

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

November 7, 2000

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dosdall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Responses to Trustee Requests for Information

ORIGINATOR: A. McBeath, Department Head

RESOURCE

STAFF: Gloria Chalmers, Sheri-Lee Langlois, Faye Parker,

INFORMATION

TRUSTEE REQUEST #254, SEPTEMBER 12, 2000 (TRUSTEE GIBEAULT) PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING THE BREAKDOWN OF THE NUMBER OF SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS PLACED IN REGULAR CLASSROOMS VERSUS THE NUMBERS BEING SERVED IN SEGREGATED SITES. The following tables provide enrolments of students with special needs by eligibility as of September 30, 2000. An average of 80% of students with severe special needs are served in district centres, with the exception of visually impaired students, most of whom attend regular schools. An average of 67% of students with mild/moderate disabilities are enrolled in district centres. Elementary and junior high students with learning disabilities or literacy eligibilities must be enrolled in a district centre for their programming. Senior high students with learning disabilities may attend a district centre or a regular school. Senior high students with literacy eligibility are accommodated in their local high schools. Elementary students with English as a Second Language eligibility attend regular schools. District centres for English as a Second Language are only available at junior and senior high. (S. Langlois 420-8431)

Eligibility	Total Enrolment	Students enrolled in a District Centre	Percentage of Total	Students integrated in a Regular School	Percentage of Total
Severe Special Needs					
Autistic	154	121	79%	33	21%
Behaviour Disorders	636	520	82%	116	18%
Dependent Handicapped	106	98	92%	8	8%
Hearing Impaired	105	68	65%	37	35%
Visually Impaired	36	3	8%	33	92%

Eligibility	Total Enrolment	Students enrolled in District Centres	Percentage of Total	Students enrolled in other Schools*	Percentage of Total
Mild/Moderate Special Needs					
Academic Challenge	1233	679	55%	554	45%
Learning Disabilities	1107	994	90%	113	10%
Opportunity	1698	1213	71%	485	29%
Trainable Handicapped	147	118	80%	29	20%
Literacy	410	354	86%	56	14%
English as a Second Language	2046	371	18%	1675	82%

*Some of these students are enrolled in a district centre with students of eligibilities other than their own.

TRUSTEE REQUEST #260, SEPTEMBER 26, 2000 (TRUSTEES NICHOLSON AND SULYMA) PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION REGARDING REDUCING OVERALL CLASS SIZE IN DIVISION I (K-3) TO A 20-1 RATIO AND A 17-1 RATIO:

- **WHAT WOULD BE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE 2000-2001 BUDGET?**
- **HOW MANY ADDITIONAL CLASSROOM SPACES WOULD BE REQUIRED?**
- **WHAT OTHER IMPLICATIONS WOULD THIS HAVE, SUCH AS, IMPACT ON OVERALL UTILIZATION RATE? WOULD THERE BE A REQUIREMENT FOR ADDITIONAL PORTABLES? WHAT WOULD THE IMPACT BE ON OTHER DIVISIONS?**

In order to develop a response to these questions, the following methodology was used:

- A class size report was run from which it could be determined how many classes of kindergarten to grade three were in each individual school.
- The September 30 enrolment in kindergarten to grade three in each school offering those grades was determined.
- This figure was divided by 17 and by 20 to determine the number of classes that would be required in each individual school to achieve a 17:1 and a 20:1 ratio.
- The actual number of kindergarten to grade three classes was compared to the number of classes at 17:1 and 20:1 to determine how many additional classes, if any, the school would require to achieve those ratios.
- Any fraction of a class over .25 was rounded up to the next whole number.
- The school's total enrolment and capacity, as well as its district utilization rate were examined to estimate whether portable classrooms would be required to accommodate the additional classes. No detailed study has been carried out to determine whether there are site constraints at some schools which would make it difficult or impossible to add the requisite number of portables.
- The school-by-school results were aggregated to arrive at district totals.

For example: Crawford Plains School has 286 students in kindergarten to grade three. At a ratio of 17:1, it would require 16.82 (i.e., 17) classes. At a ratio of 20:1, it would require 14.3 (i.e., 15) classes. There are currently 12 K to 3 classes at Crawford Plains. Therefore, the school would require 5 additional classes to reach 17:1 and 3 to reach the 20:1 ratio. The

school's utilization is over 85 percent, which means it would likely require a portable for each of the additional classes.

