



"Together We Learn"

Memorandum

Date: November 14, 2013
To: Planning and Facilities Committee
From: Hugh Gloster, Superintendent of Schools
Action: **Westside Elementary School Catchment Recommendations**

1.0 ISSUE STATEMENT

Mar Jok Elementary (MJE) School is scheduled to open in September 2014 triggering the requirement to establish new catchment areas for Westside elementary schools. The new catchment areas must be established prior to the student registration period opening in early 2014 to allow families and schools to prepare for the 2014/15 school year.

2.0 RELEVANT BOARD MOTION/DIRECTION

November 28, 2012

Main Motion 12P-169

THAT: The Board of Education supports the following specific zonal recommendations for the Long-Term Facility Plan:

Westside Area Recommendation:

1. Revise elementary school catchment areas for the opening of the new elementary school on McDougall Road (Mar Jok Elementary School) to distribute the population more evenly.

Timeline: Prior to September 2014

November 28, 2012

Main Motion 12P-179

THAT: The Board of Education supports the following catchment area recommendations for the Long-Term Facility Plan:

Westside Area

1. Complete a catchment area review and revise elementary school catchment areas for the opening of the new Mar Jok Elementary School to distribute the population more evenly.
Timeline: Prior to September 2014
2. Complete a catchment area review and potentially revise elementary feeder schools to Constable Neil Bruce Middle and Glenrosa Middle. Consideration should be given to redirecting elementary students to Glenrosa Middle.
Timeline: Prior to September 2014

December 12, 2012

Main Motion 12P-202

THAT: The Board of Education receive and approve the Long-Term Facility Plan, as amended at the November 28, 2012 Public Board Meeting.

April 24, 2013

Main Motion 13P-044

THAT: The Board of Education approve the Westside Area Work Plan as attached and as presented at the April 24, 2013 Public Board Meeting.

October 23, 2013

Main Motion 13P-136

THAT: The Board of Education approve the changes to the Westside Area Workplan as follows:

- Mar Jok and Westside Elementary Catchment Areas
 - o November 20, 2013 Planning and Facilities Committee Meeting
 - o November 27, 2013 Board of Education Public Meeting
- Feasibility of FI Middle School Program on the Westside
 - o January 2014 Planning and Facilities Committee Meeting (date TBC)
 - o January 2014 Board of Education Public Meeting (date TBC)
- Potential recommendations for changes to elementary feeder schools for CNB and GMS
 - o Timeline to be established following the outcome of the FI middle school decision

3.0 BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Education introduced the requirement for all school districts to complete comprehensive Long-Term Facility Plans. These plans form the basis for provincial capital investment decisions within each school district. The Board of Education approved the Long-Term Facility Plan for the Central Okanagan School District on December 12, 2012.

In April of 2013, the Board of Education approved a work plan that outlined a process for delivering the next steps of the District's Long-Term Facility Plan on the Westside. In particular, the work plan outlined a process to undertake an elementary catchment area review for the Westside with an implementation schedule to coincide with the opening of Mar Jok Elementary in September 2014.

The following schedule outlines the process that was agreed to for the Westside Elementary Catchment Area Review:

1. April 2013 - Board of Education approval of Westside Area Work Plan
2. May/June 2013 – Option Development
 - a. Information review
 - b. Stakeholder engagement
 - c. Phase one community engagement - Shannon Lake Elementary (SLE) and Rose Valley Elementary (RVE) PAC meetings (approximately 140 attendees)
 - d. Proposed catchment area option development
 - e. Board of Education approval to proceed with phase 2 community engagement

3. September/October 2013 – Phase two community engagement
 - a. Parent meetings at SLE, RVE and Mount Boucherie Secondary School (open to all parents)
 - b. Online survey for all Westside area elementary parents
 - c. Follow-up online survey for Westside Road area families
4. October/November 2013 – Option refinement and recommendation development
5. November 2013 – Proposed timeframe for Board of Education approval of catchment areas

3.1 PHASE TWO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Round one of the community engagement process revealed a significant amount of concern surrounding the potential catchment area changes and how they will be managed. Phase two of the consultation process was therefore designed to focus not only on where the catchment lines are drawn, but also on how the transition will be managed. The goal for this phase was to provide direct communication and seek input on key areas of influence. Communication relating to the second round of community engagement was posted to the District's website, emailed directly to all parents on existing email lists, sent by letter to parents and distributed in a media release.

