

**NANAIMO LADYSMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
BUSINESS COMMITTEE  
PUBLIC MEETING  
ACTION SHEET**

DATE: December 13, 2023  
TO: Business Committee  
FROM: Mark Walsh, Secretary-Treasurer  
SUBJECT: NDSS Update – Prefabricated/Modular Expansion

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**Recommendation:**

*The Business Committee recommends that the Board of Education of School District No. 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) support staff pursuing a prefabricated/modular expansion option to alleviate overcapacity at NDSS that may include additional capacity at NDSS or additional capacity at Wellington and to report back to the Board for final approval and direction on appropriate consultation as required.*

**Background:**

This Action Sheet to provide an update and seek direction from the board on solutions to capacity issues at NDSS. This Action Sheet follows the board's motion of March 29, 2023:

That the Board of Education of School District No. 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) direct staff to conduct further consultation as well as provide additional information with respect to potential NDSS options and report back to the Board with recommendations and next steps for the Board to consider and that Gabriola Elementary be removed from consideration to feed into Cedar Secondary School.

**Discussion:**

Staff provided an update on the status of its work regarding the issues at NDSS on October 11, 2023, which is attached as Appendix A. The brevity of the updates was due to the fact that staff were in discussions with the NDTA to a solution to the issue. Specifically, we were seeking an agreement that would have allowed an extension of the school day to add additional blocks. This practice is the norm in a number of Districts and works extremely well. This solution would have solved the capacity issue almost completely.

Unfortunately, we were unable to come to agreement with the NDTA and now are tasked with reviewing additional alternatives. We may wish to seek such flexibility in bargaining, however, any further discussion would occur in a closed session of the Board. We note that without the switch of the Gabriola catchment that the Board has taken off the table additional alternatives are required for consideration and may address the issue for a short term, they will not be a long term solution without school expansion and additional portables.

Fortunately, as updated, staff have been able to stem the growth of the school and the need is not quite as pressing. However, the population continues to be in excess of an optimal number for a facility of its size and complexity. Further, as NDSS catchment elementary schools continue to meet or exceed (e.g Fairview) projections and additional development is continuing in the area, more steps are required.

With this in mind, staff have contemplated a number of additional options for the Board to consider.

### **Limit SD93 Enrollment**

The Board may wish limit access to students from the Francophone School District. The theoretical benefit of this move would reduce population of NDSS by proximately 50 to 60 students. The drawback however is that we have a long term relationship with our partners at SD93 and we understand in at least one district there is litigation between the parties due to limitations on SD93's ability to provide an educational program. Further if we were to do this it is likely that many of the students will simply enroll in our school district which would have both an administrative and financial net positive, however the purpose of such a move would be infrastructure related and therefore could limit its impact.

### **Construct Prefabricated/Modular Expansion in Advance of a New NDSS**

There is a possibility of an expansion of NDSS that is not aligned with the replacement. It should be noted that currently districts around the province are facing massive enrollment challenging due to immigration. This means that resources are finite, and it is unclear whether the seismic envelope in the Ministry of Education and Child Care's capital program will be sufficient to support NDSS. Obviously, there are political implications if the government chooses not to proceed with supporting the safety of students at NDSS this Spring. From a practical perspective, however, the Board may be able to add space prior to the support for replacement. Specifically, the addition of a high-quality prefabricated/modular annex that the Ministry is currently fast tracking for a number of Districts around the province.

We note that adding space at NDSS apart from the replacement would be slightly absurd and not align with the LRFP. However, that may align with the feedback we heard from the community desiring to stay at NDSS at all costs. Further, previously staff did not recommend that the Board consider changes to NDSS catchments in the north such as Forest Park. This was due to projected growth in the north end and limited space available at Wellington. However, there may be an opportunity to get a prefabricated/modular supported build at Wellington quickly (which makes more physical sense than NDSS at this time) to support a catchment shift of Forest Park upon completion. This option may create additional capacity issues at Wellington as its size would increase and demand on specialty spaces would increase. We are not currently aware of what type of spaces in such an expansion (specialty vs general instruction rooms) the Ministry would support and that would be part of the discussions. Access to the gym would be limited.

Whether the expansion would be built at NDSS or Wellington, staff is seeking the Board's direction to proceed with a prefabricated/modular option whether or not NDSS gets its replacement. The recommended motion provides support for this. As noted, if the space was created at NDSS it would be contrary to the LRFP Recommendation 10 – Align seismic upgrades with other priorities in the facilities plan including environmental upgrades and expansions, as well as creating a disjointed facility, most likely on the front lawn of the school. At Wellington, the space would be a better long term fit, but as noted, the school would be limited in its amenity space on a long term basis and we have not consulted the community that would most likely be impacted (Forest Park). Note that this type of expansion replaces a permanent space request and are forecast to have a 30-year life span.

### **Appendix A: October 11, 2023 Information Sheet**