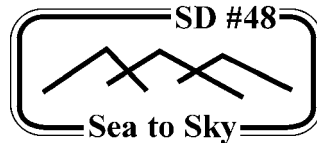


A - Audience comment/questions

P - Presenter response

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## DRSS 'Optional' Staff Meeting

Monday, November 30, 2009

3:00 pm

Presenter: Rick Erickson  
Superintendent of Schools

Scott Stanley  
Director of Human Resources

Recorder: Magy Odorfer  
District Principal

A: Would the board consider not doing this? Extra bus, moving teachers and resources ... Why are we doing this?

P: The board has not made a decision yet. The Bd wants to look at current secondary structure and in April look at our elementary structures with respect to catchment boundaries and dist programs. My experience shows that no structure is perfect; one of the strengths of the proposal is that the all students in a grade can be combined so that all students in Squamish move together, gr 8 through 12.

A: Is there a concern for teachers who have mastered their area or are out of a job?

P: Take a look at total number of students and one school goes down by 40 students and the other would increase by about the same amount- so probably there is the same number of jobs.

A: This is a huge change, grade 10 teachers who have specialized in this grade level. You have to look at the staffing situation if you move the students.

P: There is a suspicion of an agenda but there isn't one, Bd is looking at the option and considering info and input. So staffing not looked at now, but certainly if the Bd proceeded, then it would be considered.

A: So we are not just considering changes for the sake of change?

P: No, the Bd is trying to put students together to provide the best education program.

A: Is it because there are only 55 grade 8 students in HSS ? Is this the driving force?

P: As well, this would bring the grade 10s students together earlier. Alleviate the DRS students feeling left out when they move to HSS in grade 11.

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A: Valleycliffe students at the grade 8 level will experience this earlier, harsher than if in grade 10. Majority don't like the change, having only two grades during the worst years in education in one school alone without another grade to dilute the hormones, the grade 10s would moderate this effect. How about grade 8, 9, 10 here? That way we can have all of our programs intact here at DRS, like French Immersion.

P: French immersion numbers would not change because VCE students wouldn't have the elementary exposure in grades 5, 6, 7.

A: Change needs to happen for a valid reason. One concern is to lose grade 10s and we have developed excellent programs for grade 10s and these programs will not be as good for grades 8/9 because they are only here for two years. Special Ed students and French immersion would only be serviced here for two years and would experience earlier transitions into grade 10.

A: The grade 10s are a good influence on grade 8/9s that have the higher disciplinary concern.

A: Special Ed two year program as opposed to a three year. This would have a big impact on school culture and the special Ed program, developing relationships with students, parents, and families. Leaves less time to build connections. Students will be turned over very quickly and not enough time to prepare them for life skills course in a new school.

A: A school with younger students takes more energy. A secondary school can move around resources to accommodate the younger students. By losing the grade 10s, we lose the resources that can be directed to the younger grades. We feel that we are getting somewhere with the 10s and we would be losing something from our hearts.

A: Will there be make-up courses for students transitioning for students who need to catch-up?

P: Yes, there will be transition courses for students who need to catch up in grade 10 in HSS.

A: Alternate program - how would that work, would there be a separate junior program?

P: DRS has a location advantage being away from downtown.

A: What can be done to help integrate the students in grade 11 at HSS instead of getting rid of the grade 10 from DRS? What are the numbers of Grade 8s at PSS and WSS and how do they manage to run successful programs?

P: Historically there was only one secondary PSS and then a school in each community came to be. But really the numbers combined would be enough for a single small secondary. Both schools have the challenge of offering programs with enough kids. Some of the courses are offered every other year because of the small numbers.

A: More important than elective choices is what is the whole package like at the school of choice.

A: Students don't have a choice for another choice if they don't get along with their peer group.

P: There are program advantages and currently at grade 11 and 12 there is no choice – HSS has the program.

A: Staffing? Scott is this your responsibility?

P: Yes.

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A: Prep time allocation affected by grade 7 being added to school?

P: No one would lose prep time entitlement.

A: Temporary teachers are nervous and want to find out sooner rather than later, so that they can apply out. So please consider this.

A: Half of my appointment would disappear. So would they move me or force me to teach something that I haven't been teaching as I have a continuing contract.

P: Teacher assignment process would involve principal working with teacher to match expertise with courses.

A: I get messed up because my job will no longer be here at the school I want to be at. Think about consultation between teachers and where do they best fit and the fairness to us as teachers so that we aren't pigeon-holed into what's left.

P: The collective agreement handles these things; the other option is what can the local and Bd agree on. Perhaps through a letter of understanding for a fixed term. We need to remember individual teachers and additional grade 8/9 teaching blocks.

A: If grade 7 were here, the middle school would have harmonized their contracts to the secondary collective agreement.

A: Continuing contracts are tied to a school, so what happens?

P: What are the necessary positions at the school that need to be filled and then come up with the best assignment?

A: I have a continuing contract at this school but don't want to give it up to move to HSS.

