

## ***School District 59 (Peace River South)***

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*From the office of the Assistant Superintendent*

To: The Board of Education

Regarding: School Catchment Areas

### **SCHOOL ACT:**

*75.1 (1) A board must establish for each school in its school district, except for a Provincial resource program, a catchment area consisting of a geographical area around the school that includes all or part of the school district.*

*(2) A board may amend the catchment area established for a school under subsection (1) [above].*

Section 74.1 (6) of the School Act defines the order and priority in which students are to be enrolled in a class. A school is discouraged from admitting a student to an educational program when applying from outside their catchment area. The Act defines the enrolment priorities as follows:

- (a) a catchment area child who, in the previous school year, attended the school at which the educational program is made available;*
- (b) a catchment area child;*
- (c) a non-catchment area child;*
- (d) a non-school district child.*

Catchment areas in SD#59 have historically been used to prevent the overcrowding of schools. Over the past 5-6 years, declining enrolment created space in schools, which resulted in the catchment areas and change of school procedures to stop being enforced, or completely unused. On direction from the Board of Education, a review was undertaken to update the catchment areas in Dawson Creek because of the following:

- The implementation of Full Day Kindergarten will require that there is an orderly and balanced enrolment of students in all elementary schools;
- The School Act identifies Catchment Areas as the primary criteria to determine where a kindergarten child will be accepted to a public school;
- Catchment areas have not been updated following the closure of O'Brien, and Grandview;
- The closure of Parkhill Elementary adds to the necessity that the Board approves redesigned catchment areas;

In addition, the Board requested a review of elementary rural students who are by-passing their catchment area schools and accessing urban schools while also utilizing school bus transportation to do so. The concern was that the Board is currently supporting the operation of rural schools on the one hand, while at the same time supporting students to attend city schools by providing transportation. This practice duplicates services, and places the District in conflict with its own catchment structure. District staff was directed to review both urban and

rural catchment areas, bring forward ideas for obtaining compliance with the School Act, and reducing duplication of services.

Further, the Board asked that rural catchment areas be reviewed with a view to the potential impact if boundaries were adjusted in order to supplement the enrolment and sustainability of rural schools.

The suggestions below are developed from the following research:

- The students in each rural catchment area were counted;
- The city was divided into new catchment areas that would distribute students into similar sized schools;
- Catchments were established with safety in mind, to minimize the need for students to cross primary highways;
- There is an appreciation that there has been a quasi-open boundaries practice in the city for a number of years, and it will take time to reclaim students into the catchment area school that they are expected to attend;
- There is a pre-existing commitment to Early French Immersion students for transportation from rural settings to Ecole Frank Ross.

#### Suggestion #1

That the Board adopts the catchment areas as detailed on the e-map that was in the Board package, and is shown on the wall.

#### Suggestion #2

That the Board requires all new students to enrol in the school within their catchment area. That open enrolment (in the school of choice) will cease into the future, and criteria will be developed whereby parents may apply for their child to be enrolled in a school outside their catchment area. Students that are currently attending a school outside their catchment area may continue to attend, and siblings may attend as well. By resetting catchment areas for new students to the system, the catchment areas should be fully effective within 7 years. Early French Immersion students will continue to have the option of attending EFR

#### Suggestion #3

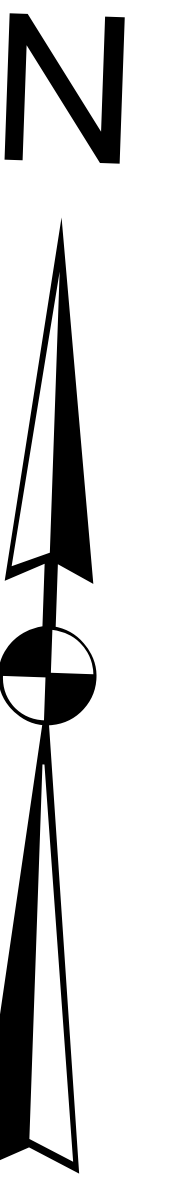
That the Board does not adjust the boundaries of rural catchment areas. A decision to begin moving students into or between rural schools, amounts to robbing from the sustainability of one school in order to sustain another. Rural residence themselves will determine whether their community schools will sustain by enrolling their children.

#### Suggestion #4

That the Board adopt a fee structure that will be phased in to apply to non-eligible bus students.

Recommendation: That the Board accepts the suggestions for implementation in September 2010.

# Proposed Catchment Areas for Dawson Creek



**Parkland  
86**

**Ecole Frank  
Ross 303**

**Crescent  
Park  
189**

**McLeod  
37  
Devereaux  
78**

**Rolla  
9**

**Canalta  
198**

**Tremblay  
177**

**Pouce  
107**

**Tate  
40**

0 205 410 820 1,230 1,640 Meters