3.1.1 Public Meetings

Three public meetings were held during the second phase of consultation to consider the proposed catchment area changes, with a total attendance of approximately 115 parents in attendance (some families attended multiple meetings). At each meeting a presentation was delivered by School District staff, including a question and answer period. The following provides a summary of the main themes emerging from the three meetings:

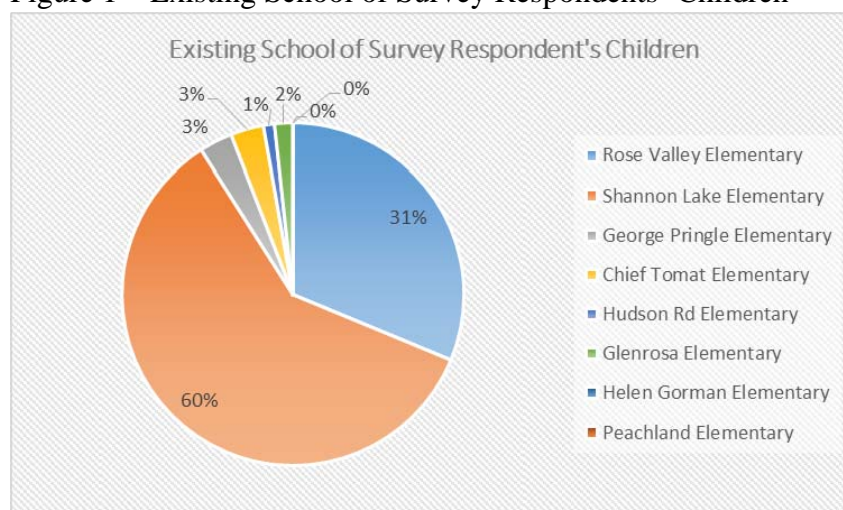
- The majority of RVE and SLE families expressed a desire to continue their children's education at their existing school.
- A large proportion of Tallus Ridge families are unhappy with the possibility of being included in the MJE catchment given their close proximity to SLE. This sentiment was also shared by other residents living in areas near Shannon Lake that are proposed to be moved to the MJE catchment area (e.g. Shannon Woods, Golf Course Drive etc.).
- A strong desire was expressed for students to be 'grandfathered', enabling them to stay in their existing school. Variations of this request were expressed, such as:
 - Grandfathering only grade 6 or grades 4-6 students
 - Grandfathering all existing students (and siblings)
 - Grandfathering only those that are in the existing catchment area
- Parents expressed concern about the possible disruption of before and after school care arrangements if their children have to move schools. (This feedback came primarily from those who have after school care near SLE.)
- Transportation concerns were raised such as: busing availability, cost of busing, walkability/bike ability, safety, sidewalks (Westlake Rd), cross-walks (Westlake Rd), traveling through an industrial area, etc.

- Some parents expressed their opinion that MJE was built in the wrong location and that it should have been in Smith Creek to cater to future growth in Tallus Ridge and Smith Creek.
- SLE families are concerned about their community being divided. Many people shared that they purchased or built their home in the area because of the proximity to SLE and feel property values and sense of community will decrease.
- Concern over the social and educational implications of making children change schools.
- Frustrations were aired surrounding why the two schools were allowed to become so over capacity with out-of-catchment students.
- Marketing MJE was raised as a way to increase enrolment in order to allow existing SLE and RVE students to remain at their school.
- Interest was expressed around future administration, staffing and operation of MJE.
- Parents want to know how the registration process will be managed.
- There was curiosity expressed around the implications of reduced enrolment at RVE and SLE.

3.1.2 Online Information and Survey

An area on the School District website was created to provide information regarding the Catchment Area Review, including the proposed catchment maps and an online survey. There were 191 responses to the survey representing 295 students from Westside elementary schools. The majority of respondents represented students at either SLE (60%) or RVE (31%), the two schools most impacted by the proposed changes. Figure 1 outlines a breakdown of responses by school.

