms and specialized teaching space at Mt. Stewart and Morell Consolidated to comfortably service all students from the three closing schools. This enables the ESD to fully utilize the capacity in these two schools while closing three schools that are now well below capacity and which will continue to lose students.

## Quality of Buildings

The facilities in the Morell family of schools are, according to the provincial enrollment report, in good shape. Morell High School is described as in excellent condition while Mt. Stewart and Morell Consolidated are both in very good condition. Both elementary schools are also fully accessible with large gymnasiums. Neither St. Teresa's or Tracadie Cross has a gym although both have access to local recreation centres. Neither St. Teresa's or St. Peter's is fully accessible and both St. Teresa's and Tracadie Cross may soon require new roofs.

In terms of green space, Mt. Stewart and Morell Consolidated have plenty of green space and the potential for expansion exists at both sites.

## Transportation of Students

Although approximately 75% of the students at Tracadie Cross are bussed to school, all other schools in this group have between 90% and 100% of their students bussed. Fortunately, the Morell family of schools does not cover a huge geographical area. Mt. Stewart School is central to both St. Teresa's and Tracadie Cross and is only about 10-15 minutes by main and secondary roads from each site. St. Peter's is about 10 minutes by the main highway from Morell Consolidated. By fully utilizing the existing bus services, and if necessary, adding an extra bus, we can ensure that the average length of time on the bus in the family of schools will be 40-60 minutes.

## Location and Access

As noted, Morell Consolidated and Mt. Stewart are only minutes from St. Peter's and St. Teresa's/Tracadie Cross respectively. Both reconfigured schools are easily accessible as Morell Consolidated is situated directly on the main highway while Mt. Stewart is just seconds off a main intersection where the highway meets the community of Mt. Stewart.

The two schools are only ten minutes apart by the main highway. The community of Morell offers a range of services such as sports fields and an arena, and the consolidated school is within walking distance of Morell Senior High School. Mt. Stewart, minutes away, also has access to the same facilities. There is also plenty of green space and potential for growth in Mt. Stewart.

## Summary

With these closings, the new Morell family of schools will consist of a reconfigured Mt. Stewart of approximately 158 students (September 2009) and Morell Consolidated with 190 students (September 2009). These numbers are approaching the ideal, and will permit the programming, support services and teacher collaboration that students require. Ideally, we would group all grade 1-8 students in the Morell family of schools in Morell Consolidated and create a 350 student grade 1-8 school. However, Morell Consolidated cannot at this time comfortably accommodate this population.

# **MONTAGUE FAMILY OF SCHOOLS**

## **Recommendations**

1. The Dundas Consolidated School be permanently closed with grade 1-6 students attending Cardigan Consolidated School and grade 7-8 students attending Montague Intermediate School.
2. The Georgetown Consolidated School be permanently closed with grade 1-6 students attending Cardigan Consolidated School and the grade 7-8 students attending Montague Intermediate School.
3. The grade 7-8 students at Cardigan Consolidated be rezoned to Montague Intermediate School. A detailed rezoning report will be made public by December 2009, with implementation to take place September 2010. These students will be permitted to attend Montague Intermediate for September 2009 if parents so desire.

## **Rationale**

### **Program Delivery**

With these closures, we are able to create a grade 1-6 school in Cardigan with approximately 186 students. There will be a full-time guidance counsellor as well as an improved resource/special education program. There will also be enhanced physical education, music and resource-based learning (library) programs. The administration will have the time to properly supervise and support staff. The intensive core French program will also be offered. For the grade 7-8 students who will be attending Montague Intermediate, they will have access to a complete intermediate program including full-time music, industrial arts, physical education, home economics, resource-based learning (library), and French. As well as specialized short courses, they will also have access to full-time support programs in guidance, special education and resource.

### **Enrollment Trends**

Dundas Consolidated presently serves 69 students in grades 1-8; there are four split classes of 14 (grades 1 and 2), 19 (grades 3 and 4), 19 (grades 5 and 6), and 17 (grades 7 and 8). The enrollment has dropped slightly over the past decade but is projected to drop by over 25% in the next 10 years. Georgetown presently serves 94 students; there are four split classes of 16 (grades 1 and 2), 23 (grades 2 and 3), 27 (grades 4 and 5), 18 (grades 7 and 8) and a single grade 6 class with 10 students. Georgetown has seen its enrollment drop by about 10% over the past decade and a further drop of about 8-10% over the next decade is projected.

### **Diversity**

These closures will bring students from three small and very distinct communities into a single entity. Traditionally, these students attend Montague Intermediate for their grade 9 year and then collectively move on to grades 10-12 at Montague Senior High. By reconstituting Cardigan Consolidated School, we can bring these students together in grade 1 so that the learning can be enriched for all. Further, the grade 7 and 8 students from Cardigan (in September

2010), Dundas and Georgetown will attend Montague Intermediate, which gives them access to a fully developed and resourced grade 7-9 program while exposing them to children from different cultural backgrounds, income strata, and family situations.

### Grade Level Configurations

As noted the classes at the reconfigured Cardigan School will be small and, almost exclusively, single graded. For September 2009, this will permit two single-grade classes per grade with one exception. Class sizes will range from 14-18 in grades 1-3, and 20-25 in grades 4-6. This will ensure that the programming and support services are optimized. It will also enable the type of teacher collaborations and administrative support that is required.

For those students in grades 7-8 now assigned to Montague Intermediate, their 7-9 program will be improved over their present situation and they will be exposed to many more students in each grade level. For those grade 7-8 students choosing to stay in Cardigan Consolidated for the 2009/2010 academic year, a program similar to the one now being offered will be provided.

### School Size

The reconfigured Cardigan School will, in 2009, serve about 186 students. This is close to the ideal. Out of eleven classes, only one will be a split grade. There will be two teachers per grade, with the individual teaching the grade 1/2 split supported by other grade one and grade two teachers. There will also be more time for the administration to properly supervise and support staff.

In terms of the grade 7-8 students in Cardigan (September 2010), Dundas and Georgetown who will now attend Montague Intermediate, the situation is ideal. In September 2009, there will be about five single grade classes at each grade with comprehensive programming and support services. The school's population will be about 380 students.

### School Capacity and Utilization

Cardigan, Dundas and Georgetown are all schools that are significantly below capacity in terms of their enrollment. As enrollments drop, these institutions will become even less utilized. By closing Dundas and Georgetown Schools, we can improve the efficiency of Cardigan School significantly.

### Quality of Buildings

In terms of the quality of the structures, Dundas, Cardigan and Georgetown range from very good to excellent. Cardigan is in very good condition and is fully accessible. There is significant room for expansion and a great deal of green space with a dedicated sports field and recreational areas.

As for the Montague Intermediate School, it is in very good condition and is fully accessible. It shares sports fields with Montague Senior High. With the completion of the new Montague Senior High, Montague Intermediate's recreational area and green space will be greatly enhanced.

## Transportation of Students

Presently, all students in Cardigan and Dundas are bussed while only 27% of those in Georgetown are transported. Georgetown is 10-15 minutes by secondary highway to Cardigan. Dundas is a 15-20 minute drive by secondary highway. In terms of transportation, there is little doubt that all students moving from Georgetown to Cardigan can be bussed in a safe and efficient manner as the communities are so close. The Dundas students will probably spend slightly more time on the bus as the distance between the two communities is greater. However, with a more efficient use of existing busses, the transportation time can be established at a maximum of 45 minutes each way.

## Location and Access

Cardigan is somewhat closer to Georgetown than Dundas, but is situated off the main highway between the two schools. It is easily accessible from either Dundas or Georgetown and it has an abundance of playing fields and green space.

## Summary

The decision to close Georgetown and Dundas and to place all the grades 1-6 students in Cardigan and the grade 7-8 students from all three schools in Montague Intermediate will result in two almost ideal situations, at least in educational terms, for these students.

# **CHARLOTTETOWN RURAL FAMILY OF SCHOOLS**

## **Recommendations**

1. The Grand Tracadie Elementary School should be permanently closed. The students should attend L.M. Montgomery School.

## **Rationale**

### **Program Delivery**

Grand Tracadie has 30 students in three split-grade classrooms. There is a single student in grade one. L.M. Montgomery has 244 students in grades 1-6. With the closure of Grand Tracadie there will be 273 students in L.M. Montgomery in September of 2009. As there is a dual catchment area between these two schools, the transfer of students should be relatively straight forward.

The reconfigured L.M. Montgomery School will be able to provide enhanced programs in physical education, music, core French, art and resource-based learning (library) as well as comprehensive support services in guidance, special education/resource, and Reading Recovery®. Given the number of classes and the absence of split grades, there will be a great opportunity for teacher collaboration and enough administrative time to ensure that the staff are properly supervised and supported.

### **Enrollment Trends**

Grand Tracadie has lost over 40% of its population in the last ten years and will drop slightly over the next decade. L.M. Montgomery has also lost a significant number of students, about 38%, in the past ten years. Its population will probably hold steady for the next decade at about 240 students. In terms of course offerings, support services and teacher allocation, it is in the best interests of both L.M. Montgomery students and those from Grand Tracadie that the students are brought together.

### **Diversity**

The students of both school communities are probably not too diverse in terms of cultural background, income strata or social situations. However, the very small number in each grade level at Grand Tracadie does not permit the within-class diversity in ability, temperament, and social skill development that is the norm in most of our schools. This diversity is desirable so that children can learn from one another and live comfortably in a pluralistic multi-cultural society. This is difficult in a school like Grand Tracadie where there is an average of five students in each grade.

### **Grade Level Configuration**

For the reconfigured L.M. Montgomery, the grade configuration (1-6) and the student population (273) will help create the ideal situation. There may be one split class but there will be at least 2 to 3 classes per grade. There will be seven grade 1-3 classes all between 14 and 20 students in size and six classes of grade 4-6 students ranging from 21 to 24 in number. There will be enough staff allocated to provide comprehensive programming and support services.

## School Size

With the closure of Grand Tracadie and the students moving to L.M. Montgomery, an elementary school of approximately 275 students in grades 1-6 is created. This is the ideal situation. There will be at least 2 to 3 teachers per grade in single-grade classrooms. There may be a single split-grade classroom.

## School Capacity and Utilization

L.M. Montgomery is presently at about 75% capacity while Grand Tracadie is at approximately 50% capacity. This number will not improve over the next few years. With the Grand Tracadie students, L.M. Montgomery will be at approximately 80% of its capacity.

## Quality of Buildings

L.M. Montgomery School is in excellent condition and is fully accessible. It is approximately 25 years old. Grand Tracadie School is in fair condition and is not fully accessible. It is approximately 53 years old. Its specialized teaching areas are unsuitable and it does not have a gym. L.M. Montgomery has a dedicated recreational area and a great deal of green space. There is also plenty of room for growth. L.M. Montgomery, because of declining enrollment, also has plenty of unused classroom and support space to accommodate the Grand Tracadie students.

## Transportation of Students

L.M. Montgomery is just off the main highway, in a very accessible location that is both safe in terms of dropping off/picking up students, and user-friendly as it has plenty of green space. It is dually zoned with Grand Tracadie, which makes the transportation of students relatively straight forward as students who now live very close to Grand Tracadie are bussed to L.M. Montgomery. Presently almost 97% of the students at L.M. Montgomery are bussed compared to 94% at Grand Tracadie.

## Location and Access

L.M. Montgomery is located just off the main highway approximately 15 minutes by car from Grand Tracadie School. As noted, the schools share a dual zone and parents now have the option to attend either Grand Tracadie or L.M. Montgomery. There are a number of students who live closer to Grand Tracadie than L.M. Montgomery who attend the latter.

## Summary

Overall, the recommendation to close Grand Tracadie School and have the 30 students attend L.M. Montgomery School is, we believe, in the best educational interests of the Grand Tracadie students.

# **COLONEL GRAY FAMILY OF SCHOOLS**

## **Recommendations**

1. The St. Jean Elementary School should be permanently closed and the students transferred to West Kent Elementary.
2. The Parkdale Elementary School should be closed and the students transferred to Prince Street Elementary School.

## **Rationale**

### **Program Delivery**

St. Jean Elementary presently enrolls 106 students while Parkdale enrolls 102 students. Grouping St. Jean with West Kent will create a 1-6 school of approximately 269 students (September 2009). Grouping Parkdale with Prince Street creates a 1-6 school of approximately 296 students (September 2009). These are ideal numbers.

For the reconfigured West Kent this number of students will permit greatly enhanced physical education, music, resource-based learning (library) and art as well as a .5 core French position. There will also be full-time guidance and resource/special education and the principal will have the time to properly supervise and support staff. Similar enhanced programs and support services will now be available at the reconfigured Prince Street School.

### **Enrollment Trends**

Over the past eight years, St. Jean has lost over 50% of its population and now enrolls 106 students. During the same period, Parkdale has lost over 35% of its population and now enrolls 102 students. Over the next decade, St. Jean is projected to lose a further 20% of its students while Parkdale is projected to lose about 10%. On the other hand, West Kent's population is projected to remain relatively stable over the coming years while Prince Street will lose about 10% of its population during this period.

### **Diversity**

There are diverse populations in all four schools. The students from St. Jean and West Kent are undoubtedly different in terms of income strata and family situations. There are also cultural differences as many more English as an Additional Language (EAL) students are enrolled in West Kent than St. Jean. The same is true for Parkdale and Prince Street. Again, there are differences in income strata and family situations. Further, there are a significant number of EAL students at Prince Street and a significant special needs population at Parkdale.

Together, the reconfigured West Kent and Prince Street Schools will provide a representative cross-section of the cultural backgrounds, income strata, and family situations of ESD students. As well, the within-class diversity in terms of ability, temperament, and experiences will enrich the learning of all students.



## Grade Level Configurations

Both reconfigured schools will offer the existing grade 1-6 configuration. Class sizes will be relatively small and there will be two to three teachers per grade which will enhance teacher collaboration. In September 2009, the new West Kent will have 14 single-grade classrooms with either two or three classes at each grade level. The class sizes will vary from 15 to 19 students at grades 1-3 and 19 to 25 students at grades 4-6. At Prince Street it will be much the same story. There will be 14 single-grade classrooms ranging in size from 15 to 19 at grades 1-3 and 18 to 25 at grades 4-6. There will be at least two classes per grade with three grade 2 classes and three at the grade 4 level.

## School Size

The size of each of the reconfigured schools is ideal. As noted, West Kent with 269 students and Prince Street with 296 calls for staffing numbers which will permit two to three single-grade classrooms per grade. There will also be enhanced programming in areas like physical education, music, and resource-based learning (library) as well as full-time support programs in guidance, resource, etc.

## School Capacity and Utilization

St. Jean Elementary and Parkdale Elementary are operating well below capacity. Conservatively, St. Jean operates at about 40% capacity while Parkdale is about half full. Over the next decade, this situation will not improve significantly.

West Kent and Prince Street are operating at approximately 60% capacity. Again, there is projected to be no significant change in these numbers over the next decade. This means we have two schools, St. Jean and Parkdale, that are operating well below capacity; while West Kent and Prince Street are operating just above the mid-range in terms of capacity. By combining the four groups of students, we ensure the most efficient use of West Kent and Prince Street. It also permits alternative uses for both Parkdale and St. Jean.

## Quality of Buildings

West Kent is described in the provincial enrollment report as being in very good condition and is fully accessible. It is just over 40 years old. There are plenty of classroom and specialized instruction spaces to support both the West Kent and St. Jean students. There is also plenty of green space and room for expansion.

Prince Street is also fully accessible and is described as being in very good condition. It is over 40 years old. There are plenty of classrooms and specialized instruction spaces to support both the Prince Street and Parkdale students. Unfortunately, there is not much room for expansion and there is not a great deal of green space. However, Prince Street will have access to the new multi-use recreational area at Birchwood Intermediate which is within walking distance.

## Transportation of Students

Two thirds of the students at Prince Street are presently bussed to school while only 25% of students at West Kent are bussed. One third of the students are bussed at Parkdale while 60% are bussed at St. Jean.

The four schools are within minutes of each other. Parkdale is about 5-10 minutes from Prince Street by main city street. St. Jean is only a few minutes from West Kent. There is little doubt that the time students spend on the bus to West Kent or Prince Street will be very reasonable.

### Location and Access

Both Prince Street and West Kent are within city limits and have access to other school, recreational facilities and sports fields. Prince Street, for example, will have access to, and is within walking distance of, the new athletic facility being built for Birchwood Intermediate. West Kent is a couple of minutes from the sports complex that supports Colonel Gray Senior High and Queen Charlotte Intermediate.

### Summary

This family of schools is home to four of the six best elementary school sites in the City of Charlottetown: West Royalty, Parkdale, Spring Park and West Kent. The others are L.M. Montgomery and Sherwood Elementary. These sites have characteristics in common that are essential in terms of elementary schools. They are easily accessible in terms of location, they are safe in terms of traffic and dropping off/picking up students, and they have lots of recreational areas and green space. Over the next decade these sites should be fully utilized.

