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Ashley St. Pierre, Chair

Craig Myles, Director of Education

The March 18, 2025 **Committee of the Whole Public Session** of the Near North District School Board was held in person at the Head Office and via a Zoom video and/or teleconference.

Trustees Present:

Ashley St. Pierre ®
Howard Wesley
Jeanie Fuscaldo
Caren Gagne
Shane Hall
Chantal Phillips
Julie Bertram ®
Bill Steer
Louise Sargent
Student Trustee Sidhu

Administrative Staff Present:

Craig Myles, Director of Education
Gay Smylie, Superintendent
Seija Van Haesendonck, Superintendent of Business
Timothy Graves, Superintendent
Melanie Gray, Superintendent
Patricia Lupton, Executive Assistant
Deb Bartlett, Communications ®
Maureen Egan, Director's Office
Liana Blaskievich, Exec. Officer Corporate Affairs

Regrets: Student Trustee Trudeau

Other:

Staff, media

1.0 Call to Order

Vice-Chair Wesley called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

1.1 Land Acknowledgement

Vice-Chair Wesley read the declaration aloud.

1.2 Attendance

Attendance indicated that 10 trustees were present including one Student Trustee.

1.3 Declaration of Conflict of Interest n/a

2.0 Closed Session

Motion: CW 25-03-01, C.Gagne/J.Fuscaldo

That the Committee move into Closed Session in order to discuss items pertaining to *The Education Act* R.S.O. 1990, c.E.2 section 207 (2) (c). – CARRIED

3.0 Approval of the Agenda

Motion: CW 25-03-02, C.Gagne/J.Fuscaldo

That the agenda for the Committee of the Whole meeting of March 18, 2025, be approved. - CARRIED.

4.0 Review of Previous Minutes

Motion: CW 25-03-03, C.Phillips/S.Hall

That the minutes for the Committee of the Whole meeting of February 11, 2025 be approved. – CARRIED.

5.0 Business Arising

5.1 Cyber Security Update

The Director and SBO advised that there was no update on this item.

5.2 Notice of Motion – Trustees Wesley and Fuscaldo

That the regular Board meeting time shall be changed from 6:30 PM to 2:30 PM, effective March 18, 2025, to improve accessibility, inclusivity, and effectiveness for students, staff, trustees, and the public.

AND THAT The Committee of the Whole meetings shall be scheduled for 1:00 PM to align with the Trustees' prior decision to hold Committee of the Whole meetings on the same day as the regular Board meeting.

The notice of motion was tabled from the February 11 CW and trustees discussed and provided comments. Trustee Fuscaldo referred to previous discussion surrounding the motion's effect on Student Trustees' attendance and noted that it would only apply to North Bay students. She also noted that meeting could continue at the current time if satellite office spaces were provided.

Trustee Sargent asked that the motion be on April's agenda to allow time to review the report provided by staff. She also suggested that the trustees consider holding meetings in its outlying areas to ensure community feels included.

Vice-Chair Wesley acknowledged that the Ministry has placed us in a challenging position re meetings must be chaired at the head office. This will be a challenge moving forward.

Trustee Steer said that OPSBA continues to lobby the Ministry on clarity surrounding electronic attendance. He speculated there could be changes once the new Minister is selected.

Trustee Fuscaldo noted the theme of public engagement in the meeting. Noting the number of attendees virtually, she said a satellite office would be appropriate.

Trustee Gagne agreed with the idea of sharing locations.

6.0 Notice of Motion

6.1 Notice of Motion – Trustee Wesley and Trustee Fuscaldo

That the Board of Trustees approve the ongoing operation of McDougall PS.

Trustees were referred to the Notice of Motion filed by Trustees Wesley and Fuscaldo contained in the agenda package regarding McDougall PS. It was noted that to proceed to discussion, the notice requires a seconder. Trustee Phillips seconded the motion. Trustee Fuscaldo introduced the motion saying that despite the letter we wrote to the Minister, the fact is there are too many students for the building, we have the support of the area MPP and from our community. She noted a similar decision was made at Upper Grand DSB.

Chair St. Pierre said she is in favour of the motion and queried the Director why he has received a response by the Ministry but the Board did not. Director Myles responded that he was unsure but also noted that he repeatedly lobbied the government. He also commented that when the letter was sent by trustees to the Minister it was “politician to politician” and when Directors reach out it is via staff. Director Myles noted the delay in sending the March 17 letter from the Ministry to trustees. Chair St. Pierre also expressed concern that the edu-pods were on back order.

Trustee Steer asked to defer the motion due to funding implications and that the board must hear from the Ministry first. He was also concerned with the cost of maintaining McDougall PS and the Board’s deficit position.

Vice-Chair Wesley said it is important to make a decision and that staff are waiting and students are in limbo and that the Ministry had put the trustees in this position.

