



*PROPOSED*  
**RECONFIGURATION PLAN**  
 Some Questions & Answers

Implementation Timeline – Consultation / Discussion / Study	<p>Implementation is being rushed, more time is needed to study this plan and its impact.- Too late for implementation in Sept, 2010, as Secondary School need to be programming now for Sept, 2010 and due to Olympic and Paralympic activities, February and March are lost months, in this process.</p> <hr style="width: 30%; margin-left: 0;"/> <p>Comment:  <i>Individual meetings have been held with the DRSS and HSS staff, as well as evening public meetings at DRSS and HSS. Citizens and employees were also invited to send in letters / e-mails with their views. In addition, The Board is scheduled to meet with the DRSS staff on February 3, 2010, and the Board Chair and Superintendent have been invited to a DRSS PAC Meeting on Tuesday, February 9, 2010.</i></p> <p><i>The Board approved the Reconfiguration Plan “in principle,” and is considering implementation starting September, 2010 or September, 2011.</i></p>
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French Immersion	<p>Will the DRSS percentage of French Immersion students be reduced in the reconfiguration proposal?</p> <hr style="width: 30%; margin-left: 0;"/> <p>Comment:  <i>There would be more students in each of Grades 8 &amp; 9, and the percentage of French Immersion students would depend on the enrolment in that Program. If French Immersion enrolment remained as it now exists, then the percentage of French Immersion students would be less than the current rate of French Immersion to English Program students.</i></p>
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<p>Music</p>	<p>The Music Department offers programs that have been developed and expanded through the dedication of the educators in the program and their commitment to the performing arts. The Grade 10's in this program allow for an enriched Band experience through Jazz Band classes because they have studied music for three years. Without the senior students, Jazz Band would not be possible.</p> <hr/> <p>Comment:</p> <p><i>Schools throughout the province have successful Junior Jazz Programs. Some elementary schools that currently feed into DRSS already have a band program, perhaps elementary band can be expanded and coordinated, thus providing a more advanced band program in Grade 9.</i></p>
<p>First Nations Program</p>	<p>Will the First Nations Program at DRSS continue to be offered ?</p> <hr/> <p>Comment:</p> <p><i>The intention is to continue supporting our First Nations students in many ways including First Nation classes, Youth Worker Support, and cultural support.</i></p>
<p>Outdoor Leadership</p>	<p>A trademark program at Don Ross Secondary, runs on the many hundreds of volunteer hours that the instructors commit to the curriculum is an entirely Grade 10 program. It is a point of Don Ross School pride that has taken several years to evolve into what it is today, and it is not economically feasible to the community (who provides financial support) to run it at both schools.</p> <hr/> <p>Comment:</p> <p><i>It is entirely possible for both HSSS and DRSS to each offer Outdoor Education programs. A junior program would indeed look different, which would reflect the age group.</i></p> <p><i>It is possible that <b>Outdoor Leadership</b> could continue at the Grade 10 level, if offered at HSSS</i></p>

<p>Counseling</p>	<p>Don Ross counselors believe that attachment theory is part of what makes this school successful. To transition all elementary schools in the area would mean that their ability to connect with students will be compromised. Plus, the short amount of time currently available to help students with social and emotional issues will be further eroded.</p> <hr/> <p>Comment:</p> <p><i>The number of students attending both DRSS and HSSS will decrease over the next few years freeing up additional counselor time per student. In addition, the critical connections made during the Teacher Advisory and the Team Teaching program ensuring every day that students receive even more personal attention than before.</i></p> <p><i>Daily Teacher Advisory (TA) programs serve a critical function during middle years. TA is an effective way to develop a culture of caring in an environment where students feel accepted and valued by their teachers and peers. Teacher Advisory helps develop and maintain academic success through the use of increased interaction with students. Teacher Advisory is used deliver social responsibility instruction school-wide and to improve home-school communication.</i></p>
<p>Special Education</p>	<p>The demand on Special Education Teachers to facilitate testing, and network with parents, specialists, instructors and administrators to complete IEPs for junior students would increase with the added student enrolment. Transforming highly needy students to high school is a difficult feat; transforming such students a second time in two years would be increasingly risky. Furthermore, the time it takes to build relationships with the parents and students is crucial to each student's Individual Education plans, programming and integration into high school.</p> <hr/> <p>Comment:</p> <p><i>Over time, there will be fewer students in the school in total, and the grade span would be reduced. There may very well be fewer DRSS Special Education students than in past years.</i></p>

