

**WBS School Advisory  
Council Tuesday, November  
18, 2025**

**MEETING MINUTES AMENDED  
(second amendment)**

Time: 07:00 p.m. to 08:00 p.m. Location: WBS Seminar Room

**Participants:** Julia Spence (Co-Chair), Katelyn MacKenzie (Co-Chair), Haley Flewwelling, Janice Aucoin, Joanne Treen, Susan Casey, Tao (Tony) Qin, Tricia Schmeisser

**Observer:** Jacinta Heckman

**Regrets:** Bei Zhou, Kelly Cull, Paola Bartolacci, Susan Hart

**Meeting Agenda**

1. Opening – 10 minutes

- Call to Order
- Welcome
  - Announcement of Co-Chair (Katelyn MacKenzie), new parent member (Kelly Cull)
- Approval of the Agenda – Item added to Events Update to include response to parent email on same topic.

2. Approval of Minutes – 5 minutes

- Review and Approval of Minutes from the Previous Meeting

3. Principal's Report – 10 minutes

- a. Student Success Plan – Literacy & Wellbeing (Joanne)
- b. Events Update – December events, March concert (Susan)\
  - Added – Parent Email
  - SAC noted there are a few seasonal celebrations that will take place
    - Beginning December 1, our WBS Kindness Tree will be displayed in the main lobby. Sparkles, our travelling Kindness Reindeer, will visit different spaces in the building each day, looking for students demonstrating our four core values: Respect, Responsibility, Relationships, Reciprocity. WBS will also be participating in the Feed NS food drive and stuff a bus with Santa in early December.
    - During the final few weeks of classes, homerooms will be invited to participate in a “Sparkles STEM challenge”, a door decorating challenge, and a hot chocolate event put on by our Home and School Association.
  - Classes may also choose to explore cultural learning connected to the diverse celebrations and traditions represented within their classrooms and our school community—Christmas being one example.

- One SAC member shares concerns about the shift away from traditional holiday celebrations at West Bedford Elementary. While recognizing the intent behind moving from a winter concert to an open house and spring concert, they note that many families valued the sense of community created by past holiday events and express concern that the cultural survey results may have been interpreted in a way that led to removing these traditions entirely. They suggest that issues such as parents leaving early at last year's concert may have been due to scheduling challenges rather than disengagement. Referencing a previously submitted proposal to the Home and School Association for a holiday-themed event that was not approved, they ask that if the school will not host holiday celebrations, the Home and School Association be permitted to organize a community-based, inclusive, holiday event.
  
- The school's decision was guided by survey results indicating a preference for more inclusive forms of celebration. While four emails expressed concern about the removal of the holiday concert, this feedback represents a small portion of a school community of over 1,100 students. Administration determined it would not be appropriate to plan an additional extracurricular event that could place strain on staff while not equitably reflecting the school's diverse cultural makeup. Instead, the school offered a range of activities, experiences, and decorations from November through January that reflected various cultural celebrations, ensuring all students could see themselves represented. This approach aligns with the school's Well-Being goal of fostering an environment where all students feel safe, welcomed, and included.

#### 4. Old Business

#### 5. New Business – 15 minutes

- SAC Conference – November 28
- SAC Applications
  - None received as of November 11

#### 6. SAC Members' questions/comments – 5 minutes

- Open floor for the SAC members for questions/ comments

#### 7. Future Meetings and Adjournment

- Proposed next SAC Meeting: Tuesday, January 20, 2026
- Adjournment of the Meeting

### **Parking Lot Issues:**

To ensure the safety of all students during morning arrival and afternoon dismissal, we will be **closing the upper parking lot to all vehicles for the near future**. This includes Pre-Primary families. Only Excel families dropping off before 8:00 a.m. or picking up after 4:00 p.m. are permitted to use the upper lot during this time.

This decision comes after ongoing safety concerns, including multiple close calls involving students. We need to reset expectations and ensure our procedures are followed consistently.

We have noticed the following issues:

- Vehicles parking in non-parking areas and leaving vehicles blocking in other cars
- Families not in Pre-Primary are entering the upper lot rather than using the lower parking lot as required.
- Cars continue to enter the emergency vehicle loop for student drop off, which must remain clear for safety.
- Vehicles also continue to drive around to the back of the school to park before staff supervision begins, creating unsafe conditions.

