

AGENDA of the REGULAR MEETING
of the Board of Education
School District No. 6 (Rocky Mountain)

Video Conference

Location: Kimberley, Golden and Invermere District Offices

Date: 2021-03-09

Time: 7:00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TERRITORY

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETINGS

- 4.1 Regular Board Meeting of February 9, 2020
- 4.2 Synopsis of In-Camera Meeting of February 9, 2020

5. PRESENTATIONS

- 5.1 Nil

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

7. STRATEGIC AND POLICY ISSUES

- 7.1 Policy Development
 - 7.1.1 Third Reading - nil
 - 7.1.2 Second Reading
 - 7.1.2.1 Policy 4104, Departing Exempt Employee Compensation (Karen Shipka) *
 - 7.1.2.2 Policy 4950, Service Recognition (Karen Shipka) *
 - 7.1.3 First Reading
 - 7.1.3.1 Policy 4105, Staff Conflict of Interest (Karen Shipka) *

8. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 8.1 Legacy of Learning Partnership (Viveka Johnson) *
- 8.2 French Support (Steve Wyer) *

9. REPORTS

- 9.1 Budget Utilization Report and Summary February 28, 2021 (Dale Culler) *
- 9.2 BC School Trustees Association (Jane Fearing)

- 9.3 BC School Trustees Association, Kootenay Boundary Branch (Jane Thurgood Sagal)
- 9.4 BC Public Schools Employers Association (Sandra Smail)
- 9.5 SOGI Board Report (Viveka Johnson) *
- 9.6 Early Learning (Viveka Johnson) *
- 9.7 Trans-Canada Highway–Kicking Horse Canyon Upgrade Project (Steve Jackson) *

10. INFORMATION ITEMS

- 10.1 Correspondence
- 10.2 March and April 2021 Calendar *

11. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- 2021.03.11 District Technology Advisory Committee Meeting, Virtual, 9:00 a.m.
- 2021.04.06 Labour Relations Committee Meeting, Teleconference, 8:30 a.m.
- 2021.04.13 Board of Education Meeting, Golden Secondary School
 - In-Camera 6:00, p.m.
 - Information Exchange, 6:30 p.m.
 - Regular Meeting, 7:00 p.m.

12. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

13. ADJOURNMENT

* attachment



POLICY NO. 4104

**DEPARTING EXEMPT EMPLOYEE
COMPENSATION**

POLICY:

Departing exempt employees are entitled to total compensation increases up to the final date of one's employment with the Board of Education. Should an adjustment to compensation for exempt employees arrive after the Board of Education becomes aware of an exempt employee's departure from employment, the employee will receive the adjusted compensation up to the final date of their employment with School District No. 6.

DISTRICT PRACTICE <INSERT HYPERLINK>
FORM <INSERT HYPERLINK>

REFERENCES: LIST AND HYPERLINK APPROPRIATE REFERENCES

ADOPTED: DATE
Amended:



POLICY NO. 4950
SERVICE RECOGNITION

POLICY:

The Board of Education will recognize length of service rendered to the District by any employee, at a time and in a manner approved by the Board. The following guidelines shall govern such awards.

DISTRICT PRACTICE <INSERT HYPERLINK>
FORM <INSERT HYPERLINK>

REFERENCES: LIST AND HYPERLINK APPROPRIATE REFERENCES

ADOPTED: DATE
Amended:



POLICY NO. 4950
DISTRICT PRACTICE
SERVICE RECOGNITION

DISTRICT PRACTICE:

1. Recognition shall be given for total continuous years of active service in the Board of Education's employ, whether full or part-time including time on leaves of absence. An individual's years of active service to the Rocky Mountain School District would be the sum of their contribution in the following areas:

Teaching: continuous years of active employment with the District on a temporary or continuing contract. This does not include service provided to the District as a teacher-on-call.

CUPE: continuous years of active employment with the District on a regular appointment.

Excluded Staff: continuous years of active service with the District while employed on a contract. **Trustee:** continuous years of active service as a trustee of the District.
2. Service in the District will be recognized after five, ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five and thirty years of service.
3. The Board shall recognize all retiring employees, regardless of length of service. Retirement recognition shall be commensurate with the individual employee's years of service in the District.

POLICY No. <INSERT HYPERLINK>
FORM <INSERT HYPERLINK>

ADOPTED: DATE
Amended:



POLICY NO. 4105

STAFF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

POLICY

The Board of Education of School District No. 6 (Rocky Mountain) carefully considers employment situations in which any employee potentially occupies a position involving a direct supervisory relationship between family, significant others, or close associates. Exceptions to this policy will be considered in extraordinary circumstances where staff shortages exist or where specific expertise is desired. This policy will not affect working relationships that were established prior to the CURRENT DATE OF APPROVAL, however future staffing decision for all employees will be subject to the policy.

DISTRICT PRACTICE <INSERT HYPERLINK>
FORM <INSERT HYPERLINK>

REFERENCES: LIST AND HYPERLINK APPROPRIATE REFERENCES

ADOPTED: DATE
Amended:



DISTRICT PRACTICE:

1. Definitions

- 1.1 **Close Associate** for the purpose of this policy, is defined as a business associate, or someone in a close personal relationship.
- 1.2 **Family** for the purpose of this policy, is defined as all relatives, such as, but not limited to the following: spouses, domestic partners, children, parents, grandparents and siblings.
- 1.3 **Significant others** for the purpose of this policy, includes individuals involved in a relationship who may or may not reside together.
- 1.4 **Direct Supervisory Relationship** for the purposes of this policy, refers to an employment relationship where one employee does or could have authority over another employee's performance evaluation, salary, work hours, working assignments or other conditions of employment.

2. Employees of the Board who are in a position to hire or contract full-time, part-time, occasional, contract or summer staff/students will not hire relations, described in 1.1-1.4 above, to work for them directly.

3. An employee must ensure there is no participation in the hiring process when the employee has a relation as described in 1.1-1.4 above.

4. Employees and prospective employees will not seek positions where a direct supervisory role could result for a relation of the type 1.1-1.4 as described above. However, should this be impossible to avoid, the Superintendent will ensure sufficient safeguards are in place to guard the district's integrity in relation to this policy.

5. In situations where an employee may have a direct supervisory role over a relation described in 1.1-1.4 above as a result of emerging or changing circumstances, each employee shall report this conflict in writing to Human Resources who will then determine if any action is required.

ADOPTED: DATE

Amended:



DATE: March 9, 2021

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Karen Shipka, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Legacy of Learning Partnership Correspondence

ORIGINATOR: Viveka Johnson

REFERENCE: www.basininstitute.org

ISSUE:

On February 10, 2021 the Board of Education received a partnership proposal from the Columbia Basin Institute of Regional History. (Appendix 1)

BACKGROUND:

The Columbia Basin Institute of Regional History is a non-profit society dedicated to furthering the preservation, documentation and presentation of the Columbia River Basin's human and natural history.

CURRENT SITUATION:

The Columbia Basin Institute of Regional History strives to deliver services without bias, in the spirit of openness and inclusiveness. The Columbia Basin Institute of Regional History takes a collaborative approach to preserving and presenting the documented heritage of our region without judgement, and with the aim of bringing people together to appreciate and celebrate both the unique and shared strands of the Basin's history. The Columbia Basin Institute would like to develop an ongoing partnership modelled after 'The Legacy of Learning,' a successful collaboration with SD#5 that continues to thrive while documenting, preserving, and showcasing school history in the district.

The Institute would like to work with a staff member at SD#6 to supervise and coordinate the project. We propose a modest rollout in the initial phases of development to digitize and showcase the district's history. More details are available in the presentation attached (Appendix B).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

- \$5000 to SD#6 for procurement, development, and display of resources.

IMPLICATIONS:

- The project would capture the history of education in the Columbia valley providing SD6 students with historical knowledge of the school system.

CONCLUSION:

The Columbia Basin Institute of Regional History, through partnerships with school districts is committed to collecting artifacts that document the history of education in the Columbia Valley. SD6 students would benefit from learning the history of the school district and the heritage of the Columbia Valley.



RECOMMENDATION:

That the board supports a partnership with the Columbia Basin Institute of Regional History as presented.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMNET:

Rocky Mountain School District is ...

- a research base, collaborative learning community



Suite #105 105-9th Ave South Cranbrook B.C. V1C 2M1
1-250-489-9150 email: info@basininstitute.org

Dear Mrs. Amber Byklum,

February 10th 2021

In our presentation on Wednesday, Feb. 10, to Superintendent Karen Shipka and Director of Instruction, Learning Support Services Viveka Johnson, we formally introduced the Columbia Basin Institute of Regional History and proposed a partnership with SD#6.

The Columbia Basin Institute would like to develop an ongoing partnership modelled after 'The Legacy of Learning,' a successful collaboration with SD#5 that continues to thrive while documenting, preserving, and showcasing school history in the district.

Our organization brings over ten years of experience with SD#5 gained during the development of 'Legacy of Learning.' The Institute is looking to expand this initiative into the surrounding Columbia River Basin School Districts, with SD#6 being the first.

We created a significant number of resources for our initiative with SD#5 and we can build upon these to manifest a unique 'Legacy of Learning' for SD#6.

The Institute would like to work with a staff member at SD#6 to supervise and coordinate the project. We propose a modest rollout in the initial phases of development to digitize and showcase the district's history at the cost of \$5000 to SD#6 for procurement, development, and display of resources.

Through careful consultation, development, and feedback, the Columbia Basin Institute proposes to create a desirable result that will benefit the Basin, SD#6, and further generations to enjoy the roots of their school history.

Kindest regards,

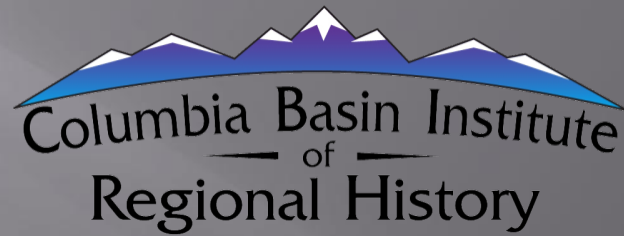
Anna Majkowski
Executive Director
Columbia Basin Institute of Regional History

CC: Karen Shipka-Superintendent SD#6, & Viveka Johnson-Director of Instruction,
Learning Support Services SD#6

A LEGACY OF LEARNING

APPENDIX 2





Mission Statement 2018

The Columbia Basin Institute of Regional History is a non-profit society dedicated to furthering the preservation, documentation, and presentation of the Columbia River Basin's human and natural history.

Statement of Principles 2018

The Columbia Basin Institute of Regional History strives to deliver services without bias, in the spirit of openness and inclusiveness.

We take a collaborative approach to preserving and presenting the documented heritage of our region without judgment, and with the aim of bringing people together to appreciate and celebrate both the unique and shared strands of the Basin's history.

From Start to Finish: Teaching Career of Menadora Benedik

SUPERINTENDENT'S BULLETIN

MARCH 5, 1985

MENADORA BENEDIK

The Board of School Trustees has accepted, with much regret, the resignation of Menadora Benedik from the principalship of Steeples Elementary School effective June 30th. Menadora has worked in Cranbrook for 27 years. Prior to coming to our district Menadora taught for 9 years in Saskatchewan.

In 1958 - 1959 Menadora taught at Wardner Elementary School. The following year she transferred to Cranbrook Central Elementary as a Grade 1 teacher and taught at that school until she was appointed principal of Tenth Avenue Elementary School in 1963. Menadora served as the principal of Cranbrook Central School for one year and, in September 1979, assumed the principalship of the new Steeples Elementary School.

Bulletin about Menadora's Retirement March 5, 1985

Newspaper Clip about her Retirement



A FRIENDLY VISIT - Steeples Elementary School principal Menadora Benedik inspects the work of a few grade one students. Benedik will be retiring from the school system in June, completing 35 years as an educator. Townsman photo: Ruth Klinkhammer

Long teaching career comes to an end

By RUTH KLINKHAMMER
Daily Townsman

After 35 years in the education system, Menadora Benedik, principal of Steeples Elementary School, said she is looking forward to getting on with her life.

Benedik will retire this June after teaching in the Cranbrook School District for 27 years and said she has no definite plans for the future.

"I have a whole lot of things that I've never been able to do before. I will now be free to do other things," she said, citing reading, fishing, cooking and sewing as probable future activities.

Benedik has no children, but is married and says her husband, Ernie, is retired and also looking forward to her retirement.

"Now when we want to do something we don't have to wait for the weekend, we can just get in the car and go."

Benedik started her teaching career in a one-room school house seven miles outside of Ituna, Saskatchewan in 1947. She took her training at the Moose Jaw Teachers College in Saskatchewan and taught for nine years in her home province, after which she took a two-year break.

In 1958, she accepted a teaching position at Wardner and in September of 1959 she transferred to

Cranbrook Central Elementary. In 1963, she was appointed as principal of Tenth Avenue Elementary, but was reassigned to Central School for one year so she could oversee the move of some classes to Pinewood Elementary School. In September 1979, she assumed the principalship of Steeples Elementary School.

Benedik said she wanted to be a teacher for as long as she could remember.

"I always wanted to be a teacher, as far back as I can remember. We played school and I was always the teacher, my poor sister never was," she said. She noted when she first began teaching, it was in a one-room school house.

"I taught 43 students ranging in grades one to eight. There was no such thing as a teacher's helper or even other teachers because I was miles from another school. I was a one-man show, every subject and every grade," remembered Benedik.

"Now," she said, looking around her bright office in Steeples school, "we have a fine gymnasium with lots of supplies and a music teacher to cover that area and supplies like you wouldn't believe...library books and paper supplies."

"Back then, we never gave out paper because we never had it. The

children came to school with what they needed and took it home with them at night. For sports...I remember a ball, yes we had a ball and bat."

She said she doesn't think that children have changed much over the years.

"People say kids were better then but we have as many fine, fine, children now as we did then," said Benedik.

However, she did note that some changes in children may have been caused by the difference in the family unit.

"Maybe one of the differences is the family unit. Back then families were really important but now things have changed so much. Single parent - families aren't uncommon and many families have both parents working," she said.

What does the future hold in store for education? Benedik said she wouldn't care to make any predictions.

"Now there are so many new things, computers and video machines, who would have ever guessed. What does the future hold? I don't know. Thirty-five years ago I wouldn't have been able to predict what's happened now. I guess things will continue to improve more and more," she said.



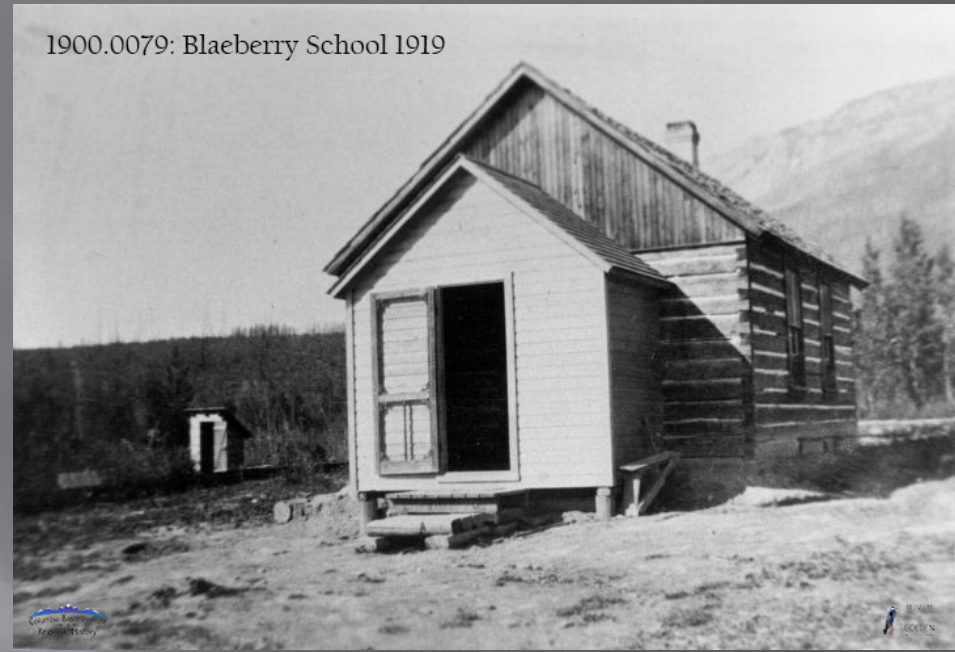
Menadora's first year teaching in Cranbrook 1959-60 at Central School



