

## School District No.36 (Surrey)

### **SUNNYSIDE ELEMENTARY POSSIBLE SCHOOL CLOSURE MEETING WITH TEACHERS FEBRUARY 24, 2009**

#### **MINUTES**

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Introductions were made by Rejean Bolduc, Principal.

**District Staff:** John Ormond, Assistant Superintendent; Kerry Magnus, Associate Director, Business Management Services; Umur Olcay, Manager, Facilities & Demographics Planning

In a school district like Surrey that is constantly growing, it may seem odd that we are considering the possibility of closing schools. We do have some challenges that other districts don't have. Three schools were brought before the Board to start process for public consultation. East Clayton and Clayton will experience a drop in enrolment as a result of Hazelgrove Elementary opening in September, 2009. Anniedale is experiencing traffic impacts and changes in land use, and the Sunnyside enrolment will be growing on the east side of Highway #99.

There is a process established for possible school closure. The Ministry has set out legislation, and the School Board has established policy regarding possible school closure.

The consultation process started with the Board motion on February 12, 2009 and will continue for a minimum of 60 days. The final deadline is December 31, 2009. However, it may be in everyone's best interest to come to a decision before that.

*The Board motion was read.*

The consultation process includes staff, the PAC, and the public. The Ministry wants to see that the entire community has the opportunity to have a say with regard to possible school closure.

In the process over the next 60 days, please write down all comments and feel free to invite others to the public meeting. Please use the comment sheet, or send an email to your Principal or Assistant Superintendent. We are compiling binders for each Trustee to read through before they make a final decision.

After sufficient meetings and public feedback, the decision will be voted on by the Trustees.

A second process to be dealt with is with regard to disposal of the property. This is a distinct and separate process. The third process that will be discussed briefly is possible staff transfers. That process will depend on the option chosen by the Board. Obviously, the preference is to keep all Sunnyside teachers together.

This is a consultative process. Your thoughts and insights are very important. This is a vibrant and lively community and we have every intention to preserve that. The original Sunnyside building was built in 1949, and people are deeply invested in this community. The Montessori program has a strong history in this community.

One of the main concerns in this area is the traffic.

*All of the options relating to a possible school closure of Sunnyside Elementary were read out:*

1. Renovate and expand Sunnyside for Regular Program and Montessori;
2. Replace Sunnyside for Regular Program and Montessori;
3. Keep Sunnyside for Regular Program and move Montessori to Jessie Lee or to new school Site #202;
4. Keep Sunnyside for Montessori Program;
5. Close Sunnyside and move Regular program and Montessori to new school Site #202;
6. Close Sunnyside and revise catchment west of Highway #99 to Jessie Lee while regular students east of Highway #99 and Montessori students will go to the New School – Site #202.

No boundary changes are currently planned. As the area grows, the Planning Department will look at student numbers and make adjustments. Sometimes student participation numbers change, perhaps as a result of students switching from private schools.

If a boundary change occurs, it is a phased change for gradual impact. There will be no change in this current school year.

### **Questions and Answers:**

**Question:** You don't want to split up staff, but option #6 splits up the staff. Do Montessori staff stay?

**Answer:** The intent would be for both Regular teachers and Montessori staff to go to the new school at site #202. Sunnyside staff would be kept together. Please use the comments sheets to say if you would prefer Option #5 utilized with a phased boundary change toward Option #6. The process takes into consideration the population of other neighbouring schools. The preferred option takes into account our best knowledge for recommendation based on the distribution of population.

**Question:** What is the excess capacity of the schools around us?

**Answer:** Jessie Lee has 7 or 8 empty classrooms. Semiahmoo Trail is nearly full.

**Question:** Rosemary Heights and Morgan Elementary – are they going to be neighbour schools?

**Answer:** Rosemary and Morgan are neighbourhood schools. As a result of a recent boundary change, students from the new townhouses along 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave. will be going across to Morgan Elementary. We will look at that again as more houses go in, but we have to support those schools now. The current district policy allows parents to register at a variety of schools. When Rosemary Heights was completed, we split Morgan's boundary between the two schools

The District is looking at building a new secondary school in the Grandview area with proposed site acquisition by 2012. The Neighbourhood Concept Plan (NCP) will guide land use development and the number of residential units added. There is a general land use plan posted on the City of Surrey website and significant residential growth is anticipated.

**Question:** Is there a guarantee that the Montessori program will be moving to the new school?

**Answer:** Based on the final decision by the Board, there is every likelihood that Montessori will move to the new school and there will be sufficient space.

**Question:** When will a decision be made?

**Answer:** An end date has been set for December 31, 2009, but it can be any date following the 60 day consultation process. When you look at the feasibility and ministry studies, the quicker that we get to a decision, the better it will be for the community.

**Question:** If the decision was made to close Sunnyside, roughly when would we be looking at closure?

**Answer:** If the decision were to pursue Option #5 or #6, closure would not happen until a new school (site #202) has opened. The best case scenario would be September of 2011 (two years). The construction of a new school takes about 18 months.

**Question:** What is the exact process that will happen?

**Answer:** Once the Board makes a final decision, then a transition committee would be formed for input into design, which would take approximately 2 or 3 months, then another 4 months to prepare working drawings and project budget. The “Project Agreement” is then sent to the Ministry for funding approval. Subject to funding approval, the project would be ready for tender by early Spring 2010, and ready for occupancy Fall 2011.

**Question:** Will it continue to be called Sunnyside Elementary?

**Answer:** SD #36 has a “Naming Committee” that accepts suggestions for names and in turn make recommendations to the Board. The Board will respond to the community’s wishes. Names that are highly valued should be put forth.

**Question:** Will there be consideration given for the Montessori program in the design of the new school?

**Answer:** If the decision is to move Montessori to the new school, input on specific requirements will be a part of the design of the new school.

**Comment:** A news article went out saying that the school was closing, and parents may be in a panic.

**Response:** Parents will see Rejean’s article in the school newsletter. There is a meeting with the PAC tomorrow.

It was noted that SD36 must follow the required consultation process very carefully.

Rejean commented that the school staff is very happy about the possibility of moving to a new building.

All new schools must be environmentally friendly, “LEED” Gold. It is exciting working on new projects and incorporating energy efficient initiatives. At Woodward Hill Elementary, the staff is working towards an educational program that will work in partnership with the building. The building then becomes a teaching tool.

There is a program called LEED (Leadership Energy Environmental Design) that guides projects to follow energy efficiency and environmental guidelines. We try to meet the LEED requirements as best we can in our school designs.

John thanked everyone for attending. Please use this as an opportunity to voice your concerns and fill out the comment forms. The more comments received, the better informed and prepared the Trustees will be to make the right decision.

Rejean thanked all guests for coming to the meeting.