

Alternate Plan Overview re: HPEDSB Proposal and the Exceptional Nature of Our School and Community

In addition to formally representing the expectations and concerns our constituencies have with regards to the current HPEDSB proposal for school consolidations and closings for the 2017/2018 year and beyond, the ARC sub-committee for Sophiasburgh Central School intends to table a formal alternate proposal focused on keeping Sophiasburgh Central School open to serve our vibrant community and help to promote a tangible vision for rural schooling here in the County and Ontario at large.

This memo outlines the basics of our plan for discussion and review at this point. We will further detail and support our plan in the coming weeks leading up to the next public meeting in April.

The basics of our plan include:

- **A strong initial argument against closing the school based on:**
 - **the well founded, and widely community-felt negative social and economic impacts to our remote and rural community;**
 - One need only look to the fate of many outlying rural communities in Ontario, indeed the County, to see what happens to social and economic cohesiveness when their one and only local school is closed. Residents are rightly concerned that the momentum we are experiencing in drawing new families to our rural ward will come to an end with the closing of Sophiasburgh Central. Not having a school in the ward threatens the vibrant fabric of our community in no small way – all the businesses, community organizations and places of worship in Sophiasburgh feel this and are acting as best they can to help keep our school open.
 - **the well supported negative impact of much longer bus rides and much lower green space on the engagement, achievement, health and wellness of Sophiasburgh students;**
 - As expressed by many at a local town hall our ARC Sub-Committee hosted early in this process, if the health, well-being and educational achievement of our children is first and foremost in the minds of both the Ministry of Education and the HPEDSB then why are they proposing to have some of our children on buses over 2 hours a day (max time 69 minutes in morning, 63 minutes in evening) to go to school in Picton? Current plan also has bus rides for some elementary students in our community starting at 6:52am in the dark of winter.
 - The current plan for the entire elementary green space at PECl is around half the size of a football field – if that. And we have seen no plans for distinct Kindergarten and Primary school spaces / playground facilities within this definite trade-down in green space quality and size. Another lose-lose for our rural students.
 - It's a fact – longer bus rides and smaller green space play a contributing negative role in student engagement, achievement and overall well-being.
 - **the ongoing relevance and vibrancy of our community, with two active rural villages as its backbone, and the impact our community has made, and continues to make, on the life of Prince Edward County;**
 - Sophiasburgh has two very active settled communities that act as stable hubs for the far flung rural citizens of the area. There is Northport, our charming bayside village and epicentre of the County's northeast shore culture. And there is Demorestville, long the beating heart of our agriculturally-based ward's life and home to Friendship United Church, our bustling open air ice rink and the gem that is Sophiasburgh Town Hall.
 - Further reinforcing the distinct country flavour of our community are the many events and festivals in the ward hosted by our active Recreation Committee and many other groups; many attended by visitors from across the County and beyond. There's the always sold out Maple Pub Night which has become a must attend for County politicians as the "season" starts, our annual Easter Egg Hunt in Northport which draws hundreds every spring, our raucous rebuff to cold Mother Nature via our Winter Carnival in Demorestville and the music-based Northport Summer Festival.

