

**Sundance Community Student Accommodation Meeting**  
**Sundance School**  
**February 7, 2006**

Issues

- Exploding growth in south Calgary.
- CBE is challenged to keep up with the growth.
- Another challenge with declining enrolment at inner city schools.
- Alberta Education has set guidelines that we work toward an overall 85% utilization rate.
- In Area V, we have nineteen accommodation issues we are trying to deal with in addition to two new schools, one expansion and one consideration for school closure.
- Area V has over 25,000 students and encompasses the schools south of Glenmore Trail to the city limits, and to the city limits east and west.

This meeting is beginning the process of providing and gathering data in conjunction with the Community Engagement and Operational Planning Department. We need to talk to communities around accommodation issues and get input around the development of possible scenarios. A scenario development team will work together to develop realistic scenarios. Then, this information will be shared with the larger community. Once the feedback is gathered and considered by stakeholders, Naomi will make a recommendation to take forward for approval. All feedback will be considered in the process.

Last year, there was some initial thinking around the issues facing the Sundance community. The participants made a recommendation to take the issues out to the broader community.

The good news for this community is that both schools in the Sundance community are needed and have a viable future.

We have been working on a long-term plan for French Immersion in the south. There is a French Immersion program at Dr. E. P. Scarlett, but a junior high location is needed within the next 2 years.

Q. *How do you come up with 105% utilization rate at Sundance when the number of students don't correspond?*

A. The special education students with codes in the severe range are counted as 3 to 1 for the purposes of utilization. Kindergarten students are counted as .5.

Q. *Is the capacity calculated at square metres or the using the new class size initiative?*

A. Right now Alberta Infrastructure uses square metres to calculate capacity. We are hopeful they will work with Alberta Education to change the method of calculating this to reflect the class size initiative.

- Q. *If you have a student in grades K-4 from Chaparral, what happens to their older siblings? You are splitting up families.*
- A. The students who live in Chaparral are designated next year to: Chaparral for K-4, Fish Creek for 5-6, MidSun for 7-9 and Centennial for 10-12. It is a trustee decision to keep the youngest children closer to home whenever possible.
- Q. *Do the families have a choice?*
- A. Principals can take out of boundary students if they have the room and resources to accept them. Principals do work together to coordinate start and end times, pd days, etc. The students do move together with their peer group.
- Q. *Do the utilization numbers include the portable classrooms?*
- A. The numbers include the portables.
- Q. *Why isn't one of the solutions to remove portables?*
- A. This can be one solution when there is declining enrolment, or another program can be designated to the school, or other communities could be designated to the school. In the community of Sundance, another community was designated to Fish Creek and another program was designated to Sundance in order to maintain their utilization and in making the best programming decisions.
- Q. *Why aren't out of boundary students asked to leave?*
- A. Seven years ago there were several empty classrooms with no out of boundary students attending. Some out of boundary students began to attend Sundance, but for the last 2 years, no new out of boundary students have been accepted.
- Q. *There will be very large numbers of grade 5 and 6 students at Fish Creek School due to the students coming from Chaparral.*
- A. This is an important concern to recognize as we look at the scenarios.
- Q. *Is the new school in Chaparral still opening in 2006?*
- A. We are not sure whether the school will open in September or October of 2006, but we are putting staff and students together somewhere for the first day of school to begin the school year together.
- Q. *If you choose scenario one, it means the kids will be together for 7 years.*
- A. This is a possibility, but students do move in and out all the time.

- Q. *Does scenario one assume that the French Immersion population stays the same?*
- A. Yes.
- Q. *Scenario three contradicts what you said about keeping the K-4 students close to home.*
- A. Every day we buss 33,000 kids, many with bus rides of 1 ½ hours each way. Students being bussed to Kingsland were experiencing this. Bussing across a single community is very different.
- Q. *Although it is important for children to move with their peer groups, siblings should stay together.*
- A. We do realize the importance of this and take it into consideration whenever we can.
- Q. *We want the ability to have siblings attend school together. Scenario three separates many families in this community.*
- A. Remember, these are scenarios only. They were developed in order to gather feedback.
- Q. *What is the walk limit for Kindergarten? I thought it was .8 km.*
- A. The walk limit is 1.2 km. It is the same for Kindergarten as it is for grades 1-6. The province sets the walk limit at 2.4 km so the CBE subsidizes transportation for those who live over 1.2 km. Perhaps you are thinking of the guideline we use to place bus stops - they are put within .8 km of home addresses so students won't have to walk further than .8 km to a bus stop.
- Q. *If the students live outside the walk limit of Fish Creek School and have to take the bus to school, do they have to pay bus fees?*
- A. The bus fees for this year are \$145.00 per student up to a family maximum of \$290.00. This includes lunchroom supervision. If you don't qualify for the bus, lunchroom fees are \$220.00 per student per year.
- Q. *Scenario 4 – does this mean since we are short 4 classrooms there will be 4 classes in the gym?*
- A. This is one of the challenges facing the school, which is why we are here tonight. We wouldn't necessarily use the gym. There could be other ways of using the library, classrooms, etc. There is tension between the utilization rate and the Alberta Commission on Learning class size guidelines. Politicians will need to deal with this.
- Q. *Why French?*

