

## EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

December 12, 2000

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dossdall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: 2000-2003 Capital Submission

ORIGINATOR: A. McBeath, Department Head

### RESOURCE

STAFF: Bob Clark, June Klassen, Robert Craig, Beatrice Denboer, Michael Ediger, Brian Fedor, Faye Parker, Deanne Patsula

### RECOMMENDATION

That the submission to Alberta Infrastructure of capital projects for 2000-2003, as identified in Appendix I, be approved.

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This report identifies the proposed district capital plan project priorities for 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003 for forwarding to the province for approval. Strategies that were used to generate the capital submission are also provided. In its review of the district's former capital submission for 2000-2002, the province requested the district to reconfirm proposed projects for each year and to add another year to its plan. The identified priorities in the proposed 4-year capital plan reflect a blend between the district's previously identified capital priorities and the result of Alberta Infrastructure's province-wide facility audits.

#### Changes in the Province's Capital Planning Process

In the spring of 2000, Alberta Infrastructure unveiled its "New Century Plan," an approach to addressing capital planning needs of school jurisdictions across the province well into the future. The following are some key changes in the province's process that have been considered by the administration in drafting the district's request for capital funding for the four year submission:

- Prior to this year, the province would request districts to annually submit comprehensive multi-year lists of projects for provincial reaction, followed with a lengthy wait and then one or two major ministerial announcements per year. Alberta Infrastructure staff have indicated that, instead, there is an interest in working with school jurisdictions earlier in the process as capital projects are being identified, prior to submission. In addition, Alberta Infrastructure has added flexibility to the approval process by accepting proposals and making capital funding decisions throughout the year rather than the once per year review by the School Buildings Board. This will allow jurisdictions to respond to emerging capital planning issues more readily.

- Unlike other years, the province’s administration is focused on providing “the best educational space for students, and not the most space.” It has been indicated that, if space can be rationalized in the long term at a particular school location, then it makes sense to request permanent space rather than temporary space such as portable pods that are designed to meet shorter-term needs.
- Alberta Infrastructure staff indicated that the province is willing to consider requests for concept development funds in order to assist districts in defining worthy capital projects for submission.
- It is clear that the province intends to consider a district’s provincial utilization rate before recommending allocations for new construction, including for “innovative” projects. It is also likely that school modernization and/or replacement projects will need to address utilization rates in the immediate vicinity of the subject school. The administration has been told that the province is willing to reward a jurisdiction’s “intent” to address the province’s concerns over utilization rates. This approach acknowledges the complexities and time it takes to implement actions that would reduce a district’s inventory, e.g., sale of closed school buildings. Even if the district were divided into sectors for purposes of determining geographic utilization rates, utilization will still need to be addressed as a basis for justifying capital projects.
- The province has completed its school facility audit process that involved assessing the condition of all public school buildings in the province. The overall intent of the audit was to provide Alberta Infrastructure with an indication of the extent of funding needed to address the condition of facilities across the province and some consistent detail as to the condition of various components of each facility. As a result of this work, it is anticipated that the province will identify additional funds to address the backlog of needs. The audit ratings are based on condition alone and do not reflect other factors, and are not a ranked priority of school facility upgrading and modernization projects for any one district. However, they do represent relative need and there is an expectation that the results will be used by districts as a tool in establishing capital project priorities.

Based on the district’s experience, project costs can vary from the audit estimates, and it is expected that there will be occasions when the district will need to request additional funds to complete some planned modernizations. Alberta Infrastructure staff have indicated a willingness to consider additional funding requests on a project by project basis, once projects have been approved, so that the facility’s needs can be addressed. For example, the Westminster School modernization was approved by the province on the basis of the audit that identified approximately \$4.5 million for the project. The province approved the district’s subsequent request for another \$1 million needed for the project.