Trustee Phillips noted that facts have changed including a growth in population previously not calculated. She suggested providing the Ministry with solutions and that the new minister does not have the ability to make this decision, but that the board does with our stakeholders and community. She also noted that it would be wise to follow the Ministry advice and defer the motion until we know more.

Vice-Chair Wesley stated that we would not have the information for the next calendar year. Students need to know where they are going and how staff are operating. The Ministry has put us in an awkward position and that deferring further would put stress on students, staff and families.

Director Myles noted that staff need to move ahead with contractual obligations, timelines and move management plans.

Trustee Gagne agreed to defer but with timelines and reaching out to the new minister. She expressed concern over losing funding. Vice-Chair Wesley said there is no documentation saying that we are losing money nor punitive actions from the Ministry.

Trustee Bertram said the board should make a decision today and let the chips fall where they may and deal with it later.

Trustee Fuscaldo said the board is tasked with ensuring student success and well-being and that we are hundreds of students spaces short therefore cannot defer. She felt we would risk losing students to the co-terminus board and therefore is in favour of voting now.

Trustee Sargent suggested pausing on the JK-6 movement to the new build and housing them in McDougall PS. She expressed concerns of safety and advocated for JK-6 in McDougall PS and re-visit next year.

Trustee Hall suggested deferring the motion and noted he did not want the school sold.

Trustee Bertram called the question and requested a recorded vote.

Trustee Steer noted point of order because all trustees had not spoken on the item. He expressed concerns and was not in favour noting that this will create a difficult climate with the Ministry in the future.

Trustee Phillips asked for the motion to be read. Vice-Chair Wesley read the motion: That the Board of Trustees approve the ongoing operation of McDougall PS.

A friendly amendment was approved adding “for the 2025-26 school year.” Vice-Chair Wesley said there is consensus to move the recommendation forward to the Board meeting for approval. A recorded vote was requested by Trustee Bertram.

	YEA	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Bertram, Julie	x			
Fuscaldo, Jeanie	x			
Gagne, Caren		x		
Hall, Shane	x			
Phillips, Chantal	x			
Sargent, Louise	x			
St. Pierre, Ashley	x			
Steer, Bill		x		
Wesley, Howard	x			

6.0 Adjournment

Motion: CW 25-03-05, L.Sargent/J.Fuscaldo

That the start time of the March Regular Board meeting be moved to 6:00 pm from 6:30 pm. - CARRIED

Motion: CW 25-03-06, S.Hall/J..Fuscaldo

That on March 18, 2025 we do now adjourn at 5:54 pm. - CARRIED

BOARD REPORT

Title	Report regarding the implications of the motion “BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of trustee’s approve the ongoing operation of McDougall Public Elementary School.” This motion requires that the Board rescind the motion made in 2014 respecting the ARC recommendation to close three schools and build one Jk-12 school.
Contact	Director’s office
Date Submitted	March 18, 2025
Mandate	<p>MYSP Priority: Communication Near North District School Board is committed to promoting public confidence and community support in public education. Effective communication provides opportunities to share accurate and reliable information and clarity of goals as we seek to attain the vision, mission and priorities that build stronger relationships. Excellence in communication practices throughout the organization is vital to the success of achieving our Mission.</p> <p>MYSP Objective: Ensure that NNDSB meets ministry expectations / requirements for financial stewardship and accountability.</p> <p>Upon Trustee request February 11, 2025, to research and create a report outlining factors and implications as they pertain to a potential decision to rescind the March 25, 2014 motion to move forward with capital proposal to build a JK-12 School resulting from the ARC.</p> <p>The report will address the implications of rescinding the motion based on the ARC recommendation to close Nobel Public School, McDougall Public School and Parry Sound High School and build one new JK-12 facility that will house separate elementary and separate secondary learning areas with some common facilities and approving the new motion to keep McDougall School open.</p> <p>The new motion proposes to keep McDougall Public School in operation and provides the intent to operate McDougall Public School for grade JK-6 students from McDougall and Nobel boundary areas. This change would result in the purpose built JK-12 school offering grades 7-12 for all students from the Parry</p>

