



Newport Station District School
School Closure Impact Assessment
September 7, 2011

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Newport Station District School

Newport Station, N.S.

Identification Report

February 21, 2011

Grades Served – P to 6

Enrolment 2010-11 – 82

Square Footage – 17,956

Original Construction – 1963

Annapolis Valley Regional School Board

Identification Report

Newport Station District School

Background:

In the fall of 2008 the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board (AVRSB) embarked on a process to develop a long range plan for the delivery of public education to students served in the region. The plan was to engage in a dialogue with communities to review what the current situations were and then to look to the future to develop an action plan for the next two to ten years. One of the areas studied was Hants West which includes the Newport Station District School (NSDS).

The final report and recommendations were presented and approved by the Board in May 2010. The following excerpt deals with the Newport Station District School:

Hants West Schools Review

The West Hants Schools Reviews encompassed the seven elementary schools currently serving grades Primary to 6, the West Hants Middle School (WHMS) currently serving grades 7 to 9 and Avon View High School (AVHS) currently serving grades 10 to 12. The options raised in the review were grade reconfigurations that would see the grade nines move to AVHS and the grade sixes from the seven elementary schools to WHMS to create a grades 6 to 8 middle school program. The other option presented was the reduction of one elementary school. The greatest response at the public meeting was with respect to the potential closure of one of the elementary schools. The majority of speakers and submissions subsequently received represented the two smallest schools. Only two submissions were received from two other school areas, one from a Home and School and one from a parent. Both of those were expressing concern over the grade 6 students attending WHMS, a position also expressed from the two smallest schools. No submissions were received from three of the elementary schools or either of the middle or high school communities. No concern was expressed about the movement of the grade nines to AVHS. The major impediment to this move is having sufficient space at AVHS to accommodate the grade nines which number in the area of 200 students. Enrolment projections indicate that AVHS should be able to accommodate the grade nine numbers within the next three school years.

Recommendation #8

It is recommended that the elementary schools in Hants West become Primary to 5, WHMS become a grade 6 to 8 middle school and Avon View High School become a grade 9 to 12 high school beginning in the first school year the grade 9 students can be accommodated within the AVHS facility.

Recommendation #9

It is recommended that a formal School Review process in accordance with the Education Act and Regulations for the closure of for Newport Station District School, be initiated prior to April 1, 2011.

Rationale

There was no opposition expressed to serving the grade nine students at AVHS so that should occur as soon as there is sufficient room to accommodate them. Although there was a preference expressed by some to leaving the grade sixes in the elementary schools, it is consistent with the Board's preferred program delivery model to have them attend WHMS. Also, the Province has spent many millions of dollars to upgrade WHMS to be a modern middle school and these resources will benefit the grade six students.

The school closure issue is more problematic. The other formal closure processes being recommended do not result in a loss of service to a community as they are the result of consolidation within the community. In the case of the recommendation for Newport Station District School (NSDS), if recommended by the formal process, a closure will result in the removal of a service in the community. The initiation of the formal process does not mean that the school will close but that a detailed evaluation process will be undertaken to determine if it should be retained. That is something that is beyond the scope of this review process. NSDS was selected as it has the smallest student population at less than one hundred students (and will drop by 14% in a P to 5 configuration) and is in close proximity to other elementary schools where there is capacity to include these students.

Considerations for the Identification Report:

Population Trends: - Information from Statistics Canada from 2001-06 (attached) indicates a very small population growth of under 1% and the median age of the population to be 42.3 years. It also shows that 83.1% of the population is the age of 15 or older. The recent extension of the twinning of Highway 101 to Windsor will likely have some impact on the overall population growth but the demographics are trending to an older median age.

Economic Activity: - There is a fair amount of economic activity in the Hants West area and the potential for growth. It takes significant increases in economic activity to generate population growth and in turn enrolment growth. Moderate economic growth could result in an increase the overall population which might slow the enrolment decline.

Enrolments: - Most schools in the schools in Hants West have been experiencing a steady decline in student population for many years. Consolidation at the secondary level to one middle level and one high school has maximized the benefits for those grade levels. There are seven elementary schools feeding into the one middle school and there is a significant inventory of excess capacity at this level.

