

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

April 22, 2003

TO: Board of Trustees
FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools
SUBJECT: Idylwylde School Closure
ORIGINATOR: A. Habinski, Executive Director, School and District Services
RESOURCE
STAFF: Jenise Bidulock, Andrea Furness, Randy Leal, Pat Niven, Gerri Porter

RECOMMENDATION

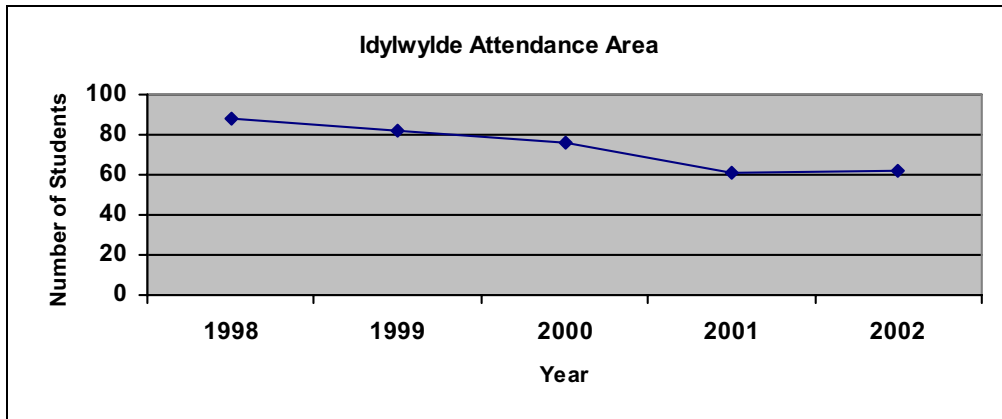
That the closure of Idylwylde School at the end of the 2002-2003 school year be approved.

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Rationale for Recommending Closure

When Idylwylde students were temporarily relocated to Rutherford School for the 2001 – 2002 school year, the district stated that consideration would be given to operating an elementary program in Idylwylde if there were enough students. Through the process of considering the closure of Idylwylde School it has been determined that operating an elementary program is not feasible due to the declining number of public school students in the Idylwylde attendance area and the declining number of pre-school and school age children in the Idylwylde neighbourhood.

District enrolment numbers, for public elementary school students living in the Idylwylde attendance area, have declined by 26 students over the past five years. On September 30, 2002 there were 62 elementary students living in the Idylwylde attendance area. It is projected that the declining enrolment trend will stabilize at approximately 62 students per year for the next five years.



According to provincial statistics the number of pre-school age children living in the Idylwylde neighbourhood has declined since 1996, while the number of elementary age children has been stable and is projected to remain stable for the next five years. According to the City of Edmonton's Corporate Planning and Policy Section, Planning and Policy Services Branch, the Bonnie Doon area which contains Idylwylde 'has a smaller share (19 per cent) of children and teenagers than the City share of 27 per cent and a larger share of people aged 65 and older, 19 per cent compared with 11 per cent for the City'.

Demographic Trends in Idylwylde Neighbourhood
(includes public, separate, francophone, charter and private school students)

Age	1996	1997	1998*	1999	2000	2001
0	41	22		21	16	18
1	24	17		16	20	17
2	22	21		20	15	16
3	14	23		11	14	16
4	17	21		18	12	16
5	13	15		23	20	11
Pre-school sub-total	131	119		109	97	94
6	24	19		15	19	21
7	17	16		21	16	16
8	12	21		12	19	15
9	15	20		22	12	16
10	13	13		23	20	10
11	19	14		14	21	20
Elementary age sub-total	100	103		107	107	98
TOTAL	231	222		216	204	192

* 1998 data not available
Source: Government of Alberta

Idylwylde School is eligible for closure according to board policy FL.BP (Appendix I). This policy allows the board of trustees the authority to close an entire school when the provincial utilization rate as of September 30, in the current school year is less than 40 per cent. Even if all the students who live in the Idylwylde neighbourhood and attend public schools were to enrol in the school, the utilization rate would be 28 per cent. If Idylwylde School is closed it would be removed from our inventory of operational schools and would result in an increase of approximately 0.13 per cent in the provincial utilization rate. The district is saving about \$140,000 per year in staff costs by relocating the students to Rutherford School and an additional \$80,000 in operation and maintenance costs for the building. The Plant Operation and Maintenance Grant funding would be increased by \$1500 if the school were closed.