	Sound High School boundary and the McDougall PS and Nobel PS boundary areas.
Background:	<p>History Following public consultation in the Spring of 2013, the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) recommended that NNDSB seek Ministry of Education (MOE) funding to build a new K-8 elementary and 9-12 secondary school on one campus, resulting in the closure of Nobel PS, McDougall PS and Parry Sound HS. This new facility set out to house K-8 students in a separate but attached space to the space accommodating grade 9-12 students to allow program integration and the use of shared facility amenities.</p> <p>The final report from the Parry Sound Family of Schools ARC (dated June 25, 2013) was shared with local town councils for review prior to being reviewed by the NNDSB Board of Trustees. Resolutions from the Corporation of the Township of Seguin (dated September 9, 2013- resolution 2013-300), and the Council for the Town of Parry Sound (dated September 17, 2013- resolution no. 2013-199) expressed support for the ARC's recommendations.</p> <p>October 2013, NNDSB adopted a motion in public session to submit a Capital Priorities funding submission to the Ministry of Education for the funding of the proposed new JK – 12 Parry Sound School. The submission was based on the ARC's recommendation to close McDougall PS, Nobel PS and Parry Sound HS and construct one facility to accommodate the elementary and secondary schools in separate learning spaces with shared use of common facilities such as the gymnasium, library and office spaces.</p> <p>From the minutes of the public session meeting of the NNDSB held Oct 22, 2013: <u>13-10-10 Moved by Michelina Beam, seconded by Linda Williams</u> <i>That the Near North District School Board file a capital funding submission under the Capital Priorities initiative with the Ministry of Education based on the recommendation put forth by the ARC to build one new facility that will house separate elementary and separate secondary learning areas with some common facilities.</i> CARRIED</p> <p>In March 2014, the Ministry informed the Board that its submission would not be funded under the 2013-2014 Capital Priorities funding</p>

initiative. Upon receipt of this information, in March 2014, the Board then immediately approved a motion to resubmit the project under the next round of Capital Priorities requests in the fall of 2014.

March 25, 2014, board meeting motion regarding Capital Priority for Parry Sound K-12 School:

moved by Randy Sheppard, seconded by Linda Williams

That the Board direct Near North District Board staff to ensure that the Capital Priorities funding submission put forth from the Parry Sound ARC be resubmitted to the Ministry of Education as the Board's top Capital Priority in the Fall of 2014. CARRIED

The PS JK-12 project was submitted under the Request for School Consolidation Capital Projects program, released on August 27, 2014, through 2014: B08. The original letter approving the project was sent March 23, 2015. It noted the following:

*“Appendix B provides the details of the approved projects and details of the funding allocations. The ministry’s decision to approve these projects was based upon the needs identified in your school board’s business cases. Any proposed changes to an approved project’s scope would require ministry approval. **These changes could lead to a forfeiture of the funding approval and require a resubmission in future rounds of Capital Priorities or SCC.**”*

Appendix A included with the letter clearly identified the project description as **“This is a new JK-12 school in Parry Sound to consolidate Parry Sound HS, Nobel PS and McDougall PS.”**

NNDSB received several additional letters from the Capital Branch of the Ministry of Education. The following are important binding statements from the Ministry letters:

“Your board is responsible and will be held accountable for implementing appropriate measures to ensure that the cost and scope of this project is within the approved funding amount.” (page 2 March 23, 2015, letter; page 1 February 28, 2020, letter; page 2 December 16, 2022, letter)

A letter from the Ministry of Education dated December 16, 2022, more specifically confirmed the project that was being funded as the following:

The ministry has received your board’s request for an Approval to Proceed (ATP) to tender for the construction of the new JK-12

school to support the consolidation of Parry Sound High School, Nobel Public School and McDougall Public School including a three-room childcare centre and one EarlyON room in Parry Sound.

*The ministry has reviewed the supporting information provided by the board and grants your board an ATP in the amount of \$43,950,510 **including an approval to use net Proceeds of Disposition from the future sale of ET Carmichael PS, EW Norman PS, McDougall PS and Nobel PS.***

Finally, on page 2-3 of the same letter, the Ministry confirms the agreement and states that any deviation from the plan for POD requires the board to contact the board's capital analyst:
It is the Ministry's understanding that the board will update the funding sources and replenish its accumulated surplus by [amount] when the proceeds of disposition from the sale of ET Carmichael PS, EW Norman PS, McDougall PS and Nobel PS are realized. Should the proceeds of disposition from the sale of the school properties be less than the projected [amount] the board should contact the capital analyst.

The final letter to the board related to the funding for the project was received on May 29, 2023, and provided approval for the board "to award the tender for the construction of the new JK-12 school to support the consolidation of Parry Sound High School, Nobel Public School and McDougall Public School including a three-room child care centre and one EarlyON room in Parry Sound for a total amount of \$58,562,436, including additional funding."

The final letter clearly states, "Your board is responsible and will be held accountable for implementing appropriate measures to ensure that the cost for this project is within the approved project funding of \$58,562,436. The school board must receive ministry approval if the total cost of this project exceeds the funding source amount identified in this approval letter."

On the Ground Capacity (OTG).

The capacity of the school is determined by the ministry by loading all instructional spaces within the facility to current ministry standards for class size requirements and room areas.