To support safe and proper use of our parking areas, our school liaison officer will be onsite this week to help reinforce our school parking procedures. We will revisit the parking situation at the end of the week to determine whether the upper lot can be reopened. This decision will depend on how closely families follow the procedures during the week.

### **Seasonal Events:**

Beginning December 1, our WBS Kindness Tree will be displayed in the main lobby. Sparkles, our travelling Kindness Reindeer, will visit different spaces in the building each day, looking for students demonstrating our four core values: Respect, Responsibility, Relationships, Reciprocity. WBS will also be participating in the Feed NS food drive and stuff a bus with Santa in early December.

During the final few weeks of classes, homerooms will be invited to participate in a “Sparkles STEAM challenge”, a door decorating challenge, and a hot chocolate event put on by our Home and School Association.

We are encouraging all classes to explore cultural learning connected to the diverse celebrations and traditions represented within our school community—Christmas being just one example.

### **West Bedford Schools Community Spirit Week- December 8–12, 2025**

We are excited to share that this December, West Bedford School and West Bedford High will be partnering to host our first Community Spirit Week—a celebration marking the official opening of our shared building. While our music team shifts the traditional

December concert to a P–6 performance in March, this week of events will give our school community a wonderful opportunity to come together, celebrate student creativity, and showcase the many talents of WBS and WBH students.

## **Highlights of Community Spirit Week**

### **Special Evening Events**

#### **Tuesday, December 9 — Coffee House Night (Time TBD)**

- Performances by:
  - WBS Choir
  - WBS Ukulele Club
  - WBH student performers
- **Location:** Cafetorium stage
- **Fine Arts Night:** A gallery walk throughout the WBS building, and WBH's main floor and mezzanine.

#### **Wednesday, December 10**

- **Grade 6–12 Band Concert** (Evening in the Gym)
- **Fine Arts Night** continues with the gallery walk open for families to enjoy.

#### **Extras:**

- The WBS Home & School Association will offer tea, coffee, and water on December 9<sup>th</sup>.
- The Scholastic Book Fair will run all week, with an evening opening on December 9<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Daytime Events (During the School Day)**

- **Spirit Week Theme Days:** Organized by WBS Grade 6 Student Ambassadors (Drew Fournier & Mary Cobb) and the WBH Student Council.
- **Primary–Grade 2 Special Event:** Our music team has partnered with Halifax based artist Meaghan Smith—a Canadian musician, storyteller, and visual artist—to spend time with our Primary to Grade 2 students. Ms. Smith will share her new book, *It Snowed*, inspired by her hit song of the same name. This special event will take place on December 9 during the school day for all students in Primary to Grade 2.
- **Scholastic Book Fair** open throughout the week.

#### **Building Ceremony (Date TBD)**

A school-wide ceremony will mark the official opening of our building, including: • A virtual assembly for Grades P–12 to participate in this experience

#### **Fine Arts Gallery Walk — Student Showcase**

Students will have the opportunity to create artwork or projects to be showcased during the Fine Arts evenings. These may be pieces completed individually, as a small-group, or class pieces. Displays will be set up around the school building.

### **WBS November Highlights**

#### **School Liaison Officer Presentations**

In the final few weeks of November, we are excited to welcome our School Liaison

Officer, Constable Andrew Paquet, who will be delivering important presentations across various grade levels:

- *Stranger Danger* for Primary and Grade 1 students
- *Being a Good Digital Citizen* for Grades 2 and 3
- *Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying* for Grades 4-6

These sessions are a valuable part of our commitment to keeping our students safe and informed.

### **Picture Day Re-takes and Class Photos**

- **Picture Re-takes:** Tuesday, December 2, 2025
- **Class Photos:**
  - Grades Pre-Primary to 3: Tuesday, December 2, 2025
  - Grades 4-6: Wednesday, December 3, 2025

### **WBS Catchment Area:**

Families are reminded that students must attend the school that serves the catchment area in which they reside. When families choose not to attend their designated school, it creates significant pressure on class sizes at WBS, with some classes reaching or exceeding hard caps. Please note that the new apartment buildings across the roundabout in the Brookline area are **not** part of the WBS catchment; they fall within the Kingswood Elementary zone. Kingswood Elementary has small class sizes and is an excellent school community. With Term 1 ending on November 21, this is an ideal time for students who live outside the WBS boundary to transition to their catchment school for the start of Term 2.