Figure 1 – Existing School of Survey Respondents' Children



Slightly less than half of all survey respondents were unsatisfied with the proposed catchment option in one way or another. The majority of dissatisfaction was from those currently attending SLE who are now proposed for inclusion in the MJE catchment. The remaining respondents were either satisfied or indifferent about the proposal. The majority of satisfied and indifferent respondents came from those less affected by the

proposal and those who live in the immediate vicinity of MJE. No particular area was completely unified in their feedback on the proposed catchment areas.

Figure 2 – Satisfaction with the Proposed Catchment Areas

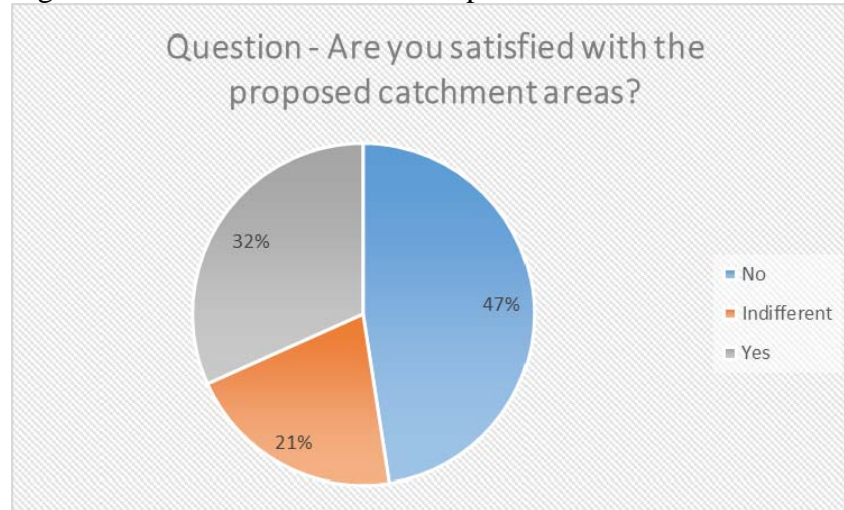
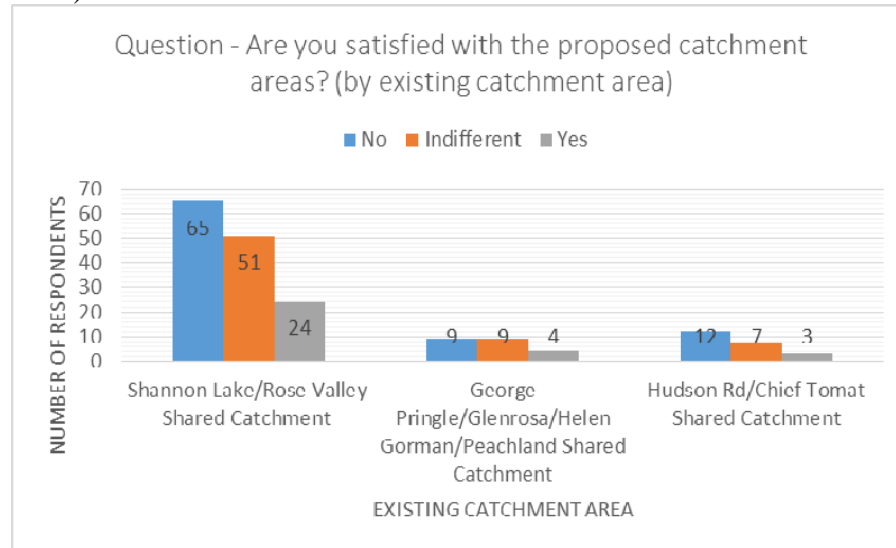
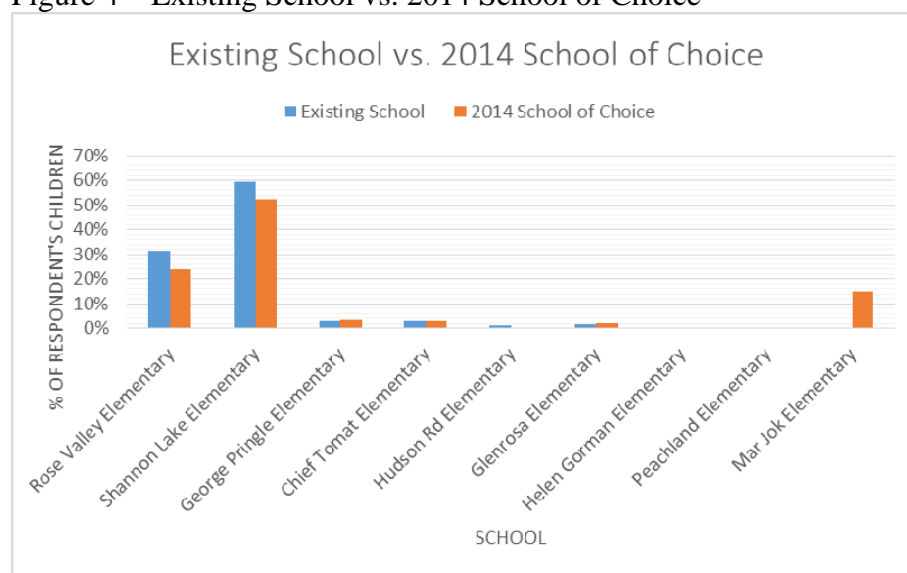