In determining capacity, the Ministry of Education identifies categories of elementary and secondary instructional spaces. Each category has a capacity associated with class sizes. The sum of a school's room capacity ratings is the on-the-ground (OTG)

capacity. The OTG capacity of a school changes if class sizes change, or alterations are made to the building. This number does not include temporary accommodation facilities (i.e., portables or portapaks).

The Ministry of Education defines spaces within the buildings as instructional space and assigns how many students on average can be loaded into these spaces. The loading values vary by panel, Elementary (JK to Grade 8) and Secondary (Grade 9 to 12). A school's OTG is calculated by adding together the loading of the instructional rooms in the school. While OTG refers to the instructional space, it does not include shared or common spaces in the school, which allow for additional flexibility and student accommodation.

The Parry Sound JK-12 school was funded for and built with the following OTG capacity.

Elementary	259
Secondary	653
6 Hex Pods	150
Total OTG	1062

Revised Enrollment Data

Each February NNDSB conducts a review and revision of its enrollment projections. The most recent five-year forecasts (completed February 2025) indicate a less significant decline than previously anticipated in the Parry Sound region, with enrollment expected to stabilize over this period. It is likely that prior projections were affected by various uncertainties, including the impacts of COVID-19, immigration and emigration trends.

Enrolment projections are calculated based on applying a variety of factors to the current enrolment values categorized by school, grade, and program. Years of historical data are analysed to determine trends of student movement between schools, such as from Grade 8 at one school to Grade 9 at another school. The most prominent factor applied in these calculations is the retention rate of school, grade, and program enrolment values. Retention rates consider historic trends of students within NNDSB schools, and the mobility of students entering or leaving NNDSB schools. Another consideration built into the retention rates includes the movement of students between programs such as from Regular Program to Extended French. Typical retention rate analysis begins with a 4-year weighted average calculation. Judgement is then applied to remove anomalies that may occur in schools with, for example, small enrolments, or unique situations such as when the Virtual School programming was offered.

The Tables below show the 2025/2026 projections by grade for the schools that will populate the new Jk-12 Building; and five-year projections for all school in the Parry Sound Region.

	JK	SK	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total
McDougall	15	18	16	13	20	14	24	20	8	26	0	0	0	0	1
Nobel	12	13	16	13	21	17	20	21	28	26	0	0	0	0	1
Parry Sound HS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	147	126	155	185	6
Parry Sound Int.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	54	52	0	0	0	0	1
Extended French	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	
French Immersion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	
Regular	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	37	36	0	0	0	0	
Special Education	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	
Total	27	31	32	26	41	31	44	41	90	104	147	126	155	185	10

5 Year Projected Enrolment of Parry Sound Area Schools

School	OTG	Current	Projected				
		2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Britt	187	26	29	29	31	33	32
Humphrey	305	211	208	215	215	209	207
MacTier	199	96	92	88	87	90	90
McDougall	302	177	174	163	173	171	165
Nobel	334	193	187	180	167	165	158
Parry Sound HS	1,293	617	613	595	590	610	632
Parry Sound Int.	-	105	106	101	110	123	137
Parry Sound Public	504	437	430	434	429	419	402
Whitestone	153	53	56	59	60	63	59
Parry Sound K-12	1,062		1,080	1,039	1,040	1,069	1,092

Revised enrollment projections for the Parry Sound JK-12 school, released in early March 2025, indicate a capacity utilization rate of 101% of OTG using Hex-Pod. Over the next five years, projections fluctuate between 97% and 102%, remaining within optimal utilization range but exceeding initial expectations outlined in the [Dallip Report](#). As a result, the continued use of Hex Pods will be necessary for the foreseeable future to accommodate student needs.

Unanticipated Future Enrolment Growth and Capacity Management

It is important to examine current five-year enrolment projections and assesses potential strategies for managing unforeseen student population growth within the Near North District School Board (NND SB). While projections indicate stable enrolment levels, it is essential to consider contingency plans should enrolment exceed expectations. Based on current data, the total on-the-ground

(OTG) capacity for Britt Public School, Humphrey Public School, MacTier Public School, Parry Sound Public School, and Whitestone Lake Public School is 1,348 student spaces. The combined enrolment for these schools is projected to peak at 825 students in the 2026-27 school year before declining to 790 students by 2029-30.

Over the next five years, the number of available pupil places in these schools is expected to range from 523 to 558, indicating significant unused capacity. If unforeseen enrolment increases occur, NNDSB has the option to conduct a school boundary review to redistribute students across the region. By leveraging available capacity in Parry Sound area schools, the board can efficiently accommodate unexpected student population growth. This approach ensures that NNDSB can effectively manage student distribution while maximizing the use of existing school facilities

Parry Sound JK-12 Scheduling Simulation

In response to higher-than-anticipated enrolment projections, a timetable simulation was conducted to assess potential space considerations for scheduling at the new Parry Sound JK-12 School. This analysis aimed to ensure that the school has adequate resources and capacity to accommodate all students effectively.

