

# School District No.36 (Surrey)

## EAST CLAYTON ELEMENTARY POSSIBLE SCHOOL CLOSURE MEETING WITH TEACHERS FEBRUARY 23, 2009

### MINUTES

---

Introductions were made by Doreen Graham, Principal.

**District staff in attendance:** Rick Fabbro, Assistant Superintendent; Umur Olcay, Manager, Facilities & Demographics Planning; and Kerry Magnus, Associate Director, Business Management Services.

Surrey is a growing community facing challenges other Districts don't have. We must demonstrate the need for new schools while ensuring that existing schools are full.

The purpose of this meeting is to talk about the possible option of amalgamating Clayton and East Clayton schools. There is a process that must be followed set out by the Ministry of Education, in legislation and Surrey School Board policy.

The process starts with the Board motion which was adopted February 12, 2009. A minimum of sixty days is required for public consultation as set out in legislation. District staff are meeting with school staff today, the school PAC later this week and a general community public meeting will be held March 10<sup>th</sup>. The minutes, questions and answers, and comment forms will be compiled and presented to the Board. The final decision is then voted on by the Board of Trustees after consultation is complete.

**Question:** Are trustees involved in the meetings?

**Answer:** Trustees will be in attendance at the public consultation meeting March 10<sup>th</sup>. We encourage you to provide your comments and questions on the blue comment forms handed out. These comments and questions will be presented to the Board members prior to any final decision by the Board.

The most important issue to school staff is the possibility of forced transfers in accordance with the Collective Agreement. School District #36 is not able to discuss this in any detail. Once Hazelgrove Elementary opens in September 2009, there will only be 90 students between East Clayton and Clayton. At present, there are 169 at Clayton and 220 at East Clayton. There will be a significant decline in enrolment which means surplus teachers. This situation has been discussed with the Union. Although there are two sites, do we treat them as one school or two schools? We are looking at how to treat a forced transfer. There are seniority issues involved here as well. School District #36 staff are hopeful for clarity on this issue within the next few weeks.

**Question:** Will there be help with the move?

**Answer:** Yes, there will be assistance from the District.

**Question:** There seems to be tight timelines with this issue - what has happened since last May?

**Answer:** Since then, District staff have been looking at alternatives. The new school, Hazelgrove, is going to be opened in September, 2009. Despite whether or not the Board decides to close East Clayton, we will still be in a situation of reduced staff required for both Clayton and East Clayton.

**Question:** One of the problems for the staff right now is that the deadline date is today for hiring new staff for Hazelgrove .

**Answer:** The posting deadline has been extended to tomorrow (February 24) due to a computer glitch on the weekend. The closing date has no bearing on how many staff will be where. We are trying to come to agreement with the Union on how forced transfers play into this situation. The Collective Agreement sets out class structure and seniority.

**Question:** With a projection of 90 students, does the Principal become a teaching Principal?

**Answer:** Principal Graham has discussed this possibility with the school and will discuss it further with Rick Fabbro.

**Question:** If there is another school with less than 90 students in Surrey, would it be in the same situation?

**Answer:** Possibly.

**Question:** Regarding the timeline – 60 days takes us into April, is this enough time?

**Answer:** In September, there will be students in place and the staffing entitlement will be based on 90 students at Clayton and East Clayton. Letters have been sent out to families in Hazelgrove’s catchment asking them to indicate which school they will attend.

**Question:** How did you get to the number 90 (students remaining at Clayton and East Clayton)?

**Answer:** SD36 Planning Department has a software program that captures how many students live in the revised catchment and how many are likely to remain with the school. It also calculates new student growth from certain housing types. Trends can also be tracked. The projections show approximately 38 at East Clayton and 52 at Clayton in September, 2009.

**Question:** Is there a probability factor for students going to a rural school?

**Answer:** There are benefits to attending a rural school that may make it more attractive to some families.

**Question:** What about the townhouses that are being built in this catchment?

**Answer:** Student population at Clayton/East Clayton will likely grow to 150 in the next couple of years, and by 2013, there will probably be another new school (Site #201) in the Hazelgrove catchment area.

**Question:** Who boxes up all the stuff?

**Answer:** Don’t start packing now. In the past, transition committees have been established at schools facing this situation. The purpose of the transition committee is to address issues including moving, packing and possible consolidation of resources.

**Question:** Wouldn’t East Clayton be a better choice for remaining open?

**Answer:** There are issues at both Clayton and East Clayton. The new school will be taking kids from both Clayton and East Clayton schools. Latimer Road and Don Christian will also feel the impact. Planning strategies are in place.

**Question:** Is this school (Clayton) going to stay here and for how long?

**Answer:** When Hazelgrove opens this Fall, we will be looking at the planning strategy for Clayton in the future – we would like to keep it as a rural school. This provides choice for the community.

**Question:** Is the heritage flavour the reason to close East Clayton?

**Answer:** No. A seismic upgrade is going to be started at Clayton this year. The School District doesn't own East Clayton, the Municipality does. The septic field has failed at East Clayton and needs to be replaced.

