

DATE: September 27, 2011

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Edgar Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Proposed Names for 2012 ASAP Schools

ORIGINATOR: Brian Smith, Executive Director

RESOURCE STAFF: Jenifer Elliott, Jack Geldart, Roland Labbe, Catherine Mihajlovich, Lorne Parker, Jane Sterling

REFERENCE: Board Policy FF.BP – Naming of Schools, Administrative Regulation FF.AR - Naming of Schools

ISSUE

Names must be chosen for two new schools scheduled to open in September 2012.

RECOMMENDATION

That the following two names for the 2012 ASAP schools be approved: Michael Strembitsky School (Ellerslie/Summerside site); Bessie Nichols School (the Grange/Hamptons site).

BACKGROUND

Three new district school buildings will open in September 2012 under the provincial ASAP II program (Attachment I). One building is a replacement school in Griesbach neighbourhood, which will retain the name of Major General Griesbach School. The other two schools currently under construction in the neighbourhoods of Ellerslie/Summerside (located in south Edmonton) and the Grange/Hamptons (located in west Edmonton) require naming. Each school will serve more than one city neighbourhood; therefore, they should not be named after the neighbourhood in which they are located. Formal naming of the school will support development of a unique identity for each school community.

RELATED FACTS

On May 31, 2011, Conference Committee considered a list of potential names for the schools, as submitted through a process to receive submissions for school naming consideration. According to Administrative Regulation FF.AR - Naming of Schools, Edmonton Public Schools is to provide an opportunity for the public and district staff to provide input during the naming process. Information on how to submit a name suggestion was posted on the District website, Staff Room, the District's Facebook page and on Twitter. In addition, the request for school name suggestions was profiled in the *Edmonton Journal* on January 25, 2011 and the *Edmonton Examiner* on January 26, 2011. The opportunity for staff and community input for naming the two 2012 ASAP schools was open from January 4, 2011 to February 28, 2011. Trustees requested that the list of names be reduced to five, and that the list be reduced based on the following criteria, recognizing:

- an individual who has made a significant contribution to education with the Edmonton Public School District

- an individual who has made a significant contribution to advance public education in Edmonton and Alberta
- an individual who does not currently have a separate park or piece of infrastructure already named after them
- an individual who contributed within Edmonton

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Based on the criteria and other aforementioned factors, five names were presented for consideration.

CONSIDERATIONS & ANALYSIS

Based on input provided from Conference Committee on September 6, 2011, the list of five potential names has now been revised and shortened (Attachment II). It should be noted that background information for each individual was provided by those submitting the names for consideration. However, research was conducted by district planning at the City of Edmonton Archives, Edmonton Public Schools Archives, the Provincial Archives of Alberta as well as the Edmonton Public Library to strengthen the background information initially provided.

NEXT STEPS

Once approved, administration will work with principals to develop school identity, in consultation with those recognized, or their families.

ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES

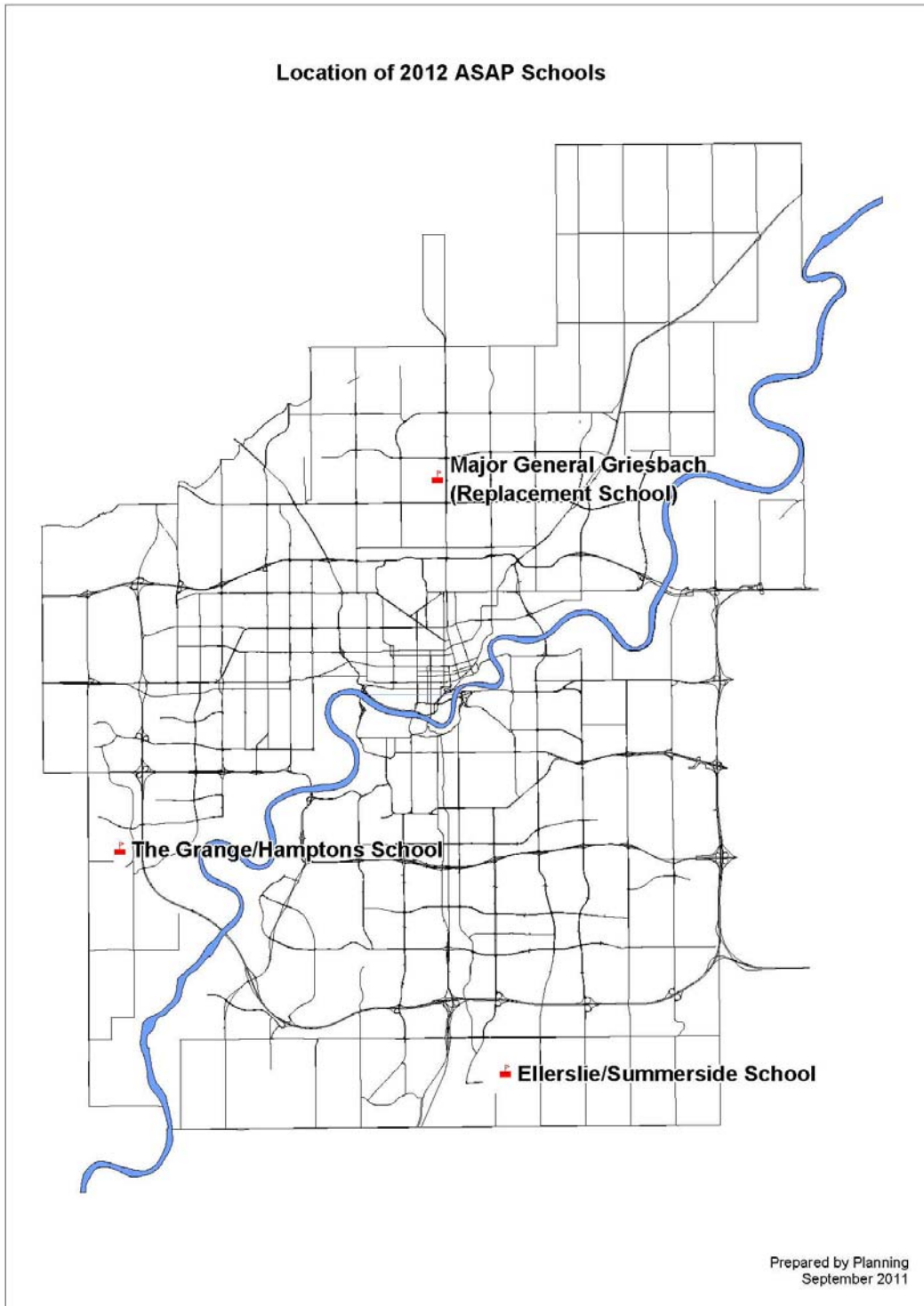
ATTACHMENT I Location of 2012 ASAP Schools

ATTACHMENT II Potential School Names – Final List

APPENDIX I Board Policy FF.BP – Naming of Schools

APPENDIX II Administrative Regulation FF.AR – Naming of Schools

JE:gm



Michael A. Strembitsky

Michael A. Strembitsky became Edmonton Public Schools' eighth Superintendent of Schools in 1973 and guided the District through the transition to a site-based decision-making organization - the first of its kind in a large North American school division. He has been referred to as the "guru of site-based school management" and in May 2004 was named one of the 100 Edmontonians of the Century by the *Edmonton Journal* in honour of his contribution to public education.

In 1956, he joined the staff of Edmonton Public Schools at Crestwood School. He spent two years as a relieving teacher, releasing principals for administrative duties and observing their operations at McKernan, Ritchie and Queen's Avenue schools. In 1960, he was appointed to the staff of Queen Elizabeth School, where he served for four years as a teacher and department head of social studies. He also enjoyed a short stint as acting assistant principal.

"Strem," as he was nicknamed at Queen Elizabeth School, moved quickly up Edmonton Public Schools' administrative ladder. In 1965, he was appointed assistant principal of Fulton Place School; a year later he was named principal of Delwood School. Only a year and a half after that, he was appointed acting supervisor of Elementary Education, and six months later, director of Elementary Curriculum for city schools. Three months after that, he was selected as assistant superintendent, a position Strembitsky held for three years before being appointed Deputy Superintendent. In 1973, he was named Superintendent of Schools at the age of 37. The next year, the Board appointed him Secretary-Treasurer, a position he held for five years.

A firm believer in input from teachers and administrators, Strembitsky held regular meetings with groups of teachers and support staff. He also believed parents should have more say in their children's education and introduced a system of open boundaries and a number of programming options, including bilingual programs in Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Spanish, German, Hebrew and Ukrainian. The number of female senior administrators also increased substantially during Superintendent Strembitsky's tenure.

Under his leadership, district public schools in Edmonton underwent a remarkable transformation. Parents can choose where to send their children and principals control most of their schools' finances, hire their own staff and select the services they want from central office.

