

Media Release



Stratford Continuing to Push for School Infrastructure to Meet Town's Growing Needs

For Immediate Release: August 9, 2018

Town of Stratford representatives recently held meetings with both the Public Schools Branch and the Cabinet Committee on Priorities. School infrastructure has been a priority for the Town of Stratford Council for many years with the Town being fully engaged with the Public Schools Branch over the past couple of years as they continue with their review of existing enrollment numbers and infrastructure needs for the future. The Town however continues to be concerned about the projection numbers being used by the Public Schools Branch, to date, in their analysis.

The 2016 Statistics Canada census shows that the Town of Stratford was the fastest growing community in all of Atlantic Canada, increasing our position from the second fastest growing in the 2011 census. The Town commissioned Atlantic Evaluation Group to review and update population growth projections with a focus on the school-age population. Their analysis of the 2011 and 2016 Statistics Canada census data showed that over the five year period of 2011 thru 2016 student enrollment at Glen Stewart Primary and Stratford Elementary grew by double the population growth in Stratford during that same period of time.

“Based on those numbers presented and anyone who has driven through our community in the past couple of years you can see that Stratford is continuing to grow with new subdivisions, condo units and apartment buildings being constructed all across our community,” commented Mayor Dunphy. “We are concerned with the calculations the Public Schools Branch have been using which in fact would see our student growth projection remain stagnant through 2026. We simply see no trend in which this scenario is probable”.

Statistic Facts:

- Province of PEI has overall population growth targets set for the 2016-2031 period of 22.9%, bringing PEI's population to 183,703 residents
- Province of PEI is looking to attract younger residents who will be able to contribute to the economy for many years which will only continue to lead to increasing populations in our schools
- Majority of new residents to PEI settle in the greater Charlottetown area, many of those choosing to live in the Town of Stratford
- Public Schools Branch projection shows Glen Stewart Primary and Stratford Elementary total student enrollment numbers of 1,111 in 2017 and 1,110 in 2026 (no forecasted growth in the community)
- Atlantic Evaluation Group projection shows student population at Glen Stewart Primary and Stratford Elementary to be 1,416 students in 2026 (3% increase per year)
- Presently almost 1,000 junior and senior high school age students cross the Hillsborough Bridge daily for school, numbers that justify the Town of Stratford having its own junior and senior high school in our community

- Atlantic Evaluation Group projection sees 1,580 students at Charlottetown Rural in 2026 versus 1,329 projected by Public Schools Branch in the same year. Both indicate a severe over capacity issue based on today's capacity of 900 students

The Town of Stratford retains the position that before renovations or additions are made at existing aging schools in the greater Charlottetown area, both a junior and senior high school should be constructed within the towns boundaries. Not only would this ease the overcrowding issues which are going to be experienced at existing junior and senior high schools, it would also ease some morning and afternoon congestion on the Hillsborough Bridge with less buses and parents commuting over it, be better for the environment with fuel savings due to shorter distances for buses to travel, less on-bus travel time for our students and would also allow our students, and future residents, to receive their schooling from K-12 in their own community.

Along with presenting the projections provided by Atlantic Evaluation Group, the Town also presented a future vision at both of these meetings which would incorporate many future needs of Stratford and provide for a community campus combining a junior and senior high school alongside sports fields and facilities. The public are invited to an open house on Wednesday, August 22nd from 7:00-8:00pm in the Southport Room of Stratford Town Centre. A presentation will be made at 7:15pm and include a summary of the projection numbers as well as allow for an opportunity to view the proposed community campus vision. Following the presentation residents are invited to remain and provide comment on it to council and staff.

"We think that residents, both of Stratford and our surrounding communities, will be very excited about the prospect we are proposing with this vision," Stratford Mayor David Dunphy added. "We know that school infrastructure is an important issue and concern to our growing community and through this vision we can solve the overcrowding issues as well as utilize the space efficiently to become a sports hub in our community".

The Town of Stratford remains committed to the engagement of residents. All are invited to attend the Community Campus Vision Open House on Wednesday, August 22nd at 7pm and to provide their feedback following the presentation which will take place at 7:15pm.

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