

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 8, 2005

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Recommendation Arising from the Athlone, McArthur and Wellington Schools' Cluster Study

ORIGINATOR: C. McCabe, Assistant to the Superintendent

RESOURCE

STAFF: Rick Bell, Jenise Bidulock, Randy Billey, Michael Ediger, Kim Falkenberg, Brian Fedor, Leanne Fedor, Andrea Furness, Kerry-Ann Kope, Randy Leal, Kathy McCabe, Shirly McNeill, Jamie Pallett, Deanne Patsula, Howard Saumer, Larry Schwenneker, Cindy Skolski

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the administration be authorized to undertake the provincial and board mandated processes to consider the closure of Wellington School.
2. That in conjunction with recommendation one above, the administration bring forward information to the Board of Trustees regarding:
 - a. necessary upgrades to Athlone and McArthur Schools;
 - b. upgrades to Dickinsfield, Rosslyn and Queen Elizabeth Schools to accommodate regular and special needs programs or to any other schools that may be considered through the closure process;
 - c. program enhancements for students at receiving schools;
 - d. other matters relating to the implementation of the recommendations.

* * * * *

In accordance with the Closure of Schools Regulation, and pursuant to the School Act, school boards have the authority to close schools. Wellington School is eligible for closure in accordance with Board Policy FL.BP (Appendix I), which identifies space utilization (under 40 per cent) and/or an average enrolment per grade and/or high cost of operation and maintenance as criteria for such selection.

Background

These recommendations are brought before the board in conjunction with a study completed in schools in this area of the city with the goal being to improve programming opportunities and learning environments for students. The study was planned to result in recommendations to the board for the consideration of one or more of the following:

- the relocation or consolidation of programs;
- the upgrading and preservation of existing space;
- the closure of schools;
- the demolition or decommissioning of space; and
- an alternative arising from the community consultation process.

Wellington School

Background

According to City of Edmonton demographic data, the number of pre-school and elementary school age children has declined in the area steadily since 1996 (Appendix II). As well, the projection for numbers of school age children shows an overall decline to the year 2030. Based on these numbers it is projected that the population of school age children in the Wellington catchment area will continue to decline.

Wellington School was opened in 1958 and has a capacity for 676 students. The September 30, 2004 enrolment at Wellington school was 182 students, which represents a 36 per cent utilization rate. Of the 182 students enrolled at Wellington; 150 students receive regular programming and 32 students receive severe special needs programming in the District Site. Enrolment at Wellington has been declining steadily since 1973 (Appendix III).

Rationale

Projected enrolment for next year is 174 students (including severe special needs) in grades 7 to 9. There are 470 public junior high students living within the Wellington attendance area. This includes the local Athlone and McArthur neighbourhoods and the west portion of Kensington and Calder (119 Street), as well as, Canossa, Oxford, Carleton, Cumberland and Hudson neighbourhoods. Of these students 136 currently choose to attend Wellington, with the remaining 334 students spread among 43 other district schools. Appendix IV shows the total capacity, student population, and student enrolment for Wellington School. There are 155 public junior high students living within the local Athlone and McArthur neighbourhoods, which includes 70 students currently attending Wellington School.

If Wellington school were to close, the 182 students currently registered would be tentatively designated to:

- Rosslyn for regular junior high;
- Queen Elizabeth for the Individual Support program; and
- Dickinsfield for the Behaviour and Learning Assistance program.

Some students might choose other nearby public junior high school schools. The current utilization rates of other neighborhood junior high schools are 64 per cent for Rosslyn School, and 80 per cent for Dickinsfield School. Queen Elizabeth School currently has a utilization rate of 38 per cent. There is space available in these schools to accommodate Wellington students.

At the February 9th Parent/Community Consultation meeting Westmount School was proposed for relocation of the I.S.P. District Centre. After further consideration it was

determined that Queen Elizabeth School would be a more suitable location. Consideration for relocation of the I.S.P. site included: age appropriate setting, program consideration and compatibility with site, capital costs associated, location relative to district needs and location where students reside, and transportation consideration.