Parkdale School is centrally located, is easily accessible, and has much potential in terms of growth and green space. It has a new gymnasium and is in very good condition but is not wheelchair accessible. It is also the smallest school in this group. The ESD should explore the feasibility of establishing an alternate school in Parkdale.

## **REPORT SUMMARY**

The recommendations in this report were made after much deliberation. Closing more than one quarter of our schools and disrupting over 700 students and 150 full and part-time staff represent a major restructuring of the Eastern School District. However, these recommendations are a response to one of the most significant demographic upheavals in the province's history. Over the last fifty years, PEI's birth rate has dropped by two thirds. In 1950, there were approximately 30.1 (births per thousand); by 2006 the rate had dropped to about 10 (births per thousand). In 1963, there were almost 3,000 babies born in the province; by 2006, this figure had dropped to about 1,400. In 1970, just over 3,000 students entered grade one across PEI; by 2007, this number had dropped by more than half to 1,295 students.

In the past seven years, almost every elementary school in the ESD has experienced a significant drop in student population. The ESD has lost about 2,000 students during this period, which is the equivalent of closing a school the size of Spring Park Elementary or Birchwood Intermediate, or Morell Regional High each year. Not only has this decline been going on for many years, it will, in most places, continue. Twenty elementary schools in the ESD have lost between 30% and 50% of students in the past decade. Fourteen of our twenty schools in Kings County will lose a further 25% or more of students in the next decade. Twenty-one of 23 schools in Queens County are also projected to lose students during this period.

Over time, the impact on all students has been significant. The larger schools are assigned fewer teachers per student than the smaller schools so that the smaller schools can offer a broad range of programs and student support services. However, as the gap in student numbers between our smallest schools and our larger schools has grown, it has become extremely difficult to ensure that students in our smallest schools have access to broad programming in physical education, music, French and resource-based learning (library), and adequate student support services in areas such as guidance, resource/special education and Reading Recovery®.

Teachers have been affected as well. As the student numbers have dropped, the teachers in our smallest schools increasingly are asked to teach across multiple grades and subject areas. More specifically, they often teach across two and sometimes three grade levels and as many as four subject areas. The principals/vice-principals also teach part or even full-time so teachers in these schools often do not have the desired amount of supervision. Perhaps most importantly, in addition to being "stretched" across grades and subject areas, teachers often have little interaction with their grade level/subject area peers. The research on effective teaching, in particular as it relates to the teaching of reading and writing, indicates that a broad and deep collaboration between and among teachers within the same subject and grade areas is essential.

In the ESD, the impact of declining enrollment is such that maintaining the status quo is not an option. The eleven schools recommended for closure can no longer meet the programming, student support and teaching needs of our students. If the students in these small schools are to maximize their academic and social potentials, they need to be regrouped in large enough numbers so that broader programs and more extensive student support services can be offered. This also ensures teachers have the opportunity to collaborate with one another within grades and subject areas.

In closing these schools, the ESD will realize about \$687,000 in operational savings. However, the complete transportation and operational costs of relocating almost 900 students and staff is not yet fully known. Net savings may be substantially less. There will also be a surplus of approximately 14 teachers if we staff the newly configured schools at 12 students per teacher. These positions should be used to both improve the student-teacher ratio in some of our larger schools and address some of the programming challenges we face in other areas. As well, approximately 25 custodian/cleaner and administrative support personnel, 25 educational assistants and 15 bus drivers will be directly affected by these closures. The bus drivers and educational assistants will, of course, move with their students and, by working more closely with one another, enhance the educational program at the newly configured schools. Every effort should be made to ensure that the administrative support personnel and custodian/cleaners, who have provided exemplary service to our schools in the past, be reassigned within the Eastern School District.

### Conclusion

It is also important for the Eastern School District to work together with parents, businesses, community members, and teachers to support schools as centres of learning. The first kindergarten cohort will be enrolling in September 2010. Although most district schools have sufficient space to accommodate these students, some renovation/rezoning will be needed. In some cases, schools may be able to provide space to early childhood groups that work with 2, 3, and 4 year olds. This represents yet another opportunity for the district to work with partners to ensure that every child will arrive at kindergarten ready to learn.

Similarly, some schools identified as surplus might be utilized to benefit both the Eastern School District and the community at large. St. Jean and Parkdale are prime facilities where existing ESD programs could be enhanced and expanded. Other school facilities might be offered to community or government groups to support innovative cultural, or social initiatives. For example, the French Language School Board has a growing demand for classroom space. Although there may be issues under the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, it might prove fruitful to examine the merits of a single educational facility serving English and French students. A school characterized by two unique cultures and philosophies governed by separate administrations and responsible to separate Boards would provide a unique learning environment and represent efficient use of educational resources. A full discussion and examination of the schools declared surplus must be undertaken to ensure that these facilities remain beneficial and productive within their communities.

School: **Eastern Kings Consolidated School**

Grade Configuration: Currently Eastern Kings is a grade 1-8 school. Kindergarten could be implemented as early as September 2010.

Student Enrollment: 55 students

Address: Eastern Kings Consolidated  
81 Munns Rd - Rte 301, Kingsboro  
RR2 Souris, PE C0A 2B0

Principal: Bernadette McInnis

Vice-Principal: Lynn MacPhee

Eastern Kings is located ½ a kilometer up Munn's Road just past Bothwell, 15 minutes east of Souris. It is centered in the Eastern Kings region in the community of Kingsboro. Most government agencies operate out of Souris. The alternative school is located in Souris.

According to Eastern School District Policy FCB, Permanent School Closure, any school identified for possible closure must be thoroughly examined. The following information must be provided.

**(a) Strengths and Deficiencies which exist in the Educational Program at the School:**

The current teacher allocation for Eastern Kings is 5.87 FTE teachers in total for the 55 students. This provides a pupil-teacher ratio of 9.36 students per teacher; one of the better pupil-teacher ratios in the District.

At present, the resource program has been allocated 0.30 FTE, and the guidance program has been reduced to 0.15 FTE. Although both allocations are in accordance with school size, offering sufficient and adequate programming in both fields is very difficult. It is an arduous task to prepare remedial programming for students with learning difficulties when a teacher is present less than a third of the time. Similarly, follow up with students by the school counsellor is difficult when the counsellor is shared with other schools.

Eastern Kings Consolidated maintains a quality core French program. Physical education is delivered within the parameters set out by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. The 0.25 FTE physical education allotment and the small number of students, limit the school's ability to offer extra-curricular programs, and run a well-rounded athletic program. Eastern Kings has taken part in feeder school tournaments. Participation in the provincial School Athletic Association activities has been limited. This year, for example, the school was unable to field grade 7 and 8 boys' and girls' soccer teams.

For the current year, the music program has been assigned 0.20 FTE teacher, limiting music activities.

With split grades from grades 1-8, principal Bernadette McInnis acknowledges that it is hard for teachers to discuss ideas and support each other at their grade level when there is only one teacher per grade or one teacher per two grades. The teaching profession recognizes the need for greater collaboration within schools, as a contributing factor to better teaching, greater accountability, and quicker identification of students who require modifications and/or adaptations. Administrators at Eastern Kings teach most of the time. These administrators are given little time to be curriculum leaders.

With many students moving to Souris Consolidated in grades 7 and 8 this year, the decline in enrollment has accelerated. It was anticipated that seven students would enter grade one this year, but all seven grade one students are attending Souris Consolidated this year. In the principal's mind, this one event has solidified the community's view that closures in the Souris Family are inevitable and Eastern Kings will merge with Souris Consolidated. She notes that her students miss the opportunities and experiences offered to children in larger schools. The FTE of guidance, resource, and administrative time is significantly lower than larger schools, and although the school is administered adequately, small numbers of students result in too little specialist time to meet student needs.

Ms. McInnis has been a strong advocate for Eastern Kings, and the education of her students. Though she acknowledges her disappointment, if the decision is made to close the school, she realizes it is in the best educational interests of all her students. She has stated, "We cannot continue to offer the quality programs our students need with such diminishing numbers."

Despite the decline in enrollment, the student-teacher ratio has improved from 12.28 students per teacher in 2003, to the present ratio of 9.37 students per teacher. But, as time passes, this becomes more difficult to do. Matching teaching assignments to teaching qualifications and interests, retaining suitably-qualified teachers to provide specialist services to students, and the inevitable implementation of triple-graded classes, hampers and will continue to affect school operation and professional growth. As enrollment continues to decline, fewer teaching staff will be assigned to the school, compounding the staffing problems. It is unreasonable to expect a principal and small teaching staff to try and provide students with an educational program that would be found at larger schools, and to do it successfully year after year.

Eastern Kings periodically receives French-speaking students from the Magdalene Islands off the eastern end of Prince Edward Island. This has had a positive impact on program delivery, and their presence has enhanced the school's French program, and provided them an excellent opportunity to improve their English. Beyond this occasional occurrence, there are no ethnic and language differences and few ethnic minorities have been attracted to the area.

**(b) The Condition of the School Building:**

Eastern Kings Consolidated is in excellent shape. A solid brick structure built in the early 70's, it has a fully-functional gymnasium with a stage. The school also has a computer lab, library, and music room. As space allowed, some of the classrooms were expanded to double size, but could easily be reverted to standard sized classrooms if

required. The library is currently located in what was once the grade 7 classroom. The library is adjacent to an open-air foyer which has been converted into the computer lab. The computers surround the exterior wall of the room with space in the center for the teacher. All students have to pass through the computer lab to get to their classrooms.

The interior of the building has been well maintained. There are two new sofas in the library and the staff room has a variety of newly acquired furniture. Student furniture is well maintained and readily available.

The gymnasium ceiling is low and would be limiting to midget-aged competitive sports. The backboards for basketball are sufficient for teaching, but not competition. The floor is tile over cement, hard and cold in the winter. Sports equipment is adequate, but not plentiful. The kitchen, located off the gym, is used for breakfast and lunch programs, as well as banquets and leaving ceremonies. The gym has a stage at the north end. The music room lies off the stage and has easy access for use in concerts and performances.

The green space is large and the sports field area has been used in the past for senior men's provincial soccer matches. There is a paved area for outdoor basketball, and some playground equipment to the rear and side of the building. The rear courtyard is used for a variety of games and as a gathering place for the students at break and lunch.

Eastern Kings has sufficient space for 130 students, is approximately one third its capacity, and is under-utilized. Classroom sizes are large and in some cases, like the grade 4/5 split, with 11 students, there is ample room for a reading area, resource table, books and various projects. Previously, the grade 1/ 2 split was housed in two adjacent classrooms, now there are 14 students in grades 2 and 3 combined.

The guidance/resource area is a very small room built inside the hallway many years ago, and comfortably seats three or four students. As a guidance office it is good for individual counselling, but for group dynamics it is poorly set up. Meetings with parents take place in classrooms, or in the Principal's office.

**(c) The Availability of Space in other School Buildings:**

If Eastern Kings were to close, Souris Consolidated has the required space to house their students. It would necessitate a reconfiguration at the receiving school. Currently Souris Consolidated can hold students from all the feeder schools in the Souris Family of Schools provided the daycare/kindergarten is removed from the building and the grade 8 students move to Souris high school. The grade configuration for both schools will change to accommodate the transition from feeder schools to the eventual K-12 school. In the meantime, Souris Consolidated would become a grade 1-7 school while Souris Regional High School becomes a grade 8-12 school.

Souris Consolidated School is a sound physical structure. The current principal, Sharon McIntosh, suggests some minor renovations would be required to house all the grades 1-7 students from the Souris family for the 2009-2010. Currently the population of

Souris Consolidated is 252 students and the capacity of the school is listed at 525 students, though optimum capacity is probably around 425 students. (MacAulay , Coles, 1996)

As indicated by the following chart, the enrollment at Souris Consolidated will decline rapidly providing ample room for all the grades 1-7 students in the Souris Family of Schools. There are 115 students presently in grades 7 and 8, but only 48 students in grades 1 and 2.

Souris Consolidated Enrollment 2008-2009

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Enrollment	29	19	20	29	22	18	58	57

**(d) The Impact of the Closure of the School on the Educational Program at the School, on Schools which are Designated to Accommodate Students from the School, and the Impact of School Closure on Parents, Students and the General Community:**

The closure of Eastern Kings School will see the children move to Souris Consolidated until a new facility can be created. Souris Consolidated can easily accommodate Eastern Kings students as there is more than adequate classroom space and specialist teaching areas. Programs will be greatly enhanced in areas such as physical education, music, art, and library. There will be strong support services in the areas of guidance, special education/resource, and Reading Recovery®.

In terms of class numbers, there will be no split-grade classes and two or three classes per grade. Class sizes will range from 19 to 21 students at grades 1-3, and 17-24 students at grades 4-7.

**(e) The Student Enrollment at the School for the Previous Five Years:**

Eastern Kings has never been considered a large school. Over the past 10 years, enrollment at the school has continued to decline, and has now reached a critical point. Eastern Kings was built as an open-area concept school in the early 1970s. Classrooms that were adjacent to each other had no walls. Semi-permanent walls have been added to its classrooms to divide students by grade and ultimately some permanent walls were built within the framework of the school. Originally its capacity was suggested to be 150 students (Ascent Group, 2008), though recently it has been identified as being able to house 135 students comfortably. This is due to changing the utilization of the space as it was vacated. The library and the computer area were designed to better meet the needs of students in the technological age.

The current enrollment at Eastern Kings Consolidated School for the 2008-2009 school year is 55 students. This is 10 students less than was previously projected for this year, giving a pupil teacher ratio of 9.36. This rapidly-declining enrollment reflects a number of factors which have impacted the school and the greater community of Eastern Kings. Currently there are no grade one students registered at the school. For the school to remain open, triple grading is probable.



Eastern Kings Consolidated Enrollment 2008-2009

Grades	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Enrollment 55	0	8	6	8	10	6	12	5

The declining enrollment is due to lower birth rates, families moving out of the Eastern Kings area, and students transferring to Souris Consolidated. Students at the grade 7 and 8 level were given the option to attend Souris Consolidated based on the anticipated merger of the schools and some students took advantage of the offer. Some siblings also transferred.

The following chart shows the historical enrollment trends at Eastern Kings.  
Eastern Kings Consolidated Enrollment 1998-2007

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Enrollment	103	92	100	83	81	78	79	72	70	70

**(f) The Projected Enrollment at the School for the Next Five Years:**

Based on the current enrollment declines, lack of residential and commercial growth, and the projections for declining enrollment over the next 5 years, it is highly unlikely that Eastern Kings will maintain existing student numbers. If, as predicted, the school's enrollment continues to diminish, it will be very difficult to provide adequate programs and support services.

The following chart is a prediction of the enrollment of Eastern Kings over the next 7 years. It is based on enrollment numbers prior to the transfer of some of the grade 7 and 8 students and the grade 1 students to Souris Consolidated. The information in the table can be used as a guide; however the actual decline in enrollment is more than originally anticipated.

Eastern Kings Consolidated Enrollment Projections 2008-2015

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Enrollment	55	63	55	55	53	54	52	51

**(g) Projected Changes in the Population for the Area Served by the School for the Next Five Years:**

The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs has indicated that there will be no significant change in population growth in the area, in the near future.

**(h) Any Available Statistics Concerning Approved Residential Sub-divisions Available for new Residential Construction:**

According to the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, there is no significant growth in permanent housing development projected for the area. There are a large number of summer residences being built, which do not impact on school populations.

**(i) Any Available Information Concerning Plans for Commercial or Industrial Development in the Geographical Area Served by the School:**

There are no growth forecasts anticipated in commercial and industrial ventures in the Eastern Kings area.

**(j) A Zoning and Transportation Plan for Affected Students:**

If Eastern Kings were to close and be relocated to Souris Consolidated, all grades 1-7 students in the Eastern Kings catchment area would go to Souris Consolidated and the grade 8 students would attend Souris Regional. Currently all grade 9-12 students from the Eastern Kings area are transported by bus to Souris Regional High School. If Eastern Kings Consolidated were to close, simple modifications to the current bus routes would allow all students to be transported to Souris Consolidated School with little negative impact.

The Eastern School District is committed to maintaining all four buses for transportation purposes to Souris High School and Souris Consolidated. The District is also committed to rectifying any substantial increases in travel times for students. Routes may change slightly, drop off and pick up points may change, and if necessary, a fifth bus may be provided to ensure travel times are reasonable.

**(k) A Financial Analysis Which Includes a Projection of Both Costs and Savings Which Would Result from the Closure of the School:**

If Eastern Kings Consolidated is closed, an annual savings of approximately \$66,298 for non-salary operating costs is anticipated.

The Eastern School District projects no significant increased costs associated with the closure of Eastern Kings. If there are marginal increases in costs, it is anticipated that the monies saved from operating expenses would be sufficient to address such issues.

