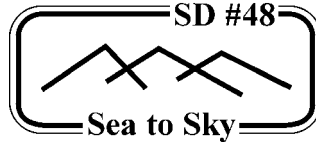


A - Audience comment/questions

P - Presenter response

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Howe Sound Secondary School - 'Optional' Staff Meeting

Tuesday, December 1, 2009

3:15 pm

Presenter: Rick Erickson
Superintendent of Schools

Scott Stanley
Director of Human Resources

Recorder: Magy Odorfer
District Principal

A: A grade 7-9 configuration would relieve some of the pressure from Mamquam Elem.

P: Another thought that was shared last night that was moving the catchment boundary north so more grade 8s come to HSS.

A: What does the DRS staff feel about this?

P: There was a collective agreement item that has continuing contracts located at schools in this district. The only way you can move to another school is through posting and filling. So is there a way that we could work with the SSTA to provide assignment options for DRS?

A: What about the positive influence from older students on younger students such as senior drama students working with drama 9 students?

P: Would it help junior students to have a more remote location? Positive mentoring by Gr 12s is given up but there is something gained.

A: Seniors get a benefit from the juniors.

A: Benefits to 10 to 12s, where would the hand-out be for that? (In reference to the "Benefits for grade 8/9 Students" handout)

P: The grade 11 and 12s aren't impacted at all, the 10s come in from DRS, and there is a turf concern set up already.

A - Audience comment/questions

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A: Absence of grade 8 and 9s would have a significant effect on the kids who are on the border and peer tutors can really have an positive impact on these younger students. Older students benefit in that they feel like they have something to give. The greetings the camaraderie, there are far more positive influences then negative, the positive support amongst age groups is really present here. The family of schools supports the concept of a family network of support. There are many benefits that come from that cross age group interaction. Putting grade 8 /9s in one school would completely change the atmosphere in HSS, a significant impact.

A: The biggest loss is grade 10 from DRS; they are like an anchor an essential part of DRS.

P: Grade 7 students have lots of leadership opportunity, then in grade 8 they are at the bottom and may not have another opportunity for leadership again, for some years. There are 55 grade 8 students at HSS and put them together with the DRSS Gr 8s, increases the option selection - like offering band 8.

A: Is there research on schools that have done this?

P: Middle school research. Coquitlam runs middle schools, and other districts add or drop grades like 7 to 9 or 6 to 9. Quesnel has moved to grade 8/9 and a grade 10 to 12 school. Grade 10 level can then provide prep courses for challenging grade 10 courses like math, science, and english, with more students. We can focus on the grad level providing support for grad students.

P: There used to be a many junior high and senior high schools, then more combinations started to show up like middle schools.

A: Cost of bussing?

P: The cost of a bus covered by the Ministry and the district pays for the driver and fuel at \$30,000 from the operational budget. To what degree is it efficient to cover resources texts for two sets of grade 8/9 schools? Would there be more flexibility for scheduling if you combine the grades at 8/9, allowing for options like jazz choir 8/9. In the grade 10, if you added the 92 students there would be more opportunity to offer prep courses.

A: Could we not hire a band teacher for one additional block at less then or same cost of the extra bus driver?

P: On the money side, we could spend less money on text books, and other resources. What can we do that would be an advantage to our students, its not an additional cost in the \$100s of thousands?

P: The secondary population is dropping over the next couple of years and elementary is increasing until 2017 when we see an increase in secondary population.

A: Alternative students, where are they included in these numbers?

P: They are included in the HSS projections. We are looking for sustainability like the alternate program will be here over a number of years so they are not disrupted.

A: I have another concern, if our enrollment stays the same and are adding more grade 10s, how can we support grade 10s with part time counselors? So if there is no increase in counselling time with more need with the additional grade 10s, how can this be of benefit for the grade 10s?

A: Without grade 8/9s there will be fewer school-based team meetings.

A: the numbers will go down, and then there will be less counselling time.

A: The story that band 8 program is not being offered because of low numbers needs to be checked out, because it's because the band teacher is away on maternity leave.

A - Audience comment/questions

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A: The perception is that the grade 8 and 9s aren't getting the electives, so regardless of whatever decision we will support our grade 8/9s the best we can.

P: Pemberton and Whistler also have small schools; Whistler has about 360 and Pemberton about 320, so they need to offer senior courses on alternating years. The advantage of small secondary versus the comprehensive large secondary.

A: This school works for some kids; DRS can work for other kids. Two schools gives students choices and a fresh start.

P: That certainly is an argument for two grade 8 to 12 schools, perhaps with separate focuses. At least to 2017, there really are not enough kids for two grade 8 to 12 schools.

A: This kills momentum of Sea to Sky League because we will only be three schools; this impacts something that was really working.

A: I want to discuss staffing because I really like teaching grade 8/9.

P: Perhaps considering the continuing contract over both schools; the union may want to consider that.

A: Band program are traditionally larger, so band would be 10 – 60 students,

P: Band teachers sometimes would like to teach 40 students, instruments are a thought along with different types of bands such as jazz band.