Educational Considerations

There are 22.5 teachers, support staff and custodial staff on staff at Wellington School (11 certificated, 7 teachers aids, 2 support, and 2.5 custodial). Closure and relocation of Wellington students as above would result in fewer combined grade classes, and other educational benefits would be available through enrolling students in a larger school setting. Program offerings at neighbourhood junior high schools are: languages (Mandarin Bilingual, French, ESL), art, band, computer studies, drama, fashion, foods, industrial arts, outdoor education, study skills and learning strategies, and visual communications.

In the instance of relocation of students, every effort would be made to ensure as much continuity as possible with current staff, in particular for those students in district center programs for students with special needs.

Should parents request a registration in a different school other than the designated receiving school, students would be able to register in that school, (provided the school provides the appropriate program,) even if pre-enrolment deadlines are past.

Capital and Financial Considerations

Wellington School audit score is 810. \$3.8M would be required to modernize Wellington School to modern day standards. Savings in terms of operational costs of approximately \$183,000 annually per year would be realized if Wellington School were to be closed.

Transportation Considerations

Subsidized ETS bus passes would be provided to students to attend their designated or other junior high school. There would be minimal budget impact. Special needs transportation would be largely unaffected.

Wellington School

Date School Opened	Capacity	Current Enrolment	Projected Enrolment Sept 2005	5 Year Projected Enrolment
1958	676	182	174	164
Enrolment Declining Since	Number of Students in Catchment Area	Number Attending Wellington School	Number attending Other District Schools	Number of Staff Currently at Wellington School
1976	470	136	334	22.5 FTE

Wellington School

Audit Score*	Cost to Renovate	Operational Cost Savings	Increases or Decreases to Transportation Costs
810	\$3.8M	\$183,000	Minimal impact

* Provincial audit score is calculated by Alberta Infrastructure and indicates the relative condition of the building. A high audit score (600+) indicates a school requiring major upgrades.

Timeline and Next Steps

Approval of these recommendations would authorize the administration to undertake further consultation with parents and communities. At the end of that process the board would make a decision regarding recommendations that the administration will present regarding the closure of Wellington School. This approach is consistent with the applicable provincial regulation and the board's policy.

Appendix V outlines the projected changes to enrolments in neighbouring schools should the closure of Wellington School be approved by the Board of Trustees.

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APPENDIX I	Alberta Regulation 238/97 – Closure of Schools Regulation and Board Policy FL.BP School Closure
APPENDIX II	Neighborhood Demographic Information
APPENDIX III	Historical Enrolment and Capacity
APPENDIX IV	Total Capacity, Student Population, and Student Enrolment
APPENDIX V	Projected Changes to Enrolment in Schools Impacted by Recommendation

Alberta Regulation 238/97 – Closure of Schools Regulation

School Act Section 58

Closure of schools, etc.

58 The Minister may make regulations

- (a) authorizing a board to
 - (i) close a school permanently or for a specified period of time,
 - (ii) close entirely 3 or more consecutive grades in an elementary school,
 - (iii) close the entire junior high school program or the entire high school program in a school, or
 - (iv) transfer all students from one school to one or more other schools;
- (b) governing procedural and other requirements a board must comply with when doing anything described in clause (a).

1988 cS-3.1 s42;1997 c25 s12

Division 2

Operation and Management

Powers of separate school boards

CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS REGULATION

Definitions

1 In this Regulation,

- (a) "closure" means any action referred to in section 2;
 - (a.1) "Ministers" means, for the purposes of sections 6 and 7, the Ministers determined under section 16 of the *Government Organization Act* as the Ministers responsible for Part 7 of the *School Act*;
- (b) "school" year means the 12-month period beginning on September 1 and ending on the following August 31.

AR 238/97 s1;223/2002

Non-application of sections

1.1 Sections 4 to 7 do not apply to a closure that occurs

- (a) in connection with the transfer by one board to another board of the ownership of real property on which a school building is located and the school building will continue to be used for the instruction or accommodation of students, or
- (b) as a result of the Minister's having directed the board to dispose of the school building pursuant to section 200(3) of the Act.

Exemption from requirements

- 1.2 The Minister may, on the written request of a board or on the Minister's initiative, exempt a board from the requirements of sections 4 to 7 in respect of a closure that occurs
- (a) as a result of the board's inability to comply with section 57(2) of the Act, or
 - (b) for health or safety reasons.

Closure of schools, etc.

