

Minutes of the Public Meeting re: Discussion Respecting Consideration of Closure of Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies, held in the gymnasium of Dr. Norman Bethune School, 315 – 86 Avenue SE, Calgary, Alberta on Thursday, February 9, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Board of Trustees:

Ms. J. Bowen-Eyre, Board Chair, Trustee – Wards 1 & 2
Ms. T. Hurdman, Trustee - Wards 6 & 7
Ms. J. Hehr, Trustee – Wards 8 & 9
Ms. J. Hrdlicka, Trustee, Wards 11 & 13
Ms. A. Stewart, Trustee, Wards 12 & 14

Administration:

Ms. C. Edwards, Moderator and Chair of the Public Meeting
Ms. K. Fenney, Procedures Chair
Mr. D. Stevenson, Chief Superintendent of Schools
Ms. S. Smith, Director, Area V
Ms. J. Barkway, Corporate Secretary
Ms. D. Perrier, Recording Secretary

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND MEETING OUTLINE

Copies of the Agenda entitled *Board of Trustees, Calgary Board of Education, Public Meeting, Discussion Respecting Consideration of Closure of Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies, Thursday, February 9, 2017*, which also contained information with respect to the purpose of the meeting, discussion guidelines, and written submissions and further questions were made available to those present and submitted for the record.

Ms. Edwards called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. and noted she would Chair the meeting. The format of the meeting is determined by the Closure of Schools Regulation, thus it has a high level of structure regarding the information that must be presented. She introduced the trustees and the Calgary Board of Education (CBE) Administration in attendance. She welcomed Mr. S. Radder, Assistant Principal of Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies, and CBE teachers and staff members.

Ms. Edwards stated that the meeting was being video recorded for the purpose of maintaining an accurate internal record of the proceedings. Meeting minutes will be available on the website at www.cbe.ab.ca prior to the Board of Trustees making a decision on this matter.

OPENING REMARKS

Chief Superintendent Stevenson welcomed members of the community to the meeting and thanked all individuals who have been involved with the Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies program.

Chief Stevenson commented on the advisory and support role of Administration up to and following the formal legislated closure consideration process. He noted that staff from the Planning and Transportation Office and Area V office have been engaging and working with the school community. He shared some background information and comments about the public engagements that have been held. Chief Stevenson expressed his appreciation to parents and the community for their commitment and thoughtful input in support of Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies. He pointed out that the engagement work was undertaken as part of Administration's advisory role to the Board of Trustees. On December 6, 2016 Administration put forward a recommendation to the Board of Trustees and, after deliberation, the Board decided to consider the closure of Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies.

Chief Stevenson pointed out that the Board of Trustees is considering the closure of a school, but no decision has been made to date. The Board of Trustees has sole authority and responsibility for the closure consideration process and Administration's role since December 6, 2016 has been, and will be, to provide the Board of Trustees, the school community and the general public with full and total support in providing relevant information and answers to questions.

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING AND ROLE OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Ms. Edwards called forward Board Chair Bowen-Eyre to speak to the role of the Board of Trustees in the closure consideration process. Chair Bowen-Eyre's comments were as follows:

"Good evening ladies and gentlemen.

As the Meeting Chair has indicated, I'm Joy Bowen-Eyre, Trustee for Wards 1 & 2 and Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Calgary Board of Education. On behalf of myself and my fellow Trustees, I would like to speak to you briefly about the Board of Trustees' role in the closure consideration process.

On Tuesday, December 6, 2016, at a regular meeting of the Board of Trustees, a motion was passed by the Board to give consideration to the closure of Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies.

The Board of Trustees has the sole responsibility and authority to make closure decisions and I want to make it clear tonight that no decision has been made at this time.

Based on information provided to us by Administration, a *Written Notice Regarding the Consideration of Closure of Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies* has been issued by the Board of Trustees, but that is only one part of the information that has been, and will be, reviewed and considered by Trustees. In accordance with Alberta legislation, before making any final decision on a matter such as this, the Board follows a process to secure additional community input.

That process involves providing important and relevant information to you – the *Written Notice* – and reviewing it with you. It also involves providing you and other concerned members of the public an opportunity to impact our decision by providing us with your input. Tonight, Trustees want to augment our understanding of the information presented in the *Written Notice* by hearing your observations, submissions and questions. That is

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why the Board of Trustees has organized and convened tonight's public meeting. A second meeting for this purpose will be convened on Monday, February 27th, at noon at the Education Centre, 1221 – 8th Street SW, Calgary. Following the public meetings, you will have an additional opportunity to ask further written questions and make further written submissions.

Trustees, as the final decision makers, are here tonight to listen and observe. Throughout tonight's discussion, at the follow-up meeting, and throughout the closure consideration process, Trustees will be paying very careful attention to what you have to say.

All of the information collected during the closure consideration process will be weighed very carefully by Trustees before any final decision is made.

The Board of Trustees tentatively anticipates debating the merits of this matter and making a decision regarding this program closure consideration on Tuesday, April 4, 2017.