Lady Grey School



1900.0079: Blaeberry School 1919



Blaeberry School

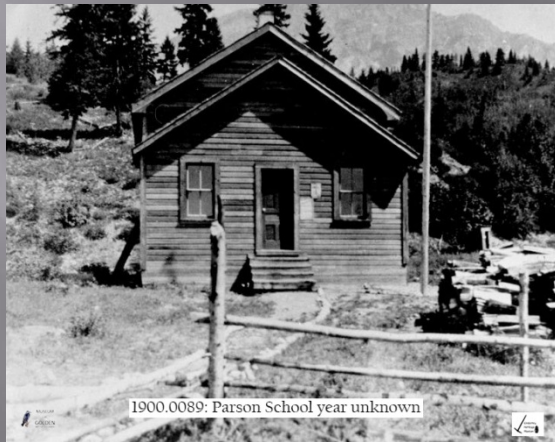


CASTLEDALE SCHOOL C.1932

1900.0090: Castledale School c.1932



Mountain Ridge School
McMurdo, BC



1900.0089: Parson School year unknown

Parson School



1900.0102: Horse Creek School year unknown

HORSE CREEK SCHOOL

Golden Elementary School



The Lost & Almost Forgotten

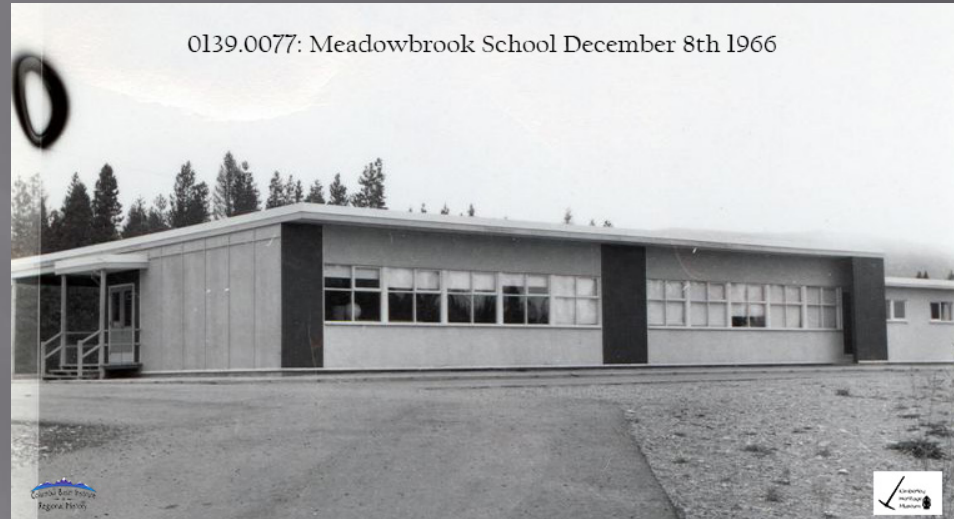


Relocating Brisco's 1st School 1980

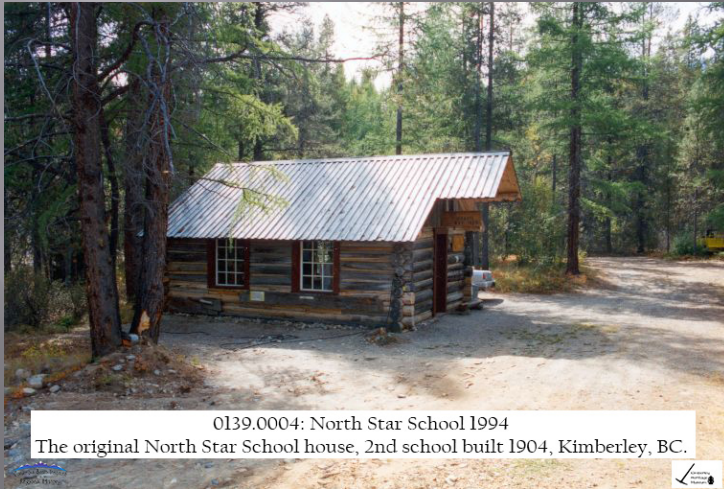
0150.0001: Kimberley Central School c.1920
before the 2nd addition was built



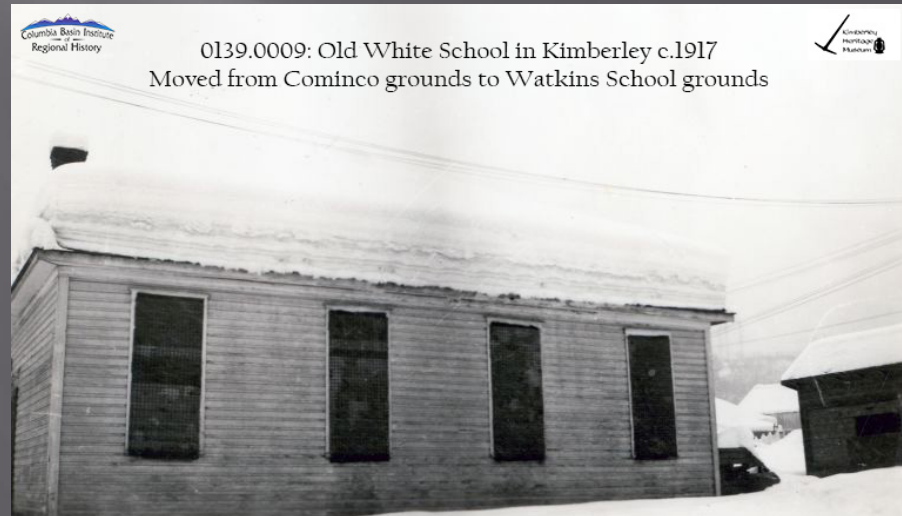
0139.0077: Meadowbrook School December 8th 1966



Almost Forgotten



0139.0004: North Star School 1994
The original North Star School house, 2nd school built 1904, Kimberley, BC.



0139.0009: Old White School in Kimberley c.1917
Moved from Cominco grounds to Watkins School grounds

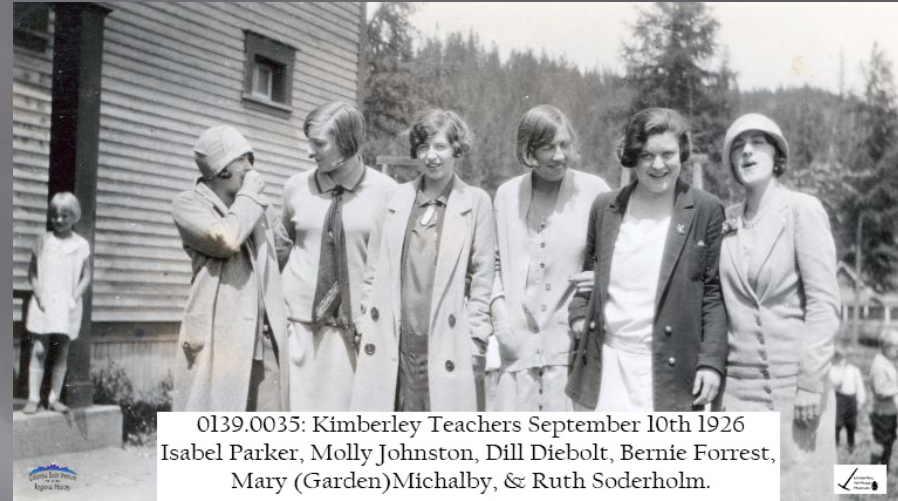
New Schools



School Boards & Teachers

0139.0003: Kimberley School Board c.1940

Back row: Unknown, John McCauly, Unknown, Mickey Thomas, Tom Knighton;
Front row: A.A. Watkins, Mrs. Cameron, P.J. McKim, Bert Bentley, W.J.(Red) McKim



0139.0035: Kimberley Teachers September 10th 1926
Isabel Parker, Molly Johnston, Dill Diebolt, Bernie Forrest,
Mary (Garden)Michalby, & Ruth Soderholm.



0139.0008: Kimberley School Principals c.1931
Wilf Orchard: Sullivan School, Harold Stafford: Central School
& Art Patterson: Chapman Camp school.

Class Photos



Miss McDonald (Teacher) Brisco School 1919

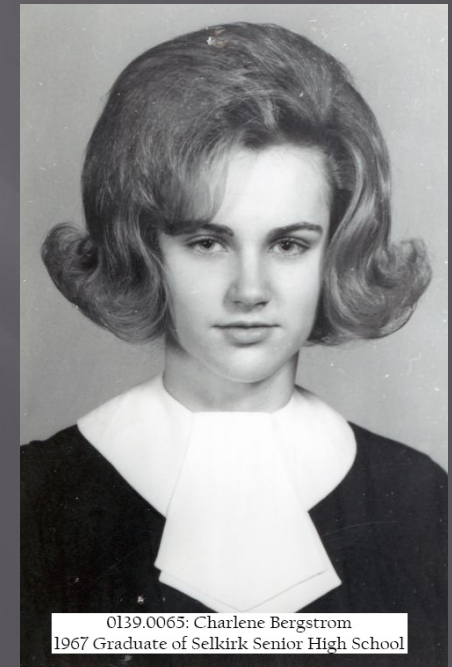


Lady Grey School
Teacher Mae Johnson Class





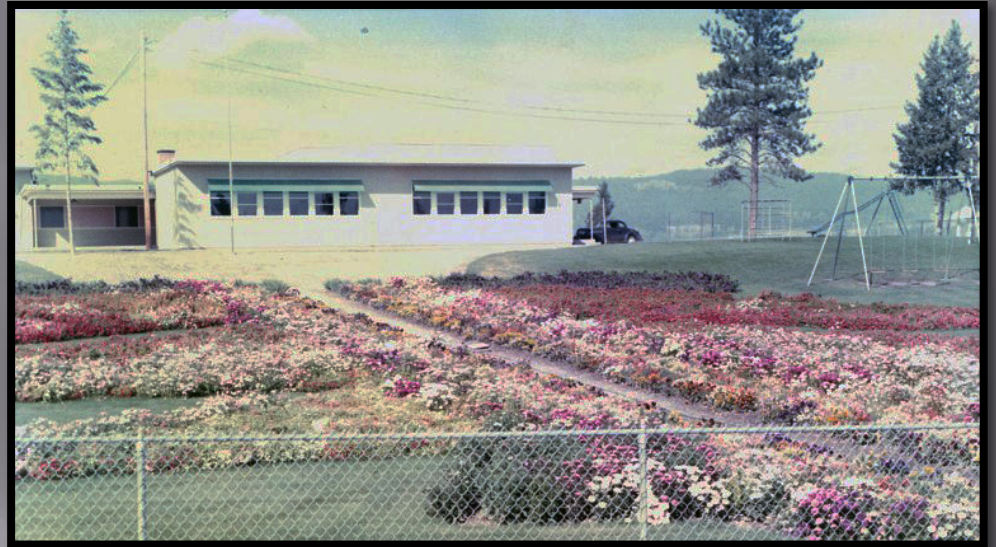
Class Photos



WAR TIME GARDEN AT BRISCO SCHOOL C.1942

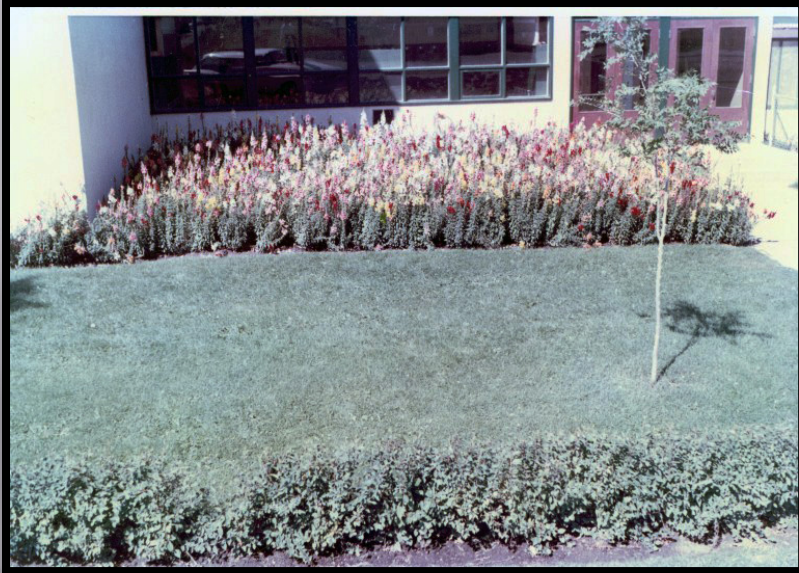


1900.0084: War Time Garden at Brisco School c.1942



School Gardens

Amy Woodland School Gardens c.1960



School Activities

Central Library
Fergus Falls

0139.0011: "Flag Pole Climber"
Kimberley Central School c.1930



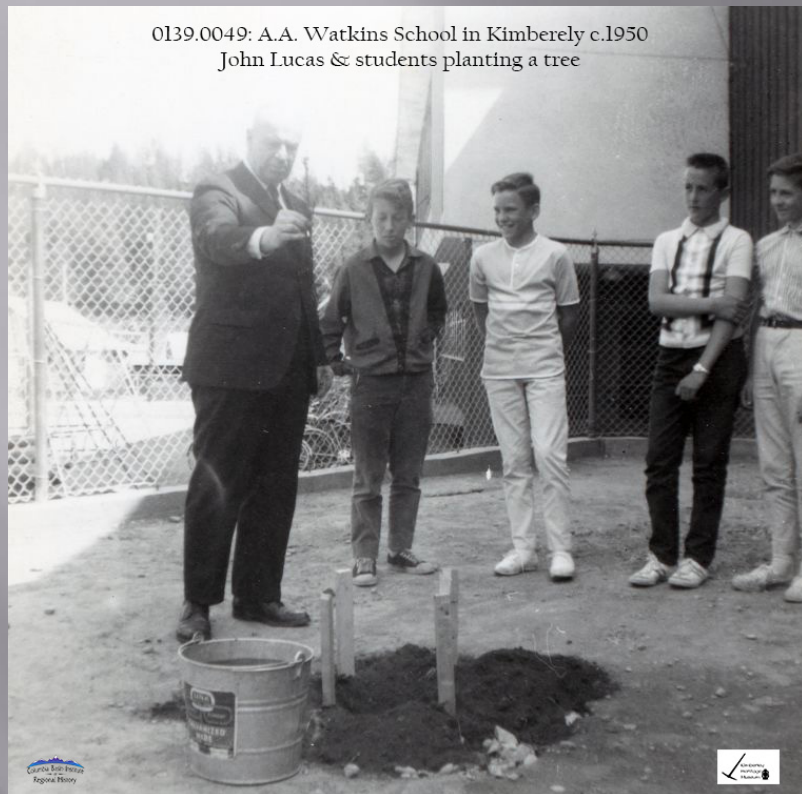
0139.0140: Safe Driver Education October 14th 1964
Kimberley High School



School Activities

& Visitors

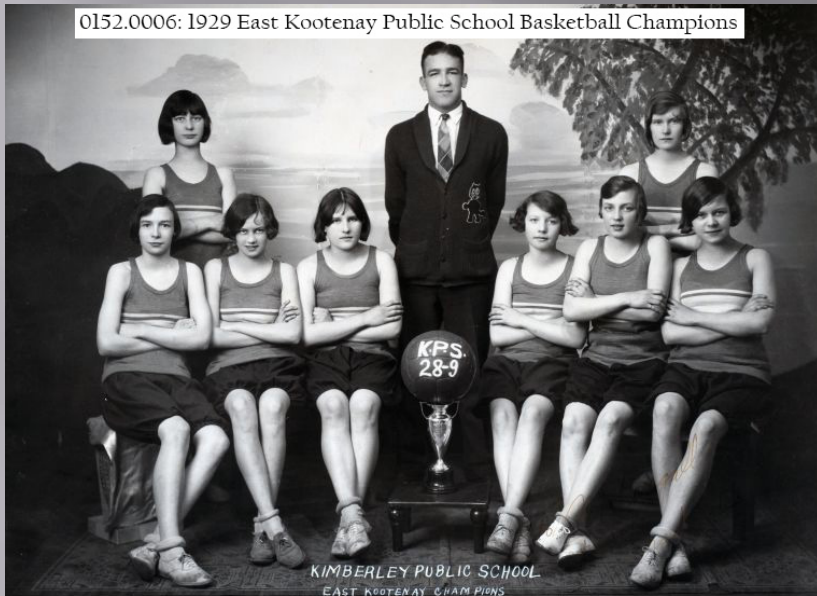
0139.0049: A.A. Watkins School in Kimberley c.1950
John Lucas & students planting a tree



0197.0144: Prince Phillip visits McKim Junior High Kimberley 1977



0152.0006: 1929 East Kootenay Public School Basketball Champions



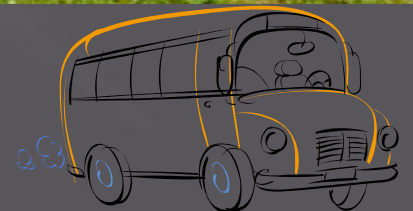
Sports

0152.0006: 1930 East Kootenay Public School Basketball Champions Kimberley



Central School Hockey Rink c.1925

Reunions

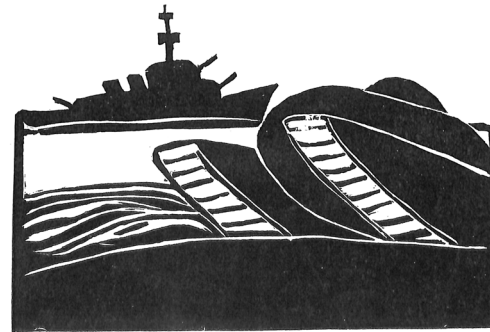


Kimberley High School 1944 Annual



Dedication . . .

TO THE MEN AND WOMEN, ONCE
CAREFREE STUDENTS OF OUR
SCHOOL, WHO ARE NOW DEVOTING
THEIR LIVES TO FIGHTING FOR
THE RIGHTS OF A FREE PEOPLE,
THIS ANNUAL IS PROUDLY DEDICATED.



Page One.



Rotary Park



Key City Theatre

Around Town

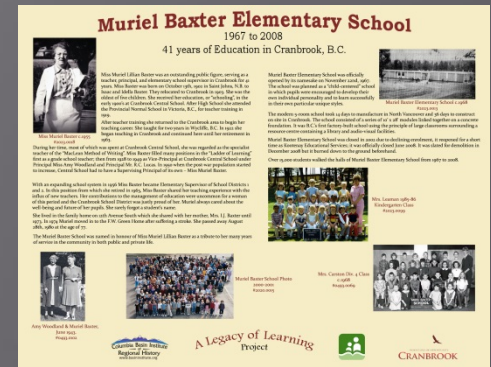


Baker Street



Library

MURIEL BAXTER



Cranbrook Dog Park
Muriel Baxter School Grounds

Where did the schools get their names?

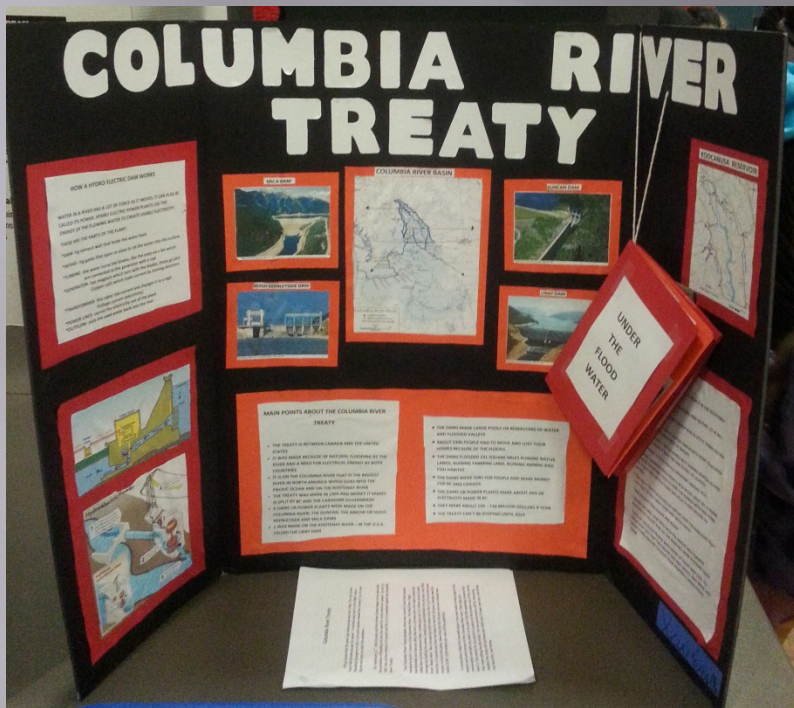


Isabella Dicken Elementary School
located in Fernie BC



School District #5 Office





Use in Schools:

- *History Reports
- *Field Trips
- *Diagrams
- *Science Reports
- *Family Trees

Thank you for time please visit the
Columbia Basin Institute of Regional History website at
www.basininstitute.org or email us at info@basininsitute.org

Also visit us on Facebook 

<https://www.facebook.com/ColumbiaBasinInstituteofRegionalHistory>





DATE: February 24, 2021

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Karen Shipka, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: French Support Teacher Position - Golden

ORIGINATOR: Steve Wyer, Assistant Superintendent

REFERENCE: Consultant Report 2010 – French Program in Golden, District Practice, [French Immersion Programming - BC](#)

ISSUE

That the Board of Education support district administration’s decision regarding the staffing allocation for the French Support position in Golden.