- As our festivals punch above their weight in terms of impact on the County at large so do Sophiasburgh residents themselves. Noted Sophiasburgh residents include a former Ontario Deputy Minister of Education Ontario, a former Ontario Finance Minister, a wide assortment of active award-winning artists of all types, influential County councillors, successful entrepreneurs, long-standing traditional farm families and “new ag” pioneers focused on organics and value-added food.
- **the growing population of young families in our community;**
 - Drawn by its active rural nature, comparatively lower County real estate prices and, in no small measure, Sophiasburgh Central itself, Sophiasburgh has seen a growing number of new young families moving into the area to start and/or raise a family. The introduction of new younger students into classes at Sophiasburgh Central is on an uptick and the trajectory looks to continue based on the growing number of babies we know of in the ward.
- **the exceptional nature and culture of Sophiasburgh Central School; and,**
 - Sophiasburgh Central has a long and proud history of excellence in our community and a reputation throughout the County of providing an open and caring learning environment for its students. This spirit continues today with a very involved teaching and non-teaching staff and an equally engaged and innovative principal – Robert McFadden.
 - Sophiasburgh Central plays an important role as a community information hub – with many local events and activities being supported by our principal via take-home materials. Active outdoor learning, a focus on responsibility and caring, digital literacy and school-wide celebrations are part and parcel of the experience that Mr. McFadden and team shape day in and day out for our community’s students and their families.
 - Informed and innovative approaches to education are also a key focus of our school with field trips and enhanced in-school programming an ongoing priority. A recent case in point is our school’s involvement with the locally-sourced “DarkSpark” program; working with our grade 7s and 8s to bring the painful history of Residential Schools to life through collaborative musical expression and studio recording.
- **Sophiasburgh Central School having the lowest FCI (Facilities Condition Index) of ALL schools affected by the current proposal.**
 - Our Facility Condition Index is a healthy 25%.
- **Slight expansion of our official catchments (a formal map outlining this soon to be shared) to bring net new students to our school and increase enrolment while helping to minimize the very real potential for overcrowding at PECL in a K-12 scenario with the immediate influx of Pinecrest and QE students**
- **Keeping Sophiasburgh a K-8 school**
- **Developing partnerships that will meaningfully fill our under-utilized space at Sophiasburgh Central, mitigate these costs and, most importantly, help to make Sophiasburgh Central School a bonafide Community Hub for all.**
 - The Sophiasburgh Central School ARC sub-committee is currently engaging local businesses and organizations (public / private / NFP / a mix thereof) that may be interested in leasing an under-utilized wing at our school (in whole or in part) to mutual benefit.
 - The Principal at Sophiasburgh (Robert McFadden) is behind this initiative and ready to work with any interested partners in showing them the space, answering questions, finding out answers from the Board etc.
 - Outreach from our group to parents in the community is showing healthy interest in preschool / before / after care for children and students in the area (at 25+ formally interested parties at the time of this memo). We are engaged in preliminary discussions with licensed childcare providers.
 - We have also been formally approached by the County of Prince Edward Public Library and Archives recently to discuss the potential of having a PEC Library branch for our community on-site at Sophiasburgh Central within the context of this alternate plan. Barbara Sweet, CEO of PEC Library writes “We are often told that we should have a branch in that area of Prince Edward County and this might be an opportunity.” We are in discussion with this group and this item will be on their upcoming Board meeting agenda.