The Board's ongoing commitment is to provide educational programs and services in suitable facilities throughout Calgary. To honour that commitment, we, as a Board, need to take into consideration student populations, the demand for programs, our available resources, and any other factors that may be significant. Although we certainly may consider financial factors, such as costs of the school or program, there are many other equally important considerations that impact our examination of any school's circumstances --- student enrolment levels, our ability to resource instructional programming, the health and safety of students, accessibility, and on a system-wide basis, serving the overall interests of public education within our jurisdiction.

Consideration of closure is a very serious matter to the Board of Trustees and we clearly appreciate that it is very significant to the students, parents and other concerned members of the community. Because of that, we want to hear your input around this very important matter. We look forward to listening carefully tonight to your comments, observations and questions.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees I thank you for attending this public meeting.”

REVIEW OF THE WRITTEN NOTICE

Ms. Edwards pointed out that copies of the Agenda and the *Written Notice Regarding Consideration of Closure of Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies* were available on the table near the entrance door of the gymnasium. She indicated that the public's observations, comments, submissions and questions form part of the material that the Board of Trustees will consider as they review this matter and ultimately reach a decision. A second meeting for this purpose will be convened on Monday, February 27, 2017 at 12 p.m. at the Education Center, 1221 – 8 Street SW, Calgary.

Ms. Edwards highlighted the contents of the *Written Notice*, aided by a PowerPoint slide show presentation. The following is a summary of the presentation.

CBE Planning Principles

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The factors considered when planning for student accommodation are outlined in the CBE Administration Regulation 1090 and noted as follows:

- minimize disruptions for students,
- provide program continuity from Kindergarten to Grade 12,
- keep cohort groups of students together,
- allow students to attend school as close to home as possible,
- provide long term sustainability,
- use space and resources effectively, and
- provide equitable access for all students to quality learning environments and choice of programs.

CBE Administration applied these planning principles in their recommendation to the Board of Trustees to consider the closure of the Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies.

Issue

A key issue for the consideration of closure of Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies of Canadian Studies is that it has seen a consistent decline in enrolment since 2008, when the program was at its peak. It will be difficult to sustain programming going forward due to low enrolment.

Attendance Area

As this is a single site program, the attendance area for the program includes the entire city of Calgary. Fifteen students are currently enrolled with five anticipated to graduate in June 2017. If the current Grade 10 and 11 students choose to return to their designated schools across the city, there will be minimal impacts within those existing schools, given the low numbers of students. The remaining students could also be accommodated at Lord Beaverbrook High School as out of attendance area students. Several students have expressed a desire to stay at Lord Beaverbrook High School until they complete Grade 12.

Enrolment and Transportation Impacts

The number of students who would need to be relocated as a result of the closure would be up to 10 students. As previously mentioned, students can be accommodated at Lord Beaverbrook High School or return to their designated schools. Across the city, high school students access schools using Calgary Transit so there are no transportation impacts.

CBE Capital Plans

A decision to close the Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies would have no implications relative to the CBE's Capital Plans. The CBE's Three-Year School Capital Plan identifies projects and priorities for new school/replacement school construction and major modernization projects, and is submitted to the province on an annual basis.

Programming and Educational Impacts of Closing for Students

The re-designation of Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies students into existing high schools offers them better access to courses and programming through increased course option selections. Parents and students have expressed a desire to remain at Lord Beaverbrook High School so they may benefit from being with the larger groups of students with whom they are familiar. Attendance at either Lord Beaverbrook or their designated high school will enable these students to access a greater variety of course offerings as well as extra-curricular opportunities. The return of these 10 students into existing high schools will have positive outcomes for their learning.

Programming and Educational Impacts of Closing for Other Schools

Students will be re-designated to their community high schools across the city. Should any or all students return to their designated high school, there would be no educational or programming impact at these schools due to the small numbers of students being re-designated.

Programming and Educational Impacts of Remaining Open

Lack of enrolment in the previous years has had an impact on how the program has been delivered. Effects of low enrolment on program delivery can be seen in how the principles of the program were not met in the years prior to the 2015-16 school year. Core components such as Military History 7 and 8 as well as Military Studies 25 were not offered. Canadian History 20 and Canadian Geography 20 have both been optional. These courses were identified as the foundation of the Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies program when it was initiated.

Due to lack of enrolment, it is anticipated that there would be no programming offered at Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies for students in Grades 7-10 if the school remained open.

Financial Implications of Remaining Open

There are currently 3.0 full time equivalent (FTE) administrative and teaching positions assigned to Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies, along with 1.7615 FTE support staff positions. Total annual cost of these positions is approximately \$425,000.

Yearly annual average building operating and maintenance costs are approximately \$150,000 - \$200,000. This includes maintenance and custodial staff, utilities and maintenance and repairs.

These costs could continue to be incurred should the program remain open.

Financial Implications of Closing

Closure of the Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies program will allow per student funding dollars to follow the students to their new school sites. The per school allotment for an assistant principal, office and library staff would be saved; this would amount to approximately \$175,000. These staff members would be re-deployed within the CBE, and therefore would remain a cost to the system.

