



**Summary of Board Meeting #2
Tuesday, November 7, 2000**

A. O Canada

B. Roll Call: (6:00 p.m.) – Trustee Hansen was absent.

C. Communications from the Board Chairman

Advised that Mr. Geoffrey Evans, a teacher at L'Académie Vimy Ridge Academy, performed O Canada.

D. Communications from the Superintendent of Schools

Reported on the following recipients of the Canadian Association of Communicators in Education (CACE) BRAVO Awards:

- **Award of Excellence – Media Category**
Karen Unland, Edmonton Journal Reporter, nominated by Communications for her consistent and accurate reporting.
- **Award of Excellence – Program Category**
L'Académie Vimy Ridge Academy communications and marketing plan – submitted by the Communication's department.
- **Award of Excellence – Product Category**
“Math to the Max” resources developed by district teachers and Resource Development Services' staff to provide curriculum support to district teachers and other educators in provinces that have the common math curriculum.

E. Minutes:

1. Board Meeting #18 – October 10, 2000
2. Organizational Board Meeting – October 24, 2000

Approved as printed. (AS)

F. Remembrance Day Ceremony

3. L'Académie Vimy Ridge Academy Remembrance Ceremony

Received for information.

G. Recognition:

4. Edmonton Aboriginal Youth Committee
5. W.P. Wagner Energy Project
6. Don Wheaton Ltd. Scholarship

Received for information.

H. Reports:

7. Report #1 of the Conference Committee (From the Meeting Held October 24, 2000)

Confirmed recommendations re:

- 2001-2002 professional improvement leaves
- funds for math courses for junior and senior high teachers

8. Plan for Disposition of Eight Closed Schools

Received for information.

10. Delegation – Kingsway Business Association

a) Heard presentation by delegation.

b) Response to delegation to be prepared for the November 28, 2000 board meeting.

11. Delegation – Edmonton Airport Association

a) Heard presentation by delegation.

b) Response to delegation to be prepared for the November 28, 2000 board meeting.

9. Edmonton Student Health Initiative Partnership Annual Report

Received for information.

12. Responses to Trustee Requests for Information

Received for information.

I. Committee and Board Representative Reports – None.

- **Community Relations Activities** – None.

J. Comments from the Public and Staff Group Representatives

1. Ms Ruth Morrin, a parent of an Amiskwaciy student, noted that she is very happy with Amiskwaciy Academy so far. She wanted the board to know that Aboriginal people also are concerned about the Academy's location – that it be in a safe place for their children. They have trust in the board that it will make a good decision, an objective decision and that arguments about their children throwing garbage around and perhaps hanging out at Esmeralda's all day, and about birds, will also be taken into consideration.

Ms Morrin asked the board to also take into consideration that they hope some day some of their children would be able to consider a career in aviation which might be a positive impact from them being around an airport especially since a lot of them come from the North. The North is taking off now economically. Perhaps they could work in cooperation with the airport authorities and people who run airports.

2. Mr. Troy Chalifoux, noted that he is an Aboriginal lawyer living in Edmonton. He is concerned about the location of Amiskwaciy but not because of the reasons espoused by the Kingsway Business Association. When he looks at the designs, he feels that it looks nothing short of a prison. Having been a prosecutor and having been a lawyer for a number of years, he knows what the inside of penal institutes look like. Clearly that is not the intention of the board or the school. However, we have to be conscious of the environment that is created for the students to attend school. In looking at the designs, he questioned where the recreational field was. The only possible and logistical location for that is between the 2.5 metre concrete berms, barbwire and the building. What kind of environment is that?

Mr. Chalifoux noted that his concern is whether or not all of the options have been raised. He has heard other options – perhaps they are viable and perhaps they are not but, if the options are limited because of availability of funds he has serious concerns about that. If the Edmonton Public School Board is serious about making its contribution towards Aboriginal people to enable them to become empowered and contributing citizens in this city, then it should “buck up” to the same extent it does in other neighbourhoods for non-native communities.

