

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

January 25, 2011

TO: Board of Trustees  
FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools  
SUBJECT: Webcasting at Public Meetings  
ORIGINATOR: D. Fraser, Executive Director, Corporate Services

RESOURCE

STAFF: Jeremy Fritsche, Cheryl Oxford, Anne Sherwood, Mark Strembicke,  
Tash Taylor

RECOMMENDATION

That Edmonton Public Schools continue webcasting public Board meetings using outside expertise to produce the webcast.

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**TRUSTEE REQUEST # 10, NOVEMBER 16, 2010 (TRUSTEE MACKENZIE AND TRUSTEE HOFFMAN) FOR THE JANUARY 25, 2011 REPORT REGARDING THE WEBCASTING OF PUBLIC BOARD MEETINGS:**

- **CONSIDER EXCLUDING THE COST OF COMMUNICATIONS STAFF TIME**
- **INCLUDE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO WATCH ARCHIVED COPIES OF THE LIVESTREAM**

The Board of Trustees has requested that public Board meetings be webcast live in an effort to make these public meetings accessible, engaging and interactive for a wider audience.

**Resources required from February 8, 2011- June 14, 2011 - \$4,500 to \$15,600**

Should the Board accept the recommendation above, it is recommended that livestream.com continue to be used as the player for live webcasts. The costs would be as follows for the remainder of the school year:

**From \$0 to \$3,500 to use livestream.com** – the basic service is free. The upgraded service (\$3,500) blocks ads and provides additional features.

**From \$4,500 to \$5,500 in consultant costs** - a consultant will be hired to produce the rest of the school year's webcasts, at a cost of \$500 per meeting. The consultant will take on the role of producing the webcast, displaying agenda items on the video feed and operating the camera.

**From \$0 to \$6,600 in staff costs** – If the chat feature were to continue, there is a need for an individual to moderate the live chat during the Board meetings.

Depending on workload, moderating the chat could become part of a staff member's assigned responsibilities at no cost or overtime would be accumulated and taken as time in lieu or paid out. The length of the Board meetings will be a variable factor in determining these costs.

It is important to note that the Board Office will need to budget for webcasting costs for the 2011-12 school year. In order to ensure sufficient resources are in place to cover potential costs, \$30,000 will need to be added to the Board Office budget.

### **Why Livestream is being recommended:**

Livestream.com is the most cost-effective option and meets all of the following requirements:

- It allows all webcasts to be archived and available on-demand to viewers.
- It offers high quality video and audio webcasts.
- The livestream player works across all major platforms and browsers, including live chat, Twitter and Facebook integration.
- The livestream player is also embeddable in webpages, provides viewer statistics, and moderator tools (e.g. - ban users, clear chat window, view chat users).

The District will ensure that all records management and privacy guidelines will be met through the following:

- Videos will be made available online for one year at which time they will be moved to the Board office and stored on DVD, where they will be available by request.
- Archived webcasts will be retained for four years similar to the current practice with audio recordings of public Board meetings.
- Citizens will be made aware of the webcast using the following methods: notifying presenters of the webcasting in advance, providing notice about webcasting in the printed agendas for each meeting, mentioned in *Sharing Your Views* document available on epsb.ca and a verbal reminder from the Board Chair about webcasting.

