

**South Shore Regional School Board
School Review 2015-2016
School Options Committee Meeting at Hebbville Academy
BJSHS/PVEC Families of Schools
Thursday, April 21, 2016, 6:30 p.m.**

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

These Minutes have been transcribed, verbatim, from a recording in a school gymnasium. Due to poor acoustics and the lack of a high quality sound system, not every single word was audible.

Geoff Cainen – Good evening and welcome to the third public meeting of the review of Bridgewater and Park View Families of Schools. My name is Geoff Cainen and I am the Superintendent of School. I want to just take a moment and start the meeting by explaining the process because there are people here I'm sure who were not here for meeting 1 or 2. I will explain how the process has worked to date and what will come; and then turn it over to Facilitator, Gary Walker, to walk us through part of the rest of the evening and then open it up for questions from the floor.

The process that we are following here at the South Shore Regional School Board (SSRSB) is a provincial ministerial policy on school review. It is the same policy that will be used in each board across the province. We have taken the idea of instead of just school closure, looking at school review from a little broader perspective and saying if there's an opportunity to have public input and public dialogue about where we should be going with our schools, then let's try to do that. One of the first things I heard when I arrived here, at a meeting at Park View actually, from a number of people, was about the fact that it seemed, often times, when decisions were made with the School Board, that they were made from the School Board Office; they were made in a few offices, and some people would make some notes, and things got passed, and people didn't know how it all occurred. We have attempted to make this a little more transparent and open, and have as much involvement as possible. So for this review of the Park View and Bridgewater Families of Schools, our attempt was to follow the policy and have SAC members and two community members on the review team. So the review team ended up being a group of 20 very, very committed individuals and I want to thank them publicly for the work that they've done.

The first public meeting was an opportunity for the Facilitator, as per the policy, to explain the rationale for the review, the objectives, and what will come out of the objectives. The Committee met a number of times and out of those meetings, the attempt was to come up with a number of possibilities given the objectives they were given. Those were shared at a meeting a while back and then the second public meeting, where we heard from numerous people, and got at least one more recommendation, that the Committee needed to look at. Tonight's meeting is an opportunity, through the Facilitator and the Co-Chairs, to present the recommendation that the

committee has come up with. And I want to be clear – it is a recommendation. The Committee doesn't make the final decision and the Superintendent does not make the final decision. The final decision rests with the governing School Board. And there will be three meetings for the governing Board to make that decision.

I hope I get these dates right. I look to the Board Members at the back to make sure I'm correct. The first public meeting will be held May 12. And although it's a public meeting, there is no public input. So it's a chance to hear. Your chance for input is tonight. The public meeting is the chance for the SOC, the School Options Committee, to present their findings to the governing Board. The governing Board, on the 19th of May, will then bring back their senior staff, the SOC, if they so choose, to ask further questions for further clarification. And then on May 24, the governing Board will make their final decision on the recommendations given by the SOC. The governing Board has three options – they can reject the entire work, they can accept the entire work, or they can alter it. That's their right and responsibility as governing Board Members. So, the second meeting, we had numerous back and forth with the public, lots of great ideas, lots of questions and clarifications. Tonight, we really just want to focus on the recommendation that the SOC is actually taking forward to the Board. So I'm going to ask Mr. Walker now, after some introductions, if he would walk us through that.

Gary Walker – Good evening. My name is Gary Walker and I am the Facilitator for the SOC. At this time, I would like to present the SOC, I've been checking them off as they come in, I believe I should have most people. I would like for you to wave or let people when I call your name please:

- Representing Bayview Community School, John Biebesheimer and Erica Moore
- Representing Bluenose Academy, Melissa Risser and Hope Demone
- Representing Bridgewater Elementary School, Siobhan Doyle and Stephanie Martin
- Community Rep for Bridgewater, Palma Champoux
- Representing Bridgewater High School, Andrea McGinnis and Kim Benjamin
- Representing Hebbville Academy, Mitch Foley and Iris Charlton
- Representing Newcombville, Anne Burgess and Pam Hebb
- Representing Park View Education Centre, Shelley Mann, Tina Grace, and Community Member Heather Mackenzie-Carey
- Representing Pentz, Allen Sullivan and Maja Kelley
- Representing Petite Rivière Elementary School, Leif Helmer and Sarah Tingley

My two Co-Chairs for the Committee are Heather Mackenzie-Carey and Shelley Mann. And at this time, I would also like to thank, on behalf of the Committee, our Recording Secretary. She doesn't take a whole lot of enjoyment sometimes, but she shows up and she puts up with us. Thank you so much Cheryl.

Tonight, I'll present the slides. I'd like to go through the slides, and then I have Board people that can answer questions, I have Co-Chairs that can answer questions, and I can facilitate any questions that need to be answered. I'll go through the slides as we present our recommendations. The slides are done according to our mandate.

(The following italicized content is the presentation.)

Our meeting was twofold – we had to conduct a review, with public consultation, of the Bridgewater and Park View Families of Schools. The review included catchment area, cross boundary registrations, facility utilization, operating costs, grade configuration, program options, and P3 renewal recommendation. The second part is the School Options Committee will submit a Report and Recommendations to the School Board which will inform the Board of their final decision.

We've always have five objectives. Our five objectives are to make a recommendation to the Board that optimizes high school programming options and choices for all students; review school catchment areas as defined in the Catchment Area Policy; consider facility utilization and operational costs; make recommendation to the Board regarding school grade configuration at all schools; and, finally, determine whether Bayview School will be needed beyond 2020.

Objective #1 was to make a recommendation to the Board that optimizes high school programming options and choices for all students.

There was a motion by the SOC to move grades 10-12 students from BJSHS to PVEC. A recorded vote of 11 for and 7 against. The rationale spoke to the mandate of optimizing programming at the high school level. Should the Board accept this recommendation, the Committee would ask that the following conditions be met:

- *No students move until interior renovation at PVEC is 100% complete.*
- *Students move at the beginning of the school year, not mid-way.*
- *Clear communication from the Board to public re plans and changes in the move.*
- *Immediately address French Immersion, Advanced Placement, and the International Baccalaureate Program.*

We also wanted, on Objective #1,

- *To immediately appoint a Transition Team made up of School Advisory Council members, staff, administration, guidance, and students, to ensure that:*
 - *students with learning, social, and emotional needs are supported in the transition.*
 - *no learning opportunities are lost in the transition.*

- *and additional topics, such as scholarships, and a number of areas we were looking at, we need to know that they are going to be addressed in the transition.*

Objective #2 was to review school catchment areas as defined in the Catchment Area Policy. We received a lot of information in this area of school catchment. It is a policy in this area. We received and asked for a great deal of information; however, at the end, we recommend that the Board review catchment areas with consideration for improving bussing times for all students. And the rationale was that we believe Central Office staff have more, and greater expertise; there is a need greater parent engagement on this topic; and requires more in-depth review than SOC could actually do. There was so much information, but even with all of that information, we couldn't make a decision on it.

Objective #3: Consider facility utilization and operating costs when making recommendations.

- A. Recommend the Board direct Superintendent to evaluate facility utilization and operating costs throughout the SSRSB.*
- B. Recommend application to the Department of Education for an Addition and Alteration for BES and BJSHS.*

The rationale is to improve current facilities.

Objective #4: Make a recommendation to the Board regarding school grade configurations.

- A. We recommend that staff review grade configurations for BES and BJSHS building to optimize programming and facility use and space. The rationale is that grade configuration needs to be examined if they move the 10-12's out of Bridgewater. That should be looked at.*
- B. Recommend grade configurations at all Park View feeder schools remain unchanged. And the rationale is that the SOC feels that the Board has the staff to make this happen.*

And Objective #5: Determine whether Bayview School will be needed beyond 2020. Our recommendation is that Bayview Community School remain part of the Board's infrastructure beyond 2020. And the rationale is that there is no benefit to closing Bayview.

Our recommendations are made for the Board, when making a decision, to take into consideration. They will make a decision. Their meeting will take place as follows:

- *Thursday, May 12, 6:30 p.m., BJSHS – The SOC Co-Chairs will present to the Board.*
- *Thursday, May 19, 6:30 p.m., Board Office – The Board will discuss the recommendations.*
- *Tuesday, May 24, 6:30 p.m., Hebbville Academy – The Board will make a decision.*

We will try to make our report very simple, with nothing elaborate.

At this time, I would ask that, if you have question, think about what we said, please come up to this microphone at the centre and we'll go from there.

Geoff Cainen – While people are deciding whether they will go to the mic, there is some terminology that I would like to take a minute to explain. Additions and Alterations – Every year, the government of Nova Scotia asks school boards put an order in, basically, for major repairs to schools, over a million dollars and up. That's the kind of money that, a number of years ago, before my time, the Board put an application in for Park View. That's the money that's going into Park View's Addition and Alteration. It is my honest feeling that, when I look at students going into Bluenose in grade primary, and they go all the way through and come out at the other end at Park View, when we finish the renovation. Or to the schools Queens. Those students have the opportunity to go through some very modern buildings and I truly believe that students in the town of Bridgewater deserve the same thing. So, an Addition and Alteration, we're not talking about a couple hundred thousand; we're talking about millions of dollars. I made a mistake at a meeting when I described those schools and I'll say it publicly here – they're kind of like a dump inside. It was the wrong thing to say. I offended some people and I sent an email to apologize about that. But the rationale was, when I look – and by the way, that's not about the teaching, the administration, or the people cleaning that building either; there are some phenomenal things going on in there – but when I look at those buildings and I look at Bluenose, or Bayview, or South Queens, I think, why shouldn't the town of Bridgewater have that as well, from primary to 12? The Addition and Alteration we'd be looking at would be well over the 10 million dollar range; a substantial refurb for both of those buildings would be what we'd be looking for. So I wanted to explain what the Addition and Alteration was and where the money came from.

