

news release

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Engagement regarding proposed relocation of Spanish Bilingual program to continue

CALGARY— Parents who appealed a Calgary Board of Education decision to move a southwest Calgary Spanish Bilingual program have been told that the engagement process will continue.

A group of parents appealed a decision to move the kindergarten to Grade 5 Spanish Bilingual program students from Westgate School to Eugene Coste School in September.

A review of the decision by Calvin Davies, area director for Area IV, has resulted in a decision to continue the engagement process. The engagement will examine previous scenarios, including the utilization of Eugene Coste School, and other possible solutions that have been proposed since the decision letter of Jan. 13, 2014. Details on the date and location of the next open house for parents to provide further feedback will be forthcoming.

“There are competing values whenever the Calgary Board of Education enters discussions with parents regarding school and/or program designation for their children,” Davies says in a letter to parents. “Simply put, there is a finite space in the CBE administrative area designated as Area IV and there is not one solution that all will support.”

The original decision was made because Westgate School, which has the Spanish Bilingual program and a French Immersion program, is over capacity.

The grounds for appeal from parents centred on the premise that:

- the suggested location is too far away from many of the communities that it will serve and
- at no time in the 2012-2013 process was the location of Eugene Coste School disclosed to parents.

“After careful consideration of multiple perspectives, I find that the potential location of Eugene Coste School was not named during the 2012-2013 parental engagement process and conclude that parental response to the proposed scenarios could have been influenced by this additional information,” the letter states.

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Davies says the CBE values the views of parents very highly and welcome parental involvement. “That is why we do engagement and have an appeal process. That appeal process is working—it revealed an issue and we are addressing it.”

For more information on the engagement process to date, see French Immersion/Spanish Bilingual Program at Westgate School.