BACKGROUND

In 2010, the Board of Education of SD6 (Rocky Mountain) conducted a review of the French Immersion program in the Golden Zone. The Board was faced with decreasing enrollments and shrinking resources and was seeking recommendations that would ensure that strong English and French programs would continue to be offered.

A number of factors were evaluated and can be found in the full report in Appendix A.

Recommendations from the report include:

1. Phase out the Kindergarten entry to FI starting in 2011/12 and implement a grade four start in a grade 4-12 model starting in 2015/16.
2. Integrate an introduction to learning French at APES, Nicholson and Field for all K-3 students beginning in 2011/12.
3. Provide quality Core French program, delivered by teachers with appropriate linguistic and pedagogical background, starting at grade 4 for “non-immersion” students at LGES and Nicholson.
4. Improve the quality of the FI program at Golden Secondary School.
5. Improve the quality of Core French programming at GSS.
6. Develop and sustain staff development and other opportunities to enable students, staff and parents in dual track schools to work more interdependently in a collaborative culture.
7. Refine policy related to access to and exit from French immersion program and develop administrative procedures that clearly articulate processes for transfer: rationale for decisions made, personnel to be involved, and locus of responsibility for decision enactment.

Recommendation 1 was implemented as recommended. Recommendation 2 was implemented by staffing a full time French teacher to support French language acquisition K-3 at the three school sites. The position also provides some Core French support Gr. 4-7. This support has been in place for 11 years but only supports Lady Grey, APES and Nicholson, not GSS.

Recommendation 3 resulted in Core French programming in grades 4-7 at Nicholson and APES, supported by the French Support Teacher. Recommendations 4-5 have been implemented.

However, in looking at current 1701 data, enrollment in French Immersion programming drops substantially from grade 8-12.

February 2021 1701 Verification Report shows:

Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
28	27	28	23	22	14	11	8	9

Recommendation 6 resulted in a significant acquisition of learning resources in the Golden community to support French instruction. Recommendation 7 resulted in the development of a District Practice that outlines entry/exit for French Immersion in the Golden Zone (Appendix B)

CURRENT SITUATION

Recent staffing challenges have led senior staff to examine the staffing allocation that supports French language in Golden. Considerations of equity across the district, strategic priority, and general program need were examined.

1. Equity

All students in the province of BC are required to demonstrate learning in Core French beginning in Grade 5. We have been providing a disproportionate level of support for students in Golden prior to Grade 5, and from Grade 5 onward, in Core French. We have been using the French Support teacher to enhance the learning opportunities in Core French only for students in Golden. An overall examination of where the Core French needs are most pressing throughout the district has not been completed.

2. Strategic Priority

The School District 6 Strategic Plan is informed by data and evidence suggesting areas where district priorities come to light. For example, the Board of Education has seen achievement data revealing a priority to improve numeracy outcomes for all students. Of course, where the district identifies priorities, the district also prioritizes allocations of resources, including staffing. The closing of Field School and the recent opening of a Francophone School in Golden would suggest that additional French support in Golden is no longer necessary to sustain the Immersion program. There is a high level of interest in French Language at the younger grade levels. A further examination of the programming offered at GSS might show that if additional learning opportunities were available to students in grade 8-12, the dramatic reduction in student enrollment in French may be alleviated.

3. Overall Need

Ten years ago, when the French Support Teacher position was created, there was a general concern that the French Immersion Program may suffer through low registration numbers by beginning in Grade 4. In order to boost interest in French prior to Grade 4 entry into French Immersion, the French Support Teacher would support English teachers, K-3, to introduce French language to students in English classes. The lack of interest of parents to enroll their children in French Immersion programming at Grade 4 never happened in Golden. In several of the past years, the district has been forced to run lotteries and wait lists for students to access the French Immersion program. There are currently no signs of declining interest in the French Immersion program beginning at Grade 4.

It is very difficult to recruit and retain French Language teachers in Golden. Currently, we have been forced to transfer the French Support teacher to a classroom position to fill a leave, as no French teachers were available. District administration predicts this to be an ongoing challenge in the future. Therefore, the need to have qualified and competent French Language teachers in front of students in the French Immersion Program is more pressing than the need to support teachers and students in primary Core French for which there is no current BC curriculum.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A portion of the French Support Teacher position is funded through Federal funding grants, which are unpredictable, and is supplemented from district operating budgets. The district operating budget supplements approximately 60% of a full time teacher salary for this position to support K-3 programming in 2 schools and to add additional teacher time to classes to support Core French instruction, Grade 5-7 at Lady Grey. Teachers in other zones provide Core French Language instruction as part of their generalist qualification.

IMPLICATIONS

It is possible that the French Immersion program at Grade 4 is benefiting slightly from the French Support Teacher's work with English teachers at the K-4 level. However, this has not been measured over the duration of the initiative. It is more difficult to tell whether or not there are more positive implications to be realized by a reallocation of French grant funding to support other French program needs within the district.

In the event the district decided to re-allocate staffing resources with respect to this position, this teacher would still have full time continuing employment in her current school, in the French Immersion and Core French Programs.

CONCLUSION

The Core French Support teacher met a need to support other teachers during the transition between Early French Immersion and the current model of French Immersion in Golden. For the reasons described above, this position no longer aligns closely enough with district strategies nor does it support the curricular mandate for Core French in BC.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the Board of Education support district administration to re-allocate the resources currently spent in Golden on the French Support Teacher position toward other district priorities and toward a more equitable distribution among all communities and schools responsible for Core French in School District 6.

MOTION OPTION:

That the Board of Education support district administration to re-allocate the resources currently spent in Golden toward a more equitable distribution among all communities and schools responsible for Core French in School District 6.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMNET

Guiding Principles:

We pledge as individuals and as an organization to:



- Competent professionalism as we strive for best practice
- Collaboration and open communication
- Respect, fairness, and caring



CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
AND POLICY (CSELP)

EXTERNAL REVIEW OF THE GOLDEN ZONE

FINAL REPORT

June 25, 2010

This report constitutes final report of the external review of the Golden Zone of the Rocky Mountain School District.

SD 6 RFP 2010-001.

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND LEADERSHIP

External Review of the Golden Zone: Rocky Mountain School District 6 (Final Report)

Robin Brayne | Dan Laitsch | Cynthia Lewis | Fred Renihan | Larry Sackney |
Lee Southern

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Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	5
Context	5
Purposes of the Study	5
Design of the Study	6
Engaging the Golden Zone Communities	6
Consultation Questions	7
Limitations of the Study	8
Organization of the Report	8
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE AND RESEARCH REVIEW, SUSTAINING QUALITY PROGRAMS	9
Quality Programs for Literacy and Multiliteracies	9
Diverse Models of FSL with Varying Outcomes	10
Measurable Common Outcomes: The Use of the Common Framework	11
Sustaining Quality Programs: Enablers and Barriers	14
Promising Practices for the Future: Some Examples	16
Summary	17
CHAPTER 3: ENROLMENT AND FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS	18
Population Demographics	18
Population Growth in the Rocky Mountain School District	19
Capacity and Utilization	23
School Profiles	24
Field Elementary	24

Alexander Park Elementary	25
Nicholson Elementary	26
Lady Grey Elementary	27
Golden Secondary	28
Capacity Utilization	29
Grade Configuration for Golden Zone Schools	30
Special Education Students in the Two Programs	31
Financial Parameters	32
CHAPTER 4: LETTING THE DATA SPEAK—THE CONSULTATIONS	33
Introduction	33
Student Feedback	34
Feedback from the SPC’s and PAC’s	36
Feedback from the French Immersion Teachers	40
Feedback from the English Program Teachers	42
Feedback from the Canadian Parents for French	46
Feedback from the Principals’ Group	49
The Question of Quality	51
Themes in the Data	52
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	53
The Study in Retrospect	53
Policy Options	54
Recommendations	54
Recommendation One: Implications	55 55
Recommendation Two Implications	56 56
Recommendation Three Implications	56 57

Recommendation Four Implications	57 57
Recommendation Five Implications	58 58
Recommendation Six Implications	59 59
Recommendation Seven Implications	59 59
Concluding Comment	60
APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY PROFILE	62
Community Profile from 2006 Census	62
APPENDIX B: FINANCIAL PROFILE	67
Financial Profile of the Rocky Mountain School District	67
APPENDIX C: CONSULTATION SCHEDULE	72
Consulting Phase Time Frame:	72
Each Consult:	72
Groups:	72
Schedule:	72
APPENDIX D: CONSULTATION QUESTIONS	73
Context	73
General Group Questions	73
Questions for Students	73
APPENDIX E: REFERENCES	75

Executive Summary

The Board of Education for the Rocky Mountain School District No. 6 is committed to providing both a strong English program and a strong French language program in the Golden zone. Given that the board is confronted with decreasing enrolments and shrinking resources, the Board of Education engaged the SFU Centre for the Study of Educational Leadership and Policy (CSELP) to:

- *Examine enrolment trends and school capacity utilization in the Golden zone*
- *Consult with interested stakeholder groups – students, parents and educators*
- *Assess the implications of enrolment trends and input from the consultations for existing configurations for French and English program delivery*
- *Review research respecting program delivery models*
- *Identify alternative configurations that are educationally sound for all students in the Golden zone*
- *Make recommendations to the Board of Education*

The consultations, involving students, parents (parent advisory councils, school planning councils and Canadian Parents for French) and educators (teachers and principals), used semi-structured interviews to initiate and organize discussions, and to provide a scheme for data analyses and reporting. All comments were recorded and themes identified. In addition, written submissions were welcomed and incorporated into the themes. In terms of analyzing and projecting enrolment trends and capacities, Stats BC and Stats Canada data were used, as well as district data. School district staff calculated financial implications using the consultants' model.

Based on its analyses of the various data sources—enrolment and school capacity information, research respecting program delivery options and outcomes, and input from the consultations—the Review Team identified the following major themes:

- *Disagreements/little consensus among stakeholder groups respecting problem definition and problem solutions*
- *Tensions between and among teachers in the FI and English programs: perceptions of inequities in workload, security and resources*

- *The vast majority of special needs students, including those receiving learning assistance, are enrolled in the English program*
- *EDI data for Golden zone (30-40% vulnerable) suggests numbers of students requiring additional/specialized supports will increase*
- *Ambiguities (process, adjudication) respecting access to and exit from FI program: attrition/retention*
- *Enrollments, especially at secondary level, will continue to decline: multi grade grouping structures, maintaining electives for programs that never converge)*
- *Core French programs not perceived as meeting the requirements of the IRP: not currently a credible alternative to FI for achieving B level competency*
- *Kindergarten entry to FI is currently the only avenue to competency/proficiency level in French (pressures, conflicts, inequities associated with such an “all or nothing” approach)*
- *Families in the Field and Nicholson catchment area are drawn away from neighborhood school in early years*
- *Pressure to recruit/retain qualified FI teachers expected to increase*
- *Collaborative cultures in dual track schools appear to be weak*

The Review Team identified four broad policy options for the Board—status quo; middle French Immersion; Intensive French; and late French Immersion—and concluded that the status quo, in the long term, was not sustainable.

Based upon its analyses of the various data sources and mindful of identified issues respecting enrolment, access and equity, sustainability, allocation of resources, learning outcomes, attrition and retention, and program quality, The Review Team made the following recommendations:

- *Phase out the Kindergarten entry to FI starting in 2011/12 and implement a grade four start in a grade 4-12 FI model starting in 2015/16.*
- *Integrate an introduction to learning in French at APES, Nicholson and Field for all K-3 students beginning in 2011/12.*

- *Provide a quality Core French program, delivered by teachers with appropriate linguistic and pedagogical background, starting at grade 4 for “non-immersion” students at LGES and Nicholson.*
- *Improve the Quality of the FI program at Golden Secondary School*
- *Improve the Quality of Core French programming at Golden Secondary School*
- *Develop and sustain staff development and other opportunities to enable students, staff and parents in dual track schools to work more interdependently in a collaborative culture*
- *Refine policy related to access to and exit from the French Immersion program and develop administrative procedures that clearly articulate processes for transfer; rationale for decisions made; personnel to be involved; and the locus of responsibility for decision enactment*

Chapter 1: Introduction

Context

Rocky Mountain School District (School District Number 6) extends along the Columbia Valley in British Columbia from Field in the north through Golden and Invermere to Kimberley in the south. The boundaries of the School District have a total population of 24,000 and the School District provides a comprehensive education program and associated supports to just over 3100 learners. The School District's annual budgeted operating expenditures for 2009/10 are \$33,159, 826.

The School District is organized into three zones – the Golden Zone in the north, centrally located Windermere Zone and Kimberley Zone in the south. Six of the 17 school sites in the School District are in the Golden Zone – Alexander Park Elementary (K-3), Field Elementary (K-3), Golden Alternate School (10-12), Golden Secondary (8-12), Lady Grey Elementary (4-7), and Nicholson Elementary (K-7). The Golden Zone serves a little over 900 learners – 393 in grades 8-12 and 532 in Kindergarten to grade 8.

The School District delivers a comprehensive K-12 education program consisting of a wide variety of provincial and Board authorized educational programs and services in the Humanities, Mathematics/Sciences, Physical Education, Applied Skills and Career Education.

The School district provides a variety of specialized services for learners with exceptional needs; alternate educational programs in each of the Golden, Windermere and Kimberley zones; adult education programs throughout the School District; and early learning programs, initiatives and supports in partnership with the community.

The School District provides FSL programs in early French Immersion (Golden Zone), Core French (Golden, Kimberley, and Windermere zones) and Intensive French (Windermere and Kimberley zones).

Purposes of the Study

In keeping with its mission statement, guiding principles and school district directions, the Board of Education is committed to quality education for all students. This commitment is to both a strong English program and a strong French language education program in the Golden Zone. In order to address how the Board can continue to meet this commitment within its challenging planning

environment, the Board engaged the SFU Centre for the Study of Educational Leadership and Policy to:

- Examine enrolment trends and capacity utilization in the Golden Zone
- Consult with interested stakeholder groups
- Assess the implications of enrolment and capacity trends and input from consultations for existing configurations for French Immersion and English program delivery
- Identify and consider alternative configurations that are educationally sound for all students in the Golden Zone
- Make recommendations for consideration by the Board

Design of the Study

In keeping with the intention of the Board to effectively and efficiently address its commitment to provide high quality French and English programs in the Golden Zone in the face of a projected decline in overall enrollment, the Centre for the Study of Educational Leadership and Policy (CSELP) undertook the following tasks:

- Reviewed the community profile (demographic information), population growth, enrolment changes, school capacities and utilization in the Golden Zone
- Described 2009/10 revenues and expenditures related to schools in the Golden Zone
- Reviewed relevant research, literature and documentation related to enablers and obstacles in sustaining high quality English and French programs
- Engaged stakeholder groups in a consultative process designed to elicit perspectives, insights, and perceptions of French and English program quality as well as program related suggestions

Engaging the Golden Zone Communities

The consultations with the stakeholder groups were carried out during the week of May 25-28, 2010. The following sixteen consultation meetings, ranging from one hour (e.g. students) and two hours duration (all other groups), were held:

- FSL (Core French) Grade 10/11/12 Students
- French Immersion Grade 8/9 Students
- French Immersion Grade 10 Students

- French Immersion Grade 11/12 Students
- Golden Secondary School Students who have dropped out of French Immersion
- English Program Students Grade 8/9/10/11/12
- Students who had graduated from the French Immersion Program
- Golden Canadian Parents for French Executive
- Golden Secondary School Parent Advisory Council Executive and School Planning Council
- Alexander Park Elementary School Parent Advisory Council Executive and School Planning Council
- Nicholson Elementary School Parent Advisory Council Executive and School Planning Council
- Lady Grey Elementary School Parent Advisory Council Executive and School Planning Council
- Field Elementary School Parent Advisory Council Executive and School Planning Council
- French Immersion Teachers
- English Program Teachers
- Principals in the Golden Zone

Consultation Questions

The two consultants facilitating the consultations used prompt/set questions to initiate and organize the discussions and to provide a scheme for data collection and reporting. In general terms, the consultations sought perceptions and opinions about the current quality of French and English programs in the Golden Zone, aspirations about what French and English programs in the Golden Zone should look like, and suggestions about what actions the Board should take in improving French and English programs. All comments were recorded and recurring themes identified.

Students were asked what they liked most about their school programs, what they perceived to be their most powerful learning experiences, what suggestions they had about electives, whether their second language programs were meeting their expectations, how they rated their abilities in French, what they saw as the advantages and disadvantages of being in a small secondary school, and what experiences they had with alternative methods of program delivery.

Parents, teachers and school administrators were asked their opinions respecting the quality of English and French programs in Golden schools, their thoughts respecting the consequences and implications of continuing to provide French and

English programs within current school configurations, their suggestions respecting how the Board could organize for high quality instructional programs in French and English within a context of shrinking enrolments, their understandings of what was meant by program quality, their expectations for maintaining high quality educational programs in English and French, and what they perceived to be the barriers to maintaining high quality programs.

Limitations of the Study

The study and its sources of data, findings, conclusions, and recommendations were limited to the Golden Zone.

The enrollment projections described in the Report are based upon the assumption that the future will be much like the past. The cohort survival technique used in the study utilizes survival rates based on enrollments in the Golden Zone for the previous five years. In preparing the projections, some weight was given to economic indicators.

