

AVRSB School Re-Configuration West Hants Transition Plan

Background

Educational Delivery in the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board School: The Preferred Configuration

The Annapolis Valley Regional School Board believes that the preferred grade configuration for schools within its region is to have Primary to grade 5, grade 6 to 8, and grade 9 to 12 schools

Educators are well supported by the research when they recognize that middle schools are different from elementary or high schools. Students in grades 6, 7, and 8 are at a unique stage of development, and require a school program that reflects this. There is a good deal of evidence that students in grade 6 are physically, socially, emotionally, and psychologically moving into the middle years, and are served well in this configuration. Middle school philosophy and practice exist in schools throughout the Valley, and in several different configurations. Activities such as exploratories, interdisciplinary units, and extra-curricular activities suited to this particular stage of development are celebrated and promoted.

Grade 9 is the year that has been to most perplexing and challenging as to where it is best situated. Most people have agreed that grade 9 is best suited to the high school context, offering students expanded program opportunities. In AVRSB, we have successful examples of grade 9's being included in a high school configuration.

Achieving the preferred configuration will provide an equitable, consistent program across the region. Student transitions will be kept at a minimum, with a maximum of three transitions during a student's Primary to 12 school experience. The purpose of moving to this preferred configuration is to offer the best possible programming for students that meets their academic, emotional, and social needs.

Transitioning to a New Configuration

We understand that any change, and particularly one that involves our children and youth, can produce anxiety and concern. The Board also understands that a comprehensive plan is needed to ensure that the change is well managed and a smooth transition to a new configuration is experienced by all.

Beginning in the Fall of 2015, a plan will be implemented in West Hants schools where a transition or new configuration will take place in the following school year. The plan will address the situation of each school community's move to grade 6-8 middle

school and/or grade 9 to 12 high school. This plan will include the following components:

- Communication with parents/guardians
- Communication with staff
- Transition opportunities for students
- Communication between schools
- School schedules and bus schedules
- Staffing
- Programming and resources

Working Together

Staff at the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board will work with school staff, students, and parents/guardians throughout the school year to prepare for September 2016. Information sessions, student transition activities, and meetings with staff will be undertaken.

A timeline for communication of school transition plans is as follows:

Stage 1: By end October: AVRSB General Transition Plan available for schools.

Stage 2: By end November: Parent Communication Plan completed by each school and shared with SACs and parents/guardians. This plan will include: letter to parents, answers to frequently asked questions, general timeline detailing plans for parent communication and student transition activities.

Stage 3: By November 30: Initial School Transition Plan completed by schools and a copy sent to AVRSB

Stage 4: By March 1, 2016: Updated/Detailed School Transition Plan completed by schools and a copy sent to AVRSB

Issues and Concerns

Anticipated Issues and Concerns

With any change it can be anticipated that there will be issues and concerns that lead to heightened levels of anxiety. It is important that as we prepare for this change we consider the issues and the concerns of all involved, and construct a plan to adequately address these concerns.

Below is a chart that identifies some of the thoughts that may be going through the minds of those most affected by school reconfiguration.

students	parents/guardians	teachers/staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What bus will I go on? ● How will I find my way around the school? ● What will it be like having so many teachers? ● Will I get bullied by the older kids at recess and lunch? ● What extra curricular activities will be offered? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I know the grade 6 teacher from XX, who will be the grade 6 teacher at the new school? ● Will my child get picked on by older students? ● Will older students in the school be a bad influence on my child? ● How will I transport my child from extra curricular activities? ● How will I contact my child's teachers or find out what my child has for homework? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What will my job assignment be? What if I don't want to go to the new school but my grade level/assignments no longer exists in this school? ● How will my schedule change? Will I have to work longer hours or different times? ● What resources will I be able to bring with me? ● What happens if people leaving take their resources? Will we get new ones for the teachers/staff staying at our school?

The AVRSB and West Hants school staffs will work to ensure that students, parents/guardians and staff have the information necessary to make this transition successful.