

# School District #8 (Kootenay Lake)

Facilities Review Process:  
Creston

# Overview:

## Facilities Process

- **Board Goal:** To continue to develop a long-range facilities plan for the district.
- Meeting 1 (February 22, 2010)
  - Purpose - To share information and options under consideration; to invite community input for sharing at next meeting
- Meeting 2 (March 2, 2010)
  - Purpose - To receive ideas/responses from the communities.

# Overview:

## Facilities Process

- **Board Goal:** To continue to develop a long-range facilities plan for the district.
- **Meeting 3 (April 7, 2010)**
  - **Purpose** - To respond to proposals and questions and to engage in further discussion.
- **Meeting 4 (April 20 - Regular Board Meeting)**
  - **Purpose** - To make decisions related to facilities in Creston based on the consultation process.

# Overview

- A Brief History: School District #8 Financial realities and facilities planning
- Where are we now? Rationale for Board Facilities Review in Creston and the Slocan Valley
- Summary of input:
  - (a) What did we hear/receive?
  - (b) Some responses and identified areas for further research

# Overview

- Where to from here?
  - (a) Options for the Board to consider, including outcome of the Slocan Valley Facilities Review
  - (b) Community response/questions.

# Thought to Frame the Meeting

There is more than a verbal tie between the words ***common, community and communication.*** People live in a community by virtue of the things they have in common, and communication is how they come to possess those things that they have in common.

John Dewey

Facilities Planning:  
Current Expectations of the Board -  
February/March 2010

- Sustainability for the future - environmental, financial, educational
- Respond to enrolment trends
- Facilities utilization
- Desire for communities to be part of the solution
- There are alternatives to the status quo ***and this is part of the rationale for a Facilities Review.***

# A Brief History: School District #8 Financial Realities and Facilities Planning

- Amalgamated district (1996) and now recognized as the 2nd most geographically dispersed district in the province.
- Has had 3 reports from Ministry Efficiency and Effectiveness teams/Special Advisors between 1996 and 2006.
- District just paid off a deficit of over \$3.9 million dollars, which has seen a minimum of \$637 000 taken out of the operating budget annually up to this year.

# A Brief History: School District #8 Financial Realities and Facilities Planning

- There has been a focus on facilities planning and review since 2001 (approximately) in an attempt to deal with declining enrolment, as well as proactivity to avoid future problems.
- Examples of proactivity: The Board in a continuous state of analysis of various aspects of the district.

# SD#8:

## Examples of Proactivity

- **The Board has taken charge of its future through:**
  - Debt repayment (June 2009)
  - Reconfiguration to manage declining enrolment: total of 5 schools closed, with two recreated)
  - Focus on organization within schools, with secondary in progress.
  - Board facilities review: Creston and Slocan Valley

# SD#8:

## Examples of Proactivity

- The Board has taken charge of its future through:
  - Review of facilities leases and rental agreements: Cost analysis and expectations re rent to be paid.
  - Special Education Review (internal; external)
  - Transportation Review (external; internal)
  - International Program Review (internal; ongoing)

# Examples of Proactivity: School Closures/Consolidations

- **June 2003**

(a) South Creston School  
closed/consolidated into ARES -  
Enrolment - 228 FTE.

(b) Central Elementary School  
closed/consolidated into South Nelson  
Enrolment - 192 FTE

# Examples of Proactivity: School Closures/Consolidations

- **June 2008**

- a) A.I.Collinson School closed/consolidated into Hume and Trafalgar

- Enrolment - 55 FTE

- b) Gordon Sargent School closed/multi-age program moved to South Nelson

- Enrolment - 59 FTE

- c) Wynndel School closed/consolidated into ARES, Erickson and Canyon/Lister

- Enrolment - 18 FTE

# Examples of Proactivity: School Closures/Consolidations

- **June 2008**
  - Redfish Elementary, South Nelson, Rosemont, Blewett and Hume all reconfigured as K-5 schools; Trafalgar as 6-8 school and L.V. Rogers as 9-12 school
- Thinking “out of the box” and enhancing choice:
  - a) Central Education Center - re-opened with several programs of choice
  - b) Creston Education Center - re-opened with programs of choice and as an early learning hub, which includes Strong Start.

