

## FEEDBACK

Consideration for the Amalgamation of St. Jerome and St. Nicholas Schools

Meeting: February 13, 2019

### ATTENDEES:

**15** parents/community members

**Trustees:** Chair Laura Thibert, Debbie Engel, Alene Mutala, Lisa Turchansky, Terry Harris, Sandra Palazzo, Carla Smiley

**Staff:** Superintendent Joan Carr, and central administrative staff (9), St. Jerome and St. Nicholas principals

### FEEDBACK

- **11 Feedback forms** received at the meeting
- **2** responses received by email

Of those who responded, some provided the following details:

| Received forms          | Parents | Community Members | Parent & Community Member | Staff |
|-------------------------|---------|-------------------|---------------------------|-------|
| February 13, 2019       | 7       | 3                 | 1                         | -     |
| February 13 to 22, 2019 | -       | -                 | -                         | -     |

Participants indicated the following grades of their child(ren):

| School         | Pre K to K | Gr 1 to 3 | Gr 4 to 6 | Gr 7-9 | Gr 10-12 | Daycare |
|----------------|------------|-----------|-----------|--------|----------|---------|
| St. Jerome     | 2          | 4         | 2         |        |          | 2       |
| St. Nicholas   |            |           |           | 3      |          |         |
| Austin O'Brien |            |           |           |        | 1        |         |

### Community Members:

- St. Clare's Parish - 1
- Beverly - 1
- Rundle - 1
- Clareview - 1

### How did you hear about this consultation meeting:

- Letter: 2
- Email: 6
- Other:
  - Text Msg - 4
  - Parent Council Mtg - 2
  - School info/Newsletter -2

## FEEDBACK FORMS RECEIVED (transcribed):

### 1. What are your thoughts about a possible amalgamation of St. Jerome Elementary and St. Nicholas Junior High schools to a new K to 9 school located on the St. Jerome School site?

- I have concerns over this concept. Two K-9 schools in same field. [Higher] percentage of kids in immediate area. [More] traffic issues, [more] congestion in the neighbourhood. Children from opposing schools/fights, etc. The construction issues experienced by Ivor Dent School, the coal mines, building sinking. Our fundraising groups would have to become one group which would reduce our ALGC casino license to one license from two. [Half of the] dollars is lost for the school communities use. I feel that the modifications made to our schools (St. Jerome & St. Nicholas) in the last 10 years have helped keep our schools in good condition and useful. I think that dollars should be building new high schools or additions to high schools and schools in new areas.
- I think it is a move in the right direction. My experience with St. Brendan's combination K-9 works very well. I like that Grade 6 would not be in a position of senior but still be children.
- Will the Soccer Academy still stay in place for the junior high - or maybe stretch down to the upper levels of elementary. Smaller classes. Want the Soccer Academy to stay in place. What about a 7-12 school instead. Northeast Edmonton currently has no school on the north side of river south of Yellowhead, our students have to bus it to the Capilano area. I love Austin O'Brien and don't want to take away their students. But it's an important idea to possibly consider. How will casinos be handled - we would go from 2 down to 1 so funds get lost (a lot will get lost) - what plan are [in] place to deal with that? (that's \$70 - 90,000 lost potentially).
- What happens to old buildings? What are the costs associated with that? Is that factored into the total cost of a rebuild? Science vs soccer - what's the main focus? Soccer seems big and prominent at St. Nicholas and science not as much. "2<sup>nd</sup> class citizens" non-soccer kids. Size of new build - where would it be located? Take away baseball fields. Coal mines - history of the area - Ivor Dent had struggles with their build and with shifting and sinking. One casino for two schools merged into one - less funds to go around for more kids. Where does that extra dollars going to come from? School fees? What's going to happen when it's K-9. Playground - we're in the middle of a re-build plan. Estimated to be completed in 3-5 years. More kids - using the playground - distance from playground. Funds for playground and equipment.
- Staying a Science Academy (St. Jerome). Uniforms staying? Small class sizes - keep. Yes to amalgamation! New school name? Would elementary now have school fees? St. Jerome currently does not have school fees.
- The science focus at St. Jerome. Keep the uniforms. Have a sports focus in the younger grades. Would there be school fees? Would there be funds for a new playground?
- Will there be two gyms? Will there be a theatre for fine arts? Will the Science Academy stay in place? Will the Soccer Academy have the resources that it needs? Coal mine? As a single site, it becomes only one charitable association instead of two. Concern - AOB High School is far away. Could we also add St. Leo and St. Bernadette? What will occur with the WIN program? ACT Centre is close. Older community. Close knit community. Tegler Centre is nearby. Church is nearby (Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary). Concern - some students are unable to pay their own academy fees. What will happen to the St. Nicholas building?
- Site built on a coal mine. When Ivor Dent was built, there was a stop of construction because of the coal mine. Closeness to Ivor Dent. Will there be a fence between the 2 schools. Supervision

with younger grades. Congestion of students in the area and school bussing. Funding a casino would be one. What about WIN program?

- Bullying. Playground needs to be bigger. St. Jerome Daycare to be built with new school. What happens to the history of the school if built new. Lunchroom. More programs (keep the old programs and advance).
- Love the idea of a beautiful brand new school in this area. The schools are really showing their age and upgrades don't seem worth it. Concerns of scheduling between the age groups. Will the younger kids have too much exposure to the older ones. Would love to see the daycare move with the schools.
- Concerns for students moving from a small more "personal" school environment to a larger busier school. Excited for the opportunity to welcome a new facility to the community! Really hoping there will be the opportunity for our childcare centre to transition to the new facility. We have been in St. Jerome 15 years and are very attached to the families and this community.