Mr. Chalifoux noted that there are roughly 5,000 Aboriginal students in Edmonton. We are talking about addressing a very small portion of the needs of that community. In the early 80's the reaction to the growing concern of troubled students was to facilitate them at Victoria Composite – no other school wanted them. At least those troubled students had a real school to go to. We are talking about housing students in a facility that is not conducive to learning. There have to be other options. He asked both the school and the board to consider them with an open mind.

Mr. Chalifoux wanted to be very clear that he supports very strongly the school and considers himself to be a friend of the school and is very worried about making his presentation because he did not want to be perceived as having a divided community. The Aboriginal community is very cohesive in its objectives regarding education. He is not deviating from that. He is asking everybody to make other options available and not to be restricted by funds or available facilities. If a new facility is needed, why can't we build a new one?

3. Mr. Brad Enge acknowledged his elders who were present, the chair, the superintendent and trustees. He works at the University of Alberta Faculty of Law and is also an Aboriginal lawyer. He has lived in Edmonton since 1979. He has three children in the Edmonton Public School system. Unfortunately, when he grew up there was no facility available to have Aboriginal people come together in one place and learn. We have seen various models tried out. At first his culture had home schooling and the along came the Christians and created residential schools, removing children from their parents. We have had reserve schools, we have separate and public schools but in a city of close to 775,000 people we don't have a proper Aboriginal school where Aboriginal people who come to Edmonton for socio-economic and other reasons have the option to send their children that provides them with the culturally-appropriate educational learning environment.

Mr. Enge complimented the Public School Board for the work, initiatives and support they have given the Academy already. He thinks that it is a right-minded and a reasonable accommodation decision to create an Academy such as the one that is under consideration as far as providing a permanent home. This is where his focus is – what is an appropriate, permanent home for Aboriginal people who want to learn in a culturally-appropriate environment.

Mr. Enge noted that he had some concerns when the Academy was first proposed because it was almost a segregationist approach and he was a bit wary about supporting it but thinks that the Aboriginal community themselves support the concept. It is a very viable concept and it provides an option for a parent like himself raising children to co-exist in a culturally-dominant society that has been very unfriendly towards Aboriginal people generally.

Mr. Enge wanted to make it clear that he is a strong proponent for the Academy but thinks that a more suitable location ought to be considered before any final decisions are made. In his discussions with the Academy principal earlier today, the indications were that a permanent place is still under consideration. As Mr. Chalifoux had mentioned, there are over 5,000 self-identified Aboriginal students in the Edmonton Public School system. He did not know how many students are in the separate system but would assume that there are roughly probably just as many.

Mr. Enge noted that, when he first learned of the Academy and its location, the first thought that came to his mind was that the Edmonton Public School Board was perhaps opening up the largest flying school in Canada because it was putting itself on the edge of a runway or a tarmac. Low and behold he found out that it is the high school that is being proposed and he began to wonder about the suitability. When he began looking at this matter, reading in the paper and looking on the Edmonton Public School Board website, and learned that there are eight schools “on the chopping block,” he thought perhaps there should be a more viable or suitable option taken into consideration when finding a permanent home for this facility. They may not all be suitable—the Academy principal indicated to him that she didn’t find any of them suitable – but that is fine.

Mr. Enge noted, that the occupancy capacities for each of those eight schools varied from 125 to 690 students. It struck him as funny that, if there are 5,000 Aboriginal students in this city, 3 of whom are his, and the school board can build a school for 125 students, why can’t it build a school for 5,000 Aboriginal students that could be a major draw to this Edmonton for students from such places as Northern Alberta who may want to taste the flavour of a large urban educational centre that has a culturally-appropriate curriculum.

K. Trustee and Board Requests for Information – None.

L. Notices of Motion – None.

M. Meeting Dates:

Date	Time	Meeting Type
November 28, 2000	6:00 p.m.	Board

N. Duration of Meeting: 6:00 p.m. to 8:35 p.m.