

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 23 – BOARD COMMITTEE REPORT

COMMITTEE: General Affairs Committee DATE: November 3, 2010
CHAIRPERSON: Trustee R. Cacchioni STAFF CONTACT: H. Gloster, Superintendent

Attendees:

Trustee R. Cacchioni (Chairperson)
Trustee G. Given
Trustee W. Horning
Trustee A. Hunt-Binkley
Trustee G. Scanlan (arrived at 2:10)
Trustee J. Watson
Trustee M. Baxter (Absent)

Staff:

H. Gloster, Superintendent
T. Beaudry, Assistant Superintendent
M. Essler, Executive Assistant (Recorder)

Partner Group Representation:

COPAC	No representative
COTA	No representative
COPVPA	Scott Sieben, Executive Member
CUPE	Bill Zeman, President
DSC	No representative

Reports/Matters Arising

The General Affairs Committee Public Meeting Report of October 6, 2010 was received.

Information Items:

1. French Immersion Program Supplemental Review 2010

The Superintendent provided an overview, by PowerPoint, of the French Immersion Program Supplemental Review 2010. The review included a report on the Public Consultation Meeting held on October 18, 2010 where 50 parents and 11 district and school staff attended. The number of Feedback Forms received as of October 25, 2010 totaled 178, with 138 parent replies and 40 staff/student/community replies. A further 15 Feedback Forms were received after October 25, 2010. The common themes indicated in the feedback include the following:

- The dual track FI program option is supported by the majority of parents and staff; however, while smaller in numbers, there are some parents of students enrolled in the FI program who indicate support for single track FI schools.
- Casorso Elementary School should be reduced from its current size.
- If it becomes necessary to cap an FI program due to overcrowding issues, the preference of parents and staff would be to expand programming opportunities in other schools (ie new or existing).
- The FI program should be expanded in the core to meet the demand and to address overcrowding.

The feedback on early vs late FI program models indicates preference for the current program (early immersion). There was no advocacy for a late immersion model at the Public Consultation Meeting and very little suggestion through the feedback process. The addition of a late immersion program would place an additional burden on the Board's limited financial resources, and research reveals there is no significant advantage gained by providing late immersion over early immersion.

The Superintendent's Preliminary recommendations were reviewed. The recommendations include:

Superintendent's Recommendation #1

THAT: The Board should continue to support the early French Immersion program model and not add a late French Immersion program option at this time.

Superintendent's Recommendation #2

THAT: The Board should maintain the French Immersion program in dual track settings and possibly consider a single track French Immersion program option should a new school be built in the future.

Superintendent's Recommendation #3:

THAT: The Board consider no specific District action relative to the secondary French Immersion program at Kelowna Secondary School at this time.

Superintendent's Recommendation #4:

THAT: The Board consider no specific District action relative to the middle years French Immersion program at KLO Middle School at this time.

Superintendent's Recommendation #5:

THAT: The Board maintain the existing French Immersion program at Peter Greer Elementary at this time;
AND THAT: Reconsideration of the delivery of French Immersion in Lake Country should take place in the event of new school construction or significant changes in student enrolment.

Superintendent's Recommendation #6:

THAT: The Board consider no specific District action relative to the French Immersion program at George Pringle Elementary School at this time;
AND THAT: Reconsideration of the delivery of French Immersion on the Westside should take place when Ministry approval is given for the construction of a new elementary school on Rosewood Drive.

Superintendent's Recommendation #7:

THAT: The Board maintain the French Immersion program at Belgo Elementary School and monitor enrolment growth;
AND THAT: The Board add a portable classroom or relocate the preschool program should additional space be required in the future.

Superintendent's Recommendation #8:

THAT: The Board maintain the French Immersion program at Glenmore Elementary School and monitor enrolment growth;
AND THAT: The Board add portables should additional space be required in the future.

Superintendent's Recommendation #9:

THAT: The Board relocate the K-1 French Immersion program from Casorso Elementary School to a different site;
AND THAT: The Board determine the site in conjunction with the decision about the future of Full Day Kindergarten and Grade 7's in the Mission area;
AND FURTHER THAT: Consideration be given to using a "phased in" approach to establishing the new K-1 site.

The costing to implement recommendation #9 will be provided to the Board. The Board is being funded \$250,000 from the Ministry of Education to be placed towards the opening of the Anne McClymont Primary School. There would be additional resource expenses incurred upon the implementation of recommendation #9. Discussion would take place with Casorso Elementary School on the sharing of resources. The Superintendent responded to the costs associated with the reopening of Bellevue Creek Elementary School. The quantity surveyor's report indicates that to open one-half of the school would cost approximately \$1 million and for a full opening \$2.1 million. Due to these fiscal challenges, the Superintendent will not be making a recommendation to the Board to consider the reopening of the school. The number of classroom spaces in the Mission area includes 9 classrooms at Anne McClymont Primary, 3 classrooms at Dorothea Walker Elementary including 2 within the school and one portable. This totals 12 available classrooms. The Federal French Funding is supplied based on a complex formula which includes growth of French Immersion, core French and the number of schools operating. The current

Federal French Funding received is \$320,000 of which \$300,000 is distributed for core French and French Immersion. The School District provides the funding for a .3 French Coordinator position.