## Summary

The enrollment at Eastern Kings has been dropping for some time. It is now to a point where it is difficult to provide the quality of programs and services that would be offered in a larger school. Further, because of the small number of teachers, it is impossible to create the broad and deep collaboration between and among teachers that is key to the teaching/learning process. Souris Consolidated has the space for all of Eastern King's grade 1-7 students, and Souris Regional High can easily house the grade 8 students. The reconfigured Souris Consolidated will permit the quality of programming and teacher collaboration previously suggested. Transportation should be a relatively straight-forward process and every effort will be made to ensure that student bus times are reasonable.

School: **Fortune Consolidated School**

Grade Configuration: Currently Fortune Consolidated is a grade 1-4 school. Kindergarten could be implemented as early as 2010.

Student Enrollment: 53 students

Address: Fortune Consolidated  
95 Route 310, Fortune Bridge  
RR4 Souris , PE C0A 2B0

Principal: Roberta Clark  
Vice-Principal: Margaret Anne MacIntyre

Fortune Consolidated is located 10 minutes west of Souris, on the western end of Rollo Bay, and a short distance from the Fortune Bridge and the community centre. Most government services in the area are located in the town of Souris.

According to Eastern School District Policy FCB, Permanent School Closure, any school considered for closure must be thoroughly examined. The following information must be provided:

**(a) Strengths and Deficiencies which exist in the Educational Program at the School:**

The current teacher allocation for the school is 5.20 FTE teachers in total for the 53 students. This provides a pupil-teacher ratio of 10.19 pupils per teacher; similar to other small schools. As with other small schools, the staffing ratio is subsidized by the Eastern School District at the expense of other larger schools.

At present, the resource program has been allocated 0.45 FTE, and the guidance program has been reduced to 0.15 FTE from last year's 0.20 FTE. These allocations are in accordance with school size, but make offering adequate programming difficult. Preparing remedial programming for students with learning difficulties is challenging when the resource allocation is small. Similarly, follow up with students by the school counsellor is difficult, as the counsellor is shared with other schools.

Fortune Consolidated maintains a core French program for its grade 4 students. The physical education program falls within the parameters set out by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, with an allocation of 30 minutes daily. Fortune Consolidated has, in the past, taken part in feeder school athletic activities. The school remains committed to participation in track and field and cross country.

This year the music program has been assigned a 0.20 FTE teacher which limits the music time for students. It is also difficult to run a resource-based library program due to the fact that there is no FTE teacher dedicated to library.

As the demographics in the area change and enrollments drop, Fortune Consolidated is challenged to provide the programs and supports it once did. Teachers find it difficult to support each other at grade level when there is only one teacher per grade. The administrators teach much of the time. Given the teaching load of administrators, it is difficult to provide the day-to-day educational leadership that is required.

The school has changed dramatically in the past few years and the opportunities for staff to collaborate and support each other through curriculum development, team teaching, and shared assessment practices is limited. Fortune School has split grades at the grade one and two level, with single grades at the grades 3 and 4 level. Future demographic trends indicate a decline in enrollment leading most likely to an additional split grade. Teachers recognize the need for greater collaboration within the school as a contributing factor to better teaching, greater accountability, and quicker identification of learning problems. A merger between Fortune Consolidated and Souris Consolidated would provide the student base to offer improved programming and student support.

Despite declining student numbers, the Eastern School District has tried to maintain quality program delivery at Fortune Consolidated by providing a low pupil-teacher ratio. But, as time passes, this becomes more and more difficult. It becomes increasingly challenging to match teaching assignments to teacher qualifications. It is also difficult to retain qualified specialists. The range of professional responsibilities that must be carried out by individual teachers becomes increasing complicated and demanding. The Fortune administration has suggested multi-aged classes be run as a pilot in 2009-2010. It has been suggested that if a merger between Souris Consolidated and Fortune Consolidated were to take place for the 2009-2010 school year, that a multi-aged class be considered.

**(b) The Condition of the School Building:**

Fortune Consolidated is in good shape. It is a solid brick structure, built in the late 60s, which included the expansion of a gymnasium with a stage. A kitchen was added to the original structure in 1979. The interior of the building has been well maintained. There has been concern in the past regarding moisture build-up in the lower corridor on the brick walls, as the area is sub-ground level. This concern has not had a significant impact on the operations of the school. Student furniture is well maintained and readily available.

Fortune has sufficient space for 200 students. It now enrolls 53 students, and it is at approximately one-quarter its capacity. The guidance and resource areas are large now that the decline in enrollment has impacted the school. Fortune Consolidated has a large green space. There is a paved area for four square and skipping rope, and some playground equipment to the rear and side of the building. At the north-east side of the building, a new playground has been built.

**(c) The Availability of Space in Other School Buildings:**

If Fortune Consolidated is to close, Souris Consolidated has the required space to house these students. It would necessitate a reconfiguration at the receiving school. Currently Souris Consolidated can hold all grade 1-7 students in the Souris family of schools, provided the daycare/ kindergarten is removed from the building, and grade 8 students move to Souris Regional High School. The grade configuration for both schools will change to accommodate the transition to a K-12 school. For the 2009-2010 school year, Souris Consolidated will become a 1-7 school, while Souris High becomes an 8-12 school .

Souris Consolidated School is a sound physical structure with no major problems. The current principal, Sharon McIntosh, suggests some minor renovations would be required to house all the grades 1-7 students from the Souris family. Currently the population of Souris Consolidated is 252 students and the capacity of the school is listed at 525 students, though optimum capacity is 425 students. (MacAulay Coles, 1996).

As indicated by the following enrollment chart, in the next two years Souris Consolidated's enrollment will decline rapidly, providing ample room for all grade 1-7 students in the Souris Family of Schools. There are presently 115 students in grades 7 and 8, compared with 48 in grades 1 and 2.

Souris Consolidated Enrollment 2008-2009

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Enrollment	29	19	20	29	22	18	58	57

**(d) The Impact of the Closure of the School on the Educational Program at the School, on Schools which are Designated to Accommodate Students from the School, and the Impact of School Closure on Parents, Students and the General Community:**

With the closure of Fortune Consolidated, students would be transported to Souris Consolidated. With the movement of grade 8 to the high school, Souris Consolidated can house students from all feeder schools in the Souris Family of schools. The grade configuration for both schools will change to accommodate the transition. In the interim, Souris Consolidated will become a grade 1-7 school while Souris Regional High School becomes a grade 8 through 12 school. In terms of educational programs at Souris Consolidated, the Fortune students will now benefit from expanded programs in physical education, music, core French, and library; and eventually have access to short courses in visual arts, career exploration and information technology. There will be enhanced programs in guidance, special education, and resource. There will be greater opportunity for broader and deeper teacher collaboration.

**(e) The Student Enrollment at the School for the Previous Five Years:**

Fortune Consolidated has never been considered a large school. Over the past 10 years however, the enrollment has declined by 50%.

Originally Fortune's capacity was suggested to be 200 students (MacAulay Coles, 1996), however this has been changed to an optimal capacity of 170 students (Ascent Group, 2008). The decrease in enrollment has allowed additional space for computers and technological supports.

The current enrollment at Fortune Consolidated School for the 2008-2009 school year is 53 students. This rapidly-declining enrollment reflects a number of factors which have impacted the school and the greater communities in the eastern end of the province.

Fortune Consolidated Enrollment 2008-2009

Grades	1	2	3	4
Enrollment 53	9	10	21	13

The chart below illustrates the historical trends of school enrollment at Fortune.

Fortune Consolidated Enrollment 1998-2007

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Enrollment	130	119	122	129	116	91	80	69	73	69

**(f) The Projected Enrollment at the School for the Next Five Years:**

Based on the historical enrollment declines, lack of residential and commercial growth, and the enrollment projections, the best case scenario is that Fortune Consolidated maintains its current enrollment numbers over the next seven years.

The following chart illustrates the enrollment projections over the next seven years. Earlier the school was projected to have 65 students this year instead of the present 53 students, indicating perhaps that these projections might be somewhat optimistic.

Fortune Consolidated Projected Enrollment 2008-2015

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Enrollment 53	65	65	59	64	66	69	70	72

**(g) Projected Changes in the Population for the Area Served by the School for the Next Five Years:**

The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs indicates no significant growth in population for this area.

**(h) Any Available Statistics Concerning Approved Residential Sub-divisions Available for new Residential Construction:**

The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs reports no significant increases in residential housing starts.

**(i) Any Available Information Concerning Plans for Commercial or Industrial Development in the Geographical Area Served by the School:**

The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs suggests there is no perceived commercial or industrial growth slated for the area.

**(j) A Zoning and Transportation Plan for Affected Students:**

If Fortune Consolidated is to close and be relocated to Souris Consolidated, then all students in the Fortune Consolidated catchment area would attend Souris Consolidated. Currently students from the Rollo Bay and Fortune Consolidated area are transported by bus to Souris Regional High School after grade 8. If Fortune Consolidated were to close, current bus routes would allow all students to be transported to Souris Consolidated School with little impact on the length of time on the bus for each child.

The Eastern School District is committed to maintaining all necessary buses for transportation purposes to Souris High School and Souris Consolidated. The District is also committed to addressing any substantial increases in travel times for students, as a result of this merger. Bus routes, drop off and pick up points may change, and, if necessary, additional bussing may be provided to ensure travel times are reasonable.

**(k) A Financial Analysis Which Includes a Projection of Both Costs and Savings Which Would Result from the Closure of the School:**

The Eastern School District projects an annual fiscal savings of approximately \$62, 576 for non-salary operating costs if Fortune Consolidated is closed.

The Eastern School District anticipates no significant increased cost associated with the closure of Fortune Consolidated. If there are marginal increases in cost it is anticipated that the monies saved from operating expenses would be sufficient to address such issues.

**Summary**

The number of students at Fortune Consolidated currently limits the amount and type of programming that is offered. There is little time for teacher collaboration, within and across grades, and the administrators teach much of the time. Moving to Souris Consolidated would give the students access to a wider variety of specialist programs. They would also have broader access to support services such as guidance and special education/resource. As well, there would be 2 to 3 single grade classes at each grade level which would permit the broad and deep teacher collaboration that is essential to effective teaching. The Eastern School District is also committed to ensuring that each student's bus travel time is reasonable.



School: **Rollo Bay Consolidated School**

Grade Configuration: Currently Rollo Bay Consolidated is a grade 5-8 school. Grade 7 and 8 students moved to Souris Consolidated in September 2008.

Student Enrollment: 34 students

Address: Rollo Bay Consolidated School  
861 Rte 2, Rollo Bay  
RR4 Souris, PE C0A 2B0

Principal: Ron McIntosh

Rollo Bay Consolidated is located 5 minutes west of Souris, on the western boundary of Souris West. Most government services are located in Souris. The Alternative School is also in Souris.

According to Eastern School District Policy FCB, Permanent School Closure, any school considered for closure must be thoroughly examined. The following information must be provided.

**(a) Strengths and Deficiencies Which Exist in the Educational Program at the School:**

The current teacher allocation for the school is 3.80 FTE teachers for 34 students; a pupil-teacher ratio of 8.94 pupils per teacher. This is one of the more favourable pupil-teacher ratios in the District.

This year, the resource program has been allocated 0.75 FTE, and the guidance program has been reduced to 0.10 FTE. Resource time was increased to help students with learning needs. When resource and guidance positions are less than a full-time equivalent in a school, adequate program design, implementation, and followup is difficult to coordinate. It is particularly hard for a 0.10 guidance counsellor to effectively support students with emotional /social issues.

Rollo Bay Consolidated maintains a core French program. The physical education program is allocated 0.20 FTE teaching staff. Rollo Bay has in the past taken part in feeder school tournaments, but has been limited in its participation in the province's School Athletic Association due to low number of students. The school remains committed to participation in track and field, badminton and cross country.

This year the music program and library have been assigned a total of 0.20 FTE teachers which limits the choral time for students. A resource-based library program is difficult to implement with such a limited teacher allocation.

Small student numbers and staff allocations are hindering school operation and delivery of educational programming. Ron McIntosh has been an avid supporter of Rollo Bay, where he has been a teacher for the past thirty years. He also has had the position of principal for the last six years. He understands the community connection to the

school. He has witnessed, first hand, the changing demographics in the area. He notes that the school has changed dramatically in the past few years, and that opportunities for the staff to collaborate and support each other through curriculum development, team teaching, and shared assessment practices are difficult to maintain. He realizes that Rollo Bay cannot provide the quality in program delivery it once did. He acknowledges that it is hard for teachers to discuss ideas and support each other at grade level when there is only one teacher per grade.

Mr. McIntosh suggests that a merger among the schools in the Souris Family of Schools would provide ample enrollment to offer improved educational programming and support services. Options such as an expanded music and art program, more inter- and intra-mural programming, and participation in heritage and science fairs would be available at the larger school.

With only two grades (two classes) at Rollo Bay, students do not benefit from the diverse background of other students or participate in the activities available in larger schools. Mr. McIntosh understands the possible merger of schools in the Souris family has the potential to provide the programming necessary for his students to be successful in a competitive global market. Mr. McIntosh states, "As populations shift, and enrollments decline, it is imperative that communities and school systems realize the potential consequences and act in a proactive manner by making decisions in the best interest of students."

Educational programs encompass much more than academic subjects. Rollo Bay Consolidated has delivered quality academics, but human resources are now too low to provide equitable programming in arts, drama and instrumental music, in the vocational areas, and after school programming in athletics. These are the aspects of school that keep the building vibrant, and students, teachers and parents engaged and interested. This past year all of Rollo Bay's grade seven and eight students elected to attend Souris Consolidated to take part in these types of programs.

**(b) The Condition of the School Building:**

Rollo Bay Consolidated was originally constructed in 1966. The building is in good physical condition. The last major renovation to the school was a roof and window replacement in the mid 1980s. There has been concern with the presence of moisture in the downstairs area, but nothing that would interfere with either program delivery or the health and safety of the students. The gym is small with a stage, which can sometimes limit participation during physical education classes. Most standard-size gymnasiums have at least three badminton courts, while Rollo Bay has only two because of its smaller size. The gymnasium ceiling is low and would be limiting to midget-aged competitive volleyball. The floor is tile over cement, very hard and very cold in the winter. The school has a well-developed computer lab, library, and music room. Some of the classrooms are empty, although others have been expanded or converted to storage, or to areas for group and/or individual work. The interior of the building has been well maintained. Student furniture is well maintained and readily available.

The athletic program at the school has been very important and a central focus at the school. In the past Rollo Bay was a leader in orienteering and has produced some

excellent badminton and track and field athletes. There is a kitchen off the gym where a student hot lunch program has operated and banquets and leaving ceremonies have been organized.

The green space is large and the sports field areas have been used in the past for senior mens' provincial soccer matches, football practices, and flag football leagues. There is a paved area for outdoor basketball, and some playground equipment to the rear and side of the building. Off to the east side of the building, a new playground has been built.

Rollo Bay has sufficient space for 200 students with a present capacity of 170 students. It is at approximately one-sixth of its capacity.

**(c) The Availability of Space in Other School Buildings:**

Souris Consolidated can easily house Rollo Bay students if Rollo Bay is to close. Grade 8 students would move to Souris Regional High School.

Souris Consolidated School is a sound physical structure which would require minor renovations to accommodate this change next year. Currently the population of Souris Consolidated is 252 students and the capacity of the school is listed at 525 students, though optimum capacity is about 425 students. (MacAulay, Coles, 1996)

The following chart illustrates the anticipated rapid enrollment decline over the next two years at Souris Consolidated. There will be ample space for all of the grade 1-7 students in the Souris Family of Schools. Presently there are 115 students in grades seven and eight in Souris, but only 48 in grades one and two.

Souris Consolidated Enrollment 2008-2009

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Enrollment	252	29	19	20	29	22	18	58	57

**(d) The Impact of the Closure of the School on the Educational Program at the School, on Schools Which are Designated to Accommodate Students from the School, and the Impact of School Closure on Parents, Students and the General Community:**

With the closure of Rollo Bay, students would be transported to Souris Consolidated. There is ample space to house these students in Souris Consolidated.

In terms of educational programming, Rollo Bay students will have access to the type of programming and support services in Souris Consolidated that their grade 7 and 8 peers now enjoy. Further, the number of staff at Souris Consolidated will permit the broad and deep collaboration that is essential to effective teaching and learning.

**(e) The Student Enrollment at the School for the Previous Five Years:**

The current enrollment at Rollo Bay Consolidated School for the 2008-2009 school year is 34 students, all of whom are at the grade five and six level. Last year there were also grade 7 and 8 students in Rollo Bay. In 1997 there were 139 students in the school. This rapidly declining enrollment reflects a number of factors which have impacted the school and other communities in the region.

Lower birth rates, families moving out of the Rollo Bay catchment area, and students transferring to Souris Consolidated have all contributed to diminishing student numbers.

The chart below shows the historical trends of school enrollment at Rollo Bay. It must be noted that **Rollo Bay and Fortune Consolidated are combined for statistical purposes**. The enrollment of Rollo Bay continues to decline and is currently at a point where effective program delivery is jeopardized.

