

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

May 22, 2001

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dossdall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Parent Input Regarding the Decision to Close Queen Mary Park School

ORIGINATOR: G. Reynolds, Department Head

RESOURCE  
STAFF: Manfred Malzahn

INFORMATION

At the May 8, 2001 board meeting Sonya Olsen, a member of the Queen Mary Park Parents' Association, commented on the board's recent decision to close Queen Mary Park School. Following is the text of her comments, as provided by her.

*Queen Mary Park parents want to opt out of the City Centre Education Project. Allowing QMP to remain open will not affect the success or failure of the project.*

*The parents association is prepared (and already had plans in motion before the closure) to fundraise with bingo's and a casino to raise funds to provide the students at QMP with school supplies. We will not require funding for busing and we are looking at ways to facilitate a hot lunch program. We will not require and do not want any of the "freebies" that have been offered. If opting out is not an option we have an alternative plan to suggest.*

*John A. McDougall requires extensive upgrades and repairs. Would you be willing to delay the transfer of students to JAM for another year while the construction is completed and keep QMP open during this period of time? In addition the children from JAM could attend school at QMP for the same reason. This would be in the best interest of children with health concerns. As the parent of an asthmatic child this is a very serious concern. Other parents have mentioned this concern to me as well. During this time the children and parents could get to know each other and once the school is renovated parents might be more receptive to having their children attend JAM.*

*If this were truly a city centre project, why weren't all the schools in the city centre put on the list? Vic Comp. is overflowing and has a long waiting list to get into it. The elementary from JAM could have moved to QMP and JAM could have been a satellite campus for Vic. Comp.*

The administration met with Ms. Olsen on May 15, 2001 to hear her concerns in greater detail and to offer relevant information. The substance of that discussion is summarized below.

1. Opting out of the City Centre Education Project (CCEP): The CCEP has no legal or formal status of any kind. It is simply a name attached to this initiative. Queen Mary Park School will continue to be part of the CCEP but even if its participation were to end at this time, this would not alter the fact that the school will be closed in accordance with the board's decision.
2. Parent fund-raising for school supplies and a lunch program: The CCEP is based on the premise that city centre students require enhanced programming and services to be successful in school, and that grouping students in larger numbers is a prerequisite to these enhancements. While parents' offer to fund-raise for no-cost school supplies and a lunch program are appreciated, the project involves numerous other initiatives that can only be consistently implemented in larger schools.
3. Delaying the closure of Queen Mary Park School by one year: The provincial regulation on school closure prohibits this. Any school closure process must begin and end in the same school year.
4. Using Queen Mary Park School as swing space while John A. McDougall School is modernized: Normal practice in a large building like John A. McDougall is to continue school operations as construction is carried out in phases. All necessary measures are taken to ensure that there is no negative impact on areas that are in use by students and staff, and as much of the work as possible is scheduled for the summer and other times when the school is not operating. In any case, provincial funding for upgrading John A. McDougall has not been secured. If the project were to be funded, it is unlikely that it would be completed in one year.
5. Expansion of Victoria School into the John A. McDougall School building: There are no plans for Victoria School to expand beyond its existing building. When a school faces potential overcrowding, this is prevented by implementing a maximum enrolment guideline that limits the number of students who may enroll. Victoria School does not have a maximum enrolment guideline.

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