- 2 A board may
- (a) close a school permanently or for a specified period of time,
 - (b) close entirely 3 or more consecutive grades in a school, or;
 - (c) repealed AR 257/2003 s5,
 - (d) transfer all students from one school building to one or more other school buildings on a permanent basis.

Policies and procedures for closure of schools

- 3 A board may develop, and implement policies and procedures with respect to closure of schools that are not inconsistent with this Regulation.

Notification of proposed closure

- 4 (1) Where a board is considering the closure of a school, the board shall
- (a) raise the matter through a notice of motion at a regular meeting of the board, and
 - (b) in writing notify the parents of every child and student enrolled in the school who, in the opinion of the board, will be significantly affected by the closure of the school.
- (2) A notice referred to in subsection (1)(b) shall set out the following:
- (a) how the closure would affect the attendance area defined for that school;
 - (b) how the closure would affect the attendance at other schools;
 - (c) the number of students who would need to be relocated as a result of the closure;
 - (d) the need for, and extent of, busing;
 - (e) program implications for other schools and for the students when they are attending other schools;
 - (f) the educational and financial impact of closing the school, including the effect on operational costs and capital implications;
 - (g) the educational and financial impact if the school were to remain open;
 - (h) and (i) repealed AR 257/2003 s7;
 - (i) the time and location of the public meeting referred to in section 5(1)(a).

- (3) A notice referred to in subsection (1)(b) may set out the following:
 - (a) the capital needs of the schools that may have increased enrolment as a result of the closure, and
 - (b) the possible uses of the school building or space in the school building if
 - (i) the entire school is being closed, or
 - (ii) 3 or more consecutive grades in the school are being closed entirely.

Public meetings

- 5 (1) Where a board has given notice of motions at a regular meeting of the board that it is considering the closure of a school, the board
 - (a) shall organize and convene a public meeting for the purpose of discussing the information provided to the parents under section 4,
 - (b) shall provide an opportunity for the council of the municipality in which the school is located to provide a statement to the board of the impact the closure may have on the community, and
 - (c) may hold other meetings with respect to the closure at times and places as the board may determine.

- (2) The date and place of the public meeting referred to in subsection (1)(a) shall be
 - (a) posted in 5 or more conspicuous places in the area or areas of the school or schools affected by the closure, for a period of at least 14 days before the date of the public meeting, and
 - (b) advertised in a newspaper circulating within the area or areas of the school or schools affected by the proposed closure, on at least 2 occasions as close as is practicable to the date of the meeting.

- (3) At least 2 trustees of the board shall attend the public meeting referred to in subsection (1)(a)

- (4) A board shall ensure that minutes of all public meetings held under this section are prepared.

Decision on closure

- 6 (1) A board shall not make a final decision on the proposed closure until at least 3 weeks have passed since the date of the public meeting referred to in section 5(1)(a).
- (2) A board shall give due consideration to any written submissions on the proposed closure that it receives after the public meeting referred to in section 5(1)(a).
- (3) A board
 - (a) shall by resolution decide whether to close the school, and

- (b) if the decision is to close the school, shall forthwith notify the Ministers in writing of the decision.

AR 238/97 s6;223/2002

Closure within school year

- 7 (1) All school closure procedures shall be initiated and completed within the school year in which the decision to close the school is made.
- (2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), on the written request of the board, the Ministers may extend the school closure procedures beyond one school year.

Expiry

- 8 For the purpose of ensuring that this Regulation is reviewed for ongoing relevancy and necessity, with the option that it may be re-passed in its present or an amended form following a review, this Regulation expires on November 1, 2008.
- 9 Repealed AR 223/2002 s5.

AR 238/97 s8;223/2002

Edmonton Public Schools' School Closure Policy

CODE: FL.BP
TOPIC: School Closure

EFFECTIVE DATE: 11-09-2001
ISSUE DATE: 25-09-2001
REVIEW DATE: 09-2006

The board believes that the closure of schools is an important consideration in ensuring the responsible use of the resources placed in its trust; making efficient use of the district's school space; and safeguarding the health and safety of students, staff, and the public.

A. SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

1. The board reserves to itself the authority to close an entire school or three or more consecutive grades in a school.
2. The board authorizes the administration, under the direction of the superintendent of schools and with appropriate consultation, to:
 - a. close or permanently relocate fewer than three consecutive grades in a school, or
 - b. temporarily relocate any number of grades from one school to another.
3. Discontinuance of a special needs program or an alternative program is not considered a school closure and is addressed in HA.BP Student Programs.

B. CRITERIA FOR SCHOOL CLOSURE

An entire school or three or more consecutive grades in a school may be considered for closure if one or more of the following criteria are met:

1. Total enrolment as of September 30 in the current school year is below the following levels:
 - a. elementary (K to 6) - an average of 15 students per grade, or
 - b. junior high (7 to 9) - an average of 30 students per grade, or
 - c. senior high (10 to 12) - an average of 120 students per grade.
2. The space utilization rate as defined by the provincial government as of September 30 in the current school year is less than 40 per cent.
3. The cost of keeping the school in operable condition or restoring it to operable condition is deemed by the board to be unreasonably high.
4. Closing the school is deemed by the board to be necessary to safeguard the health and safety of students, staff, or the public.
5. Parents and guardians of a majority of students enrolled in the school on

September 30 in the current school year agree that closure should be considered.

C. PROCESS FOR SCHOOL CLOSURE

1. Where the board is considering school closure, it shall raise the matter through notice of motion at a regular board meeting, and ensure that the following are carried out:
 - a. A written communication, the contents of which are consistent with policies established by Alberta Learning, is sent to the parents of every student enrolled in the school who, in the opinion of the board, would be significantly affected by the closure of the school.
 - b. A public meeting is held, with at least a simple majority of trustees present.
 - c. The time, date, and place of this meeting are publicized in accordance with policies established by Alberta Learning.
 - d. The City of Edmonton is provided an opportunity to provide to the board a statement of the impact the closure may have on the community.
2. Following the public meeting attended by trustees, there shall be a period of at least three weeks for parents and community members to present to the board further responses to the proposed closure.
3. The administration may hold additional public meetings, consult with parents at other schools, or provide other opportunities for public involvement as appropriate, at any time.

Reference(s):

[HA.BP](#) - Student Programs

[School Act](#) Section 58

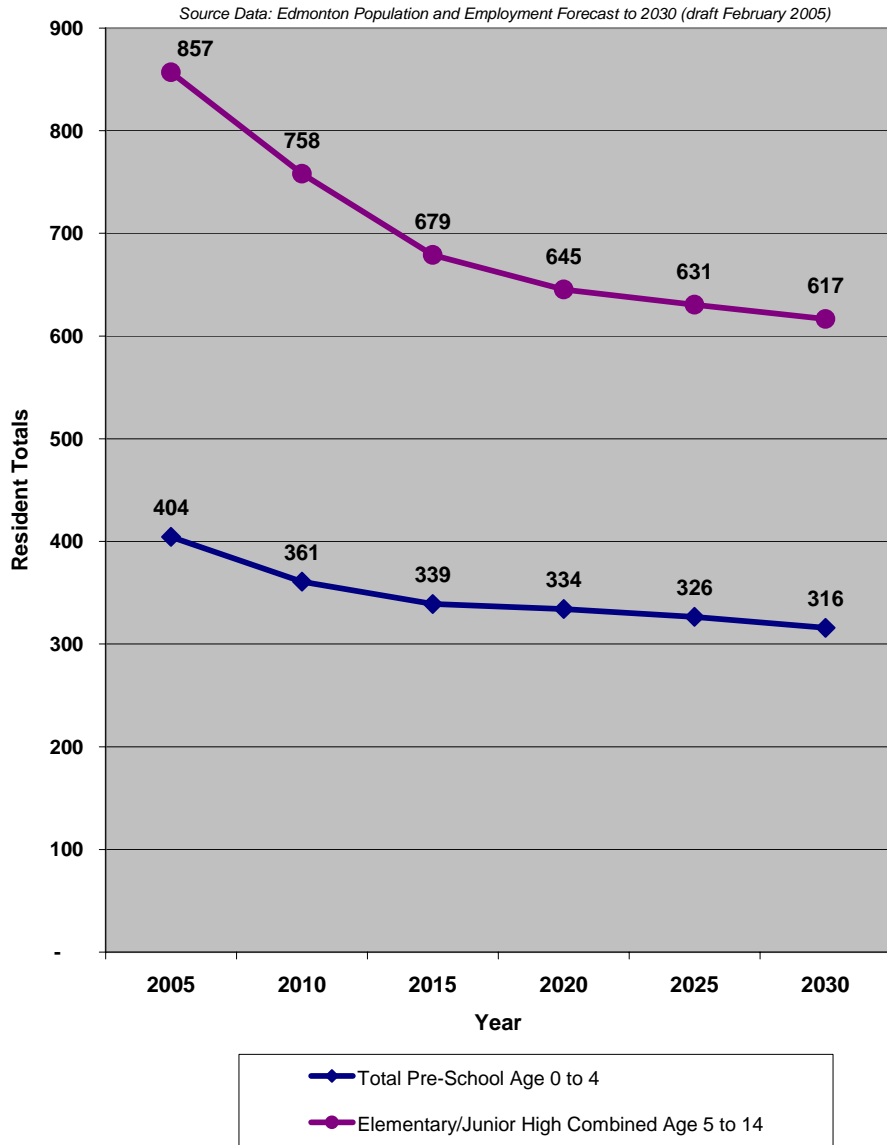
Alberta Learning's [Closure of Schools Regulation](#)