Questions and comments from the public:

- I'm a little bit confused in your explanation about the school. Bridgewater Elementary opened in 1980, a new school. About 21 years ago, we had the junior high completely taken down, a new junior high; a major refit to the high school. What's wrong with that?
 - Geoff Cainen – There's nothing wrong with that. It's a matter of continuing to ask for upgrades for those schools. There's a lot of new courses coming in that should be able to be offered in those buildings, and be sure that there are large open learning spaces for students, where they can collaborate together – a little different than what they currently have, in terms of structure of the hallways and classrooms.
- It's always been my opinion in my findings at the hospital, it's not the bricks and mortar, it's the person at the front of the classroom.
 - Geoff Cainen – Totally, totally agree. 100%. You can have the shiniest building in town, but you need the best teachers there as well. 100% agree.

- I'm a resident of the town of Bridgewater. My name is Dennis Woodworth. I've lived here since 1970. As a young boy, I remember going to school in Bridgewater when the infrastructure wasn't even there. Jeff was part of it as well, growing up in the town of Bridgewater. We used to go to annexes and make things work. I certainly agree with Bev tonight in regards to, I seem to think that we tend to focus on how glamorous the building is and what we have available to us as the focus that we have and we truly shouldn't have that. Years ago I was asked to actually be a volunteer coach at the new French school and I made some comments to some individuals the other night, the other day actually, about how can you have a school when you only have a hundred and some students in it and have such a big glamorous school and not look at their situation as being an option for the future? I know that it's in a different jurisdiction, but Bridgewater High School is incredibly important to the community of the town of Bridgewater. I'm a tax payer of the town of Bridgewater and I was also a tax payer for a number of years in the municipality and I can tell you, sir, that I've spent a lot more money on taxes in the town of Bridgewater than I ever did in the municipality. And the number 1 reason why I made that move back to Bridgewater was that my son could walk to school every day from our location at 80 Parkdale Avenue. And he could also participate in extra-curricular activities every day without his mother or father having to pick him up at 7, 8, or 9 o'clock at night. I watch my son getting on the bus, or I did watch my son get on the bus every morning, because my wife and I had to go to work each day and leave our son behind. In Upper Branch, every day, unattended, so he could attend school. The health and safety aspect to us, as a family, to pay that much more money for property taxes, was a no-brainer to us. So we made that investment. So having a school located in the central part of Bridgewater is incredibly important to the culture of the town of Bridgewater and also attracting new people to become part of our community. Making that change of having students go from 10, 11, and 12 to go to Park View would be a wrong move. The second thing is transportation. I coach young kids. And many of you here tonight also are volunteers in our community, coaching kids. And I can tell you that I have a very difficult time believing that you're not gonna see a parking lot the size of possibly Sobeys and Empire Theatres up at Park View someday, because you talk about an extra burden on a family, a lot of kids are not gonna walk from Jubilee Road to Park View, or even Parkdale Avenue to Park View. Which means that I, as a family member, my son is 23 years old, so I'm not directly affected by it, but I can tell you I can see the families here tonight. Mom, dad, I'm not walking to school every day, we need another car. Which means we need additional insurance, we need additional maintenance and repairs, we need additional fuel, to be able for our son or daughter to be able to go and travel back and forth to school. Let's say, on average, it's \$400 a month. That's an added expense of \$5,000 a year. There's not one person in this room tonight that spends \$5,000 a year towards their taxes or education. So you're gonna put an extra burden on families that live in our community to make sure that our kids can get back and forth to school, especially in grade 10, 11, and 12, because they're 16 years of age at that time. The next thing I looked at is sports teams.

I grew up playing every sport in the town of Bridgewater. I played every sport in school, because I had an equal opportunity to do so and adequate coaching to be able to coach every team. I know Park View has one division and one only. And I can tell you if you had a surplus of teams in every sport in that school, there is no possible way that you can convince me that there will be kids not playing sports any more. And extra-curricular activities, sir, in every single day of life, for kids, is so essentially needed at this time, especially with the problems we have with obesity in our community right now. It's prevalent, it's in our face every day. And we know that we need to have these kids actively involved, each and every day, and if we minimize the amount of facilities we have, and we continue to let the number grow, regardless of the amount of people attending the school, it's going to be very challenging to allow those kids to participate. And the other big problem is, and I know this because I asked people like Jim Whynot, Charles McNeil, and many other teachers that were my coaches in school, I find more people outside that have careers or jobs that are in here volunteering as coaches in the same program. I just don't see the amount of numbers that we could have to sustain coaching under one roof. And another problem that I've had conversations, and these are all comments from people in the community that are part of our alumni. The other one is the bullying aspect. We talk about it every day. It's online. It's in our community. It's on the radio. It's on television every day. When you take students from Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High School and you show up at that branded school, and it's going to continue to stay as Park View Education Centre, those hundred and some kids that are gonna transfer to that school, no matter how much you educate that population, they will always be looked at differently and treated differently because of where they live. Whether that's right or wrong. I know that's wrong, but it doesn't make a difference. And it's a healthy divide. I have many kids that I grew up with that went to Park View and we were best of friends, best of friends, growing up together, but I can tell you, when it came to the institution, the school, we were very proud to represent our community and our school at the highest level of competition, both academically and extra-curricular. So there will be a prevalent bullying issue for a very long period of time, until we can get over that issue. And that I can guarantee. And last, but not least, I am speaking on behalf of the thousand graduates that graduated from Bridgewater High School, including one of the people that are on your board here tonight, Jeff DeWolfe. It'll be a very sad day, very sad day, to historically change the dynamics and the culture of Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High School, as historically it's been a landmark in our community for a very long time. We, this weekend, and you know it's funny that tonight this meeting takes place, because tomorrow, over 200 of our graduates from the 1980's are all coming back, very proud graduates of Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High School, to take part in the largest alumni event that we've ever had in the history of our school. And I would hate to be the one to educate all of them this weekend on the decision being made tonight in the recommendation for what changes dramatically the landscape of education in our community. I wish you all the best of luck. I can truly tell you that I am dynamically against what you are talking about and what you are proposing, because I am a very proud graduate of Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High

School, my son is a very proud graduate of Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High School, my father is a very proud graduate of Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High School, my grandfather is a very proud graduate of Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High School, and my great-grandfather is a very proud graduate of Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High School. Thank you very much.

- I didn't graduate from Bridgewater High School but I did spend a few years there, I have two children who graduated and a granddaughter there now. When I'm presented with a situation or problem, I always try to remind myself to step back and take a dispassionate look at the situation and I ask myself a few questions, like what are we trying to do and why are we doing this? And what do we hope to accomplish and how do we hope to accomplish it? So I ask myself, why are we reviewing BHS and Park View anyway? Why are we moving 200 students from BHS to Park View? Both schools are providing a good educational program. And this has been publicly stated by Board officials that one school is not better than the other, so it's not about programming. But there is this latest Department of Education trend to look at utilization, or supposed underutilization, of being decidedly out of favor. And with declining rural populations, Park View, in the future, will have classrooms that are empty; not in use for all periods in all days. To me, that's a bonus. As an educator, as an administrator, that's a bonus because it allows for more creativity in scheduling and program delivery. These spaces can be utilized for non-seat-work components of your school courses. What physics teacher wouldn't like to have an empty space when they're working on velocity? What English teacher wouldn't like to have a place for improv and drama without dealing with 30 desks and chairs? That teacher of special education wouldn't like a quiet place for students with autism who need to step back from all of the input that they cannot cope with on some days? What art teacher wouldn't like a blank space to lay out big art projects? That would be a dream come true. And it's a possible dream that could come true. The fact that a building is underutilized does not make it more expensive to operate, nor does being fully utilized make it cheaper to run. There are many things that remain the same no matter how many students are in the building – heating the building remains the same, grounds keeping remains the same, custodial staff remains the same. And for instance, right now, BHS has naturalized their grounds in order to make the building more appealing and so it isn't an eyesore. The Board doesn't even pay for that. It doesn't help with the upkeep of naturalized spaces. So there's no cost in it for the Board. In certain areas, underutilization would be less costly – less power if they turn off the lights when they're not in the room; fewer professional staff for fewer students; wear and tear is less with fewer students jostling their way through hallways wearing those 80 pound bookbags on their backs; with less crime, there's less tension, less violence; fewer student days lost to suspensions; and fewer teacher days lost to illnesses that are related to stress. An underutilized building has the potential to store records for the School Board, rather than pay storage at a place like the Bridgewater storage units. There's all kinds of things that could be done. So I see no savings there for the Board to not have an underutilized school. Now, here are my thoughts about programming, because this is a big issue. Would a move to Park View provide more course

selection, better programming, better teaching to BHS students? Is it enough to move forward? A few things were expressed at SOC meetings that a small school might not be able to offer the range of courses that would be desired. One example provided was in the Phys Ed area, where a small school might not be able to offer dance and yoga, as it calls for in the Phys Ed program. Yet at BHS, which is a small school, there are qualified Phys Ed teachers, of course, as well as a dance instructor and a yoga instructor on staff. BHS, a small school, has maintained its advanced program, its regular programs, its immersion program, which other schools have not been either willing or able to keep. It would lose seats in some programs, such as O2, since only one O2 class can be at a school. It was suggested that small schools would have limited elective options. As the Department of Education moves toward 21 required courses to graduate, there will be a reduced need for electives. Most students only take seven courses per year. Even if graduation required immediately 21 courses, smaller student schools can still offer many electives. Staffing is based on a formula that's very consistent throughout the Board, a certain number of students equals a certain number of number of teachers. Drop 300 students, they might lose 10 teachers, 600 students might be 20 teachers. But those extra ten teachers are going to be dedicated to maintaining the multiple sections of courses that will be required to educate the extra 300 students. No savings there. No advantage there. Technology has also been banged about as an issue and BHS is certainly ahead of the game with its use of iPads and its access to computers for the teachers and staff. There's no advantage there. Money. Money, of course, is always an important factor. Education is expensive. We are all paying for that expensive education and we want the best bang for our buck. So will this save you more dollars? No, I don't think so. I do not think so. I considered the issue of the physical plant and there's no savings there. In fact, I contend that fewer students in the building will save money. Human Resources stated at an SOC meeting that no jobs would be lost if there was a merger of the schools. So there are no savings there. In fact, moving the students from BHS to Park View will cost money. Busing will cost more. I'm sorry Bubby. It's not personal, you know that. In a scenario presented at the last public meeting, it was indicated that buses were driving through Bridgewater half empty or with empty seats. I questioned the economics of having half empty buses and was told that seats have to be guaranteed for all students who have the right to travel on the bus. That's logical, makes sense to me. Bus as we know, many don't travel on the bus, they have parents drop them off or they drive themselves, so there are empty seats. But if those seats have to be guaranteed for the kids from Pentz, Riverport, Five Houses, wherever it may be, how can we put BHS students in those seats? I don't think we can. What if all the students from Back Centre, Front Centre, Rose Bay, and Riverport decide to take the bus today? There will be no empty seats for BHS students. Are my kids, my granddaughter, going to be told, Sorry, you don't get to go to school today; the bus is full. That's gonna cost money. Also, as Dennis pointed out, many BHS students are going to want to drive. Parking has always been an issue. Park View has always felt sorry for the administrators up there who had to deal with that issue,