Rollo Bay/Fortune Consolidated Enrollments 1998-2007

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Enrollment	272	258	257	255	241	203	195	181	175	158

**(f) The Projected Enrollment at the School for the Next Five Years:**

Based on the current enrollment declines and lack of residential and commercial growth, Rollo Bay Consolidated will continue to experience enrollment decline. It is estimated that the number of students in the Rollo Bay catchment area will decline by approximately 25% in the next decade.

**(g) Projected Changes in the Population for the Area Served by the School for the Next Five Years:**

According to recent documents provided to the Eastern School District from the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, there is no indication of a significant change in population growth in the area.

**(h) Any Available Statistics Concerning Approved Residential Sub-divisions Available for New Residential Construction:**

The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs indicates that there is not expected to be an increase in the number of requests for subdivision approvals in this area.

**(i) Any Available Information Concerning Plans for Commercial or Industrial Development in the Geographical Area Served by the School:**

According to the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs there is no information to suggest an increase in commercial or industrial development in this area.

There is no significant growth in permanent housing development in the area. There are a large number of summer residences being built but these do not impact on school populations.

**(j) A Zoning and Transportation Plan for Affected Students:**

Currently students from the Rollo Bay area are transported by bus to Souris Regional High School after grade 8. If Rollo Bay Consolidated is to close, modifications will be made to the current bus routes to accommodate younger children. Bus travel time for each student would be carefully monitored to ensure these times are reasonable.

In the past, grade 7 and 8 students from Rollo Bay have been traveling to Souris during the regular day for curricular reasons to participate in the equity program. This program has also helped identify potential transportation concerns which can be easily addressed. The Eastern School District is committed to maintaining all current buses for transportation purposes to Souris Consolidated and Souris High so that the student bus time for each student is reasonable.

**(k) A Financial Analysis which Includes a Projection of Both Costs and Savings Which Would Result from the Closure of the School:**

The closure of Rollo Bay Consolidated would generate an annual fiscal savings of approximately \$55,515 for non-salary operating costs.

There are no significant projected cost increases to the Eastern School District with this closure. Student transportation costs, and existing program delivery will remain consistent with current practice, just in a different facility. If there are marginal increases in cost it is anticipated that the monies saved from operating expenses would be sufficient to address such issues.

**Summary**

Rollo Bay presently enrolls 34 students in grades 5 and 6. This year, all grade 7 and 8 students elected to attend Souris Consolidated School to access broader educational programs and services. Souris Consolidated can accommodate all remaining Rollo Bay students and it is clear that Souris Consolidated has the student population to support a wide variety of programs and services.

School: **St. Peter's Consolidated School**

Grade Configuration: St. Peter's Consolidated is a grade 1-8 school with the prospect of kindergarten implementation as early as September 2010.

Student Enrollment: 59 students

Address: St. Peter's Consolidated  
1968 Cardigan Rd - Rte 313, St. Peter's  
PO Box 40, St. Peter's Bay, PE C0A 2A0

Principal: Linda Blackett

Vice-Principal: Mark Kelly

St. Peter's Consolidated is located half way between Souris and Morell schools. It serves the Morell Family of Schools and is approximately 10 minutes from the community of Morell. Most government agencies operate out of Montague, Morell or Souris. The mail service is in St Peter's.

According to the Eastern School District Policy FCB, Permanent School Closure, any school suggested for permanent closure must be thoroughly examined. The following information must be provided:

**(a) Strengths and Deficiencies Which Exist in the Educational Program at the School:**

The current teacher allocation for the school is 6.22 FTE teachers in total for the 59 students, giving the school a pupil-teacher ratio of 9.48 pupils per teacher, one of the better ratios in the District. At present, the resource program has been allocated 0.65 FTE, and the guidance allotment is 0.17 FTE. Although the Resource FTE is above the staffing norm, planning and followup with special needs students is very difficult for these part-time employees. St Peter's Consolidated maintains a quality core French program.

The physical education allotment is 0.20 of an FTE. This, coupled with the low student numbers, limits the operation of a well-rounded athletic program, and access to extra-curricular offerings. Students participate in track and field, badminton, and cross country. They also have the opportunity to take part in School Athletic Association-sponsored sports through Morell Regional High.

This year the music program has been assigned 0.20 FTE for grades 1-6 which limits the choral time for students. Currently students are bussed to Morell twice a week to participate in the equity program which focuses on instrumental music and industrial arts.

Several problems are created because the school has low student numbers and limited staff. With split classes at all grades, teachers find it challenging to discuss ideas and support each other at grade level. Greater collaboration within a school

contributes to more effective teaching, greater accountability, and better identification and response to student needs should modifications or adaptations be necessary. Administrators teach much of the time. This reduces the amount of classroom interaction with staff and students, and requires them to work outside the school day to complete administrative duties.

The Eastern School District tries to maintain quality program delivery at St. Peter's Consolidated through a generous pupil-teacher ratio. Due to declining student numbers, specialists can be difficult to recruit and retain. Preparation for numerous subject areas and several grades puts pressure on both teachers and administrators.

Few students from different cultures or ethnic backgrounds attend St. Peter's.

**(b) The Condition of the School Building:**

The building is in good shape; however, it is not wheelchair accessible. The interior of the building has been well maintained. Student furniture, chairs and desks are well maintained and readily available. The school is clean and welcoming.

The green space is large. The playground is more than sufficient for a small consolidated school. It has a full-sized athletic field for competitive athletic programming. In recent years, St. Peter's students have been invited to travel to Morell High School to take part in midget-level sports for grade 7 through 9, though very few have ever done this. The paved parking area is also used for outdoor ball games, like four square. Playground equipment is located to the side of the building. Between the school and road the green space is used for a variety of games and is a meeting place for the students at break and lunch.

St. Peter's Consolidated has sufficient space for about 250 students. With 59 students, it is well below capacity and under-utilized. Classroom sizes are extremely large and spacious, with ample room for a reading area, resource table, books and various projects. As classrooms have been vacated, staff have found ways to utilize the newly-created space by expanding the library and creating a computer lab. Although there is no cafeteria, the kitchen allows for hot lunches periodically throughout the week. The kitchen is shared with the daycare and kindergarten programs that use the facility daily.

**(c) The Availability of Space in Other School Buildings:**

There is space in Morell Consolidated to house students from St. Peter's. There are currently 156 students in Morell Consolidated with a capacity for approximately 350-400 students. It is a sound physical structure, well maintained with a well-equipped gymnasium. The current principal, Leo Hendricken, has stated that the school is capable of handling the merger with little impact. Morell Consolidated is projected to lose a further 25% of the student population in the coming decade.

**(d) The Impact of the Closure of the School on the Educational Program at the School, on Schools Which are Designated to Accommodate Students from the School, and the Impact of School Closure on Parents, Students and the General Community:**

Core programming for students will not change significantly as they move from St. Peter's to Morell Consolidated. However, enhanced programs in music and physical education will be available. Increased supports in guidance, resource and special education would be possible. An intensive French program at Morell Consolidated is presently offered to students in grade 6. At the professional level teachers will enjoy more opportunities for support, direction, team teaching, and collaboration. Over time these will result in better educational experiences for all students. The grounds are large enough that a sports field can be developed for extra-curricular sporting events. The equity programs offered to all Morell feeder schools will continue to operate at Morell Regional High School.

**(e) The Student Enrollment at the School for the Previous Five Years:**

Over the past 10 years the enrollment at the school has declined significantly. In 1997 there were 119 students enrolled in this school. Today there are 59 students, which represents a drop of 50%. Over the next decade the school is projected to lose a further 20% of its enrollment.

St. Peter's Consolidated Enrollment 2008-2009

Grade		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Enrollment	59	5	9	5	9	6	8	9	8

This low and declining enrollment reflects a number of factors which have impacted the school and the greater community of St. Peter's. These include lower birth rates, families moving out of the area, and little growth in community development and housing.

The chart below illustrates the historical trends of school enrollment at St. Peter's.

St. Peter's Consolidated Enrollment 1998-2007

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Enrolment	114	113	111	109	98	96	91	86	77	70

**(f) The Projected Enrollment at the School for the Next Five Years:**

Based on the projections for the next 5 years, it is unlikely that St. Peter's will maintain current enrollment numbers. The following chart shows this trend for the next 7 years. Earlier projections for 2008 indicated St. Peter's would have 62 students this year, instead of the actual 59 students. It is not a significant difference but does indicate a downward trend. In six years the student population may drop below 50 students. Some of this change can be attributed to the fact that Morell Consolidated school has



offered an intensive French language program at the grade 6 level and approximately 10% of St. Peter's Consolidated grade 6s attend.

St. Peter's Consolidated Projected Enrollment 2008-2015

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	
Enrolment	59	62	57	55	53	54	51	47	48

**(g) Projected Changes in the Population for the Area Served by the School for the Next Five Years:**

According to recent documents provided to the Eastern School District from the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, there is no indication of a significant change in population growth in the area.

**(h) Any Available Statistics Concerning Approved Residential Sub-divisions Available for New Residential Construction:**

The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs indicates that there is not expected to be an increase in the number of requests for subdivision approvals in this area. There are a number of summer homes under construction, but these do not support population growth at St. Peter's School.

**(i) Any Available Information Concerning Plans for Commercial or Industrial Development in the Geographical Area Served by the School:**

According to the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs there is no information to suggest an increase in commercial or industrial development in this area.

**(j) A Zoning and Transportation Plan for Affected Students:**

If St. Peter's were to close and its students relocated to Morell Consolidated simple modifications to the current bus routes would facilitate student transportation to Morell Consolidated School. Since the two schools are geographically close, the impact of bus route changes and times on buses for students will be marginal. Grade 7 and 8 students from St. Peter's Consolidated are accustomed to traveling to Morell to participate in the equity program.

**(k) A Financial Analysis Which Includes a Projection of Both Costs and Savings Which Would Result from the Closure of the School:**

The closure of St. Peter's Consolidated would realize an annual fiscal savings of approximately \$59,885 in non-salary operating costs.

The Eastern School District projects no significant increased costs associated with the closure of St. Peter's. The cost of student transportation will remain consistent with current practice. Existing program delivery will be provided at Morell Consolidated, with the commitment to maintaining a healthy student teacher ratio. If there are marginal increases in cost it is anticipated that the monies saved from operating expenses would be sufficient to address such issues.

## **Summary**

Given a population of 59 students, it is very difficult to offer the specialized programs and student support services that larger schools deliver. As well, it is challenging, with the small number of teachers and split grades, to create a professional learning community marked by broad and deep teacher collaboration. Morell Consolidated has the space, and with the increase in students, will be able to address many educational challenges. The transportation should be straight forward and bus times for students will remain reasonable.

School: **St. Teresa Consolidated School**

Grade Configuration: St.Teresa's Consolidated is a grade 1-8 school. Kindergarten is slated for implementation as early as September 2010.

Student Enrollment: 47 students

Address: St Teresa's Consolidated  
2988 Mount Stewart Rd - Rte 22, St Teresa  
RR5 Mount Stewart, PE C0A 1T0

Principal: Noreen Lisi  
Vice-Principal: Krista Gordon

St. Teresa's Consolidated is centrally located among Cardigan, Mount Stewart, Donagh and Vernon River schools. It is part of the Morell Family of Schools and is approximately 10 minutes from the community of Mount Stewart. There are few government services and agencies located in the community. The mail service is in Mount Stewart.

According to Eastern School District Policy FCB, Permanent School Closure, any school identified for possible closure must be thoroughly examined, using the following information.

**(a) Strengths and Deficiencies Which Exist in the Educational Program at the School:**

The current teacher allocation for the school is 4.90 FTE teachers in total for the 47 students. The school has one of the better pupil-teacher ratios in the district at 9.59 pupils per teacher.

At present, the resource program has been allocated 0.25 FTE, and the guidance program has been reduced to 0.16 FTE. Both these allocations are in accordance with school size, but make offering adequate programming in both areas very difficult. Resource staff have difficulty preparing remedial programming for students when resource has such a small allocation. Similarly guidance staff find continuity and followup difficult when the counsellor's time is spent in other schools.

St. Teresa's Consolidated maintains quality core French and physical education programs. The limited amount of allocated time to both these programs makes it challenging to support extra-curricular programming. The physical education allotment is 0.13; and, with 47 students, a well-rounded physical education program is difficult to offer. St. Teresa's has taken part in feeder school tournaments, but is now limited in their participation of the province's School Athletic Association activities due to the small number of participants. Students participate in track and field, cross country, and badminton.

At present the music allocation is 0.17 FTE. This can limit the students' exposure to extra-curricular music activities. The school has always made the effort to participate in the ESD Drama Festival.

It is very difficult for grade level teachers to meet and exchange ideas, and discuss best practices, since each teacher has two grades to instruct. St. Teresa's has split classes through grades 1-8. Administrators teach most of the time. This reduces the amount of classroom interaction with staff and students, which requires them to work outside the school day to complete administrative duties.

The educational programs at the school meet educational standards, but students are not exposed to offerings that students at larger schools take for granted. In a larger grouping, students might enjoy vocational programs, instrumental music, a greatly-expanded physical education program, and other extra-curricular activities in their school. Currently St. Teresa's students are bused to Morell High School twice a week for instrumental music and industrial arts.

**(b) The Condition of the School Building:**

St. Teresa's Consolidated is a wood framed structure constructed in 1989. The wooden structure requires that it be monitored closely for deterioration. The school is adjacent to the community center and utilizes the center's gymnasium. Given its age, the building is in good physical condition. However, it will have a shorter life expectancy than a brick building. There is no gymnasium or instrumental music area within the school. There is a ramp for wheelchair accessibility to the main floor, but no lift to the second floor. Student furniture, chairs and desks are well maintained and readily available. The school is clean and the interior is also well looked after.

The playground is adequate for a small consolidated school. It has two full-sized athletic fields for competitive athletic programming and has been the host school for the autumn feeder school friendship soccer tournament. In recent years, St. Teresa's students have been invited to travel to Morell High School to take part in midget-level sports for grade 7 through 9. Very few students have chosen to participate.

The green space is large. There is a paved parking area which is also used for outdoor ball games, like four square. Some of the paved area extends towards the church and students use this paved part for games. There is playground equipment in the front of the building. Between the school and road, the green space is used for a variety of games and as a meeting place for students during breaks and at lunch.

St. Teresa's Consolidated has sufficient space for 125 to 150 students, which means the school is under-utilized. Classrooms are extremely large and spacious. The computer lab is housed in a converted classroom. As classrooms emptied, they were reconfigured to reflect new technologies in an effort to improve programming for students. The computer lab is in the centre of the school where students and staff have ready access.

Although there is no cafeteria, the kitchen is used to prepare student hot lunches several times a week.

**(c) The Availability of Space in Other School Buildings:**

There is space to house St. Teresa’s students at Mount Stewart Consolidated. If the catchment area of Mount Stewart is expanded to include St. Teresa’s Consolidated, those students who have traditionally applied to attend school in the Montague Family would still have that opportunity. Currently there are no students attending Montague Regional from St. Teresa’s.

Fifty students currently attend Mount Stewart, and it has a capacity of over 200 students. It is an excellent, well-maintained facility, with a proper gymnasium. The current principal, Bernadine Lamphier, has stated that the school is capable of handling the merger with little impact.

The following chart illustrates Mount Stewart’s present enrollment.

Mount Stewart Consolidated Enrollment 2008-2009

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Enrollment	5	7	7	2	5	10	4	10

**(d) The Impact of the Closure of the School on the Educational Program at the School, on Schools Which are Designated to Accommodate Students from the School, and the Impact of School Closure on Parents, Students and the General Community:**

The merger of St. Teresa’s, Mount Stewart, and Tracadie Cross will be very beneficial professionally to the staff involved. There will be more staff, and as a result, greater access to each other for support, direction, team teaching, and collaboration. This professional relationship, over time, will result in better educational experiences for all students. More importantly, the move will positively impact the students as they will have greater access to broader programs in music, physical education, and library. There will also be more support services in guidance, special education/resource and Reading Recovery®. The equity programs offered to all Morell Family feeder schools will still operate at Morell Regional High School, and be available to an expanded population of Mount Stewart students. Mount Stewart has a spacious, well-equipped gymnasium. The grounds are large enough that a sports field can be developed for extra-curricular sporting events.

With a merger of these schools into Mount Stewart, the population is still too small to introduce vocational programming at the school.

**(e) The Student Enrollment at the School for the Previous Five Years:**

The current enrollment at St. Teresa’s Consolidated School for the 2008-2009 school year is 47 students. If the status quo is maintained, triple grading will almost certainly be introduced in September 2009.

St. Teresa's Consolidated Enrollment 2008-2009

Grades	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Enrollment 47	5	6	5	4	6	10	8	3

Over the past decade the student population at St. Teresa's has gone from a high of 79 students to the present 47 students, a drop of about 38%. This decline is connected with the trend in many other areas of the province. This reflects a number of factors including lower birth rates, families moving in search of employment, and little growth in commercial and residential development.