- **One key area where we feel there is both a need and a great opportunity is the food sector.**
 - We are currently talking to food businesses and NFP food security / community food initiatives orgs here in the County and finding the reaction quite encouraging.
 - We already have one well known value-added food business in the County formally interested in leasing ~1500 square feet of space in which to operate a commercial kitchen and food prep space with the potential of looking at more space for a new catering venture. We are also engaging a growing list of potential part time users and local food security organizations based around a common interest for a shared commercial kitchen. The end goal of this process is the eventual submission of a non-binding letter of interest from key potential lessors / users / supporters-in-kind to demonstrate the level of commitment this idea has within the County. We are well on the way in this regard.
 - Based on the great potential of this vision we are also engaged in conversations with Slow Food Prince Edward County, National Farmers Union and Community Gardens Prince Edward County.
- **The vision we have here is a vibrant, mutually beneficial and cost-effective relationship with one or a group of food-based partners who, while efficiently running and growing their business and/or serving their mandate, are also partnering with Sophiasburgh Central School to provide exciting and innovative ways to serve the community and enhance student learning and nutrition. A community garden, a community food network, students receiving first-hand knowledge about a future in the food industry and working with our partners to provide nutritious options for students are all part of this vision.**
- **Of no small import here is the fact that Hastings and Prince Edward Counties have the second highest rate of food insecurity in Ontario.**
- **We are interested in having Sophiasburgh become a bit of a food and education innovation centre and a dynamic player in shaping the future of rural education and rural communities here in the province.**
 - To this end, any partner, public or private, will need to consider ways their presence can start to help the community on the whole, offer up additional learning experiences for the students and be part of a new vision for rural schools in Ontario / Canada. Our group believes, and is seeing in our discussions and letters of interest, that food preparation provides a vast array of exciting opportunities for the businesses, organizations, community and students involved; think FoodShare meets Commercial Kitchen (in the country, with access to LOTS of outdoor space, and in the midst of one of the richer food networks in the province) and the vision starts to write itself.
 - Rough space available is ~6500 square feet – this includes 4 classrooms, hallway, and facilities. An entire wing.
 - The School is equipped with Propane Gas, Trucked in Town Water and A 2000 Amp 347/600 Volt Electrical Service This provides gas for cooking needs, and the ability to use 3 phase high voltage motors on things like mixers, washers and blenders which makes them far more efficient and something that isn't available everywhere in Sophiasburgh or the County for that matter.
 - There is currently ~\$770,000 available (to be used no later than the 2018/19 year) from the Ministry of Education to cover building retrofits / leasehold improvements for businesses/partners who fit the bill as part of a solution to making schools become more than a space for structured learning (classes) and evolve into true Community Hubs. Access to this pool of retrofit funding is definitely part of our developing plan to make this vision come to life.

- Finally, and very importantly, there is cross ARC sub-committee and, in turn, cross-County support for keeping Sophiasburgh Central School open.
- Prince Edward County has struck a working sub-committee involving the Mayor, CAO, Community Development Team and representatives from each of the 6 ARC sub-committees here in the County.
 - One of a few key documents from this working sub-committee, soon to be publicly distributed and integrated into the ARC process, is an “ARC Sub Committee County Solution Proposal” that has as its first goal “To keep open schools in five regions of the County – North, East, South, West and Central.”
 - North – Keep open 1 K – 8 school, either Kente or Massasauga – Rednersville.
 - East – Keep open Sophiasburgh
 - South – Athol, South Marysburgh (not part of the ARC)
 - West – Keep open, without a new build but renovations or potential addition to C.M.L. Snider
 - Central – PECl (K-12)
 - This plan, supported by all ARC sub-committees, also includes the closure of BOTH Queen Elizabeth and Pinecrest and the movement of these students to a newly retrofitted K-12 ready school at PECl. Students from QE would all go to PECl while students from Pinecrest would be distributed, based on proximity, to CML Snider, Kente, PECl and Sophiasburgh.

We look forward to working with your offices, the HPEDSB and the Ministry of Education in making this vision come to life for our community, for the County and for Ontario.