<p>Choice</p>	<p>No alternative for a student to attend another school.</p> <hr/> <p>Comment:</p> <p><i>True. However, we have only ever had one or two students per year request such a transfer. As professional educators, we are confident any conflict between a student and another student or between a student and a teacher can be satisfactorily resolved without the need to move to a new school.</i></p>
<p>Discipline</p>	<p>Testing the boundaries at the Grade 8 and 9 level is more prevalent. More Grade 8s and 9s affect clerical, instructor, and administrator time, because these students are the ones needing disciplinary action, compared to older grades.</p> <hr/> <p>Comment:</p> <p><i>Middle Year programs are more effective in decreasing overall discipline needs by improving student behaviour. This is partly due to the Teacher Advisory and to the improved bond between Teacher Teams, their students, and their families. In fact, more time can be spent teaching social responsibility, character education, and focusing on peer to peer social interactions.</i></p>
<p>Class Size &amp; Bill 33</p>	<p>Filling junior classes to their maximum capacity would become easier, however, the transition and preparation required to support Grade 8s and 9s in Special Education is much greater than supporting Grade 10s. Such a situation would likely create greater risks for those students who need the most support. The resources required by the Special Education department, including support staff, would be inadequate in the proposed model.</p> <hr/> <p>Comment:</p> <p><i>Resources previously channeled toward Grade 10s would then be re-channeled toward the additional Grade 8 &amp; 9 classes. Again, numbers will be smaller overall.</i></p>

<p>Grade Grouping</p>	<p>Loss of Grade 10s as ‘role models’ and ‘leaders’ of the school.</p> <p>Two Grades (Gr 8 &amp; 9) are not enough to develop the necessary knowledge and understanding needed to work with students.</p> <p>If DRSS becomes a Grade 8 &amp; 9 Middle Years School, what about adding Grade 7, and making DRSS truly a Middle School where students attend for three years – Grades 7, 8 &amp; 9 - not two years.</p> <hr/> <p>Comment:</p> <p><i>Leadership is not a position – Grade 10, Grade 12, sixty years old, thirty years old, or otherwise. It is a state of mind. It is a reflection of how we relate to other people. One of the biggest benefits of Middle Years programming is the ability to spend time focusing on self-esteem, determination, organizational aptitude, focus, tolerance, decisiveness, self-discipline, charisma, time management, self-confidence, and social competence.</i></p> <p><i>We trust all of our professional highly trained staff have developed the necessary knowledge and understanding needed to work with students. We also trust they can be successful teaching at any grade level for any amount of time.</i></p> <p><i>Grade 7 may be considered in the future, as demographics change.</i></p>
<p>Athletics</p>	<p>Athletics would be adversely affected by the merging of grades from two schools, particularly, the diversity of competition. In an inter-district league of only four schools, eliminating one opponent at two grade levels, and increasing the selection pool at one school to more than double that of the two others’ seriously jeopardizes the integrity of the District’s athletic experience. Moreover, the removal of Grade 10s from the Don Ross student body presents a loss in student leadership. The 10s are the school’s athletic leaders; they hold positions from referees to assistant coaches.</p> <p>Both DRSS and HSS compete as separate schools – reconfiguration would cut in half the number of teams.</p> <hr/> <p>Comment:</p> <p><i>Although the merging of the grades could change the make up of the</i></p>

	<p><i>school competing in the intra district league, the competition would not necessarily decrease. By offering two teams at Don Ross in grade 8 and 9 (two equally competitive teams) we could still have a 4 team league. The same students would be playing so the competition level could be the same.</i></p> <p><i>Removal of the grade 10's does remove some experienced athletes, however, many Grade 9s from the leadership class currently play a role in organizing noon hour games. We rely mainly on adults as head referees and coaches, and ex-DRSS students from Howe Sound have always come back to DRSS to help out when needed. The Board has also approved Community Volunteer Coaches, which could be explored as a way of adding coaching staff.</i></p>
<p>Technology Education, Drama, Art, French</p>	<p>Technology Education, Drama, Art, French and the academics will register a loss of student leaders with the loss of the Grade 10s. The role modeling that students at the senior grades provide to grade 8s and 9s in these programs is irreplaceable.”</p> <hr/> <p>Comment:</p> <p><i>Within all age groups there are leaders who excel in sports, the arts, cooking, wood-working, languages, and theatre. The best role-models are those who are good at something. Visit any elementary school in the district and you will find many young role-models who are not in Grade 10. We are a district made rich by the many talented musicians, dancers, athletes, and students who excel at languages. They bring their gifts to us and they are cultivated further by great teachers.</i></p>