Please note that the school will continue to verify that all students are attending their designated catchment-area school. We strongly encourage families to initiate this transition on their own if they are not living within the WBS boundary, rather than waiting for the school to force your move. This proactive step helps ensure smooth transitions for students and supports balanced class sizes across our school communities.

### **Student Success Plan for WBS**

Coming to the end of the first cycle- we will be doing a reflection around changes in teacher practices, affects on student achievement

- Mid-Cycle Literacy Data

Achievement by Grade

Grade % Meeting Reading % Meeting Writing

1 66.1% 66.1%

2 76.2% 68.9%

3 76.0% 72.0%

4 74.5% 75.2%

5 74.4% 75.0%

6 79.4% 77.2%

### **Trends & Insights:**

Steady growth across grades: Both reading and writing achievement rise consistently from Grade 1 through Grade 6.

**Early literacy gap:** Grade 1, which is expected given developmental stages but highlights the importance of early intervention.

**Convergence by upper elementary:** By Grade 6, more than three-quarters of students meet expectations in both reading and writing, suggesting increasing mastery and instructional effectiveness in later grades.

### **Achievement by Gender**

Gender % Meeting Reading % Meeting Writing Female 77.0% 81.8%

Male 72.5% 63.4% X (non-binary/other) 100% 100% **Trends &**

### **Insights:**

**Gender gap evident in writing:** Females outperform males by ~18 percentage points in writing and ~5 points in reading.

**Consistent pattern:** This mirrors well-documented literacy trends where female students demonstrate stronger performance in written expression. **Implication:** Targeted strategies to engage boys in writing (e.g., choice-driven writing topics, structured scaffolds, oral-to-written bridging) may help close the gap.

### **Achievement by Ancestry (Top 8 Groups)**

Ancestry % Meeting Reading % Meeting Writing African Descent 83.1%

76.6% Asian Descent 80.3% 82.4% European Descent 78.6% 78.6%

East Asian Descent 72.4% 67.1% Not Listed 72.7% 63.6% Acadian

Descent 72.2% 77.8% Middle Eastern Descent 53.2% 48.9% Not

Specified 63.9% 44.4% **Trends & Insights:**

**Highest achievement:** Students of African, Asian, and European descent show the strongest overall literacy results, with 76-83% meeting expectations in both domains.

### **Areas for focus:**

o Students of Middle Eastern descent have significantly lower achievement (around half meeting expectations).

o Students with unspecified ancestry also show lower outcomes, which may reflect additional language or socio-cultural barriers.

**Equity lens:** The variation across ancestry groups suggests the importance of culturally responsive literacy instruction, language support, and ongoing monitoring of subgroup data to ensure equitable progress.

### **Cross-Domain Observations**

Reading slightly stronger than writing overall (74.8% vs. 72.8%), with larger differences emerging in specific groups (notably males and Middle Eastern

descent). Performance stabilizes by upper grades, reflecting both maturation and sustained

instructional quality.

**Equity implications:** Where gaps exist (e.g., gender and ancestry), they are consistent across both reading and writing, signaling systemic patterns rather than isolated challenges.

### **Summary of Key Takeaways**

Literacy proficiency increases with grade level, showing steady development. A clear gender gap persists, especially in writing.

Significant variation by ancestry highlights the need for culturally responsive and differentiated literacy approaches.

The strongest achievement appears among African, Asian, and European ancestry groups, while Middle Eastern and Not Specified groups show the greatest need for targeted support.

### **Incident Data for September and October**

Grade

Incidents are concentrated in Grades 3 and 5. This pattern may reflect developmental transitions such as increased independence and peer influence in the middle grades.

**Gender**

An overwhelming 92% of incidents involve male students, which aligns with typical behavioural patterns observed in elementary settings where boys are more frequently referred for physical or disruptive behaviours.

**Ancestry**

Students identifying as African Descent (2.75x) and Middle Eastern Descent (1.67x) are overrepresented in the incident data compared to their overall school population. Asian Descent students are strongly underrepresented, while European and Not Listed groups align roughly with population levels.