Newport Station District School is the smallest of the elementary schools with a projected enrolment (attached) for 2011-12 of less than eighty students with further declines anticipated. In addition, the planned future move of the grade six classes to West Hants Middle School will further reduce the school population. The school is also in close proximity to two other elementary schools that can easily accommodate the NSDS student population.

Facilities: - NSDS is more than forty-five years old being constructed in 1963 and has been well maintained over the years. Some improvements have been made but the school will require some significant capital investment in the next few years if it is to be retained as a school facility. If the school is closed the available resources for facility improvements can be allocated to other facilities.

Cost Savings: - In addition to being able to reallocate building maintenance resources, facility operating costs (details attached) will be saved by the closure of NSDS as well some staffing efficiencies will be achieved. These will be offset by the loss of the small school funding factor for this school when it is closed. There is, however, an expectation that this funding factor is going to be eliminated in any case in the future.

Transportation: - Transportation of the students to the receiving schools is not anticipated to create significant challenges. Some route modifications will be required and there may be opportunities for operational improvements. Details will be fully articulated in the Community Impact Assessment as part of the formal review process.

Recommendation:

It is recommended to the Board that a formal school closure review process be undertaken for the Newport Station District School, Newport Station, Nova Scotia.

Section 2 – Review of Potential Impact of School Closure

Section 2-1: The capability of the school to deliver the public school program.

Currently NSDS is able to provide programming to meet the Public School Program (PSP). However, as enrolment continues to decline it would likely become necessary for the school to have more multi-age classes with three grades in a class. While the PSP would still be met in that situation, it would not be our preferred class configuration.

As enrolment declines, specialist teaching positions become smaller and smaller, making them more challenging to fill by teachers with the preferred training and experience. While we look to combine part-time positions at smaller schools to create full-time positions (i.e. a phys ed teacher may teach at two schools), it isn't always possible or ideal.

Section 2-2: The educational benefits to students if they attend another school.

The educational benefit to students, especially at the elementary level, is about much more than the public school program and the prescribed curriculum. Having opportunities to interact with peers and a variety of teachers/adults is an important part of a student's development. Attending a school where there are more students at each grade allows students to have increased peer interactions. While there are disadvantages to very large schools, the same is true for very small schools. Enrolment trends for NSDS indicate the school will continue to get smaller in the foreseeable future.

Evidence shows that students learn better if they have a healthy breakfast and access to reasonably priced nutritional food during the day. With declining enrolments, schools across the AVRSB are finding it increasingly difficult to operate food services to ensure students have access to nutritional food choices. While there isn't any change in configuration for students at NSDS that would guarantee a particular level of food service access for students, having students attend fewer schools would increase enrolments at the schools affected thereby improving opportunities for food services to be self-sufficient.

If NSDS were to close, some students would be going to Brooklyn District Elementary School (BDES) while others would be going to Three Mile Plains District School (TMPDS). In the case of BDES the students would have immediate access to improved instructional facilities, including phys. ed. and music. In the case of TMPDS an approved renovation project scheduled for the 2014-15 and 2015-16 fiscal years will see improved instructional spaces at that school.

Section 2-3: The travel time and distance implications for students travelling to a different school(s).

The closure of Newport Station District School would result in the relocation of the students to either Three Mile Plains District School or Brooklyn District Elementary School. NSDS is currently served by two school buses and it is proposed that the redistribution of students to the other schools would be accomplished by sending one bus to TMPDS and one to BDES. This would send approximately 40% of the students to TMPDS and 60% to BDES, with students remaining on their current bus. Overall bus route transit times will be minimally affected. More detail on the proposed bus routes and maps of the morning and afternoon routes are attached in Appendix 4-2

Section 2-4: The ability of students to access and participate in extra-curricular activities.

The ability of students to participate in extra-curricular activities is a function of the opportunities available to them. As a school enrolment gets smaller there are fewer students interested in a particular activity, so the options are reduced. Having the NSDS students attend other schools increases the opportunities at those schools benefiting both the current students at that school and the new students. As student population increases, the staffing at the school will increase, often leading to more staff who will be interested in organizing and leading extra-curricular activities.

Section 2-5: The impact on the receiving school.