Financial projections were calculated for schools in the Golden Zone based on existing data (status quo) and projected for the next year.

Organization of the Report

The Report is presented in five chapters.

Chapter one provides an introduction to the Report, setting out the context, purposes, design, and organization of the study.

Chapter two presents a summary of the literature, recent research and documentation respecting French as a Second Language (FSL) programming options – Core French, Intensive French and French Immersion - and outcomes.

Chapter three presents enrollment, financial and school capacity/utilization information.

Chapter four presents the perspectives, suggestions and feedback received at the consultation meetings, and key themes and issues.

Chapter five presents general policy options and specific recommendations for consideration by the Board of Education based upon the community consultations, correspondence received, previous consultations initiated by the Board, enrolment and capacity information and relevant research.

Chapter 2: Literature and Research Review, Sustaining Quality Programs

This literature and research review has been commissioned as part of a multi-faceted review of French and English program planning options conducted on behalf of the Board of Education of the Rocky Mountain School District (School District Number 6), to "efficiently and effectively address the Board's commitment to provide high quality French and English Programs in the Golden Zone in the face of projected decline in overall enrollment". The scope of this review is limited to summarizing the literature, recent research, and documentation regarding French as a Second Language (FSL). Schools in Canada have implemented various models of time and intensity for learning French. Program options are generally referred to as Core French, Intensive French, and Immersion models, each involving special considerations for effectiveness and sustainability. This chapter summarizes the factors involved in sustaining "high quality" FSL programs, and offers trends in promising practices and planning considerations for the district.

Quality Programs for Literacy and Multiliteracies

The British Columbia school system provides a thriving diversity of programs in English and French. Students whose home languages are English, French, another international language or an Aboriginal language share the richness of their backgrounds at school; they go to school in one official language, and learn a "second" or additional languages at school in a variety of programming contexts (BC Ministry of Education, 1997). These various forms of second language education take place within the broader context of a vision of learning for all students in the 21st Century, through the development of competencies and lifelong learning skills related to literacy and multiliteracies.

Based on an expanded vision of learning, UNESCO provides the following definition of literacy for the 21st Century:

Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society. (UNESCO, 2003).

A new term, “multiliteracies”, has been used to capture the intrinsic value of ‘plurilingual’ and ‘pluricultural’ skills as students participate in the global village.

Multiliteracies refers to the changing nature of literacy derived from two global realities:

- a. Diversification of school systems resulting from unprecedented population mobility and cross-cultural contact;
- b. Rapid technological expansion that is opening up new forms of literacy almost on a daily basis (Cummins, BCSSA, 2006, www.multiliteracies.ca).

These evolving definitions challenge school districts to set goals to specifically concentrate on literacy and multiliteracies in order to develop the competencies of students to understand, speak, read, write, and think about ideas through various modes (e.g., processing information, working with others, using technology tools, and understanding cultural contexts, in one or more languages) (Anderson et al, 2008; Cummins, Brown, & Sayers, 2007).

At the 2009 Pan Canadian conference “Languages without Borders”, Cummins reminded us that Canada is a leader in the development of world class school systems which provide diversified ways and means for students to maintain home languages, as well as to gain and maintain fluency in more than one “second” language. The newly revised Draft IRP for Additional Languages for BC reflects these goals. (Ministry of Education, BC, 2010).

Policies on Official Bilingualism and interventions to promote the learning of English and French now operate in solidly plurilingual and pluricultural Canadian contexts. Bilingual university programs provide increasing ways for students to carry on with official second language (L2) learning within this rich pluricultural context. There are increasing opportunities to continue with courses “en français” at SFU, UBC, the University of Ottawa, Faculté St. Jean in Edmonton, and others.

Diverse Models of FSL with Varying Outcomes

The Canadian context and underlying values of second language (L2) education drive diverse program designs and outcomes in each province. Over the past 40 years, Canada has built a proud history of innovation in second language learning and teaching. These include fostering the development of various models such as early, middle and late French Immersion, Intensive English in Quebec, Intensive French and Extended French, as well as bilingual programs for a number of other languages. Extensive research supports the legitimacy and efficacy of all of these programs, albeit with varying expected outcomes given the time and intensity they are offered (Turnbull et al, 1998; Lapkin, 2009). In BC, Carr (2007) clarified the differences between current BC programs. The Table 1 below is adapted with permission from Carr’s work.

Table 1: A Comparison of FSL Programs in BC

Core French	Intensive French	French Immersion (early, middle, late)
Approx. 200 000 students	Approx. 750 students as of Sept. 2010, and growing as districts implement.	Approx. 45 000 students
Provincially mandated in Grades 5 to 8, generally delivered in two 40-minute lessons per week. 150-200 hours (Grades 5, 6, 7). After Grade 8, an elective.	Program of choice that starts in Grade 6 with an intensive half-year (80% French) followed by Enriched French program (20% French). 600 hours (Grades 6 & 7), special programming for Grade 8 and 9. Various ways to support from Grades 10 to 12.	Program of choice that starts in K or Gr. 6 with 100% French instruction. 60-100% of day in French (K to Grade 7), 50% at Grades 8-10, 25% at Grade 11/12.
Curriculum based on a multi-dimensional communicative-experiential approach.	Curriculum based on a communicative-experiential and literacy-based approach.	Curriculum based on addressing all subject area learning outcomes using French as the language of instruction.
By Grade 12, student is <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •able to interact spontaneously in a limited variety of meaningful, real-life situations, read familiar materials and write to express ideas in simple texts. 	After the intensive year (Gr. 6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •able to show “considerable spontaneity in language production and to initiate and sustain general conversation” (Germain, Netten & Movassat, 2004, p. 309). Research is currently underway to evaluate the expected level when these students continue to Grade 9 and then to Grade 12. 	By Grade 12, student is <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •functionally bilingual; students are able to “live” in the language, pursue post-secondary studies or work in either official language (Ministry of Education, 1997, Definitions)

Measurable Common Outcomes: The Use of the Common Framework

What we can expect FSL programs to deliver in terms of real life language outcomes depends on “time and intensity” (Lightbown, 2000; Mady, 2008; Carr, 2007). The Council of Canadian Ministers of Education (CMEC) (2009) has recently studied and promoted the use of common standards for all L2 programs for adults and children, based on the European Common Framework of Reference for Languages, used in over 50 countries in Europe and in the process of being implemented in all provinces of Canada (Vandergrift, 2006; Canadian Parents for French (CPF), 2008). The rationale for such a Framework includes both the promotion of common understandings about language learning proficiencies and the promotion of an underlying Canadian vision and context for language learning and multiliteracy.

Citizenship education brings a multidimensional orientation to language teaching/learning, as well as recognition of the linguistic and cultural diversity of Canadian society. With the globalization of communications and individual mobility, citizenship education is recognized as opening a window to the world. It is based on the implementation of a critical pedagogy that fosters awareness of other cultures and languages (Guilherme, 2002). Citizenship education supports Canada's vision of valuing the different cultures that make up the Canadian mosaic while respecting linguistic and cultural diversity, as well as individuals' values in their search for a Canadian identity.

Citizenship education is based on the following:

- *Respect for the linguistic and cultural diversity of Canadian society;*
- *Seamless integration for everyone into Canadian society;*
- *A pluralist society that is open to contributions while honouring democratic values;*
- *English and French as common languages of public life;*
- *Knowledge of Aboriginal languages and respect for Aboriginal rights and cultures;*
- *The learning of heritage languages for immigrant populations and respect for their languages and cultures;*
- *The learning of international languages to facilitate understanding among learners; and*
- *Openness to other cultures and the preparing of learners to live in an evolving world. (CMEC, 2009)*

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) situates language learners within three broad divisions (A level=Basic, B level=Independent, C level=Proficient) and six levels. The CEFR describes what a learner can do in the language in each skill area: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. These competencies are briefly summarized in Table 2. The framework can serve a multifaceted role: it can form the basis of summative and formative evaluation, as well as help to shape appropriate instruction and play a role in learner motivation and self-assessment. Accompanying documents such as the “Language Passport and Portfolio” are used as classroom tools with primary, secondary and adult learners in school programs as well as in programs intended to support families newly arrived in the community (Coste & Piccardo, 2010)

It is important to note that the levels described are “absolute”. For example, native speakers may not have reached a “C2” level, which is reserved for highly sophisticated, educated masters of the language. Teachers of additional languages

ideally should themselves have mastered the target language at the C1 level in order to provide appropriate language models to students. This is an ongoing challenge in second language teacher education and professional learning (Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers, 2009; Ponsart & Lewis, 2008).

The CMEC and the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT), working together with European institutions, are currently conducting multi-facetted projects to implement the use of the Framework and to coordinate the use of its levels with a variety of language assessments and prerequisites used by governments and universities, teacher training institutions, the Civil Service, and other institutions. Provinces and school boards, such as the Maritime Provinces and the Edmonton Public School Board, are expanding the availability of credentialing assessments for parents and students across a variety of programs interested in attaining internationally recognized documentation of language learning levels. These ways of clarifying goals and recognizing achievement are thought to be motivational for learners, leading to increased autonomy as lifelong learners of languages (CASLT, 2010).

Table 2: Common European Framework of Reference: Summary of Language Levels (CASLT, 2009)

Level	Description
A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.
A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments

and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.

Researchers are currently working with sample populations of FSL and ESL learners in various programs in Canada to calibrate the levels of the CEFR in order to clarify for parents and students what levels of competence to expect within various program options. Early indications would suggest that (Carr, personal communication, 2010) students in Grade 8 who have experienced Intensive French in BC outperform students of Core French at the secondary level (Grade 10). Preliminary research suggests that the following levels represent the outcomes of the various program choices (BC Ministry of Education, 2010):

- *Core French continued to the Grade 12 level: A2/B1 competency*
- *Intensive French continued to the senior level (Grade 10 and above): B1 competency*
- *Immersion programs continued to the Grade 12 level: B2 competency*

The use of the Common Framework to clarify these outcomes shifts the conversation from “when to start” learning languages to how to maintain and enhance learning through to the end of secondary school, as well as placing emphasis on lifelong learning and learning how to learn further languages for the future.

Sustaining Quality Programs: Enablers and Barriers

From a school district planning point of view, each program mentioned has enabling factors as well as barriers to implementation and sustainability. Table 3 summarizes these factors.

Table 3: Program Enablers and Barriers

Program	Enablers	Barriers
Early Immersion	K entry a “natural” start which coincides with the beginning of schooling.	Requires specialized personnel and space for 12 grade levels. Significant numbers of students leave the program along the way, but none can join after Grade one without prior French.
Late Immersion	Grade 4 or Grade 6 start requires one teacher and one classroom per year at elementary.	Because content is taught in French, some students self select at this level not to join (viewed as more demanding).
Intensive French	Grade 5 or 6 half year “en français” provides a literacy based, low risk “bain linguistique” with a promising “kick start”	Needs systematic and focused follow up at secondary school to maintain and solidify high-level outcomes

Core French	Mandated Grades 4-8 and then an elective at Grade 9-12. Approximately 80 minutes per week provides a low risk introduction to communication.	Outcomes are minimal, especially because often, teachers required to deliver the program at the elementary level do not feel competent (Carr, 2007)
Secondary FSL	Part of the timetable as an elective	Benefits from exchange and other opportunities or experiential learning and short term immersive experiences
Secondary Immersion	3-4 content courses at Grades 8-10, 3 at Grade 11-12 required for the Bilingual Dogwood	Extreme draw on the resources of the timetable for small numbers. Students often plateau in language skills, other electives are limited, and the social group becomes insular.
Secondary Extended	One or more content electives offered in French to all students wishing to enroll	Requires time for course development, an “inclusive and differentiated” approach

The common factor amongst all models is that healthy programs require personnel with specific and complex competencies (CASLT, 2009), leadership, and literacy based pedagogy which assumes differentiation and inclusivity (CPF, 2008). The more personnel required to deliver programs the more challenges districts face in this regard. The recruitment and retention of competent FSL teachers for all programs has been an ongoing challenge in Canada, due to the demand for high quality experiences by parents and the system (Lapkin et al., 1990; MacFarlane & Hart, 2002; Karsenti et al., 2008).

Demographics and the availability of resources and space influence what FSL program offerings individual school districts are able to provide and sustain. Families are also influenced in their choice of program type because of their proximity to the programs and their ability to transport their children to the schools where the programs are located. According to the 2008 CPF report on the state of FSL programs in Canada, about 7% of BC students are currently enrolled in French Immersion programs. This number has remained relatively stable over time. Intensive French programs continue to grow across the country. In BC, perhaps due to the “neighbourhood” nature of the program, the fact that students’ can follow up in secondary school without the commitment of needing to take several courses in French, which forces students to leave French Immersion even though they are motivated to maintain their French, may be a factor for increasing enrolments (Lewis, 1985). From a school district perspective, the Intensive program achieves significant results with a far lesser demand on resources and personnel (Netten & Germain, 2005).

Programs such as Early Immersion, where students can leave over several years, but more students cannot join along the way because they don’t have the prerequisite skills, are doomed to the pressures of small numbers, particularly at the secondary level. Contacts across Canada were asked to share creative solutions to small numbers in Immersion style programs that may be in place. In some provinces, New Brunswick for example, additional federal and provincial funding is provided

to subsidize extremely small numbers, and still split classes are a reality in order to hold onto Immersion models. In Newfoundland, Intensive French has been implemented extensively in many small rural communities. In Ontario, middle immersion models continue to prove successful in school boards such as Ottawa Carleton and others.

Promising Practices for the Future: Some Examples

Current Canadian researchers and lead educators in second language programs are working together to investigate and document innovative solutions to the barriers to increased numbers of students being able to develop significant levels of competence in both official and additional languages (Mady, 2008). Programs that offer multiple entry points in the early and the middle years and which can continue to retain students until the end of secondary school hold the most promise for the greatest numbers of students. The following promising practices and projects are currently underway to strengthen program quality:

1. Students benefit from strengthening the relationship between first language and additional language literacy learning strategies and pedagogy (Anderson et al., 2007).
2. Programs must serve a broad range of abilities and learning styles. Differentiated instruction in all L2 classrooms help to meet the needs of a broad range of learners (CPF, 2008).
3. Teacher recruitment and retention is a continuing issue in L2 programs across Canada. There is a continued need for support for career long development of teacher competencies (CASLT, 2009; ACPI, 2009). Districts can support quality programs by providing ongoing professional learning for languages teachers (Ponsart & Lewis, 2008; Carr, 2007; Lapkin et al., 2009; CASLT, 2009). The use of the Common Framework and Portfolio with teachers in their pre-service years shows promise in clarifying standards and supporting teachers in developing their own language competencies (Kelly et al., 2004; CASLT, 2009).
4. Students in all L2 programs benefit from increased possibilities for interaction with real French speakers and authentic resources and projects via the internet and face to face, for example, outdoor education experiences in French, "immersive" experiences for all learners in all programs, and exchange opportunities (SEVEC, 2010). The power of real life language experiences through exchange opportunities has been documented. Exchange experiences (short term and long term) (SEVEC, 2010) provide students from all programs real life situations in which to solidify and actualize their competencies and their willingness to engage with the language and culture. The educational possibilities of "social networking" technologies can overcome the barriers of time and space, and simulate global communities of learners who share the same language(s) (Murphy, as cited in Mady, 2008).

5. The development and implementation of nationally and internationally recognized credentials to formally recognize language learning levels (e.g., the “DELF/DALF”) (BC Ministry of Education, 2010) provide concrete goals, pathways, and credentials for students.
6. A shared goal of second language programs, regardless of the model, is the development of intercultural awareness and competency (Bennett & Milton, 2009). An increasingly diverse Canadian society and the increasingly global aspect of work in the future create the need for schools to attend to the development of intercultural competencies.
7. Secondary schools need to explore flexibility of programming to lower barriers within the secondary timetable and to allow for more “time and intensity” in all programs. There are increasing examples of program combinations and innovations in progress across Canada which can lead to increased outcomes for students (Mady, 2009). For example, students from various program entry points can come together in Board Approved elective courses designed to provide immersive language learning experiences through Arts and Culture.

The federal government has renewed its commitment to increase the number of students leaving secondary school with a degree of “functional competence” in French (CMEC, 2009). It is indeed timely to explore differing models of time and intensity which may lead to increasing numbers of students leaving Grade 12 at the “independent” B1 or B2 levels. At these levels, students should be able to, with support, pursue post secondary studies in French and/or live and work in a French environment where they could continue to develop their language competence. The challenge for school districts thus becomes to sustain inclusive quality second language learning experiences and to motivate students to continue their programs throughout their secondary years, in order to reap the promise of the benefits of language learning and intercultural awareness.

Summary

This literature review has summarized the criteria and indicators of quality second language learning experiences for students. Different levels of time and intensity result in different levels of competence. Within the resources available, school boards need to prioritize goals and create program choices that will enable the most students possible to achieve an independent level of language proficiency (B1 or B2) by the end of secondary school. All school programs, including FSL programs (Core, Intensive, Immersion) programs, need to be supported in professional learning, resources and personnel so that quality learning is sustainable.

Chapter 3: Enrolment and Financial Projections

This chapter presents the demographics and enrolments for the province, Rocky Mountain School District, and the schools in the Golden Zone. Data on capacity utilization and student configurations are also presented, as well as the financial projections.

Population Demographics

School enrolments change in response to various social and economic factors. In rural areas changing demographic and economic factors have a strong impact on the number of schools and programs the school district can support. In order to understand how these factors are changing, the best source of information is the Census data collected every five years by Statistics Canada. Stats Canada develops a community profile and it is the basis of the data presented here. We are grateful to Yates, Thorn and Associates for providing much of the background data.

The Golden Zone of the Rocky Mountain School District has a very similar profile to the province as a whole (see Appendix A), with the only difference being the percentage of people over the age of 65 (10% for Golden Zone versus 15% for the province). In 2001, the Golden Zone had 29% (2,060) of its population under the age of 20. By 2006, this was down to 24% (1,675 people) or a loss of 15% of its children and youth. These students moved because their parents moved. The 20-44 age cohort declined from 2,750 in 2001 to 2,480 in 2006. The most severe losses occurred in the elementary cohort (5-14 years).

