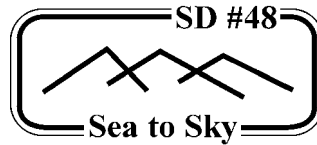


A - Audience comment/questions

P - Presenter response

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COMMUNITY MEETING @ DRSS

Monday, November 30, 2009

6:30 pm

Introductions: Rick Price,
Vice Chair,
Board of Education

Presenter: Rick Erickson
Superintendent of Schools

Nancy Edwards
Secretary Treasurer

Recorder: Magy Odorfer
District Principal

A: Sports programs, how will they be affected?

A: Combine grade 8/9s into a single team that Whistler and Pemberton would not want to play against such a larger school team. Junior and senior teams that include grade 9/10s brings a complication. DRS Mountain Bike Team would no longer have grade 10s, which may be a concern.

A: French Immersion impact?

P: French immersion students can have more elective choices in a larger school situation. Whether a two year or three year program is a consideration. Adding more students who are not in French Immersion may/may not impact school culture. French immersion grade 10 would move to wherever the grade is placed.

A: Short and long lockers, who will get what size lockers?

P: If the Board decides to go ahead with this then this will be considered by the school.

A: Grade 7, 8, 9 is this a consideration?

P: A number of districts have 6 to 8 or 7 to 9 configurations. Moving the 7s into a middle school model would mean moving grade 7s out of already small elementary schools.

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A: Grade 7 would benefit from a secondary school program. Some parents can't afford to move closer to the DRS as older siblings look after younger kids. This looks good on paper but with no grade 10 role model, it would be scary program to teach. Staff needs to be fairly treated especially those teaching specialty programs: French Immersion, Band, Outdoor leadership. No more choice for students who need to be separated from peer group

Not against a shift happening as long as it is the right shift.

P: the Board is looking in balance at the consequences of such a possible decision.

A: The biggest issues with DRS teachers are the shift of grade 10 away from DRS and having to design a grade 8/9 program.

A: School of 400 students with 50% of student transitioning every year, what does the school need to do to make the students feel like they belong and have a sense of community? Students with Special Needs transitioning in program for only 2 years. Large classes at grade 8/9 level are a concern. Every student will be transitioning to two different secondary schools.

P: All students would start grade 8 together and would transition at grade 10. The DRS students already spend only 2 years together at HSS in grade 10 and 11.

A: What is the timeline?

P: Dec. 9 Board meeting, trustees will consider, reject, accept and or decide what to do next as a preliminary action. The timeline is wide open.

A: The small grade 8 numbers at HSS has affected the number of electives offered at HSS from 4 to 3 this year, no band offered.

A: What about shifting boundaries between DRS and HSS, so that more grade 8s go into HSS that would normally go into DRS?

P: This would mean shifting the boundary north to include a larger number of 8s entering grade 8 at HSS.

A: What are the numbers of secondary students at PSS and WSS?

P: At one time, all Whistler and Pemberton students went to school at PSS. WSS was going to be a junior secondary. Keep PSS as the senior to keep the number of electives. The Whistler parents felt it more important to keep the students in their home community; therefore, Whistler Secondary became a 8 to 12 school. Whistler secondary cannot offer band because of its small size. Pemberton is declining in student population so the viability of programs is a concern. Both schools exist as small secondary schools. Some senior courses are offered on alternating years because of the small populations.

A: I need someone to convince me that this change would make DRS a better place than it already is. I don't see how turning DRS into a revolving door with only 2 grades with no grade 10s providing leadership. And it appears that moving grade 7s is not likely. So why? It would affect the spirit and culture here at DRS in a negative way.

P: Grade 7s is not been discussed at this time.

A - Audience comment/questions

P - Presenter response

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A: What advantage would this reconfiguration have on DRS?

P: Transition to grade 8 for all Squamish students to the same school would increase the number of gr 8 teachers needed at DRSS . You can have a teaching pod of 2 teachers science/math and humanities (socials and English) with 50 students. So a school would have 3 mini schools / pods. Students have the same teachers for both grade 8 and 9 building strong relationships. More social emotional events can take place and integrated programs can be developed. Pods within the school can benefit the students. Flexibility in the schedule with more electives offered. Community based approach from grade 8 to 12, breaks down the North South perceptions in Squamish area.

