

Minutes of the Reconvened Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees, which commenced at 1:00 p.m. on June 28, 2005, and adjourned to 2:30 p.m., Monday, July 4, 2005, in the Board Room of the Education Centre, 515 Macleod Trail SE, Calgary, Alberta

PRESENT

Board of Trustees:

Trustee G. Dirks, Chair
Trustee N. Close
Trustee P. Cochrane
Trustee L. Ferguson

Absent: Trustee C. Bazinet
Trustee K. Fawcett
Trustee G. Lane

Administration:

Dr. B. Croskery, Chief Superintendent of Schools
Mr. P. Carlton, Director, Area III
Ms. M. Clark, Superintendent, Human Resources
Mr. D. Dart, Superintendent, Business Operations & Environmental Services – Secretary Treasurer
Ms. B. Hubert, Deputy Chief Superintendent of Schools
Mr. J. Jones, Executive Assistant to the Chief Superintendent of Schools
Ms. B. Kuester, Executive Director of Communications
Mr. R. Peden, Assistant General Counsel/Senior Solicitor, Legal & Risk Management Services
Mr. G. Scott, Director & General Counsel, Legal & Risk Management Services
Ms. S. Wasylshyn, Executive Assistant to the Trustees
Ms. D. Perrier, Recording Secretary

Stakeholder Representatives:

Mr. L. Liffiton, Alberta Teachers' Association

Action By

Chair Dirks called the meeting to order at 2:32 p.m., and noted that this meeting is convened as a continuation of the Board Meeting commenced on Tuesday, June 28, 2005, and the sole remaining matter of outstanding business is Agenda Item 7.2.1 from that meeting. The Board has sought clarification and direction from the Minister of Education regarding student accommodation issues related to Piitoayis Family School. In particular, the Minister was asked to consider the applicability of the Closure of Schools Regulation to the particular circumstances and, in the event that the Regulation was applicable, to determine whether issuance of the discretionary exemption identified at Section 1.2(2) of the Regulation was appropriate. Resolution of Agenda Item 7.2.1 was, consequently, deferred until the Minister had sufficient opportunity to conduct a review of the situation.

A response from the Minister of Education was given on June 29, 2005, and was read in part by Chair Dirks, as follows:

“As requested I will grant an exemption to the Calgary Board of Education to the Closure of Schools Regulation, as it applies to moving the Piitoayis Family School from Valley View Elementary School to Colonel Walker Community School. I am satisfied that the Board has consulted with the communities affected regarding the change in programs at the schools. Given the growth in enrollment of the Piitoayis Family School, from 106 in 2002 to an estimated 200 students in September 2005, I am satisfied that the enrolment in this program exceeds the capacity of Valley View. This is also clear from the fact that Valley View Elementary School has 28 classrooms, and 31 are needed to house both programs. Additionally, given that neither a program nor a facility will close as a result of this transfer, the exemption granted is clearly in the spirit of the regulation and the procedures required.”

Chair Dirks provided a recap of events that have taken place with respect to the matter. On June 21, 2005 the Board of Trustees passed a motion giving support in principle to a possible plan that would see the move of Piitoayis students from Valley View Elementary School to the Colonel Walker Community School facility. In that regard, the Chief Superintendent was directed to work internally to develop and articulate an analysis of options available to appropriately deal with this issue. Following the June 21st meeting, the trustees directed a request to the Minister of Education, as referenced above. On June 23rd the Chief Superintendent's office issued an *Important Notice to Parents* directed to the parents of all students at the schools of Colonel Walker, Piitoayis Family and Valley View, alerting them to the upcoming student accommodation issue planned for discussion at the Board of Trustees' meeting on June 28th, and inviting interested individuals to provide input to the Board through stakeholder reports. On June 28th the Chief Superintendent presented the report *Student Accommodation Issue – Securing a Facility for the Expansion of the Piitoayis Family School*, which was received by the Board of Trustees for information.