- Alberta Infrastructure recently announced a one-year modernization/upgrading block fund, separate from the annual BQRP block grant, that is being provided to allow districts to address school facilities that were rated below the province’s 700-point condition score through the audit process. This additional allocation of \$5,376,655 would allow the district to address schools previously submitted to the province as priorities for modernization, but which did not rate high on the audit, and would therefore no longer be proposed for modernization as part of the district’s four year capital plan. The projects would be identified outside of the scope of the district’s capital submission, and undertaken through

the block modernization/upgrading grant. A separate report on the proposed plan for utilizing these funds is also on tonight's board agenda.

A number of these changes are in response to concerns that were previously raised by the district and represent a new way of the province doing business. The work of the board over the last number of months related to capital planning appears to have had an influence on the process. For example, the former rigid approval process has been revised to allow for flexibility to better respond to school facility needs.

The balance of this report outlines district rationale for capital project proposals for the years 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003 as outlined in Appendix I. The project cost estimates provided are in year 2000 dollars.

### New School Construction Proposals

There are three major factors considered in reconfirming support for elementary schools in Twin Brooks, Jackson Heights, and the Lake District. Firstly, enrolment projections reconfirm the need for these schools as previously prioritized in the district's former capital submission.

Secondly, in regard to elementary schools in Twin Brooks and the Lake District, the administration has recently reconfirmed Edmonton Catholic Schools' interest in continuing with a partnership in submitting a joint request to the province for multi-use proposals in these two areas. Both jurisdictions will give a high priority to these projects, with Twin Brooks as a higher priority for Edmonton Public Schools and the Lake District as a higher priority for Edmonton Catholic Schools. It is our understanding that the province is interested in reviewing innovative capital projects that involve P3 proposals (Public/Public and Public/Private Partnerships).

Lastly, the planned disposition of eight closed school facilities is a clear indication that the district is addressing the province's concern about its utilization rate. Disposal of the eight facilities would represent a decrease of 1,940 rated student spaces in the district's inventory.

The district's former capital submission included requests for a stand alone elementary school in Twin Brooks and a developer built kindergarten to grade 8 school in Terwillegar Towne as year 2000 projects. These requests were turned down by the province on the basis of the district's overall utilization rate. An elementary school in Pilot Sound, which was previously proposed as a year 2002 project, has been removed from the submission. Based upon a re-examination of enrolment growth for this area, it is projected that enrolment levels will be insufficient to justify a new elementary school in this plan area within the four-year capital plan timeframe.

### Modernization and Replacement Proposals

Replacement of Temporary with Permanent Space:

- The district's former capital submission proposed pod additions in place of free-standing portables at a number of schools. It is suggested that the district now request to replace portables with permanent additions when the space is needed in the long term. This would create a more desirable learning environment and is also in keeping with Alberta Infrastructure's view that space required long term should be quality space for students. It would also provide the district with flexibility to address related needs for additional

ancillary space such as washrooms and circulation space, as well as addressing potential indoor environmental concerns arising in older portables.

- Of note, the replacement of space at Grandview Heights School was moved up from 2001 to 2000. This was done in an effort to coordinate the work with a potential school modernization project being proposed in a separate report to board on the use of the one-time block modernization fund. This school, which was previously identified as one of the top 10 facilities proposed for modernization, is rated much lower in the province's recent condition audit.
- The replacement of portables with a permanent addition at Kildare School has been added as a year 2001 project to coincide with a proposed modernization of that facility which is included in this submission. The provincial audit gave a high rating to the school.
- The replacement of space at the Winterburn Campus was moved down the list from being a year 2001 project to a 2003 project. This was done in response to development industry activity in the area. The phasing in of developers' plans for the area and the city's need to address hard services in the area need to be considered prior to the district being able to address the longer-term space needs of the school. The district may be in the position to make a follow-up request to move this project up sooner, if these outstanding planning issues are resolved sooner than anticipated. In the interim, the school will continue to rely on free-standing portables.
- Based on revised student enrolment projections, the replacement of portables with permanent space at Velma E. Baker for the year 2000 and at George H. Luck for the year 2001 is not justified at this time. Enrolments at these schools appear to have peaked and are not expected to increase significantly over the next 3-4 years. Based on these findings, it is proposed that the replacement of space at these two schools not be confirmed at this time.