St. Teresa's Consolidated Enrollment 1998-2007

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Enrollment	79	69	64	62	66	63	58	56	55	50

**(f) The Projected Enrollment at the School for the Next Five Years:**

Based on the historical enrollment declines, and lack of residential and commercial growth, the school population will fall over the next several years. It is probable that the school's population will fall to fewer than forty students in the next few years. With the present 47 students in eight grades, triple grading, as noted, is inevitable.

The following chart is a prediction of the enrollment of St Teresa's Consolidated over the next seven years.

St. Teresa's Consolidated Enrollment Projections 2008-2015

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Enrollment 47	46	46	43	39	38	37	35	35

**(g) Projected Changes in the Population for the Area Served by the School for the Next Five Years:**

According to recent documents provided to the Eastern School District from the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, there is no indication of a significant change in population growth in the area.

**(h) Any Available Statistics Concerning Approved Residential Sub-divisions Available for New Residential Construction:**

The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs indicates that there is not expected to be an increase in the number of requests for subdivision approvals in this area.

**(i) Any Available Information Concerning Plans for Commercial or Industrial Development in the Geographical Area Served by the School:**

According to the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs there is no information to suggest an increase in commercial or industrial development in this area.

**(j) A Zoning and Transportation Plan for Affected Students:**

If St. Teresa's were to close, all students would be attend Mount Stewart Consolidated. This would be accomplished though modifications to existing bus routes. As the schools are in close proximity, students would not experience large differences in travel times.

Grade 7 and 8 students from St. Teresa's Consolidated have been traveling to Morell, passing Mount Stewart, to participate in the Morell Senior High equity program. Scheduling transportation for this program has already helped rectify potential transportation concerns. The Eastern School District is committed to maintaining quality transportation services for St. Teresa's students when they move to Mount Stewart Consolidated.

**(k) A Financial Analysis Which Includes a Projection of Both Costs and Savings Which Would Result from the Closure of the School:**

The closure of St. Teresa's Consolidated would realize an approximate annual fiscal savings of approximately \$39,992 for non-salary operating costs. Since transportation and program delivery are consistent across the District, the costs associated will not change significantly. The Eastern School District is committed to maintaining a healthy student-teacher ratio. If there are marginal increases in costs, it is anticipated that the monies saved from operating expenses would be sufficient enough to address such issues.

**Summary**

The present enrollment at St. Teresa's is such that it is difficult to provide specialist programming and support services. It is also difficult to create an environment where teachers can collaborate. Enrollment projections indicate these problems will worsen. Grouping St. Teresa's students with students from Mount Stewart will help address many educational challenges. Given their close proximity, student bus times should be very reasonable. The challenges posed by this amalgamation are minimal.

School: **Tracadie Cross Consolidated School**

Grade Configuration: Currently Tracadie Cross Consolidated is a grade 1-8 school with kindergarten slated for implementation as early as September 2010.

Student Enrollment: 73 students

Address: Tracadie Cross Consolidated  
170 Station Rd Tracadie Cross  
RR#1 Mount Stewart, PE C0A 1T0

Principal: Jason Kielly  
Vice-Principal: Sherry MacDougall

Tracadie Cross Consolidated is located less than 10 minutes from the community of Mount Stewart, 20 minutes east of Charlottetown. Most government services operate out of Charlottetown. Alternative schools are available in Charlottetown and Morell. The mail service is in Mount Stewart.

As per the Eastern School District Policy FCB, Permanent School Closure, any school identified for consideration regarding permanent closure must be thoroughly examined. The following information must be provided:

**(a) Strengths and Deficiencies Which Exist in the Educational Program at the School:**

The current teacher allocation for the school is 7.95 FTE teachers in total for 73 students. This provides a pupil-teacher ratio of 9.18 pupils per teacher, representing one of the Eastern School District's better pupil-teacher ratios. At present, the resource program has been allocated 0.70 FTE, and the guidance program has been reduced to 0.33 FTE. Both these allocations are in accordance with school size, but make offering sufficient and adequate programming in these areas very difficult. It is an arduous task to prepare remedial programming for a student when a teacher is only present 70% of the time. It is hard for guidance services to follow-up on serious needs when the counsellor is available a third of the time.

Tracadie Cross Consolidated maintains a quality core French program as well as a physical education program that falls within the parameters set out by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. The 0.17 physical education allotment (there is less assigned to music) and the small number of students limit the school's ability to offer extra-curricular programs. Tracadie Cross has in the past taken part in feeder school tournaments, but is limited in its participation in the province's School Athletic Association because of low numbers. Mr. Kielly reports that the grade 7 and 8 students are exposed to instrumental music and industrial arts twice a week at Morell High School. Additional bussing is provided to allow this participation.

There are problems created by such small numbers and limited staff, even though the pupil-teacher ratio is low. Mr. Kielly speaks positively about the school and its students.



He notes that the staff offer a sound basic program with extras when possible, but these extras are subject to inconsistencies with funding, limited student numbers, and not having enough staff to support various projects. Mr. Kielly notes, "We are a staff of less than eight teachers, and so it is increasingly difficult to offer every program that comes along. Even if we wanted to, we don't have the people to do it or the student numbers sometimes to make it work."

It is hard for teachers to discuss ideas and support and collaborate with each other at grade level as there are split grades throughout grades 1-6. This is a concern as the research now clearly indicates that teacher collaboration within schools is a contributing factor to better teaching, greater accountability, and identification of students' needs.

The First Nations influence has had a positive impact at Tracadie Cross as students and parents bring a welcome diversity to the school. This has directly influenced programming at the school. Diversity within schools is a major component of a healthy educational atmosphere and it is evident at Tracadie Cross.

Mr. Kielly acknowledges that the students are not getting all they could if they were in a larger facility with access to a gym and vocational materials. Mr. Kielly explains that some of the clientele at Tracadie Cross are ready for creative educational programming to encourage them to stay in school and complete grade 12. However, these are not available in Tracadie Cross because of the low student numbers. If the school were to be listed for closure and the children were to attend another school, Mr. Kielly would be supportive of a merger with Mount Stewart. He speaks very highly of his staff and his school. He acknowledges that Mount Stewart is a newer building, in better condition, and less than 10 minutes from Tracadie Cross.

**(b) The Condition of the School Building:**

Tracadie Cross School is in good shape. It is a well-maintained wooden structure. The physical education program has some limitations due to the fact there is no gymnasium in the school.

The playground is sufficient for a small consolidated school, however it does not have full-sized athletic fields for competitive athletic programming in conjunction with the PEI School Athletic Association. In recent years, Tracadie Cross students have traveled to Morell High School to take part in midget-level sports for grade 7 through 9.

The interior of the building has been well looked after. Student furniture, chairs and desks are well maintained and readily available.

The green space is large. There is a paved parking area used for outdoor ball games. There is playground equipment to the rear and side of the building. The rear green space is used for a variety of games and a place for students to gather during breaks and lunch. The Community Center is used for physical education classes.

Tracadie Cross Consolidated has sufficient space for 150-175 students and, with 73 students enrolled, is at less than half its capacity. It is very much under-utilized.

Classroom sizes are extremely large and spacious, and have been augmented with reading areas, resource tables, books, various projects, and art. The computer lab is currently a converted classroom which is located in the center of the school where students and staff can access it readily. As the enrollment decreased, the available space was used for the library and student work areas. There is no cafeteria but the kitchen allows for hot lunches periodically throughout the week.

**(c) The Availability of Space in Other School Buildings:**

There is space for Tracadie Cross students at Mount Stewart Consolidated. If the catchment area of Mount Stewart was to include Tracadie Cross Consolidated, it is suggested that those students who have traditionally gone to Charlottetown instead of Morell High School would still be permitted to choose that option.

As Mr. Kielly notes, staying in the Morell Family of Schools makes the most sense. It eases transition, and if Tracadie Cross is closed he recognizes that Mount Stewart has much to offer. He stated "Surely we can take what is good in both schools and make things work."

There are currently 50 students in Mount Stewart with a capacity of more than 200 (see chart below). It is an excellent facility, well maintained with a good gymnasium. Mount Stewart Consolidated School is a sound physical structure. The current principal, Bernadine Lamphier, states that the school is capable of handling the merger.

Mount Stewart Consolidated Enrollment 2008-2009

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Enrollment	5	7	7	2	5	10	4	10

**(d) The Impact of the Closure of the School on the Educational Program at the School, on Schools which are Designated to Accommodate Students from the School, and the Impact of School Closure on Parents, Students and the General Community:**

Tracadie Cross Consolidated has a substantial First Nations population (anywhere from 18 - 24 students throughout the year) and has developed a deep understanding of their culture, their issues, and learning styles. These understandings will enrich Mount Stewart's environment.

Currently Mount Stewart offers many of the same programs as Tracadie Cross Consolidated. However, the increased student and teacher numbers will mean significantly-enhanced programming in physical education, music and library, as well as expanded guidance and resource support. Teachers will also have greater access to each other, for support, direction, team teaching, and collaboration. Over time these will surely translate into better educational experiences for all students. The grounds are large enough that a sports field can be developed for extra-curricular sporting events. The enhanced programs offered to all Morell Family feeder schools will still take place at Morell Regional High School.

**(e) The Student Enrollment at the School for the Previous Five Years:**

Tracadie Cross has never been considered a large school. Over the past 10 years Tracadie Cross School has lost about 38% of its students, falling from a high in 1997 of 114 to the present 73 students.

This rapidly-declining enrollment reflects a number of factors which have impacted the school and the greater community of Tracadie Cross. Currently there are only four grade one students registered at the school. If the school is to remain open, the possibility of triple grading at the 1-3 level is likely. Forty-two percent of the school population is exiting within the next two years. There are 31 students in grades 7 and 8 but only 16 students in grades 1 and 2.

Tracadie Cross Consolidated Enrollment 2008-2009

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Enrollment	73	4	12	3	6	11	6	16	15

Below is an overview of enrollment trends over the past decade.

Tracadie Cross Consolidated Enrollment 1998-2007

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Enrollment	121	124	124	123	127	105	108	100	84	80

**(f) The Projected Enrollment at the School for the Next Five Years:**

Based on the historical enrollment declines, lack of residential and commercial growth, and the projections for declining enrollment over the next 5 years, it appears the school's population will continue to decline. Previously, Tracadie Cross' population was projected to be 80 students this year. There are, as noted, 73 students presently enrolled. Over the next seven years the enrollment is projected to drop a further 25-30% to approximately 50 students.

Tracadie Cross Projected Enrollment 2008-2015

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Enrollment	73	80	66	63	63	59	56	54

**(g) Projected Changes in the Population for the Area Served by the School for the Next Five Years:**

There is some marginal growth in house construction in the Donaldston Road area, Blooming Point Road, and Bedford. These new constructions have not resulted in substantial population increases at the school so there is likely little to no significant growth projected for the next five years.

**(h) Any Available Statistics Concerning Approved Residential Sub-divisions Available for new Residential Construction:**

The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs indicates that there is not expected to be an increase in the number of requests for subdivision approvals in this area.

**(i) Any Available Information Concerning Plans for Commercial or Industrial Development in the Geographical Area Served by the School:**

According to the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs there is no information to suggest an increase in commercial or industrial development in this area.

**(j) A Zoning and Transportation Plan for Affected Students:**

For ease of transition and simplicity, there currently is no need to change the zone associated with Tracadie Cross Consolidated. All students in the school catchment area will be moved to the Mount Stewart Consolidated catchment area.

As the two schools are only minutes apart, simple modifications to the existing bus routes would accommodate all student transportation to Mount Stewart Consolidated School with little impact on the length of time on the bus for each child. It is important to note that grade 7 and 8 students from Tracadie Cross Consolidated have been traveling to Morell, passing Mount Stewart regularly, to attend the equity program at Morell High. This program has also helped identify potential transportation concerns. The Eastern School District is committed to maintaining all Tracadie Cross buses for transportation purposes to Mount Stewart Consolidated. The District is also committed to addressing any issues regarding substantial increases in travel times for students. Routes may change, drop off and pick up points may change, and if necessary, alternatives may be provided to ensure travel times are reasonable.

**(k) A Financial Analysis Which Includes a Projection of Both Costs and Savings Which Would Result from the Closure of the School:**

If Tracadie Cross Consolidated is closed, an analysis indicates an annual fiscal savings of approximately \$50,400 related to non-salary operating costs.

The Eastern School District projects no significant increased cost associated with the closure of Tracadie Cross. The cost of student transportation will remain consistent with current practice. Existing program delivery will be provided at Mount Stewart Consolidated, with the commitment to maintaining a healthy pupil-teacher ratio. If there are marginal increases in cost it is anticipated that the monies saved from operating expenses would be sufficient enough to address such issues.

**Summary**

The present enrollment at Tracadie Cross is such that it is difficult to provide specialist programming and support services. By amalgamating with Mount Stewart, the students will be exposed to broader programming in several areas, and will have greater access to student support services. Further, teachers will have greater opportunities for collaboration with their peers.

School: **Dundas Consolidated School**

Grade Configuration: Dundas Consolidated is currently a grade 1-8 school with kindergarten slated for implementation as early as September 2010.

Student Enrollment: 69 students

Address: Dundas Consolidated  
87 Cumberland Rd, Dundas  
P.O. Box 21006, Cardigan, PE C0A 1G0

Principal: Paul Sullivan  
Vice-Principal: Jo-Anne Lanigan

Dundas Consolidated is centrally located between Cardigan, St Peter's, and Fortune Consolidated Schools. It falls within the Montague Family of Schools for administrative purposes. It is tied to the Souris Family of Schools for storm closures and school cancellations. Most government agencies operate out of Montague or Souris, and service is provided from those towns. Any Dundas student requiring support at an alternative school would likely travel to Montague. However, depending on the location of the student's home, alternative schools can also be accessed in Souris and Morell. The mail service is in Cardigan.

According to Eastern School District Policy FCB, Permanent School Closure, any school identified for possible closure must be thoroughly examined under the following set of guiding principles.

**(a) Strengths and Deficiencies which Exist in the Educational Program at the School:**

The current teacher allocation for the school is 5.95 FTE teachers in total for the 69 students. This provides a pupil-teacher ratio of 11.59 pupils per teacher. Dundas has operated with four split grade classrooms for a number of years (1-2, 3-4, 5-6, and a 7-8).

Discussions with Paul Sullivan, principal of the school, indicate that the school administration and staff have made a concerted effort to address the high percentage of special needs students in the school. As part of the School Development Plan, Dundas has implemented a Primary Literacy Intervention Plan. With assistance from the school's assigned literacy coach, students in grades 1 through 4 are formally assessed for reading levels using the PM Benchmark assessment tool. Students are grouped by reading level and spend the first 90 minutes of the day working through an uninterrupted literacy block. Guided reading and writing is the main focal point for the students.

At present, the resource program has been allocated 0.57 FTE, and the guidance program has been reduced to 0.20 FTE. These allocations recognize that Dundas is a small school requiring high academic supports to assist children. The half-time resource teacher is challenged to meet student needs for instructional support. Further,

at 0.20 FTE, it is a challenge for guidance services to follow-up on serious needs when the counsellor works at Dundas the equivalent of a day a week.

This year the music program has been assigned 0.50 FTE, and is offered to students in grades 1-6. This is a very generous allocation for a small school. As a result, students are able to participate more fully in various competitions. Dundas continues to be actively involved in the Eastern School District's Drama and Music Festivals.

Dundas Consolidated maintains quality core French programs, and a physical education program that falls within the parameters set out by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Since there is not a full-time dedicated physical education instructor assigned to the school, extra curricular athletic programs are limited, and are also hampered by low student enrollment. Students can participate in track and field, cross country, and badminton. Feeder school tournaments are held two or three times a year for soccer, volleyball and sometimes basketball to allow students at the grade 7 and 8 level to participate in competitive sport. In larger schools, these same students would participate in inter-murals as well as School Athletic Association-sponsored sports.

The principal, Mr. Sullivan, teaches physical education, language arts, science, computer, and has allocated himself very little time for administrative duties. The vice-principal at Dundas Consolidated has a 100% teaching load which essentially means most administrative duties are completed outside the teaching day. Educational leadership requires precious time and resources, and is difficult to accomplish when principals and vice-principals are teaching large percentages of time.

With few teaching staff, teachers are unable to discuss ideas and support each other at grade level when there is one teacher per two grades. Teachers recognize that greater collaboration within schools leads to better teaching, greater accountability, and more support for students requiring modifications and/or adaptations. Sufficient numbers of students do not allow a single class per grade. The target is a minimum of two teachers per grade.

Despite declining student numbers, the Eastern School District has tried to maintain quality program delivery at Dundas Consolidated by providing a generous pupil teacher ratio. As well, Dundas students participate in an enhancement program at Montague Intermediate School, where they are exposed to prevocational, technology and home economics programming. Matching teaching assignments to teacher qualifications and interests, and retaining qualified teachers and specialists becomes more difficult each year. As staff transfer out, qualified replacements who have combined skill sets in music, physical education, guidance, special education and technology, will be hard to find.