**Question:** What would be the start date of a new school on the proposed site (#201)?

**Answer:** Subject to Ministry approval, a new school at Site #201 would start construction in 2012 which is based on projections and capacities.

**Question:** What is the Hazelgrove student capacity?

**Answer:** 400 grades 1 – 7 + 80 Kindergarten.

**Question:** What is the status of the full-day Kindergarten issue?

**Answer:** The Ministry has backed off on this issue. It may come back. The concept would help some Districts fill up empty classrooms, but may be problematic for Surrey.

**Question:** A lot of parents assume all staff are going to the new school.

**Answer:** You can tell them that the Hazelgrove staff posting closes tomorrow.

**Question:** What will happen with the computer lab?

**Answer:** A transition team will be set up to discuss issues such as this.

**Question:** Can the playground be moved from East Clayton?

**Answer:** There is a process involved for upgrading playground equipment and likewise for relocation of playground equipment. The Grounds Department will have to take a look at what is salvageable. One of the things that is really important to parents is a good playground.

**Question:** Wouldn't it be cheaper to stay at East Clayton? Why couldn't we consider it as the option?

**Answer:** It definitely is an option to look at. A couple of problems, however, are the lack of a computer lab and the failed septic field.

#### **Questions previously brought forward:**

**The bathrooms at Clayton are in the basement, accessible by an exterior door or sets of steep stairs. Are there plans to improve access?**

- District staff are reviewing options for both temporary/or permanent washrooms. The preference is to add accessible washrooms to the main school structure.

**Parking capacity and traffic flow is restrictive at Clayton – will this be improved?**

- This is not in the scope of work for seismic upgrade. Enrolment is anticipated to drop. Traffic is a big concern and traffic is increasing. As a trade-off for more parking, the school might lose some play space.

**Seismic upgrading time-frame for portables... how will it impact the location of students/classrooms? What will this look like?**

- District staff have reviewed this with the Principal. Depending on when upgrades commence, portables may not be required.

**Union contract interpretation - are the Claytons one school? The answer impacts decisions about forced transfers.**

- Rick Fabbro has addressed this – see previous comments.

**When will the information about staffing be known? Will this be in time for the transfer rounds? Parents worry that teachers will post out because they won't know for sure what is happening with their jobs/positions which will deplete the excellent complement of teachers.**

- Rick has addressed this – see previous comments.
- Parents are in either one of two camps – those who have been waiting for a new school, and those who don't want to lose their existing school.

**What will happen in two or three years when student growth mushrooms again, especially on the Clayton side of 72<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, if East Clayton is closed?**

- Student growth in the Clayton NCP (Neighbourhood Community Plan) area is primarily expected to be within Hazelgrove's catchment area. There will be some growth in the Clayton/East Clayton catchment to bolster enrolment.

**When combining the libraries from East Clayton with Clayton, there would be space limitations. Where can the library be set up? Is the portable larger by square footage than the current library at Clayton?**

- Perhaps LRS can provide assistance. A transition committee can also help to brainstorm possible solutions to this problem.

**If the French teacher has no classroom (currently in a portable, sharing with the music teacher) how can a rolling cart work, in the annex upstairs? The portable may be needed if we exceed 5 divisions.**

- The transition team could consider possible solutions.

**The gymnasium at Clayton is not a regulation size and therefore cannot hold basketball games there, nor host tournaments. Are there any plans to increase the size of the gym?**

- The Ministry of Education sets out area standards. According to the Ministry Area Standards, gym allocations for small schools are:  
For a 40 K + 50 school = 100 m<sup>2</sup> gym  
For a 40K + 75 and 40K + 100 school = 150 m<sup>2</sup> gym  
For a 40K + 125 and 40 K + 150 school = 265 m<sup>2</sup> gym  
For a 40 K + 175 and larger school = 380 m<sup>2</sup> gym
- There are currently no plans to increase the size of the gym at Clayton Elementary.

**Are the current PAC funds shared with Hazelgrove?**

- A transition committee normally works out these issues. The PAC guidelines may define this circumstance.

**New Questions:**

**Question:** Is there going to come a point where there will be a position taken that there is no money (for the changes)?

**Answer:** District staff work with the Principal and transition team to work out scope of work and costs. A transition committee would not be established until the Board has made a final decision.

**Question:** The sixty days would then happen quite fast?

**Answer:** The parents that Rick has talked to believe it will be a smooth transition

**Question:** Would it be an option to close both schools?

**Answer:** Any comments you have to support one or another option will help the Board make a decision.

**Question:** Is the Clayton school a heritage site?

**Answer:** It is not a designated Heritage Site (protected). However, it is on the Heritage Register. There is a list of properties that are seen by the City as significant. The only protected heritage site in Surrey is the little one room schoolhouse at Anniedale.

You will have an opportunity to be a part of the public meetings. Feel free to send in comments and questions through the Principal. We are hoping that Union representatives will be able to come soon to talk to staff.

Thank you for your attendance.