because we don't even have parking lots at BHS. We didn't have to worry about it. It was pointed out that a parking lot would be created behind the school. It's going to cost money to create that parking lot. It's not just going to happen. Now one option that was put forward at an SOC meeting in response to queries about what would happen to Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High School once it became Bridgewater Junior High School was that the two schools could operate under a campus model, which generally means shared services. It's been tried. Some places it's worked, but other places? But this would mean, again, having underutilized buildings, especially if the 5s and 6s were moved to the high school building. But that problem can be easily solved. You take the remaining BES students to Bayview because that school is going to remain open and it's probably going to be underutilized because their population is dropping. And there's empty buses that are going back to Park View, back through Mahone Bay, dropping kids off. They could pick up the BES students. That's not gonna be a long bus ride for them. Or we could take the students from Pentz and Petite. Buses are already traveling up the river for the high school students. Empty seats on those buses. Pick up the elementary students and bring them to BES. Solves the problem. Two buildings the Board can ditch. That is a true savings for them. They no longer have to heat, look after them. Of course, the municipality will have to take them over and that's gonna be a cost to them but that's not the School Board's problem. But I do fear that Pentz and Petite will not only not get a new school, they won't have any school. There will be no schools in their communities to serve their children. So I return to my original question. Why are we doing the shifting of students? There are no savings to be made by the Board. There are no real programming advantages to this. So what do we hope to accomplish? If we jump on the band wagon of utilization of school plants, which we can see doesn't mean savings or enhance programming. But I think this school review process has been hurried with insufficient input from the major stakeholders. Insufficient information or meeting times, or even the purpose of all of this. And some of whom, like the students, who will have their educational programs affected, have had no voice at all. I don't think all of the affected parties have been invited to the table. Every change that is made creates a domino effect, which could affect Pentz, Petite, Hebbville, Bayview, New Germany. These areas must be part of the conversation. Why have the governments of the town and the county not been included? They contribute to educational funding. They will bear the burden of abandoned schools and the loss of tax dollars, when the area become so less appealing to families with children, they don't want to settle there anymore. Why were school staff muzzled at meetings? Should they not be part of looking at the whole picture? I still contend that we could have an educational system that would be the envy of the province. And we could have it with what we've got. We need to start thinking outside the box. Yes, it's 2016. What was good when I went to school, way back when dinosaurs roamed the earth, is no longer good. My granddaughter is doing things with iPads and stuff that I couldn't even dream about when I was her age. I was still using a party line on the telephone when I was in grade 8. How times have changed. And we have to keep up with them. These kids are growing up in a

different world than I lived in, that's for sure. I made suggestions about specialized high schools, and I know every school has to offer the full high school program. But that doesn't mean that they are all required to be given at the same physical plant. Why can't students from New Germany or Bridgewater transfer to Park View for a semester to pick up specialized courses? Why can't Park View students transfer to BHS and New Germany for things like French Immersion? They would go back to their own schools, get their education, and graduate with their cohorts. You could have more teachers teaching specialized courses, like guitar or calculus, that would be available to all students in this area. Not just BHS, not just Park View, not just New Germany. Any student should have access to what they need, want or desire. And Forest Heights should not be left out of this equation. They can be part of this super campus model as well and they have every right to be. They should have access to the same things as my granddaughter and your children or grandchildren. Why are you not hiring staff at New Germany for semester 1 and Park View for semester 2? Or BHS semester 1, Park View semester 2. That's something that should be done. We need to be more creative. We need to look at what could be. Don't put the road blocks up first. Look at what do we want for education for our children and grandchildren? How can we make that happen? Put the road blocks behind. You're gonna have problems to solve no matter what you do. But look at what we can do. We have some fabulous staff. We have some fabulous students. And we have good Board Members, terrific SOC members, who are all concerned with the education of the students in this area. They're not doing this because it's fun. There were times, I'm sure, they said I'm getting out of here; this is too much. They did it and they stuck with it because they want to do what is best. I'm going to make a recommendation as to what I think is best. I challenge the SOC to change their recommendation to the Board. You're going to be surprised at what I say because it's not what you think. I challenge the members of the Committee to re-examine the very questions I put forward – why are we doing this and what do we hope to accomplish? I challenge the Committee to recommend to the Board that no decision could be made at this time because of a process that did not include all effected parties, that did not give sufficient time for consultation and reflection, that did not fully examine the ramifications of any decision that is made and that has put such a formidable task on the shoulders of the SOC. To me, it's the only viable recommendation at this time. Thank you for listening. I appreciate it.

- My name is David Walker and I am the mayor of the town of Bridgewater. I was there as a staff member under Debra. Just to make sure that Bubby gets equal time, Dennis only wanted to acknowledge Jeff, Bubby, but you're with me, so you were there too. I'm extremely disappointed in the fact that, and this is my formal presentation, because I anticipated that the public meetings would be an opportunity for myself and councillors to hear what the public had to say. We're elected by the public in Bridgewater; we wanted to hear what they had to say, we want to reflect their concerns and their thoughts to the Board. So I was a bit taken back tonight when I found out that it's either speak tonight or you're never speaking again. So that really frustrates me. That the School Board that

represents all our communities has now said, this is your time to voice your opinion, but don't dare come to a School Board meeting and say anything on this topic. I'm not happy about that. I do want to say that I appreciate unbelievably the work that the SOC members have done. I sympathize with them. School Board staff, School Board members, councillors and our staff, we get criticized all the time. Just check Facebook. But we're paid. That's part of what comes with the job. What should not come with the job of being an SOC member was criticism, phone calls, and complaints to them. So hats off to them because I think you were set up from the start. We did communicate to the Board as a council. We expressed a number of concerns that we had with the school review. To their credit, the Board came and met with us. We discussed all of the concerns that we had. We appreciated that very much. One at least was certainly fully explained and I now know how to work notifications on my Facebook site, so I can get more notifications. The rest, as far as we're concerned, were not resolved. The process is not transparent. If the process were transparent, the Board, in its wisdom years ago, would have recognized that we have an enrolment issue. I don't think any of us would dispute this. It's declining. We have to look at what does that mean. Enrolment in every school, from my understanding, is declining, with two exceptions – Bridgewater Elementary and Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High. Are we coming through the roof with new people? No, but we're stable. So you step back and you look and say, what's the best model with this declining enrolment? When do you decide that you're going to do that? After you apply for and receive a 14 million dollar upgrade to Park View Education Centre; after you've been told you cannot consider certain schools, after you've been told you can't consider boundary reviews and boundary changes. Then basically, and I'll allude to this in a minute, the answer has already been decided. What we're doing is trying to, without upsetting a lot of people, end up agreeing with that decision that has already been made. The letters went to the Board. Our council decided that we have people on the SOC. I sit on the SAC for the high school, the junior senior high school. Councillor Graves sits on it as our liaison for the elementary school. We said we'd let the process unfold. Tonight, we'll force the issue a bit. We took it among ourselves, as a council, to invite our SOC members and community rep to a meeting with council. Informal. No media. No minutes, although some people took some notes, but nothing formal. An exchange of thoughts. An exchange of ideas to clarify things for us. What we're hearing, A, is that right? They can ask us questions. So I was less than enthused when I received a phone call suggesting that was highly inappropriate. If anybody wants to tell me I have no right to talk to people who represent me, you're barking up the wrong tree. We also decided that sometimes we say we're the bright people, the students are not. We said, but they're the ones gonna be affected. The 10s to 12s at Bridgewater right now, are the students who will, depending upon timelines, be going to Park View. The 5s and 6s perhaps from the elementary school will be the students that perhaps will become part of a new junior high model. I wonder what they think. So the second thing we did, the deputy mayor and I met with the junior senior high school's student council. Great meeting. A lot of exchange. They offered opinions and I reminded

them of a situation that happened, and Dennis probably knows the dates, I don't, when we were tearing down the F.R. Davis part of the school. We were a split shift. I shared a classroom with Jamie Whynot. My daughter happened to be in the school on student council at the junior high level at the time. I should have said that from the start. Full disclosure. I taught at BES and BHS for 30 years. I hope that's not clouding my statement. I don't think it is. The senior highs went in the morning, the junior highs went in the afternoon. It was supposed to switch at the end of the first half of the year. The junior highs got wind that the senior highs really likes the morning. They were more alert, it was easier to study, and they get to the beach quicker. They had the rest of the day. The junior high student council went and appeared before the School Board. They did their homework, they came in prepared, and they took all the educational data to support why the morning is more productive than the afternoon. And guess what? We switched. They got the morning for the second half of the year. And what I encouraged the students to do is they have to understand the student council, that they're us. They're the political arm of their students. They need to stand up and let everybody know when they believe we're not making the right decisions. They might be criticized by some of us wise adults. Yup. But the good learning that can be realized is that you can accomplish as students if you're willing to put yourself in the front. There's a two-way provincial basketball tournament at BHS gym, and my apologies again, for me, it's always BHS, I can't get the j and s in there. There's a lot of leaders in that school. On a regular basis, town council presents certificates and medallions and plaques to individual teams that have been successful sports wise, culture wise, individually. And that reinforces the value and kind of grounding and preparation those students are getting. What is disturbing me as well is this has deteriorated in some circles into a debate about who is better. They have a bad school, they have a good school, they have more to offer, they have less to offer. One of the things I learned very quickly when I retired, the Board, in its wisdom, said we're going to give you early retirement. We're going to give you some sub days and you'll be paid at a full teacher's pay for the days, but you must teach in schools that are more rural than Bridgewater. Park View qualified. What I discovered was, when I taught, I always felt the school I taught in needed all the repairs, all the other schools were state of the art. All the bad kids were in my class and came to my school. What I discovered in subbing throughout the county was that, guess what? Every school has issues, structurally, and what it needs for its facility and every school has some unbelievably gifted and talented students, and every school has those few students who made the day really long. So I'm really disappointed that we have, in many ways, allowed this to become a debate about good and bad, one school is better than the other. They are both excellent schools with dedicated staff and students who are really doing wonderful things. If you didn't believe that, go to Park View last weekend, go to the Baptist church last weekend, to see Park View's IB program. Great successes in both schools. And rather than celebrating the success of both, we're now getting ourselves into the position where we're going to say, no, we're better than them or we're not as good as them. And that's unfortunate.