Trustee Cochrane provided a synopsis of submissions regarding the consideration of closure of the Piitoayis Family School, from stakeholder reports given at the June 28, 2005 Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees, and from emails received subsequent to the June 28th meeting, which relayed the following expressions:

Submissions related to movement of Piitoayis Family School:

- The Piitoayis Family School has provided improved learning opportunities for aboriginal students, which has led to a very positive school experience for the whole family.
- Students are experiencing a school where their culture is respected within their daily school environment.
- The aboriginal community has had the opportunity to share the gifts of aboriginal culture with the Valley View community, and it now has an opportunity to share those gifts with the Colonel Walker community.
- There are 100 years of accumulated issues regarding education and First Nations people in Canada.
- The displacement of populations and racism has been part of the educational experience for many aboriginal students.
- The Canadian government is showing signs of support for aboriginal students to take their place in Canadian society.
- Hope for better solutions and the need to work together. Concern was expressed that the Board is hearing too many reasons why this move will not work. We need to work together to make this work.
- Recognition of the success of the program and its need for space to grow.
- Piitoayis Family School cannot grow any larger at Valley View.

Submissions related to Valley View Elementary School:

- The regular community program needs to expand to meet the needs of its community students.
- Valley View and Piitoayis learned together to bring the regular school culture and the aboriginal family school culture together - recognition of the work that went into this and the success of this learning.
- Both programs need to grow, but both cannot expand within the same building.
- It is time for Piitoayis Family School to be located in another facility.

Submissions related to Colonel Walker Community School:

- Concerns regarding the process CBE used, the short timeframe and that Colonel Walker parents were not adequately involved.
- Concerns about the actual physical capacity of the Colonel Walker building to hold both schools.

Emails received since June 28/05 Board meeting:

- Concerns that the Ministerial exemption requested by the Board of Trustees is a 'back-door' way of closing the regular program at Colonel Walker without going through due process.
- Concerns that the CBE is more concerned with the success of an alternative program than with a regular community program.
- Concern that Inglewood demographics have not been considered in this process.
- Concern that another location was not considered for Piitoayis.
- Concern for the future of Colonel Walker's Before and After School Care program and the hot lunch program.

Trustee Cochrane noted on behalf of the Colonel Walker constituents who sent in submissions, their statement that the issues that they raised did not have to do with the placement of an aboriginal program in their community; there was not a suggestion that it was the type of children in the program – it was more a question of the program and related concerns that were noted.

MOTION ARISING:

MOVED by Trustee Cochrane:

THAT the Piitoayis Family School program be hereby closed at Valley View Elementary School and moved to Colonel Walker Community School for the commencement of the 2005/2006 academic year and continuing thereafter until further direction by the Board of Trustees.

Trustees gave consideration to the motion and posed questions for Administration. In response to a question about space availability at Colonel Walker School, Chief Superintendent Croskery noted he had concerns as a result of the high profile given to the matter in numerous communications made by members of the public as to whether the facility would in fact have the capacity to house another program such as the Piitoayis program if the Board were to make that decision. He stated that he and nine members of staff, as well as the principals from both Colonel Walker and Piitoayis, toured Colonel Walker School last week and conducted a review of every room in the school building. He pointed out that the situation currently in existence has Valley View and Piitoayis students sharing many of the school's spaces, including the gymnasium and the library, and it would not be unreasonable to see this similar model of shared space should Piitoayis be moved to Colonel Walker School. Chief Superintendent Croskery noted that in looking at the actual classrooms and teaching instructional spaces, he concluded with absoluteness that there is room to accommodate both schools in the same facility, and this conclusion was concurred with by the other nine staff members and by the two principals. He pointed out that even with the special needs students who are currently housed in the wing section of Colonel Walker School, there would still be adequate space for both schools. In the unlikely event that additional space would be required, there is ample room on the site for the placement of portables.

