



The Board of Education of School District No. 83 (North Okanagan-Shuswap)

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Board of Education
FROM: Superintendent of Schools/CEO, Peter Jory
RE: LRFP Process for the Salmon Arm Area

DATE: April 13, 2021

Background

The Board of Education has conducted an extensive consultation process in support of the Long Range Facilities Plan. From January through March of 2020, the Board participated in a series of consultation sessions with First Nations, school and district staff, parents, students, and local politicians from each community across the School District, and discussed local and regional student enrollment projections, along with building conditions and capacities. Stakeholder feedback was collected via an electronic survey, emails, ballot boxes, and by recorders at each session, and shared with the Board at that time. The LRFP was adopted in October 2020.

As the specific Plan options had changed through the process, an additional session was held for the Salmon Arm area in November of 2020, which covered the following:

- Updated student projections for Options D and E
- Potential portable costs for E4 and E5
- Insight into potential reconfiguration enrollment phasing for a “hard start” and a “soft start”
- Other considerations, including potential impact on student learning

An additional survey for Salmon Area and Sorrento areas was also issued and the results were shared with the Board of Education in December of 2020. Discussion was put on pause for a number of months due to COVID-19, then revisited at the March public meeting of the Board and in a Committee of the Whole held on March 31.

Media coverage of the March 31 COW seems to have renewed stakeholder interest in the conversation, and the Board has received a surge of feedback to compliment the data already collected throughout the previous year. In addition to the choice between Option E4 and the more recently added Option E5 (May 2020), conversations seem to be focused on whether to move ahead on a decision for Option E to maximize preparation time for September of 2022, or to slow down in hope of getting more stakeholder understanding and support.

Item

This document will contain a number of information items generated throughout the process and as a result of recent conversations and questions designed to inform the Board of its next steps. This will include charts depicting survey feedback for Option E4 and E5, transition options for soft start, impacts of restored language, capacity insights for Option E4 and E5 which include costing estimates, as well as the summary of the LRFP process so far.

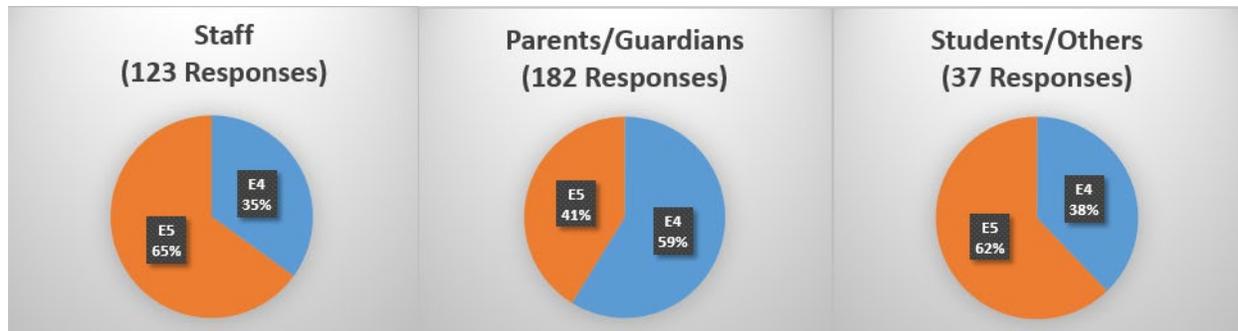


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Stakeholder Feedback for Option E4 and E5

Following the presentation on November 12th, 2020, the District opened a survey that was open until November 27th. The survey netted 488 responses, of which 336 included a specific answer regarding E4 or E5. The following is a summary:



Though the different stakeholder groups vary in their opinion, if all these response were considered in the aggregate, E5 is shown to have a slight edge. If the 18 responses that looked to be examples of “ballot-stuffing” were removed, the overall survey would be almost exactly equal.

Transition Options

The means to get from our current configuration to either of the two possible configurations are being depicted in the following manner:

Hard Start: Every student is assigned to their new school for September and goes directly there.

- Pros: Easier to plan as numbers are more predictable
- Cons: Possible student inequities (eg. Some students in E5 would have an additional transition as they go back to Jackson)

Soft Start: A phased approach where current cohorts transition through present configuration and inbound cohorts split or combine into their new schools.

