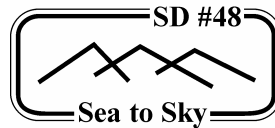


Enrollment at Elementary Schools in Squamish Discussion Notes



PUBLIC MEETING

Oct. 18, 2010
Howe Sound Secondary

AUDIENCE: indicates question or comments from audience

- Indicates response from Board Trustee, Superintendent or Secretary-Treasurer

Mamquam Elementary School Discussion Notes

AUDIENCE: Are the numbers of French Immersion students predicted for Squamish Elementary reliable and accurate?

- The numbers are a prediction that includes French Immersion students attending from the home school.

AUDIENCE: A survey was done years ago and it indicated that numbers of students in the French Immersion program would drop if moved from Mamquam Elementary, are you aware of this survey?

- No I am not aware, but it is a possibility.

AUDIENCE: Why can the French Immersion program not be moved to Garibaldi Highlands Elementary?

- Squamish Elementary is in a central location, while Garibaldi Highlands Elementary is not centrally located.

AUDIENCE: Is splitting the French Immersion program still a consideration?

- The French Immersion program requires a unique set of learning resources and staff; therefore splitting French Immersion between two schools would weaken the program.

AUDIENCE: What if French Immersion does not survive the move from Mamquam Elementary? We need a solid base of two grade 5 classes in French Immersion. What if we lose the program because we do not have enough students move to Squamish Elementary school?

- We have to do something as the demographics indicate that we will have a problem with over-crowding at Mamquam Elementary.

AUDIENCE: 50% of Mamquam Elementary students end up in French Immersion. Why would this not be the case if it moved to another school?

- It might be reasonable to predict a drop in enrollment in the first year, but we believe the program will survive the move. It is an important program for our students that we want sustained.

AUDIENCE: What about moving grade 7 from Mamquam Elementary or all elementary schools in Squamish to Don Ross Secondary, is this option being considered?

- Not at this time. The suggestion was discussed when considering the structure of the transition program at Don Ross Secondary, but was viewed as not viable because this would take grade 7's out of the elementary school.

AUDIENCE: If given a choice, the grade 7's would "peel off" to secondary school instead of staying at their elementary school.

- Don Ross Secondary would not have the space for all of the grade seven students in Squamish.

AUDIENCE: Are these projected numbers for schools accurate? Apparently the population is actually 3000 higher than reported, so maybe these numbers are not accurate.

- Baragar Demographics is a company that specializes in this work and has historically been very accurate in predicting school populations for our district. These are good numbers or otherwise we wouldn't use them.

AUDIENCE: Was the Board represented in a Squamish trip to China led by the mayor of Squamish? Have international students from China been considered?

- No Board member participated. The international students are at secondary level, not at the elementary.

AUDIENCE: Presentation from the Mamquam Elementary PAC.

- See attached document "*Mamquam Elementary PAC Letter to the Board*".

AUDIENCE: Why bother reviewing boundaries if you have no intention of enforcing them?

- Boundaries are a long term discussion to assist families in determining their neighborhood schools.

AUDIENCE: If you were to split the program between two schools, wouldn't you get more students enrolled in French Immersion in the district?

- The staff expressed their concern as did the Mamquam Elementary PAC presentation, with the program being split. Resources and staff would be negatively impacted.

AUDIENCE: I'm haven't yet heard a solid reason for running two separate programs, staff cohesion is not as important as my family cohesion.

AUDIENCE: Some parents feel that the English program is not as strong as the French program and prefer the French option.

AUDIENCE: Can other options still be considered by the Board?

- Yes, we look forward to your letters. I am quite surprised that Mamquam Elementary PAC is interested in moving the program in its entirety instead of a staggered transition of moving one grade a year from grades 5 to 7.

AUDIENCE: Changing the Boundary and enforcing it, is this still an option?

- Enforcing the boundaries is forcing parents where we don't think it is necessary, because we support families having choices about where to send their children to school. We want this change to work, so boundary review is still underway. This is to assist families in knowing where their neighborhood school is located.

AUDIENCE: Many of the students will still enroll in French Immersion regardless of whether it will be at Mamquam Elementary or at Squamish Elementary

AUDIENCE: Is the Board still open to other options?

- Our minds are not made up and we are open to suggestions. The Board faces a complex dilemma; for instance, we have heard input stating that the program may decline if split, as well we heard that it may actually grow if established in two schools. The solution that we come up with will not satisfy 100% of the population but it will be the best one we can identify, given the complexities and competing interests at stake.

AUDIENCE: The English program is a very good program and has lots to offer as well, I feel very strongly about both programs.

Stawamus Elementary School Discussion Notes

AUDIENCE: Why did option number 6 get taken off?

- Boundary changes were taken off the table, as they are another issue aside from the overcrowding at Mamquam Elementary.

AUDIENCE: Why can't the Furry Creek/Britannia Beach bus stop at Stawamus Elementary instead of driving by the school and dropping them off at Squamish Elementary?

- We can't force the parents to send students to Stawamus Elementary instead of Squamish Elementary.

AUDIENCE: You are forcing these families to attend Squamish Elementary and taking away their choice of sending their children to Stawamus Elementary.

AUDIENCE: The school district made the decision to send these kids to Squamish because the district did not want to negotiate an alternate drop-off spot for the bus with the fire department.

- If the Stawamus Elementary boundary were to include Furry Creek, the catchment would increase the population by 35 students; 12 already attend Stawamus Elementary, 19 attend Squamish Elementary, 3 go to Garibaldi Highlands Elementary, and 1 attends French Immersion at Mamquam Elementary. Only 19 students would likely be moved to Stawamus, if bussing changes would be take place.

AUDIENCE: The Stawamus PAC and staff have been concerned about this and have sent out surveys to 60 families. A majority of them were returned with lots of ideas.

We discussed other options including the bussing students from Furry Creek, Britannia Beach, Klahanie, and the reserve. We are glad to hear that you are still considering this option.

We need better signage for our school and for the foot path at the base of Park Drive.

We would like some of the trees cleared off the path, so that it is more visible and safer. Parents are willing to volunteer along with staff to make Stawamus Elementary more attractive and feasible.

We feel that the technology school of choice is a viable option and we are looking at incorporating more technology into the classrooms including SMART BOARDS. Collaborative teaching is already taking place at our school. We would like a commitment from the Board to support the School of Choice – Technology for the full first cycle of students. Stawamus Elementary is an amazing school and we are well worth promoting!

AUDIENCE: We had two new students and their dad try to walk to school, but they walked right past the pathway to the Stawamus Elementary because it is so overgrown.

AUDIENCE: A program of choice excludes families who can't afford transportation. Could busses take students to their school of choice as we have busses running throughout our district?

- The busses are running at capacity.
- Can an elementary student ride a school bus if there is space and the answer is yes.

AUDIENCE: A program of choice needs the support from the Board to sustain itself? I already pull a lot of funding from my personal dollars for my classroom

- The concern has been raised by the Board and will be considered.

AUDIENCE: The concern of parents who choose a school of choice is that the program is sustainable and viable in the long run.

- The board is aware of this and do not want to be revisiting this as a problem in the future.

AUDIENCE: Can the Board afford to consider a school of choice?

- The funding has not been a significant barrier for success of these programs of choice in other districts.