

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

June 28, 2001

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dossdall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Appeal Regarding Superintendent of Schools' Decision to Temporarily Relocate Idylwyldes Students to Rutherford

ORIGINATOR: A. Sherwood, Board Secretary

INFORMATION

Mr. Thomas Agopsowicz, a concerned parent and past president of the Idylwyldes Community League, has requested an opportunity to appear before the board to appeal the superintendent of school's decision to temporarily relocate Idylwyldes students to Rutherford School (Appendix II, green pages).

A letter from Anne Sherwood, board secretary, dated June 26, 2001 advising that arrangements have been made for the delegation to be heard by the board on **Thursday, June 28, 2001** at **1:30 p.m.** is attached (Appendix I).

Mr. Agopsowicz and Mr. Jim Wray will be the speakers.

AS:mmf

- APPENDIX I - Correspondence from A. Sherwood, Board Secretary
- APPENDIX II - (Green Pages) Material submitted by Mr. Agopsowicz
- APPENDIX III - (White Pages) Material submitted by the Administration

APPENDIX I – Letter from A. Sherwood, Board Secretary

APPENDIX II – Material Submitted by Mr. Agopsowicz

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TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dossdall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Appeal Regarding Superintendent of Schools' Decision to Temporarily Relocate Idylwylde Students to Rutherford

ORIGINATOR: G. Reynolds, Department Head

RESOURCE
STAFF: Manfred Malzahn, Faye Parker, Lori Price Wagner

RECOMMENDATION

That Mr. Thomas Agopsowicz's appeal of the superintendent's decision to temporarily relocate Idylwylde students to Rutherford for the 2001-2002 school year be denied.

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Mr. Thomas Agopsowicz, parent of a student at the Idylwylde campus of Rutherford/Idylwylde School, has appealed the superintendent's decision to temporarily relocate Idylwylde students to Rutherford for the 2001-2002 school year (Appendix I). Mr. Agopsowicz has also written to the Minister of Learning requesting a ministerial review of the district's plan (Appendix II).

Appendix III is a copy of a letter from the board chairman to the Minister of Learning requesting a response to the district's plan for temporary relocation of Idylwylde students. Appendix IV is a copy of a letter from the board solicitor to Mr. Agopsowicz about the proposal. Also attached is a letter from MLA Hugh MacDonald to the Minister of Learning (Appendix V). A letter from Mr. Scott Hood, chair of the Idylwylde Principal's Advisory Committee, expressing support for the temporary relocation of students, is in Appendix VI. Alberta Regulation 238/97 Closure of Schools is in Appendix VII, and the board's school closure policy is in Appendix VIII.

The appellant maintains that the superintendent's decision is not in the best interests of Idylwylde students, parents, and community, and that the decision is not in compliance with Alberta Regulation 238/97 Closure of Schools. The administration's response is as follows:

Grouping Students for Instruction

Unexpectedly low enrolment for September 2001 presented the school administration with very few options for grouping students for instruction in ways that would be effective for students, acceptable to parents, and financially feasible. The prospect of three-grade combined classes caused concern among Idylwylde parents, and that in turn led to discussions about combining the students with those at Rutherford. The enrolment situation is as follows:

	Idylwylde 2001-2002 enrolment	Rutherford 2001-2002 enrolment	Administration's proposal to combine students
Kindergarten	5	5	21 in a K-1 class
Grade 1	5	6	
Grade 2	13	10	23 in a grade 2 class
Grade 3	6	13	19 in a grade 3 class
Grade 4	12	11	23 in a grade 4 class
Grade 5	9	19	28 in a grade 5 class
Grade 6	4	12	16 in a grade 6 class
Sub-totals	54	76	130
Strategies class	13		13 in the Strategies class
Totals	67	76	143

Consultation

Parents were consulted to determine their views about how students could be grouped. Time available for consultation was limited by the need to give students and parents certainty and to conclude staffing for the upcoming school year. Steps in the process included:

- A parent meeting on May 31, 2001, attended by 5 parents from Idylwylde and 19 parents from Rutherford, requesting input on classroom organization.
- A survey sent to all Rutherford/Idylwylde parents on June 1, requesting input about the same topic.
- Based on the feedback that was received, a plan was made to temporarily relocate the students to Rutherford, and that plan was presented to another parent meeting on June 12. Forty Idylwylde parents and 11 Rutherford parents attended, as well as staff members and several members of the public.
- Small group drop-in sessions were arranged for the evening of June 18 and at lunchtime on June 19. Three parents attended the first session and none attended the second session.

Compliance with Alberta Regulation 238/97

The regulation governs school closure, but does not apply to temporary relocation of students. Students have been temporarily relocated in the past, with the concurrence of Alberta Learning, from Westview Village to Winterburn and from Queen Alexandra to Garneau. Temporary relocation has also been carried out in situations where a school building is being modernized or where a new school is not complete at the beginning of a school year.

Multiple Campus Project

Idylwylde and Rutherford have been twinned schools since September 1999, and have operated under a single administration. One of the objectives of the multiple campus project is to preserve small schools. However, no guarantee was given that it would be possible to continue providing programming at all the sites no matter how low the enrolment.

Student Transportation

In order to reduce the impact on students and families, free busing would be available to elementary students residing in Idylwylde neighbourhood. The service would be between the two school sites, and would operate in the morning, at noon and after school. There would be orientation for students and parents, and procedures would be in place in case a student misses the bus. There would be no cost to the district because the service could be provided by rerouting buses already in the area.

Rutherford School building

The building is old and needs upgrading, but it is safe for students and staff. When Alberta Infrastructure hired consultants to inspect school buildings across Alberta about a year ago, they identified upgrading needs at Rutherford of approximately \$1.5 million.

Strategies Program

District centre programs such as the Strategies program at Idylwylde are established or phased out in response to changes in the number of students needing special programming. The number of elementary students identified for the Strategies program has declined since 1998, and it was determined at the end of the 1999-2000 school year that Idylwylde's Strategies program should be phased out.

Lease of Space to Francophone School

Students are not being relocated to make space in Idylwylde for Gabrielle Roy School. Even after part of the building is leased, there would have been plenty of space available for public school students from Idylwylde neighbourhood. The proposed lease enables the district to reclaim space if it is needed to accommodate our students.

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APPENDIX I	Letter from Mr. Thomas Agopsowicz to the "immediate supervisor of the superintendent of schools"
APPENDIX II	Letter from Mr. Thomas Agopsowicz to the Minister of Learning
APPENDIX III	Letter from the Board Chairman to the Minister of Learning
APPENDIX IV	Letter from the board solicitor to Mr. Thomas Agopsowicz
APPENDIX V	Letter from MLA Hugh MacDonald to the Minister of Learning (sent by email to the administration; signed copy not available)
APPENDIX VI	Letter from Mr. Scott Hood to the Minister of Learning
APPENDIX VII	Alberta Regulation 238/97 Closure of Schools
APPENDIX VIII	Board Policy FL.BP School Closure