With respect, and in the spirit of innovation and collaboration,

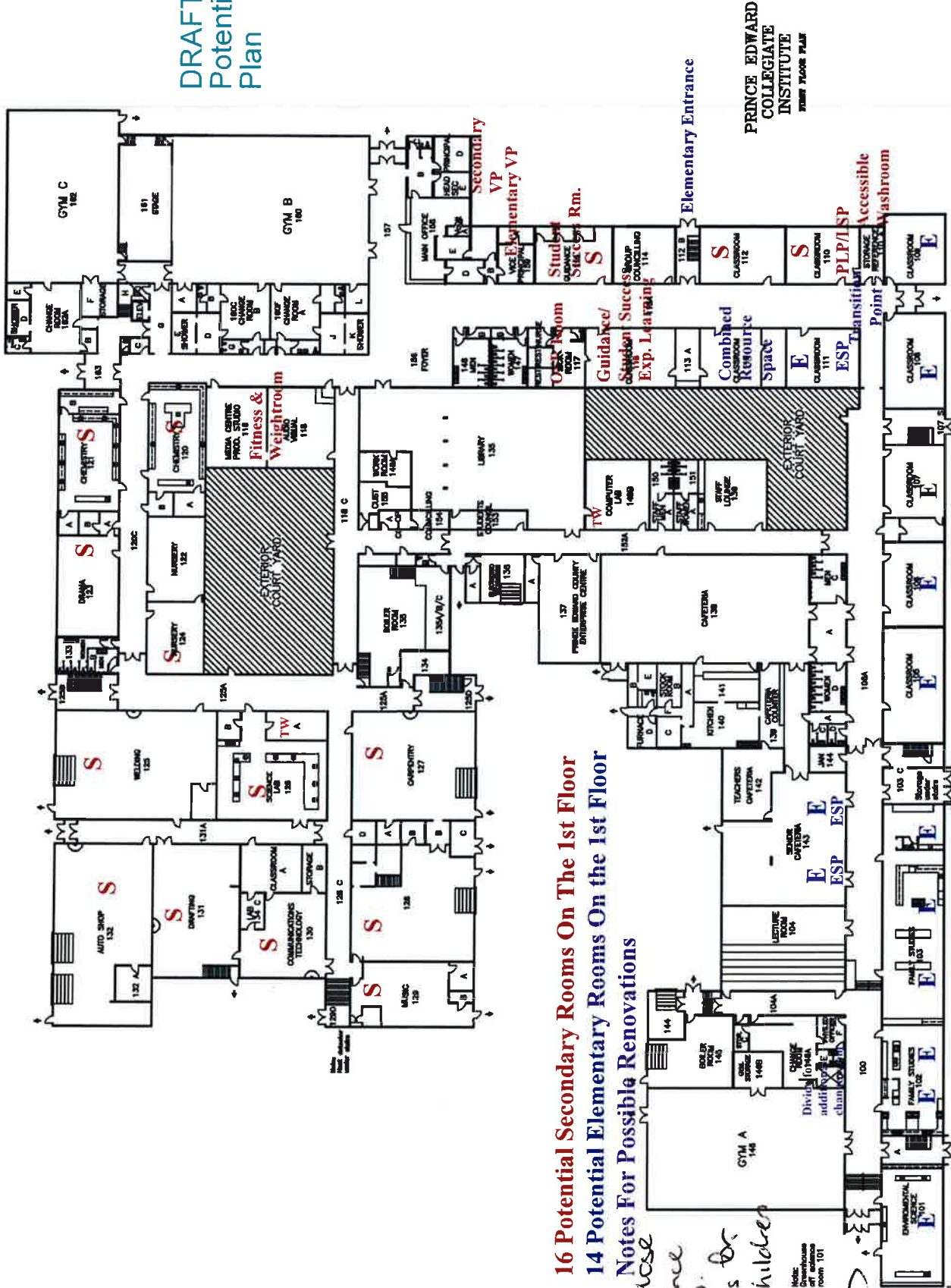
- *The Sophiasburgh Central School ARC Sub-Committee*

Submitted March 29, 2017, by request, to Premier Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Education Mitzie Hunter and Karen Pltre, Special Advisor to the Premier on Community Hubs

Sophiasburgh ARC Transition Concerns (rough notes taken at school meeting March 20)