Having the NSDS students join students at surrounding schools would increase the student population at those schools, thus assisting with class configuration and staffing. Increased student interactions and class composition options allow school administrators and teachers to best meet the needs of students in the school. With fewer students the options for student placement in different classes is very limited, whereas with more students, options are increased and the school can be more responsive to student needs.

The students from the NSDS catchment would be redistributed to two other local elementary schools. Three Mile Plains District School would receive approximately 40% of the students and Brooklyn District Elementary School would receive 60%. These small numbers of students can easily be accommodated in these two facilities as they both have had considerably larger student populations in the past.

Section 2-6: Capital construction planning for the school region.

There is currently a major addition and renovation project approved for the Three Mile Plains District School. The project will see a new gymnasium and a full renovation of the existing school facility. This project is currently scheduled to be carried out during the 2014-15 and 2015-16 fiscal years. The Windsor Forks District School has also been identified by the School Board as needing a similar major renovation however this project has not yet received provincial approval. The other schools in West Hants are in good shape and no major capital projects are anticipated, however smaller improvement projects are ongoing annually as funds are available.

Section 2-7: Any property services efficiencies that would be achieved by the closure.

The building operating and maintenance costs of NSDS for the 2010-11 fiscal year totaled \$117,563 and these will continue to increase annually as costs rise. These costs will be eliminated if the school is closed. The costs are detailed in Appendix 4-3

Section 2-8: The operational and capital requirements of maintaining the status quo.

In addition to the annual operating costs, NSDS has some major facility upgrade needs that must be met in the coming years if the school is to be maintained. Ideally, if the school is to be maintained for the long term, it should have a similar addition and renovation project as that approved for Three Mile Plains and requested for Windsor Forks. At the very least, significant work will be required even to maintain the school in its current form. These needs are detailed in Appendices 4-4 and 4-5

Section 2-9: Efficiencies in instructional and support staffing that can be achieved.

There would be savings in school administration, secretarial and library services as these services exist in the receiving schools. Teaching staff, student support and supervision levels are based more directly on student enrolment and special needs and would be added to the receiving schools in relation to the student populations. The greatest staffing advantage for the receiving schools is the ability to maintain qualified staff in specialist teaching positions. As schools get smaller, the ability to hire and retain qualified specialists becomes more difficult.

Section 2-10: The extent of community usage of the school over the past year.

There is little community use of the school facility throughout the year. Most after hours usage is school-related such as an after-school program four days a week and other school events. West Hants Recreation has used the facility for a one-week summer camp

Section 2-11: Alternatives available to the community for facility use.

All school related activities can be accommodated in the receiving schools as can the summer camp use by West Hants Recreation. These schools are also available for other community uses as are all of the schools in the area.

Section 2-12: Other community impacts.

The loss of a school is always a difficult transition for the community affected. Newport Station District School has been in operation for many years and served its many students well. The future use of the school facility and site would be determined by the Municipality of West Hants as the facility would be returned to the Municipality once it had been declared surplus by the School Board.

Section 3 – Summary of Rationale and Recommendations

The decision to proceed with the formal review process to permanently close Newport Station District School was not based on concerns about the quality of teaching and learning currently being carried out at the school. Neither was it based on the operating expense savings; the closure of NSDS would result in the loss of \$150,000 per year which the Board now receives as small school supplement funding through the annual funding formula. There are some indications that this funding may not be continued indefinitely however this has not yet been confirmed.

The decision was taken because the student population has declined and is expected to continue to decline to a point where it is increasingly difficult to provide the best possible education for the students. In addition, in a system that has one high school and one middle school, seven elementary schools are no longer needed to service the elementary student population. Three of these seven schools still need significant upgrades to remain viable for the long term. One has an approved renovation coming and a second project has been requested but has not yet been approved. Newport Station District School also needs significant renovations if it is to be retained for the long term. Given the close proximity of other schools to serve the NSDS students and the small school population, the Board does not feel that it can make a viable case for the necessary renovations.

The timing of the closure by legislation must be within five years of a formal decision to close the school but could happen as soon as the end of the 2011-12 school year.

It is recommended that Newport Station District School be permanently closed no later than June 30, 2016.

