

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

April 11, 2000

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dosdall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Responses to Trustee Requests for Information

ORIGINATORS: A. McBeath, Department Head

RESOURCE
STAFF: Anne-Louise Charette, Robert Craig, Manfred Malzahn

INFORMATION

TRUSTEE REQUEST #201, MARCH 10, 2000 (TRUSTEE HANSEN): PROVIDE A REPORT REGARDING THE NUMBER OF DISTRICT STUDENTS IN DIVISIONS I AND II WHO HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS REQUIRING SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY SERVICES; THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ACTUALLY RECEIVING ASSISTANCE; AND THE AVERAGE AMOUNT OF TIME EACH STUDENT RECEIVES. The following information has been provided by Capital Health. In the period from September 1999 to January 31, 2000, there were 2,395 district students with active status. Active status includes students who are waiting for assessment or treatment as well as those who are receiving services, or have received service and are scheduled for review. Of these students 90% are in kindergarten or division I, and 10% are in division II. There were 698 new referrals to Capital Health during this period.

This year, the average waiting time between referral and assessment is 30 days and the average waiting time between assessment and treatment is 67 days.

There are currently 948 students who have received or are currently receiving treatment. The amount of treatment for those students who have started and ended treatment in that period is as follows:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| • High priority students | 1.5 hours to 102 hours | average 13 hours |
| • Moderate priority students | 0.5 hours to 42 hours | average 8 hours |
| • Low priority students | 0.75 hours to 27 hours | average 7 hours |

These figures do not include children whose treatment was initiated prior to January 31 but not completed by that date. Treatment may include direct treatment, home programming and consultation. (A-L. Charette, 429-8381)

TRUSTEE REQUEST #204, MARCH 21, 2000 (TRUSTEE BONKO) PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING WHAT GEOGRAPHIC AREAS STUDENTS ATTENDING QUEEN ELIZABETH SCHOOL ARE DRAWN FROM AND THE NUMBERS INVOLVED. The attached map (appendix I) provides a representation of the geographic distribution of students attending Queen Elizabeth School on September 30, 1999. The attached table, (appendix II) provides the specific number of students per neighbourhood. (R. Craig, 429-8399)

TRUSTEE REQUEST #205, MARCH 21, 2000 (TRUSTEE HANSEN): PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING WITH RESPECT TO PROGRAMS OF CHOICE: A REPORT IDENTIFYING THOSE PROGRAMS OF CHOICE IN WHICH THERE DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE SUFFICIENT SUPPORT OR ENROLMENT TO MAKE THEM SELF-SUSTAINING; HISTORICAL DATA ON THE SELF-SUFFICIENCY OF ANY SUCH PROGRAMS; INFORMATION AS TO HOW THE DISTRICT HAS HISTORICALLY DEALT WITH PROGRAMS OF CHOICE WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN SELF-SUSTAINING (TRUSTEE HANSEN) Of the approximately 20 alternative programs offered by Edmonton Public Schools, most have stable or increasing enrolment. Historically, where enrolments have declined, this has taken one of two forms: low enrolment at a district site that offers the program, or low enrolment in the program district-wide. Overall, the district's first response to situations of this kind is to make efforts to increase enrolment.

If enrolment at a particular site does not increase, and is too low to remain viable, that school's program is usually consolidated with another program in the same area of the city. Weinlos School's French immersion program, for example, is being consolidated with the program at Greenview School, effective September 2000. This work is done administratively. The main considerations are program effectiveness and financial viability, the definition of which varies depending on the circumstances. For example, in an immersion or bilingual program a range of three grades in a single class may be seen as ineffective, while in some other programs this is not seen as a problem. Financial viability is more difficult to define, because it depends on a number of factors. These include organizational decisions made by the principal and total financial resources available at the school. In some instances, schools make costly organizational decisions in one or more programs based on parental desires or expectations. These decisions cannot be viewed as a necessary part of the cost of the program. In some schools, the alternative programs help provide sufficient resources to the school as a whole so that a small regular program can be maintained.

When enrolment in an alternative program as a whole declines to the point where only one district centre remains, or where there never was more than one district centre, consolidation is not an option. Closure of the last program of its kind is a board decision, and the administration would make a recommendation only after all other options have been exhausted, and after consultation with parents. This approach reaffirms the district's support for choice and builds trust with parent groups. The only closure of this kind in recent years was the Waldorf program, which closed at the end of the 1990-91 school year.

At this time, there are no alternative programs in the district that are not self-sustaining. There is concern about low enrolment in the Caraway program, but the school administration and parents, with support from central services, are taking steps to give the program a higher profile and attract new students.

It should be noted that the School Act permits charging fees for non-instructional costs of an alternative program that are over and above the cost of offering a regular program. In addition, the district supports small schools and multiple programs through the multiple program allocation, which has been in place since the mid-1980s. (M. Malzahn, 429-8003)

AMcB:hc