

Board of School Trustees  
School District No. 57 (Prince George)

PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING

**HIGHGLEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**March 4, 2003**

**MINUTES**

Present:

Bill Christie, Chairperson  
Carlene Keddie, Trustee  
Michelle Marrelli, Trustee  
Fred McLeod, Trustee  
John Rustad, Trustee  
Patricia Wick Thibault, Trustee

Dick Chambers, Superintendent of Schools  
Bryan Mix, Secretary-Treasurer  
Wendy De Marsh, Executive Assistant (Recorder)  
Lori MacIver, School Operations Officer

Absent: Lyn Hall, Trustee

Approximately 70 people in the audience.

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1. Opening Remarks

Mr. Christie called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., reviewed the agenda and the rules of order for the meeting and then gave a brief overview of the district's budget and enrolment situation.

2. Board Presentation

Mr. Chambers gave a presentation comprised of information about:

- the consultation process
  - the decline in the district's enrolment
  - the district's budget shortfall
  - the components of the budget solution
  - the savings to be achieved by closing Highglen Elementary School
  - the reasons for selecting Highglen Elementary School for proposed closure
  - a summary of written submissions received to date
  - when the decision about closing the school would be made
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3. Highglen Elementary School Parent Advisory Council Presentation

Melanie Switzer turned in a petition requesting that Highglen be kept open as a receiving school. She commented on the school's convenient location, its good condition and its low operating costs and the many programs offered at the school.

Ray Borgia spoke about the school's convenient location, the quality of its physical plant and its cost-efficiency, and asked the Board to consider keeping Highglen open as a receiving school and moving the Montessori program to another school.

Karen Stahl, on behalf of the Prince George Montessori Society, thanked the Board for approving the establishment of a single-track Montessori school and indicated that the society would be happy with whatever school the district designated for it.

4. Speakers' List

Maggie Spicer spoke about some of the activities that the school offered and noted that these activities depend on the staff working together. She commented on the importance of neighbourhood schools to needy children.

Bob Werstiuk expressed happiness with the school and suggested the Montessori program would be better suited to a smaller school.

Kelly Johnson asked the Board not to close the school to the neighbourhood in order to make it a single-track Montessori school.

5. Other Speakers

Mr. Christie opened the floor to anyone who wished to speak. A number of people came forward and raised the following concerns and questions:

- Comment about the quality of the school and the staff.
- Question as to why Highglen was not considered as a receiving school in any of the options in the District Configuration Committee report and concern that decision to approve a single-track Montessori school was not postponed until after decisions made regarding school closures.
- Question about process for changing the school from dual- to single-track and concern that staff were not consulted about the decision.
- Comment about how central the school is.

6. Closing Remarks

Trustees noted that the decision to approve a single-track Montessori school was not a decision to make Highglen that school. They commented on the district's declining enrolment, the difficulty of making decisions to close schools and the need to put more resources into classrooms instead of buildings.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.