Programming, that one I heard a number of times, that students in school A can't get things students in school B can get. I taught in one of those schools. Both of my children graduated from those schools. I went back for six years subbing. I have no reservations in saying that if a family moves to Bridgewater and they go to Bridgewater Elementary School until grade 6 and they go to Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High from 7-12, and they move on. They're prepared well. They are not lacking anything. How they do in university can be affected by a lot of other things. First year away from home, all of a sudden a lot of freedom to be had. The programming they received is there. For me, and again, I haven't met with council, that was going to happen before we presented to the Board, for me, it's the process. The process is flawed, and it's a process that the provincial government is imposing. I guess I know where I have to go next. Because to me, it was as Debra pointed out, you step back and say, what's the problem? We don't have enough students to fill all our schools. Well what's the best solution? And if that solution is looking at that with an umbrella, not cherry picking one school, two schools, let's not look at that now, let's look at that in the future. You should be looking at the whole thing to determine what's in the best interest of the tax payer, of the student, and the operations of the Board. This particular process was predetermined. I read a report that went from the School Board to the Department of Education many years ago, which basically said in supporting the application for the renovations at Park View, the flag ship school of the district and we have to do it quickly. I encourage the Board to step back, I'm addressing this for the Board, once again, whether they agree or not. I really feel sorry for the SOC, because I think you were set up. I encourage the Board to step back and slow it down. And I want to remind the Board of something. The night that the Superintendent presented the options to the Board to review the Tancook and the Bridgewater and Park View families, a comment was made by board member Griffin, I'm not gonna quote, because I'll misword it probably, why aren't we involving municipal units, they should be involved, they should have input. Not to be critical. The only time there has been communication between the Board and council is when council has requested it. It's not coming the other way. I agree with her. Over two million dollars in taxes is funded for public education in Bridgewater. What will happen this fiscal year, municipalities across Nova Scotia will contribute nine million dollars more to education. So there's declining enrolments, costs should be going down, it's not going down for the municipalities. And what's even more interesting is nine million more going into public education from municipalities, but only 2.8, I think, increase in the budget from the province. So, I'm wondering where the rest of that went, but that's a different thing. But I really urge the Board, I think you're hurrying the process, I think you're doing it in a way that is not considering the overall process and that is going to lead to problems down the road. Thank you.

- He stole half of what I was gonna say, but I have a few things to say. For those of you who don't know me, by name is Bill McInnis and I'm the Deputy Mayor of Bridgewater. I never taught a class in my life. I grew up in the banking world and I've often come to the conclusion many, many years ago that bigger is not often better. I'm living proof of that.

I decline several promotions for jobs with a major bank of Canada and I could have left Bridgewater years ago, but Bridgewater is the place where I want to live and raise my kids. I'm under some threat here this evening, because I have three kids that graduated from Bridgewater High School, and if we do something with that high school, they'll disown me. Having said that, there are a few things I'm not sure you've taken into consideration. Bridgewater, the town of Bridgewater, is one of the fastest, if not the fastest, growing towns in Nova Scotia, indeed, maybe in Canada. That's an important fact. This is why our school population is not deficient; it's holding its own. Bridgewater High School is a key component in the strategy of the town. We use that as a marketing tool for the town of Bridgewater. We've had many, many, many students who have graduated and gone on to do some wonderful things. I've gone to graduations. We've had students that, on a very regular basis, get scholarships for Harvard, in little old Bridgewater. There must be something going on in that school that's right. And I'm not pitting it against Park View. Park View is a wonderful school. But I must ask you, when you go to my home town, Sheet Harbour, a wonderful spot by the way, you should go there, they never heard of Park View. Where's Park View? They know where Bridgewater is. And that's why we use Bridgewater High School to market our town. It is a key component of our economic strategy. I was at a meeting with some of you people at town council a while ago and I said, whatever is best for the students and whatever is best for those people that pay for this, i.e., the tax payer, I'm on side, but it's really, really important to keep the politics out of it. I've lived here now for 37 years, and I didn't know this, politics is all through it. Absolutely. Why would someone who lives directly adjacent to Park View be bused to New Germany? As a business person or just common sense, why would we do that? Why wouldn't they go to Park View? I know we have our boundaries for schools and we have our busing, but if you want to look at running this thing economically and getting good results, we have to look at things like that. It's not your decision I understand, it's the province's. Well someone's gotta talk to the province. Maybe we should have our MP, our MLA here. These are serious decisions that are going to affect what I consider to be the most important people in our town, our kids. They're our future. I would ask that you please reconsider what you're thinking about. Bigger is not always better. It's really not. I would encourage you to take a second look at this, because, you know, I was at that meeting with the student council in Bridgewater. Those kids know what's going on. They know what's going on. Not to include them in the conversation, I think is wrong. They have a point of view as well. The mayor said a lot of things I wanted to say. I would ask you to go back to the table and take the politics out of it. Let's look at it in a common sense, rational manner. Thank you.

- Good evening. I'm one of the seven and I really hope the 11 are thinking right now. This whole policy, this whole process, is a disgrace for this Board, this county, and this province. And I know you co-chaired it Geoff, but a job not well done. You talk about transparency, there was none. There were things questioned of our Facilitator/Co-Chair, whatever his position was, I'm not sure. He took them all. The minutes does not reflect

what was in those meetings, what was said by members in those meetings, and we all know. There were many things left out. One you brought to our attention 15 minutes before this meeting tonight. It happened March 30 when you made that remark about Bridgewater High School. And it takes you to the 11th hour before you can own up to it? Where is the leadership in this Board? And what kind of leadership is it? I really want to know. Can you tell me? Because I'd really like to know. Staff are too afraid to speak up against you for fear of being fired. Insubordination. What happened to, I don't know, freedom of speech? Page 38 of the Education Act maybe? Would you like me to recite it to you? Where all board members, employees, discuss things and come to an agreement. That wasn't done. It wasn't done on this committee. It was steered the whole way. And I'm done as an SOC member. I'm not being a part of this anymore.

- I'm sorry for coming back up again, but I was asked to ask a few questions tonight. I was getting pretty emotional and I forgot to ask those few questions. I would like to say that Mike Ward, who is our head custodian at Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High School, and has been since I was a young boy, he is a fantastic individual and has worked in that facility for a very long time and we are very proud of the work he does there. First question, for the Board – I was alarmed yesterday to find out that, and if somebody could grab the microphone and answer this question for all of this, because maybe you don't know this, it's that the Board pays out quite a substantial amount of money, over a hundred thousand dollars a year to the town of Lunenburg for parking and also the use of the facilities in the town of Lunenburg. Could you explain to us why we spend that kind of money as tax payers to pay those expenditures?
 - Brian Smith – You're correct. Just over 96 thousand dollars. This was part of the agreement when it was chosen for the school to go there. There were already some agreements about charges for sewer and the playground that were in place. And then the town levied those fees for sewer and for playground use. Playground meaning the sports fields that are in behind, not the playground right beside the school. So these were really charges that were in place before that new school was built and there was no way we could negotiate that again. It was before my time and I don't know all the details, but at the time of building, that was the agreement that was in place.
- Mayor Walker, do we charge for parking and use of facilities or anything at Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High School?
- No.
- Zero. Next question, verbatim. Where are the students going to come from to fill Bridgewater Jr. High? From what I see, the school will be opened up to the students outside the town of Bridgewater. Is this correct? And, if so, what do you foresee as the school configuration? P-5 Hebbville, P-5 Bridgewater Elementary, 6-9 Bridgewater Jr. High. Is this your intention to do that with these schools?

- Geoff Cainen – I think, if I ... can I just ask you to stand at the microphone until we finish your question? I want to make sure we get it all. I don't think we have a preferred configuration at this point at all. What the recommendation is basically saying is for staff and community to get together and see if that can be worked out. So whether it be a P-5 or a P-4, honestly, at this point, I couldn't tell you that. I do know that it's something that, as the recommendation says, there needs to be a lot of discussion around that. One of the pieces of the puzzle, and the SOC can certainly speak to this better than I, one of the things they were looking at, at one point, was the rounding of boundaries, for lack of a better word, taking the corner of maybe Hebbville, the corner of Pentz, and the corner of Bluenose, because bus services for Bluenose, for example, from Dayspring, might be taken from 49 minutes down to 12 or 13 minutes, I think, into the town of Bridgewater. So, taking a few of those students and bringing them back into the town of Bridgewater, even though they're not in the town boundaries. Does that answer your question?
- Yes, for now.
- I think Dennis brought up a very good point, that this decision is not a finite decision. Whatever decision is made, it will affect, possibly, everybody else in this room. If I was on a committee making a recommendation, I would not feel in my heart that I could make a recommendation until the dominoes had fallen. And I'm sure the people of Pentz and Petite want to know. They maybe, probably don't have an opinion about BHS and Park View, but they want to know whether they're going to have a school and whether they're students are going to be coming to BES. I'm sure Bridgewater people, whose kids are in the elementary, never thought about the fact that your kids could be bused to Bayview, your kids could be bused to Bluenose. Who knows? Maybe they will be a new school down the river and they are going to be bused down the river. They're all going to be good schools, as David said. Every school has its issues, but by and large, Lunenburg County has always been known to produce good academics and to provide good support for our students who need it. This is why Bridgewater High School has maintained some classes with four or five kids in them, because these are the kids who are going to be doing the moving and shaking in years to come, who are going to be paying the taxes that keep me in my old folks home. But we make sure that all of our students are looked after. Park View does the same. Forest Heights does the same. They're all working to make sure that every student is working to their capacity, to the best that it can be. But we also know that we are not an island. No man is an island. No school is an island. And what affects Bridgewater will affect the rest of you. So don't relax because Bridgewater's position has been made, because you may be next. I don't want to be fear mongering. This is just reality. I know it's expensive, but as I looked at things, it is not cheaper to run a school, we're not saving money unless we totally ditch a school. Because it costs the same to heat it, to clean it, to look after the grounds, whether there are 200 kids, 400 kids, or 600 kids.