Mr. Strembitsky retired from Edmonton Public Schools in 1995 and now works as an education consultant with a variety of school jurisdictions in the United States, and a number of other countries including New Zealand, Germany and Hong Kong.

Michael A. Strembitsky's personal standards and diverse interests, career success and contribution to public education are recognized by the Award of Excellence presented in his name to three deserving students each year.

Bessie H. Nichols

Of 132 trustees elected to the Edmonton Public School Board between 1882 and 1982, only 14 were women. The very first of these 14 women was Bessie H. Nichols. On February 16, 1912, Nichols became the first woman in Edmonton to be elected to civic office. Only the day before the election had the legislation changed to allow for women to sit as school board trustees. Earlier in February 1912, the Alberta legislature had made an amendment to Edmonton's charter permitting women to vote for the first time.

Although personal information regarding Nichols is limited, it is known that she had graduated from the University of Toronto in 1897 with a Bachelor of Arts in modern languages. It is believed that she is initially from Hamilton, Ontario and moved to Alberta in the early 1900s where she began teaching at Alberta College in 1903. Later, she worked for lawyer James E. Wallbridge as a stenographer and had become his law student by the time she had entered politics in 1912.

Nichols was reluctant to run in the 1912 election, but was heavily supported by the Council of Women of Greater Edmonton to do so. Nichols was ill prior to the election and feared she would not be able to commit to the two week campaign. However, with a strong support system behind her, Nichols was elected to the Edmonton Public School Board with 1446 votes, only 75 behind veteran trustee Walter Ramsay. Of the seven elected trustees in this election, she received the second highest number of votes. It was not only women that Nichols was popular with, rather the entire community supported her bid to run in the election. It was believed that a female trustee would be a great help to schools and Nichols' background and training would allow her to fit the position and get results. She was identified as a hard worker and was considered to be just as capable as a male school board trustee. She was likely the only candidate in the election with little to no opposition. Her candidacy was supported by both mayoral candidates as well as all alderman candidates.

It is unknown where Nichols' popularity may have taken her, as she missed the first board meeting after the election and was then excused from all school business by her doctor only one month later. She sat on the board's school management committee and was the chairman of the finance committee but it is unclear how many board meetings she was able to attend. Suffering from an unknown illness, she spent several months in 1913 undergoing two operations at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. While recuperating in the hospital, she sent in her resignation and was denied. Instead, she was given a five month leave of absence. By doing this, Nichols' fellow trustees had hoped that as she recovered she would change her mind and return to the board. What happened to Nichols after her two year term expired in 1914 is unknown, as she did not run for re-election.

(Source: Looking Back: A Century of Education in Edmonton Public Schools and articles and newspaper clippings acquired from the City of Edmonton Archives, Edmonton Public Schools Archives and the Edmonton Public Library)

Edmonton Public Schools Board Policies and Regulations

CODE: FF.BP

EFFECTIVE DATE: 22-05-2007

TOPIC: Naming of Schools

ISSUE DATE: 24-05-2007

REVIEW DATE: 05-2014

The Board reserves to itself the authority to name schools. In the naming of schools, preference shall be given to the names of persons who have made a valuable contribution to education and to the community at large or the names of neighbourhoods.

Reference(s):

[FF.AR](#) - Naming New Schools

[School Act](#) Section 60(3)(c)

Edmonton Public Schools Board Policies and Regulations

CODE: FF.AR

EFFECTIVE DATE: 03-02-2010

TOPIC: Naming of Schools

ISSUE DATE: 18-02-2010

REVIEW DATE: 02-2015

1. The following process shall be used in naming schools:
 - a. The Board Secretary shall keep an ongoing historical list of suggested school names, along with rationale, that may be submitted by the public and district staff as names to be considered.
 - b. The Superintendent of Schools shall provide an opportunity for the public and for district staff to provide input during the naming process.
 - c. The Superintendent of Schools shall provide the Conference Committee with a short list of school names to be considered, including the rationale and background information for each name.
 - d. The Conference Committee shall provide the Superintendent of Schools with direction with regard to the selection of a name.
 - e. The Superintendent of Schools shall recommend for approval to the Board of Trustees a name for the school.
2. The Board's decision for the school name shall be communicated to the City of Edmonton.
3. For all new schools, a suitable plaque outlining the origin of the school name shall be placed in a prominent position in the school. If the school is named after an individual, a picture and brief biography of the person being honoured should be displayed.

Reference(s):

[FF.BP](#) - Naming of Schools