# Patterns across the district and province

- More elementary schools than secondary
- Students consolidated into middle and high schools from either grades 6 or 7 or 8
- Goal of secondary programs: A comprehensive set of offerings to enable students to pursue interests in:
  - academics
  - fine arts, sports, technology and, increasingly, social responsibility/service
- Alternate programs - usually 1 per zone
- Increasing interest in specialty type programs (e.g. Trades programs at PCSS, Homelinks, Valhalla Wilderness and ATLAS programs, Quest for Community), Wildflower)

# Key Messages:

## Role of the Board/supported by staff

- Board is elected to provide leadership for the K-12 system, with a major focus on managing resources/budget.
- The Board has an obligation to optimize the use of resources, which involves a “systems approach” and consideration of all 5000 students
- This Board has both a demonstrated and public commitment to choice.

# Status Quo: Creston

- Adam Robertson Elementary School
- Canyon Lister Elementary School
- Erickson Elementary School
- Yahk Elementary School
- Prince Charles Secondary School,  
including alternate and Pathways  
programs.
- Creston Education Center

# Creston Education Center

- Houses Homelinks Program (K-12)
- Houses Strong Start Program
- Houses offices for Student Support Services staff
- Used by several other groups
- Can truly be classified as a “hub” and does fit some of the vision for a Neighbourhood of Learning”

# Concerns:

## Facilities Usage in Creston

- Utilization rates in some schools is relatively high (e.g. ARES, Erickson and PCSS)
- Utilization rates at the Creston Education Center is very low: The building has a capacity of 275 students and yet very few students are in attendance on a daily basis.
- Utilization at Canyon-Lister is also very low (47%)
- There are financial and environmental concerns associated with underutilized space.

# Proposed option to which the community responded

- Close the Creston Education Centre and relocate programs and offices to facilities with space.

# Creston Option

- The Creston option is not about closing down programs: It is about consolidating existing programs into vacant space with savings realized through efficiencies.
- The proposed movement of Homelinks Program is like the movement of Gordon Sargent Multi-Aged Primary Program into vacant space at South Nelson Elementary.

# Reality

Boards all over the province are facing increasing cost pressures and other challenges. Many Boards are in the process of reviewing facilities with the mindset that programs are important to preserve but that perhaps some efficiencies can be found in facilities costs.

# Some observations:

## Movement of Homelinks

- There is space in Canyon-Lister School (3-4 classrooms, with potential to create several teaching spaces)
- Access to the gym and other school facilities would be facilitated as Canyon-Lister enrolment has declined over the years.
- There is potential to house the Homelinks Program in one wing.

# Some observations: Movement of Offices

- The old Board office is available.
- This site is central to all schools.
- This would enable the Creston Education Center to be shut down, with potential for lease. The value of the “hub”, however, is recognized.

# What did we hear? (February 22- present)

- Facts: Summary of amount of input
- Key messages/themes
- Questions raised
- Some voices from the input

# Summary of Input Received (as of March 23, 2010)

- 16 presentations
- 3 letters
- 12 emails
- Approximately 200 people at meetings

# Key Themes from Input

- The Homelinks Program is based on a strong vision which assumes that students are not integrated into mainstream schools.
- Individuals highly value the location of the Homelinks program.
- Transportation would be an issue for many parents if the Homelinks Program were moved to Canyon.
- We understand that the role of the Board is to manage the budget and educational issues.
- We are willing to work with the Board to find solutions, but...
- We need more time to explore possibilities which would enable us to keep the Creston Education Center open.

