

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

June 17, 2003

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Castle Downs Senior High School Feasibility Study

ORIGINATOR: A. Habinski, Executive Director School and District Services

RESOURCE

STAFF: Jenise Bidulock, Diane Brunton, Robert Craig, Seth Crook, Michael Ediger, Andrea Furness, Leanne Fedor, Roland Labbe, Randy Leal, Pat Semeniuk, Cindy Skolski, Linda Wiens

RECOMMENDATION

That the submission of the Castle Downs Senior High School Feasibility Study (Attachment I) to Alberta Infrastructure be approved.

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Background and Purpose

In response to Edmonton Public Schools' 2000-2003 Capital Submission, Alberta Infrastructure provided funding to undertake a feasibility study that would examine north side high school populations and the need for a new senior high school. The findings of the Castle Downs Senior High School Feasibility Study are presented in this report.

Feasibility - Summary of Analysis

The key elements currently influencing the feasibility of constructing a new public senior high school in the Castle Downs area are:

1. There is sufficient public high school space within close proximity (i.e. Queen Elizabeth High School) to accommodate the number of students residing within the Castle Downs study area;
2. The expense of constructing a new public senior high school within the study area should not negatively affect the capital priorities previously identified by the district; and
3. The conditions and requirements of Alberta Infrastructure that precede their approval of funding to support new construction (i.e. the availability of alternative space and a senior high utilization rate of 85 per cent) have yet to be fully addressed by the district.

Implications on Capital Planning

1. Public and Separate Schools

Edmonton Public Schools recognizes its responsibility to ensure its continued ability to serve the public education needs of all high school students within the City of Edmonton. The district is therefore interested in exploring sound options that would provide the opportunity to offer a public senior high school choice to all high school students within the Castle Downs area.

While projected enrolments within the study area indicate that a stand-alone public high school may not be the most cost efficient alternative, the demographics of the area warrant consideration, by the district, of a multi-campus facility with a smaller capacity for public students. A proposal for a multi-campus facility in partnership with Edmonton Catholic Schools on the Castle Downs site has consequently been identified and proposed within the district's 2003-2005 Capital Submission, currently before the board under separate cover.

While all means of creating efficiencies in terms of costs will be considered (i.e. shared gym, labs, physical plant, etc.) consideration will also be given, by the district, to Edmonton Catholic Schools' requirements for a successful partnership, including the option of involving a third party within a multi-campus facility. These considerations would be essential in order to ultimately ensure project feasibility and acceptability.

2. Other District Initiatives

A number of other initiatives that could ultimately impact the need for the construction of a new senior high school facility in the Castle Downs area are either currently being considered or pursued by the district. These initiatives focus primarily on the obvious need to positively affect facility utilization within district high schools so that Alberta Infrastructure's conditions for the approval of funding for new space can be met as soon as possible.

Disposition of Space through Lease or Conversion: The district is currently considering the lease of surplus high school space within a district high school to another public education provider in support of a partnership arrangement that would present two distinct public education options to Edmonton students within one facility. A second initiative is also being considered that would convert surplus high school space at another district high school for the purpose of accommodating the re-location of Edmonton Regional Educational Consulting Services from Belvedere School. Combining these measures with the closure of the high school program at Stratford School would have the effect of removing a total of approximately 1,600 student spaces and increasing the district's high school utilization rate to 84 per cent.

Alternate Grade Configuration: As either an alternative to or as a complementary component of a partnership, a new facility could include additional junior high grade levels. It is expected that in the near future there will be a need for additional junior high space in the area.

Special Program Placement and Program Improvement: Options to implement special programs in senior high schools will be explored to provide opportunities for success similar

to that which has been achieved at L'Academie Vimy Ridge Academy with the placement of a Sports Alternative program. Work has also been undertaken to improve program delivery in north side high schools with discussions anticipating program improvements that would lead to increased enrolments and improved utilization in north side high schools. Examples include establishing formal "consortia" between groupings of senior high schools to more clearly determine specific programming needs and improved program delivery as well as the development of pre-tech/career programming partnerships between schools and/or other public institutions.

Submission of Report to Alberta Infrastructure

The full report (Attachment I) is intended to be submitted to Alberta Infrastructure as information.

Attachment I – Castle Downs Senior High School Feasibility Study

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