QUESTION:

What feedback do you have for the Board regarding the analysis and recommendations contained in the Strategic Facilities Plan?

1. What do we keep
2. What do we change?
3. What are other alternatives?
4. What are the problems you see with the recommendations?

FALUN RESPONSES:

- Maintain and if possible, decrease bus start times and ride times.
- A breakfast program would help students who must leave home early.
- Some families may choose to enroll their children in neighboring school boards.
- Consolidation may result in additional benefits (enhanced programs & opportunities).
- Important not to lose the culture and climate of a small school.
- Important to retain small class sizes.
- Consider developing K-9 schools and decrease Junior High.
- Option Central A.
- Equitable education for all.
- Realignment of provincial education boundaries?
- Approach Chamber to bring in more industry.
- Get rid of leased schools first.
- Create a Christian school/program – may get some students back.
- Some support for bringing students to Falun ie: class sizes remain reasonable – classes of 35-40 not acceptable.
- Although it makes financial sense, does it really work best for students?
- Expect all students to attend their own schools – not school of choice (parent suggestion).
- Bring Storefront students back to PLR (parents support this), but retain “flexibility” for students.
- Parents highly supportive of including FNMI students in WRPS schools.
- Parents foresee student growth as there is lots of acreage development.
WETASKIWIN & MILLET AREA PARENTS: WCHS RESPONSES:

- Innovative programming attracts students (one to one, laptops) – if we lose programming options we will lose students
- Concerns expressed re: loss of choice programming
- Amalgamate schools in order to dual-track programming
- Run within one facility ie: - one school K-9 - one track French – one track English
  - one year round – one standard
- All Junior High students under one roof in Wetaskiwin.
- “STRONG” support for all year round K-9 programming
- Off Campus programming needs to be maintained within a facility
- Offer French Immersion K-12 or don’t offer it at all.
- Reconfigure classes/schools so all K-3 are in one 4-6 etc.
- What happens to staff – accommodated where possible
- What happens to facilities – secured – cost to demolish
- Video conferencing for special programs
- Off campus students (WCHS/QE) – could bring social problems
- Dual track school – FI & Year round school
- What can parents expect from their trustee – newsletter info – school presentations
- Focus consolidation in City rather than rural schools
- Concerns about ride time for far East (RB) end, & (Gwynne) – already some very long ride times
- Concerns about “splitting” kids up eg. Gwynne K-6 one school & 7-9 another school (not supported)
- Support for combining PS/FA
- Consolidate French Immersion into one school
- Direct all GW students to CV rather than to two schools – may require gradually redirecting some CB students back to their own schools (need to adjust City boundaries so that CV takes rural students first (this idea is controversial)
- Concern of class size being too large
- Look at combining RB and GW & consider other rural school combinations
- Rural communities have a different culture than urban & should be maintained (small town feel)
- Maintain K-9 schools
- Consider transporting students out to the rural schools
- More involvement/ownership of parents and students for the programs and decisions.
- Closure will result in families choosing to go to schools outside of WRPS eg New Norway
- The school culture is what matters regardless of location
- There should be work by the municipalities to encourage economic growth
- Review attendance boundaries
- Review the number of city schools
- Consider other cost cutting measures eg shorten school year
- Utilizing the schools we currently have (fill them up first)
- Draw boundaries that are more logical & based on quadrants eg: NE of city & county go to NW, NW goes to CT
- Keep year round program regardless of school & consider dual track & keep it K-9
- Remove option East E
- Do not renovate CV until all other schools are full
- Do Option East B but don’t renovate just absorb
- Want schools to have opportunity to program small class sizes for students who need the support (highly differentiated)
- Yes to Option Millet A
- Four K-9 serving four quadrants
- QE become K-9 dual track FI & Eng
- PD become EFFWC
- Move Tech to wherever there is space
• Grade re-configuration
• Agreement with other jurisdictions to accept our students?
• Is there something RB could do to save their school?
• How would staff be affected?
• Move in path of least resistance (parents)
• Have to have High School that students want to attend
• Need to keep RB re: long bus ride to City and easy access to schools outside jurisdiction
• Look at year round education – is it feasible?
• Get rid of leased space
• Move Early Ed to an elementary school
• Leave alternate program at Lynn Lauren
• Keep year round program
• Not married to building but like smaller size
• Year round calendar
• Keep French Immersion Program
• Can combine schools but would like to maintain all programs
• Cap on class size
• Schools should not compete against each other
• School culture ie: Lord’s Prayer
• Communicate very carefully
• Obtain adequate funding
• Dual track programs
• All schools on year round calendar
• Ask staff for alternatives, they may have some ideas
• Go to designated school to stop competition
• Raise school fees
• Create an Education Foundation
• Some people may leave to home schooling, separate schools or reserve schools
• Changes need to be handled in a very clear sensible manner
• Good communication & tell the public why & how it will benefit
• Sustain feasible education
• Concern for staff layoffs
• Maintain off campus separate from mainstream. Could include EECC in with off campus – potential good fit with students interaction
• Investigate program in Calgary called “RADAR”
• Option A (Millet) – combine GSS & Millet – makes sense, low impact
• Wetaskiwin Option C is good but would need to keep as dual track programming
• Biggest negative impact is Option A & B – really long ride times & loss of community
• More Info Required On:
  o decommissioning buildings (cost?)
  o what would teacher/student ratios be for each option
  o far east boundary – what are the options for attending a school in a different jurisdiction
  o what are other declining jurisdictions doing to address their funding issues – global & prov.
  o
• Combine all year round & French Immersion in one facility running on an alternative calendar
• If we are going to close schools there has to be some benefit to students & parents at receiving school.
• How do we sell the benefits to parents that are having to change schools
• Programming options provide value
• What other programming options would be economical & attract students
• Maintaining community schools is about more that education
• Need to look at attendance boundaries to see if we could keep rural schools
• Standardization may save dollars but standards don’t meet all needs.
• Board needs to make tough decisions:
- Cost vs benefit – need strong leadership
- Can’t please everyone
- Once decisions are made – affected communities need to be included as part of the transition – communicate