#### School Modernization Projects:

- Priority is being given to projects that have already been initiated. One commitment of the district is to follow through on the Victoria School concept development study that is examining the needs of that school facility. The facility was ranked as a priority by the district in its previous submission, and was identified by the province as the greatest need in the condition audit. The administration is working with Alberta Infrastructure staff, Victoria School leadership staff, and Barr Ryder, Architects and Planners, to generate a capital proposal for consideration by the board, and subsequently the province. A separate report on the Victoria modernization is on tonight's board agenda. Another commitment is to complete the modernization of Terrace Heights School, which was broken into two phases in response to funding limitations.
- Other proposed modernization projects reflect either the province's condition audit results, previously identified district modernization priorities, or both. As a result, there are some proposed changes in modernization priorities. Aside from the Terrace Heights Phase II proposal, the modernization projects in this submission address the schools in the 700-plus point range of the province's condition audit. By 2002, facilities in the 600-700 range are included. All of the schools previously submitted as priorities for the district are addressed in the capital submission with the exception of Grandview Heights and Ottewell. Ottewell,

like Grandview, was lower on the province's audit list than previously identified by the district. It may be possible to address some of the schools' needs through the one-time block modernization/upgrading grant. Expectations in the communities served by these schools have been raised and there is a sense of commitment by the district to both schools since they were identified in the district's previous capital submission.

#### Concept Development Studies:

- A number of schools that were previously identified by the district as priorities for modernization, and/or are identified through the province's audit results, are located in close proximity to one another. Concept studies of groups of these schools are proposed to allow the district to examine the programming and accommodation needs of students amongst the facilities in question. Community consultation is an important part of the concept development work. The results of the studies would be used as a basis on which to request specific future capital projects. Since most of the studies are expected to be completed in the year they would receive funding, it follows that the district's list of proposed projects for subsequent years would be modified accordingly. That is, the results of the concept development would be reflected in a specific funding request.
- A year ago, the district received provincial funds to conduct a concept development study for a Technology Centre at J. Percy Page School. The allocation was in response to the district's request to address four programming areas of the school, of which the technology centre was one component. The funds were provided out of the province's then Capital Innovation Fund to allow the district to further develop this aspect of its proposal. Since that time, the province has revised its process such that there is no longer a separate fund for innovative projects and has indicated that innovative ideas would instead be considered as one aspect related to capital project proposals in general. The administration has been working with the school and Stantec, the consultants on the project, as the concept is developed.

Alberta Infrastructure staff have also been consulted on the project. They pointed out that, unlike previous similar projects, they must now involve the Innovation and Science Department in the approval of projects that involve technology. Given these circumstances, it is the intent of the administration to highlight this as a unique project that should be treated apart from the district's other capital priorities, and to bring a separate report to board once the study is concluded.

- A concept development study is also proposed in 2002 to examine senior high enrolments and the possible need for an additional senior high school on the north side.

#### Portable Replacement and Relocation:

- Over the past two years, the district has reduced its inventory of free-standing portables by 44, due to aging and the spaces becoming obsolete for classroom use. Of the remaining 135, 47 are over 30 years old, surpassing their initial life expectancy. The administration intends to continue its plan to dispose of these portables over the next four years and to replace some of them with new stock. The provision of permanent additions in place of existing temporary free-standing portables in specific locations would facilitate this process.

- The province provides funding for portable replacements and relocations. Usually, 10 to 12 portable relocations are required annually to meet changing enrolment pressures at various schools in the district. The replacement of free-standing portables with permanent additions where proposed will free up some portables to meet relocation needs in the district.

#### Other Initiatives

The administration will continue to consider other initiatives in order to address the district's capital needs. Working with developers, partnering with other public sector groups, examining the starter-school concept, and other innovative solutions to provide school space where needed will be explored. Concept development plans will also examine area specific space utilization concerns. At a later date the administration will report to board on these initiatives.

AM/bd

APPENDIX I - Proposed Edmonton Public Schools' Capital Project Priorities for 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003