The only thing that's gonna change is the number of staff and those staff are gonna be somewhere. It doesn't matter whether they're at Park View, Bridgewater, Pentz, Petite, or New Germany. They're all going to be paid. That is a static number. There are economies when you get down to 23 kids in a building from P-6, but I know kids that have gone to the Greenfield schools, who have gone to their little schools and who have done amazingly well. Two of them were my children, who both, at Bridgewater High School, won scholarships and made the dean's list in university. They work in multiple grade classrooms, three grades, and they came out of it just fine. So I think we really need to rethink this, we need to slow this process. There's no reward for having this decision made this year and I think that the public is going to agree with that. Thank you.

- Hi. We just want to introduce ourselves. I'm Andrea McGinnis and this is Kim Benjamin, and we were the SOC reps for the Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High family of schools. We just want to let everybody know that we felt, as the two people that represented that school, that we didn't have a fair or equal forum to speak about the benefits of our school. All the information presented was slanted in a very pro-Park View way. No time was ever given to explore the potential of Bridgewater. We felt we were continually overshadowed by the Park View family of schools during this process. If you had the time to read the minutes that are on the site, you will see the comments that just say, just move the Bridgewater schools, don't touch the Park View feeder schools, it's working just fine. We want everyone to understand in this room that it is not that simple. By moving BHS students, you have created a very large void in the Bridgewater campus of schools. And although it has been stated that BES is bursting at the seams, we have yet to see any evidence that supports this. Moving the students from Bridgewater High and BES will allow the Board freedom to start moving all students. This process ended up as being save our school, and not what is best for the students, the community, or the tax payers. The recommendations presented here tonight require more thought and planning than the sixteen hours that this committee have been given. You can clearly see that by the PowerPoint presentation. There we no drop-downs to see what happens when the students start to move. The process was rushed and incomplete. I encourage everyone to contact their elected board member and the Department of Education and let them know that no decision should be made until all schools are reviewed, including the New Germany family of schools and if the province decides to renew the lease of Mahone Bay, Bayview, sorry. Thank you.
- I would like to echo Andrea's comments. So we had 20 members on the SOC who were volunteers. We have no background in education. The only person with any subject matter expertise was Gary, our Facilitator, who was a principal in the school system in Nova Scotia. Other than that, it was people who had been on SACs for many years. I had joined the SAC in September this last year and somebody asked if I'd like to sit on the committee that talked about the merging of the schools. I don't think any of us can grasp what was presented to us in the data on numbers and enrolments and boundaries.

Sixteen hours of work to make a recommendation to the Board that vastly affects the education of the students within those families of schools. Just because we all went to school doesn't mean that we know about education. So they should be engaging people that have more expertise than we do to help make these decisions. I know that the Board is going to be making the final decision, but when we talk about the recommendation of the SOC as a whole, that the Board will very much look at our recommendation because they feel that we have looked at the data and the information that has been available to us. When I hear people say thank you so much for being on this committee, I feel very badly because I don't feel we did a good job, because we aren't experts. I know my child, I know my school, I know my community, but the information that the staff gave to us, I feel like it came like a train toward us. I'm putting that out there so that people understand that I'm one of the seven. I'm not saying I disagree, that I can't see the value of combining the schools, but I'm saying that because I don't think that we have the ability or the information to make that recommendation to the Board. As a parent, I have somebody in grade 9 who doesn't know where she's going to school in September. I don't know how we can make decisions this quickly and change the outlook of their school career in a few months. I would ask that that be included when the Board is looking at their decision.

- I'm also one of the seven. I am the SAC representative at BES. I'm a parent of three children in this school system – one at BES, one in junior high, and one in senior high. When I took this on, I took it on with an open mind, hoping that the data and evidence to show what we were looking at would be good for all kids in the school system. Unfortunately, I will say, I am disappointed and not happy with the recommendation put forward. Not just because of the vote. It's the lack of content. This does not show the public anything that I feel they need to see. Whether it be whether we decided grade configurations, we didn't show them the possibilities. I will say I was not paid or elected to do this, but as one of the schools that is mostly possibly affected in all of this, I have fielded, as a business owner, I have fielded people at my place of business, my doctor's appointments, at sports events, I have fielded questions practically daily since the second public meeting. And I'm happy to have done this, but we also promised the public more information, and drop downs, and possibilities as to what every school in this review may look like when it's finished, and we didn't do that, and I don't feel that this review is finished. I think a lot of work needs to be done and that the recommendation put forward to the Board should really look at the rationale behind every objective and the reasons it was given. I don't feel any of these back up moving these kids. The vote should speak to that. There wasn't a consensus, so obviously, some of us, and I won't say the whole committee, many of us did a lot of work outside of these meetings to look at what we were given and try to understand. But I echo Andrea and Kim, we're not educators. We only are parents and people who may work near the system. We don't know all of this but we can clearly see that each one of these recommendation affecting them will affect more than just Bridgewater. And that's what I looked at when I voted. Thank you.

- So the recommendation put forth to keep Bayview School, it's just that. The Board still has to decide whether it's needed or not. It shows rationale, it's just needed. But it's a P3 school that costs 950 thousand dollars to the province annually to run. What happens if the province doesn't renew the lease? What happens then?
 - Geoff Cainen – The province has asked school boards with P3 schools to go through some kind of review to make a decision on whether those schools are needed or not. We have two – one is Aspotogan and one is Bayview. With Aspotogan, the Board put forward the recommendation for that school because, and I won't say it's isolated, but it's in and of itself in one area, and to get the students from that peninsula area to Chester would be well over an hour. So the recommendation went from the elected School Board to the province saying we need Aspotogan. And we did the Bayview one through the process that the SOC has talked about tonight and the recommendation is that we need that school as well. Once the province gets the recommendation, we don't know of any situation where the province has not taken the Board's decision.
- I'm going to apologize. I've got a cold so I sound a little bit snuffly. I'm a parent at Bayview School and I spoke briefly at the last meeting as well. What I heard a lot of today, at this meeting, is that a lot of information that's been kind of almost thrown and we're told that they weren't necessarily ready for that kind of information or didn't have background or it wasn't their field and they weren't prepared to deal with that kind of information. I want to support the people in saying it's been rushed and that it's not really given anybody enough time to come to a really clarified decision and be able to make such an important decision in 16 hours, 20 hours, that sort of thing. I think I mentioned at the last meeting that I worked for the education department in the UK. And I've had to work in these kinds of reviews when I worked in the UK education department. What I'm curious about is that this is sort of a committee made up of volunteers that put their time into coming up with these recommendations. But I'm curious to know what's actually happening within the Board, what's the School Board actually doing. I know the things that I had to undertake in order to be considering any kind of school closure or any kind of review or transition of this scale. So I'm just curious to know what is actually happening at the school board. What are they doing that's separate to what this volunteer board are actually doing?
 - Geoff Cainen – Just for clarification, do you mean staff or the elected School Board, or both?
- Both really. I was a staff member in the education department where I worked and I was responsible for collecting data and analysing data. I wasn't aware of any kind of volunteer committee that was coming up with a recommendation. We were the people that went and spoke to the public. I'm just curious.
 - Geoff Cainen – In terms of this review process, one of the things the policy is attempting to do was to broaden the involvement of people and not have it just

as staff running reports and getting the data and giving it to the Board. So staff's responsibility in the process was to make sure that the School Options Committee received any and all information, hopefully in a timely manner, that they requested or required. The governing Board was updated once by the Facilitator. Their role fits in next month when the recommendations go to the Board and the Board will then hold those three meetings, they will deliberate, they'll ask questions of the co-chairs, of staff, whomever they wish. In the Tancook situation, they sent the staff away to gather more information so they could make an informed decision. And then when the time came, they made their decision. Does that answer your question?

- I think so. The last thing I want to say is that I really felt very encouraged by what Debra was saying. The possible opportunities to think outside the box. I think there can always be a tendency to rush in, that something has to happen and happen quickly. And I just feel that there is a real opportunity to look at providing something in the Bridgewater area that can really be something special, something that addresses many more issues and takes all students in the Park View school and in the Bridgewater area something more that will benefit them. I would like to ask that you slow down and try not to rush the process.
- I have a few points that I want to make. I'm a graduate of Bridgewater High. Ms. Featherby was my vice-principal and Mr. Walker was there. I'm a resident in the town of Bridgewater. But besides that, my main interest is that I have a son who is in the elementary school in grade 1, so he's pretty far removed from the high school, but I see how this can affect him. This is what I'm concerned about. I've got some points to make about the whole process and about the issues we were talking about here. The SOC objectives – there were five objectives and, as we were shown on the PowerPoint here earlier, three of them, the SOC didn't do anything on. Or they did discussions and they decided that they weren't pertinent or they didn't have the expertise to deal with it. Three of the five objectives. So, what's the point of the SOC if they're not equipped to deal with the stuff they're supposed to do? How can they possibly make a recommendation if they can't even complete their objectives, if they can't come to any kind of consensus or decision anything on those. How can they possibly make a recommendation? Discussion on the motion at the March 30 meeting, the motion to move the students. In the minutes of the meeting, it just says discussion took place. What was the discussion? Isn't that the point of having minutes? Why don't we get to know what they actually talked about? I don't understand what the point of having the minutes is, if it's not gonna include the discussion. That's the important part. Like, we're missing a big chunk there. Next is the busing. As Ms. Featherby brought up earlier, I've been wondering what this, it's bothering me too. If you're legally required to have a certain number of space for Park View students, and you're adding more Bridgewater students, doesn't that mean you're legally required to provide more bus spaces? Like, I was pretty good at math in high school and

