

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

October 14, 2003

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Allendale School Closure Process

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

RESOURCE

STAFF: Jenise Bidulock, Robert Craig, Andrea Furness, Karen Linden, Deanne Patsula, Darren Sweeney

INFORMATION

The notice of motion “That the administration begin the required process to initiate closure of the regular elementary program at Allendale School”, was approved at public board on September 30, 2003. The elementary program at Allendale School is eligible for closure in accordance with Board Policy FL.BP (Appendix I).

Background

Allendale Elementary Junior High School was opened in 1949 and has a capacity for 687 students. The enrolment on September 30, 2003, at Allendale School, was 260 students, of which 14 were registered in the regular elementary program and 17 were registered in the elementary Interactions program. Although, enrolment in the regular elementary program had increased between 1998 and 2002 there were not more than 76 students in the program, which equals an average of fewer than 11 students per grade. According to Board Policy the elementary program is eligible for closure when there are fewer than 15 students per grade.

Enrolment for the elementary program had been projected for 77 students for the current year. However, in the spring of 2003 pre-enrolment in the regular elementary program for the 2003-2004 school year fell to 43 students, which meant that students would be in combined classes of three or more grades. At that time discussions were held among parents, staff and the principal, which resulted in many students transferring to Mount Pleasant School. Eighteen students remained enrolled in the Allendale regular elementary program, and a class was organized for the beginning of the 2003-2004 school year. Four students have since elected to enrol elsewhere.

In 2002, the elementary Interactions program at Allendale was identified to be phased out and students accommodated at Belmead, Tipaskan, and Mee-Yah-Noh.

In addition to the elementary programs, Allendale School is a junior high district centre for the Interactions program (Division III), as well as junior high German Bilingual and Cogito programs. There are 19 students in the Division III Interactions program, 76 junior high students in the German Bilingual program, and 60 junior high students enrolled in the Cogito program. Including the 75 junior high students in regular programs there are a total of 230 junior high students at Allendale.

Rationale

Enrolment in the elementary program at Allendale School is not projected to increase significantly in the future. There are 113 public elementary students living within the Allendale attendance area. Only 10 of these students are currently attending Allendale, with the remaining students primarily attending the following nearby schools: Parkallen, 26 students, Mount Pleasant, 22 students, Garneau, 9 students, and McKernan, 9 students. If the Allendale elementary program were to close, the 10 students would likely choose one of these public elementary schools. The provincial utilization rates of these schools are: Parkallen, 41 per cent; Mount Pleasant 94 per cent; Garneau 35 per cent; and McKernan 68 per cent. There is ample space to accommodate Allendale elementary students in nearby schools. All of the current students registered at Allendale elementary could be accommodated at Mount Pleasant School or other nearby district schools.

Consultation

Students and parents who will be affected by this recommendation have been advised through a letter prior to this report being made public. The letter advised parents of the process for formal school closure including the mandated public consultation.

Timeline and Next Steps

The provincial regulation requires that any school closure process begins and ends in the same school year. Central Services staff, with support from the principal, will take the lead in this process. Over the next month, groups and individuals will be encouraged to provide input in a variety of forms, including attendance at meetings, written submissions, individual meetings and telephone calls. The date and location of the public meeting will be communicated to trustees once it is determined.

AF

APPENDIX I Board Policy FL.BP School Closure

APPENDIX II Alberta Regulation 238/97 – Closure of Schools Regulation