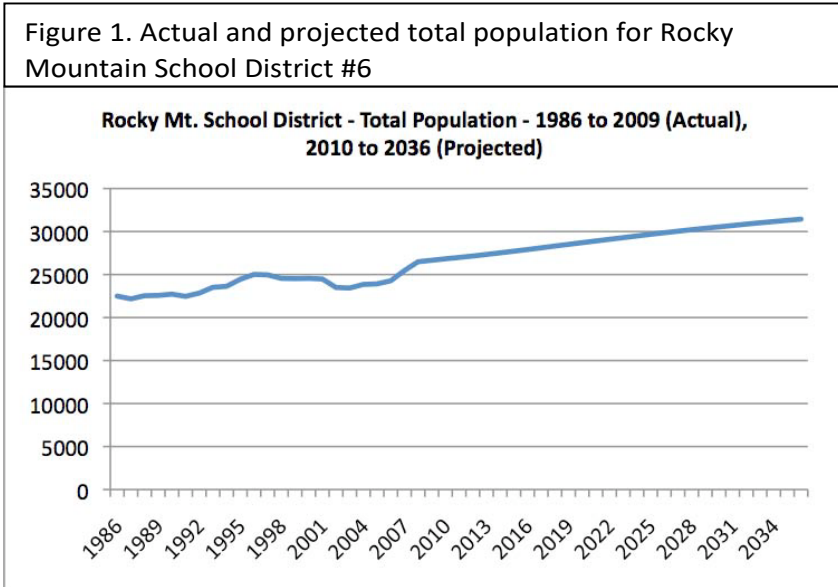
In 2006, there were 1,040 family households with children in the region. Of these, 210 were single parent families, mostly with female heads of households. Another anomaly in the Golden Zone is that a much lower percentage of people compared to the province immigrated in the 1991 to 2000 period (16% for Golden Zone versus 30% for the province). Since the 2001 census four out of ten residents of the region had found a new home.

Economically, the Golden Zone has experienced declines in the forest and other primary industries, but real estate has experienced a substantial increase. However, much of the real estate has not translated into increased student enrolment. It is likely that much of the construction has been tourist- based.

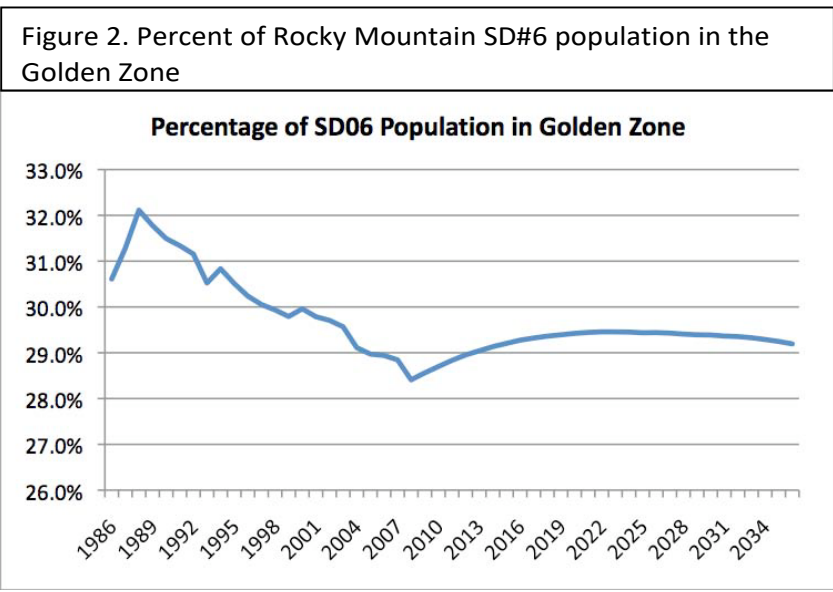
Population Growth in the Rocky Mountain School District

The total population of the Rocky Mountain School District has steadily increased from 22,000 in 1986 to 26,600 in 2009. BC Stats projection is for a steady increase to over 30,000 by 2031 (Figure 1). However, the population projections for the Golden Zone show a continuing reduction of its share of the total population, from 32% in the late

1980s to 28% in 2009 (Figure 2). What is apparent is that the Golden Zone is not sharing in the growth that is occurring in the Rocky Mountain School District. For the period 2010 to 2034, the population is projected to increase slightly and thereafter level off around 29%.



Demographics (see Appendix A) indicate that the generation entering child bearing years around 2000 would lead to more births. This has not occurred. In part, this is because families are having fewer children and women are delaying having babies until later in life. The number of births to residents in BC has only increased marginally and the average age of the first time mother is almost 30.



Kindergarten enrolment in the province has been declining for many years, since its peak enrolment in the mid-1990s. This trend has bottomed out and 2008 was the first increase in Kindergarten enrolment in the province. The province’s current projection is for an elementary enrolment of around 340,000 students in 2018. This

is considerably more optimistic compared to its previous enrolments projects, which were 317,000 in 2017.

At the secondary level, the province is projecting continuing declines over the next ten years until 2019. After that period, slight increases are projected. These increases in secondary enrolments commence once the increasing elementary enrolments work their way through grades 8 to 12.

The Ministry's enrolment projections for Rocky Mountain School District (Table 4) are for continued elementary enrolment decrease from 1,822 students in 2009 to 1,820 students in 2014, and then slight increases thereafter to 1,917 students in 2019. At the secondary level, enrolments will decrease from 3,280 students in 2009 to 3,055 students in 2014, and thereafter show a slight recovery to 3,142

Table 4: Actual and Projected Enrolment Projections K-12 for Rocky Mountain SD#6

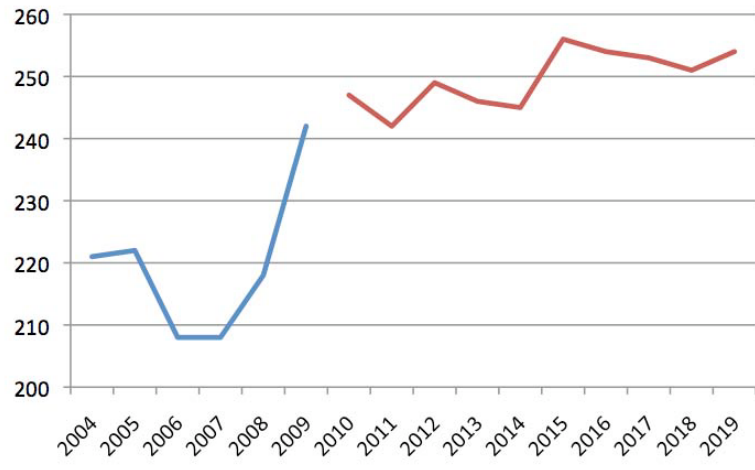
	Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Elem Ungr.	Elem.Sub Total
Actual	2004	221	253	255	228	249	296	269	296	0	2,067
Actual	2005	222	212	242	250	227	244	307	270	0	1,974
Actual	2006	208	222	215	244	244	221	246	301	0	1,901
Actual	2007	208	217	222	222	247	249	225	253	0	1,843
Actual	2008	218	206	202	229	229	236	259	226	0	1,805
Actual	2009	242	205	209	216	232	229	238	251	0	1,822
Projection	2010	247	211	211	224	217	226	210	269	0	1815
Projection	2011	242	215	217	225	224	211	207	238	0	1779
Projection	2012	249	212	221	231	225	218	194	235	0	1785
Projection	2013	246	218	219	237	232	220	202	220	0	1794
Projection	2014	245	216	226	234	238	228	204	229	0	1820
Projection	2015	256	215	223	243	236	233	211	232	0	1849
Projection	2016	254	225	222	240	245	231	216	240	0	1873
Projection	2017	253	224	232	239	242	240	214	246	0	1890
Projection	2018	251	222	232	250	241	237	222	244	0	1899
Projection	2019	254	222	230	249	252	236	220	254	0	1917

	Year	8	9	10	11	12	Sec Ungr.	Sec.Sub Total	All grades	Home School	Grand Total	Yearly change
Actual	2004	332	301	319	340	299	7	1,598	3,665	1	3,666	
Actual	2005	306	340	305	328	320	8	1,607	3,581	1	3,582	97.71%
Actual	2006	273	301	343	312	294	4	1,527	3,428	0	3,428	95.70%
Actual	2007	307	289	312	333	288	6	1,535	3,378	0	3,378	98.54%
Actual	2008	260	321	285	296	308	3	1,473	3,278	0	3,278	97.04%
Actual	2009	238	253	321	330	306	10	1,412	3,234	0	3,280	98.66%
Projection	2010	249	230	298	292	278	10	1357	3172	0	3172	98.08%
Projection	2011	267	240	272	275	269	9	1332	3111	0	3111	98.08%
Projection	2012	237	257	282	251	254	9	1290	3075	0	3075	98.84%
Projection	2013	233	229	300	259	232	9	1262	3056	0	3056	99.38%
Projection	2014	219	225	270	275	238	8	1235	3055	0	3055	99.97%
Projection	2015	229	212	266	250	252	8	1217	3066	0	3066	100.36%
Projection	2016	232	221	251	246	232	8	1190	3063	0	3063	99.90%
Projection	2017	240	224	260	232	225	8	1189	3079	0	3079	100.52%
Projection	2018	246	232	264	239	214	8	1203	3102	0	3102	100.75%
Projection	2019	245	237	273	243	219	8	1225	3142	0	3142	101.29%

students in 2019. The expected rate of growth at the secondary level will be lower in the Rocky Mountain School District compared to the provincial average.

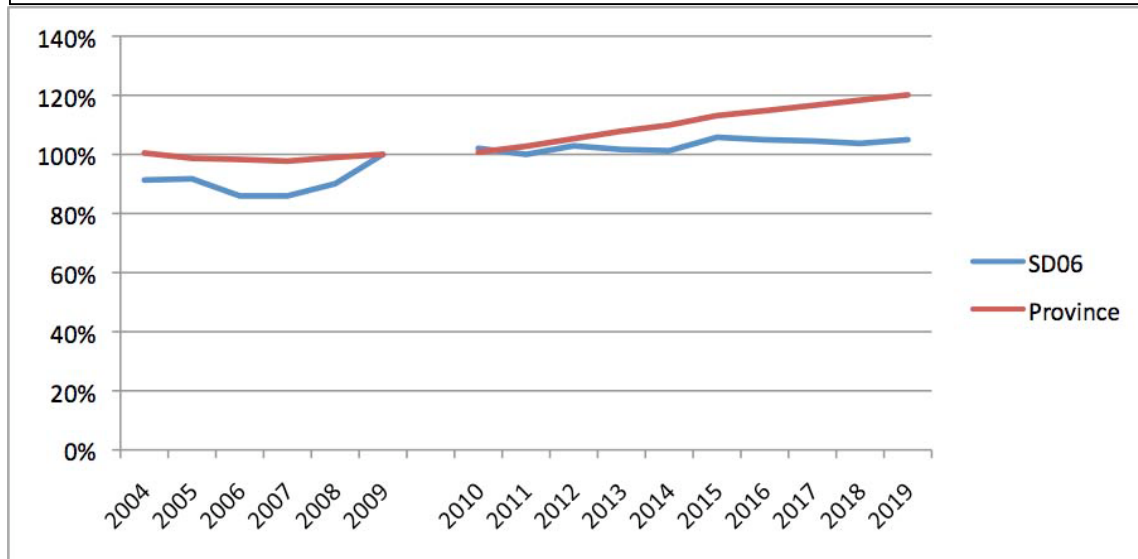
Over the past five years Kindergarten enrolments have fluctuated between 210 and 220, although the 2009 enrolment was 242 (Figure 3). The Ministry’s assumption is that this trend will continue but from the higher total. When these figures are compared with the provincial data, with 100% set at the 2009 level, it is evident that the expected rate of growth for Rocky Mountain School District will be lower than the provincial average (Figure 4). This is likely given that the region’s basic industry remains depressed.

Figure 3. Kindergarten actual and projected enrolments for Rocky Mountain SD#6



Elementary enrolments in Rocky Mountain School District reflect a similar trend to other districts and to the province as a whole (Figure 5, next page). The elementary enrolment decline since 2004 appears to have bottomed out in 2008, with a slight increase in 2009. The Ministry projection is that the elementary enrolment will

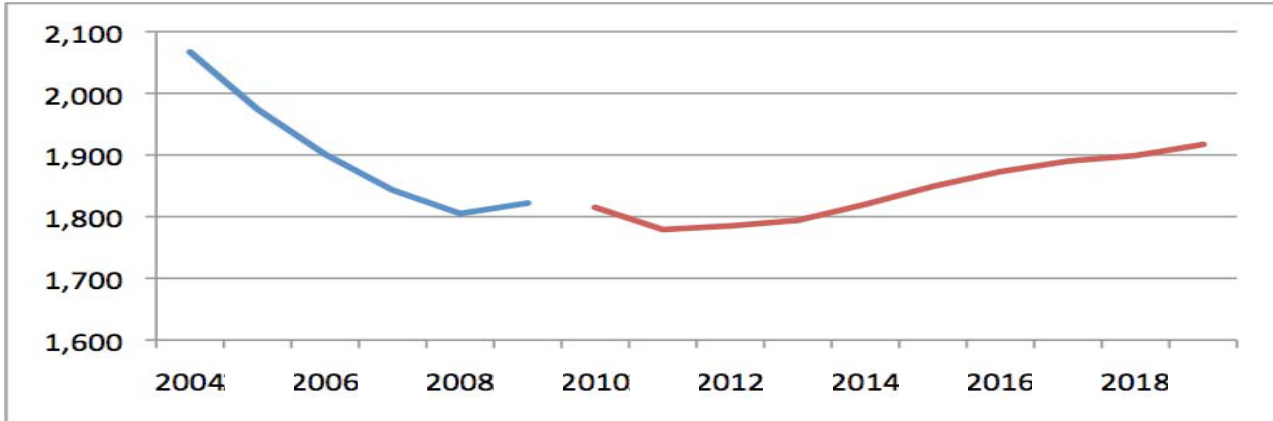
Figure 4. Kindergarten enrolments actual and projected for BC and Rocky Mountain SD#6 with 2009 set at 100%



decline slightly and then rebound through the rest of the projection period to 2019. It is projected that about 140 students will be added to the enrolment.

The secondary enrolments in the District show a continued decline until around 2018 (Figure 6). Thereafter the modest increase in elementary enrolments will work their way through to the secondary level. However, it is likely that the enrolment increases at the secondary level will be modest at best.

Figure 5. Elementary enrolments actual and projected for Rocky Mountain SD#6



The Golden Zone’s elementary population is not growing as fast as the rest of the school district. At the same, it has not lost significantly more enrolment than the district as a whole. It has maintained its share of district enrolment at around 29% at the elementary level and around 28% at the secondary level. The actual and projected district enrolments for the various grade levels are shown in Figure 7 (next page). Figure 8 (next page) shows similar projections for the schools in the Golden Zone.

