

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

May 11, 2004

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Request for Capital Funding to Undertake a Partnership Development Study at L'Académie Vimy Ridge Academy

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

RESOURCE
STAFF: Jenise Bidulock, Don Blackwell, Meredith Colgan, Michael Ediger, Henry Madsen

RECOMMENDATION

That a request to Alberta Infrastructure for emergent capital funding to undertake a partnership development study jointly with the *Conseil Scolaire Centre-Nord* (Francophone School District) respecting L'Académie Vimy Ridge Academy, be approved.

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Surplus space at L'Académie Vimy Ridge Academy is presently leased to *Le Conseil Scolaire Centre-Nord* (Francophone District) to accommodate a K-9 school, *L'Ecole Gabrielle Roy*. A study is required to establish a long-term partnership which will transfer a portion of the school to the Francophone district, and will enable shared use of other spaces on a more permanent basis. The study will be undertaken jointly by Edmonton Public Schools and the Francophone district on a 50/50 cost share basis, and will be submitted to the province as an emergent item outside the current district capital priorities. Other potential partnerships may emerge with the City of Edmonton in regard to the existing pool on site, or with other current building users such as the Ballet School.

Proceeding with a partnership in this way would benefit the district as follows:

- Low utilization in the school is addressed through permanent disposition of surplus space. Disposition of space will improve the utilization rate in the high school sector to 84 per cent, thus providing justification to add senior high capacity in growth areas.
- Plant Operation and Maintenance resources will be used more effectively.
- A condition of the partnership is expected to be a substantial capital upgrade of district space as retained for L'Académie Vimy Ridge Academy programs. The upgrading could address building modifications needed for the multiple programs in the school.

- A partnership may facilitate cooperation among facility users, and may result in shared use of space, resources and services such as transportation or instructional programming.

From the Francophone school district's perspective, a permanent acquisition of the building area will meet accommodation needs and will enable the district to expend capital to modify the instructional spaces to suit their needs and to create a unique visual identity for the school. Both districts could benefit from efficiencies gained through sharing spaces, programs or services under one roof.

The study would be completed by February 2005, with potential implementation in September 2005.

Key components are (see Appendix I for complete study outline):

- Partner Identification
- Facility requirements and space needs, both exclusive use and shared use
- Building concept design
- Capital upgrading requirements
- Ownership and operating agreements
- Joint programming and shared services potential
- Site impacts
- Community consultation and communication

Principals Don Blackwell and Henry Madsen are in support of the recommendation. A meeting was held with the executive of L'Académie Vimy Ridge Academy Parent Council, where positive feedback was received and excellent questions were asked regarding the study, its outcomes and the role of parents in the study or future planning and design stages. The administration will further discuss the study at the next full parent council meeting on May 12, 2004.

An outcome of the study is expected to be a comprehensive partnership agreement which will require future board approval prior to implementation. Additional information regarding the rationale for the study is provided in Appendix II.

APPENDIX I Partnership Development Study

APPENDIX II Background Information: L'Académie Vimy Ridge Academy Partnership

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Background Information: L'Académie Vimy Ridge Academy Partnership

A study is required to implement a partnership between Edmonton Public Schools and *Conseil Scolaire Centre-Nord* (Francophone School District) at L'Académie Vimy Ridge Academy. The project would involve a permanent disposition of space at L'Académie Vimy Ridge Academy to accommodate a Francophone school, and a modernization of affected space resulting from classroom relocation at L'Académie Vimy Ridge Academy.

The utilization rate in district high schools has improved from 81 per cent in 2002 – 2003 to 84 per cent in 2003 – 2004. This improvement moves the district close to the 85 percent utilization threshold for the high school sector. Meeting this threshold is an important step in accessing capital funds for modernization and new construction of high schools. This increase in utilization has been achieved primarily through the Francophone lease of approximately 14 classrooms at L'Académie Vimy Ridge Academy, and the use of high school space in Queen Elizabeth School for decentralized administration (Consulting Services).

The Francophone school district has long identified a need to acquire a permanent and larger site for Gabrielle Roy School, a public Francophone school in Edmonton. An agreement was reached between Edmonton Public Schools and the Francophone school district to lease a portion of L'Académie Vimy Ridge Academy to the Francophone school district for the 2003-2004 school year. At that time, minor renovations to the wing at L'Académie Vimy Ridge Academy were completed by the Francophone school district. Idylwylde School was subsequently closed in the spring of 2003, and currently remains vacant.

The Francophone school district has explored a variety of options for a site that would meet their needs, including the expansion of the currently vacant Idylwylde School, which is located on the same site as L'Académie Vimy Ridge Academy, and new construction on other sites. They also explored the feasibility of being able to acquire, whether under an extended lease, or purchase, a portion of the facility at L'Académie Vimy Ridge Academy.

Throughout this process, Edmonton Public Schools and the Francophone School District have been collaborating on a potential joint capital solution that will meet the needs of both boards in a timely and cost-effective way. This initiative would result in a Public-Public Partnership possibility in the existing facility of L'Académie Vimy Ridge Academy. The City of Edmonton has also expressed a desire to be involved in a partnership, as site improvements may benefit the community at large as well as students.

A request for capital funding will be jointly submitted by the Francophone School District and the Edmonton Public School Board to Alberta Infrastructure to complete a Partnership Development Study.

The study will explore the feasibility and costs associated with an innovative partnership project to convert an existing under-utilized public senior high school into a shared facility accommodating a kindergarten to grade nine Francophone school, as well as the multiple programs currently offered at L'Académie Vimy Ridge Academy. A potential third partnership could involve the City of Edmonton, and the potential incorporation of the

Bonnie Doon Pool, and other recreational facilities, into the project. One of the important goals of the partnership for the district will be to access capital enhancements to the facility for L'Académie Vimy Ridge Academy, specifically the L'Académie Vimy Ridge Academy, Canadian studies program, sports alternative program, and special needs programs.

It is estimated that the study duration would be eight months, including preparation of a terms of reference, hiring a consultant, and study completion. Each phase would be done in consultation with Alberta Infrastructure staff. The expected outcomes would be a concept design for a partnership facility and a proposed capital budget for consideration and review.

Because this form of collaborative partnership is unique in Edmonton, where two school boards and a municipality are collaborating in one building on one site, the districts will jointly request the involvement of Alberta Infrastructure in funding a study outside of the process of the Capital Plan. The request will be initiated by the Francophone school district and Edmonton Public Schools will support the request. We will also request, from Alberta Infrastructure, that this not negatively affect our district Capital Plan and that additional resources be provided. Once the details of the study are finalized with the Francophone school district, a recommendation will be made to Board to authorize the emergent capital request and the specific amount of funds requested.