Bus routes and timing	<p>Early (6:52am) start. Length of time on bus (an hour). Will the school start time still be 8:15? Is it possible to add more busses/routes to shorten ride times?</p>
Greenspace	<p>Outdoor play space needs to be larger. Will there be staggered times for recesses?</p>
Construction schedule	<p>Water concerns at high school? Renovations happening while students are in class is not ideal. There is not enough time for renovations to happen.</p>
Timelines	<p>September 2017 is not enough time for renovations. Sophiasburgh students starting a year later than others is not acceptable. Ideally, construction happens 2017-2018 and all 3 schools stay in their own buildings until they move in 2018. OR, all 3 schools go to Queen Elizabeth for a year while construction takes place.(although double transition is not ideal). There is no time for the transition committee to work.</p>
Staffing issues	<p>What will the administration look like? What will the staffing process be for teachers/EAs/DECEs</p>
Safety issues	<p>Entrance at parking lot (north-west door) has steep stairway. Bus drop-off/Pick-up zones?? No sidewalks, the parking lot is a problem. Staff and student parking lots are close to entrances.</p>
Secondary/Elementary spaces	<p>Washrooms - size Lunchrooms? Gyms? Changerooms? Kindergarten washrooms Sinks in classrooms</p>
Programming	<p>How is programming going to be enhanced? What specifically does enhanced mean? How will facilities be enhanced? How will music, drama, science and art be delivered? How does this enhance programs for secondary students? What is the plan for mentoring programs?</p>
Extracurriculars	<p>What will sports programs look like in the County? With such a difference in the size of schools, will they still compete against each other OR will they compete against Belleville schools?</p>
School culture and identity	<p>How will we bring students together and still preserve individual identities of schools? What will the new school be called? How will a new school culture/identity be created to generate a whole school community feeling?</p>

DRAFT
Potential Floor
Plan



PRINCE EDWARD
COLLEGIATE
INSTITUTE
THIRD FLOOR PLAN

16 Potential Secondary Rooms On The 1st Floor
14 Potential Elementary Rooms On the 1st Floor
Notes For Possible Renovations

Stairs close to entrance + steep. Obnoxious for small children

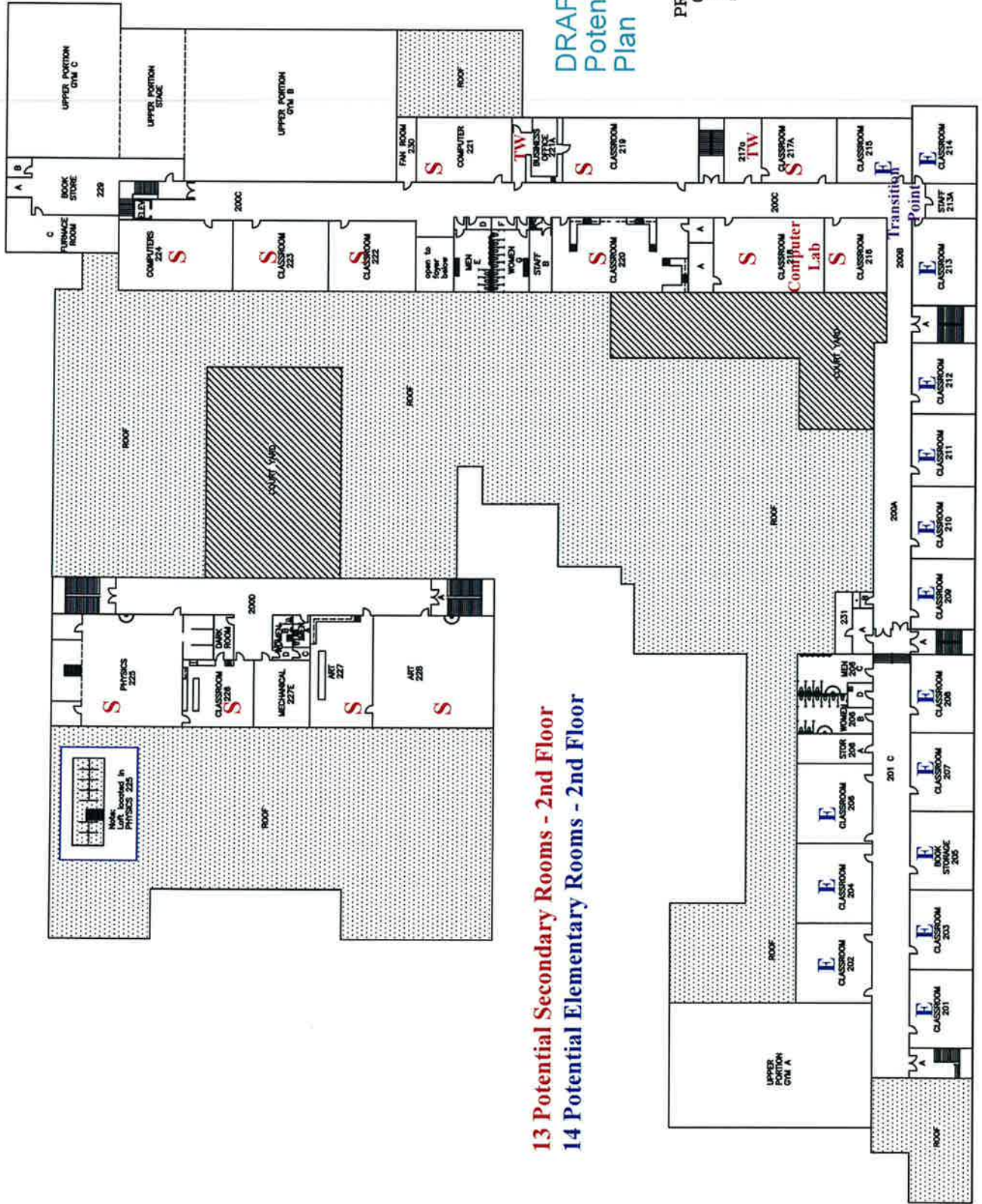
Kindergarten Rooms for green space for only kindergartens (side drive) fenced in