Figure 3 – Satisfaction with the Proposed Catchment Areas (by Existing Catchment Area)



Respondents were asked which school they currently attend and which school they plan to enroll in for September 2014 as their school of first choice. A high proportion of those attending RVE and SLE, that are in the proposed MJE catchment, still intend to register at their existing school for 2014 (although there were also a number of families expressing a desire to register at MJE). The open ended comments indicate that some families may change their school of first choice based on factors such as the availability of childcare, who the new MJE school administration is and the convenience/safety of transportation options.

Figure 4 – Existing School vs. 2014 School of Choice



The Board of Education was provided with unedited comments received through the online survey, written feedback and email correspondence. Those comments are not appended to the public report to protect the privacy of the respondents. The following provides a synthesis of feedback from the survey:

Thoughts on proposed elementary catchment areas

- Many areas are unhappy with the proposed catchment boundaries and the prospect of children being “forced” to change schools. The strongest sentiments against the proposal were from families in the Tallus Ridge and Shannon Woods areas.
- Some areas are happy with the proposal, including those in the immediate MJE area and the area around CNB.
- Concerns with disrupting before and after school care programs were expressed.
- Dissatisfaction was voiced with not being in the catchment area of their nearest school.
- Social and educational concerns for children that may not be able to continue on at their existing school were mentioned. Specific concerns were raised by parents of students with additional learning or social requirements.
- There is a strong loyalty to existing schools (in particular SLE and RVE). This applies to existing in-catchment and out-of-catchment families.
- Some families expressed concern that the changes in catchment may have a negative economic impact, such as not being able to retain current employment, spending more money on transportation and/or reduced property values.
- Transportation concerns were raised, including: the new catchment school is further away; the desire for more convenient and free busing; and the safety concerns of traveling through industrial area and the steep gradient of roads to MJE.
- There is a perception that this proposal divides the community of Shannon Lake.
- Unhappiness is being expressed by some parents about peers being separated.

Alternate catchment area options proposed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep Tallus Ridge in SLE catchment area • Include Smith Creek in SLE catchment area • Keep Shannon Woods in SLE catchment area • Keep areas south of Shannon Lake Road in the SLE catchment area • Put Westside Rd into the RVE or MJE catchment • Create an open catchment between SLE, MJE and RVE • “Market” MJE and see if enough people leave naturally • Keep portables at SLE and RVE
Implementation suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grandfather or prioritize registration for all existing students, or variations such as: all existing in-catchment students; all existing students and siblings; grade 6 students; grade 4-6 students; or those students whose childcare is in the vicinity of the existing school. • Make transition process clear and fair • Provide or facilitate the provision of before and after school care at MJE • Move administration and/or staff from SLE and RVE to MJE • Make an effort to build a school community early on (establish PAC, have parents and students meet) • Provide free transportation for those being moved from SLE to MJE • Tour potential students through the new school to get them familiar with the surroundings

3.1.3 Westside Rd Area Survey

Upon analysis of the online survey results and further updates on enrolment projections, School District staff developed an alternate catchment option to include the Hudson Road Elementary School (HRE) catchment area north of Highway 97 (Westside Rd area) in the proposed MJE catchment.