[Alberta Infrastructure](#)- see School Capital Manual 2002-2003 Section 5.2.1 Utilization Rate and Section 5.2.2. Area, Capacity and Utilization Procedures

Neighborhood Demographic Information

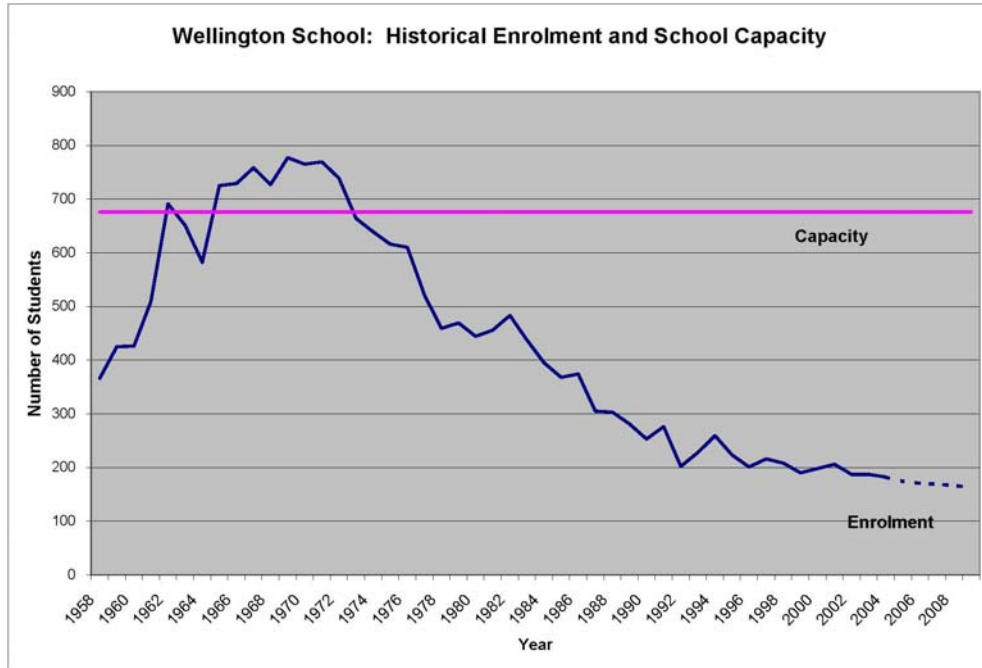
25 Year Projection by Age Group

Athlone, Dunvegan and Wellington Neighbourhoods



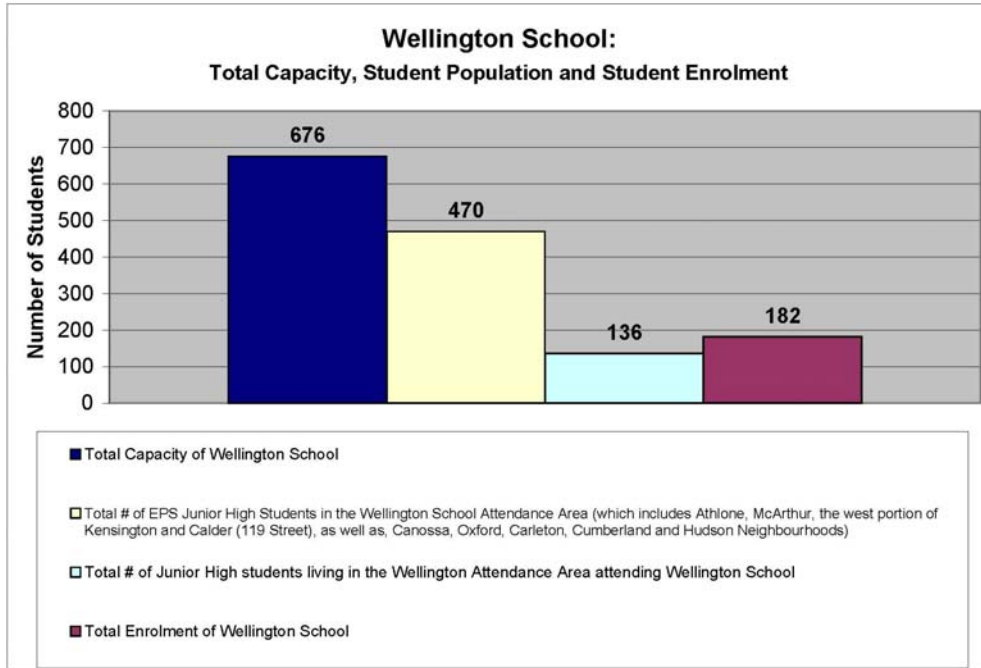
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Wellington School Historical Enrolment and School Capacity



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TOTAL CAPACITY, STUDENT POPULATION, AND STUDENT ENROLMENT



* There are 155 junior high students living within the local Athlone and McArthur neighbourhoods, which includes 70 students currently attending Wellington School.

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**PROJECTED CHANGES TO ENROLMENT IN SCHOOLS
IMPACTED BY RECOMMENDATION
Refined Option A**

Closure of Wellington School

Summary of redistribution of programs:

- Relocate regular program grades 7 – 9 to Rosslyn Junior High
- Relocate District Centre Individual Support Program special needs program to Queen Elizabeth
- Relocate District Centre Behaviour and Learning Assistance special needs program to Dickinsfield

Enrolment Projections for 2005-2006*

Enrolment information is based on projected enrolment for September 30th, 2005.

Rosslyn School

Net Capacity: 773

Utilization Rate: 63%

	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	TOTAL
Rosslyn School	162	154	143	459
Wellington School (Regular Students)	45	44	52	141
