

DATE: June 12, 2012

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Edgar Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Designated Schools (Response to Trustee Request #200)

ORIGINATOR: Brian Smith, Executive Director Finance and Infrastructure

RESOURCE

STAFF: Tim Boan, Leanne Fedor, Jack Geldart, Ann Parker, Lorne Parker, Jim Ray , Christopher Wright

REFERENCE: May 8, 2012 Board Meeting (Trustee Shipka)

ISSUE

The following information was requested:

What are the reasons that students in some designated communities such as McConachie and Schonsee, have as many as three under-capacity schools closer to the students' residence than their designated schools? What would be the impact of changing the designation of those communities to under-utilized schools that are closer to where those students live?

BACKGROUND

Increasing numbers of Edmonton Public School students are residing in new subdivisions, placing enrolment pressures on existing schools. As the city continues to grow, accompanied with uncertain funding for new school construction, it has become necessary to accommodate students who reside in new neighbourhoods at schools farther away from where they reside. According to Board Policy IC.BP, when creating or modifying attendance areas consideration is given to the following criteria including but not limited to:

- school feeder patterns
- walking distance
- major roads
- public transit routes
- natural barriers
- commuter patterns
- infrastructure
- proximity of schools to one another
- schools with available space to accommodate additional students.

Designated schools are the closest schools with available space to accommodate all of the current and projected students within a given area. Historically this has meant bypassing schools that are closer to the newest neighbourhoods when these schools do not have sufficient space to accommodate the current and projected student enrolment numbers.

CURRENT SITUATION

When determining designated receiving schools for developing neighbourhoods, both elementary and junior high attendance areas are considered.

The McConachie neighbourhood is currently designated to Belvedere School for elementary programming and Steele Heights School for junior high programming. Elementary schools that are in closer proximity to the McConachie neighbourhood include: Dr. Donald Massey, J. A. Fife, John Barnett, Kildare, McLeod and York schools.

The Schonsee neighbourhood is currently designated to Northmount School for elementary programming and Dickensfield School for junior high programming. Elementary schools that are in closer proximity to the Schonsee neighbourhood include: Dr. Donald Massey, Evansdale, J. A. Fife, John Barnett, Lago Lindo and Kildare schools.

The table below lists schools that are in closer proximity than the designated schools for the McConachie and Schonsee neighbourhoods. Schools with a utilization rate of 85% are considered to be at capacity. The table compares the number of students enrolled based on September 30, 2011 data with the number of student spaces based on 85% of the provincial ACU capacities. Available student spaces are the difference between the 85% utilization value and the September 30th enrolment value.

Table 1 - Schools in Closer Proximity to the McConachie Neighbourhood

School	ACU Capacity	85% Utilization	Current Enrolment	Available Student Spaces
Dr. Donald Massey	840	714	759	-45
J. A. Fife*	533	453	291*	162
John Barnett	274	233	163	70
Kildare	571	485	520	-35
McLeod	402	341	326	15
York	377	320	200	120

Table 2 - Schools in Closer Proximity to the Schonsee Neighbourhood

School	ACU Capacity	85% Utilization	Current Enrolment	Available Student Spaces
Evansdale	467	397	333	64
J. A. Fife*	533	453	291*	162
John Barnett	274	233	163	70
Kildare	571	485	520	-35
Lago Lindo	446	379	322	57
McLeod	402	341	326	15

*Note: J. A. Fife School currently accommodates Kindergarten to Grade 5 French Immersion and will require additional space to accommodate the growth of the program.

The following table indicates the number of Edmonton Public Schools' resident elementary students in the developing McConachie and Schonsee neighbourhoods based on September 30th enrolment data unless otherwise specified. The peak projected number of resident elementary students is also indicated.

Table 3 – Historic and Projected EPSB Elementary Populations for the McConachie and Schonsee Neighbourhoods

Neighbourhood	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	May 11, 2012	Projected Peak EPSB Elementary Population
McConachie					1	10	40	48	494
Schonsee	7	18	35	39	54	70	106	121	212

At the time when the McConachie and Schonsee neighbourhoods were designated to their receiving schools, the North Central Sector schools identified in Tables 1 and 2 were not considered as there was not sufficient space to accommodate the projected student enrolments. Since then, the opening of the ASAP 2010 schools has alleviated some of the enrolment pressure at North Central Sector schools.

There are currently no elementary schools in closer proximity to the McConachie neighbourhood with sufficient space to be considered for re-designation of this neighbourhood.

Specific to the Schonsee neighbourhood, while there is not currently sufficient space at J.A. Fife School, this school has the greatest amount of surplus space. In that regard, enrolment will continue to be monitored to determine if sufficient space will become available in the future to warrant re-designation of the Schonsee neighbourhood to J.A. Fife School. Should a re-designation become possible, additional consideration will be given to appointing Londonderry School as the designated junior high school for the J.A. Fife School attendance area. This concurrent action would re-align junior high feeder patterns. However, at this time there is inadequate space at Londonderry School to accommodate the projected student enrolment of the Schonsee neighbourhood. As of September 30, 2011, Londonderry School had an enrolment of 637 students with a provincially rated capacity of 700 students, resulting in a 92 per cent utilization rate.

In summary, sufficient space would need to be available at both J.A. Fife and Londonderry schools to warrant a redesignation of the Schonsee neighbourhood to these schools.

The potential impacts of changing school designation(s) for the McConachie and Schonsee neighbourhoods would be:

- A redesignation may not be congruent with current transportation availability including ETS and yellow bus service. In the event that a redesignation conflicts with current transportation patterns, additional costs would be incurred by the District.
- District transportation services are currently provided to students from the McConachie and Schonsee neighbourhoods to the designated schools. A change in designated schools would require a re-direction of transportation services to align with the new school designation. Transportation services in support of the original school designation would no longer be available.
- Enrolment at the current designated school would be projected to decline in response to a new school designation.

KEY POINTS

- When determining designated receiving schools for developing neighbourhoods, a number of factors are considered including (but not limited to) the current and projected number of students as well as elementary and junior high feeder patterns.
- Schools in closer proximity to the McConachie and Schonsee neighbourhoods than their designated schools have inadequate space to accommodate all of the current and projected students.
- Edmonton Public Schools reviews school attendance areas and enrolments on a regular basis and the McConachie and Schonsee neighbourhoods will be included within these reviews. Should there be a time when space is available at schools in closer proximity to McConachie and Schonsee, these neighbourhoods could be added to the attendance areas of these schools.
- A change in designated schools would require a re-direction of transportation services to align with the new school designation. Transportation services in support of the original school designation would no longer be available.
- As a district of choice, parents may choose to enroll their children at any school providing entrance requirements are met and there is space available.

ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES

N/A

JG:sa