Section 4 - Appendices

Appendix 4-1
NSDS Enrolment History and Projection

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected
NSDS															
P	11	14	20	14	14	15	13	20	10	7	8	10	10	10	10
1	21	15	15	22	13	16	16	11	19	7	7	8	10	10	10
2	27	18	13	14	21	12	14	15	11	19	7	7	8	10	10
3	18	22	19	13	11	24	12	11	12	12	18	7	7	8	10
4	9	13	19	21	11	11	21	12	11	15	12	18	7	7	8
5	22	17	12	19	19	11	10	20	11	12	14	12	18	7	7
6	15	19	17	10	17	17	11	10	19	10	12	14	12	18	7
Total	123	118	115	113	106	106	97	99	93	82	78	76	72	70	62
Decrease		-5	-3	-2	-7	0	-9	2	-6	-11	-4	-2	-4	-2	-8



NSDS Impact Assessment Appendix 4-2

PROPOSED BUS RUNS FOR RELOCATED NSDS STUDENTS

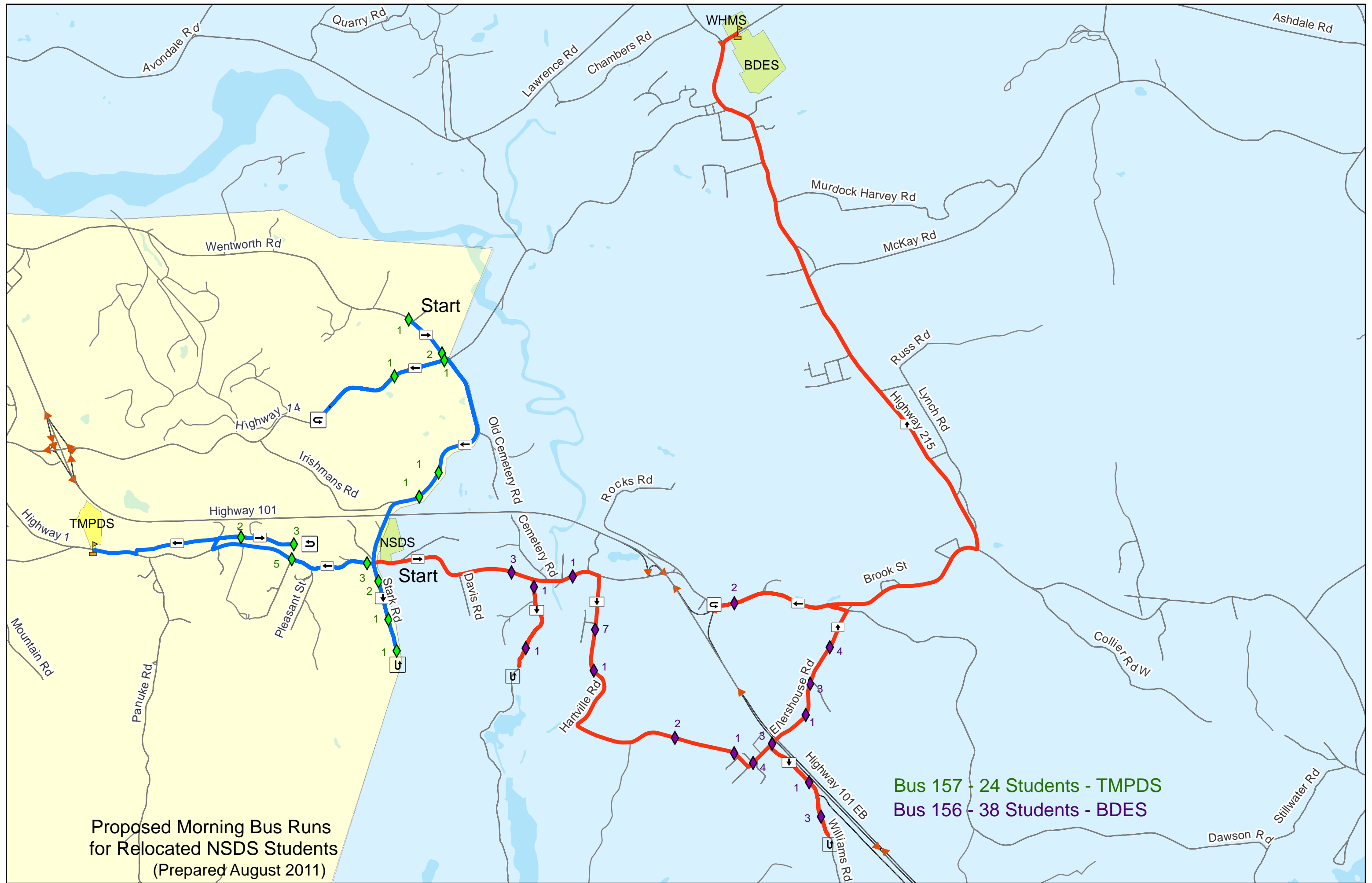
General: In the event that Newport Station District School students were relocated to Three Mile Plains District School (TMPDS) and Brooklyn and District Elementary School (BDES), it would be necessary to adjust school catchment areas in the receiving schools to accommodate this change. Based on the current bus route structure, it is proposed that all students living west of, and up to and including, Wentworth Road and Stark Road, attend TMPDS. All students living east of this area would attend BDES. These proposed catchment area boundaries are shown on the attached maps.