P: Those are considerations and decisions that still need to be addressed.

A: We want to make sure that there is a sit-down conversation that occurs so the DRS teachers have equal opportunity to teach grade 10 teachers and don't pick-up the pieces after the HSS have selected the grade 10 courses. So we know what our options are and the HSS staff knows what the process is, so that we are not pitted against each other. Once this split occurs there will be very little bridging of expertise between HSS and DRS. We want to make sure of this in the long term and that DRS teachers are accepted and not forced into options. An acceptance of DRS teachers rather than coming from - we have to take you. Everyone needs to feel that they are respected between both staffs.

A: Continuing is attached to the district instead of the school in most school districts, opening the opportunity for continuing so that you go where the district needs are.

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A: I have 3 points:

1. This school is designed as a grade 8 to 12 school based on 600 students with specialty areas. You would have to change classrooms to avoid triple booking classrooms to convert specialty rooms into regular classrooms to accommodate grade 7s.
2. Concern for grade 8 / 9s, grade 10s run the intramurals here, so we would have to bring grade 10s here to help organize, grade 9s can't do it. Athletics would be affected teams would have to play in Vancouver and there is likely not an opportunity to go during the week. We would not win provincially if we lose our grade 10s. We are known for mountain biking provincially and this would end here at DRS and likely even at HSS.
3. What is to be gained is difficult, bussed in Valleycliffe kids would likely not stay for sport teams if practices start at 4:30. The value of why you want to offer the grade 8/9 program may be diminished by moving all grade 8/9s here, I just don't see it.

A: We want to offer what we already have, but we won't be able to do this if we lose grade 10, We will lose the French immersion feel. Is there a plan for a grade 7-10 school?

P: There is no plan. Population is dwindling in the south and growing in the north. 1100 total secondary students in area, typical standard secondary school for the greater Squamish community. But the Ed \$ are going to early learning and no \$s available for building a consolidated secondary school in Squamish (Gr 8-12). MoE may let us sell something to build something else. We have youngest demographics in province, it is a vibrant place. What can we do to make things better, to the advantage of kids, with what we have now ?

Refer to Handout "Benefits for Students in a Transition Program" are here at DRS

A: Are Outdoor programs at junior and senior being considered at both schools?

P: Outdoor leadership programs are being talked about as a senior course at HSS and a junior course at DRS, two separate programs.

A: Please add list of disadvantage to hand-out.

P: Benefits are those that people may not be too familiar with.

A: Bridge for grade 10 teachers from DRS to HSS is the same for grade 10 students who become role models who take the exams seriously is seen by the grade 8s who then realize that by grade 10 they have to be serious, we can't do what the grade 10s can do.

Why fix something if it ain't broke. If these changes are not going to benefit DRS and will benefit only about 120 kids. The shop is real when a grade 10 talks about safety. It seems like a convenience for HSS not for DRS.

A: Teacher teams is the first I have heard of this. We have yet to talk about these at the school level. Starting fresh with staffing at both schools. So if nothing is posted I can't teach senior courses in this district.

P: Why not one campus with two schools? That discussion would take place within the union so that continuing contracts that are school based is not a disadvantage for some teachers.

A: No transfer language, so changes to support transfers between HSS and DRS.

A: Grade 9 Outdoor Leadership program is not possible. As teachers, we donate half of our time to run the program. It could lose a lot at this level, a whole thinking process needs to take place to redesign it. It is not as appealing to staff who donate their time to run program. It would significantly decrease the enjoyment of teaching program

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A: HSS would have the depth of young adults and losing the grade 10 would definitely make this school less appealing. Grade 8 and 9 take more work and I enjoy the grade 10s. HSS would enjoy mature students at grade 10. It feels good to be part of that maturation process. The school would be losing it and HSS would be gaining it. I really appreciate the vibe here and community here and don't really want to go anywhere else.

A: OL (Outdoor Leadership) takes a lot of commitment from individuals with vision; it is naive to think that HSS can run an equivalent program. The strength of this school is the vision of individuals have and are supported by the school community. The mass of the grade 8/9s without the grade 10s would make some of these programs impossible to offer as a staff collectively. This is what the parents see. It (this discussion) needs to be enough in your face so that we could have a say, this is causing so much stress, taking away from our teaching.

A: We are attached to our grade 10s, they are the positive influence.

P: The trouble that can take place in grade 8-12 doesn't necessarily occur in compressed grades.

A: Team building opportunities can continue to take place without a district change.

P: A grade 8 /9 student would have a better opportunity for such strategies in a transition program. A tremendous program is taking place here and grade 8/9 opportunities here would be an enhancement for HSS grade 8/9. Communication is enhanced at a middle junior high than at a 8 to 12.

A: Closer ties to families is a lot of work. Try to keep class sizes at grade 8/9 smaller than at the grade 10 level. How can we accommodate that if we have grade 8/9s?

P: DRS was given additional funding for a TA in consideration of the age group.

A: Would additional funding be talked about if it did go?

P: Yes