# Key Themes from Input

- There is a strong commitment to the “hub” and a recognition of the potential for long term benefits to be realized for learners and ultimately, society.
- There is recognition of the need for the Creston Education Center to be cost-neutral to the Board where renters and users are concerned. **Note: Currently this is not the case and the Board has communicated its plans to increase rents to cover the costs of custodial, maintenance, energy and etc.. There is currently nothing charged for administration.**
- As a community, we need more clarity and have a right to detailed information related to a number of things, including:
  - a) long term enrolment projections
  - b) potential savings
  - c) the Neighbourhood of Learning concept

# Key Themes from Input

- The Creston Valley has a propensity toward home schooling.
- There is interest in pursuing other programming options within the building, including
  - a) expanding the Homelinks program
  - b) renting out more space, especially to expand services linked to current early learning focus
  - c) starting one or more Kindergarten programs in the building, thus creating a true early learning hub.
  - d) adding programs such as Wildflower, which is extremely popular in Nelson
  - e) use of rooms currently used by Homelinks for other programs when students are not in attendance (e.g. adult education, music programs)
  - f) addition of day care spaces
  - g) numerous other options and ideas outlined in the Homelinks PAC presentation

# Key Themes from Input

- There was fear expressed about losing student from the district due to transportation concerns and lack of alignment with the original Homelinks vision.
- A major theme cited by many included an interest in taking a business-like approach to consider ways to enhance use, revenue and choice. ***Note: Increasing student enrolment (e.g. drawing in home schoolers) does increase revenue and is aligned with the core work of SD#8.***

# Key Themes from Input

- There were several points made regarding the variety of choices in the Slocan Valley including a propensity toward home schooling and access to alternate programs, with a concern re loss of students from the public system if Winlaw in particular were to close.
- There was fear expressed about “pitting” communities against each other if the consideration for closure continues.

# Some Key Questions

- What do long term enrolment projections say for the Creston area?
- How do you enhance revenue for the school district?
- What are the estimated cost savings and how are they rationalized?
- Would the Creston Education Center classify/quality as a Neighbourhood of Learning?

# Some Key Questions

- Long term enrolment projections and a key point:
  - Source is Ministry data
  - Ministry is still projecting a decline until 2017 *but* our experience has been that our enrolment decline has been less than the Ministry projected. Last year, we had 60 more students in the district than in the previous year. We anticipate a similar pattern this year.
  - Enrolment appears to have stabilized and is increasing.
  - We are told that there are more students who would like to attend the Homelinks Program.... ***Given that we are now out of funding protection, bringing those students into the system would enhance our revenue and enable us to staff based on increased enrolment.***

# Some Key Questions

- How do you enhance district revenue?
  - There are two ways to enhance revenue to the district.
    - (a) expand number of students and programs, which brings in a per pupil amount to the district.
    - (b) lease or rent space in existing facilities
  - The Board has been subsidizing several areas in the district, which takes money away from our core mandate. Examples:
    - (a) Creston Day Care at PCSS pays no rent and yet there are utility and custodial costs. This also is viewed as “unfair” to other providers who are paying rent.
    - (b) Creston Strong Start and some others do not pay adequate rent to cover costs.

# Some Key Questions

- How do you enhance district revenue?
  - Our district staff is not large, and our business is K-12 education, which means that adding renters increases workload and administration. The Board would have to determine how to support any move to expand use of building and conduct a cost-benefit analysis.
  - The work on rentals and leases has been done by our Secretary- Treasurer and Manager of Facilities. The following slides reflect what I know at this point.

# Rentals

<b>Tenants</b>	<b>Current Rent</b>	<b>Monthly Cost</b>
Creston Family Place		300
Creston Strong Start	150	200
CBAL Program	50	50
Creston Infant/Pregnancy/Therapeutic Program	600	600
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Total Monthly Tenants	800	1,150

## **Yearly Operating Costs (10 months)**

Custodial/Energy/Maintenance costs for above	11,500
Custodian to maintain halls, gym, bathrooms etc.	10,000
Energy for remainder of building	16,000
Maintenance for remainder of building	50,000
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Estimated yearly Custodial/Energy/Maintenance Costs	87,500

# Possible Savings: Closure of the CEC

Energy	20,000
Maintenance	55,000
Equipment/Supplies	11,900
Energy Costs for Old Board Office	<u>-5,000</u>
Total Estimated Savings	<u>81,900</u>

# Rentals:

## Key Points

- Strong Start - the Board has agreed to partially subsidize custodial costs at approximately \$150/month.
- I believe the rent paid by CBAL is \$100/month
- The operating costs reflected are for the total building and there is no expectation that the building would need to generate \$80 000+ in revenue if Homelinks is in the building.
- The \$50 000. maintenance cost is a 3 year average as some work has been done on the building. Therefore this is difficult to “compare” to Erickson.
- There are costs associated with closed buildings.