it seems to me that if you're adding more students, you're adding more bus spaces. So I don't understand how you can say there is no added cost to busing. So next is the money, which has also been brought up. The former director of finance for the School Board, Jerome Tanner, said that consultants reviewed this very option in 2012 and that there's no money to be saved and that he didn't see any reason for doing this, it didn't make sense to move the kids at that time. So, what's changed? Why are we reviewing it now? It's not gonna save any money now. What has changed since 2012? One of the original scenarios was to move all of the grade 9s from the Park View feeder schools to Park View. And this was rejected for several reasons we were told at the last meeting. But one thing that we're told again and again was, oh, you can't move an entire cohort out of the school, it's gonna completely change the school, you can't move an entire cohort, it's gonna change everything, it's gonna ruin the school. But to remove three entire cohorts out of Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High. What the heck is that gonna do for the school? Doesn't that matter? Like, I don't understand why it's ok to do it to that school, but it's not ok to move a grade 9 cohort out of another school. That doesn't make sense to me. And finally, if you're gonna make this recommendation, and the School Board is gonna make this decision, there needs to be an entire plan. You can't just say, let's move the grade 10-12 students and then we'll decide what to do with the rest of them later. Again, in the March 30 minutes, about this motion to move the grade 10-12 students, it said that they weren't going to consider grade configuration or catchment or anything like that. That needs to be part of the decision. We need to know how it's going to affect anybody else. It's all one thing. If you're gonna move half the students from a school, you have to know how it's gonna affect the rest of that school, how it's gonna affect the elementary school, because, you know, oh maybe we'll move some of the grades over, we're not really sure, grade 5 or grade 6 or both, or kids from another school, we don't really know what we're gonna do. You have to know that if you're gonna make this big decision. I don't think that our town council here would decide on legalization or the zoning of a building in the town without first considering how it's gonna affect the people who use that building or its neighbors. It's got to be part of the decision. So the School Board needs to consider that too, moving three grades out of one school. Again, like I said, I am in the elementary school, so that's what I'm concerned about. How is this going to affect all these kids coming up through the system, how it's gonna affect the schools. All the schools are working well now. You want to shuffle all these kids around and not really know what's going to happen.

- I have a couple of questions for the Board. I'm not from Bridgewater, I'm from Shelburne, but that's my problem. I want to talk about catchment areas. I've been dealing with that in the fire department for years. We have boundaries in the town of Bridgewater. But the fire departments have to come through town to go back out to certain surroundings. That's a catchment area. So if you look at the catchment area, how many students are within five miles of the Bridgewater school? And wouldn't it make more sense for them to come to Bridgewater as to bus them 35 minutes to New Germany? I have an issue with

that. And the other issue is, in the last five years, the town of Bridgewater and its residents have paid over 200 thousand dollars more for education to the province. We're paying over two million dollars and the province is putting a little over two million back into education system. Where does the other seven million go? We have a right to know that. And certainly, you should look at that catchment area and put something up that is best for the students. Certainly busing them this long bus distance is not the status quo. We have to change the way the students use it. Get on board. You owe it to the students.

- I think I have the answers to your questions. I did a little research while I was on the SOC. Apparently, last year, 75 and a half million dollars of the budget to this school board in the year 2014-15, and 85% went to Board employee salaries. And of the 85%, 90% went to central office staff salaries. And most average around ten. And while I'm here, there are a few other things I would like to address, that I didn't have a chance to before because I let my temper get in the way. On the SOC, I don't know if anybody could calculate this or not, we worked a total of 16 hours on this. 16 hours. And we're gonna determine the death of a school that's 110 years old in 16 hours. 200 kids and their families and this community is going to be changed over 16 hours, of, not term it work, because three out of the five mandates didn't even get done. It needs to be postponed until there can be all of the information needed, the whole picture, and David, leave politics out of it, I agree with you completely.
- Hi. My name is Kelcie Bond and I am one of the co-presidents of our student council at Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High School. Hi. I'm Mark Rogers and I'm also on the student council executive, I'm the treasurer. We didn't really prepare anything for tonight. We weren't expecting to speak, but once we got here we felt it necessary to voice our opinions. I'm personally very disappointed with this review. I feel like I have benefitted greatly from being at a small school and getting to know the administration and staff, being involved in athletics, and just personally, I feel like I've really benefitted from being in a small school. I've had numerous opportunities to be involved in different clubs, like student council and being on six athletic teams. And just really disappointed that Bridgewater may not have a high school next year, or whenever. (Kelcie) I feel the same way as Mark and through our meetings, we've gotten the same response from a lot of the students at our school. And I think that you don't really need to mess with something that's not broken. Our school is very successful and there's a lot of good things at our school. Personally, it's not really about the courses and, I guess, my actual education that I care about the most, because I went through my high school, I have a lot of good friends, I'm going to graduate, and I'm going to be going to university. But for me, it's the community feel of my school and I think that's really important. I have really strong relationships with all of my teachers, and it's not only that, but I have really strong relationships with everyone at my school. I'm really close with everyone. We have 200 kids in our high school and I can probably tell you everyone's name, even our junior high. I went to Bridgewater Jr. Sr. High School since grade 7, so I am very attached to it, and I'm really, really glad that this isn't

going to affect me going to high school, but it does affect two of my siblings. And I'm sure it affects a lot of people's kids that are in this room right now. I just wanted to voice that a lot of students at our school feel the same way as I do. So yeah, I just thought that it was important that you hear the students' side of it. Another thing, for sports teams, I don't think I would have played on as many sports teams if I went to Park View, but I played on five or six sports teams this year, so I've had a lot of opportunities and I'm going to UNB next year to play volleyball and I don't think I would have had that opportunity if I didn't stay at Bridgewater and play volleyball. Not only that, but if I went to Park View, I probably wouldn't have made a lot of the sports teams that I play for in Bridgewater, and yes, there would be a division 2 or maybe even 3 team, because of the numbers at Park View, but I honestly probably wouldn't have played if I didn't make the A team. And for people that are going to be transferred to Park View, there will already be sports teams at Park View that would have already been established. There would be students that have played in grade 10, grade 11, and grade 12. When you move students to Park View from Bridgewater, maybe the gr 10s from Bridgewater aren't going to make the team at Park View because they already have their set team. There's not going to be as many opportunities for our students there.

- I'm the former of director of finance that was referred to earlier. I would just like to say a couple of things. One is, in June of 2012, the Board passed a motion based on a study that was done by Deloitte and Touche and also one of the consultants in place at the time, was Dr. Jim Gunn, who was a former acting superintendent of the South Shore Regional School Board, at least a couple of times, and it was decided when they looked at the Park View and Bridgewater schools, it was decided at the time, that they were both sustainable and that they would not be reviewed for at least five years. So that was in 2012 and five years would take us to 2017, and I'm wondering what we're doing here in 2016. First of all, I'd like to say thanks to the people of town council, the mayor and deputy mayor, for coming here tonight and speaking against this program change, or school change, which definitely needs some more thought. Several months ago, I was approached by the School Advisory Council of Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High School to serve on the School Options Committee. I guess, unfortunately, I didn't get selected. When I was checking on the criteria of selection, I was told that I had worked for the school board and I have a son that is a town councillor, and therefore, I shouldn't be able to serve, but I think that after almost 30 years working for the school board, I would have had something to offer to the School Options Committee. And I really resent not having the opportunity to do that. It was also mentioned earlier, I think it was Dennis Woodworth, that had questions for Mr. Smith, I assume, concerning Lunenburg Jr./Sr. High and paying a hundred thousand dollars. Back a number of years ago, when the old Lunenburg Jr./Sr. High School didn't have a gymnasium, we paid approximately 50 thousand dollars to Lunenburg because we utilized their gymnasium. So if you're paying a hundred thousand dollars now, start re-negotiating, because you're paying way too much. The last thing is, I heard someone else saying, is that I could understand if we were moving kids out and closing buildings, I could

understand there would be savings, but why, why would you ever move 200 kids out and still maintain the same facilities for fewer students. It just doesn't make sense to me. Thank you very much.

- Hi. My name is Tess. I am also on the Bridgewater High School student council. I'm gonna speak to the other side though. I'm not gonna talk about sports or clubs. I'm gonna talk about how it's going to affect the students and I'm gonna go back to programs. I've been hearing a lot of people talking about the O2 program, which will be affected, because right now there is an O2 program in both the Bridgewater High School and Park View, and each school accepts 20 grade 10 students each year into the program. By changing it, and sending the grade 10-12 students from Bridgewater to Park View, you're actually literally cutting the O2 program in half for the town, which I'm afraid isn't a good decision. I am a part of the O2 program and it has actually been such a blessing for me. I've gotten so much out of it. I have learned so much about myself and it would be such a shame to see it cut in half like that. The more students that get that opportunity the better options they'll have. That's why it's called Options and Opportunities program, and merging the schools is effectively cutting that program in half. The other thing I'd like to speak to is, I have not always lived here. I moved from Montréal five or six years ago now. I've been to big schools, but I've also been a part of two school closures. The first one was a complete closure, so they took all the kids from the school and moved them to another school and that school was actually demolished two years later, entirely. And that had a huge effect on the students who used to go there. A lot of the students who had to make that switch were very depressed the next year and it was very traumatizing for a lot of the students because that was the school that we had grown up in and we knew that school very well. The second time it happened was actually more similar to how this closing or merger is happening. So, I was in grade 4 at the time and they said what we're gonna do is we're gonna make the school that you currently go to a pre-primary to 3 and we're gonna send you all to a 4-7 school, which didn't make any sense to us and we were all moved the next year and we had no idea what we were doing, we had no idea what our place was. And that's another thing. At Bridgewater, everything kind of has its place, and at Park View, most people have their place, but by merging the two schools, everything is gonna be up in the air for quite a few years. And it's just gonna be a lot of running around and it's gonna be very traumatizing for a lot of the students involved and it's not going to have a positive effect. I've heard a lot of talk about the cost and how it's going to affect transportation to and from school. It's going to affect the students more than anything. And that's the part that I don't think is getting a lot of talk. That's what the biggest problem is going to be, is how it's going to affect the students. And I think more talk needs to go into that.
 - Jeff DeWolfe – If you could just wait there, I'd just like to respond. Thank you for your comments. Great job. We did previously provide information to the SOC. Each school gets funded for one O2 program with 20 students. We recognize the great success that program has had in all of our high schools and the community

piece, the connection to the community is excellent for students. We would not be able to get Education funding from the province for a second cohort, but we had given information to the SOC that we would fund the second cohort if the decision was to move the students. So there would be two cohorts. Thank you.