**(b) The Condition of the School Building:**

The building is in good shape. The gymnasium is much smaller than most, leaving volleyball and badminton courts undersized. There is a ramp for wheelchair access to the main floor, but no lift to the second floor. Therefore, the school is not wheelchair accessible.

The interior of the building has been well maintained. Like so many other schools, Dundas staff has taken pride in the physical appearance of the school and the custodial staff do an excellent job maintaining the building. Student furniture, chairs and desks are well maintained and readily available. The school is clean and welcoming.

The playground is sufficient for a small consolidated school. It has two full-sized athletic fields for competitive athletic programming, and has hosted other schools for friendship soccer tournaments in the past. Dundas students have been invited to participate in midget sports at Montague Intermediate School, though very few have opted to participate. The green space at Dundas is large. There is a paved parking area used for outdoor ball games, like four square. Some of the paved area extends towards the church and students use this paved part for games. Playground equipment is located to the side of the building.

Dundas Consolidated has sufficient space for 225 students (200 optimal) suggesting that it is approximately one third its capacity at 31%, and therefore much under-utilized. Classroom sizes are extremely large and spacious. This leaves ample room for a reading area, a resource area, a combination library/computer lab, and space for various projects and lots of art activities. There is space for expanding offices, especially in the upstairs of the building.

There is no cafeteria although the kitchen/staff room allows for hot lunches periodically throughout the week. The computer lab/library remains as a focal point of the school where students and staff can readily congregate.

**(c) The Availability of Space in Other School Buildings:**

Many students in the Dundas Consolidated zone apply and are approved to attend schools in each of the three Family of Schools (Souris, Morell, Montague). Most Dundas students choose to attend Montague Intermediate after grade 8, and then feed into Montague Regional High School. The closest school in the Montague family, which has available space to host these students, is Cardigan Consolidated School. If the Cardigan Consolidated zone was altered to include Dundas Consolidated, it is suggested that those students who have traditionally gone to the Morell Family of Schools or the Souris Family of Schools, could still make that choice.

There is ample space in both Cardigan Consolidated and Montague Intermediate to accommodate the Dundas students in grades 1-6 and 7-8 respectively. There are currently 85 students at the 1-6 level at Cardigan Consolidated with a capacity for 300 students. It is an excellent facility, well maintained with a fully functional gymnasium. Recently a music room was added to the back of the building. The school is capable of handling the merger with very little impact. If grade 7 and 8 students in Cardigan attended Montague Intermediate, more space would be available for students and staff.

As indicated by the following enrolment chart, Cardigan can easily merge with Dundas Consolidated and house all students in the one facility.

Cardigan Consolidated Grades 1-6 Enrollment 2008-2009

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6
Enrollment	19	7	20	12	15	12

**(d) The Impact of the Closure of the School on the Educational Program at the School, on Schools Which are Designated to Accommodate Students from the School, and the Impact of School Closure on Parents, Students and the General Community:**

By attending Cardigan School, Dundas students have greater access to enhanced guidance, special education, and resource programs. There will also be more opportunity in the physical education, music and library programs. The increased student numbers will also ensure that enhanced French language programming will be available. The building in Cardigan will house all of Dundas's 1-6 students while the 7 and 8 classes will go to Montague Intermediate. The grounds are large enough that a sports field can be developed for extra curricular sporting events. The enhanced programs offered to all Montague feeder schools will continue to operate at Montague Intermediate School.

At the professional level, teachers will have greater access to each other, for support, direction, team teaching, and collaboration. Over time this will surely translate into better educational experiences for all students.

At present Cardigan Consolidated School can host Dundas students. The following outlines Cardigan Consolidated's school enrollment projections. This chart includes the grade 7 and 8 students who in fact will be attending Montague Intermediate.

Cardigan Consolidated Grades 1–8 Projected Enrollment 2008-2015

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Enrollment	113	108	99	96	91	85	75	80

Cardigan Consolidated Grades 1–6 Projected Enrollment 2008-2015

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Enrollment	81	76	72	68	58	59	57	60

The enrollment projections for Montague Intermediate are shown below. Montague Intermediate's capacity is 400 students (MacAulay Coles, 1996). However, this report was written in 1996 and since then, a school addition now houses a technology arts lab, library, gymnasium, music room, a science lab, and office space. Though much of the space does not lend itself to substantial increases in student enrollment, it would confirm the capacity of 400 students is now an optimal capacity.



Montague Intermediate Projected Enrollment 2008-2015

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Enrollment	329	314	313	285	259	255	257	233

If the grade 7 and 8 students from Dundas are moved to Montague Intermediate in September 2009, there will be plenty of room

**(e) The Student Enrollment at the School for the Previous Five Years:**

Dundas has never been considered a large school. A critical time in the school's history has been reached and maintaining high quality program delivery has become increasingly difficult. Originally the capacity for Dundas was suggested to be 225 students (MacAulay, Coles, 1996) although the optimal size is probably around 200 students. This declining enrollment reflects a number of factors which have impacted the school and the greater community of Dundas. If the school remains open, the likelihood of triple grading at the 1-3 level and 4-6 levels is inevitable, especially with four students currently registered in grade one.

Dundas Consolidated Enrollment 2008 -2009

Grades	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Enrollment	69	4	10	11	8	8	11	6	11

Below is an overview of enrollment trends over the past decade.

Dundas Consolidated Enrollment 1998-2007

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Enrollment	77	76	77	78	78	74	77	76	78	77

**(f) The Projected Enrollment at the School for the Next Five Years:**

Based on the historical enrollment, lack of residential and commercial growth, and the projections for enrollment over the next 5 years, it is unlikely that Dundas Consolidated will increase present enrollment numbers.

The following chart illustrates enrollment projections over the next seven years.

Dundas Consolidated Enrollment Projections 2008-2015

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	
Enrollment	69	73	69	72	69	70	70	67	67

**(g) Projected Changes in the Population for the Area Served by the School for the Next Five Years:**

According to recent documents provided to the Eastern School District from the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, there is no indication of a significant change in population growth in the area.

**(h) Any Available Statistics Concerning Approved Residential Sub-divisions Available for New Residential Construction:**

The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs indicates that there is not expected to be an increase in the number of requests for subdivision approvals in this area.

**(i) Any Available Information Concerning Plans for Commercial or Industrial Development in the Geographical Area Served by the School**

According to the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, there is no information to suggest an increase in commercial or industrial development in this area.

**(j) Zoning and Transportation Plan for Affected Students:**

If Dundas were to close and be relocated to Cardigan Consolidated, all students zoned for Dundas Consolidated would automatically go to Cardigan for grades 1-6, Montague Intermediate for 7 through 9, and Montague High School for 10 through 12. Simple modifications to the current bus routes would accommodate all student transportation requirements to both Cardigan Consolidated and Montague Intermediate schools. For students in grades 1-6, the impact of bus route changes and times on buses will be reasonable. High school students will have no bus changes. The greatest change will come for those students who will now attend Montague Intermediate for grades 7 through 9, although these students presently are familiar with this bus route as they participate in the enhancement program (industrial arts, home economics, technology) at Montague Intermediate. Any potential transportation concerns have likely been identified.

The Eastern School District is committed to maintaining all Dundas buses for transportation purposes to Cardigan and Montague Intermediate. The District is also committed to addressing any substantial increases in travel times for students to ensure they are reasonable.

**(k) A Financial Analysis which Includes a Projection of Both Costs and Savings Which Would Result from the Closure of the School:**

With the closure of Dundas Consolidated, an annual savings of approximately \$56,649 in non-salary operating costs could be realized. The Eastern School District projects no significant increased cost as a result of the closure. Student transportation costs and program delivery costs will remain consistent with current practice, with the commitment to maintaining a healthy student-teacher ratio. If there are marginal increases in cost, it is anticipated that the monies saved from operating expenses would be sufficient to address such issues.

## **Summary**

Given a student population of 69, it is very difficult to offer specialized programs and support services at Dundas Consolidated. Further, it is challenging with the small number of teachers and split grades to maximize the work of teachers and administration. Cardigan Consolidated has the space to accommodate students from Dundas while Montague Intermediate can easily accommodate the grade 7 and 8 students. In these two larger groupings, it will be easier to address the programming and teaching challenges that have been identified. The Eastern School District is committed to ensuring that student time on buses will be reasonable.

School: **Georgetown Elementary School**

Grade Configuration: Currently Georgetown Elementary is a grade 1-8 school with a kindergarten privately operating out of the school.

Student Enrollment: 94 students

Address: Georgetown Elementary School  
47 Kent Street, Georgetown, PE C0A 1L0

Principal: Norbert Carpenter  
Vice-Principal: Lisa Myers

Georgetown Elementary is centrally located on a peninsula between the Cardigan and Brudenell Rivers. It is part of the Montague Family of Schools and is 20 minutes from the Town of Montague, 5 minutes from the village of Cardigan. Most government agencies operate out of Montague. The alternative school is also in Montague. The mail service is in Georgetown. Holland College maintains a satellite school in the community.

According to the Eastern School District Policy FCB, Permanent School Closure, any school under consideration for permanent closure must be thoroughly examined. The following information must be provided:

**(a) Strengths and Deficiencies Which Exist in the Educational Program at the School:**

The current teacher allocation for the school is 7.67 FTE teachers in total for 94 students. The pupil-teacher ratio of 12.25 pupils per teacher, is considered an average ratio in the District.

This year, the resource program has been allocated 0.90 FTE teachers along with 0.25 FTE for Reading Recovery®. The school was also granted an extra 0.25 FTE for additional resource. The resource allocation is high, as the District recognizes the student population that requires adaptations or modifications programming. The guidance program is at 0.34 FTE. These specialist allocations are above the staffing norm and reflect District support for meeting the learning and social-emotional needs of students. Ongoing support and follow up for students is difficult for the counsellor to schedule, because the position is shared with two other schools.

Georgetown Elementary maintains a quality core French program and a physical education program that falls within the parameters set out by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Currently students from Georgetown have the opportunity to take part in School Athletic Association-sponsored sports through Montague Intermediate School, but few, if any, take advantage of this opportunity. Students can participate in track and field in the spring and cross country in the fall. There are some students who also compete in badminton. The school is involved in friendship tournaments in volleyball, soccer and basketball with local elementary schools. The music allocation is 0.16 FTE teacher, which limits the choral time for students, and the number of community performances which can be held.

Problems result from small student numbers and limited staff, despite the favourable pupil-teacher ratio. The principal, Norbert Carpenter, indicates that teachers are challenged to find time to collaborate with peers, and to offer support to each other. With one teacher working at each grade, it is difficult to share resources and teaching strategies. Georgetown has split grades from 1-8, and the administrators teach most of the time. Administrators have scarce time for educational leadership. Although the educational programming at the school is sound, attendance at a larger facility would offer students access to vocational programs and instrumental music. Georgetown students are presently exposed to industrial arts, technology arts and home economics at Montague Intermediate, once in a six-day cycle.

The pupil-teacher ratio is about average when compared to other small schools in the district. Mr. Carpenter acknowledges that this is a positive aspect to working in a "small school," as teachers and students can develop stronger relationships. Parent participation at the school is high; there is a homey feeling, and very much an "open door policy." The town of Georgetown and the school are supportive of each other, and Mr. Carpenter stated that the "small" aspect of the school encouraged greater possible connections between home and school.

As all teachers teach split grades, it is becoming increasingly difficult to match teaching assignments to teaching qualifications and interests, to retain qualified teachers and to provide specialist services to students. Preparation for several subjects at several different grade levels is onerous, and can cause teacher overload. As enrollments decline, qualified teachers leave, and fewer teachers are assigned to Georgetown which makes things more difficult. Continuity of program, staff, and efforts associated with school development are affected.

**(b) The Condition of the School Building:**

The building is a wooden structure which is well maintained. The playground is sufficient for a small consolidated school. Small athletic fields for physical education classes, and playground equipment are located in the front and rear of the school. There is a tennis court beside the school.

The interior of the building has been well maintained and the school is clean and welcoming. The custodial staff have always taken pride in the cleanliness of the school. Student furniture, chairs and desks, are well maintained and readily available.

The green space is large and meets the needs of the student population. There is a paved parking area used for outdoor ball games, like four square. The long paved walkway from the car park to the front doors allows for games, basketball hoops, and jump rope. Between the school and the street, the green space is used for a variety of games and as a student meeting place.

Georgetown Elementary has sufficient space for 200 students suggesting that the school is at approximately one-half its capacity. It is under-utilized. Classroom sizes are large and spacious, and many are configured with reading areas, resource tables, books and learning centres. The computer lab and the library are in converted classrooms. Over the past decade, Georgetown School has undertaken renovations in classrooms to adapt to new technologies.

The guidance area is large, allowing for group and parent meetings. Similarly, the large resource area allows for student groups to work comfortably, three or four at a time. Most meetings with parents take place in classrooms, the library, or in the Principal's office.

Although there is no cafeteria, the kitchen allows for hot lunches periodically throughout the week. The kitchen's proximity to the gym has allowed for pancake breakfasts and winter carnival hot lunches. Wedding receptions and dinners have been hosted there.

The Georgetown School facility is adequate for the basic delivery of programs.

**(c) The Availability of Space in Other School Buildings:**

If Georgetown Consolidated were to close, there is ample space if students are split so elementary students attend Cardigan Consolidated, and intermediate students attend Montague Intermediate. There are currently 85 students at the 1-6 level at Cardigan Consolidated with a capacity for 300. It is an excellent facility, well maintained with a great gymnasium. Cardigan Consolidated School is a sound physical structure. The school is capable of handling the merger with very little impact.

The following enrollment chart indicates that a merger between Cardigan Consolidated and Georgetown Elementary will allow all students to be housed in one facility.

Cardigan Consolidated Grades 1-6 Enrollment 2008-2009

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6
Enrollment	19	7	20	12	15	12

**(d) The Impact of the Closure of the School on the Educational Program at the School, on Schools Which are Designated to Accommodate Students from the School, and the Impact of School Closure on Parents, Students and the General Community:**

Both Georgetown and Cardigan follow the Minister's prescribed curriculum, so core programming will be similar in both schools. However, on the professional level, with more staff assigned to the building, staff will have greater access to each other for support, direction, team teaching, and collaboration. There will also be full-time guidance and enhanced special education/resource programs, as well as more opportunities in physical education, and enhanced music and library programs. The increased numbers would also ensure that enhanced French language programming would be available. Over time this will surely translate into better educational experiences for all students. The building in Cardigan can house all of Georgetown's 1-6 students, and the grounds are large enough that a sports field can be developed for extra-curricular sporting events.

The chart below shows the enrollment projections for Montague Intermediate. It should be noted that Montague Intermediate's capacity is estimated to be about 400 students. Since then the school has had an addition completed with a technology arts lab, library, gymnasium, instrumental music room, a science lab, and office space. It is also part of the new Montague Regional High School's building priority and is scheduled to have a new industrial arts lab added in 2009. Though the facility cannot absorb substantial increases in student enrollment; with a capacity of 400 students, it can easily hold grades 7 and 8 students from Georgetown, Dundas and Cardigan.

Montague Intermediate Projected Enrollment 2008-2015

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Enrollment	329	314	313	285	259	255	257	233

Beginning in 2009, with the movement of grade 7 and 8 students from Cardigan, Georgetown and Dundas to Montague Intermediate, the total numbers would be as follows:

Montague Intermediate Projected Enrollment 2008-2015  
(includes grades 7 and 8 students from Cardigan, Georgetown, and Dundas)

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Enrollment	390	386	381	357	341	330	317	283

**(e) The Student Enrollment at the School for the Previous Five Years:**

Georgetown Elementary has typically maintained a student population of just over 100 students. In the past this was large enough to keep the school open and offer the basics in programming. As times change and greater demand is placed on literacy levels, accountability, measurement and assessment to meet students' needs, a student enrollment of 100 does not allow for the ideal in educational programming. Over the past 10 years, the enrollment at the school has slowly declined.

Originally the school's capacity was suggested to be 200 students (Ascent Group, 2008), although 175 is probably a more realistic number. This low and declining enrollment reflects a number of factors which have impacted the school and the greater community of Georgetown.

Georgetown Elementary Enrollment 2008-2009

Grades	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Enrollment	94	11	14	14	15	12	10	12	6

Below is an overview of enrollment trends over the past decade.  
**Georgetown Elementary Enrollment 1998-2007**

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Enrollment	97	95	95	93	102	96	89	84	86	84

Enrollments are diminishing due to lower birth rates, family mobility, and limited growth in community development and housing. The closure of the Irving-owned lumber mill and limited use of the shipyard has impacted greatly on the population of the town and the enrollment at the school. Georgetown actively encourages new housing and commercial ventures for the town in order to boost population.