- Need sociological input – consultant community development
- Would be nice to combine GW and RB to keep it rural
- Schools are ALL affected by lower enrollment – split classes can work.
- Why is French Immersion not mentioned as a program?
- Can we work with Leduc to have FI program in WCHS?
  - Beaumont not option.
  - Can FI go into one school (Millet)?
- Ride times seem long – is this best for students?
  - Extra curricular & sleep suffer with longer bus rides
  - Hard on little (younger) students
- Closed campuses – should have for ALL students (exempt high school)
- Need to look at best interest of the children – putting behavior programs in mainstream may not work.
- Financial – move ECS & Lynn Lauren back to schools.
- Storefront high school should go back to the Comp.
- Junior High behavior – can they be placed at the Comp or QE?
- Work with counties to subdivide land to increase population
- If we choose to live in the country we expect longer bus rides.
- QE – build population base by developing K & E program. (Gr 7) that is hands on, not just theory.
- Do we need so many Grade 7,8, & 9 schools?
- Want strong programming, like the idea of combining schools
- Need to know what “is” the cost saved if we close a school.
- Need to look at RB – it is a community school. What about community?
- Move Early Ed to high school – students would love the young students – provide for volunteer experiences
- Like Option B (Millet), closing PS
- Move Lynn Lauren students to QE & Comp
- Do Option East D
BUCK MOUNTAIN CENTRAL RESPONSES:

- We will lose students to Breton, etc.
- Long ride time for younger students
- Keep AF, BMC, WF Schools
- Keep communities together
- Change WF – down size, upgrade
- On renovating Buck Mountain Site:
  - Is site sufficient for additional students
  - Will school facilities be sufficient ie: gym big enough
  - How will combing K-12 students in one site be addressed
  - Trying to build a new school by closing 3 schools in the face of declining enrolment seems impossible
  - What are options/opportunities for vacant school buildings
  - Schools in AF & WF are a draw for young families – without the schools, the communities lose the attraction, some local jobs & business.
  - 10 years from now, kids will be gone…shouldn’t we still keep focused on today’s students?
- Be aware of observation that neighboring schools/school districts seem to be doing better ie: number of classroom assistants, laptops, SLP.
- How are we looking at other efficiencies in WRPS ie: Central Administration
- What can we do to attract/retain families that are NOT choosing our schools & programs
- How can we support the successful unification of AF & WR students who are different (rival) communities into a new cohesive school community
- An important/key consideration is also ensuring sufficient choices within the program of studies - especially because families can choose neighboring schools
- If it comes to a forced choice – renovate BMC & consider east boundary change
- We renovate but lose students anyway.
- Thoughtfully consider if school jurisdiction boundaries currently best serve students? ie: county boundaries don’t match health & other service boundaries ie: go to Wild Rose
- 10 years to implement is a problem with recommendations
- Families in AF & WF may not choose a Central K-12 school so despite spending to renovate we lose students and are not feasible & those communities are now less attractive to new families.
- Unclear how combing schools (AF & WF) will result in new grade enrolments that will benefit students and be efficient
- What are the benefits of combining schools – cost savings
  - how might a unified school strengthen programs, provide choices that might not otherwise exist; grade configurations…
- Loss of WF & AF schools will kill the community and will result in further declining enrolment
- Consider using expansion moneys to expand WF, AF and BMC programs
- Remember that elementary & high school have different needs
- Make sure teachers have appropriate supports (complex classrooms)
- If you want to increase enrolment you to increase opportunities
- Need to reduce administration costs
- You may lose families to other jurisdictions and Home schooling
- Consider creating a K-6 school at Maywood – splitting WF, AF LD
- Best option is to combine schools BUT if we do:
  - will it really affect monies for school
  - what would be the difference
  - it won’t affect high school, only increase would be in elementary
  - how will it affect those students who are at risk
  - will it improve opportunity for K & E
• Option: maintain students by developing & providing Christian-based schooling or other options or opportunities
• RAP program develop at BMC will keep students
• Rural schools can bring forth top grads. Perfect schools need to maintain rural life/quality.
• Create a “foundation” to support our schools to raise money
• How long from tonight to decide on best option. Get on list; push forward.
• Can we “add” portables now to expand BMC
• If we need to go into debt that is okay
• Keep one grade per class (don’t like splits)
• Keep/improve options (high school) – rotate options, split modules
• Why build another school when we should update/upgrade BMC. It is existing already.
• Is there sufficient land to add onto BMC
• Has a partnership with Breton been looked into
• Is the province looking into alternatives for rural areas? We need this.
• Could schools close temporarily?
• WF students are a long way from BMC
• Local business may be affected
• Downsize WF?
• Sewer is to be developed in the hamlet at Buck Lake. (no time frame)
• Preference to expand BMCS rather than build new school.
• Use distance education
• Pressure government for more money – assist parents to do so
• Centralization may be wiser in the long run
• Students may go outside the jurisdiction to go to school
• No Easy Solution!!
• WRPS present plan to county counselors
• Both options are not realistic
  - takes too much money
  - too long to make the change
  - new site proposed where there is no development
• Right size WF – save rooms that can be saved even if there needs to be a walk way to gym
• Schools are important to communities – the immediate community should have a say in what the community school looks like.
• These options would not increase number of Jr/Sr high students
• Need to have small schools if it saves the community
• Should look at closing/amalgamating schools in the City of Wetaskiwin.
• All the same kids in the same area.
• Programming options can be offered via technology
• Is quality of education really affected at elementary level because of small class size?
• Need to come up with a basic “design” for what a small high school needs to offer “Basic High School programming”
• How can we speed process up for combining schools? Need to see something happening; need to push forward.
• What will happen to AF school? Turn one of the schools into a post-secondary school or RAP program.
• What is capacity “345=projected of “274”? Does BMC now have capacity to expand with minor renovations or portables? It was a large pop at one time, we should be able to bring in students to make if full.
• Cut boundary (WF/AF) to bring to capacity. (may lose in high school)
• Move boundary 12/ way between WF/LD – will have negative impact on student numbers @ WF
• School closures effect extra curricular
• Cost to drive to school
• Changes to schools will escalate student exodus – people leave community
• School closure can “close” community
• Value of education is dropping
• Minister of Ed saying technology is answer in rural Alberta
• Value in community
• WF has been “right sized” two times
• 90% of money is salaries
• Will programs choice increase – that would be the hope
• Hard to find staff for rural Alberta
• Need programs to support university entrance
• K-12 best possible grade configuration.
• Core curriculum has been in development for 18 years
• Can’t sacrifice small schools for large schools
• Sports part of school also
• 37% increase in funding since 1995
• Maybe funding distribution needs to be changed
• Split classes can cause kids to fall between cracks
• Kids suffering from teachers who can’t teach certain courses.
• Want assurance of core curriculum
• Quality of education?? Will it improve?
• Worried that cuts are made so drastic that we would have a new school with no students – all gone to other schools.
• Use journey people to offer courses to students.
• Define a basic education and unsure it is provided to all students & engage community in that conversation.
• Engage the broader community to advocate for an education that is satisfactory & appropriate for students.
• Current subsidy is not satisfactory
• Tighten boundaries
• School of choice can be beneficial to students
• Do better job of teacher supervision
• Ensure “no” doors are closed for further education
• Alternate options for low enrollment classes ie: Chem/French/Bio, etc.
• Want basic courses for all high school students.