

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

November 27, 2001

TO: Board of Trustees
FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools
SUBJECT: Concept Development Studies: Update
ORIGINATOR: G. Reynolds, Department Head

RESOURCE

STAFF: Jerry Bayly, Ted Biggs, Deborah Brandell, Deborah Cooper, Robert Craig, Michael Ediger, Vlad Eshenko, Kim Falkenberg, Patrick Fizell, Darren Fox, Kathy Goudreau, Darlene Jones, Barbara Jonsson, Manfred Malzahn, Faye Parker, Deanne Patsula, Sandy Sawchuk, Cindy Skolski, Morrie Smith, Sandra Stoddard

INFORMATION

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the June 19, 2001 board report on four concept development studies underway in north Edmonton (Attachment 1). The concept development studies are intended to generate plans for addressing programming plans and space utilization in clusters of schools as a precursor to requesting capital support to modernize or replace programming space in schools. The four concept development studies are:

Centre East: Bellevue, Highlands, Montrose, Mount Royal, Newton
Centre West: Inglewood, Westmount, Woodcroft
North West: Athlone, McArthur, Wellington
North East: Balwin, North Edmonton, Princeton

The identification of school clusters was based on several criteria as outlined in the terms of reference (Attachment 1). Another important part of the study context is the indication from Alberta Infrastructure that requests for modernization funding will not be approved unless the district has a plan to address surplus space in the geographic area of the school(s) being proposed for modernization.

Cluster Team Activities and Progress

Each concept development study team has completed the first stage of the project, which began with the identification of a working group comprised of the principal, a parent and a staff member from each school, as well as a representative from each community league in the area. The role of the team is to develop a plan for the cluster of schools, and team members act as a conduit of information to and from their respective groups. The first stage also included the completion of an initial phase of public consultation to introduce the study, the creation of a process plan, the identification of issues and needs, and the development of evaluation criteria.

All four teams are currently generating options that meet the needs identified by parents, students, staff and other community members, within the parameter of the terms of reference. These options will be shared with parents and the broader community through town hall meetings. The potential options for one or more schools in any cluster could result in one or more of the following:

- New programming plans
- Changes in grade configuration
- Creative re-use of space by community-based partnerships
- Demolition of parts of schools or of entire schools
- Replacement of parts of schools
- Extensive modernization
- School closure

In the next stage of the project, each team will shortlist the options which best meet the evaluation criteria that have been established. These options will form the basis of a plan for the cluster that will be presented to the management team. In addition to addressing programming needs, space utilization and capital requests, the plan will also include timelines and phasing of proposed actions.

The plan for each cluster of schools will be reviewed by the management team. This team is comprised of the principals who lead each cluster team, project architects, the city of Edmonton community services staff, and planning and facilities staff. The management team will make recommendations to the board based upon the study teams' findings.

If the recommendations include school closure, no school closure could occur unless the board approved the initiation of the formal closure process as mandated in the board and provincial policy and regulations. The timelines for the completion of the study process are such that no school closure process would be initiated until the 2002-2003 school year. Any school to be considered for closure would have to be eligible under the board's criteria.

A proposed school closure is also governed by the provincial School Act and accompanying regulations, which provide the city of Edmonton the opportunity to assess the impact that a proposed school closure may have on the community. As a result of the involvement of city staff on the management team and on all the cluster teams, the assessment of community issues and impacts will be integrated into the cluster teams' work.

Public Consultation

During the first stage of the study all cluster teams conducted surveys of students, parents, staff and other community members, as well as holding a town hall meeting for the parents and broader community.

All cluster teams will hold further public meetings during January and February 2002 to discuss evaluation criteria and options. Further public meetings will subsequently be held to obtain reaction to the draft plans from each cluster team. The Centre East cluster team presented options to the public on November 14, 2001.

Cluster teams will submit their draft plan to the management team by March 2002. Recommendations for each school cluster will be presented to the board in April 2002.

It is hoped that involvement of all stakeholders throughout the concept development study process will facilitate the generation of cluster plans that will be acceptable to and supported by parents and the community.

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ATTACHMENT 1: Board Report of June 19, 2001