



Rainy River District School Board
F.H. Huffman School Accommodation Review
Public Consultation

MINUTES

April 8, 2008 – 6:30 p.m.
F.H. Huffman School
Fort Frances, Ontario

Committee Members in Attendance:

Dan Belluz (Chair), Heather Campbell, Donna Kowalchuk, Laurie Holliday, Penny Newman, Gord McBride, Dianne Faragher, Petrina Carlson, Angela Mainville, Jan Adams, Terry Higgins

Accommodation Review Committee Resources:

Laura Mills, Superintendent of Business, Kathie Zatulsky – recording secretary

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Welcome and Introduction

Dan Belluz, Chair of the Accommodation Review Committee, welcomed committee members and community members present at the fourth public consultation for the accommodation review of F.H. Huffman School.

Chair Dan Belluz suggested that the committee not expand on the agenda item “History – How we got here”, as the two community members present were in attendance at the last public consultation in January. There was no objection. Heather Campbell, Superintendent of Education, provided an update on the F.H. Huffman School Valuation Framework, reflecting additions from previous public consultations.

School Valuation Framework

Value to the Student

An additional comment was added under the *Supports* section which addressed the difficulty in attracting a qualified Ojibwe teacher at Huffman School for a .2 position.

Additional comments were added under the *Extracurricular* section which included information on EQAO data, class size and student safety.

A question was posed by a teacher of F.H. Huffman School - Students at F.H. Huffman School use the gym daily. Will the students have daily access to the gym at the new consolidated school?

Heather Campbell responded by saying that it depends on the design of the school and the scheduling for use of the gym. Penny Newman added that students currently at Robert Moore School often get more gym time than in the past due to the regulations on primary class size and smaller groups. Sometimes more than one group can be scheduled to use the gym at the same time.

Laurie Holliday, ARC member and teacher at F.H. Huffman stated that there will be more opportunity for student participation in activities and events in a larger consolidated school as there will be no bussing issues when students need to be transported to other schools to participate.

There were no further additions to this section of the Valuation Framework.

Value to the System

There were no questions or comments on this section.

Value to the Local Economy

It was noted that comments were added under Section C - Real Estate Values.

Discussion:

Question - Does the Best Start Program still exist and was there funding for a daycare in the consolidated school?

Laura Mills, Superintendent of Business, responded by saying that there is no funding available through Best Start or the Ministry of Education for day cares within schools.

Question - Would the fire at J.W. Walker School impact on the funding for a new school?

Laura Mills stated that repairs to J.W. Walker School would be through an insurance claim only. No capital funding from the Board would have to be used for repairs at the school.

Question – How soon will the new consolidated school be ready for occupancy?

Laura Mills stated that the Board has selected an architectural firm and will begin the process to review drawings and submit tenders by spring of 2009. The earliest date that the school may be completed is September, 2010.

Question – If the decision was made to close F.H. Huffman School, how would the students be accommodated?

Heather Campbell stated that if F.H. Huffman School closes, students would probably not be moved until the new consolidated school was completed. The Board will review accommodation requirements when the decision is made on the future of F.H. Huffman School.

There were no further questions or comments.

Heather Campbell, provided copies of a report outline for the Accommodation Review Committee to review prior to the next meeting April 15, 2008, 4:00 p.m. at F.H. Huffman School. The committee will list the advantages and disadvantages of each accommodation option for F. H. Huffman School with consideration to the "Value to the Student, Value to the System, Value to the Community and Value to the Local Economy". A report will be presented to the Board with a recommendation on the future of F.H. Huffman School.

Chair Belluz thanked everyone for attending the public consultation and for providing input on the F.H. Huffman School Accommodation Review.

The meeting was adjourned.