Figure 6. Secondary enrolments actual and projected for Rocky Mountain SD#6

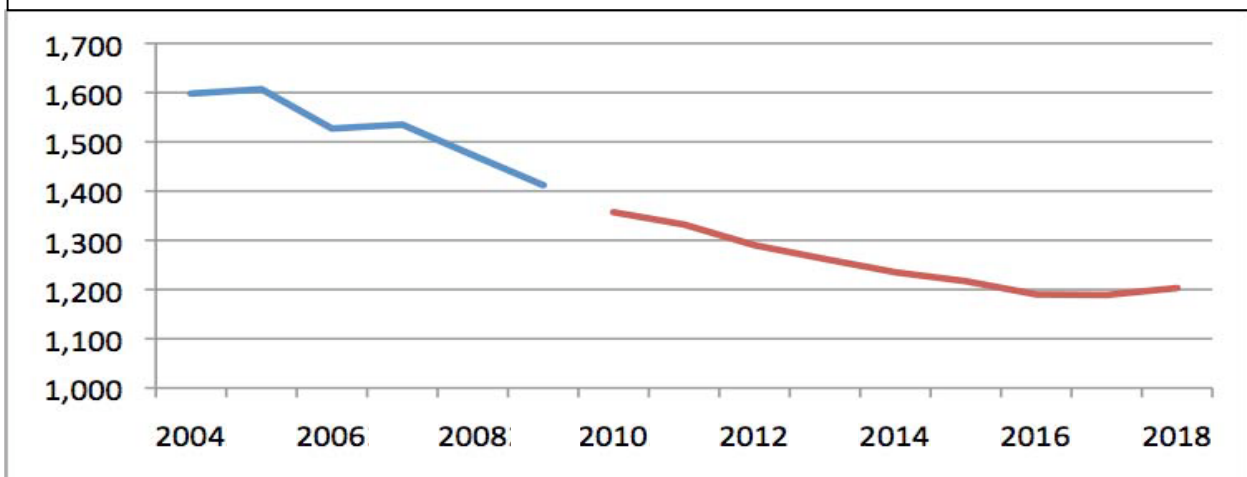


Figure 7. Actual and projected enrolment for Rocky Mountain School District #6

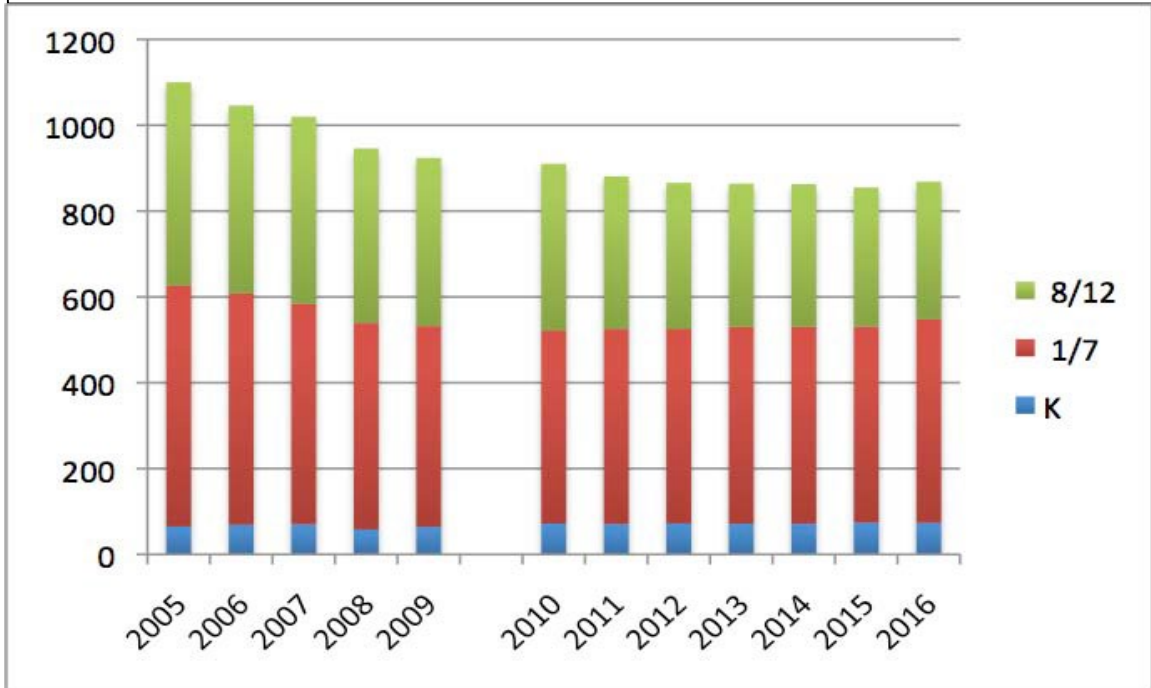
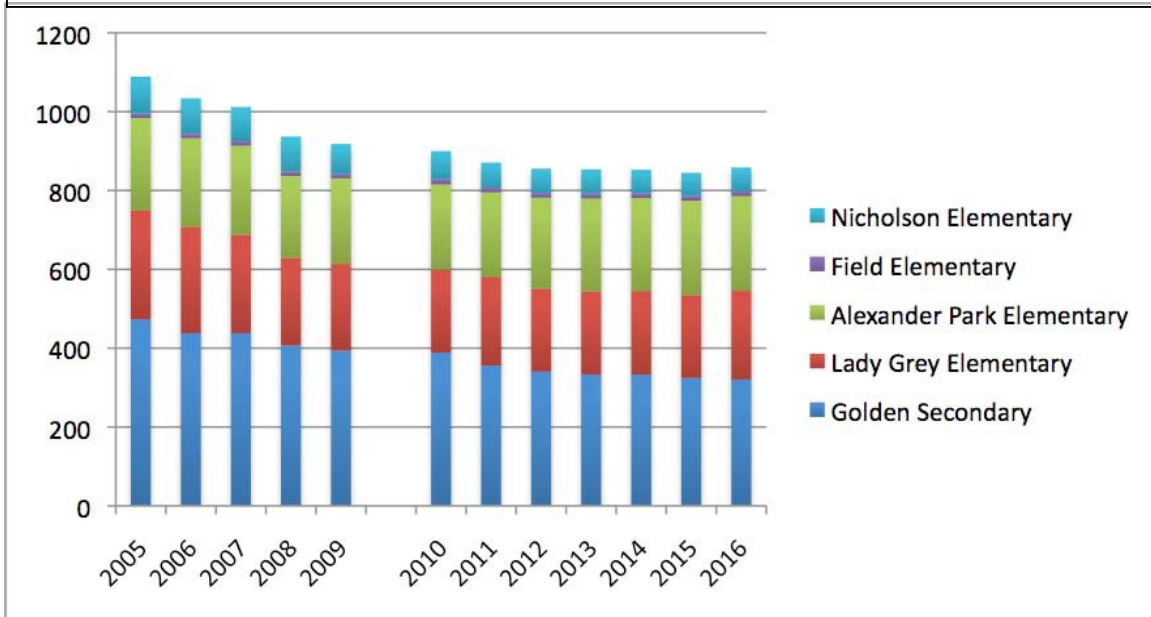


Figure 8. Actual and projected enrolment for the Golden Zone



Capacity and Utilization

There are separate capacities assigned for Kindergarten, elementary (Grades 1-7) and secondary (Grades 8-12) schools. In addition, there is a nominal capacity which is based on 25 students per classroom in Kindergarten and 30 students per

classroom in other grades. In total, the Golden Zone has an operating capacity (Table 5) that will accommodate 152 Kindergarten students, 595 elementary students, and 550 secondary students—almost 1,300 students in total.

	Nominal Capacity			Operating Capacity			Date	Current
	K	E	S	K	E	S	Opened	Configuration
Field Elementary	40	75		38	63		1960	K/3
Nicholson Elementary	40	100		38	93		1962	K/7
Alexander Park Elementary	40	225		38	189		1963	K/3
Lady Grey Elementary	40	250		38	250		1956	4/7
Golden Secondary			550			550	1991	8/12

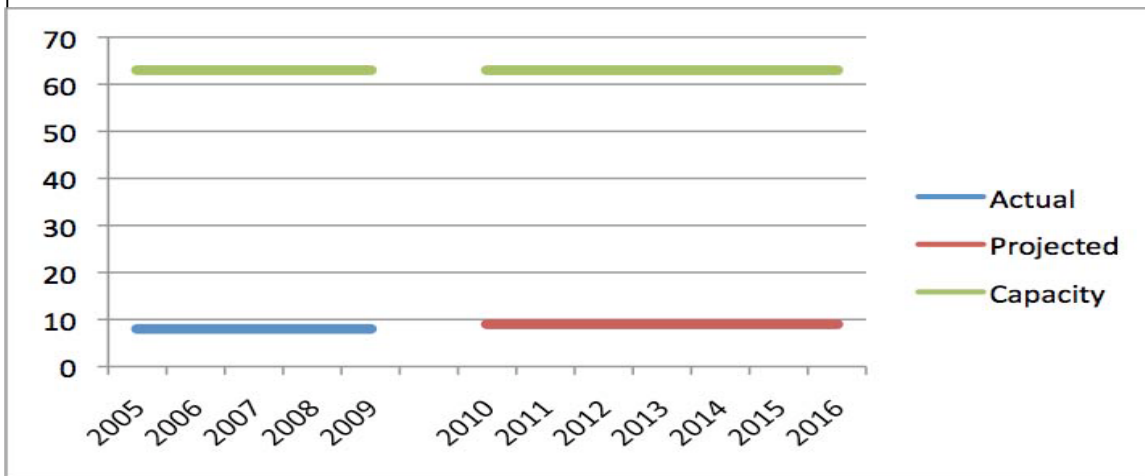
School Profiles

Field Elementary

This is the smallest school in the zone. Its enrolment is too small to project by any statistical means. We have assumed that, if no actions are taken by the School Board to the contrary, it will remain at around its current enrolment (Table 6). The school’s capacity is 38K and 63 grades 1/7, so its enrolment is well below its capacity (Figure 9, next page).

School: Field Elementary							
Calculated by Retention Ratios							
	Year	K	1	2	3	Elem Ungr.	Elem.SubTotal
Actual	2005	3	3	3	2	0	11
	2006	3	3	3	2	0	11
	2007	3	3	3	2	0	11
	2008	3	3	3	2	0	11
	2009	2	1	2	0	0	5
Retention Ratios	4 year	Note: numbers too small for retention calculations to be meaningful.					
	2 year						
	last year						
	Weighted Av. Selected RR.	1.00	1.00	1.00			
Projected	2010	2	2	2		0	8
	2011	2	2	2		0	8
	2012	2	2	2		0	8
	2013	2	2	2		0	8
	2014	2	2	2		0	8
	2015	2	2	2		0	8
	2016	2	2	2		0	8

Figure 9. Enrolment and capacity for Field Elementary School



Alexander Park Elementary

This school enrolls kindergarten to grade 3. It has declined over the last six years from 235 to 217, but over the next seven years will grow back to about the 240 enrolment level (Table 7).

Table 7: Actual and Projected Enrolments for Alexander Park Elementary

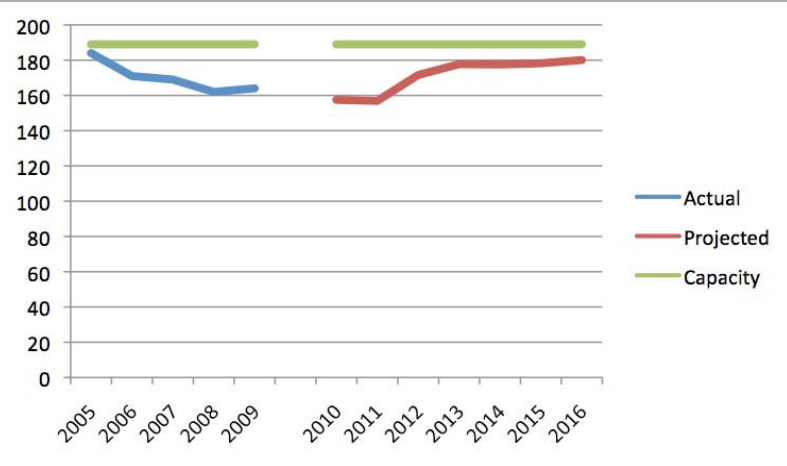
School:		Alexander Park Elementary						
Calculated by Retention Ratios								
Year	K	1	2	3	Elem Ungr.	Elem.SubTotal		
Actual	2005	51	62	61	61	0	235	
	2006	54	48	62	61	0	225	
	2007	57	60	46	63	0	226	
	2008	46	57	55	50	0	208	
	2009	53	44	62	58	0	217	
Retention Ratios	4 year		1.00	0.99	1.04			
	2 year		0.98	1.00	1.07			
	last year		0.96	1.09	1.05			
	Weighted Av.		0.98	1.03	1.05			
	Selected RR.		1.03	1.00	0.95			
Projected	2010	59	55	44	59	0	216	
	2011	58	61	55	42	0	214	
	2012	59	59	61	52	0	231	
	2013	59	61	59	57	0	236	
	2014	58	60	61	56	0	236	
	2015	61	60	60	58	0	239	
	2016	61	63	60	57	0	241	

Its capacity is 38K and 189 grades 1/7 students (Figure 10, next page). The school’s kindergarten enrolment has been and is projected to stay over 38; therefore, two kindergarten classrooms are required for three kindergarten classes. This would reduce the current operating capacity to around 165 grade 1/7 students and place

the school at or above capacity as the school enrolment increases slowly over the next few years.

A further capacity issue will be the move to a full-day Kindergarten which will increase the need for kindergarten space from two to three classrooms. As a result, Alexander Park Elementary will not have any excess capacity and may even require some additional space in the future.

Figure 10. Actual and project enrolments and capacity for Alexander Park Elementary



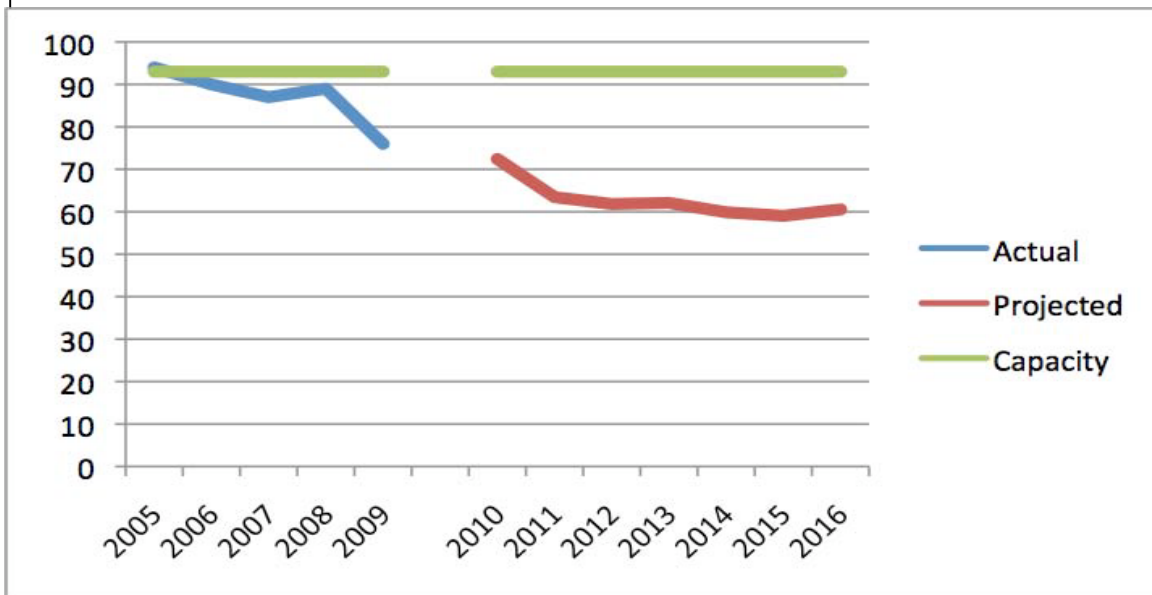
Nicholson Elementary

Nicholson Elementary enrolls kindergarten to grade 7. Over the past five years, its enrolment has been steadily declining to the extent that most grades now have around 10 students (Table 8). The school presently enrolls 84 students and this enrolment is projected to drop to 71 students by 2016. The school’s actual capacity is 93 students indicating that its enrolment is below its capacity and this problem will exacerbate as the enrolments continue to drop (Figure 11, next page). Given the low enrolments this school is vulnerable.

Table 8: Actual and Project Enrolments for Nicholson Elementary

School: Nicholson Elementary											
Calculated by Retention Ratios											
	Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Elem Ungr.	Elem.SubTotal
Actual	2005	11	12	15	15	19	7	10	16	0	105
	2006	12	11	13	15	16	18	6	11	0	102
	2007	10	13	10	12	16	11	19	6	0	97
	2008	9	11	11	8	12	17	11	19	0	98
	2009	8	8	10	11	9	10	18	10	0	84
Retention Ratios	4 year		1.02	0.94	0.93	1.06	0.88	0.99	1.00		
	2 year		0.99	0.88	0.90	1.06	0.95	1.03	0.95		
	last year		0.89	0.91	1.00	1.13	0.83	1.06	0.91		
	Weighted Av.		0.97	0.91	0.94	1.08	0.89	1.03	0.96		
	Selected RR.		0.97	0.94	0.95	1.08	0.90	1.04	0.96		
Projected	2010	10	8	8	10	12	8	10	17	0	82
	2011	10	10	7	7	10	11	8	10	0	73
	2012	10	10	9	7	8	9	11	8	0	72
	2013	10	10	9	9	7	7	10	11	0	72
	2014	10	10	9	9	9	7	7	9	0	70
	2015	10	10	9	9	9	8	7	7	0	69
	2016	10	10	9	9	9	8	9	7	0	71

Figure 11. Enrolment and capacity for Nicholson Elementary



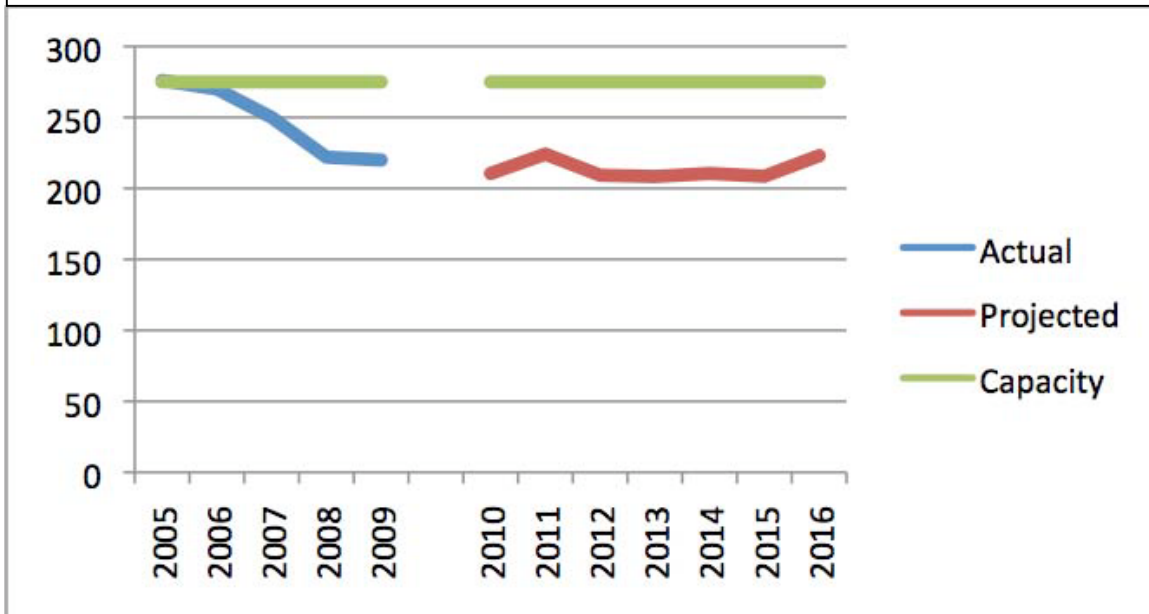
Lady Grey Elementary

Lady Grey Elementary enrolls students at the intermediate grades 4/7. It too has declined over the past six years, and will not see much of an increase for a few years. However toward the end of the projection period, it will see a small increase which will likely continue past 2016, probably through to around 2020 by which time its enrolment should reach 240 students (Table 9). With a capacity of 275 students, this school can accommodate its projected enrolment over the next seven years (Figure 12, next page).

