

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

June 9, 2009

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Responses to Board Requests for Information

ORIGINATOR: T. Parker, Assistant Superintendent

RESOURCE

STAFF: Michael Ediger, Mike Falk, David Fraser, Kelly Hehn, Lorne Parker, Cindy Skolski

INFORMATION

**BOARD REQUEST #192, FEBRUARY 10, 2009: PROVIDE INFORMATION FROM THE SCHOOLS THAT HAVE EXPERIENCED REPEATED LATE BUSES IN TERMS OF AN ESTIMATION OF HOW MANY INSTRUCTIONAL MINUTES HAVE BEEN LOST SINCE SEPTEMBER AND THE PLANS FROM THOSE PRINCIPALS ON HOW THESE MINUTES WILL BE RECOUPED BEFORE JUNE. ALSO, ADVISE OF ANY COSTS SCHOOLS MAY INCUR TO MAKE UP THESE MANDATED MINUTES:** Thirty-four Principals responded with the requested information on the instructional minutes lost due to late busses, and mitigation measures utilized. The information received has been difficult to interpret. What was not reported is the total number of students impacted and therefore understanding the impact on individual students is difficult to gauge. An average of 387 instructional minutes were reported lost each month by the schools surveyed. Many school principals also reported that late busses were episodic and occurred more frequently at the start of the school year when routes were being set, or during inclement weather. School principals reported a wide range of strategies to provide for students who missed instruction because of late busses. These strategies included additional one on one time with teacher or educational assistants, peer support, homework and use of recess and lunch periods.

No principals reported a cost linked to providing additional time and support. Principals who had staff provide additional time with students by teachers or educational assistants did so within current collective agreements.

Regarding mandated minutes, schools are required to provide a set number of mandated hours per year as determined by Alberta Education. A small percentage of district students have perfect attendance and therefore access all of the mandated minutes. Schools continually adjust and respond to individual student absences and lates throughout the year.

**BOARD REQUEST #205, APRIL 14, 2009: PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING THE IMPLICATIONS OF MOVING TO A FOUR-DAY SCHOOL WEEK INDICATING AREAS, INCLUDING TRANSPORTATION, WHERE COST SAVINGS MAY BE POSSIBLE AND IDENTIFYING OTHER ALBERTA**

**JURISDICTIONS USING THIS MODEL:** Moving to a four-day school week would impact every school and decision unit in the district and therefore a complete answer to this request cannot be given without a huge investment of time and resources to study the implications and possible cost savings. The literature shows that a four-day school week tends to be implemented in mainly rural jurisdictions, some of which would not be able to operate otherwise. Reports of meeting anticipated cost savings are mixed. For schools indicating cost savings, they occurred in utilities, transportation, other costs related to keeping a building open, and from reductions in days worked for staff tied to the number of school days.

There are approximately 25 schools in Alberta that have implemented a four-day school week. These schools tend to be mainly rural or community schools. Our Lady of Mount Pleasant School in Camrose will implement a four-day school week starting in September. This junior-senior high school will offer 1,000 hours of instruction to both junior and senior high school students, with teachers working 1,600 minutes a week.

In Saskatchewan six schools in the Prairie South School Division have operated on a four-day week for some years. No evidence of improved student achievement in one of these schools was found in a 2007 study by Dr. Larry Sackney of the Saskatchewan Educational Leadership Unit. He is conducting further research this year.

A number of British Columbia school districts, in predominately rural areas facing financial difficulties, have implemented a four-day school week in some of their schools. Although there appears to be little change in student achievement, some schools report increased attendance and lower levels of discipline problems. There has been a very mixed reaction to this change, ranging from absolute support to the spawning of groups such as “Keep Five Alive”.

