



To: Rainy River District School Board
Submitted By: Pupil Accommodation Review Committee
– F. H. Huffman School

BACKGROUND:

1. At the June 5, 2007 Board meeting, Trustees approved a resolution that the Board proceed with an Accommodation Review under Policy 6.50 for F.H. Huffman School. Trustees, School Council chairs and members, community representatives, First Nation representatives, school staff representatives, and school administrators were appointed prior to the first Accommodation Review Committee meeting. The F.H. Huffman Pupil Accommodation Review Committee is composed of the following:

Dan Belluz	Trustee (Chair of the Committee)
Judy Eluik	Trustee
Donna Dittaro	Trustee
Terry Higgins	School Council Rep – F.H. Huffman School
Kristin McCormick	School Council Rep – F.H. Huffman School
Dianne Faragher	School Council Rep – Robert Moore School
Gord McBride	Community Rep
Petrina Carlson	Community Rep
Angela Mainville	Couchiching First Nations rep, Education Department
Jan Adams	Couchiching First Nations rep, Education Department
Heather Campbell	Superintendent of Education
Donna Kowalchuk	Principal, F.H. Huffman School
Laurie Holliday	Teacher, F.H. Huffman School
Penny Newman	Principal, Robert Moore School
Brent Tookenay	Seven Generations Education Institute

2. The Committee met on November 22, November 29, December 3, 2007, January 15, February 12 and April 8, 2008 to complete the following tasks:
 - Review and customize the generic School Valuation Framework for F.H. Huffman School and determine if there were other factors to be considered;
 - Hear questions and comments from the community and consider these questions and comments based on the School Valuation Framework. Questions and Answers were posted to the Board website;
 - Review data for F.H. Huffman School based on the School Valuation Framework;
 - Complete a School Valuation Framework report for Senior Administration and provide recommendations for consideration.

STATUS:

3. The Committee reviewed the school data provided by administration for F.H. Huffman School and Robert Moore School. This school data was placed on the Rainy River District School Board website for community information as Appendices A to E.
4. The Committee discussed the generic Rainy River District School Board School Valuation Framework and made additions that they felt needed to be considered and applied to F.H. Huffman School.
5. The Committee heard input from the community at the public consultations held December 3, 2007, January 15, February 12 and April 8, 2008. Over the four public consultation sessions, 21 people, including representatives from the media, attended. Feedback forms were also available at the meeting and from the Board's website which provided another method for the public to pose questions and comments. Concerns included:
 - Projected enrolments and staffing;
 - Increased class size;
 - Understanding of the review process by parents and community;
 - Lack of Native as a Second Language (Ojibwe) programming;
 - Losing the small close-knit learning environment of a small school;
 - Safety concerns with grouping primary students with junior and intermediate students.
6. The Committee completed the School Valuation Framework for F.H. Huffman School. (See attached.)
7. On April 15, 2008, the Committee met to discuss all aspects of the School Valuation Framework and carefully reviewed the information as it related to Value to the Student, Value to the System, Value to the Community and Value to the Local Economy. Key summary points are provided as follows:

Value to the Student:

- Students would have an increased availability of programming, such as Ojibwe language instruction, as well as more opportunity for extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, at a larger school. Presently, F.H. Huffman School is not able to offer Ojibwe language instruction.
- All students would enjoy an enhanced school library, multiple resources, a full-size gym, and access to new technology such as SMARTBoards within a new school.

- While the increase of student body caused concerns for student safety, there would be opportunity to enhance safety and security within a new school, such as video surveillance and an intercom system.
- The increase in student body with a consolidation of Huffman and Robert Moore Schools would allow for greater flexibility in programming groupings such as the developmental literacy groupings.
- Students would have a greater opportunity for varied social interaction and mentorship through programs such as Peer Mediation and reading buddies.

Value to the System:

- Improved student achievement begins with the teacher, and the opportunities to share with grade alike staff and discuss pedagogy with a peer partner are proven to support change in teacher practices. The consolidation of the two schools would allow for increased networking and resource sharing between staff members.
- Reduced maintenance costs would occur with a new school, thus increasing improvement opportunities for the other schools within the system.
- Programming such as Ojibwe language instruction could be offered and intervention programs would continue to be offered within a new consolidated school.

Value to the Community:

- Partnerships with community partners would benefit from a single school to access.
- A full-sized gym may attract community use of the school. Presently, F. H. Huffman is not used for any community activities.
- A new school may attract professionals, such as doctors, to the community.
- While a school is the centre of a community, the distance between F. H. Huffman and Robert Moore Schools is 1.5 km and F. H. Huffman School is a feeder school to Robert Moore School.

Value to the Local Economy:

- Jobs may be created with the building of a new school.
- A new school would attract families to the area. Real estate values would increase.
- A new school may attract professionals, such as doctors, to the community which would also be beneficial to the local economy.

RECOMMENDATION:

8. The Committee weighed the Value to the Students as being the highest consideration and, after lengthy discussion over the advantages and the disadvantages for each option, reached an unanimous decision and submit the following recommendation:

That the Rainy River District School Board, pursuant to Board Policy No. 6.50, Pupil Accommodation Review, consolidate F. H. Huffman School and Robert Moore School to build a new school on the Robert Moore School property.