Table 9: Actual and Projected Enrolment for Lady Grey Elementary School

School: Lady Grey Elementary							
Calculated by Retention Ratios							
	Year	4	5	6	7	Elem Ungr.	Elem.SubTotal
Actual	2005	62	67	87	60	0	276
	2006	65	58	65	82	0	270
	2007	55	65	59	71	0	250
	2008	59	49	62	52	0	222
	2009	57	58	42	63	0	220
Retention Ratios	4 year	0.98	0.95	0.95	0.98		
	2 year	1.00	0.94	0.91	0.95		
	last year	1.10	0.98	0.86	1.02		
	Weighted Av.	1.03	0.96	0.90	0.98		
	Selected RR.	1.03	0.96	0.90	1.00		
Projected	2010	62	55	52	42	0	211
	2011	63	59	49	52	0	224
	2012	46	61	53	49	0	209
	2013	56	44	55	53	0	208
	2014	62	54	40	55	0	211
	2015	61	59	49	40	0	209
	2016	63	58	54	49	0	223

Figure 12. Actual and projected enrolments and capacity for Lady Grey Elementary School



Golden Secondary

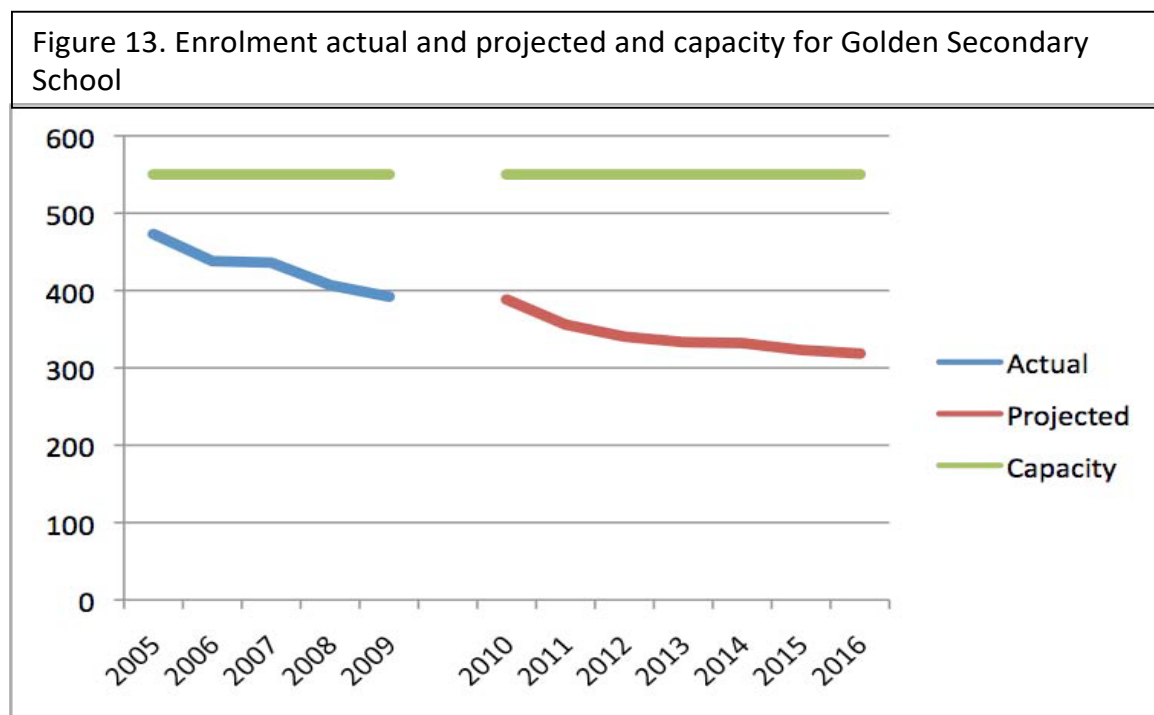
Golden Secondary enrolls all the secondary students in the zone (although there is an alternate school with a current enrolment of 35 students). In 2009, all its grades were at similar enrolment levels between 72 and 84, with lower grades at the lower end of this scale (Table 10). The school also has retention ratios slightly less than

Table 10: Actual and Projected Enrolment for Golden Secondary School

School:		Golden Secondary								
Calculated by Retention Ratios										
	Year	8	9	10	11	12	Sec Ungr.	Sec.SubTotal		
Actual	2005	108	91	90	91	93	0	473		
	2006	74	101	91	87	85	0	438		
	2007	90	80	91	86	89	2	438		
	2008	75	86	80	84	82	0	407		
	2009	73	72	82	84	81	1	393		
Retention Ratios	4 year	1.20	0.98	0.96	0.97	0.97				
	2 year	1.23	0.96	0.98	0.99	0.96				
	last year	1.40	0.96	0.95	1.05	0.96				
	Weighted Av.	1.28	0.97	0.96	1.00	0.96				
	Selected RR.	1.35	0.97	0.96	1.00	0.96				
Projected	2010	85	71	69	82	81	0	388		
	2011	57	82	68	70	79	0	356		
	2012	71	55	79	68	67	0	340		
	2013	67	68	53	80	66	0	333		
	2014	72	64	66	53	77	0	332		
	2015	74	69	62	66	51	0	323		
	2016	54	72	67	62	64	0	318		

1.0 which means that it loses a few students at each grade change. This is a recipe for slow declining enrolments and our projection is for its total enrolment to decline from its current 393 students to 318 by 2016. After this, there will likely be a continuing drift lower to around 300 students in 2020, but some slight increases likely thereafter.

The positive retention ratio between grades 7 and 8 should be noted. This is likely a reflection of students, who are outside the elementary system, enrolling for secondary education. They could have been in private schools elsewhere or home schooled. The school’s capacity is 550 students therefore it has excess space for its projected enrolment (Figure 13). In fact, the excess capacity will continue to grow for a considerable period of time.



Capacity Utilization

The Ministry of Education expects school districts to ensure that there is both adequate capacity in their systems, and to ensure that capacity is not added in one location if space capacity is available close by. Table 11 (next page) shows the capacity utilization at the Golden Zone schools, excluding kindergarten, and how it will change with projected enrolments.

Clearly all schools have adequate capacity at present to accommodate the grade 1/12 enrolment, although Alexander Park may be an exception. Forecasted enrolment and the move to full day Kindergarten may result in some space challenges in the future.

Table 11: Capacity Utilization for Schools in the Golden Zone					
	Golden Sec.	Lady Grey	Alexander Park	Field	Nicholson
2005	86%	100%	97%	13%	101%
2006	80%	98%	90%	13%	97%
2007	79%	91%	89%	13%	94%
2008	74%	81%	86%	13%	96%
2009	71%	80%	87%	13%	82%
2010	71%	77%	83%	14%	78%
2011	65%	82%	83%	14%	68%
2012	62%	77%	91%	14%	66%
2013	61%	76%	94%	14%	67%
2014	60%	77%	94%	14%	64%
2015	59%	77%	94%	14%	63%
2016	58%	82%	95%	14%	65%

Grade Configuration for Golden Zone Schools

Table 12 (next page) shows the grade configuration enrolments for the Golden Zone schools. This table provides the total enrolment in the schools by grade and shows the grade enrolment configuration for the three French immersion schools. What is apparent from these data is that the enrolment in French Immersion decreases as a percentage of the total school enrolment as one moves up the grade levels. As a percentage of the total enrolment, French Immersion at Alexander Park elementary school represents 43%. At Lady Grey (Grades 4-7), the percentage enrolled in French Immersion drops to 31%. Retention in French Immersion is an issue. Low enrolment in the program means that the regular program has to compensate costs accrued by the Immersion program.

Grades	Alexander Park	Nicholson	Lady Grey	Field	Golden Secondary	Golden Special
K	53	8	--	2	--	--
1	44	8	--	1	--	--
2	62	10	--	2	--	--
3	58	11	--	--	--	--
4	--	9	57	--	--	--
5	--	10	58	--	--	--
6	--	18	42	--	--	--
7	--	10	63	--	--	--
8	--	--	--	--	73	--
9	--	--	--	--	72	--
10	--	--	--	--	81	5
11	--	--	--	--	77	18
12	--	--	--	--	78	17

Special Education Students in the Two Programs

Tables 13(this page) and 14 (next page) show the categories, types, and number of students in the two programs. What is apparent from these figures is that the students with special needs are found predominantly in the English language program. Not only are these larger numbers of special needs students found in the English language program, but the class sizes are also larger. In Golden Secondary, there are 37 designated students in the English Language program and one in the French Immersion program. In the Golden Alternate program there are 15 designated students in the English Language program and none in the French Immersion program. The vast majority of special needs students, including those needing learning assistance, are enrolled in the English Language program.

Type	English	French
Chronic Health	5	0
Learning Disabled	4	0
Moderate Behaviour	1	0
Learning Assistance (IEP)	7	1

Table 14: Special Education: Class Sizes and Categories of Needs at Elementary Levels						
Program	Avg Class	Learning Assistance (non-desg)	Learning Disabilities	Behaviour (Mod and Int)	Chronic Health/Autism	Dep. Hand.
English	22.8	17 (2.8/class)	12 (2/class)	7 (1.2/class)	4 (0.7/class)	1 (0.2/class)
French Imm.	22.6	5 (1.7/class)	2 (0.7/class)	2 (0.7/class)	1 (0.3/class)	0
Total	217	22	14	9	5	1

Financial Parameters

The financial data were compiled by the Rocky Mountain School District financial staff using the contractor's model. The financial picture for the school district is captured in Appendix B. As can be seen, the cost of educating students in the Golden Zone is considerably higher compared to the rest of the district. As a proxy of this comparison, the cost of educating students in the Rocky Mountain School District (excluding the Golden Zone) is just over \$10,000 per student. On the other hand, the cost of educating the students in the Golden Zone is a little more than \$10,800 per student, or approximately 7.5% more. The most expensive school to operate in the Golden Zone is Golden Secondary School. What is important to note is that as the enrolments decrease the costs of running dual programs increases. The question becomes is quality compromised in the dominant program because of low enrolments in the French Immersion programs. This becomes especially acute at the secondary level and given that the enrolment projections indicate decreasing enrolments for at least the next 10 years.

Chapter 4: Letting the Data Speak— The Consultations

Introduction

As part of the Review mandate and, in keeping with the Board’s aspiration to effectively and efficiently address its commitment to provide high quality French and English programs in the Golden Zone in the face of a projected decline in overall enrollment, the review team was charged with the task of engaging parents, staff, students and community in a consultative process.

The respective audiences for the consultation were identified with assistance from school and school district administration and included one hour meetings with French as a Second Language students (FSL) in Grades 10-12; French Immersion students (FI) in grades 8-9, 11-12; and, 10 respectively; Golden Secondary students who had dropped out of (FI); students who had graduated from the (FI)program; and, Golden Secondary “English only” program students. Two hour meetings were held with each school’s joint Planning Council (SPC) and Parent Advisory Committee (PAC); French Immersion /FSL teachers; English Program Teachers; School Principals; and, the Canadian Parents for French. In all, 16 separate consultations were conducted representing a total of 25 hours of consultation within a four-day period. The consultation schedule is contained in Appendix C.

The substance of the consultations followed the mandate given by the Board in section 3 of the Board Request for Proposals (RFP) outlining factors to be considered in the review. The consultations for the teachers, administrators, parent and stakeholder representatives followed a semi-structured format. These included set questions that were asked of every group followed by an opportunity for open-ended dialogue wherein participants could take advantage of the opportunity to extend the conversation. Each group was given a question sheet describing the prevailing context and Board aspirations for the review. In addition, participants were invited to send written submissions to the review team. The questions, which are elaborated in Appendix D, were framed as follows:

- a. What is your perspective on the nature of the issue?
- b. What are the implications/consequences of maintaining the status quo?
- c. What opportunities are available to reconcile the Board’s desire to effectively maintain high quality French and English Programs with the reality of shrinking enrolments?
- d. What do you understand by program quality and, given the constraints described earlier, what are your expectations for quality maintenance?

- e. What are the barriers to achieving and sustaining program quality in Golden?
- f. What suggestions/recommendations do you have for Board action in this matter?

The questions for student input were a little different and focused more on their perceptions of the quality of their educational experience in Golden. The questions to which they were asked to respond were:

- a. What do you like most about the programs you have taken?
- b. What have been your most powerful learning experiences? Explain why.
- c. What electives are you taking? Do you have suggestions about electives?
- d. Is your current second language program meeting your expectations now? Why? Why not?
- e. How would you rate your ability in French? What skills do you feel are strong? Where would you like to get better?
- f. What are the advantages/disadvantages of being in a small secondary school?
- g. What are your experiences with alternative learning experiences, e.g., independent learning, distance learning, alternate use of technology?

The following section provides a synthesis of the data derived from each of the groups beginning with the students.

Student Feedback

In general terms, students in Golden value their schooling experience. They like the idea of learning in an environment in which everyone knows them. They appreciate the fact that if they need help they can go to a staff member and get it. They like their teachers, they respect their teachers and they feel that these sentiments are reciprocal. It is apparent that students feel valued and safe in a culture of enablement, a theme that is captured in the following responses:

- *I like the teachers and learning the stuff I have learned in real life (FSL gr 12)*
- *Les profs sont super! (FI gr 10) I think the teachers here are awesome (FSL gr 10)*
- *We like how helpful the teachers are and the projects*

The French immersion students at all levels in the secondary program felt that they had become fluently bilingual or were on their way to being so, a claim captured in the following response of a confident grade 8 FI student:

- *J'aime les classes français parce que tu peux voyager et parler a les autres personnes*

And, from a grade 12 student: *It's meeting our expectations. Teachers are amazing.*

While the students in the FI program felt that the program was meeting their needs the students in the Core French program were not as confident in the success of

their own experiences. A sense of disappointment and frustration resonates through the following oft repeated responses from the FSL students:

- *No, we don't talk enough! No, I want to learn more about objects and places.*
- *It is and it isn't. I haven't really learned as much as I had hoped. I normally enjoy this course, however, it often has projects which teach us nothing (French hockey cards) besides how to translate using a computer.*

The problematic quality of the Core French Program reflects a concern that found repeated expression among other groups, a concern that will be considered in more detail as the discussion unfolds.

As is often the case in small secondary schools, the range of program offerings is logistically limited. Golden Secondary School provides no exception to this condition. While availability of Elective program options are limited for all students, the limitation for French Immersion students is exacerbated because of the requirement that they have to take a specified number of courses in French in order to qualify for the bilingual Dogwood Certificate. Students were high in praise of the lengths that Golden Secondary School has gone to in order to mount a comprehensive menu of elective programs as well as with the quality of them. The following describes a partial list of programs or powerful learning experiences the students in both French and English programs valued:

- *Learning French culture. Learning French then actually using it in real life, especially in Quebec (exchange program)*
- *Field trips in elementary school*
- *Learning a life-long skill that most other students don't*
- *Leadership class/conferences – you meet people of all different backgrounds and exchange stories/ideas*
- *Going to France and living with a family, you learn a new culture*
- *Guest speakers at the school – all teach us*
- *Relay for Life with our Leadership class*
- *Going to Ottawa and speaking French with the people from Quebec*
- *Sports trips*
- *Rock climbing/guiding*
- *French Cuisine – learning the vocabulary, the verbs related to cooking, and now being able to read French cookbooks – yummy!*
- *Wood/Metalwork/shop classes*
- *Drama*
- *Autoshop, Metal, Woodwork, Outdoor Ed – French Immersion students could not take Woodwork. This year it's Outdoor Ed.*

- *Autoshop, Metal and Woodwork, Planning 10 – because French Immersion students can't take certain electives*

That the experiences students consider to have been most powerful in their learning are not necessarily classroom or program based is an interesting and instructive finding. Students want contextually relevant experiential (any time any place) opportunities for learning and these should be instrumentally evidenced in program design and delivery. Ways in which this might happen in a small secondary school will be addressed in the final chapter.

Feedback from the SPC's and PAC's

To characterize the dilemma that the Board faces in reconciling program issues in Golden as a complex one, may be an understatement of major proportions, for it represents a many faceted and convoluted issue which involves historical, pedagogical, social, cultural, political and financial considerations. As is apparent in the following observations taken from all of the contributing PAC groups, the fact that many of the issues are interconnected and interdependent within an ecology of community variables make the central problem difficult to identify and define. The following quotations taken from the transcripts from the PAC consultations lend heightened definition to this theme.

What are your perspectives on the nature of the problem?

- *Maybe the problem is that funding is based on the number of kids, and maybe it should be based on what the school needs. Maybe the way the funding is allocated is the problem.*
- *Tourist-based workers: They're not stable; you can't count on them being here.*
- *We are seeing numbers in FI stay consistent -- we are down 1 block of English this year and had to lay off a teacher. There is a growing imbalance between the English and French Immersion programs.*
- *I think the jobs in Golden have become tourist jobs, bringing in younger people without families yet, mills are closing down, and many families had to move away. There are not enough kids to justify two programs, to justify paying the teachers.*
- *Misunderstanding among stakeholders where one side doesn't hear what the other side is saying presents a large communication problem.*
- *There has been growing controversy over this program – perceptions about whether it's valuable or not, whether it threatens my child's education or not.*
- *There is an imbalance in the signing up for one program over the other. English teachers are sometimes teaching 7 different courses, while French Immersion teachers may not have to.*
- *You're made to feel your child isn't worthy enough if you don't put them in French. I've been put down when I didn't put my child in the FI program.*

- We have a “dog’s breakfast” in terms of Core French. Parents have to choose between this “dog’s breakfast” kind of French or FI kind of French.

What are the implications/consequences of maintaining the status quo?

- There has been a reduction in the number of electives available - to keep three levels of Math is a problem, so it does limit the breadth of electives for the French Immersion kids, but not English kids
- Number of French Immersion teachers in town now is good, but it’s not always the case - the retention of FI teachers is a problem for every school district.
- We don’t have a lot of different languages spoken in this area. Is it different in rural Manitoba and other French areas?
- To the same quality of service with less money – as funds are decreased it’s hard to maintain status quo
- Finding quality primary FI teachers is a real struggle in a small, rural community is hard. Because you can speak French doesn’t mean you can teach a child how to read and write

What opportunities are available to maintain high quality French and English programs with the reality of shrinking enrollments and resources?

- To have the kids from both the English and French programs share more things, present their scholastic styles of whatever they’re learning. Have a meeting at the beginning of the week, with the French kids doing a French version and the English kids have an English version. We’re always trying to teach our kids about inclusion and acceptance, they could learn from each other.
- In the French program, allowing people to join in Grade 6, we might be able to save the attrition level perhaps In the French program
- We’re lucky when we get an Immersion teacher who has also studied FSL teaching
- Have FI teachers “double dip” (can’t attract them if there are no full time jobs)
- Our kids are under-exposed culturally and language-wise, and I feel that to limit the exposure further, these kids are going to go out into the world and they need to be ready for that, and they need exposure to different languages.
- If the 3rd elective is such a huge issue, is there any movement with the government to allow the two – Core French and Intensive French? (issue is the bilingual Dogwood)
- We should be looking at drawing people in at the higher grades. Are we losing teachers because there are not enough students at the higher grades?
- Would it be possible for my child to go into the French foods class in Grade 10 (when she’s not in FI)? In the French program, allowing people to join in Grade 6, we might be able to save the attrition level perhaps.

What do you understand by program quality?