A: Will student feedback be asked for?

P: The Board will consider this at their Dec. 9th meeting.

A: I don't really think grade 10s are really good role models. I think without grade 10s there would be less drugs and alcohol. So moving the 10s out wouldn't be as great an issue.

A: My grade 8 son will be in a school with grade 12 students at HSS. So the other option is to bus my son up to DRS to learn with other grade 8s.

A: I like the idea of the students moving together as a grade 8 / 9 group and then as a grade 10 to 12 group. My concern is the time on the bus for the Valleycliffe that could be up to one hour a day.

P: The bus run time would be 15 minutes from Valleycliffe to DRS.

A: French Immersion 10 would be the only Fr Immersion class at HSS, so would this increase the French immersion classes?

P: There is a senior French immersion program at HSS.

A: Outdoor Leadership, if grade 9 was moved out next yr in Gr 10 to HSS, then they would miss Outdoor Leadership and being the leaders of the school. So please consider that they finish out their grade 10 year at DRS.

A: What are the advantages for our DRS grade 10 students?

P: Honors/ Advance Placement options can be considered if you have increased student numbers at HSS.

A: Caution to move slowly towards this change.

P: Board has not 'backstop' date to make this decision. They will consider what comes next, if anything, on Dec 9. They may want more info ??

P: Prep courses for science 10 and math 10 can be offered if increased numbers at HSS.

A: There is an emphasis on course programs and options that makes me nervous. We will be eroding a strong sense of community at the expense of being able to offer equal opportunity to all Squamish area students.

A - Audience comment/questions

P - Presenter response

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A: I had the opportunity to teach grade 8-10 here at DRS and HSS I taught in grade 11/12. Now I teach here. Lots grade 10s left to HSS and I had a great year here at DRS. The option of being able to give back in grade 10 as a leader here is important. Grade 8s don't necessarily get it, but the grade 10s and Outdoor Leadership make them leaders. HSS has their own unique program for grade 8 to 12s with their musical.

A: Grade 9s are psyched up and we need time to adapt to this change, deciding in such rushed time makes me nervous. There isn't a studied and researched plan. Do we include grade 7? We need more time to study more about these options.

A: What is DRS gaining? What are we losing? DRS would lose Outdoor Leadership, grade 8 and 9 do not have the maturity for the program. French immersion trip needs 2 years to prepare. French immersion culture would decrease because the French immersion 10s would leave. I see a lot of losses not gains for DRS. I wish that HSS had more options for their students without sacrificing the students at DRS.

A: There is a real sense of place here that could be jeopardized by moving students through in 2 years.

A: Being able to see the students mature from grade 8 to 10, losing the grade 10s would diminish the teaching experience here. Teaching involves the social interactions as well as the subjects and it is cool to see them blossom.

A: I had a daughter who went through DRS and is now at HSS, I asked her about this, and she wasn't sure about this. The DRS experience is very special. What about the other south students in grade 8/9 that don't get the DRS experience. The 55 grade 8s are in with big hairy grade 12s. Grade 10 is a tough time with the pressure of provincial exams. A disconnect begins. If you come in with the same group in grade 8 through 9 and transition with the same group of people that you know into grade 10, it is much easier. She had a great experience in DRS. With this reconfiguration, there would be a shared community feel, not north vs. south. Why not allow every child the great DRS program?

A: We can not guarantee that we can provide the program because of teachers and ministry funding. Grade 8/9 students are at their worst times in their lives being hormonally imbalanced and need grade 10s to provide leadership.

A: Think of all the grade 8/9s activities and programs that can support the students needs.

A: Would staff have an option of moving over to HSS with the grade 10s?

P: The teachers can talk about different ways of handling this with their union.

A: The clashing will be here in grade 8 as south vs. north instead of in grade 11 at HSS. It will shift to a more challenging age.

A: What will you do with suspended students?

P: Prior to suspensions, other strategies are pursued. Alternatives such as restorative justice are being used now.

A: A very diverse situation with a unique character. The reconfiguration gets rid of some of the diversity and is creating this fear of change.