Mr. P. Carlton, Director, Area III, responded to a question, noting that with respect to the special needs classes, the HULL program was relocated to Sherwood School as a result of flooding at Colonel Walker and the junior high school component for those students would remain at Sherwood. Should the Board of Trustees decide to move the Piitoayis Family School to Colonel Walker, the two HULL classes would be placed at Valley View Elementary School.

With respect to the current leases at Colonel Walker School, the *Roots of Empathy* group is connected to the Learning Village and the potential for providing it with space in Valley View is under review. It is believed that discussions also considered giving a year's notice on that leased space. Chief Superintendent Croskery noted that the Before and After School Care program currently leases space in Colonel Walker School behind the gymnasium, and it is anticipated that would not be changed, although the issue did not receive any consideration. He also noted that there is a privately operated lunch program offered in the basement of Colonel Walker School. There was some discussion held as to whether there might be some possibility for the sharing of

lunchroom space for the Piitoayis and Colonel Walker students should the Board of Trustees make that decision to go forward with the move.

Information was given about the process that was used to evaluate other school sites for the potential move of the Piitoayis Family School. Chief Superintendent Croskery noted that there were a number of criteria used by the Task Force, some of which included issues surrounding the need for junior high facilities, such as lab space and space for career and technology studies – which were of particular issue when reviewing Ogden School. Proximity to students' residences was also considered, as was access to major transportation corridors. Knob Hill and R.B. Bennett schools were viewed to be too small and geographically not well situated with respect to transportation routes. Chief Superintendent Croskery stated that every CBE facility that was empty and that could conceivably be used was reviewed; Deputy Chief Superintendent Hubert informed that in total, 21 facilities were screened in this process.

Chief Superintendent Croskery made some observations about the recent work of Colonel Walker School staff in addressing problems that resulted from flooding. He stressed the belief that there is a need to be more sensitive to any concerns that are felt by those staff members with respect to their future and that there needs to be more engagement with the current staff at Colonel Walker School.

With respect to upgrades that may be required at Colonel Walker School, it was believed that the new wing of the school could require wiring for computers and networking capabilities. Mr. Carlton addressed the question of financing for upgrades that might be required, noting there was a great deal of thought given to the issue and discussions have taken place on how to provide the upgrades in a fiscal and responsible manner in the event they were to be made in the future. It was noted that the aboriginal library resources at Melville Scott could be relocated to Colonel Walker, should the program be moved.

Trustee Cochrane provided opening remarks and rationale for the motion. She pointed out that there is a need for a larger space for the Piitoayis Family School – they need to grow and they need to continue to have the space to grow to be successful. There is also a need for more classroom space for Valley View Elementary School, which can't grow and accommodate their students' needs while sharing their building with Piitoayis. She stated that there is also a need for a long-range accommodation plan for the regular program at Colonel Walker School, and that this has been a need for quite some time.

Trustee Cochrane agreed that it is very late in the year for making this decision and that timing of process is important; but, further to that, there have been two issues this year about which trustees have taken direct action and brought decisions to the Board Room even though it was very late in the year, because they felt it was necessary to make a decision on behalf of large numbers of students for the coming school year.

Trustee Cochrane pointed out that there is a need to move a school (Piitoayis) from one location to another until a permanent location for that school can be found. She noted that once provincial funding is received for a new or renovated facility for the Piitoayis Family School, it would mark the school's permanent location. Trustee Cochrane stated she did not know what the future holds for the regular program at Colonel Walker School, noting that is not the decision the Board of Trustees is making at this point in time. She noted that if and when Colonel Walker's future needs to be decided, the Board of Trustees would do so with full and appropriate processes.

Following debate of the motion, and trustees offering reasons for their support of the motion, Chair Dirks called for the vote on the motion.

The motion was
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MOTION ARISING:

MOVED by Trustee Cochrane:

THAT the Board of Trustees directs the Chief Superintendent to provide such resources as reasonable and necessary to support the successful transition of both programs following the transfer of the Piitoayis Family School to the Colonel Walker Community School building.

The motion was
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m.