Proposed Bus Runs: In general terms, it would be logistically practical to continue the two morning runs and two afternoon runs that currently exist for NSDS. This means that students would continue to take their same bus to and from their new school. These proposed bus runs are shown on the attached morning and afternoon bus run maps. The major change is that the morning run to BDES (Bus # 156) would be reversed. This means that, while the actual run time would remain within six minutes of its current length, students who get off the bus first would now get off at or near the end of the run. Conversely, students who currently stay on the bus until the end of the run would now get off first.

Following is a table showing the timing changes to the four proposed bus runs:

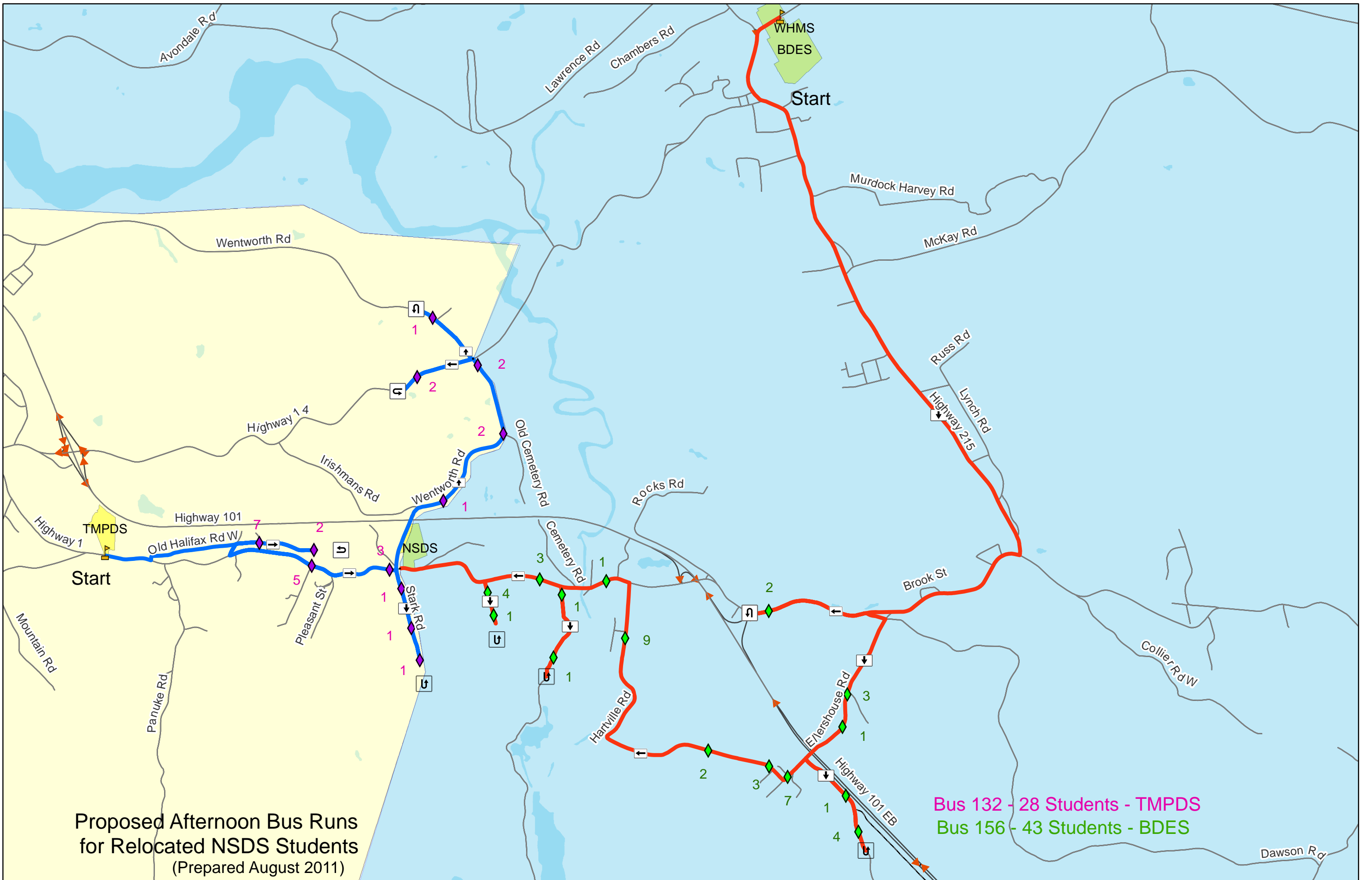
BUS RUNS	CURRENT LENGTH	NEW LENGTH	TIME DIFFERENCE	COMMENTS
MORNING RUNS				
Bus 156 (BDES)	33 minutes	39 minutes	6 minutes longer.	Run direction would be reversed as bus would now head in the opposite direction. (BDES instead of NSDS).
Bus 157 (TMPDS)	31 minutes	34 minutes	3 minutes longer.	Run direction would remain the same.
AFTERNOON RUNS				
Bus 132 (TMPDS)	40 minutes	36 minutes	4 minutes shorter.	Run direction would remain the same.
Bus 156 (BDES)	27 minutes	34 minutes	7 minutes longer.	Run direction would remain the same.