Accommodation of Idylwylde Students

Students from the Idylwylde neighbourhood can easily be accommodated in Rutherford School for the long term. The September 2002 enrolment numbers show us there are 62 public school students in the Idylwylde neighbourhood, of which 10 are attending Rutherford School. Rutherford School has an enrolment of 104 students and a capacity for 376 students. Students attending Rutherford School will benefit from fewer combined classes, increased availability of high quality equipment and materials, more opportunities for supplementary programs and extra curricular activities, and more opportunities for special needs students to access small group programming. For the last two school years Rutherford School has received revenue from the lease at Idylwylde School. This practice will be continued for the 2003 – 2004 school year.

Many students in the Idylwylde neighbourhood have chosen to attend Holyrood School, which is located in an adjacent neighbourhood. Holyrood School was not chosen as the designated receiving school for Idylwylde students due to its high utilization rate and inability to accommodate all the students in the Idylwylde neighbourhood for the long term. Holyrood School has a capacity for 498 students, including four free standing portables, and a utilization rate of 73 per cent.

If there is substantial population growth in the future, and a neighbourhood elementary school is required, L'Académie Vimy Ridge Academy may be a suitable location since it is located on the same site in the Idylwylde neighbourhood.

Consultation

Two public meetings were held to receive input from parents and residents. The first meeting was held on February 26, to receive input from the Idylwylde community about concerns regarding Idylwylde School and options for the future use of the school. Twenty-six parents and residents from Idylwylde and adjacent neighbourhoods attended the meeting in which district staff provided information about Idylwylde School. Opportunity was given to ask questions and raise issues and concerns. Questions were answered by the administration and provided to those interested (Appendix II).

The second meeting was held in accordance with the Alberta Learning School Act (Appendix III), on March 26, to provide information and receive input regarding the closure of Idylwylde School. Eleven community members and Rutherford parents were present, as well

as district staff and five trustees. Attendees were provided with information about the implications of the closure for the students, the community, and the district, the implications of keeping the school open, and information about the implementation of closure (Appendix IV).

There were no unresolved issues that arose from the meeting; however, there were three unanswered questions that need to be addressed through this report.

1. Can enrolment be projected beyond 5 years?
It is difficult to project past five years due to the potential for a greater margin of error in the projection. Elementary enrolment projections are based on pre-school city demographics of children ages 0 to 5.
2. Is the Idylwyld School enrolment curve typical of other schools in the city?
The curve is very typical of other district schools in aging neighbourhoods in Edmonton. The neighbourhood trend is a very high enrolment for the first few years the school is open, then it declines, stabilizes and may have a second period of high enrolment, although the initial enrolment numbers will never again be achieved. Enrolment will then decline and eventually stabilize. .
3. How do the Francophone students in Idylwyld School impact the overall school utilization rate?
The Francophone students are not counted as Edmonton Public School students and do not impact the district utilization rate.

Input from the City of Edmonton

The City of Edmonton was invited to comment on potential community impacts of the proposed closures. At the writing of this report, we have not received input from the City of Edmonton. However, it is expected that a statement will be shared with Trustees on April 22, 2003. At this time the administration is exploring the long term use of the building by the Francophone School District.

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APPENDIX I – Board Policy FL.BP School Closure

APPENDIX II – Questions and Answers from the March 26, Public Meeting

APPENDIX III – Alberta Regulation 238/97 – Closure of Schools Regulation

APPENDIX IV – Notice of Meeting