- Hi. I'm Sara Greenough and I'm currently in grade 7 at Hebbville. I wanted to share my opinion on how it would affect me if you move Bridgewater's 10-12 to Park View. If they're moved there, there will be a giant hole in Bridgewater. If you moved them, say, to Pentz and Petite, to Hebbville, well, I came from Pentz, and if you move them there, will you move the people that came from Pentz there, so they'd be from 7-9? And I think, before you make any decisions, you should make sure there's a clear cut plan of what you're going to do. That if you move people here that this will fill that, not leave it up in the air what will happen to those kids. I just wanted to share my small opinion, so yeah.
- OK. My name is Bev Burgess and I've been involved in education in the town of Bridgewater for about 30 years, being on school trustees and some of this rodeo I've been through before, so it's not new. I have a couple of questions, one with respect to the process, which other people have alluded to hasn't been followed. I see in the policy it says, School Boards are responsible for ensuring the policy is followed. So, did the School Board say you were not following the policy? Did anybody contact you and say you shouldn't be doing this, you should be doing that? I just want to know the answer.
 - Heather Mackenzie-Carey – Could you elaborate?
- Right here, it says, School Boards are responsible for ensuring the policy is followed. So there has been allusions tonight that the policy has not been followed, and certainly from reading this I can see that some parts of the policy was not followed. For example, the second meeting we had drop downs. It was my understanding the drop downs were to have been done. They did not appear. I believe the mayor of the town of Bridgewater asked for a copy of the presentation and he was told he could not have it until after the committee reviewed it. Which is kind of strange to me. Why would you make a public presentation and then saying, well we have to make sure it's right. That part of the policy didn't make sense to me. So, did you get any kind of communication from the Board to say, yes, you're doing what you're supposed to be doing or no, you're not doing what you're supposed to do, I guess is my question.
 - Heather Mackenzie-Carey – I guess I would have to say that we have a facilitator and I think that we really worked through the facilitator's guidance and made the assumption that we were following the policy because of that facilitator who was versed in the policy and following his guidance between staff and provincial bodies. The SOC members have put our faith in the facilitator in terms of the policy being followed.
 - Gary Walker – So, and as for the policy, I met with the Board. I did meet with the Board with the Co-chairs to talk to the Board about where we were in the process, but no, I never received anything from the Board, to answer your question.

- So, I guess my question is, how could you present something at a meeting as public information, but say, no, it's not for the public, we have to go back. And how do we know, the public who were at that second meeting, whether all those presentations we really what you had agreed to or not. This is the next meeting, correct?
 - Gary Walker – Actually, after the meeting, Cheryl was responsible to post them right away.
- No, they had to be approved by the SOC. Those minutes of the public meeting did not happen right away. They had to be approved. You said right at the meeting they had to be approved by the SOC at their next meeting.
 - Gary Walker – So when they approved them, they get posted.
- Yes, but how do we know the presentations didn't get changed? We couldn't get a copy of what was presented at that public meeting. Because the committee had not approved it. Which seems kind of strange that you would have a public meeting and say, this is what we talked about, but no, it really isn't. How can you arrive at a decision when you really haven't gone to the public? That's my point.
- It's me again. Sorry. It's just my opinion. This has been hard for me to let go. I apologize. I know the SOC did the best they could with the information they were given, which seems to me the information was just to drive them to arrive at the decision you guys wanted. I find it very hard to believe that you don't know what's going to happen to our school once those kids are moved. You're always 10 steps ahead. You know what's happening. We're just not being told. I want to know what was missing out of the minutes, because I know there's stuff that was not in those minutes that were discussed. I want to know what those discussions were. I would also like to know how many of those people on the committee voted yes to move the 10s-12s, but maybe wanted conditions that their schools would be left alone. Where is all the conversation on who asked for what? Nobody has any of this information for any of us to see. And I'm very sorry the committee was put in this position.
- Hi. I'm Sophie Tanner. I'm in grade 9 at Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High School. Hi. I'm Layne Conrad and I'm in grade 9 at Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High School. Hi. I'm Kaitlyn Woodworth and I'm in grade 9 at Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High School. I'm Kait Benjamin and I'm in grade 9 at Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High School. Hi. I'm Taylor Scarfe and I'm in grade 9 at Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High School.
- So, I have a few things to say and I have a question. The first thing is that, I think that all agree that it is hard for us not to know what school we're going to be going to next year. Also, in a small town, we're very fortunate to have the option to either go to the AP program or the IB program. If you merge, obviously that option will be taken away, which we are very lucky to have. I'm also wondering, how will class sizes be affected if we do merge?
 - Jeff DeWolfe – We provided the SOC a pretty detailed analysis of the current class sizes and some scenarios. Basically, what would happen is, small classes at

Bridgewater that may have eight or nine students, I'll use French Immersion as a good example, Hebbville feeds into Park View for French Immersion, they have a course in grade 10, they haven't been able to offer a course in grade 11 and 12. Bridgewater's French Immersion numbers are very small. By combining those numbers, it would be healthier. Generally, class sizes, when you bring two schools together, with more students, class sizes usually go up; therefore you can offer more sections of other things, because you're not carrying very small class sizes. One of the issues here from the start is the difficulty in having classes that are in the single digits and it has budget implications. That piece is a real challenge for us. When you combine two schools, you get a bit more efficiencies and you're able to offer more courses.

- Being in the French Immersion program at Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High School, along with four or five people standing up here, I believe that being in a class of single digits or 14 or 15 students is more beneficiary to our learning because a class of 30 limits one-on-one learning with the teacher and can deteriorate the options for kids that struggle in school by being in a class of 30 where kids that struggle or are shy to raise their hand and ask a question because they struggle with the material. That can be very nerve wracking and being in a smaller class can give one on one time with the teacher really helps a lot. Also, being a grade 9, having the older kids at our school to mentor us in sports and academics really helps us a lot because we get their insight into things that they did through their high school career and can help us move through. I don't think that could be something that would happen because we are going to be kids moving into a new school and I don't think that would happen.
- Personally, my opinion on this merge is that being in a small school you know everybody. I started going to Bridgewater when I was in grade 7 and probably by grade 8 I knew who everyone was at the school, which I find is very benefitting because people are relaxed at school and you don't have to worry about, you know, what people think, because everybody is very close at school. Also, I play sports at Bridgewater and one thing that I'm a bit worried about if we do end up going to Park View is if I don't make sports teams, because students are already chosen before we get to Park View and if we do end up going in grade 10, I don't think it will be so much of an issue as if we go in grade 11. But that is something that I worry about.
- Hi. So, my opinion on this is that it's very scary not knowing what we're going to be doing next year. And I find a lot of people I talk to in my age group find that they're really worried too. I also like about my school that it's very small and everyone knows each other. I feel like if we went to Park View, more people would be kind of nervous to speak up in class and also if the classrooms are smaller, you get more one-on-one time with the teacher and people aren't afraid to speak up. I find it nerve wracking that classes are going to be bigger and I don't know what's going to happen.

- OK. I just have one thing to say. I tried out for a lot of sports teams at Bridgewater and if I go to Park View, I'm probably not going to make a lot of them that I would very easily make at Bridgewater. And they are competitive. They may not be division one, but they're more fun to be on, you're not as scared to try out.
- Hi there. For anybody that knows me, I don't do this. I have two kids a Pentz in grade primary and grade 3. So, I'm concerned about what the drop downs look like. First of all, I want to extend to the SOC members a thank you for what you guys have done. I'm ashamed the Board has put them in this position of having to give them the facts and information they need to make the right decision. In looking at our school, we're up for closure, my kids have 16 months and we don't know where they're going to school. No answers have been given. Of these class sizes, our kids have classes of 10, 12, 15 students. You're gonna tear them apart and put them in three different schools? So my grade 3 students is going to two of her friends, three of her friends, maybe transfer to another school with her? It's really unfair to start at the top and just hope that everything else just falls into place. It's our little people you have to think about, as well as our big people. I'm a graduate of Bridgewater High. I was in the class of 96. My brother was valedictorian in 92, my two sisters graduated in 82, and 83, and I think my sister from 83 is coming to the alumni weekend this weekend. I think we really need to slow down the process. As JC said in a meeting a few months back, slow it down, make some choices, and get the facts in place. I'd also like to note that we in the Pentz community wrote letters to the Board over two months ago, were promised a response, and still haven't gotten one. You might want to mention that to them. Thank you for your time.
- What happens to the jobs? What happens to our teachers at Bridgewater Jr./Sr. High School? I mean, they're leaders in our community, and educators. What happens to them?
 - Tina Munro – So, the teachers at Bridgewater, there is a process that we follow in how we staff. The process is actually online. If you teach predominantly in the middle school, you would stay in the middle school. If you teach predominantly in the high school, you move with the children to Park View. Once you're in Park View, there is an entire pool. We've done the staffing scenarios with each year calculating FTEs and no one is displaced, we've used the current numbers. When I say that, it doesn't mean the same number of teachers, it means that terms, retirements, all of those pieces, are vacancies in the schools, so that no one is displaced. So there is a process outlined, but basically, the high school teachers move with the high school students.
- Are you saying there will be fewer teachers when the two high schools are merged? Or will the number of teachers, regardless of whether they're term, whether they're subs, whether they're permanent, would the number of teachers remain the same for that number of students from Bridgewater High School and Park View?
 - So, what I'm saying is that there are savings in FTEs.