The summary results are presented in the following table:

Classroom Size	Additional Classes Required	Portable Classrooms Required	Cost of Hiring Teachers
17 to 1 Ratio	266	93	\$14.4 M
20 to 1 Ratio	109	29	\$ 5.9 M

Economic Impact

To calculate the economic impact on the district for 2000-2001, it is necessary to determine the number of additional teachers required and multiply this by the unit cost for teachers. It is assumed that each additional class, with the exception of kindergarten, would require an extra 1.0 FTE teacher. For purposes of this calculation, it is also assumed that one-quarter, or 25 per cent of the additional classes would be kindergarten classes requiring a 0.5 FTE teacher. Therefore, at a ratio of 17:1, approximately 233 FTE teachers would be needed. At the 2000-2001 unit cost of \$61,862, it would cost the district \$14.4 million to hire this many teachers for the year. Given that it is now November, this cost could be prorated, assuming it would be possible to hire this number of teachers. At the 20:1 ratio, the 109 additional classes would require about 95 FTE, at a cost of \$5.9 million. It should be noted that these are annual costs, which would be increased over time by the cost of negotiated salary increases.

Information from Personnel Services indicates that, for the 17:1 ratio, it would be impossible to fill this many positions with appropriate staff at this time of the year. The 17:1 ratio could pose difficulties even with a year to plan for the change. A ratio of 20:1 would be less problematic, but would still confront the district with decisions about whether our current hiring standards could still be met. This is particularly true given projections that it may be difficult over the next few years to meet the demand for teachers even at current class sizes. There could also be particular challenges if the need for teachers in many of our specialized elementary alternative programs or in other specialty areas such as French and music were to increase substantially.

There would be other potential economic impacts of reducing the class sizes in division I. These range from the cost of the furniture, equipment and supplies to set up additional classrooms, to the potential for increased utilities and maintenance costs and a possible increased need for support and custodial services in some locations.

If there were no additional funding from the provincial government to accompany this initiative, the above amounts would have to be absorbed by the district, and would probably result in a deficit position. In a case where no new funding were provided, then the cost of the initiative would most likely be absorbed by increasing class sizes in other grades or divisions.

Impact on Space

Assuming that no new capacity is added to the district's inventory, moving to either a 17:1 or a 20:1 class size in division I would have no impact on the district's space utilization rate as it is calculated by the provincial government, because it neither increases the number of students in the district nor decreases the amount of school space. If this move came as a provincial initiative, with accompanying funding, it is likely that Alberta Infrastructure would have to give some recognition to the additional space needed to meet a government requirement.

There would, however, be a major impact on the use of space, particularly in schools which are already operating at or near capacity. The 266 additional classrooms required at the 17:1 ratio represent 6,650 student spaces under the current utilization calculation – about 6 per cent of the district's current rated capacity.

At 17:1, there would be a need for about 93 additional portable classrooms at schools. This, from the schools' perspective, is likely a conservative estimate, as no detailed work has been done to determine what the particular schools think their needs would be. It is also not known whether some sites would be incapable of accommodating the required portables.

In an average year, the district relocates about 12 portables. The total district stock of portable classrooms is 151. All of these are currently located at schools, and are generally used for instruction. It would not be possible to relocate 61 per cent of the stock without seriously disrupting school operations. It is also doubtful that the district would receive approval from Alberta Infrastructure to build this many additional portable classrooms. Even if such approval were received, the new space would have a negative impact on the district's overall space utilization rate. The district would receive a portion of the Operations and Maintenance grants in respect of any new portables. This would partially offset the cost of operating additional space without additional students.

At a ratio of 20:1, the general impacts are the same, but of lesser magnitude, as shown in the table above. (F. Parker, 429-8429)

TRUSTEE REQUEST #263, OCTOBER 10, 2000 (TRUSTEES) PREPARE A LETTER FOR THE CHAIRMAN'S SIGNATURE REGARDING THE MOTION CONCERNING KINDERGARTEN: Attached is a copy of the letter forwarded to the Minister of Education advising of the board of trustees' motion concerning kindergarten. (Appendix I)(A. McBeath, 429-8025)

TRUSTEE REQUEST #265, OCTOBER 10, 2000 (TRUSTEE FLEMING) PREPARE A LETTER FOR THE CHAIRMAN'S SIGNATURE TO THE MINISTER OF INFRASTRUCTURE REQUESTING THAT THE MINISTER CLARIFY THE STATUS OF THE DISTRICT'S 2000 CAPITAL PLAN. In response to Trustee Fleming's request, the attached letter has been forwarded to the Minister of Infrastructure. (Appendix II) (F. Parker 429-8429)

TRUSTEE REQUEST #266, OCTOBER 24, 2000 (TRUSTEE HANSEN) ARE THE ARCHIVES AND THE 1881 SCHOOL HOUSE COUNTED IN THE DISTRICT'S UTILIZATION RATE? McKay Avenue School, which houses the district's Archives and Museum, is included by Alberta Infrastructure in the district's inventory of school space. It is therefore a factor in the district's space utilization rate. The 1881 School is not included in the inventory. (Faye Parker 429-8429)

APPENDIX I – Letter to The Honourable Dr. Lyle Oberg

APPENDIX II – Letter to The Honourable Ed Stelmach

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