**(f) The Projected Enrollment at the School for the Next Five Years:**

Enrollment projections indicate that Georgetown will lose about 5% of its enrollment over the next decade. Previous projections indicated that Georgetown enrollment would be about 78 this year, as compared to 94. This indicates these projections might be somewhat pessimistic.

**Georgetown Elementary Enrollment Projections 2008-2015**

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Enrollment 94	78	72	73	65	56	50	45	41

**(g) Projected Changes in the Population for the Area Served by the School for the Next Five Years:**

According to recent documents provided to the Eastern School District from the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, there is no indication of a significant change in population growth in the area.

**(h) Any Available Statistics Concerning Approved Residential Sub-divisions Available for New Residential Construction:**

The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs indicates that there is not expected to be an increase in the number of requests for subdivision approvals in this area.

**(i) Any Available Information Concerning Plans for Commercial or Industrial Development in the Geographical Area Served by the School:**

According to the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs there is no information to suggest an increase in commercial or industrial development in this area.

**(j) A Zoning and Transportation Plan for Affected Students:**

If Georgetown Elementary is to close, simple modifications to the current bus routes would allow easy transportation for grade 1-6 students to Cardigan Consolidated and for grade 7-8 students to Montague Intermediate. Bus schedules will be established



to ensure bus rides are as short as possible. Walkers in Georgetown would now have a bus ride, though the distance between the two communities is only minutes away. The close proximity of the two schools (Cardigan and Georgetown) will result in marginal impact for grade 1-6 students. There would be an increase in bus time for those students who will now travel to Montague Intermediate. Students from Georgetown Elementary have been traveling to Montague Intermediate for curricular reasons to participate in the "Enhancement Program" (Industrial Arts, Home Economics, Technology) at Montague Intermediate. Scheduling these bus runs has helped identify potential transportation concerns. The District is committed to organizing student transportation in the most efficient manner possible. Routes may change, drop off and pick up points may change, and if necessary, alternatives may be provided to ensure travel times are reasonable.

**(k) A Financial Analysis Which Includes a Projection of Both Costs and Savings Which Would Result from the Closure of the School.**

The closure of Georgetown Elementary would realize an annual fiscal savings of approximately \$57,892 in non-salary operating costs.

There is no significant projected increased cost to the Eastern School District as student transportation will remain consistent with current practice. Existing program delivery will be provided at both Cardigan Consolidated and Montague Intermediate, with the commitment to maintaining a healthy student- teacher ratio. If there are marginal increases in cost it is anticipated that the monies saved from operating expenses would be sufficient to address such issues.

**Summary**

The enrollment at Georgetown Elementary is at a point where it is very difficult to provide the quality of programs and services that are offered in a larger school. Further, because of the small number of teachers, it is impossible to create the broad and deep collaboration between and among teachers that is essential to the teaching/learning process. Cardigan Consolidated has the space for Georgetown's grades 1-6 students, and Montague Intermediate can easily house the grade 7 and 8 students. The number of students at the reconfigured Cardigan Consolidated will permit the quality of programming and teacher collaboration suggested. Transportation should be a relatively straight-forward process and every effort will be made to ensure that student bus times are reasonable. In the next ten years there will continue to be modest declines in the enrollment at Georgetown.

School: **Grand Tracadie Elementary School**

Grade Configuration: Currently Grand Tracadie Elementary is a grade 1-6 school with the prospect of kindergarten starting as early as September 2010

Student Enrollment: 30 students

Address: Grand Tracadie Elementary School  
18 Harbour Rd, Grand Tracadie  
RR1 Little York, PE C0A 1P0

Principal: Heather Cudmore

Vice-Principal: Shane Dunn

Grand Tracadie Elementary is centrally located in the Grand Tracadie area 15 minutes east of Charlottetown. It falls within the Charlottetown Rural Family of Schools for administrative purposes. Services are available in the area, however, Social Services, RCMP, and community outreach workers are housed in the Charlottetown area or Morell. Students in need of support in the regular school system can attend alternative schooling in Charlottetown.

According to Eastern School District Policy FCB, Permanent School Closure, any school identified for permanent closure must be thoroughly examined under the following set of guiding principles.

**(a) Strengths and Deficiencies which Exist in the Educational Program at the School:**

The current teacher allocation for the school is 3.46 FTE teachers in total for 30 students; a pupil-teacher ratio of 8.67 teachers per pupil. This is one of the Eastern School District's best pupil-teacher ratios.

One of the strengths of small schools like Grand Tracadie, is that students receive greater individual attention and are better known in the school. Educational experiences can be tailored to meet the needs of the individual. Grand Tracadie offers all required programs and many additional ones. However, the breadth of a number of programs is limited.

At present, the resource/special education program is challenging. Student IEPs and adaptations and modifications are prepared by administration and staff. The guidance program has been reduced to 0.16 FTE, meaning those services are provided once in a 6 day cycle. These allocations are in accordance with the school population. It can be difficult to provide the proper support for students having difficulties with learning problems or social/emotional problems in a school of this size. Grand Tracadie Elementary maintains a quality core French program as well as a physical education program that falls within the parameters set out by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. The school has triple graded students in grades 4, 5, and 6 in specialist areas. The physical education program and the yearly events attributed to that program are very successful despite the lack of a gymnasium. This is impressive with a limited allocation of 0.10 FTE teacher for physical education.

Currently students from Grand Tracadie have the opportunity to take part in School Athletic Association sponsored sports through school supported activities like track and field, cross country, and badminton.

With only 30 students, the principal and vice-principal take on greater teaching responsibilities. The vice principal has a 100% teaching load, which means his administrative duties are completed outside the school day. The limited allocation of administrative time makes support for extra curricular programming extremely challenging. The teaching staff are spread fairly thin, taking on a variety of responsibilities. The role of educational leader requires precious time and resources and cannot be accomplished when principals and vice-principals are teaching large percentages of time.

This year, the music program has been assigned 0.10 FTE of a position. This has been a positive influence on the school and the students and staff take pride in the concerts they stage. Grand Tracadie continues to be actively involved in the Eastern School District's Drama Festival.

Grand Tracadie maintains double and triple grades. Despite the desirable pupil-teacher ratio, there are problems created by such small numbers and limited staff. Teachers find it difficult to discuss ideas and support each other at grade level when there is only one teacher per two grades. (Grand Tracadie has split grade classes throughout grades 1-6.) The teaching profession recognizes that greater collaboration within schools contributes to better teaching, greater accountability, and quicker identification and support for special needs students.

As enrollments continue to decline, fewer teaching staff will be assigned to the school, creating greater challenges to deliver all areas of the program.

**(b) The Condition of the School Building:**

The building is in mediocre shape. The lack of a gymnasium is a limiting factor and children at Grand Tracadie do not enjoy the same on-site activities that most other Eastern School District students enjoy. The rest of the school, though well maintained, is worn and dated. Grand Tracadie School is one of the District's older structures. There is no lift to either floor, so it is not a wheelchair accessible facility. Like so many other schools, Grand Tracadie staff take pride in the physical appearance of the school and the custodial staff do an excellent job maintaining the building. Student furniture, chairs and desks are well maintained and readily available. The school is clean and welcoming.

The playground is sufficient for a small elementary school. It has an athletic field adjacent to the school. The green space is large enough for the current size of the school. There is a paved parking area also used for outdoor ball games, like four square. There is playground equipment to the side of the parking lot.

Grand Tracadie Elementary has optimal space for 75 students, so with the current enrollment of 30, it is approximately 40% of its capacity. It is very much under-utilized. Classroom sizes are large and spacious. The school staff have found ways to utilize the space in creative ways. Library books, science labs and computers are easily

accessible because the staff has made room for them in the existing classrooms. However, there are few spaces to work with individual students.

Despite facility limitations, Grand Tracadie Elementary School does a good job of delivering the public education program. There is no cafeteria, but there is a kitchen on site. The age of the building could be a factor as the life of a school facility is generally considered to be 50 years, although condition and utilization do play a role in determining whether renovations are required. Constructed in 1960, it is clear that the age of Grand Tracadie may be a factor as it is 48 years old.

**(c) The Availability of Space in Other School Buildings:**

The following enrollment chart indicates that L.M. Montgomery will have no issue in accommodating students from Grand Tracadie. Its capacity is about 320 students. With 244 presently registered, there is presently plenty of room for Grand Tracadie students in L.M. Montgomery.

L. M. Montgomery Elementary Enrollment 2008-2009

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6
Enrollment 244	46	37	42	40	37	42

**(d) The Impact of the Closure of the School on the Educational Program at the School, on Schools Which are Designated to Accommodate Students from the School, and the Impact of School Closure on Parents, Students and the General Community:**

Since L. M. Montgomery offers many of the same programs, Grand Tracadie students will easily access these. They will also have access to enhanced programs in physical education, music, library and French. There will be more programs available in guidance, special education/resource, and Reading Recovery®. At the professional level, teachers will have greater access to each other, for support, direction, team teaching, and collaboration. Over time this will result in better educational experiences for all students. The building at L. M. Montgomery can take in all of Grand Tracadie’s grade 1-6 students. The green space and sports fields are very large and the playground is newly refurbished. The gymnasium at L. M. Montgomery is small, but for an elementary curriculum it is sufficient.

L. M. Montgomery was built in 1983, making it significantly newer than Grand Tracadie. It is also a brick building with all the amenities required to provide a high quality education program for kindergarten through grade 6.

The chart below shows the enrollment projections for L. M. Montgomery. It should be noted that L. M. Montgomery’s capacity is 375 students (MacAulay Coles, 1996). However, this report was written in 1996 and since then the school has utilized its space to accommodate a music room, a science lab, office space, and a large resource area. Its present capacity is about 320 students, leaving plenty of room for the Grand Tracadie students.

L. M. Montgomery Elementary Projected Enrollment 2008-2015

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Enrollment	230	233	240	240	236	240	248	247

**(e) The Student Enrollment at the School for the Previous Five Years:**

Grand Tracadie has always been considered a small school. Over the past 10 years it has lost about 45% of its population. The population in 1997 was 54 students and this year there are 30. With a teacher allotment of 3.46 FTE teachers this makes for a pupil-teacher ratio of 8.67 pupils per teaching staff. This declining enrollment reflects a number of factors which have impacted the school, the greater community of Grand Tracadie, and the province in general. For the school to remain open, the possibility of triple grading is very likely.

Grand Tracadie Elementary School Enrollment (2008)

Grades	1	2	3	4	5	6
Enrollment	30	1	6	7	6	5

The current table shows the historical trends regarding school enrollment at Grand Tracadie Elementary. Accordingly, the enrollment of Grand Tracadie Elementary continues to decline and is currently at a point where economies of scale have to be examined.

Grand Tracadie Elementary Historical Enrolments

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Enrolment	56	55	54	54	50	48	41	39	40	36

**(f) The Projected Enrollment at the School for the Next Five Years:**

The chart below provides a projection of the enrollment of Grand Tracadie Elementary over the next 7 years. Note that the current enrollment numbers are 7 students lower than a previous projection indicating that Grand Tracadie is losing student population a little quicker than predicted. It also should be noted that there is only one student presently enrolled in grade one.

Grand Tracadie Elementary Enrollment Projections 2008-2015

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Enrollment	30	37	39	45	42	48	51	51

**(g) Projected Changes in the Population for the Area Served by the School for the Next Five Years:**

According to recent documents provided to the Eastern School District from the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, there is no indication of a significant change in population growth in the area.

**(h) Any Available Statistics Concerning Approved Residential Sub-divisions Available for New Residential Construction:**

The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs indicates that there is not expected to be an increase in the number of requests for subdivision approvals in this area.

**(i) Any Available Information Concerning Plans for Commercial or Industrial Development in the Geographical Area Served by the School:**

According to the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs there is no information to suggest an increase in commercial or industrial development in this area.

**(j) A Zoning and Transportation Plan for Affected Students:**

If Grand Tracadie were to close and be relocated to L. M. Montgomery Elementary, all students in the Grand Tracadie zone would attend L. M. Montgomery for 1-6, Stonepark Intermediate for 7 through 9, and Charlottetown Rural High School for 10 through 12.

The Eastern School District is committed to maintaining the Grand Tracadie bus for transportation purposes to L. M. Montgomery. The District is also committed to addressing any issues regarding substantial increases in travel times for students. Routes may change, drop off and pick up points may change, and if necessary, alternatives may be provided to ensure travel times are reasonable.

**(k) A Financial Analysis Which Includes a Projection of Both Costs and Savings Which Would Result from the Closure of the School.**

The closure of Grand Tracadie Elementary could result in an annual cost savings of approximately \$31,080 in non-salary operating costs.

The Eastern School District projects no significant increased cost to the Eastern School District with the closure of Grand Tracadie; the cost of student transportation will remain consistent with current practice, existing program delivery will be continued at L.M. Montgomery, with the commitment to maintaining a healthy student-teacher ratio. If there are marginal increases in cost it is anticipated that the monies saved from operating expenses would be sufficient to address such issues.

## **Summary**

The present enrollment at Grand Tracadie of 30 students is simply not large enough to support the types of programs and support services that many students require. Further, there are not enough teachers or administrative support to permit significant amount of teacher collaboration and administrative encouragement needed to ensure our students get all the support they need. These issues can be addressed at L.M. Montgomery Elementary as Grand Tracadie students can easily be accommodated there.

School: **Parkdale Elementary School**

Grade Configuration: Currently Parkdale Elementary is a grade 1-6 school. Kindergarten is slated for implementation with the prospect of kindergarten starting as early as September 2010.

Student Enrollment: 102 students

Address: Parkdale Elementary School  
49 Confederation St., Charlottetown, PE C1A 5V5

Principal: Michele LeClair  
Vice-Principal: Maureen Duffy

Parkdale Elementary is centrally located in the Parkdale area of Charlottetown. It is housed within the Colonel Gray Family of Schools for administrative purposes. Government services are readily available in the area. The school can apply for and have students attend an alternative school setting.

According to Eastern School District Policy FCB, Permanent School Closure, any school considered for permanent closure must be thoroughly examined. The following information is part of that examination.

**(a) Strengths and Deficiencies which Exist in the Educational Program at the School:**

At present, the resource/special education program has been allocated 1.00 FTE, and the guidance program has been reduced to 0.33 FTE. These allocations are in accordance with school need.

Parkdale Elementary maintains a quality core French program as well as music and physical education programs that fall within the parameters set out by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. The principal, Michele LeClair, stresses the importance of the music and physical education programs. The annual events and celebrations associated with these programs expand into the regular life of the school. This is impressive with an allocation of 0.40 FTE for each of physical education and music. Not only are they able to provide regular intra-murals, but students can participate in choir and a drama program at all grade levels. In addition to the regular school use of the facility, Parkdale supports community use with the gym and music room being utilized regularly. Currently students from Parkdale have the opportunity to take part in School Athletic Association sponsored sports through school supported activities like track and field in the spring and cross country in the fall of the year.

The principal and vice-principal take on significant teaching responsibilities. The vice-principal has a 90% teaching load which limits completion of most administrative duties to outside the teaching day. The administrators do not have adequate time to be curriculum leaders. All teaching staff at Parkdale work to provide quality education to all students despite the limitations of being a small school.



Parkdale maintains single classes at each grade, but unfortunately there are insufficient numbers to provide two single classes per grade. This makes it hard for teachers to discuss ideas and support each other at grade level when there is only one teacher per grade. The FTE for guidance and administrative time is significantly lower than larger schools, though based on staffing norms is adequate to administer the school. Low student numbers result in less specialist time. Staff have made it a priority to improve student literacy and numeracy skills. They are committed to securing adequate resources to meet student needs and have been successful in fund-raising efforts and in accessing funding programs such as classroom composition and innovation grants.

As student numbers decline, the Eastern School District has tried to maintain quality program delivery at Parkdale Elementary, supporting the school through a lower pupil-teacher ratio. Matching teaching assignments to teaching qualifications and interests, and retaining suitably qualified teachers to provide specialist services to students on a part-time basis becomes more difficult as enrollment shrinks.

**(b) The Condition of the School Building;**

Parkdale Elementary was constructed in 1956, and although the building has been well maintained, and is very clean, its age is becoming a factor. Since 1996, there have been upgrades to the school including interior painting, renovations to the office areas, and an alarm system. A new gymnasium was recently added to the school and it serves the elementary level exceedingly well. There is limited access to sections of the building and no lift to either floor, so it is not completely wheel chair accessible. Parkdale staff have taken pride in the physical appearance of the school and the custodial staff do an excellent job maintaining the building. The school is clean and welcoming. Student furniture, chairs and desks are well maintained and readily available.

The green space is adequate for a school of 100 students; however, if enrollments increase substantially this might be a problem. There is a paved parking area, which is also accessible for outdoor ball games. Playground equipment is available to the side of the parking lot and there is some green space behind the building.