- Pros: Students move in one direction and have current number or fewer transitions
- Cons: Complex to plan, staff, and timetable as well as potentially confusing for stakeholders

As the Soft Start is more complex, possible strategies are outlined below:

Potential Soft Start for Option E4

Current to Year 1:

- All grade 12's transition out through graduation
- Both the grade 10 and 11 cohorts transition in to Sullivan
- Half of SMS 8's move to Jackson and half stay
- Half of SMS 7's move to Jackson and half stay
- Grade 6 cohort remains at their elementary schools

Year 1 to Year 2:

- SMS and Jackson grade 9 cohorts combine as grade 10's at Sullivan
- Grade 6 elem students combine into grade 7 cohort in either Jackson and SMS



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Potential Soft Start for Option E5

Current to Year 1:

- All grade 12's transition out through graduation
- All grade 11's transition to Sullivan grade 12
- Half of Jackson's 9's and 10's move to Sullivan
- All SMS 8's come into Jackson

Year 1 to Year 2:

- All grade 12's transition out through graduation
- Grade 11's in each school transition to Grade 12
- Half of Jackson's 9's and 10's move to Sullivan*
- SMS 8's split into Jackson and Sullivan

*Half of this 9 group moves after just one year

Impact of Restored Language

The Supreme Court ruling of 2017 restored local contract language to school districts around the province. Most germane to this conversation is the concept of “click-down” where school staff are expected to make their “best efforts” to reduce class sizes by one student for each IEP in each class starting on the third one. This change has effectively reduced the capacity in schools around the province, and coinciding with the return to positive enrollment trend, has created a run on portables and construction requests. Even though the contract language was in place prior to 2002 when Sullivan enrollment approached 800 students, the number of IEPs across the district was 12 percent of the general student population compared to 18 percent today. This means that current application of restored language has a greater impact on school capacity today than it would have prior to the removal of that language in January of 2002 through the initiation of Bill 28.

Portables and other building enhancements required due to the contract restoration were covered by the province in 2017-2018, but 100 percent of portable costs once again rest with the school districts.

E4: Capacity Insights for One Secondary School

Maximizing Sullivan campus enrollment as a means to reduce portable costs should be a key component of this conversation. Current course request data for three cohorts was matched to current facilities, and it was more promising than first expected. However, capacity and efficiency of use would need to be improved through the following means:

- Utilize all classrooms in all blocks rather than preserving them for teacher preparation
- Increase course opportunities outside the timetable
- Close the Wellness Center and the IAP/CCP programs and convert these spaces to classrooms
- Triple or quadruple book the gymnasium in all blocks
- Convert one math room to a science room
- Relocate blocks of art beyond 8 to regular classrooms or cap enrollment
- Move wood shop classes back to Jackson



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Staff believes that with these changes in place and very thoughtful and stringent timetable building, the Sullivan site capacity could again be as high as 750-800 with just 2-3 portables, even with the restored language in place. Another 4-5 portables would then be required within the next five years to timetable the Baragar projected enrollment requirement of 1000 for three cohorts. While the two middle schools in this model would remain well under capacity, remember that Option E4 requires an additional cohort of students to remain in Salmon Arm elementary schools, which would require another 4-6 portables in addition to the above.

The previously listed compromises could reduce the costs for E5 from \$5M-\$6M down to as low as \$3M-\$4M over the next five years, depending on utilization, timetabling, and enrollment changes.

E5: Capacity Insights for Two Secondary Schools

This model has the potential to accommodate the 1340 students projected by Baragar in the four cohorts more efficiently, because the schools would not be impacted by the differences in cohort size in the same way, and the catchment boundaries could be adjusted to better match available space. That being said, enrollment is projected to increase beyond current capacity, which will require 2-3 portables in addition to the 2 that have been ordered for the Jackson campus for 2021-21.

Given current projections, this model requires no more portables at elementary. If rural K-8 schools remain in their current configuration, Shuswap Middle would likely require a portable in 2023. This gives a projected portable cost of \$1M over the next five years, depending on utilization, timetabling, and enrollment changes.

This information is provided for discussion purposes only.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Jory
Superintendent of Schools/CEO