### **Background information on webcast meetings to date:**

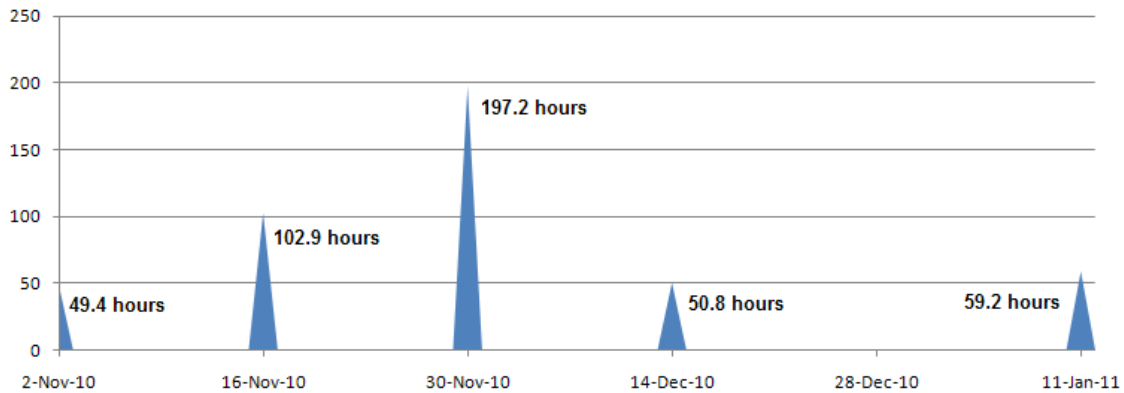
A variety of tools were used to promote the webcasts including:

- emails to all staff
- emails to school council chairs and other community partners
- media releases
- media interview with Board Chair
- promotion on epsb.ca (main page and Board of Trustees section on Board meetings/agendas)
- Twitter and Facebook
- Go Public blogs

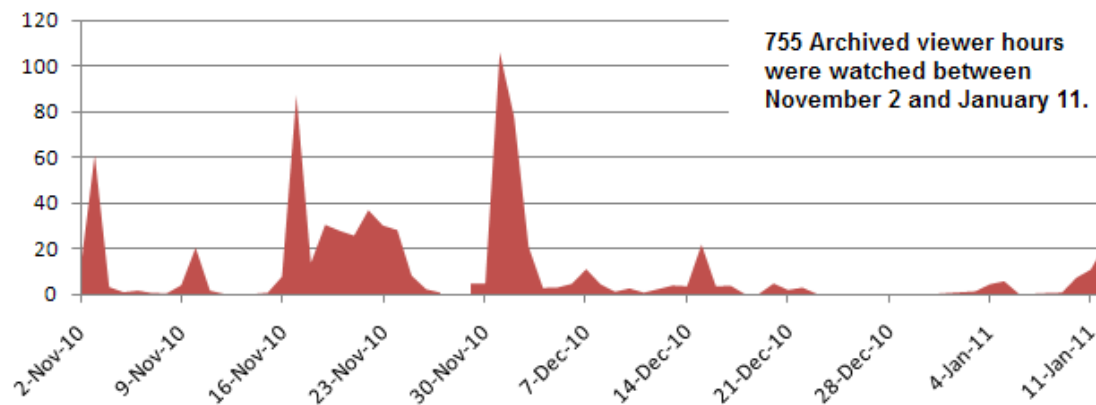
Overall, general feedback received about webcasting was positive and viewers noted that they enjoyed the option to view Board meetings and participate. Livestream provides statistics in viewer hours only; therefore, absolute numbers of viewers are not available. It is possible to roughly estimate an average number of viewers who took in the live webcast taking the length of the Board meeting webcast and dividing it by the number of viewer hours.

Meeting date	Approximate meeting length	Number of viewer hours during live webcast	Estimated average number of viewers
Nov. 2, 2010	1 hour	49.4	49
Nov. 16, 2010	4.5 hours	102.9	23
Nov. 30, 2010	4 hours	197.2	49
Dec. 14, 2010	3 hours	50.8	17
Jan. 11, 2011	2 hours	59.2	30
	14.5 hours	459.5	<b>Average: 34 viewers</b>

### Live Meeting Viewer Hours



### Archived Viewer Hours



There was a total of 755 archived viewer hours between November 2 and January 11. Livestream statistics cannot outline which archived webcast(s) were watched but rather the overall amount of archived viewer hours and timelines. Once again, an average number of viewers can be estimated by taking the amount of archived hours of webcasts available (14.5 hours of meeting time) divided by the number of archived viewer hours for an average of 52 viewers. As charted above, there were two notable spikes after the November 16 and November 30 Board meetings, likely due to an interest in the school closure moratorium discussions.

ES:jf