

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

PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING

MEADOW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

March 13, 2003

MINUTES

Present:

Bill Christie, Chairperson
Lyn Hall Vice-Chairperson
Carlene Keddie, Trustee
Fred McLeod, Trustee
John Rustad, Trustee
Patricia Wick Thibault, Trustee

Kerry Firth, Assistant Superintendent
Allan Reed, Manager of Finance
Lori MacIver, School Operations Officer (Recorder)

Absent: Michelle Marrelli, Trustee

Approximately 100 people in the audience.

1. Opening Remarks

Mr. Christie called the meeting to order at 7:05 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. Firth 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 Meadow Elementary School
- the reasons for selecting Meadow Elementary School for proposed closure
- a summary of written submissions received to date
- when the decision about closing the school would be made

3. Meadow Elementary School Parent Advisory Council Presentation

Dean Strachan reviewed data from the District Configuration Committee report and noted that of the schools in the area, the closure of Meadow would provide the least amount of savings to the district. He noted that the building was in excellent condition.

Kevin Bertles spoke about the efficiency of the school's educational organization and the programs and activities offered at the school. He expressed concerns about students from the area walking to neighbouring schools and noted that the Meadow area was the only subdivision in greater Prince George that was growing.

Shari Green spoke about the stability of the school's enrolment, the demographics of the area and the potential for residential growth, the programs and activities organized by parents at the school and the excellence of the teaching staff.

A group of students spoke about the activities of the leadership class at the school and how much they loved their school.

A group of students gave a presentation highlighting activities and events held at the school.

Teacher Mona Tyndall presented a video of her Grade 3 class and spoke about the family atmosphere of the school.

4. Speakers' List

Jim Mullen spoke about the potential residential growth in the neighbourhood and suggested that keeping the school open would help fuel that growth. He commented on the importance of neighbourhood schools. He suggested that the Board look at other ways to save money instead of closing schools.

Heidi Martell comments about the school being a benefit to the district and the community.

Ken Henry spoke about the residential growth in the area and suggested that the school was needed to accommodate it.

Rosa Albinati expressed concern about the effect that closing the school would have on house prices and the neighbourhood.

Kathy Pereira talked about the community, the programs offered at the school, and noted that the school is showing a steady increase in enrolment.

Heather Chafe commented on the academic excellence of the school.

Tom Kearns expressed concern about student safety walking to neighbourhood schools and the negative effect that closing the school would have on students and

the community, and noted that Meadow was the only school in the area that was experiencing an increase in enrolment

Roger Kollner spoke about the area's potential for growth and noted that the main selling feature of the area was the location and proximity of the 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:

- Comments about the quality of programs at the school, including the computer program.
- Suggestion that the oldest and more costly schools should be closed and the decision should not be based on small verses large.
- Question about whether layoff notices will be sent to seven principals if seven schools are closed and if the closures are related to classroom costs. Concern about pitting communities against one another.
- Comment on the quality of the education and the feeling of community at the school.

6. Closing Remarks

Trustees commented on the difficulty of making decisions to close schools, the other ways the district was looking to cut costs and the necessity to close schools in order to increase the resources available to all students in the district.

The meeting adjourned at 10.22 p.m.