In order to receive direct feedback on this new proposal, families living on the Westside Road bus transportation route received a letter outlining the proposal and a link to an online survey (asking for their preference between being included in the HRE catchment or the MJE catchment).

In total there were 11 responses to the survey representing 21 students. The majority of the respondents’ children currently attend RVE (10 students) with the remainder attending HRE (3 students) and George Pringle Elementary (2 students). Those respondents with children currently attending RVE viewed inclusion in the MJE catchment as more favourable than HRE. Those with children attending HRE would prefer to remain in the Hudson Road catchment. The George Pringle family preferred inclusion in the MJE catchment.

Of the eight families with children currently in RVE, five of them indicated that they intend to still register their children at RVE for the 2014/15 school year.

There was an opportunity for open-ended feedback which yielded the following comments:

- The North end of Bear Creek Rd should be in the RVE catchment.
- MJE is viewed as closer in proximity than HRE for families that drive their children to school.
- For school busing, MJE was viewed as less convenient than HRE.

3.2 OPTION REFINEMENT AND RECOMMENDATION DEVELOPMENT

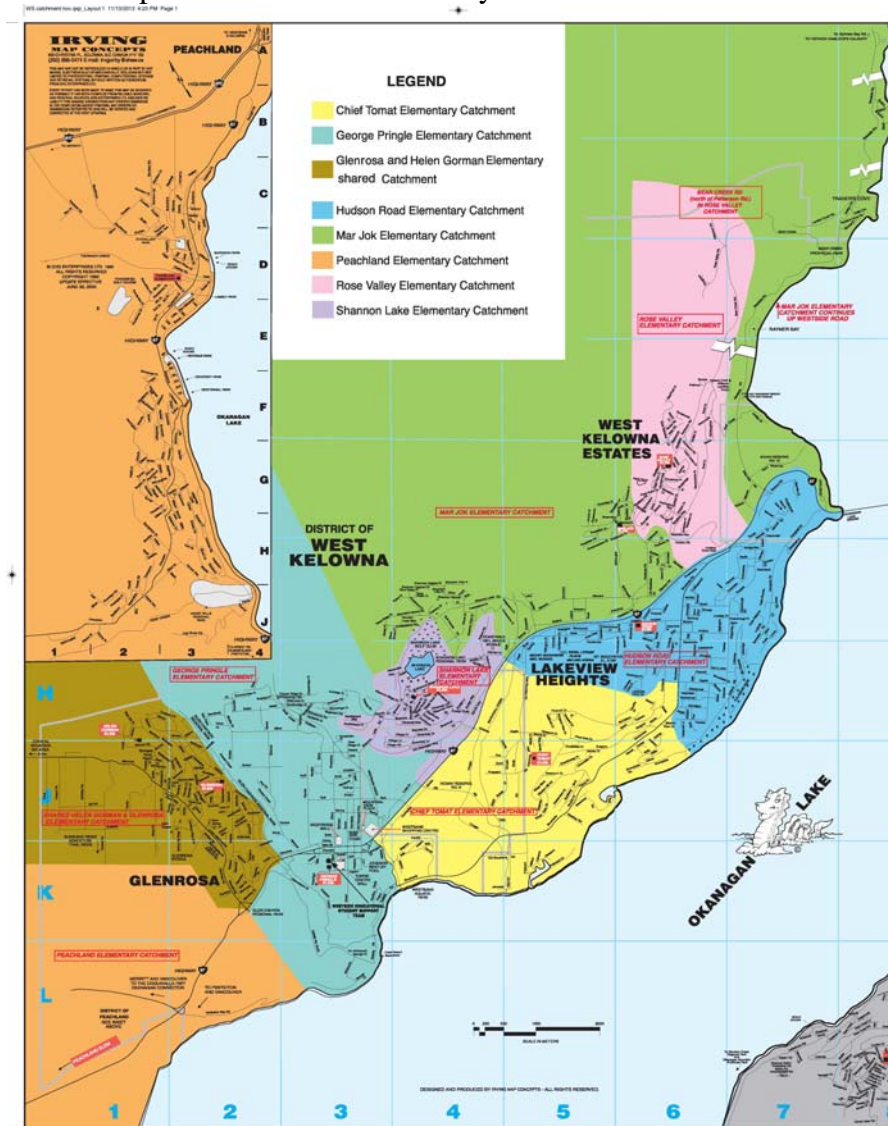
3.2.1 Catchment Area Option Refinement

Alternate Option	Why it was Considered	Discussion	Recommendation
Moving Westside Rd area into MJE catchment	The majority of out-of-catchment students at RVE and SLE will have to return to their home school or another school of choice. Therefore, sufficient capacity should be available at HRE to receive that potential demand.	Moving the Westside Rd area to MJE allows for additional enrolment at HRE as well as increasing the size of the MJE catchment (which under the first proposed option for consultation was quite small).	Recommended by staff
Keep Tallus Ridge (lower half or all) in SLE catchment	There was very strong feedback from this community about remaining in the SLE catchment. This area is closer to SLE than MJE.	The existing students from this community could be accommodated at SLE in the short-term (provided all existing out-of-catchment students were removed from SLE). There are currently 67 elementary-aged students in Tallus Ridge attending SLE (up 17 from 2012/13). The kindergarten cohort is the largest. This option creates a small MJE catchment area and will overpopulate SLE long-term.	Not recommended by staff
Retaining some or all open/shared catchment areas	Maintaining some or all open/shared catchments was raised as an option during the feedback.	Shared catchments are less effective at managing capacity issues at over populated schools (because more students are technically in-catchment). In addition to this, a high amount of frustration around out-of-catchment students filling local area schools was expressed by parents. School of Choice legislation effectively creates open boundaries where there is capacity.	Not recommended by staff
Keep the Golf Course Drive area in the SLE catchment	Option considered based on community feedback and proximity to SLE.	Golf Course Drive would not have a significant enrolment impact (5) if placed in either catchment. Moving this area back to the SLE catchment may skew the perception of fairness given it's further by road to SLE than much of Tallus Ridge.	Not recommended by staff