Below is a list, not meant to be comprehensive, of some of the issues that would have to be considered if the District were to pursue a four-day school week:

- The effect on the contracted transportation carriers would be to have one day a week without utilization of their buses. Other boards with five-day school weeks would be more attractive to these carriers, and unless the District were to compensate for the off-day, it may be difficult to obtain sufficient contracts to meet the District’s needs.
- It would be unlikely that students using ETS transportation would have lower costs for bus passes. ETS would likely have concerns over the lack of use on the fifth day for special buses that are used jointly by both Edmonton school districts.
- A much larger percentage of parents in an urban district have jobs that take them away from their homes than in a rural district. This would lead to a much larger need for daycare on the non-instructional day in urban districts than in rural districts. Single parent and two-parent working homes would face additional financial and logistic hardships related to increased daycare needs.
- The District would have to address the need to keep certain schools open on the fifth day for rental spaces such as daycares.

- Alberta Education mandates 950 hours of instruction for Grades 1 through 9 and 1,000 hours for Grades 10 through 12. The change to a four-day school week would then require the length of the school day to increase by approximately one hour (perhaps 45 minutes if breaks are shortened), to approximately six hours per day for Grades 1 to 9 and approximately seven hours for Grades 10 to 12.
- Some of the Collective Agreement implications regarding a four-day school week include:

**Support staff:**

- Hours of work currently are defined as ‘normally [shall] be seven hours per day, Monday to Friday’
- Lunch breaks for part-time staff would be impacted
- Vacations are based on years worked determining number of days earned
- Sick leave is based on days; would take longer to accrue sick leave
- Leaves of absence e.g. family leave, personal leave [would they be based on time earned at seven hours a day]

**Custodial staff:**

- Leaves of absence e.g. family/personal leave are based on three-8 hour days
- Sick leave – now 175 days
- Vacation and holiday bonus days – now up to five bonus days can be earned
- Custodial assistants work at least ten days in the summer
- Summer hours are four consecutive days at 9.5 hours
- Overtime and call back implications

**Teachers:**

- Experience increments are based on number of days worked divided by 130
- Part-time and substitute teachers would be disadvantaged in accumulating service and in the rate of pay they received unless there was a rate adjustment
- Teacher Assignment – 1,800 minutes of which 1,430 are instructional

The above are examples of the many factors that would need to be considered if the District were to adopt a four-day school week. If the Board is serious about pursuing this major shift in the school week, additional financial and personnel resources would have to be made available in order to identify all of the impacts and to conduct appropriate stakeholder feedback.

**CONFERENCE REQUEST #207, APRIL 21, 2009, PROVIDE AN UPDATE ON THE PROPOSED 12 CITY WARDS AND BACKGROUND ON THE BOARD’S OWN WARD CONFIGURATION:**

**City of Edmonton Review Status**

The City of Edmonton passed first reading to establish 12 electoral wards on February 17, 2009. The bylaw will return to City Council on July 22, 2009. The results of a public consultation process will be considered, followed by votes on the second and third readings.

The City's proposed 12 ward system does not directly impact the Board's nine ward system. However, it provides an opportunity for the Board to consider alternatives to the nine ward system. The Board's nine ward system provides a single representative for each ward. One of the concerns raised about the single representative system is that some representatives hold the view that they serve a defined, narrow "constituency" as opposed to the broad citizenry. Rather than a single representative ward system, the Board could consider a multiple representative ward system within the City ward boundaries. For example, three Trustees could be elected from within each of three "super" wards comprised of four city wards.

Edmonton Catholic Schools will have to adopt a new ward system for their seven member board. They currently have six electoral wards coterminous with the City's six ward system with one trustee being elected on the basis of the next highest number of votes from among all of the wards.

### **Approval**

A Board motion is required to amend the current ward criteria, and a Board motion and Ministerial approval is required to change the ward boundaries. Changes to ward boundaries for trustee elections could be implemented if Ministerial approval is obtained by March 1, 2010 for the October 2010 General Municipal Election.

In order for the City of Edmonton Elections Office to provide computerized compilation of electoral results, the public school board ward boundaries must conform to existing voting subdivision boundaries.

The next general municipal election will be held on Monday, October 18, 2010.

### **Background**

Prior to 1989, all public and separate school trustees were elected city-wide. In 1989 the Minister of Education required trustees to be elected by wards. Nine public and seven separate school trustees were elected from within the existing City of Edmonton's six ward system. For the Edmonton Public School Board, the highest vote recipient from each of the six wards were elected, along with the second highest vote recipients in three of the six wards.

