Greater Petite Area Community Association March 20, 2017

MEDIA RELEASE

**Parent-led Protest for Petite Elementary Families**

In response to the recent failure of the South Shore Regional School Board to avert a June 2018 closure of Petite Elementary, local parents have organized a one-day protest on Wednesday March 22.

The free Community Learning Day will feature learning activities, crafts and games for children aged 4 to 11. All parents of PRES students have been contacted and provided an alternative learning day from 7:30am- 2:30pm with parents free to drop off children with qualified volunteers.

The positive protest is hosted at the Vogler’s Cove Community Hall, in one of the communities likely to be most affected by bussing children far from home each day. “There is zero educational benefit of taking them so long each way to a school that is roughly the same-age and with less space to play and learn” says organizer Ebony Newell. “The purpose of this event is to demonstrate to the SSRSB that the residents of these communities are not satisfied with how this is unfolding”.

Safety considerations and logistic support has come from the newly established Greater Petite Area Community Association. It has formed to keep the school open by finding ways to support education and development in this vibrant and growing rural part of Lunenburg County.

While a great deal of effort has been put into the Petite for the Future awareness campaign that includes a viral video and extensive media coverage, parents are unconvinced the board is working as hard to find a solution to keep a school open in the area. “We are not satisfied with the Board’s months of inaction and refusal to explore options, and their procedural decisions seemingly made on the fly”, says GPACA Chairperson Stacey Godsoe.

Local residents, business owners, parents and the School Advisory Committee for PRES are united in demanding the Board act on its intent to secure a replacement school before any closure is considered. They and others have implored the Board to simply request the offer of new funding for a renovation to one of the local schools. The lawful process to do so is spelled out in the Education Act, and requires a school options committee be struck by the board to study the situation and make recommendations.

Organizers expect more than half of the children to participate in this community day of protest. Media are welcome to stop by and speak to volunteers and organizers to learn more about Petite for the Future.

For further information

Ebony Newell, parent organizer 902-521-2111

Stacey Godsoe, GPACA Chair 902-688-1562

<http://petiteforthefuture.ca/>