Place all of Bear Creek Rd into RVE catchment	There are a number of rural lots on Bear Creek Rd that based on historical maps sit within the HRE catchment area.	There are approximately 6 elementary students that live in this area and they all currently attend RVE. There is no logical or transportation reasoning for this area not to be included in the RVE catchment.	Recommended by staff
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Based on the aforementioned information, staff are recommending the following as the Westside elementary catchment areas for implementation in September 2014.

Figure 5 – Proposed Westside Elementary Catchment Areas - 2014



(For an electronic version of this map, refer to www.sd23.bc.ca.)

3.2.2 Implementation Option Development

Based on community engagement and enrolment numbers, several implementation options were developed to facilitate the transition to the new catchment areas.

Alternate Option	Why it was Considered	Discussion	Recommendation
Grandfather existing students	This was by far the most common request during the consultation. This would allow children to remain at their current school, mitigating the social and educational concerns outlined by many families.	This option would not facilitate the immediate closure of portables at RVE and SLE, therefore incurring unnecessary operational costs. MJE would be at-risk of operating as a very small school for a number of years. This option also creates complications for families with siblings that have yet to enter elementary school.	Not recommended by staff
Grandfather grade 6 students only at RVE and SLE	Community feedback outlined concerns with moving students for one year only (and missing out on established grade 6 traditions).	This would potentially mean that MJE would open with a very small grade 6 cohort. Families may also attempt to keep younger children with their grade 6 siblings, further reducing the MJE enrolment. This could result in the need to maintain portables at RVE.	Not recommended by staff
Grandfather or prioritize registration for all existing in-catchment students, requiring existing out-of-catchment students to <u>re-register</u>	This concept prioritizes former in-catchment students (now out of catchment) over former out-of-catchment students to favour families that have historically chosen to go to their catchment area school.	Feedback from existing out-of-catchment families also indicated a strong preference for grandfathering. The same social and educational reasons for not wanting to relocate children featured equally for in and out-of-catchment families. Under current policy, an out-of-catchment student once enrolled in a school is considered a “student of that school”.	Not recommended by staff
Relocate <u>only</u> SLE and RVE students who are in the new catchment for MJE, allowing out-of-catchment students to remain	This option aims to relocate the fewest number of students from their existing school.	This option was viewed as highly inequitable by former in-catchment families as it allows those who were out-of-catchment but attending SLE and RVE to remain.	Not recommended by staff

