

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

April 13, 2004

TO: Board of Trustees  
FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools  
SUBJECT: Allendale Elementary Program Closure  
ORIGINATOR: A. Habinski, Executive Director School and District Services

RESOURCE

STAFF: Jenise Bidulock, Robert Craig, Leanne Fedor, Andrea Furness, Karen Linden, Pat Niven, Deanne Patsula, Gerri Porter, Amy-Irene Seward, Darren Sweeney

RECOMMENDATION

That the closure of the elementary program at Allendale School at the end of the 2003-2004 school year be approved.

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This recommendation is consistent with the November 25, 2003, recommendation that was presented to public board, and subsequently deferred to April 13, 2004. Updated information has been added in regards to current enrolment and existing challenges of offering an elementary program for fifteen students.

As of March 26, 2004, enrolment was as follows:

	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Total
Number of students	3	1	2	2	2	0	5	15

Rationale for Recommending Program Closure

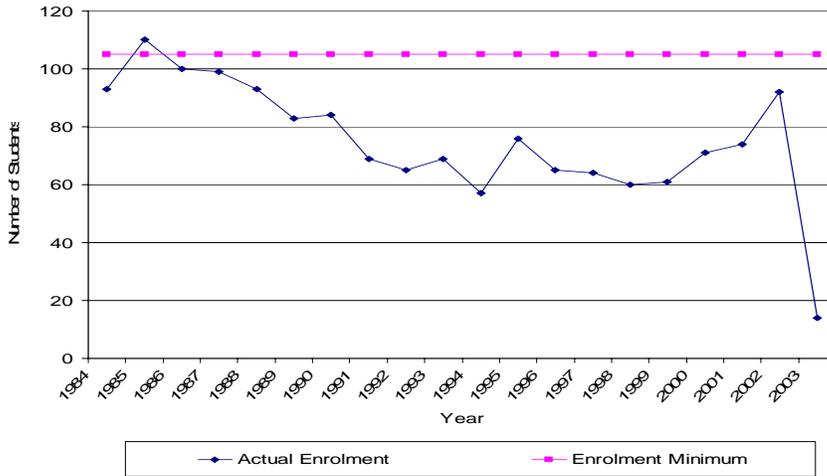
The elementary program at Allendale School is eligible for closure according to board policy FL.BP (Appendix I), which provides the board of trustees the authority to close three or more consecutive grades when the total enrolment, as of September 30 in the current school year, is below an average of 15 students per grade in elementary (K-6). The enrolment on September 30, 2003, at Allendale School, was 260 students, of which 14 were attending the regular elementary program.

Enrolment for the elementary program had been projected to be 77 students for the current year. However, in the spring of 2003, pre-enrolment in the regular elementary program for the 2003-2004 school year dropped to 43 students, which meant that students would be in combined classes of three or more grades. At that time, discussions were held among parents, staff and the principal, which resulted in many students transferring to Mount

Pleasant School. Eighteen students, including a severe special needs student, remained enrolled in the Allendale regular elementary program, and a class was organized for the beginning of the 2003-2004 school year. Four of these students have since elected to enrol elsewhere.

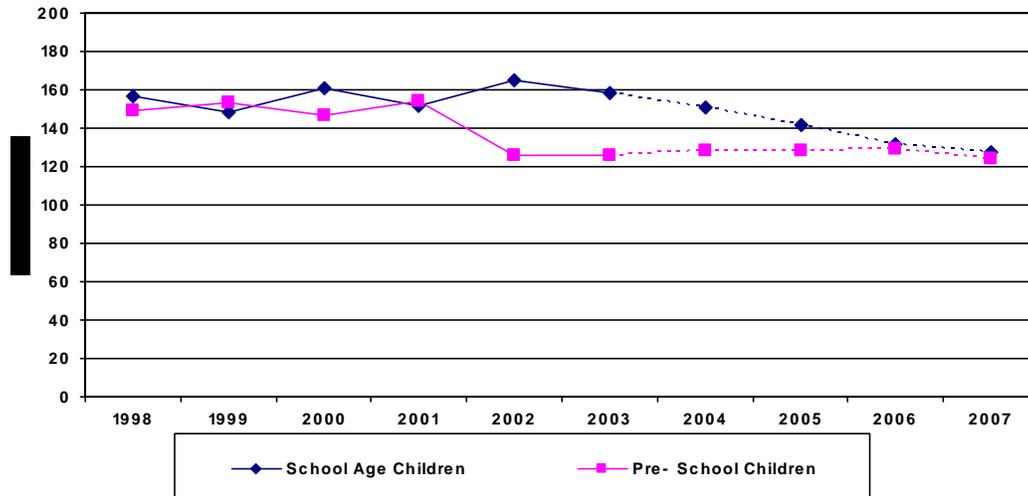
Enrolment in the regular elementary program at Allendale has been below 100 students since 1986. The following graph shows the Allendale elementary enrolment from 1984 to 2003, and the enrolment minimum of 15 students per grade or 105 students in Kindergarten to grade six as stated in board policy FL.BP.