The simulation was conducted using the following data sources:

- The most recent **floor plan** for the new Parry Sound JK-12 school.
- **Enrolment and staffing data** from the current 2024-2025 school year.
- **Projected enrolment and staffing figures** for the 2025-2026 school year.

The simulation was based on an **on-the-ground (OTG) capacity of 1,062**, including the use of the six Hex Pods to maximize available space.

Enrolment and Capacity Analysis

In a school that includes secondary students, the ADE (Average Daily Enrolment) varies depending on the number of courses the students take and where those courses take place inside or outside of the traditional classroom (i.e., Coop in the library and at the workplace, a variety of virtual credits in one classroom or alternate study space.) As a result, the ADE is a more correct

indication of utilization as it reflects actual use and is less than the number of students recorded.

- The projected **secondary Average Daily Enrolment (ADE) for 2025-2026 is 591**. It is important to note that ADE differs from total projected student enrolment, as it reflects the actual number of course sections required for staffing. For example, a Grade 12 student taking three courses, and a spare would be counted as 0.75 ADE in staffing calculations. Additionally, the ADE calculation accounts for an expected annual 6.5% reduction in secondary enrolment in the second semester.
- Elementary enrolment is projected at 467 students for the 2025-2026 school year.
- The total JK-12 combined enrolment is projected at 1,058 students, which aligns closely with the school's OTG capacity of 1,062.

Conclusion and Key Findings of the Simulation

The simulation confirms that the **new Parry Sound JK-12 school has sufficient space to accommodate all students within the designated OTG capacity**. Student-Centered Space Allocation

School administrators will be committed to ensuring that all learning spaces, including the hex pods, are allocated in a way that best supports student success and well-being. This may include designating the hex pods for secondary classrooms or teacher workspaces, which in turn creates additional space for elementary students within the building.

Given higher-than-anticipated elementary enrolment and a lower-than-expected number of secondary students, spaces originally designated for secondary students will be thoughtfully reallocated to meet the needs of the elementary population. These decisions are made with careful consideration to provide all students with a safe, supportive and effective learning environment. Administrators will have the flexibility to structure programming effectively, including the use of the **Hex Pods**, to ensure efficient scheduling and optimal learning environments.

This analysis provides confidence that the new school can successfully support projected enrolment while maintaining a high standard of programming and resource allocation.

Commitment to Supporting Education Community Partnership Programs (ECPPs)

The NNDSB deeply values our partnerships with community agencies and remains committed to supporting the unique needs of students in the Education Community Partnership Programs (ECPPs). While these programs were not included in the initial timetable simulation—since they operate in collaboration with community partners rather than as NNDSB-led programs—care will have to be taken in ensuring appropriate space and resources for their success. Moving forward, staff will work closely with our partners to explore sustainable solutions based on staffing, enrolment, and available space. Potential options may include accommodating the programs in classrooms, utilizing hex pods, identifying an off-campus location, or securing a leased space in collaboration with the community agency. Our goal is to ensure that every student in these programs has access to a supportive and inclusive learning environment that meets their needs.

This simulation does not include returning Grade 12 graduates; however, as many of these students take a reduced course load and participate in online learning, their impact on in-person class numbers is minimal compared to other secondary students.

Additionally, staff conducting this simulation exercise have determined that, based on projected staffing, available space, and course offerings for the upcoming year, the school has the capacity to accommodate an additional **150 to nearly 200** secondary students before reaching class size limits. This ensures that resources are utilized effectively while maintaining a supportive learning environment for all students

Commitment to Supporting Special Education Students

The well-being and success of students in Special Education programs remain our highest priority. With projected enrolment exceeding the number of dedicated Special Education classrooms funded by the ministry, we have taken proactive steps in this simulation to ensure these students receive the support they need. As part of this commitment, staff have designated an additional classroom to accommodate them in this simulation.

In close collaboration with the Special Education Department, NNDSB is dedicated to providing the necessary resources, ensuring students have access to inclusive and nurturing learning environments. Beyond their classrooms, students will also have access to essential sensory spaces and specialized learning areas throughout the school, tailored to meet their needs.

Indigenous Space and Consultation

Projected enrolments include students from First Nations, ensuring that their presence and needs are accounted for in the planning process. This inclusive approach underscores the board's commitment to creating a learning environment that respects and reflects the diverse cultural backgrounds of all students.