- A. This is a program that is very highly subscribed to in Area V. Families are interested in learning in both official languages.
- Q. *Sounds expensive?*
- A. There is some start up budget for all new programs. This program is resourced using the same Resource Allocation Model that all the schools receive. The students graduate from high school with a bilingual certificate.
- Q. *When are you going to know about Kindergarten for next year?*
- A. We are registering Kindergarten at Sundance. We need some work from the community members to make quick decisions. We will work as quickly as humanly possible, but we will not work without your input. We will have decisions made before the end of June.
- Q. *What about Kindergarten orientation? Could the 2 schools coordinate their orientation dates?*
- A. This is a good suggestion.
- Q. *How would you make Scenario two work?*
- A. There are different ways to do it. We were considering that the current students would stay, only new students would be designated to a different school.
- Q. *Could you take Scenario two and allow siblings of current students to attend?*
- A. Thank you for that suggestions. We will take a look at that.
- Q. *Can the parents fundraise for portables?*
- A. Funding only comes from the province. We have a capital plan and the priorities are considered across the system.
- Q. *Tax payers should have the choice to choose Catholic, English or French Immersion. My child should have a choice before any other outside the community.*
- A. We must always project into the future – the number of student spaces in this community and the number of regular program students will be less than 50% of the school utilization rates. Regardless of the future, Sundance students will always have first choice of the programs in this community.
- Q. *Is there a chance that the French Immersion was brought in too soon?*
- A. There was a sense of urgency for the French Immersion students as the communities designated to Kingsland from the deep south were facing such long bus rides. We did not

anticipate the Alberta Commission on Learning's class size guidelines at that time the decision was made. We are hoping there will be some communication between Alberta Infrastructure and Alberta Education. We could have chosen a different school to put the French Immersion program in, but that would not have helped the accommodation issues in the Sundance Community. We need to deal with these issues.

Q. *I wanted to comment that the dual track system works very well – this is a wonderful opportunity for our children.*

A. Thank you.

Q. *How do any of these scenarios address the overcrowding situation for next year?*

A. This is why further discussion and input is needed.

Q. *There is half the school year left and there are 38 kids in grade 2. Can't CBE top up the funding?*

A. The principal has interviewed for a teacher, but has not yet found a suitable candidate. Once someone is hired, there will be about 2 FTE teachers in grade 2.

Q. *Are all the scenarios viable? What are the pros and cons of each?*

A. Scenario two, three and four we are more confident about as they involve things within our control. Portables are not within our control, so Scenario one would be the most challenging.

Q. *What leverage can we use to get portables?*

A. We have a capital plan that we look at every year. All schools that need portables think they should be at the top of the list. We requested 24 portables this year, 2 were granted. Reality is, we don't have them. Sundance remains on the list for portables as do many other schools.

Q. *Are the portables at Kingsland available?*

A. There is another list of portables that can be moved to other places. These are also prioritized. The cost to build portables is huge, and the cost to move them is huge also. Another problem is that many portables are not in good enough condition to be moved.

Q. *Is there a Catholic French Immersion school in Midnapore in 2006? Won't that reduce our numbers?*

A. This is something we will need to consider. We need to look at the Sundance community accommodation needs. The number of students may drop slightly due to a Catholic

program, but there is such a large number of growing communities in the south who require a French Immersion, the impact will not be significant.

Q. *Could you have French Immersion at Fish Creek also?*

A. This could be another scenario to consider. Please record this idea on a green sheet and submit it to the principal.

Q. *Who is selecting the working group committee?*

A. We need members from Sundance School from the regular program and the French Immersion program, Fish Creek School from Sundance and from Chaparral, as well as the school council chairs and key communicators from both schools. If you represent any of these groups, put your name forward to the principal.

Q. *Can we establish a time frame for submitting scenarios?*

A. Immediately. We have not set the next meeting date yet. There needs to be a couple of working group meetings and then bring the information back to the larger group.

Q. *Can you put the meeting information in the student agendas?*

A. The meeting information was included in the newsletter, on the website and posted on the school doors. We need to think about the agendas.

Q. *Why was nothing posted sooner?*

A. Information was shared at school council meetings and posted as part of the minutes of the meetings. The vacuum of information was the reason for this meeting. The wheels move slowly sometimes.

Q. *Comment: Children who are bussed to school have parents who experience a real disconnect from the school. There are significant issues around community building and we need to do this into the future.*

Q. *Comment: We are very fortunate to have two schools in this community. Many schools have no schools.*

A. There are many issues around community schools that are emotionally packed issues. It is a testament to public education that there is caring for community schools.

You are invited to take a green sheet, think about the scenarios presented or possible new ones, write down your input and send them in to the school. The next step is to create a working group to look at the input and develop scenarios to present to the larger community.