*Allendale Elementary Enrolment and Enrolment Minimum – Board Policy FL.BP*



There are 165 elementary school-aged children living in the Allendale neighbourhood, of which 109 currently attend Edmonton Public Schools. Nine of these students attend the elementary program at Allendale. Six of the students in the Allendale elementary program come from nearby neighbourhoods. There are 130 pre-school-aged children living in the Allendale neighbourhood. The graph below shows the projection for school-aged and pre-school-aged children living in the Allendale neighbourhood.

*Allendale Neighbourhood Actual and Projected Pre-School and School Aged Children*



The number of pre-school-aged children is projected to remain stable at approximately 125 children. The projection for school-aged children suggests a slight decline over the next few years. On average, Edmonton Public Schools will attract 70 per cent of the students living in the Allendale neighbourhood and, of these students, an average of 52 per cent of elementary students will choose their neighbourhood school. Allendale Elementary School will attract some students from other neighbourhoods, however, based on these numbers the Allendale neighbourhood can no longer support an elementary program.

The closure of the elementary program at Allendale would increase the ability for school staff to balance their budget because the other programs in the school would no longer need to subsidize the regular elementary program. The total allocation for elementary programming at Allendale for the 2003-2004 school year is approximately \$68,000, while the cost of the teacher and teacher assistant salaries is \$107,404. The teacher assistant is provided only because of a severe special needs student in grade 1. No contribution is possible towards other school staffing and supplies, equipment and services costs. The elementary program was not eligible for a multiple program grant because the enrolment was under the minimum requirement of forty students. The cost of providing this elementary program is supplemented by funds from the junior high programs offered at Allendale.

The continuation of this elementary program would put an increasing strain on resources. This year the elementary program did not require new resources; however, in future years it will be necessary to purchase new resources such as text books and equipment for new curriculum.

The one teacher of this elementary program has been given an extraordinary challenge to ensure *Superb Results from all students*. It is unreasonable to expect one teacher to cover all curriculum topics across all subject areas. In Science, for example, the teacher has twenty-five topics to cover because the current students are in five different grades. The elementary teacher has no opportunities for in-school collaboration with other elementary teachers and no respite from supervision duties. Other issues become complex such as timetabling, the provision of a music specialist and the anticipation of the language mandate in 2006.

**Accommodation of Allendale Elementary Students**

The 109 public elementary students living in Allendale are attending the following schools:

Parkallen	25
Mount Pleasant	22
Allendale Elementary	9
Garneau	9
McKernan	8
Other District Schools	36
<b>Total -</b>	<b>109</b>

The two largest groups of students living in Allendale are attending Parkallen and Mount Pleasant Schools, both of which are located in neighbourhoods adjacent to the Allendale attendance area. Parkallen has a provincial utilization rate of 41 per cent and can

accommodate all the students attending the elementary program at Allendale and all the public school students living in Allendale attendance area. Mount Pleasant has a provincial utilization rate of 111 per cent, therefore, cannot accommodate the students attending the elementary program at Allendale and the students living in the Allendale attendance area if they chose their designated school.

To best serve students living in the Allendale attendance area it has been determined that Parkallen would be appropriate as the receiving school. Yellow bus transportation would be provided to Parkallen from the Allendale attendance area for students attending the elementary program at Allendale School at a subsidized rate to the parents. Yellow bus transportation will continue to be provided for students living in the Allendale attendance area, and attending Mount Pleasant. This service will continue for six years to accommodate the students affected by the elementary program closure, after which time yellow bus service will be provided exclusively to Parkallen from the Allendale attendance area.

### **Consultation**

Consultation with parents began in the spring of 2003 when the low pre-enrolment numbers were first noticed. At that time it was too late in the school year to begin the process for considering school closure and finish it within the same school year it was started. A public meeting was held in accordance with the School Act (Appendix III), on November 4, 2003, to provide information and receive input regarding the closure of the elementary program at Allendale. Thirteen community members and parents were present, as well as five trustees and district staff. Attendees were provided with information about the implications of the closure for students, the community and the district, implications of keeping the school open, and information about the implementation of closure (Appendix III). Opportunity was given to ask questions and raise issues and concerns. Questions were answered by the administration at the meeting, and a follow-up summary of questions and answers was subsequently mailed to those in attendance (Appendix IV).

The concerns and issues raised at the public meeting were regarding the designated receiving school, the accommodation of students at other district schools, and the provision of yellow bus transportation. Generally, attendees expressed disappointment that the program was being considered for closure.

### **Input from the City of Edmonton**

The City of Edmonton was invited to comment on potential community impacts of the proposed closure of the elementary program at Allendale. A statement was provided which did not raise any concerns about the closure, as the building would retain the junior high program and would continue to be available to the community.

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- APPENDIX I Board Policy FL.BP School Closure
- APPENDIX II School Act Requirements for Closure
- APPENDIX III Notice of Meeting
- APPENDIX IV Questions and Answers from the November 4, Public Meeting