Is there a possibility to keep green house

Plant Department, HPEDSB4/11/2002 10:03 AMpecid.dwg

DRAFT Potential Floor Plan

PRINCE EDWARD
COLLEGIATE
INSTITUTE
SECOND FLOOR PLAN



13 Potential Secondary Rooms - 2nd Floor
14 Potential Elementary Rooms - 2nd Floor

Transition Plan - Initial Thinking
ARC Working Group Meeting #2 - March 29th, 2017

<p>Defining and Using the Physical Space</p> <p>Timetabling / room use considerations: part of planning at PEI spring 2017</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - special needs students (eg. calming, sensory rooms) - flow of students and staff throughout building and outside - shared use of space (eg. gyms, library) 	<p>Staff Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - possible use of upcoming PA days to enhance the transition - K-12 PD sessions (ETFO & OSSTF) - operational items may need some separation (eg. OSSLT, EQAO, yard supervision) - may be some things that are only 9-12, primary, junior etc. - need to create the conditions for staff learning – we would be creating a new culture at PEI - staff training for how to deal with kids in the different panels, especially those with special needs. <p>Staffing Process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work with HR and respective collective agreements to complete staffing should recommendation be approved <p>How would we build new culture / identity – eg Panthers / Lions / Tigers / etc? Even if Sophiasburg Comes a year later</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - committee work? we would like to be included in new culture / identity <p>Rooms and Space</p> <p>We will need approximately 30 rooms for K – 8 including specialized program space; also require space that is conducive to professional learning.</p> <p>Meeting Rooms: OT, Counselling, etc.</p>
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Kindergarten rooms – bathrooms, cubbies, yard exits

School co-curricular sports and sharing of facilities (eg. Gym after school or at recess / lunch times)

How can the lecture hall be re-purposed to be effective space (drama, music, etc.?)

Specialized programs need to be on main floor

Kindergärten classrooms need to be on main floor with accessible access to outdoor space

Common Use Areas

Would need to create management systems/processes for sharing resources such as stage, meeting rooms, fields, computers, gyms.

Full school main office would remain where it is to welcome all staff, students and community members; delineated may be made for K-8/9-12 if necessary

A common library space would be appropriate and there are great ideas about how to share the space and make it welcoming for all students

Music room is only used 2 periods per semester for grades 9-12; could look at sharing space with 7-8 program.