The Committee discussed the sustainability of the French Immersion Program at Casorso Elementary School if a parallel French Immersion Program was to be offered at another location in the Mission.

In response to a trustee query on the possibility of the Ministry providing funding to open Bellevue Creek Elementary or the building of a new school in the Mission, the Superintendent responded that the Board Chair, Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer will be meeting with MLA Steve Thomson to discuss the issues in the Mission area. It is the expectation that the Ministry would not provide funding for the opening of Bellevue Creek Elementary or for the building of a new school in the Mission due to the fact that there are empty classrooms in the area. This query will be presented to MLA Thomson at the meeting.

It is the intent of the Superintendent to proceed with the preliminary recommendations unless there is significant input received in opposition.

In response to a request from a trustee, the Superintendent advised that a costing scenario will be provided on a parallel K-6 dual track program being offered in another Mission elementary school.

Heather McInnes, PAC President, Casorso Elementary School

On behalf of the parents of Casorso Elementary School, Ms. McInnes requested the rationale around offering of a K-1 hub rather than just a Kindergarten hub.

The Superintendent advised that this was due to discussions with staff around creating a large enough mass of students/teachers to have a quality experience and provide collaboration for teachers and students. Also, if trying to achieve the goal of downsizing Casorso Elementary moving only the Kindergarten population would not relieve enough of the strain on the school.

Ms McInnes further requested information on the offering of a K-6 FI program at another Mission school, and the option of a boundary reconfiguration.

The Superintendent confirmed there is provincial legislation on schools of choice. This provides parents the option for their child to attend any school of their choosing, space permitting.

On the issue of transportation, Ms. McInnes asked if there would be transportation offered between Casorso and Dorothea Walker or if there would be alternate start/stop times to enable parents to drop off/pick up their child from both sites.

In response, the Superintendent advised that if recommendation #9 was approved by the Board, there would be opportunity for parents to meet with the Principals to make decisions in the best interests of the students.

A PAC Meeting at Casorso Elementary will be held on Monday, November 15, 2010 with the Superintendent in attendance so that feedback can be obtained from parents.

Mark Hesketh, PAC President, Dorothea Walker Elementary School

Mr. Hesketh provided the 'DWE PAC Parent Position Statement Re: Mission Schools Re-alignment' form signed by parents. Statements received from parents include the majority of parents' support of a middle school in the Mission (72%) in favour but do not support for moving the Grade 7's to Okanagan Mission Secondary School. Over 67% of parents feel that expanding the FI program at the expense of potentially losing spaces for future English students or taking away space to alleviate the overcrowding issues at Chute Lake and Anne McClymont is not logical or fiscally responsible. The parents also indicated support for keeping the Kindergarten students in the same school they will be attending for grades 1-7. There were five preferred options outlined in the Parent Position Statement. The issue for Dorothea Walker Elementary is the ability to provide capacity for the FI program and ensuring the availability of space for future English students.

Michelle Shroyen, PAC Member, Casorso Elementary School

Michelle reviewed the difficulties experienced at Casorso Elementary School due to overcrowding including traffic flow, playground space and number of washrooms. Many parents indicated they would have expressed approval of the addition of portables and the subsequent loss of playground space if they knew that a recommendation would be to split families between two schools.

Outcome:

As indicated on the French Immersion Review 2010 Timeline, the final staff recommendations and public discussion and clarification of recommendations will take place at the next General Affairs Committee scheduled on Wednesday, December 1, 2010 at 4:00 p.m. at Hollywood Road Education Services.

Format of BCSTA Annual General Meeting

The Committee Chairperson confirmed that a discussion would be taking place with the President of the Okanagan Branch of the BCSTA on this matter. The Committee Chair will provide a report back to the Committee at the December 1, 2010 meeting.

Items for Future General Affairs Committee Meetings

December 1, 2010 Committee Meeting:

- French Immersion Program Supplemental Review 2010
- Full Day Kindergarten/Future of Grade 7's in the Mission and Lake Country Schools
- Format of BCSTA Annual General Meeting

Board Policy 530 – Fund-Raising

Video Surveillance – requested by Trustee Baxter

Future General Affairs Committee Meetings

Wednesday, December 1, 2010 at 4:00 p.m. at Hollywood Road Education Services

Questions – Please Contact:

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