- So you're saying that there'll be fewer teachers then. There are savings.
 - With full-time equivalents, there will be fewer full-time equivalents. I will say though, that term teachers are not guaranteed at each school any year. We re-hire each year, so they're not included in our numbers when we do that. But full-time equivalents, there are savings when you move the high school.
- So there'll be fewer teachers, whether they're term or permanent. There will be fewer teachers teaching that mass of students. So that when we talk about being able to offer more electives, I'm a little confused. I guess I've been out of the system a little too long. I'm still going to say that I see no reason why French Immersion kids, calculus kids, English kids, can't be in a class of 12 or 14. We have students in our school system who have an adult assigned to them full time and a classroom teacher for a good portion of that time as well. I think that there are times when other students within that school system deserve to have that type of attention. They have that right too. I don't think that there are going to be that many electives needed to be offered if we're going to 21 credits to graduate. Now, Jeffrey is going to try to persuade me otherwise. Go ahead.
 - Jeff DeWolfe – I'm debating on trying. There are graduation requirements in the province that students, at the current time, need 18 credits to graduate. In the late 90's and 2000, many schools switched to semestering, which caused them to have, rather than seven credits available per year, you have eight credits available. So, from one perspective, if you only need 18 credits currently to graduate, and there are 24 possible credits you could earn, that number is low. So what we are going to see the province do, even though the details aren't finalized yet, they will probably move to 21 credits. So, right away, you are asking kids to take more courses. So, when you ask kids to take more courses, there needs to be more options for kids. So, somehow, the way this has been answered in the past, is that there'll be less flexibility. Well, the need for more courses will be there, because students are going to want to take them. That will bump the class size up, and it will also, hopefully, fill in courses that are of interest to students. I could read the list of graduation requirements now. There is a wide variety of courses that are available. And from a programming perspective in high school, the more students you have, the more courses you can offer, and more varied interests for the students. That's a fact.
- To a certain degree. But with more students, you also have to have more sections of English 10, English 11, English 12, Math 10, Math 11, and all the different levels of the math courses. You have to have more sections. I think that a lot of people don't understand the difference between a section and a course, because telling them there are 110 courses being offered at grade 10, did anybody distinguish for them that 25 of them were English 10 courses? That's one course, not 25 courses.
 - Jeff DeWolfe – That's right. What multiple sections do, obviously, if you have 200 kids in grade 10, and the average is 25 in each section, taking the average

Communications 10, what it does, it brings efficiency so you don't have four kids in one, the closer the average will be in those courses. So, for that, you're right. But there's also other courses that, with more students, you could offer, that you wouldn't be able to otherwise.

- But, in a small school like Bridgewater, you can respond much more rapidly to the interests of the students and decide what courses you will offer and in a school like Bridgewater, which is a walking school, you can run outside of the regular school day, because they do that. We've had courses offered at 7:30 at night. But I know the Department doesn't like that because it doesn't fit in their nice little box. But we responded to the needs of students. Did we respond to all of the courses that they wanted? No. No school can do that.
 - Jeff DeWolfe – In fairness, what make a small high school difficult is you have several streams of programming in a small school and when you don't have multiple sections of a course, often students run into conflicts. I know that's one of the reasons you've gone outside the school day. When you look at it from strictly a programming perspective, more students does give more options to students to get the one they want. It's a fact.
- How many complaints did you have from Bridgewater this year about kids not being able to get courses?
 - Jeff DeWolfe – We've run some data on the number of students who, when they select their courses they ran into conflicts, and the percentage is much higher at Bridgewater. The other issue we have is that Park View's enrolment is declining. And that's not a Bridgewater responsibility. I get that. But we're running into similar problems at a small high school like Bridgewater. All the good points that were raised tonight, there is an efficiency in programming and options for students if we have a higher number and if they were combined.
- Good. Then let's allow the kids from New Germany to come in for a semester in Bridgewater. With those buses rolling by us, let them go to Park View for a semester. But let them stay as Bridgewater High School students and stay with their cohort. You're heard these kids. These are just a sampling.
 - Jeff DeWolfe – I've heard all the students and all the voices tonight. Absolutely.
- Good. Then I hope you listen to the students voices and that you don't just talk about getting 25 kids in an English 10 section at Park View as opposed to 14, because you know that's not what it's about Jeff. You know in your heart of hearts, just like I do.
- I just have one more question about AP and IB? So, if we do merge with Park View and you're in grade 11, I'm in grade 9, will pre-IB be offered at Bridgewater when we're in grade 10?
 - Jeff DeWolfe – We have had to speculate to some degree, but with all honesty, we are waiting for the decision to be made. We are not going too far in planning, but I know there's a fair amount of anxiety with parents and students around that

question. Pre-IB now happens, and we have a policy where if you're accepted into three pre-IB courses, you get the transfer. You don't get denied that. In the past, we've had a number of students from Bridgewater who have done this. Some years it's a little higher than others, some years it's very lean. So, that's underway now. The issue, if they were to decide to move the school, would be would you be able to join IB in grade 11. So what we have done, is we've asked the province, the person responsible for IB, if that were to happen, if we could train teachers. Pre-IB isn't an official IB course. It's a course where they kind of enrich the curriculum a little bit to prepare you for the IB courses in grade 11. So we've asked the province if we could train teachers at Bridgewater for the grade 10 cohort so that they could do pre-IB, then when they move in grade 11, they would be able to just join IB so they would be prepared. If this decision is made, if the Board goes with the decision to move the Bridgewater students, there will be a committee that we said from early on that would have students on it, and community, and these are the types of issues we would deal with right away to get these things cleared up so the transition would be as smooth as possible.

- Also, if you're saying that students outside of a 3.5 kilometer radius of the school would have to walk to school, that would mean that I would have a 45 minute walk to school every day. And some days, my parents work early, so that would mean I would not be able to get a drive. So, I'm just wondering what determines the 3.5 kilometer distance.
 - Gilbert Jackson – It's actually 3.6 kilometers and it's a provincial standard from the Education Act. That's something the province has decided is a reasonable distance for students in high school to walk to school. Given that the proper infrastructure is in place in the town of Bridgewater. I went to Bridgewater myself and I walked three kilometers to school every day. It took me about 30 minutes.
- I live in the town of Bridgewater. I have a bright daughter and she's interested in the IB program. So, if she registers for three IB courses, then you automatically admit her to Park View. Other part of the question. I live in the county. I have a son. He's analyzed things and decided the best advanced program for him is the AP program. Can he register for AP courses at Bridgewater and automatically transfer?
 - Jeff DeWolfe – IB – It is required that every board have IB in their system. IB is a provincially recognized program. AP is also recognized, but there is funding for IB and every board is required to have one IB school. I would say this to you – students who apply for a transfer and recognize AP as course they wanted, they we would go through a process and I am confident that, if the reasons were valid, we would grant that as well. We really do what is best for students with transfers and there is great sensitivity around transfers, obviously, because it affects the population. We do what's best for the kids.
- I just want to talk a little bit about this 3.6 kilometers walking distance. I can't grasp it, but it's a provincial standard, you say. I take it the reason why it's a provincial standard is that,

the city of Halifax or other towns, they have a transit system. We don't have a transit system here, not yet at least. And 3.6 kilometers is the pouring rain or snow, or some days, it gets pretty cold, and I'm an expert at that, because I walk every day, and it's not very pleasant, especially if you're carrying, what was it, 40 pounds? We don't have a transit system. You may want to address that before you make a decision on this.

- I know you're trying to shut us down here. I just want to say that, based on everything that's been said tonight, based on what we've seen at the meetings and the PowerPoints, and obviously what we haven't seen, this recommendation doesn't look like a recommendation, at least not a reasonable one. Not one that really anyone can follow through on. That's all I can say.

Gary Walker – The SOC's recommendation will go to the School Board. The School Board has their process in place to deal with it, as Geoff outlined. They can take it, leave it, take part of it. The School Board will make the final decision for the Bridgewater/Park View School Review.

- Why isn't the School Board here to listen to the public?
 - Gary Walker – I believe they are. I believe there are some Board members here. School Board members, you want to raise your hands? Three. There are eight Board Members.
 - Geoff – they'll go through that
 - More comments from Geoff – they'll make that decision
- I don't know of a successful business in this country could run a process like this. Not a one.

Geoff Cainen – The provincial policy on school reviews states that the work goes through the SOC and it's the SOC that actually comes to the School Board members to present to them. So they will go through those three meetings that are outlined there, and get all the information, as they did at the Tancook one, which would talk about what went on at the meetings, what was the data given, and what were the decisions made. They'll go through that process through the three meetings. Having gone through the Review for Tancook, the SOC made their presentation, the Board asked questions of the SOC, the Board then brought staff back in and asked more questions and asked for more data, and then at the last meeting, they asked some more questions and then made their decision. If they felt they had enough information, we'll have to see, if they don't, I expect that if they don't feel they have enough information on the 24th, they'll make that decision.

- Just a quick question in response to Jeff's comments about Park View's enrolment declining. My question is, if Park View's enrolment wasn't declining, would we be here tonight?

- Kim Benjamin – I know we don't meet again. So, we've heard everything tonight. Are there any next steps for the SOC?
 - Gary Walker – We'll meet. We'll be in touch with the SOC for the public meeting minutes that we need to go through, to see what came out of the meeting, the same process we did for number 1 and number 2.
- Kim Benjamin – The reason why I asked the question is because we've heard a lot of comments from the public tonight. There's nothing to say that we're going to put that in a recommendation. People want those comments to be heard by Board Members. There's opportunities outside of this that they need to take advantage of. Can you speak to that? They'll get the comments from tonight, but you don't get the full flavor of things from reading the minutes. People will want to speak to their Board members. Could you please outline how they would go about doing that? We had that clarified for us. Can you clarify it for people, other than here, their options to do that?
 - Geoff Cainen – Yes, I think the SOC needs to come back together. There was a lot of information tonight and I think that they will probably come back for a meeting to talk about that and see if there's things that they want to add to the recommendation. That's the whole idea of the third public meeting, so the SOC can hear from members of the public. There's a need to reflect that. The question about the Board members, obviously everybody always has that right to contact their individual Board Member or the Board Chair, that information is on the website, their phone numbers and emails.

Gary Walker – On behalf of the SOC, thank you so much.

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.