During the Parry Sound JK-12 design process, the board engaged with First Nation communities, through the JK-12 Parry Sound Build Program Committee, to ensure their perspectives and needs were incorporated. This consultation was conducted in collaboration with the NNDSB Indigenous Education department who worked closely with the architects to integrate culturally relevant elements and spaces into the design. The board organized several meetings, where representatives from First Nation communities provided valuable input on the required spaces and cultural considerations.

The board will collaborate with the new administration to thoughtfully assign locations for the important cultural and teaching spaces as the school progresses to the stage of classroom and additional space organization. The new school will feature several collaborative learning spaces adjoining the Indigenous Language classroom, providing ideal areas for Grad Coaches in support of Indigenous students to support students in their academic and personal growth.

Unanticipated Future Enrolment Growth and Capacity Management

It is important to examine current five-year enrolment projections and assesses potential strategies for managing unforeseen student population growth within the Near North District School Board (NNDSB). While projections indicate stable enrolment levels, it is essential to consider contingency plans should enrolment exceed expectations. Based on current data, the total on-the-ground (OTG) capacity for Britt Public School, Humphrey Public School, MacTier Public School, Parry Sound Public School, and Whitestone Lake Public School is 1,348 student spaces. The combined enrolment for these schools is projected to peak at 825 students in the 2026-27 school year before declining to 790 students by 2029-30.

Over the next five years, the number of available pupil places in these schools is expected to range from 523 to 558, indicating significant unused capacity. If unforeseen enrolment increases occur, NNDSB has the option to conduct a school boundary review

	<p>to redistribute students across the region. By leveraging available capacity in Parry Sound area schools, the board can efficiently accommodate unexpected student population growth. This approach ensures that NNDSB can effectively manage student distribution while maximizing the use of existing school facilities.</p>
Implications	<p>Reversal of the decision to close McDougall Public school would result in a failure to attain proceeds of disposition for McDougall Public School previously promised in the agreement with the Ministry of Education Capital Branch.</p> <p>Discussion at the February 11, 2025, Committee of the Whole meeting centered on the fact that the Ministry of Education had not yet answered the Trustees' October 21, 2024 letter of request to the Minister of Education to keep McDougall Public School open. Trustees discussed creating a motion to keep the school open despite not receiving Ministry of Education approval. It was correctly noted by one trustee that the original motion must be rescinded, and a new motion provided. Trustees were cautioned that the ARC legal process means the Board/board is bound by legal contracts. They were further cautioned that the plan is based on decisions made and by legal contracts and (reversing) would put the B/board at legal and financial risk</p> <p>According to parliamentary procedure and Roberts Rules of Order, to reverse the decision to close McDougall Public School, the Board of Trustees must first rescind the original motion which agrees with the ARC decision approved in October 2013.</p> <p>According to Robert's Rules of Order: "The motion to rescind can be applied to votes on all main motions, including questions of privilege and orders of the day that have been acted upon, and to votes on an appeal, with the following exceptions: votes cannot be rescinded after something has been done as a result of that vote that the assembly cannot undo; or where it is in the nature of a contract and the other party is informed of the fact." http://www.rulesonline.com/rro-06.htm#:~:text=The%20motion%20to%20rescind%20can,that%20the%20assembly%20cannot%20undo%3B</p> <p>Based on the above Financial/contractual information, there are critical concerns regarding the Board rescinding or reversing the motion to consolidate the 3 schools into 1, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The build funding is contingent on proceeds of disposition from the sale of Nobel PS and McDougall PS, and the funding received for the Child Care, EarlyON and Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK) can only be used to address the capital

costs related to the implementation of the associated program. If the building does not open with FDK programming for example, this can impact the Ministry's funding for the project and result in potential claw back of previously utilized funds.

- The funds are currently granted to the board for this project under O. Reg. 396/22: Grants for Student Needs – Legislative Grants for the 2022-2023 School Board Fiscal Year; <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/220396#BK12> (and its predecessor regulations). See Table 42, row 271 – Capital Priorities amount; Table 45, row 238 – Child Care; Table 46, row 32, EarlyON; and Table 47, row 41, FDK.

Section 12 – Conditions for grant, notes the following:

Conditions for grant

12. (1) It is a condition of the payment of a grant to a board under this Regulation that the board comply with all Acts administered by the Minister and with all regulations, policies, guidelines, directives and similar instruments made under an Act administered by the Minister. O. Reg. 396/22, s. 12 (1).

(2) If a board contravenes an Act administered by the Minister or a regulation, policy, guideline, directive or similar instrument made under an Act administered by the Minister, the Minister may withhold all or part of a grant otherwise payable to the board under the Act. O. Reg. 396/22, s. 12 (2).

Communication with Ministry of Education

On Monday March 3, 2025, the Director of Education responded to a request made by the Ministry of Education to meet virtually. The Ministry staff requested information which included enrollment data amongst other items. This information was gathered and provided. Trustees were updated about the communication.

