

## NEWS RELEASE

April 15, 2019

### **Board Reconfigures Mobile Central High School System**

Grade 5 students at St. Bernard's Elementary in Witless Bay will join their Grade 6 schoolmates and move to the newly-extended Mobile Central High School in September, 2019. The decision was made by the Board of Trustees of the Newfoundland and Labrador School District during its regular public meeting on Saturday, April 13, 2019 at the District Conference Centre in St. John's.

The Board considered input from the school community, gathered over the past several months through in-person and online consultations, as well as long-standing concerns over space limitations at St. Bernard's Elementary, currently a K-6 facility. The decision means that effective September 2019, St. Bernard's Elementary will be reconfigured for Kindergarten to Grade 4, while Mobile Central High School will serve Grades 5-12.

"There were issues raised in the consultations that have been, and will be, considered as we move forward," said Board Chair Goronwy Price. "For example, the school will plan its space so that younger students are together in one part of the school and older students are in another space, with options to stagger lunch periods. Parents had expressed concerns about younger and older students in the same facility, but Board trustees considered that there are various grade configurations in schools throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, including more than 80 K-12 facilities, where administrators and staff create safe environments where older students serve as mentors for those in the younger grades, and where bullying of any kind is not tolerated."

A video of the full Board proceedings can be viewed on the District website or directly from the link provided here: <https://www.nlesd.ca/about/board/meetinghighlights.jsp>.

In other business, the Board passed a new policy entitled: Whistleblower - Employee Disclosure of Wrongdoing (HR-806). The policy establishes a process whereby employees who may be aware of improper activity or wrongdoing are expected to make their concerns known. The policy complements the Provincial Government's Whistleblower Protection Act, and addresses a finding of the Auditor General's report "Management of the Procurement of Goods and Services" from September 2018. That report noted the Board had no formal internal mechanism by which employees could report suspected unethical behaviour. The Board also passed a revised Criminal Records Screening and Vulnerable Sector Check Policy (HR-813), designed to strengthen the process and criteria for positive criminal records screening. Both policies can be viewed on the District website here: <https://www.nlesd.ca/about/policies.jsp>.

The Newfoundland and Labrador English School District represents approximately 65,000 students, more than 8,200 employees, over 250 schools, and 5 alternate sites throughout the province.

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#### **Media contact:**

Heather May | Director of Communications | Newfoundland and Labrador English School District  
O: 709-758-2371 | M: 709-690-0056 | [heathermay@nlesd.ca](mailto:heathermay@nlesd.ca) | @NLESDCA | [www.nlesd.ca](http://www.nlesd.ca)