**Ancestry Data Summary**

<b>Ancestry</b>	<b># of students</b>	<b>Incident %</b>	<b>Population %</b>	<b>Representation</b>
European Descent	■	33.3%	26.5%	1.26x
African Descent	■	23.1%	8.4%	2.75x
Middle Eastern Descent	■	17.9%	10.7%	1.67x
Not Listed	■	12.8%	10.5%	1.22x
East Asian Descent	■	7.7%	8.5%	0.91x
Asian Descent	■	5.1%	25.5%	0.20x

**Category of Incident**

Over 60% of incidents involve physical aggression or violence. A smaller but notable number involve sexual harassment and racist behaviour, highlighting the need for explicit instruction around safety, respect, and inclusion.

**Time of Day**

Lunchtime is the most common time for incidents (almost half of all cases), followed by instructional periods. Unstructured and transitional times are the highest risk for conflict.

**Location**

The outdoor area is the most frequent (40%), followed by classrooms. This pattern reinforces the importance of proactive supervision and structured engagement strategies during lunch and recess.

**Seriousness Level**

Most incidents are Level 1–2 (minor to moderate), with only six Level 3 (major) incidents. The majority are manageable within school-level interventions before escalation.

## Actions / Consequences

Responses remain largely instructional and restorative – conferencing, coaching, and restorative approaches – reflecting alignment with the Inclusive Education Policy. Fifteen out-of-school suspensions indicate a small number of serious or repeated behaviours requiring targeted follow-up.

## Overall Insights

- Grades 3 and 5 male students account for most incidents.
- Most behaviours occur during lunch and outdoor settings.
- Physical and interpersonal behaviours dominate the pattern of concern. • African and Middle Eastern Descent students are overrepresented, indicating an equity consideration.
- Restorative and coaching-based responses remain the foundation of behavioural support at WBS.

## MEMO

### Impact of Standard Provincial Funding Formula on High Population Schools

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#### SUMMARY:

- The Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development uses a standard formula of \$5000 + \$1 per student for three provincial funding envelopes: School Advisory Council funding, Healthy School Grants, and Student Support Grants.
- The Co-chair of West Bedford School (“WBS”) (Elementary) analyzed enrollment data and projected School Advisory Council (“SAC”) funds across the province to understand the impact of the funding formula on their school.
- Results found that the SAC funding model disadvantages large schools and disproportionately affects schools within the Halifax Regional Centre for Education (“HRCE”).
- When comparing elementary, middle, high, and P-12 schools, the effect of the SAC funding formula is felt most greatly by elementary “super schools.” WBS is the most severely affected.
- The WBS SAC request that consideration be given to reviewing and revising the funding model to ensure equitable distribution of funds across provincial schools.

#### KEY FINDINGS:

The Co-chair of WBS accessed enrollment data from the [Department of Early Education and Child Development](#) for the 2025-26 academic year. Using the funding formula x school enrollment (removing PP and RG grade levels), funds were projected for all schools in the province. The full dataset included 365 schools as Alternative, Adult, and Disability & Special Education schools were not included in the analysis. Three key findings were made:

##### **1. Schools in the HRCE are most impacted by funding model.**

The provincial amount of fundings under each envelope, per student, averages \$31.84, while the median is \$18.79 which indicates that there is skewed distribution of funds across the data set. This could mean projected data for small schools greatly impacts the dataset (e.g. those with less than 100 students); however, these schools only comprise 10% (37/365) of schools in the dataset. The results more likely demonstrate that a smaller number of schools benefit from the funding model disproportionately more than the majority of schools.

When comparing funds across Regional Centres for Education, the HRCE has the highest average SAC Funds per school and the lowest average amount of dollars per student. The HRCE average is over \$11.00 lower per student than the second lowest average Regional Centre for Education (“RCEs”) and \$2.55 less when considering median values.

	Amount of \$ per Student* Average (Median)	Funds per School* Average (Median)
Annapolis Valley Regional Centre for Education	\$34.03 (\$22.28)	\$5330 (\$5237)
Cape Breton Victoria Regional Centre for Education	\$35.76 (\$19.73)	\$5328 (\$5267)
Chignecto Central Regional Centre for Education	\$31.65 (\$21.75)	\$5302 (\$5241)
Conseil scolaire acadien provincial	\$31.70 (\$20.46)	\$5285 (\$5257)
Halifax Regional Centre for Education	\$19.99 (\$16.87)	\$5422 (\$5315)
Strait Regional Centre for Education	\$47.78 (\$19.42)	\$5297(\$5272)
South Shore Regional Centre for Education	\$72.56 (\$22.93)	\$5278 (\$5228)
Tri-County Regional Centre for Education	\$38.20 (\$24.64)	\$5262 (\$5212)
<b>Average (Median)</b>	<b>\$31.84 (\$18.79)</b>	<b>\$5348 (\$5281)</b>

