

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

PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING

QUINSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

March 5, 2003

MINUTES

Present:

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

Bryan Mix, Secretary-Treasurer
Norm Monroe, Assistant Superintendent
Wendy De Marsh, Executive Assistant (Recorder)
Lori MacIver, School Operations Officer

Absent: Lyn Hall, Trustee

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

Janet Gomes spoke about the educational organization of the school, the services provided and programs offered, and commented on the sustainability of the neighbourhood.

A group of Grade 6 students listed all of the things students liked about the school.

Suzette Prince spoke about her work with the aboriginal students in the school and the cultural and support programs that the school provided for them.

Don Pollard spoke about the high percentage of young families in the area and noted that the school's enrolment had been increasing. He presented alternative school amalgamation packages for the Board to consider and noted Quinson's cost-effectiveness.

4. Speakers' List

Linda Campbell commented on the stability the school provided for the neighbourhood and the importance to teachers and students of the bright, spacious classrooms in the school.

Karla Wright commented on the serene and safe environment provided by the school and urged the Board to ask the government to increase the budget.

Cynthia Hill noted Quinson's increasing enrolment and cultural diversity and expressed her happiness with the school and the services it provided.

Jane Loades commented on the welcoming atmosphere of the school and expressed concern about having children separated from their friends.

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 Board's insensitivity in making decisions that affected people's lives.
- Comments about the school's commitment to extra-curricular activities and the community's commitment to the school.
- Question as to whether crossing guards would be provided for children crossing busy streets.
- Comments about the welcoming atmosphere of the school and note that school is the heart of the community.

- Comments about the security of the school and how the community has a “school watch” to deter vandalism.
- Comment about the importance of neighbourhood schools.
- Comment about the importance of literacy and note that if school were a receiving school, it might be possible to have the library open every day.
- Appreciation for the level of support provided by the school.
- Comment about how much aboriginal students like the school.
- Comment about the diversity of the school.
- Question about whether or not bussed children from Miworth would move with the rest of the school or would they be moved somewhere else?
- Comment about willingness to volunteer in any way that is needed in order to keep school open.
- Comment on the positive effect the school has had on son with ADHD.

6. Closing Remarks

Trustees 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 9:24 p.m.