In conclusion, three runs would be increased in length by up to seven minutes, while the fourth run would decrease by four minutes. Total time students would be on the bus would range from 34 to 39 minutes, which is well within the range of the average elementary school bus run. Students would also travel on the same buses as they currently use at NSDS. It is anticipated that the busing transition from NSDS to TMPDS and BDES would be smooth and would fully meet the needs of the students.



Proposed Morning Bus Runs
for Relocated NSDS Students
(Prepared August 2011)

Bus 157 - 24 Students - TMPDS
Bus 156 - 38 Students - BDES



Proposed Afternoon Bus Runs
for Relocated NSDS Students
(Prepared August 2011)

Bus 132 - 28 Students - TMPDS
Bus 156 - 43 Students - BDES

**Appendix 4-3
NSDS Operating Costs 2010-11**

Newport Station District School			
Operating Costs 2010-11			NSDS
		Sq. Ft.	17,956
		Students	82
	Utilities		
		power	\$ 12,528
		fuel	\$ 14,647
		water	\$ 800
		sewer	N/A
	Contracted Services		
		Grounds	\$ 1,558
		Snowplowing	\$ 3,692
		Waste disposal	\$ 2,948
	Board Services		
		Repairs	\$ 7,246
		Labour	\$ 5,193
	Custodial		
		Labour	\$ 63,348
		materials	\$ 5,602
	Total 2010-11 Actual Cost		\$ 117,563
	Cost per Square Foot		\$ 6.55
	Cost per Student		\$ 1,433.70
These figures reflect operating costs and regular maintenance items			

NSDS Impact Assessment Appendix 4-4 Building Profile

Newport Station District School 1989 Wentworth Road, Newport Station, N.S.

The building was built in 1963. It is a single storey steel structure with masonry (brick and concrete block) exterior walls. The floor area is 17,956 square feet.

Grounds

- The property is a nice rural setting with mature Acadian forest.
- The general area is known for gypsum content in the soil and thus at risk to ‘sink holes’.
- The parking lot is gravel surface adjacent to the front entrance.
- The paved area around the school serves as the bus loop.
- The existing asphalt areas are in very poor condition and require replacement.
- The school community has a number of walking trails throughout the property.
- The school community has added a number of play structures in recent years.

Building Envelope

- The wooden windows are original and in need of replacement.
- The roof was replaced with a modified bitumen roof system in 2004.
- The door entrance systems are original and should be replaced.