**2. The larger the school, the more impacted they are by the funding model. The HRCE is impacted more than other RCEs as they have a higher proportion of large schools.**

HRCE's median<sup>1</sup> funds per school are higher due to the number of schools above median school populations, compared to those across the province. When taking a provincial perspective, 51% of schools in Nova Scotia with populations greater than 500 are in HRCE and 9/10 schools in Nova Scotia with populations greater than 1000 are in HRCE. In total, 27% of all HRCE schools have populations over 500.

Schools with large populations did not see proportionate funding. The larger the school; the smaller the median amount of SAC funds per student.

Median Funds per Student			
Provincial (All Schools)	Schools with Populations >1000	Schools with Populations 500 - 999	Schools with Populations 100 - 499
\$18.79	\$4.99	\$8.78	\$20.92

**3. Elementary “super schools” are most greatly impacted. WBS is the most severely impacted school in the province.**

In the table below, median funds in elementary schools tend to be highest, given lower median school populations. High schools have the lowest median funds per student given that the median high school population is greater.

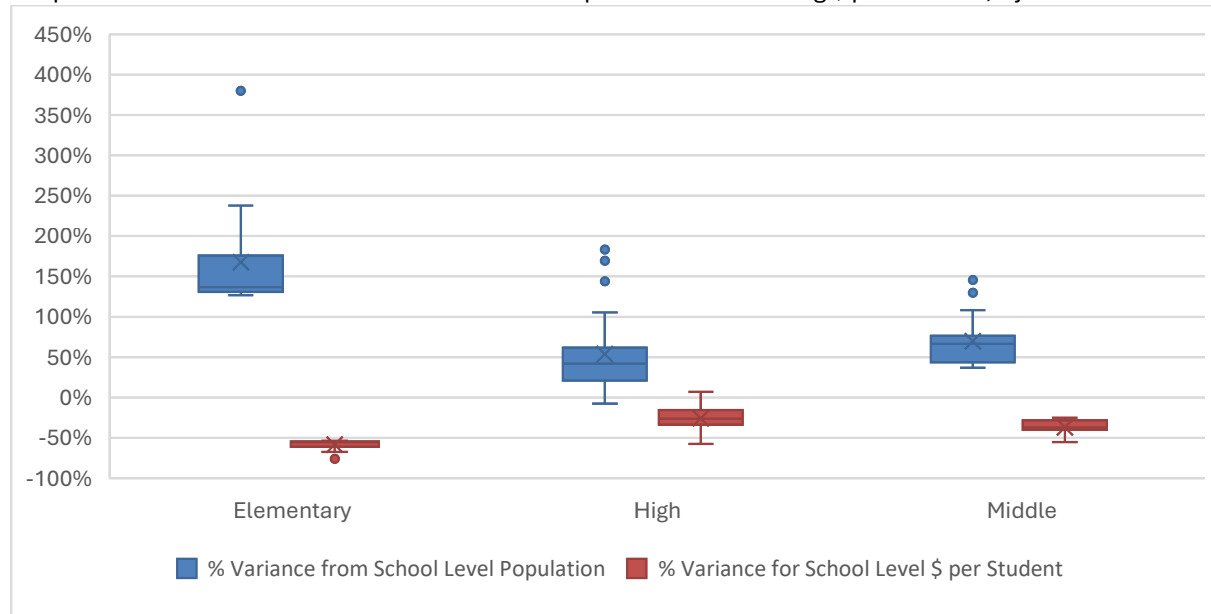
	P-12	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Median funds in \$ per Student by School Level</b>	<b>\$19.38</b>	<b>\$23.57</b>	<b>\$14.37</b>	<b>\$9.00</b>

<sup>1</sup> Analysis focused on median funds per student to minimize skewed results.

While all schools with large, outlier enrollment populations were impacted, the proportional impact was felt most by elementary “super schools” with populations over 500.<sup>2</sup> Within elementary schools, the variable difference in enrollment population for schools greater than 500 students was over 125% the provincial median. It should be noted that **WBS is the only elementary school with a population greater than 1000 and is 380% larger than the median Nova Scotian elementary school.**

As seen in the graph below, the variable difference in school population does not translate into proportional funds. The gulf is widest among elementary schools, where the variability between school population and \$ Funding per Student is -58% compared to middle (-37%) and high (-26%) school levels.

