

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

PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING

LAKWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

February 18, 2003

MINUTES

Present:

Bill Christie, Chairperson
Lyn Hall Vice-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)

Approximately 120 people in the audience.

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 Lakewood Elementary School
 - the reasons for selecting Lakewood 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. Lakewood Elementary School Parent Advisory Council Presentation

Susan Tindale spoke about the strength of the partnership between parents, teachers and students at the school and reviewed some of the events and activities held at the school.

Steve Wagar spoke about the benefits of the school sharing grounds with Lakewood Jr. Secondary School. He noted the school's low maintenance costs, its steady enrolment and its suitability as a centralized busing school.

4. Speakers' List

Curtis Blackburn questioned the Board's plans for the school if it were closed.

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:

- Concern about the intersection at 15th Avenue and Ospika Boulevard.
- Comments about emotional attachment to the school and the students.
- Comments about the importance of small, neighbourhood schools. Suggestion that services to special needs students be more centralized.
- Comment about the commitment of the school's staff and the importance of the school to the community.
- Concern that child will not get same level of service and support at another school.
- Comment about how much the school means to parents and the community.
- Comments about the dedication of the staff and the safeness of the neighbourhood.
- Comments about the community's use of and support for the school. Request that the Board consider the best location for schools to serve the community and suggestion that Board consider where schools would be built if it had to start from scratch.
- Concern about the impact on property values.
- Question as to why a four-day week or extended school year are not being considered.

- Questions regarding the possibility of secondary schools closing and the transfer process for students from schools that close.
- Concern about closing the school when it shares its grounds with the junior secondary school.
- Comments about the school's application to become a fine arts school and the arts programs already in place at the school.

6. Closing Remarks

Trustees commented on the district's declining enrolment, the difficulty of making decisions to close schools and their concern about safety issues related to school closures. They noted that the district could not afford to keep all its schools open and that the money saved by closing schools would increase the resources available to all schools and students.

The meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.