**Feedback form received by email:**

- As a student at st Nicholas I am personally against this amalgamation and here are my reasons why. Number 1; personally I have nothing against st Jerome simply because I went there for Elementary school but if st Jerome is not near its capacity how do you think bringing these two schools together will help fill up the space. Number 2; these schools possibly merging together this might cause some issues with some parents because you have a kid in kindergarten and if they are looking up to this junior high what happens if these older kids start setting bad examples what do you think the kids in kindergarten are going to start doing Number 3; I am very strongly against because in the plans you said you have to knock down st Nicholas Junior High which is basically tearing down a legacy that will live on for how ever long Alphonso Davies is playing soccer and if we knock down his training grounds where his career started it. It would really hurt me in a sense because when I am older I won't be able to go to my kids and say look that's where I went to school. Number 4; also one of the reasons I am against this is that we could possibly have one school that is against this merging of this two schools and one that supports it. But another one of my worries is that are you going to put two gyms in the new are you going to put two floors in this new school and that is all of my reason why we should not do this. Plz respond back as soon as you can thank you
- I am a resident of Rundle Hts and would be interested in being part of the advisory group around the amalgamation of St.Jerome and St. Nicholas schools. Thank you for considering me.

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**2. Tell us about what makes your community or school unique? Could these unique elements be included in a new school?**

- I think the two buildings (St. Jerome & St. Nicholas) are close enough together to share staff as we have (ex: Music teacher) if needed. The Science Academy, smaller size makes it a close knit community. The staff know the students well. It is more of a family atmosphere (similar to churches, the sense of wellbeing and community can be lost with size [more]. Uniforms.

- I only visit the school at St. Jerome's and the spirit is amazing. I believe this would still exist when the schools are combined. I can see there could be more programs in a larger school. As at St. Brendan's, a chapel is very helpful.
- Soccer academy; Science Academy; In School Daycare.
- Uniform - campus wear. Don't think junior high would want uniform but it's great for area and elementary. Small class sizes - teachers and kids all know each other. Really tight knit community. In-School Daycare - security of being in the building. Great programs with the kids. Priced well for the community and working families. School fees - parent council and school try to minimize fees and out of pocket funds - no school fees, min. field trip costs, etc.
- Science Academy (St. Jerome), uniforms? Small classes, 100 Voices, close community, love that because of being a small school, everyone knows each other. Robotics Club, Lego League, Science Olympics - all started at St. Jerome - keep? please! In-School Daycare.
- The science focus is wonderful. Add more sports focus to younger grades. Uniforms! We love the uniforms. Close knit community. Fine Arts Program! Introduce theatre and music to elementary age students. Lego League. In-School Daycare! It is very needed in this community.
- Academics, science, fine arts, soccer, proximity to river valley. The new school will continue to be close to these amenities. St. Nicholas bridges with St. Bernadette and St. Teresa of Calcutta (soccer). Want this to continue.
- Science, Soccer, Fine Art academies. Proximity to river valley, ACT Centre. Family. Older community. Tegler Centre. Bless Virgin March Church - bridging. Bridging with St. Bernadette and St. Teresa of Calcutta with Soccer Academy.
- The Science Academy of the school. Gardening. Animals. Library. The daycare inside the school. The size of the classrooms are acceptable and not too extreme. Too much kids in one class could affect learning. Yes, the science aspect of St. Jerome would be excellent to keep that going. Daycare is the second important element to keep (make bigger).
- Everyone in this community seems so kind and always looking out for one another. Lots of parental involvement in school functions. Would love to see the sense of community move along with the new school. Daycare is convenient for parents/students - love to see it move as well. Small classroom sizes (or split better).
- This school (St. Jerome) is very special, a lot like a family. Every staff member knows every child and it would be wonderful to preserve this intimate feel. Families are often pleased with the attention they receive in a small school environment. Stage space, with great lighting and a curtain!

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**3. How would you like to be engaged and communicated with throughout this process? (meetings, surveys, online, etc.)**

- Meetings preferred.
- I get the information on e-mail.
- Meetings, online, surveys.
- Meetings - child care? Surveys.
- Meetings (babysitting), online.

- Meetings - if childcare can be offered that would be wonderful.
- Don't want a survey, prefer in-person meetings. School Council meetings are good. Contact from District should come before the media.
- In person meeting, email. Not to hear through the media. Hear from the principal and then give input.
- Surveys (only allows so much to be said) and meetings (where meetings can have discussions with others and get input).
- Meetings at the schools with community members/staff/parents. Lots of online updates.
- I like meetings - the share of information is open and informative. Email updates are nice, just to keep people informed and feeling like their school community is a priority.

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POST-IT Notes:

- Engagement events as events on Facebook. Not necessarily discussions, but the events.
- 10 mill St. Jerome, 15 mill St. Nicolas. Building new there are still going to be maintenance. Why take away the potential St. Jerome has to build new when you can fix up what is existing. Make with what we have and keep the history of the school.
- Uniforms?
- If an addition is added onto St. Jerome, would there be enough room for a park/field? A lunchroom. If St. Jerome is just updated, would there be enough money left from maintenance for more/new programs?
- Keeping a Science Academy is super important.
- Coal mine. Closest to the Ivor Dent School. Will there be fence between the 2 schools.
- Possible 7-12 school instead of a K-9. Our area has to bus kids to Capilano to go to high school.
- WIN junior program needs to stay in community.
- How will St. Jerome students be affected during construction?
- Let's go K-12!
- Bully. Daycare to go with St. Jerome. Bigger park if new school built. Unique design of new school - Unicorn school. Rainbows, clouds, real unicorns. Fine Arts class.
- The potential and history of the schools should be kept and carried forward with years to come.