The enrollment data as provided in this report was provided to the Ministry team.

Ministry input has been sought to provide trustees with accurate information to inform appropriate next steps regarding the consolidation of NPS, Mc and PSHS. The query includes the following concerns:

That the Near North District School Board is legally bound to follow through with the ARC decision and resulting capital priorities submissions, approval agreements and the subsequent closure of Nobel PS, McDougall PS and PSHS respectively; and the

relocation of all students within the three catchment areas. Failing to do so could result in, but not limited to, recourse that the Ministry of Education may consider in this case.

That contravening agreements as established after the ARC and subsequent Capital Priorities submission may include the Ministry withholding funding with numerous associated costs. The funds are currently granted to the board for this project under O. Reg. 396/22: Grants for Student Needs – Legislative Grants for the 2022-2023 School Board Fiscal Year;
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/220396#BK12> (and its predecessor regulations).

Section 12 – Conditions for grant, notes the following: Conditions for grant 12. (1) *It is a condition of the payment of a grant to a board under this Regulation that the board comply with all Acts administered by the Minister and with all regulations, policies, guidelines, directives and similar instruments made under an Act administered by the Minister. O. Reg. 396/22, s. 12 (1).* (2) ***If a board contravenes an Act administered by the Minister or a regulation, policy, guideline, directive or similar instrument made under an Act administered by the Minister, the Minister may withhold all or part of a grant otherwise payable to the board under the Act. O. Reg. 396/22, s. 12 (2).***

That based on the ARC decision to close McDougall PS, Nobel PS and Parry Sound HS and prior to learning of the trustees' intent to bring forward the motion to continue operating McDougall PS, NNDSB staff completed the "School Level Data Verification" submission. This submission was made according to expectations of the ARC proceedings and resolution. NNDSB indicated in EFIS that the new Parry Sound JK-12 (yet to be named) would be opened inclusive of McDougall PS and Nobel PS students. Staff also confirmed that Parry Sound HS, McDougall PS and Nobel PS would be closed. **As a result of this submission, it is understood that the closed schools would lose their MIDENT numbers and would no longer be accessible for data input in the School Level Data entry form under enrolment in EFIS for budget/estimate, financial purposes and all other related purposes.**

That if based on the recent "School Level Data Verification" submission, if the three schools previously mentioned for closure, are no longer assigned a MIDENT number and subsequently no longer scheduled to appear on the EFIS - School Level Data entry form, whether a request could be made to the Ministry to have McDougall PS assigned a MIDENT number and then appear and remain accessible for enrolment input on the EFIS Enrolment-

	<p>School Level Data form for the 2025-2026 year. If yes, would the school continue to operate as a fully functioning active school and generate all current levels of funding for students, school administration, facilities, etc. or would funding be at a reduced level?</p> <p>That the intent is to maintain operations and enrol students from the current JK-6 McDougall PS and Nobel PS catchment areas, thus drawing on the enrolment of approximately 300 students away from the new JK-12 school creates the concern that if McDougall PS no longer exists in EFIS, NNDSB would not be able to submit the ADE for approximately 300 students attending McDougall PS as of September 2025 resulting in the loss of core funding for those students in the following areas, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Resource Fund • Special Education Per Pupil Fund • School Facilities Funding • School Board Administration Funding • Student Transportation Fund • Classroom Staffing Fund <p>That it would be impossible for NNDSB to maintain McDougall PS as an operational school without Ministry funding. What are the implications of this decision if the request to have McDougall PS remain open on the EFIS Enrolment-School Level Data form is not possible or the request is denied, but the school remains open?</p> <p>How would NNDSB record student enrolment at this school (to generate funding) if there is not a corresponding line/fields for enrolment entry in EFIS? Would all normal Ministry funding related to student count, school administration and facilities cease to exist?</p> <p>What are the implications of operations and funding the new JK-12 school with the decrease in enrolment of the McDougall and Nobel students? If the motion is approved resulting in the new JK-12 build operating as a grade 7-12 school, what is the full extent of funding implications from the Ministry knowing it would result in an opening day reduction in enrolment of 30%?</p> <p>That the transportation consortium was required to submit a 2025-2026 simulation in December 2024 to the Ministry of Education, which determines the transportation funding for 2025-2026. This simulation included the closure of Nobel PS and McDougall PS, and the transportation of all students from those two boundary areas to the JK-12 school in Parry Sound. A draft scenario and costing which maintained McDougall PS as a K-6 school with students from Nobel and McDougall boundary areas, and all other</p>	
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impacted students at the 7-12 school in Parry Sound, **would have additional costs in excess of \$150,000. There were also concerns raised about increased congestion introducing safety concerns at McDougall and that there is no mechanism to revise this simulation to reflect the pending motion resulting in inadequate transportation funding.**

FINANCIAL RISK

Estimated 5-Year cost of McDougall School Operation and Renewal

A **MIDENT number** is a unique identifier assigned by the Ontario Ministry of Education, used to track schools for funding, maintenance, and student data purposes. If the Ministry does not approve the Board's motion to keep McDougall PS open and declines to reinstate its MIDENT number, the Board will be fully responsible for covering all operational expenses.