# Questions:

## Costs re Closed Buildings

### A.I. Collinson

- initial cost of securing building at closure
  - lab & material (plywood)\$ 3,500.00  
(one time cost)
- Ongoing maintenance costs - grounds, snowplowing, security checks\$1,500.00 annual
- Utility costs - building maintained at 8 degrees\$ 9,314.97

# Questions:

## Costs re Closed Buildings

### **A.I. Collinson**

- Annual Cost = \$ 11 000.
- \$20 962.00(energy cost - Jul 07 - Jun 08)

**Savings: \$9 962.00 approximate/year re energy and maintenance.**

# Questions re Closed Buildings

## **Wynndel:**

- Initial cost of securing building at closure - lab & material (plywood) 3,000.00 one time cost
- Ongoing maintenance costs - grounds, snowplowing, security check \$1,800.00 annual
- Utility costs - building maintained at 8 degrees \$ 4,402.12

# Questions re Closed Buildings

## **Wynndel:**

- Approximate Annual Costs - \$5200.
- \$13 642. 00 (energy cost Jul 07 - Jun 08)
- **Savings = \$8 442 approximate per year (maintenance, etc.)**

# Key Concept: Facilities

- It is difficult to be “exact” in terms of what savings will be, although questions raised are valid.
- The more buildings that you have, the more maintenance is done and the more energy is paid.
- Closing buildings does save maintenance, energy and administrative costs.
- Every dollar saved in operational type costs has the potential to go into the classroom: The key question for the Board is whether the savings are worth the impact.

# Some Key Questions

- Would the Creston Education Center classify/quality as a Neighbourhood of Learning?
  - Contact: Claire Avison and Doug Stewart, Ministry of Education made during Spring Break.
  - There are two key concepts that both relate to ***expanding the use of schools.***

# Neighbourhood Learning Centres

- A capital commitment: Up to 15% of additional space can be added to the school to support NLCs
- Regardless of capital plans, all schools being asked to use space to accommodate a wider range of services.
- No additional funding: encouragement to work to enhance revenue/share expenses.
- Interest in profiling the Creston Education Center and others provincially.

# NLC: Vision

- All schools in the province are ***neighbourhood learning centres*** creating welcoming places for community learning, services and engagement. These ***neighbourhood learning centres*** are responsive to the needs of the community and are important community assets that are fully used for the delivery of an array of services to achieve learning excellence and well-being for the entire community.

# Some quotes from input

- *We understand that there is a problem in the district. We think we (Homelinks) are already part of the solution - a financially sustainable, educationally successful program in an environmentally sustainable building that houses a whole community of learners. We'd love a chance to sit down with the Board and senior staff, AROUND a table- instead of across from each other' and brainstorm ways to run our programs and our district more efficiently.*

# Some quotes from input

- *There is a HUGE market of students that are still homeschooled without registering with the district. And that's okay - but, if we can offer them a chance to find out about Homelinks - and maybe get them to Graduation. Find someone that can honestly market this product.*
- *Homelinks Vision:*
  - *We are a community of families, students, teachers and school district staff committed to developing and delivering individualized distributed learning programs that will build success for each student and respect the values and priorities of each family.*

# Some quotes from input

- *The Human Early Learning Partnership recommends the creation of neighbourhood “hubs” as an effective way to make services accessible to families and to address the issue of early childhood vulnerability in B.C. communities. Again, I urge you to maintain the Creston Education Centre, and the services that are housed there. It will not be in the interest of Creston’s young children and future kindergartens to dismantle it.*
  - *Dr. Clyde Hertzman, Director, HELP*

# Some quotes from input

- *The overall value and benefit of having early childhood services co-located and accessible for everyone cannot be stated strongly enough. It creates an atmosphere that naturally allow for networking and building strong working relationships between programs and agencies, which also helps to increase the understanding of each program and their role.*