If the program were to close, system cost savings would be \$175,000 and facility costs \$200,000.

Future Use of Facility

In the future, the Dr. Norman Bethune School building may be used as a contingency space to support modernizations of other facilities or as CBE administrative space. A small number of returning Grade 12 complex learning needs students are currently accessing the building, and use of the facility for this purpose will be assessed annually.

The future of the facility will be monitored in accordance with the process outlined in the Three-Year School Capital Plan.

QUESTIONS

The following questions were either received prior to this public consultation meeting or were anticipated by CBE Administration.

Question: *How will school council funds be distributed?*

Response: The CBE has established a guide to support school administrators in situations such as a school closure. The question of school council funds arises frequently. Any funds remaining that are attached to the school council or raised by a fundraising branch of the school council would follow the students.

Question: *Can students continue to attend Lord Beaverbrook High School?*

Response: Grade 10 and 11 students currently attending Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies have the option to return to their designated high school or remain as an out of attendance area student at Lord Beaverbrook.

Question: *Where will current Grade 12 students graduate?*

Response: Grade 12 students currently enrolled in Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies will graduate at Lord Beaverbrook High School as has occurred the past few years.

Question: *What would it take to re-open this program in the future?*

Response: For this program or any other alternative programs, application would need to be made to the Calgary Board of Education for alternative program status and meet the requirements of the process.

OPEN DISCUSSION – COMMENTS & QUESTIONS

Ms. Edwards provided a brief review of the discussion guidelines, which are noted on the back of the Agenda. She reiterated that the trustees were present to hear the public's input and that they will ultimately be the sole decision makers regarding the status of Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies. She pointed out that it would not be appropriate in the middle of the process for trustees to respond directly to questions or to engage in debate. She asked that questions be directed to her as the meeting Chair and she would provide a response or direct the question to an appropriate CBE administrator for response.

Ms. K. Galenzoski, parent of a graduate of Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies, commented on financial information regarding costs to run the school. She shared her understanding that, regardless of a closure decision the facility cost would remain; and that the adult class for complex learners will require an office staff position. She shared her thoughts about the importance of having had classes that were separate from the rest of the school. She felt it would be beneficial to students and families for alternative classes to be offered in all schools to continue the learning of Canadian history.

Ms. Smith responded that Canadian History and Military History courses are offered as complimentary course options and will continue to be offered as long as there are students who choose to enroll in the programs.

Brandon Howse, alumni of Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies, shared concern about students having to transition from a small school setting to a school with a much larger student population and class sizes, and that this may have a potential impact on their learning.

Ms. Smith noted that students are allowed a choice as to where they would like to finish their high school, in the event Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies closes. She shared that she has heard students are feeling comfortable about a potential move, as they have a cohort of students currently attending Lord Beaverbrook High School.

Mr. K. Simmons, member of the Acadia Community Association, shared comments about the uniqueness of the program offered at Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies, and the importance of a positive outcome for student success. He noted that the school building and its use in the community are of great importance, and conversations between the CBE and the community should remain open in relation to future use of the building.

Ms. L. Gingras, parent of a Grade 11 student at Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies, questioned Lord Beaverbrook High School's accommodation of out-of-attendance area students, should her child decide to continue his studies there if Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies were to close.

Ms. Smith remarked that all of the Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies students are assured of being accommodated at Lord Beaverbrook High School.

Ms. K. Galenzoski noted there are many veterans, community members and parents who strongly believe in this program of study for learning. She shared her belief that it is important for the Board to contact the founding members of Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies to invite them to share their perspective at the upcoming public meeting respecting consideration of closure of the program.

Ms. Smith requested that contact information be shared by Ms. Galenzoski so that the founding members of Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies may be provided notification of the public meeting to be held February 27, 2017.

Brandon Howse requested that some of the older alumni of Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies be contacted to invite them to share in the discussion respecting consideration of closure.

Ms. Smith asked Brandon to put the message out to former students of Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies, as she does not have access to their contact information.

CLOSING REMARKS

Ms. Edwards noted that an error was shown on the last slide of the PowerPoint presentation, in that written submissions and follow-up questions are to be received by the CBE on or before 12:00 noon on Friday, March 31, 2017; this is correctly noted on the back of the Agenda.

She thanked everybody for attending the meeting and for providing respectful comments and input. The Board of Trustees tentatively anticipates debating the merits of this matter and making a decision regarding this program closure consideration on or about Tuesday, April 4, 2017. The public's observations, comments and questions are valued and will form part of the material that trustees will consider as they review the matter and ultimately reach a decision. The Public's input at the meeting this evening has been an important contribution to the Board of Trustees decision-making process.

Ms. Edwards declared the meeting closed at 7:40 p.m.

Note to Reader:

The Minutes of the Public Meeting re: Discussion Respecting Consideration of Closure of Juno Beach Academy of Canadian Studies, held in the gymnasium, Dr. Norman Bethune School, 315 – 86 Avenue, SE, Calgary, Alberta on Thursday, February 9, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. include the major points of discussion - they are not a verbatim transcript of the meeting.