<p>Staffing</p>	<p>The process must be clear and fair. Teachers believe a mutual agreement which is fully supported by teachers is essential. A revised model should be considered in order to maintain morale, and create a positive environment of commitment in which all our students can benefit.”</p> <p>There will be more time needed to coordinate the transfer and organization of records, due to an increase to the junior student body at transition.”</p> <hr/> <p>Comment:</p> <p><i>Certainly the Board and SSTA will be working to develop a staffing process that is clear and fair.</i></p> <p><i>Regarding clerical responsibilities, there will be added volume at the Grade 8 &amp; 9 level and on the other side, no work at the Grade 10 level.</i></p>
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<p>Financial Picture</p>	<p>What additional expenses or efficiencies would result from Reconfiguration ??</p> <hr/> <p>Comment:</p> <p><i>The main Financial expense identified by Nancy Edwards a few months ago, was the estimated cost of \$ 30,000 – to cover the cost of one part time bus driver and the necessary fuel.</i></p> <p><i>Regarding efficiencies, these are mainly in the gathering of resources in one location – textbooks, for example.</i></p>
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<p>Busing</p>	<p>Will the district need to purchase another bus in order to implement the proposed reconfiguration? If yes, who pays for the bus or busses?</p> <p>If the school district is adding bus kms., then what impact will that have on the district's 'carbon foot print'? Will that be another cost?</p> <p>If additional bus routes are added, what new Operational Costs will have to be paid?</p> <p>At what time will students from Britannia Beach, Valleycliffe, ... have to catch the bus each morning ? How long will those students be on the bus, before they arrive at DRSS?</p> <p>Could the start time for DRSS be moved a ½ hour ahead? This would help all students and the students catching the bus would have a reasonable time to catch the bus in the morning?</p> <hr/> <p>Comment:</p> <p><i>As previously stated, the main Financial expense identified by Nancy Edwards a few months ago, was the estimated cost of \$ 30,000 – to cover the cost of one part time bus driver and the necessary fuel. She did state that eventually we'd need another bus, but that is a Capital Cost paid for by the Ministry of Education (not an operational cost).</i></p> <p><i>The bus schedule for students from Britannia Beach, Valleycliffe, ... is currently being developed, and it is anticipated that there may be fewer stops.</i></p> <p><i>The time for students to catch the bus could be altered, if the start time at DRSS was changed. A later start time for a Middle Years program has some research supporting it.</i></p>
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<p>Alternatives to Reconfiguration</p>	<p>To increase HSS student enrolment, why not move the DRSS and HSSS school boundaries North ?</p> <p>To increase HSSS student enrolment, what about moving the French Immersion Program (Grades 8, 9 and 10) to HSS ?</p> <p>What about two Grade 8 to 12 schools ?</p> <hr/> <p>Comment:</p> <p><i>The Board has considered these options and believes that the greatest improvements in student learning will occur if students are together in one Middle Years school.</i></p>
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<p>Howe Sound Secondary School</p>	<p>What's the advantage of creating a Graduation Program School over the current Grade 8 thru 12 school organization ?</p> <hr/> <p>Comment:</p> <p><i>The Key to students experiencing success in the Graduation Program (Grades 10 to 12), is to offer courses in both the academic and elective realm that meet the program needs and particular learning styles and abilities of this age group.</i></p> <p><i>Increasing the number of students in grade ten attending HSSS, will result in more core subjects offered in each semester, a wider range of electives, and an increased opportunity to provide new courses / programs of choice and the possibility of bringing back courses that have previously been eliminated. For example, students could enroll in an English course focused on providing substantial academic supports or one developed for students with exceptional academic capabilities.</i></p>
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