Without ministry funding, NNDSB may need to absorb **all costs related to staffing, instructional supplies, facility operations, and services**. The estimated **annual operating cost for 2025-2026 is approximately \$2.82 million**, with a projected **five-year total of \$14.96 million**—excluding capital repairs for known deficiencies. This represents a significant financial risk, as the Board would need to reallocate funds from other areas to sustain McDougall PS without dedicated provincial support.

School Facility Conditions Index

The Ministry of Education conducts an engineering assessment of each school across the province at least once every eight years to evaluate structural conditions and identify necessary capital repairs and investments for the next assessment cycle. This evaluation results in a School **Facility Condition Index (SFCI) rating**, a standardized asset management tool that measures a building's condition at a specific point in time.

The **SFCI** is calculated by comparing the total cost of outstanding repairs, renewals, or upgrades to the building's current replacement value. Expressed as a percentage, it serves as a key indicator of facility condition, supporting long-term maintenance and investment planning.

McDougall Public School was last assessed in August 2013—12 years ago—before being exempted by the Ministry of Education

from future assessments due to its planned closure. At the time of evaluation, the school had **64 identified deficiencies** with an estimated repair cost of **\$3.56 million compared to at-the-time replacement cost of \$7.17 million** placing it in the “**poor to fair**” category. Required improvements included, but were not limited to:

- Replacement of all exterior windows and coverings
- Playing field renewal
- Floor finishing replacement
- Lighting, electrical services, and panel upgrades
- Foundation repairs
- HVAC system replacement
- Domestic water and plumbing system upgrades
- Septic system replacement and stormwater management improvements

0- 10% FCI	Asset is in <u>good</u> condition
10-25% FCI	Asset is in <u>fair to good</u> condition
25-60% FCI	Asset is in <u>poor to fair</u> condition
60% + FCI	Asset is in <u>critical</u> condition

Facilities in the fair to poor range are exposed to the following risk factors

- Facilities show signs of wear, significant deterioration, with increasing component and equipment failures.
- Repairs and replacements (e.g., boilers, windows, interior renovations) are needed.
- Major system replacements (e.g., heating, plumbing) and full renovations are required.
- Occupant's complaints occur more frequently, potentially impacting morale.
- Maintenance staff may be diverted from regular tasks to handle urgent repairs reducing preventive upkeep.
- Whole facility and or isolated areas may shut down due to issues like leaks.

The facility's condition may have worsened since its last assessment, necessitating an updated evaluation and strategic planning for repairs or potential decommissioning. Cost estimates from the ministry, based on 2013 dollars, do not reflect inflation or current market conditions, often underestimating actual costs. Additionally, as school boards cannot use capital funds for schools

	<p>slated for closure, any necessary repairs must be funded from other sources, with renewal funds limited to addressing short-term operational and safety concerns (Efis.memo B07 2023). <i>“For schools that are scheduled to be closed or are under consideration for closure, renewal funds should only be used to address renewal needs that could compromise the continuing operation of these schools in the short term (including any health and safety considerations).”</i></p> <p>Transportation Cost Implications</p> <p>Student transportation funding is determined by a simulation of bus routes conducted by the transportation consortium and submitted to the Ministry of Education. The 2025-2026 funding was based on a December 2024 simulation that assumed the closure of Nobel PS and McDougall PS, with all students from those areas transported to the new JK-12 school in Parry Sound. However, an alternative scenario that keeps McDougall PS open as a K-6 school while sending Grade 7-12 students to Parry Sound would result in additional transportation costs exceeding \$150,000 annually. Without special approval and extra funding from the ministry, NNDSB would need to cover over \$750,000 in unbudgeted costs over five years, if the Ministry will not allow the use of McDougall School in a simulation. This could potentially place significant financial strain on the board’s resources.</p> <p>Additional Board Staff Spaces</p> <p>The new JK-12 school does not currently include designated space for board office staff, meeting rooms, or the Classroom Support Centre. The transition committee is exploring alternative solutions, such as utilizing space in other schools or leasing facilities within the Parry Sound region.</p> <p>While keeping McDougall PS open would create a minor benefit by allowing board-level staff and resources to be housed within the new JK-12 building, this advantage is minimal. It does not outweigh the significant financial implications outlined elsewhere in this report.</p>
Recommendation	That the Board receive the legal opinion as per the report for consideration and decision making.