TOTAL	207	198	165	570

Rosslyn School	FTE Enrolment: 459	Adjusted Enrolment: 489
Wellington School	FTE Enrolment: 141	Adjusted Enrolment: 141
TOTALS	<u>600</u>	<u>630</u>

Utilization Rate with relocation of Wellington Students (Regular Students): 82%

* Assumes all students will go to their designated school

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Dickinsfield School

Net Capacity: 429

Utilization Rate: 84%

	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	TOTAL
Dickinsfield School	108	121	118	347
Wellington School (BLA)	3	2	6	11
TOTAL	111	123	124	358

Dickinsfield School	FTE Enrolment:	347	Adjusted Enrolment:	359
Wellington School	FTE Enrolment:	11	Adjusted Enrolment:	33
TOTALS		<u>358</u>		<u>392</u>

*Utilization Rate with relocation of Wellington Students (BLA Students) 91%

*NOTE: Assumes all students choose their designated receiving school(s) for their programs.

Queen Elizabeth School

Net Capacity: *1840

Utilization Rate: 41%

	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	TOTAL
Queen Elizabeth School				278	261	214	753
Wellington School (ISP)	7	11	4				22
TOTAL	7	11	4	278	261	214	775

Queen Elizabeth	FTE Enrolment:	753	Adjusted Enrolment:	797
Wellington School	FTE Enrolment:	22	Adjusted Enrolment:	66
TOTALS		<u>775</u>		<u>863</u>

*Utilization Rate with relocation of Wellington Students (ISP students) 47%

*Utilization Rate will be adjusted to accommodate decentralized administration for consulting services relocation to Queen Elizabeth School.