Interior

- The multipurpose room also serves as the corridor to access the classrooms from the front entrance.
- Generally the finishes, casework, etc are old and in need of upgrades.
- Some washrooms and plumbing have been upgraded.

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Appendix 4-4
Pg. 2

Mechanical Systems

- The building is heated by a hot water boiler that is original. There has been welding done on this unit in the past. It will have to be replaced when it fails and is subject to inspection by Department of Labour, Pressure Vessels Division.
- Oil tanks were replaced recently and space allowed to provide a separate main electrical room.
- The Building Automated System controls the boiler plant exhaust fans and is centrally monitored.
- Domestic water is proved by a drilled well on site. Although the water meets the Canadian Drinking Standards Guidelines, bottled water is supplied for drinking.
- The central sanitary sewer system was upgraded with a contour bed disposal field in 2003.
- The ventilation is served by exhaust fans with operable windows.

Electrical Systems

- The main service is located in the boiler room. It is served by a 400amp, 120/208V. There is a design in place to upgrade this service.
- The distribution system requires upgrading. Panels are dated and more circuits are required in the teaching spaces to meet program delivery.
- Lighting has been upgraded to T8 throughout.
- Emergency/Exit lighting is good condition.
- 6602 Edwards Fire Alarm system in fair condition.
- Public Address system requires upgrading for two way communication.

Executive Summary

This school is now 48 years old and is in need of major upgrades to continue to serve students in the future.

Appendix 4-5 NSDS Future Capital Needs

Newport Station District School					
1989 Wentworth Road					
Newport Station, NS B0N 2A0					
School Details		Details/Comments			
	Enrollment - Current	82			
	Grade Levels	P-6			
Building Envelope		Type/Material/Description/Comments		Age	Condition
	Original Construction	single storey, steel structure with brick veneer		1963	
	Major Renovation/Addition	none			
	Roof	modified bitumen		2004	good
	Windows & Entrances	original wooden windows			poor
					60,000
Building Systems		Type/Material/Description/Comments		Age	Condition
	Fire Alarm	Edwards 6602			fair
	Sprinkler	none			
	Security	DCS Power 832			good
	Heating	hot water boiler and distribution should be replaced		1963	fair
	Water	well on site, provide bottled water			fair
	Electricity	400 amp main service- limited expansion capacity. Parts are not available for expansion.			fair
	Ventilation	exhaust fans, windows			fair
	Public Address	Petcom- one way communication			fair
	Technology Network	cat5 added			good
	Other				
Site Details		Descriptions/Comments			
	Landscaping	large property with mature acadian forest			good
	Driveways	bus loop around perimeter. Requires asphalt			fair
	Parking	mixed with bus traffic- requires asphalt			fair
	Lighting	building and pole mounted			good
	Waste water system	upgraded with on site sewage disposal system		2003	good
	Exterior Facilities				
	"Specify"				
	Other				
Barrier Free Details					
	Parking	none identified, existing gravel area			fair
	Entrances	wooden doors require upgrading, no operators			fair
	Elevators	not required, single storey			
	Washrooms	none			
	Other				
Building Interior		Descriptions/Comments		Number	Condition
	Classrooms	Typical classroom is 750 sq ft. Casework and finishes could be upgraded		12	
	Specialty Instruction Areas				
	"Specify"				
	Gymnasium	multipurpose space is 1624 sq ft and forms part of corridor			fair
	Cafeteria	none			
	Office/Administration	adjacent to front entrance			
	Washrooms	one set for each sex			fair
	Hallways	gym forms part of the halls			
	Flooring	some original			
	Storage	available			
	Furniture & Equipment				
	"Specify"				
	Technology Equipment				
	Other				
Program Requirements for PSP		gym, learning support areas			
					50,000
Totals					\$3,060,000

Appendix 4-5 NSDS Future Capital Needs

	General Comments	Building will need upgrades in the near future. The heating plant and distribution will need to be replaced, along with the windows.			
	Condition Coding				
	Poor	Doesn't meet requirements, upgrade within 5 years			
	Fair	Meets most requirements, upgrade within 10 years			
	Good	Meets most requirements, no upgrade for 15 years			
	Excellent	New or Like New Condition, no upgrade for 20+ years			