

June 6, 2019

New Business

Andrew School: Senior high program

The Board of Trustees approved the closure of grades 10 to 12 at Andrew School, effective June 30, 2019. Starting in the 2019-20 school year, Andrew School's grade configuration will change to a kindergarten to Grade 9 program and will no longer offer a senior high program. As a result, the Board also approved a new attendance area for students in grades 10 through 12 who live within the current Andrew School attendance area. As of September 2019, these students are designated to either Lamont High or Vegreville Composite High, depending on where they reside (see "[Senior High Rural Attendance Boundaries](#)"). In addition, the Board approved waiving transportation fees for affected students in grades 10 to 12 who choose to attend Lamont High or Vegreville Composite High as a non-designated school in the upcoming year—a decision the Board will review annually.

Before making a final decision, the Board spent a considerable amount of time reviewing and analyzing data submitted by EIPS administration and feedback collected from the community. In fall 2018, the Board began reviewing the senior high program at Andrew School. Multiple public consultations were conducted with students, staff, families, officials and community members—three working-group meetings, a student forum, and four public meetings. The question at hand: how to address the issue of equity of education in the senior high grades at Andrew School?

As background, 28 students were enrolled in the senior high grades at Andrew School in the 2017-18 school year. For the 2018-19 school year, that number dropped to 19—a figure that's projected to stay roughly the same for the immediate future. With such low numbers, students don't have the same programming available as other senior highs do within the Division.

Public consultations started in October 2018. EIPS conducted two working-group meetings with Andrew School staff, and officials from Lamont County and Andrew. Both were informal conversations that shaped a student forum and a public meeting. Topics presented at all four sessions were similar in nature—background information, Andrew School successes and challenges, and important considerations.

EIPS then developed three preliminary options for senior high students living in the Andrew School attendance area. All three options were presented to the community at a public meeting on Feb. 20, 2019. To complement the public meeting the Division conducted a survey to gather even more input from the community. Following that, trustees participated in a third working-group session, held on March 19, with Andrew School students, grades 7-11. And, on April 11, EIPS hosted a third public meeting to update the community on what was heard throughout the

consultations and discuss next steps. Overall, the data and feedback confirmed the low enrolment at the senior high level limits the access students have to enhanced educational opportunities—in comparison to other schools within the Division (see "[Andrew School Public Consultations: Report Summary](#)").

As such, at the April 18 Board meeting, trustees approved the motion "to consider the closure of grades 10 to 12 at Andrew School, effective June 30, 2019." Following the motion, the Board also requested administration bring forward a [comprehensive report](#) regarding the possible closure. According to the School Act, when a grade reconfiguration is considered and involves three or more grades, it's technically termed a school closure, even though the school isn't being considered for closure. For this reason, there were certain guidelines EIPS had to follow, outlined in the province's School Act "Closure of Schools Regulation: Alberta Regulation 238/1997," to ensure a fair and transparent process and that the decision made is in the best interest of both students and the Division.

One of those included another public meeting, which EIPS held on May 9 (see, "[Public Meeting No. 4 Transcript](#)"). The purpose: To review the main themes that came out of the public consultations, explain next steps, listen to comments and answer questions attendees had. The meeting also included multiple topic-specific stations relating to the proposed grade reconfiguration.

Taking all the data and feedback into consideration—including enrolment projections; attendance boundaries; programming availability, at Andrew School and within the Division; transportation needs for students; budget funding allocations and fiduciary responsibilities; and the Division's long-term capital plans—the Board decided the best way to address the issue of equity of education for students living within the Andrew School attendance area is to close the school's senior high program. Redirecting students to Lamont High and Vegreville Composite High allows senior high students to have better access to programming options, program-specialty teachers, extracurricular opportunities, team sports and a more well-rounded senior high experience.

Between now and September 2019, EIPS will work closely with students and their families to ensure the transition to their new school is handled smoothly and with sensitivity. It will also put a school transition plan in place, which will include consultations with students and families; school council groups from Andrew School, Lamont High and Vegreville Composite High; school administration; staff; and EIPS senior administration. Additionally, EIPS will ensure facility requirements, support services and student transportation needs are dealt with in advance of the first day of classes on Sept. 3, 2019.

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Trustee Reports Roundtable

Trustee Skip Gordon shared information about Ardrossan Junior Senior High's graduation ceremony on June 27. He's looking forward to attending and bringing greetings.