In 1995, nine public school trustee electoral wards were implemented which were distinct from municipal wards. Boundary alignments were chosen in order to distribute future urban growth and to ensure that the ward populations would remain within a  $\pm 10$  per cent of average public school supporting population for at least three elections. Wards were designed on the basis of achieving a balance of total public school supporting population among wards as a priority over seeking to achieve a balance in the number of schools or students within a ward. The potential for population growth or decline within each ward was also considered. In November 2006, a motion was passed by the Board to amend the trustee electoral ward design criteria to have a balance of ward population of  $\pm 15$  per cent.

**Current Trustee Electoral Ward Design Criteria as Passed by Board December 6, 1994; Amended November 7, 2006**

The wards must:

1. have a resident population of public school supporters that is within  $\pm 15$  per cent of the average for all wards (one ninth of the total district-wide public-school supporting population);
2. reflect the potential for population growth or decline with the goal that school ward populations remain within  $\pm 15$  per cent of the average through three municipal general elections;
3. encompass entire school attendance areas where possible;
4. be regular in shape, and be delineated by easily identifiable boundaries such as major roadways, railways, ravines, rivers, etcetera; and
5. ensure where possible that communities of common interests or characteristics are kept within the same ward.

**Current Ward Boundaries**

The data used to complete this review were provided by the City of Edmonton from the 2008 Municipal Census counts. This is the same data source the City of Edmonton used for the Municipal Ward Boundary Review currently underway. Due to a change in the census reporting process not all electors declared themselves as either public or separate supporters.

Appendix I provides a map of the current electoral ward boundaries.

The data indicates the ‘balanced ward population’ criterion will not be met in 2010 in Ward H (see table below).

<b>Current Ward Boundaries</b>	<b>Total City Population</b>	<b>Public Supporting Population</b>	<b>Difference from Optimum Public Population (<math>\pm 10\%</math>)</b>	<b>Public Population Deviation</b>
A	101,249	68,706	4,383	6.81%
B	90,268	64,503	180	0.28%
C	73,980	58,110	(6,213)	-9.66%
D	72,600	58,086	(6,237)	-9.70%
E	75,742	56,036	(8,287)	-12.88%
F	71,123	61,566	(2,757)	-4.29%
G	88,087	70,869	6,546	10.18%
H	100,915	79,656	15,333	23.84%
I	78,448	61,380	(2,943)	-4.58%
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>752,412</b>	<b>578,912</b>		
<b>Ward Average</b>	<b>83,601</b>	<b>64,323</b>		

Population Deviation with the No response as 100 per cent Public Support

### Potential Realignment

To meet the current criteria, voting subdivisions 506 (Brander Gardens), 507 (Brookside) 517 (Bulyea Heights), 519 (Rhatigan Ridge) and 518 (Ramsay Heights) could be moved from Ward H to Ward F. This area is north of Rabbit Hill Road, west of Whitemud Creek and east of the Saskatchewan River. This realignment would bring all nine wards back into the  $\pm 15$  per cent range and provide flexibility for future population growth in Ward H.

<b>Current Ward Boundaries</b>	<b>Total City Population</b>	<b>Public Supporting Population</b>	<b>Difference from Optimum Public Population (+/-10%)</b>	<b>Public Population</b>
A	101,249	68,706	4,383	6.81 %
B	90,268	64,503	180	0.28 %
C	73,980	58,110	(6,213)	-9.66 %
D	72,600	58,086	(6,237)	-9.70 %
E	75,742	56,036	(8,287)	-12.88 %
F	86,077	73,320	8,997	13.99 %
G	88,087	70,869	6,546	10.18 %
H	85,961	67,902	3,579	5.56 %
I	78,448	61,380	(2,943)	-4.58 %
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>752,412</b>	<b>578,912</b>		
<b>Ward Average</b>	<b>83,601</b>	<b>64,323</b>		

Population Deviation with the No response as 100% Public Support

TP:ja

APPENDIX I – Map of Current Electoral Boundaries