Parkdale Elementary has optimal space for about 200 students. With the current enrollment at 102 students, it is underutilized. Classroom sizes are generous and spacious, and many contain reading areas. The school has a resource area, a spacious library, a computer lab and space for ongoing projects. Empty classrooms are used as storage areas on the lower floor of the building, and an art room has space for art supplies. There is ample space for expanding offices, resource areas, and for special needs students. The computer lab and library is quite large as it once was a multi-purpose room. The school is well maintained.

Parkdale Elementary's location is easily accessible. The age of the building will become an increasingly important factor in its utilization. The life of a school facility is generally considered to be 50 years, though condition and utilization play a role in determining whether renovations are required.

**(c) The Availability of Space in Other School Buildings:**

Parkdale is unique in that almost 50% of its students are bused in from neighbourhoods that are zoned for other schools. Students from Hillsborough Park and Hillsborough Village could, for example, attend L. M. Montgomery School, as might those living in Brackley and Brackley Beach areas. There is sufficient space at L. M. Montgomery to accommodate the 40-50 students from Hillsborough and Brackley areas should Parkdale close. There is sufficient space for the remaining 50-60 students to be housed at Prince Street Elementary. Parkdale students will be assigned to Prince Street, however, some may wish to apply to other schools such as L. M. Montgomery.

The following enrollment chart indicates that Prince Street given its capacity of over 400 students, could easily accommodate all students presently attending Parkdale.

Prince Street Elementary Enrollment 2008-2009

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6
Enrollment 236	45	32	45	21	48	55

**(d) The Impact of the Closure of the School on the Educational Program at the School, on Schools Which are Designated to Accommodate Students from the School, and the Impact of School Closure on Parents, Students and the General Community;**

Parkdale students will be exposed to broader program offerings at Prince Street. There will be enhanced offerings in the areas of physical education, music, core French, and library. There will also be significantly greater support in guidance and resource programs. Teaching staff will benefit considerably, as they will experience the professional growth that results from being part of a professional learning community. Opportunities to share knowledge, ideas, and resources with colleagues, will over time translate into better educational experiences for all students.

The building at Prince Street can absorb all of Parkdale's 1-6 students. The grounds are large enough and the school now has access to a sports field shared with Birchwood Intermediate. The gymnasium at Prince Street is adequate for elementary programming.

The age of the Prince Street building may become a factor in the next decade, as it is only 6 years newer than Parkdale. However, Prince Street's site is less accessible and not as convenient as Parkdale's in terms of dropping off and picking up students.

The chart below shows the enrollment projections for Prince Street Elementary. It should be noted that Prince Street's capacity was 500 students (MacAulay Coles, 1996). However, since then the school has utilized its space to accommodate a music room, a science lab, office space, and a large resource area. Studies of the school and discussion with the principal would confirm the optimal capacity at present to be about 425 students. This easily allows for a merger of the two schools.

Prince Street Elementary Projected Enrollment 2008-2015

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Enrollment	236	202	180	191	202	215	220	221

**(e) The Student Enrollment at the School for the Previous Five Years:**

Parkdale has never been considered a large school. Over the past 10 years, the school has lost about 50% of its population, falling from a high of 220 students in 1997 to the present 112 students.

Originally Parkdale's capacity was suggested to be 300 students (MacAulay Coles,1996) though the authors did state that the optimal size is around 250 students. This number has decreased slightly as vacant space has been transformed for other uses such as a computer lab and library.

The current enrollment at Parkdale Elementary School for the 2008-2009 school year is 102 students. With a teacher allotment of 9.18 FTE teachers this makes for a pupil-teacher ratio of 10.19 pupils per teaching staff.

This declining enrollment reflects a number of factors which have impacted the school, the greater community of Charlottetown, and the province in general.

Parkdale Elementary School Enrollment 2008-2009

Grades		1	2	3	4	5	6
Enrollment	102	15	16	20	19	14	18

There has been little growth in the community. Current housing has supplied a steady stream of students, but the area now has few elementary school-age children.

The following chart shows the historical trends for student enrollment at Parkdale.

Parkdale Elementary Enrollment 1998-2007

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Enrollment	206	198	169	159	140	134	122	118	115	112

**(f) The Projected Enrollment at the School for the Next Five Years:**

Based on historical enrollment declines, and the lack of residential and commercial growth, the best case scenario is that Parkdale Elementary would be able to maintain current enrollment numbers.

The following chart is a prediction of the enrollment of Parkdale Elementary over the next seven years.

Parkdale Elementary Projected Enrollment 2008-2015

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Enrollment 102	100	94	94	90	90	90	89	90

**(g) Projected Changes in the Population for the Area Served by the School for the Next Five Years:**

There is little evidence to show potential and/or current commercial growth in the area, and no significant growth in permanent housing development is anticipated for the area.

It is also significant to note that if Parkdale is merged with Prince Street, student enrollment numbers will be maintained for the newly-merged school for approximately the next 10 years.

**(h) Any Available Statistics Concerning Approved Residential Sub-divisions Available for New Residential Construction:**

The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs indicates that there is not expected to be an increase in the number of requests for subdivision approvals in this area.

**(i) Any Available Information Concerning Plans for Commercial or Industrial Development in the Geographical Area Served by the School:**

According to the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs there is no information to suggest an increase in commercial or industrial development in this area.

**(j) A Zoning and Transportation Plan for Affected Students;**

If Parkdale Elementary were to close, simple modifications to existing bus routes would ensure all students would be readily transported to Prince Street. The impact of bus route changes and times on buses for students will be minimal. The largest change will come for those students from Brackley and Brackley Beach, Hillsborough and Hillsborough Park, who may choose to attend a school closer to home than Prince Street.

The Eastern School District is committed to maintaining all Parkdale buses for transportation purposes to Prince Street, and ensuring those students in the Hillsborough Park and Village area, along with students from Brackley and Brackley Beach, have suitable transportation. In all four cases, bus times for students would be reasonable. The District is also committed to addressing any issues regarding substantial increases in travel times for students. Routes may change, drop off and pick up points may change, and if necessary, alternatives may be provided to ensure travel times are reasonable.

**(k) A Financial Analysis Which Includes a Projection of Both Costs and Savings Which Would Result from the Closure of the School.**

A Parkdale Elementary closure could realize an annual fiscal savings of approximately \$85,192 for non-salary operating costs.

It is not anticipated that there will be increased cost to the Eastern School District with this school closure, since program delivery and student transportation costs will be relatively unaffected. The Eastern School District is committed to maintaining a healthy student- teacher ratio. Should there be marginal cost increases, it is anticipated that the monies saved from operating expenses would be sufficient to address such issues.

## **Summary**

Parkdale is a small elementary school built in 1956. Currently the school has 102 students enrolled, down 10 students from 112 last year, and down approximately 50% since 1998. The enrollment is projected to decline a further 9.8% in the next decade, reducing the school to approximately 90 students. The school is, and will continue to be, underutilized. By moving students to a larger school at Prince Street, the students will be exposed to broader programming in several areas, and will have greater access to student support services. Teachers will have more opportunity to collaborate with their peers and receive support from administrators. Certainly this will improve the teaching/learning process, and help ensure that students have the opportunity to maximize their academic and social potential.

School: **St. Jean Elementary School**

Grade Configuration: Currently St. Jean is a grade 1-6 school with the prospect of kindergarten starting as early as September 2010.

Student Enrollment: 106 students

Address: St. Jean Elementary School  
335 Queen St., Charlottetown, PE C1A 4C5

Principal: Debi Mais-Murphy  
Vice-Principal: Don Murnaghan

St. Jean Elementary is located in the downtown area of the city of Charlottetown. The school is located in close proximity to a variety of facilities that support and enhance student learning. These include: The Confederation Center of the Arts, The Confederation Center Library, the Technology Center, English as an Alternate Language Center, Victoria Park, Simmons Rink, and the University of Prince Edward Island with all its amenities. St. Jean is also located near emergency response services like the Charlottetown Fire Department and the City Police.

According to Eastern School District Policy FCB, Permanent School Closure, any school identified for possible permanent closure must be thoroughly examined. The following information must be provided.

**(a) Strengths and Deficiencies Which Exist in the Educational Program at the School:**

The current teacher allocation for the school is 13.59 FTE teachers in total for the 106 students. This provides a pupil-teacher ratio of 7.9 pupils per teacher. This is one of the best ratios in the District and is provided to St. Jean to help with classroom composition issues and programs aimed at early literacy intervention. This generous pupil-teacher ratio comes at the expense of other larger schools within the District.

At present, the resource program has been allocated 1.45 FTE. The guidance program has been increased to 1.00 FTE. This means there has been an increase in exposure to guidance, and also allows for maneuverability in scheduling. Both the allocations for guidance and resource programs are higher than the norm, which helps the administration as they try to meet student needs. The physical education allotment is 0.60 FTE. Similarly, the music program has been assigned 0.60 FTE which provides enough opportunity for all students in the school to have an expanded music program.

Ms. Mais-Murphy states that in order to create capacity for the anticipated arrival of students with English Language learning needs, the 2008-2009 grade 6 class of 27 students was divided into two classes of 13 and 14 students respectively. This decision has had a very positive impact, enabling the two classroom teachers to collaborate and work as a team focusing on assessment, evaluation and curriculum planning. Currently the principal at St. Jean teaches 30% of the time, while the vice-principal teaches 70% of the time.

St. Jean Elementary periodically receives EAL students. This has not been a significant factor in program delivery as the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has provided extra teaching staff and resources to accommodate these students. The presence of these children in the school is a positive influence on the school culture and the other students.

**(b) The Condition of the School Building:**

St. Jean Elementary was constructed in 1962, roughly ten years after the city of Charlottetown constructed a gymnasium for the downtown core population. The school was built beside the gymnasium and is connected by a long hallway. There is also a newly-installed sprinkler system throughout the building. St. Jean is wheelchair accessible and has both ramps and an elevator. The school currently houses Autism Consultants from the Eastern School District, the District's Teachers' Resource Centre, and offices associated with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Parking is limited to approximately 35 places and is divided between the front and side of the school. The playground facility is currently acceptable, however if there were an increase in enrollment the limited green space could pose a problem.

St. Jean, a solid brick structure, is in excellent shape. The fully-functional gymnasium with a stage has hardwood floors, though in some areas minor repairs may be necessary to fix warping or heaving. There is a substantial amount of storage space and possible office space. The gymnasium has a basement, which has been used in the past as a storage area for the Eastern School District.

The school maintains a computer lab, downstairs library and music room. There are numerous classrooms available for expansion, and some have been converted into office space for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. The Teachers' Resource area utilizes two classrooms and there are many small rooms for storage, offices, Reading Recovery® and resource areas. This reconfiguration of space for Department and District offices makes sense, given that the school is about 20% utilized by students. These rooms could revert to classroom use to accommodate a large increase in enrollment if that were to happen.

The interior of the building has been well looked after. The school is well decorated and displays of student work can be seen in every classroom. Student furniture is well maintained and readily available.

There is a kitchen off the gym where a very successful breakfast program is offered.

The green space is small and limiting. Currently it can handle the 106 students that attend the school; however, the space is small, and proper-sized sports fields do not exist. There is some playground equipment to the right front of the building and a green space to the back. There is a paved area for outdoor basketball. The rear courtyard is used for a variety of games and a meeting place for the students at break and lunch. There is also a gazebo and picnic area for student use. The yard is fenced from the surrounding area and students can't leave the premises without first going back into the school and exiting through one of the school main doors. This is a positive feature for parents who want their children to stay on the school property at lunch.

St. Jean at one time could accommodate 500 students and is presently very much under-utilized. Classroom sizes are large and in two grade 6 classes, for example, with only 13 students per class, there is ample room for a reading area, resource table, books and various projects. The library is a large room. The teacher staff room is a converted classroom. The guidance room was formerly a classroom, and is very spacious. The resource area is also large and there are additional classrooms available for EAL students. There are small office areas for staff workstations. The computer lab is well supplied and in a quiet part of the building.

**(c) The Availability of Space in Other School Buildings:**

Currently West Kent and St. Jean share a dual student attendance zone. West Kent's capacity is approximately 350 students. As there are only 183 students presently enrolled at West Kent, there is room to house students from St. Jean. The following table illustrates the enrollment projections at West Kent.

West Kent Elementary Enrollment Predictions 2008-2015

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Enrollment	183	165	169	160	153	160	161	164

West Kent could easily accommodate St. Jean students. The combined enrollments of both schools in September 2009 will be about 290 students. Over the coming years this number will likely fluctuate between 250 and 300 students.

**(d) The Impact of the Closure of the School on the Educational Program at the School, on Schools which are Designated to Accommodate Students from the School, and the Impact of School Closure on Parents, Students and the General Community:**

With the closure of St. Jean School, students would be transported to West Kent School. Currently West Kent has space to hold 200 more students. West Kent Elementary School is a sound physical structure.

West Kent principal, Ross McDermott, has stated that the school is capable of comfortably housing at least 200 hundred more students. West Kent has ample green space for combined students from St. Jean and West Kent. Currently the population of West Kent Elementary is 183 students and the capacity of the school is listed at 400 students (MacAulay Coles, 1996). This suggests that West Kent is currently under-utilized.

With the amalgamation of students from St. Jean and West Kent, projected school population for the next 7 years should fluctuate between 245 students to 300 students. The increased student population at West Kent will provide additional programming opportunities in both the specialist and core curriculum areas.

West Kent enrollment dropped dramatically when the new West Royalty Elementary School was built. The enrollment history of West Kent indicates a substantial drop at that time; however, over the past few years enrollment numbers at the school have begun to increase.



As recommended in this report, West Kent and St. Jean Elementary will merge and be housed in West Kent. This will add another 100 students to the school enrollment as indicated in the tables below. These projections do not account for kindergarten. The following chart indicates enrollment projections at the school.

**Projected Enrollments West Kent and St. Jean Elementary**

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Enrolment	289	294	285	269	265	256	245	257

West Kent has been able to maintain healthy enrollment numbers even though a decline is evident throughout most of the Eastern School District. The capacity of the school is listed at 400 students.

**(e) The Student Enrollment at the School for the Previous Five Years:**

Over the previous 10 year period, student enrollment at St. Jean has rapidly declined. During this time the enrollment has dropped by over 40% or about 100 students. This trend is projected to continue.

**St. Jean Enrollment 1998-2007**

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Enrollment	221	224	230	210	206	186	169	155	133	125

The current enrollment at St. Jean Elementary is 106 students. This is 11 students fewer than was earlier projected for this year. This declining enrollment reflects a number of factors which have impacted the school and the greater community. St. Jean's enrollment numbers will most likely continue to decline.

**St. Jean Elementary School Enrollment 2008-2009**

Grade		1	2	3	4	5	6
Enrollment	106	17	16	16	15	17	25

**(f) The Projected Enrollment at the School for the Next Five Years:**

The following chart represents the projected enrollment of St. Jean over the next 7 years. It is important to recognize that previous projections over-estimated the number of students enrolled in St. Jean.

**St. Jean Elementary School Enrollment Projections 2008-2015**

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Enrollment	117	104	96	96	92	97	96	98

**(g) Projected Changes in the Population for the Area Served by the School for the Next Five Years:**

According to recent documents provided to the Eastern School District from The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs of Prince Edward Island there is no projected population growth anticipated for the area.

**(h) Any Available Statistics Concerning Approved Residential Sub-divisions Available for New Residential Construction:**

The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs of Prince Edward Island, suggests that there is no indication of a significant increased change in residential housing for the St. Jean school zone.

**(i) Any Available Information Concerning Plans for Commercial or Industrial Development in the Geographical Area Served by the School:**

The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs of Prince Edward Island suggests that there is no indication of a significant increase in commercial or industrial development in this area.

There is no indication that new development in the downtown core of Charlottetown will provide the magnitude of jobs to entice a population shift/growth to this area of Prince Edward Island.

**(j) A Zoning and Transportation Plan for Affected Students:**

If St Jean were to close and students were relocated to West Kent, modifications to the current bus routes would permit students to travel with little impact on the length of time on the bus for each child. The District is committed to addressing any issues regarding substantial increases in travel times for students. Routes, drop off and pick up points may change, and if necessary, an additional bus may be provided to ensure travel times are reasonable.

**(k) A Financial Analysis Which Includes a Projection of Both Costs and Savings Which Would Result from the Closure of the School:**

The Eastern School District projects an annual savings of approximately \$122,021, for non-salary operating costs, with the closure of St. Jean School. No significant increased costs are anticipated. If there are marginal increases in cost it is anticipated that the savings from operating expenses would be sufficient to address such issues.

## Summary

The enrollment at St. Jean Elementary has been dropping for some time. It is now to a point where it is difficult to sustain the quality of programs and student support services that are offered in a larger school. Due to the number of teachers, it is impossible to create the broad and deep collaboration between and among teachers that is essential to the teaching/learning process. West Kent has the space for St Jean's students. The number of students at the reconfigured West Kent will permit the quality of programming and teacher collaboration desired. Transportation should be a relatively straight-forward process, and every effort will be made to ensure that student bus times are reasonable.