



School District #8 (Kootenay Lake)

Press Release: Board of Education Plans Community Consultation in Relation to Facilities Planning

The Board of Education for School District #8 (Kootenay Lake) has been engaged in an ongoing review of facilities as part of a proactive approach to dealing with declining enrolment, demographic shifts and new educational directions. Seeking Ministerial support for a rebuild of Trafalgar continues to be a priority as a part of a reconfiguration plan for the City of Nelson. The rebuild will enable the district to close South Nelson School and create a K-8 school with 2 wings, one a K-5 and one for grades 6-8 middle school students. District staff are currently working on a business case to share with the Minister and Ministry staff, with hopes of sharing their vision and plans as part of a visit to School District #8 planned by Minister Margaret MacDiarmid in the new year.

As part of a summer working session, the Board identified the needs for more extensive facilities planning and adopted the following as one of 3 goals for the 2009-2010 school year:

➤ **To continue to develop a long-range plan for facilities.**

The adoption of this goal by the Board signals a need for more community consultation to address a variety of realities facing the district, including low utilization rates in some schools, financial challenges, future educational directions, environmental stewardship and community impact. As a result, the Board is communicating its intention to:

- Engage in consultation with members of communities in the Slocan Valley, and Winlaw and the Village of Slocan in particular. The Slocan Valley is one of the only zones in the district that has not seen any reconfiguration and has some schools with very low utilization rates.
- Engage in consultation with the Town of Creston with regard to the future of various district facilities, including the Creston Education Centre.
- Engage in consultation with the community of Crawford Bay regarding a new approach to delivering the grades 10-12 graduation program in the school as a result of low enrolment in the grades 7-12 component of the new Crawford Bay Elementary-Secondary School. Given these numbers, the Board recognizes that this is an excellent opportunity to explore ways

to delivery a more personalized graduation program which will equip learners for the 21st century.

The Board is planning to schedule meetings in late January and early February with affected communities as a first step toward future planning. Board Chairperson Bill Maslechko indicated that, "As we continue to face financial challenges at a provincial level, it is important that the Board demonstrate its proactivity and willingness to consider potential changes to current facilities. This could include considering options such as school closures, reconfigurations or other ideas that are identified by the community". He went on to state that, to date, the reconfiguration within the City of Nelson and its feeder schools, which resulted in the closure of Gordon Sargent Primary and A.I. Collinson, has gone relatively smoothly. "I attribute this to the thoughtful planning and work that was done with communities and staff and the board would expect a similar amount of rigour to address concerns and ideas expressed by affected communities."

Proposed dates for initial community consultation:

1. January 12 – Board meeting in Crawford Bay and sharing of initial information, to be followed with community meeting later in the winter.
2. Monday, February 1 – Slocan Zone (at Winlaw School at 6:30 p.m.)
3. Monday, February 22 – Creston Zone at the Creston Education Centre at 6:30 p.m.)

For further information, contact:

- Bill Maslechko, Chairperson of the Board of Education (250-352-6100) or bmaslechko@sd8.bc.ca
- Patricia Dooley, Superintendent of Schools (250-505-7037) or pdooley@sd8.bc.ca



**Pat Dooley,
Superintendent**