Relocate all 2014/15 out-of-catchment RVE and SLE students to their home school but provide priority for re-registration at RVE and SLE	Community feedback outlined a strong sentiment to remain at existing schools (which are supplemented by portables). The expected operational outcome is for all portables at RVE and SLE to be closed.	This option provides the clearest means of reducing the SLE and RVE student population. The objective is to distribute the student enrolment to maximize the use of the permanent space at all three schools.	Recommended by staff
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4.0 **POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

1) Existing Board of Education Policy 405 and Regulation 405R – Student Placement (see attached Appendix 1 and 2).

a) Policy - 405(1) Student Placement – Principles for setting/changing catchment areas

Board Policy	Staff comment in relation to recommended option
<i>Reflect traditional neighbourhoods, subdivisions and regions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the majority of proposed catchments, traditional neighbourhoods are reflected. For MJE – the catchment is made up of three areas, Shannon Lake, Rose Valley and the Westside Rd area. Although the community of Shannon Lake is between two catchment areas, the subdivision boundaries have been respected.
<i>Minimize safety concerns for elementary students as a result of major roadways or other known hazards</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where possible, boundaries have been drawn to minimize the crossing of major transportation barriers such as Highway 97. The new MJE catchment does mean that families traveling from Shannon Lake have to travel through an industrial area with no sidewalks (although they will be eligible for busing).
<i>Reflect long-term development to minimize stress caused by frequently changing boundaries in rapidly growing/declining areas</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed option provides the best solution for long-term growth with the highest growth area, Tallus Ridge, being included in the MJE catchment area.

<i>Maximize the efficiency of schools and the transportation system</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recommended catchment option provides the most efficient transportation option (all newly eligible areas branch off one main corridor). • The recommended catchment option attempts to best balance enrolment between Westside area schools.
<i>Maintain a cohort of students at each grade level offered at the school, to support the long-term sustainability of the school</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recommended catchment options maintain a cohort of students at each grade.

- b) Policy 405(2) – *Where space permits, students should be allowed to remain in currently assigned schools and catchment area changes will apply only to new registrations.*
- c) Policy 405(3) – *In some situations it may be necessary and desirable to relocate students from one school to another.*
- d) Regulation 405R(1) – *Once a student has been registered in a school, he/she will be counted as a student of that school.*
- e) Regulation 405R(2) – Enrolment Priorities:
Priority shall be given to students on the following basis:
- *catchment area students who, in the previous year, attended the school;*
 - *catchment area students who, in the previous year, were ‘placed’ by the district in a different school;*
 - *siblings of catchment area students;*
 - *new catchment area students;*
 - *siblings of non-catchment area students currently enrolled in the school;*
 - *non-catchment area students who request to attend the school which is other than their catchment area school;*
 - *non-district area students;*
 - *international students.*

5.0 OPTIONS FOR ACTION

1. Approve the staff recommendation.
2. Request further information on the staff recommendation.
3. Amend the staff recommendation.
4. Reject the staff recommendation.

6.0 FOLLOW-UP/REVIEW

Staff will report back to the Planning and Facilities Committee in early 2014 to provide a registration process update.

7.0 SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMENTS

The Ministry of Education's approval for the construction of the new Mar Jok Elementary School was welcomed as a way to relieve the enrolment pressure that is being experienced at both Rose Valley Elementary and Shannon Lake Elementary Schools. At the time of approval, this project was the Board's number one capital priority.