Common Resource room (with delineation where necessary) a possibility; would maximize use of EAs; potential for sensory room in there / quiet space; ISRT / ISEH using a common space.

Teacher workspace should be common for all staff

Teacher work areas required

- Prep space
- Meeting Rooms / Professional learning teams
- Literacy Rooms/ Numeracy Rooms professional resource library

Current Junior Cafeteria would remain for grades 9-12

Security – how would we secure building and make it safe for all students

CYC supports; allocation TBD

Possible Combined Student Services (ISRT/ISEH, Guidance, Student Success)

Need more space for OSRs

Physical Division of Elementary and Secondary

There are some elementary students who are “runners;” there may or may not be more places to hide in the secondary school; will need to edit safety plans or create new ones with ISRT/ISEH

Need to discuss/manage logistics of bells ringing, announcements, exits / entrances for different aged students

Peanut Allergy? Other allergies? - How is this handled at MSS? CSS?

Flow of People – suggestions may include colours in halls / intersections; dots on the floors; symbols for the washrooms.

How many washrooms will we have? 2 for each panel? Common/consistent signage.

Is there any flexibility in start times possibly @ 40.

Secondary	Elementary
8:20 – 9:35 – Period 1	8:10 – 10:10 Block 1 (120)
9:35 – 9:45 - Break	10:10 – 10:50 Break #1
9:45 – 11:00 Period 2	10:50 – 12:30 Block 2 (100)
11:00 – 11:50 Lunch	12:30- 1:10 Break #2
11:50 – 1:05 Period 3	1:10 – 2:30 Block 3 (80)
1:05 – 1:15 Break	
1:15 – 2:30 Period 4	

Student work spaces in the office / student services?

Coop Room – student work space. Could install Computer counters?

Work Counters in the foyer would be possible as well?

Outside Considerations

Playing field – may be add 1 soccer field by turning the orientation; explore possibility of formal agreement with the County to use the community soccer field across Johnson St. and tennis courts at Benson Park.

Removing the greenhouse would be good idea → would be great access for kindergarten's
 ↳ such a useful space for elementary kids a science. Unfortunately to remove
 Tennis courts re-purposed as basketball courts for classes or recess time or for parking? it in a farming community

Moving play structures; would be in plans to have these on site

What is happening to school council budgets? Eg. money that has been raised for a purpose – eg. playground, smart boards etc.

- Fundraising done for a specific purpose would continue to have that purpose with new school; rest of school funds goes into one budget for new school

Separate space for kindergarten outdoor play necessity

Miscellaneous

When would a discussion about the school start time take place? (can now as a possibility)

How much library tech time will we have? (Collective Agreements would be followed in staffing process)

We can use the back door for the elementary to get into the library (logistical planning will be considered)

Supervision in cafeteria with OSSTF / ETFO people. This will be a federation issue. (current junior cafeteria will be used for 9-12 only)

Packing of personal staff belongings is responsibility of staff; packing and moving of board materials and furniture is responsibility of board and will be coordinated.

Transition Plan for Staff and Students

Staff luncheon/BBQ in June to bring teachers/staff together

Shared memos, committees re. structures/management issues/etc.

Activities and trips at end of year we could try to combine schools/classes/grade levels

Sending welcome postcards to all students in the elementary grades from senior students

Collaborative Student Council Gr 4-12 (was suggested by current PECEI students)

Elementary students have an afternoon of activities at PECEI with senior students Gr 9-11

Secondary Students visit their elementary school as a "reach out" (JOL Class)

T-shirts for all!

Wall to honour history of each former school as a possibility *Great idea*

In September - full school picture (wide/old school-type of photography) *Sophiasburgh is left out*

Late August - Open House/ Activity afternoon for parents and students

Over the summer, full social media presence: twitter, video, share

We have a proposal in under System Memo 97 for the QEP / Pinecrest / PECEI to have an academic olympics in May (cool!)