# Some quotes from input

- *Thanks to the School District and others, this Early Childhood community hub was the first in the Kootenays.....We understand the School District faces significant financial pressure. However, closing this building would result in a drastic loss of service to families in the Creston area.*
- *As our ever-changing society gradually evolves, new awarenesses emerge to embrace those critical changes; changes that will ultimately affect our society as a whole. One such change observed over the past few years, is the move towards alternate forms of educating our most precious resource - our children. The way in which a child receives their education should be as individual and unique as the child themselves. ...HomeInks is a glowing example of how our education system has acknowledged and effectively responded to our society's need for a more unique and individualized approach to learning.*

# Some quotes from input

- *Suggestions for the School Board:*
  - *Have the Creston and District Nursery School move into the CEC building as they are within the SD8 umbrella. Their location at the rec center has been disrupted due to construction of the new rec center and they are now housed in the bottom of a church building. The CEC will provide a gymnasium, playground, additional bathrooms and handwashing facilities and provide a child-orientated environment that would be better suited for them.*
  - *Establish a middle school in Creston now. This has been requested here for years.*

# Some quotes from input

- *I remember how disappointed and upset many people were when South Creston School closed. People were discouraged to see an empty building that had so much potential. The comments and enthusiasm have been abundant and positive since the building regained its vitality with the development of the Creston Education Centre.*
- *The central location of the South Creston building is serving a large community of learners Our family lives in Wynndel and I know Homelinks consists of families from other areas in the community...If the Homelinks program were to be moved out of the South Creston building, it would have a huge impact on many families.*
- *There is a \$17 return on every \$1 invested in early learning.*

# Input Theme:

## Working together over time

- *There is potential here to create a dynamic education system of choice for the Valley. We are looking at long term sustainable alternatives. This needs time to build and cultivate. I have faith that as our school trustees you lobby for more time to process and develop solutions to this very difficult task...*
- *I recommend that the Board not intervene with a quick fix of configuration or closures for September, but rather establish a process over the next year, to reach conclusion by April 1, 2011. Setting up a task force of district, school, local government and community members to define an inclusive process and collect information would be a positive approach.*

# Input Theme:

## Working together over time

- *Throughout my 24 years in the social service sector...I have had a positive and collaborative working relationship with School District #8....These partnerships have created good resource management and the important enhancement of services in the Creston community. School District #8 has been an important partner in helping us to provide innovative programming to the children and families of SD38 and the Creston community. We hope to continue the partnership and will work to the best of our ability with SD#8 to help meet its current challenges.*

# Where to from here?

## Options for the Board

- Motion to move Creston Homelinks to Canyon-Lister and either:
  - (a) close the CEC
  - (b) keep a portion of CEC open and charge appropriate rent to make the building cost-neutral
- Motion to delay further decisions related to the CEC in order to explore potential to enhance revenue and programming options in the CEC, including expansion of the “hub” concept aligned with Neighbourhood for Learning Vision
- Motion or direction to establish one or more K classes in the CEC for September of this year.
- Motion or direction to explore putting a senior alternate program in this building.

# Where to from here?

## Options for the Board

- Assumptions and comments:
  - a) If the Board chooses to keep the building open, the Homelinks program would need to consolidate to open space for additional renters and/or programs
  - b) A structure would be needed to provide the infrastructure needed to pursue plans
  - c) The CEC would take advantage of the Ministry of Education's interest in profiling the building as an example of a Neighbourhood of Learning.
  - d) If a new class/program were to be established, work would need to be done to assess interest and logical students through the Human Resources department

# Facilities Planning:

## What happened in the Slocan Valley?

- The Board of Education adopted 3 motions on the advice of myself, structured on a decision sheet. The motions enabled:
  - a) delay of decision re any school closures to enable the communities to work together to come up with a viable plan for implementation in September, 2011
  - b) creation of an advisory committee with parent, community, staff and district reps to lead the process.
  - c) clarity to be brought to the communities regarding catchment areas and transportation

# Where to from here?

- Opportunity to:
  - a) share opinions, advice and perspectives with the Board/staff
  - b) raise questions

***The Board is expected to make further decisions related to CEC at its regular meeting on April 20, in Creston.***