The site for the new school is located much closer to the Rose Valley neighbourhood, yet there is a need to draw students away from both RVE and SLE schools in significant numbers to ensure all schools function within their permanent space. This makes it challenging to draw catchment boundaries that reflect traditional neighbourhoods. Compounding this challenge is the fact that both Shannon Lake Elementary School and Rose Valley Elementary School have significant numbers of out-of-catchment students in attendance. The recommended catchment areas and implementation process attempt to resolve the existing challenges in the area, while also providing for long-term stability in the future.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommendation:

THAT: The Board of Education approve the elementary catchment areas for the Westside, as shown on the map in Figure 5 of this report, for implementation in the 2014/15 school year.

THAT: The Board of Education suspend Board Policy 405(2) and Regulation 405R(1) – Student Placement, for Rose Valley Elementary School and Shannon Lake Elementary School, for the 2014/15 student registration process only;

AND THAT: A new set of registration priorities be established for both schools for the 2014/15 student registration process.

THAT: Out-of-catchment students of Rose Valley Elementary School (based on the proposed 2014/15 catchment area map) who attended Rose Valley Elementary in 2013/14, automatically be enrolled in their catchment area school (based on the proposed 2014/15 catchment area map) prior to the start of the 2014/15 student registration period.

THAT: Out-of-catchment students of Shannon Lake Elementary School (based on the proposed 2014/15 catchment area map) who attended Shannon Lake Elementary School in 2013/14, automatically be enrolled in their catchment area school (based on the proposed 2014/15 catchment area map) prior to the start of the 2014/15 registration period.

THAT: The Board of Education suspend the enrolment priorities in Regulation 405R(2) – Student Placement, for the 2014/15 school year only, and prioritize student registration at Rose Valley Elementary School using the following priorities:

- *catchment area students who, in the previous year, attended the school;*
- *catchment area students who, in the previous year, were 'placed' by the district in a different school;*
- *siblings of catchment area students;*
- *new catchment area students;*

- **a non-catchment area student (based on the proposed 2014/15 catchment area map) who attended Rose Valley Elementary School in the 2013/14 school year;**
- *siblings of non-catchment area students currently enrolled in the school;*
- *non-catchment area students who request to attend the school which is other than their catchment area school;*
- *non-district area students;*
- *international students.*

THAT: The Board of Education suspend the enrolment priorities in Regulation 405R(2) – Student Placement, for the 2014/15 school year only, and prioritize student registration at Shannon Lake Elementary School using the following priorities:

- *catchment area students who, in the previous year, attended the school;*
- *catchment area students who, in the previous year, were ‘placed’ by the district in a different school;*
- *siblings of catchment area students;*
- *new catchment area students;*
- **a non-catchment area student (based on the proposed 2014/15 catchment area map) who attended Shannon Lake Elementary School in the 2013/14 school year;**
- *siblings of non-catchment area students currently enrolled in the school;*
- *non-catchment area students who request to attend the school which is other than their catchment area school;*
- *non-district area students;*
- *international students.*

THAT: The Board of Education direct staff to manage the implementation of the new catchment areas and the 2014/15 registration process as follows:

1. Communicate new catchment areas to parents and the community at large.
2. Provide direct communication to families who currently attend Shannon Lake Elementary School or Rose Valley Elementary School who are out-of-catchment for Rose Valley Elementary School and Shannon Lake Elementary School (based on the proposed 2014/15 catchment area map) and indicate that:
 - a. for the 2014/15 school year, the students have been automatically registered at their catchment area school;
 - b. if the student’s catchment area school is not Mar Jok Elementary School, parents will be provided an opportunity to preregister their child(ren) at Mar Jok Elementary School by responding to the communication (without having to line up);
 - c. if parents wish to register their child(ren) at Shannon Lake Elementary School, Rose Valley Elementary School or any other elementary school (except Mar Jok Elementary School) they must register at that school during the District’s established registration period;
 - d. the timelines and details of the registration process.

9.0 **APPENDIX**

1. Board Policy 405 – Student Placement
2. Board Regulation 405R – Student Placement