Graph 1: % Variation from Median School Level Population and Funding \$ per Student, by School Level



The table below shows the most impacted schools; all of them are in the Halifax Regional Municipality, and all but one is part of HRCE. The table also shows that WBS, along with other HRCE elementary “super schools” experience the greatest variance from the median, in comparison to their peer schools.

Board	School Name	School Level	Total (without PP)	\$ per Student	% Variance from Median Population by School Level	%Variance from Median \$ per Student by School Level
HRCE	West Bedford	Elementary	1,063	5.70	380%	-76%
HRCE	Bedford South	Elementary	748	7.68	238%	-67%
HRCE	Beechville Lakeside Timberlea Senior Elementary	Elementary	617	9.10	179%	-61%

<sup>2</sup> In 2025-2026, no P-12 schools had populations greater than 500.

Board	School Name	School Level	Total (without PP)	\$ per Student	% Variance from Median Population by School Level	%Variance from Median \$ per Student by School Level
HRCE	LeMarchant St Thomas Elementary	Elementary	605	9.26	173%	-61%
HRCE	Halifax West High	High	1,770	3.82	183%	-58%
HRCE	Charles P Allen High	High	1,738	3.88	178%	-57%
HRCE	Grosvenor Wentworth Park Elementary	Elementary	536	10.33	142%	-56%
CSAP	École Beaubassin	Elementary	533	10.38	141%	-56%
HRCE	Citadel High	High	1,684	3.97	169%	-56%
HRCE	Sackville Heights Elementary	Elementary	524	10.54	137%	-55%
HRCE	Rocky Lake Junior High	Middle	919	6.44	146%	-55%

**IMPACT:**

When funding per student is severely reduced, especially in early years, there is less opportunity at large schools for students to access resources they may otherwise have available to them in another HRCE or provincial school. All students should be given relatively equal opportunity, especially at the elementary level where small impacts and interventions can have great and long-lasting impact.

Rapid population growth within Halifax Regional Municipality has put strain on many schools in HRCE and “super schools” for elementary aged children are a new reality in HRCE. It cannot be overlooked that there are unique pressures faced by “super schools”, such as overcrowding both within the schools (e.g. up to 3 classes using the gym at one time) and in outdoor play areas (lack of space and play equipment), that greatly impact students and their wellbeing. Students at WBS, and populous schools in HRCE, should not be further disadvantaged because of the pace at which new schools can be built to accommodate them. Decision makers should consider appropriately resourcing funding envelopes for these schools to provide them with the same opportunity to support their students as what is given to schools elsewhere in the province.

**BACKGROUND:**

- The Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development uses a standard formula of \$5000 + \$1 per student for three provincial funding envelopes which impact SAC funding, Healthy School Grants, and Student Support Grants.

SAC Funding

- SACs are integral to promoting student success by bringing together school stakeholders and individuals from local communities and advising on the best interests of students from the point of view of the school community. The funds directed toward students support all students’ achievement toward their School Success Plan and play a key role in the ongoing efforts of schools to improve student achievement and well-being.
  - If an SAC represents multiple schools, each school will receive its own budget of \$5,000

plus \$1 per student.

#### Healthy Schools Grants

- The Health Schools Grants provide funding for schools to boost student well-being through physical activity, nutrition, and mental health initiatives, with common examples including equipment, garden supplies, healthy cooking programs, and sensory spaces. These grants encourage holistic health, covering everything from sports gear and mental health resources to cultural awareness, with funds often managed in partnership with School Advisory Councils or community health boards.

#### Student Support Grants

- Student Support Grants allow schools to tailor services and programming at a local level to improve student success. These grants enable individual schools to fund local initiatives and help address fundraising pressures facing many children, youth, families, and schools.

#### **ADVICE:**

As a result of rapid population growth within Nova Scotia, specifically within the Halifax Regional Municipality, the Co-chair of West Bedford School and Co-chair of Rocky Lake Junior High jointly request that consideration is given to reviewing and revising the funding model to ensure equitable distribution of funds across provincial schools.

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**PREPARED BY:** Julia Spence, Co-Chair, West Bedford School, hrce-sac-wbs@gnspecs.ca  
**DATE:** November 26, 2025, updated January 21, 2026