- *The attrition is a problem, but what is the reason for it, is it something we can fix? Is it people making choices for random reasons?*
- *The accessibility – from everything I’ve seen both programs are accessible, but so many have said they are not, that they’ve been denied, that there isn’t the accessibility since these discussions have started*
- *Quality is being met as long as you don’t touch our French program!*
- *I don’t think about quality and maintenance, but if my daughter wanted to be an Engineer and couldn’t take Math, I’d be upset.*
- *The problem in the English program isn’t the same.*
- *In Golden, perception that if you don’t put your child in FI, you’re not a good parent*
- *If they can integrate the Core program as well that would work. May help kids know the FI teacher/English teacher is the same as theirs.*
- *Something has to happen so parents see it in a different way, information has to get out (re: the other program)*
- *The French and English parents are both passionate about what their kids are doing – may help kids know the FI teacher/English teacher is the same as theirs.*
- *Accessibility and equity is the fact that this school (Nicholson) could be closed. These students could be housed at APES and LGES. This would not solve the problem of equity, it just packs more kids into a setup that really isn’t equitable. You’ll still have the same differences with Core French and French, the makeup of the classrooms and learning differences. You’ll lose choice regarding the environment of the school. We’re K-7, which is not the case in town. We have kids here who did not do well because they were not happy at the other schools socially or otherwise. Some drive their kids here because they didn’t do well at other schools, some moved to town but still keep their kids here. We lose a lot when we lose that choice for some students – this is where you are, this is where you stay. That would be a detriment in terms of general well-being of a child. We have more of a family feeling, older kids buddies to the younger kids, making them role models for the younger kids.*

What are the barriers to achieving and sustaining program quality in Golden?

- *Funding, declining enrollment, attrition*
- *Staffing*
- *The issue (of declining enrollment) is there in small towns, no matter what the language*
- *Would eliminating FI increase the quality for everyone or is the issue that we don’t have enough kids no matter what?*
- *Have you found other communities dealing with these issues who have found creative solutions?*

- *It's sad when kids have to choose between having a bilingual diploma and taking shop*
- *They should seriously pursue the bilingual diploma issue, see what kind of options there are with it (the Extended Program option)*

What suggestions do you have for Board action in this matter?

- *Maybe something could be done in preschool to introduce French Immersion*
- *However some choose a certain preschool based on which does more French*
- *To take everyone's considerations fairly when considering options*
- *A community poll to see what people are thinking? (other than the consultations)*
- *The biggest impact for a child to learn a 2nd language is in this age bracket, whatever needs to happen needs to happen here (at primary)*
- *No one wants to lose the French*
- *Needs to be communication to parents about the issues around this, not English vs French, not just attrition in FI, it's declining enrollment too*
- *History, personalities, political and cultural backgrounds restrict us from being creative*
- *Sustainability is a tough one, but overcoming barriers is a tough one*
- *Can't keep one program at the expense of the other, we can't have it all, so what can we have? If we're going to have FI, we need to have a better quality in the Core French program as well.*
- *It feels like it's one or the other, we have to choose.*
- *How about late immersion (at Grade 4, Grade 6 or Grade 8)?*
- *Student exchanges, even just a few weeks*
- *I want this school (Nicholson) to stay open for my daughter (who is 2)!*

Even a cursory glance at the above data reveals that there is no shortage of thorny issues within the education system in Golden. Declining enrollment, recruitment and retention of qualified staff, tensions between and among teachers and parents in English and French programs, inequities in funding and resource allocations, job security and perceived quality erosion in the Core French and English programs were all identified as providing a live threat to the maintenance of program quality. Interestingly though, there was an overarching desire to ensure that French programming would remain intact as a valued option. Moreover, a theme that echoed through the discussion conveyed a realization by the protagonists in the conflict that they were, in some measure, part of the problem and that community members needed to get past history and entrenched positions in order to improve the educational opportunities for all children in Golden.

Feedback from the French Immersion Teachers

A theme that found extant expression across the discussions was that the genesis of the problem around second language programs assumed different interpretations depending on which group was defining the problem. The differences in the perspectives of English and French program teachers as to the nature of the issue provide an interesting case in point. The following represent the responses from the consultation with the French Immersion teachers.

What are your perspectives on the nature of the problem?

- *Some students are refused access to FI after Grade 1 – we lose kids but new kids can't come in even though they are strong and would do fine -- It can be successful depending on the child. It is felt that because they (the Board) has Intensive French in Invermere and Kimberley they want to bring it to Golden...but that isn't the same quality of language*
- *Some students drop out because they have learning difficulties*
- *Some come out because the child has an illness – the parents were told to move the child to English, even though the illness has no bearing on French learning*
- *Disabled students can be bilingual and even trilingual and this is not a reason to move them out of FI alone*
- *Misconception about who can be in FI and English teachers feel they are getting all the challenging students*
- *Parents say they want to move their child out and it happens – no discussion as to the reasons why they are struggling. Sometimes it has nothing to do with FI but more to do with the student's abilities – some move out of FI and their marks are the same in the English program as it was in the FI program*
- *We had a report before to improve support in FI class, but nothing has been done to improve the support*
- *My child (in FI) has wanted to take Outdoor Ed for 3 years and has not been able to – why isn't he given the option? Others get in first.*
- *Scheduling is a horror in a small community, but things can be done (distance education)*
- *We want to continue a quality French and English program. Right now we have both and we should be proud of it, but it has become a case of "us" against "them" in the staffroom as well as in the community. Sometimes Core French teachers are just classroom teachers who don't know much French. Sometimes there is collaboration with FI, but that is not always possible.*

What are the implications/consequences of maintaining the status quo?

- *The status quo is not letting other kids in beyond Grade 1. The kids do well and it's a positive experience, we just have to start being flexible about letting a child into FI, opening that door, not having the principal say "switch your kid"*

- *There are two groups being created, the school does not present FI as something positive, it's not presented to the population, if parents know they enroll their kid in FI. But is not being advertised or promoted.*
- *Before parents had their own FI evening and lots of information given, but now it's all part of the same group, no extra information given*
- *When I heard a parent come in to register their child for Kindergarten, not one word was mentioned about it being a FI school.*
- *If the parent doesn't ask, they (the administration) don't give the option to the parents, it's just English*
- *It's felt that if FI is promoted, the English program teachers' jobs are at risk*
- *There is bias from the principal against FI, their job is to promote all that is offered in the school*
- *Parents have to be pushy or involved to get into FI. English programs are given priority by default*

What do you understand by program quality and what are your expectations for quality maintenance?

- *The big difference is at the high school with class size – 8 students in Grade 8 this year compared to 30 in an English class*
- *Alternating courses every second week to take interest courses, but had to make up the time for class time mixed (half time schedule on some courses, go to one class one week, get homework and then go to the other class the second week)*

What are the barriers to achieving and sustaining program quality in Golden?

- *Lack of advertising communication in the program*
- *Lack of support for French in the district and schools, and misunderstanding of who can be in it*
- *Need more of a "we" not "us and them"*
- *Classroom support – if we are going to open the doors of inclusivity we need support for these students*
- *Transition to Grade 4, many leave then, lots of struggling kids, many have left in the past, but this year with EA support, no one has mentioned leaving*
- *We never go where the \$\$ goes for FI – it's used for other things*
- *If we don't start to collaborate we will never promote this positive culture of choice*
- *If all teachers have a chance to hook up with another class and do activities together, it helps*

What suggestions do you have for Board action in this matter?

- *Finding ways to support people when they're coming into the district to understand the opportunities and give support to the direction they're going in*
- *Intensive and French Immersion together*

- *Intensive French at Nicholson to keep kids in the community there perhaps to keep a community school; K-7 FI as it is, but when they get to Grade 8, they combine kids from FI and Intensive French*
- *Principals and staff (secretaries) need to be educated as to the possibilities and to promote all possibilities, not just English*
- *If kids are truly struggling they move out, but it shouldn't be the first choice*
- *Could combine students from Core French into FI classes (cooking) at high school, depending on class size*
- *We need to know where the money from the government goes – is it going to staffing??*

The French Immersion teachers appear to believe that their program is undervalued. A level of mistrust appears to exist in the minds of some teachers as to the motives of Principals who they claim deny parents a choice of program (by channeling new students directly into the English Program) or by counseling parents to take students who are struggling out of French Immersion. Whether this attribution is fair or not may be problematic. It may be that Board policy in this regard is not clear or else not well understood. That being said, to their credit, the French Immersion teachers presented some useful and well thought out strategies for strengthening the Core French program, for suggesting enrichment opportunities by bringing FSL and Immersion students together and in suggesting an Intensive French program option at Nicholson Elementary School.

Feedback from the English Program Teachers

Data from the consultation with the English Program Teachers provided a contrasting and sometimes contradictory assessment of the central problem and how it is manifested in perspectives on programs, policies and configurations as well as in approaches to long-term resolution. Herewith, is a synthesis of their responses to the prescribed questions:

What is your perspective on the nature of the problem?

- *The biggest thing has been classroom composition and with declining enrollment we get the children with more severe needs*
- *At kindergarten night we talk about the components and the English Program teachers are asked to leave, and the French side talks to parents. It's a heavily sold program.*
- *Lots of students are taken out in Grade 3 or 4 – I've never taught that grade when it hasn't happened*
- *Removing the child originates from the school not the parents*
- *My classroom then becomes heavily weighted whereas in the classroom the child comes from, the learning conditions improve*
- *We already have more kids with problems, and then when this happens it compounds the problem*

- *We have fewer and fewer classes to move kids apart, so problems at home compound at school*
- *There are a lot more needs with funded kids, kids coming out of French*
- *I always feel there's a bit of competition to sell your program without selling it – I got the phone calls from Parents for French when my child was entering school – there's a pressure and it's sold as superior to the parents by the parents. It's not politically correct to be pro-English like you are for French – you're either pro-French or anti-French. I can't say why the English program is better because it's politically incorrect but they can do that. In a small community it divides the community and it has divided this community for 20 years.*
- *If you don't put your child in FI (as a teacher) you are considered anti-French.*
- *It's hard not to be able to "sell" your program the same way. What's the secret that the English teachers have to leave the orientation night?*
- *Every advertisement from the Board is "French Immersion Kindergarten" or "Regular Kindergarten" – parents say "My kid isn't regular!" This year we had the same night because the full-day Kindergarten was the focus and the Parents for French did their night before that.*
- *The biggest detriment to the program would be that the children at the beginning are the "brain drain" because it's perceived the smart kids are in FI. Now you see kids with all sorts of level in FI but not special needs children or learning difficulties. Our regular program classes are heavier in that area.*

What are the implications/consequences of maintaining the status quo?

- *If the status quo was going to work, we wouldn't be here. The question is being put because status quo doesn't work*
- *If status quo isn't continuing, what does it look like when it changes?*
- *I love walking down the halls hearing French, having teachers from Quebec here, but I also have to weigh that I have more of those needy kids as an English teacher, but to deny the other children and the program. It's one thing we have as a small district.*
- *It's too bad we're denying some children, why can't we have the same for all children?*
- *Are the English kids also being affected by lack of electives in high school? Seems the only option is go online to learn it.*
- *Some of the FI teachers never get laid off – 1-year seniority and working while someone with 17 years in English is laid off. Don't know how you get around that....*
- *There is inequity in Professional Development. In our amalgamated contract we change the amount per teacher, and the FI teachers also have access to funds to go to the FI Teachers Conference that we don't have. They say what FI Pro-D do we get locally? But we don't get that either. It is part of*

- the inequity of the program in the selling of it, that FI is better, that is uncomfortable. Teachers question when they see someone going to a conference and not using their Pro-D money.*
- *I teach at 3 schools and it's not equal. The classes are loaded in the English side. Lots of parent engagement in FI and less in English. The classes are not equal in opportunity for all students in the English program. This is too small a community to support the program we have now.*

What opportunities are available to maintain high quality French and English programs with the reality of shrinking enrollments and resources?

- *I feel that when we had an itinerant Core French teacher, we had someone who knew how to speak French. Now those who don't speak French are teaching Core French, adding to the burden of teachers. Core French should be taught by French teachers, not adding it to a classroom teacher's role. Younger kids would love to have exposure to it*
- *I don't have time to teach French the way it should be, I am teaching all the other subjects*
- *We should use our FI teachers to teach French?*
- *Students should be taught Core French from the beginning, so it's not all of a sudden put on them in Grade 5.*
- *Kids be given the opportunity to speak it more, not just the writing and reading of it, so their experience with it is enjoyable*
- *We used to keep the barrier and it's wonderful not to have that. We can do something to promote that as well as it's important we not set up our own barriers. In Grade 7 this year we had a mingling of leaders and that was a positive thing.*

What do you understand by program quality and what are your expectations for quality maintenance?

- *I do find that it's absurd that we are having a \$20,000 conversation given that declining enrollment means we can't afford this. We need to fund more things like Band, the gifted program, etc. at the elementary level. We put our own son & daughter in the English program because these teachers have learned to adapt and modify because they don't have the option to eject the problem students down the hall to the English program. We want our children to have a solid 1st language before adding other languages on. There was no opportunity for parents of English students to speak to you if not a PAC member, so I'm speaking as a parent. We want an equitable program for all our learners.*
- *I'm not sure parents were invited to give their view to the PAC so not sure they gave all the views or just their own*
- *If we're talking about quality French program, we lost the FSL teacher and it was given to the classroom teacher who may not speak French. We are seeing more students with needs in FI but it is in no way comparable*

- *Parents feel the door is closed if they take child out of FI. Early on we were exiting kids from FI occasionally in Grade 6 or 7 only when there was profound problems and done at a natural break (before high school). Now we exit earlier, because there are less SEAs in French and English classes, less support. When you struggle and then exit, there is a sense of relief of not carrying French and English demands, but a sense of failure, as profound as failing a grade or being retained*

What are the barriers to achieving and sustaining program quality in Golden?

- *We don't know what the capacity for learning language is in Kindergarten, so why burden them at that age? It's too young*
- *Kindergarten is a strong year for social bonding, learning the rules of the game, how can they learn the rules of a 2nd language*
- *If they were together and bonded as a group and then diversify later it would be better*
- *No one feels FI is a horrible thing for kids, if we lived in a big city it wouldn't be an issue, there isn't the elitist attitude, the superiority, and there the kids don't have that attitude, even if they exit because their peers don't know even the English kids in the class they go into. Not under a magnifying glass like it is here*
- *It doesn't work in our community because we're too small, there isn't the space*
- *There isn't an answer that everybody or even a large population will jump on board*
- *I didn't initially understand what the problem was at the initial meeting with the data presented, I hope to gain a better understanding of the challenges being faced by the administration*

What suggestions/recommendations do you have for Board action in this matter?

- *It is refreshing to hear there are many options.*
- *We heard Intensive French or early FI. There's more possibility – we haven't been told if status quo isn't continuing, what does it look like when it changes?*
- *Perception of federal money gives an advantage to children in FI. Is there a way to spread those dollars so all children can benefit?*
- *Will the public get this report before the Board makes the decision?*
- *To be open-minded, we can look at Intensive French though it hasn't been in Invermere/Kimberley long enough to see if it works for them. It's frustrating for me to not feel comfortable to not say anything not popular about the program (previous FI teacher)*
- *It's not this way or nothing, there is an in-between. It comes down to the students, how interested, how motivated they are.*

In many respects the conversations with the English and French program teachers mirrored the conversations with the School PAC groups. There appears to be little consensus between the teacher groups as to what constitutes the problem or how the problem might be addressed. That both groups were passionately invested in the issues was apparent. That both groups felt they were heavily put upon was also apparent. That there exists an imbalance in access and equity within and between programs was evident to all. There was disagreement, however, as to where the burden of responsibility for that imbalance might lie.

Feedback from the Canadian Parents for French

The CPF began by stressing that it values collaboration and engaging with the Golden community in enhancing future possibilities for all children. Their stated objective was framed as one designed to help support and contribute resources to all, so French can start with other children earlier too. They indicated also that they hoped to improve the French Immersion Program because it works, and that they wished to extend their support so that all children could have exposure to French from the get-go! The following is a synthesis of their responses in the consultation.

What is your perspective on the nature of the problem?

- *What decision is being planned*
- *We were told this wasn't a budget issue, so why is there a timeline as well, that this problem had to be solved in a 2-month period?*
- *If the core decision-making people were as passionate about educating every child in French, I wonder if their vision about how to allocate resources would be different. Part of the problem may be the inability to think in a different paradigm, lack of trust, so not really able to explore. We're nervous because there has been a lot of confusion about what is being considered or everything because there's these barriers between each group.*
- *I have one child in FI and another who will come in the fall of 2011. We are "untrackable" (work from home). We are so excited about what my daughter brings home, it breaks my heart that it may not be there for my son, it will divide my family, she will have a different life experience from my son in her French language skills.*
- *Overall enrollment will decline if FI is ended (because of families moving away)*
- *You get attrition in FI because you don't allow new people to come into the program*

What are the implications/consequences of maintaining the status quo?

- *I don't advocate maintaining the status quo – too much emotion and tension – instead take what we have and improve it.*
- *French is part of Canada, what we are. Status quo isn't working the way it is, and if we can't have music and art, we can build upon this early*

- immersion, spill it into K-3, how can we share that? When we get to Grade 4, how can we put kids into those spaces if there are any?*
- *If the change isn't handled well, it could be perceived that we have lessened the quality of education*
 - *It's not this or that, it could be something of both, build it upon something that works, get rid of something that kind of works*
 - *Attrition rates for English are higher than that for FI. One year had 44 Kindergarten, now only 16, but that's not the norm.*
 - *There are many ways to increase cohort size in our FI program that have not been considered or explored.*

What opportunities are available to maintain high quality French and English programs?

- *We need to have more collaboration with the school board, the town, etc., then the Board wouldn't feel so alone. The school attracts many people to stay here. It's a misperception that the ski people don't have kids or don't stay. The Town Council has wanted the School Board involved but have resistance to that. Maybe a trades program could be sponsored with LP because of this collaboration for example*
- *Is there any dual-track schools where they are not defined so much as French/English, where there's more Core French in the English program, more English in the French program?*
- *Reading groups: The French kids didn't participate, and they definitely could have*
- *We have not opened cultural things to the community because historically it has been difficult in this community to advertise something as being supported by this group. Brought in a Quebecois entertainer "Maple Man", he spoke with a heavy accent, kids loved it (English & French)*
- *Parents with children in FI program volunteering in the English program because that's where the need was*
- *An important element to look at for community resources are things like volunteers to help make these programs work. There is a lot of expertise and passion and knowledge in this community if we all put our hearts and minds with it.*
- *As time goes on, there'll be less \$\$ so more need for volunteers, so need to see support from the school so feel not putting effort into a void, to make the program even stronger*
- *It is surprising this program has lasted as long as it has with so much controversy*
- *There are a lot of resources available yet to be tapped into*
- *Talking to leaders outside the school board is a good idea, they have a vested interest in making this community thrive.*
- *It would be a shame to drastically alter something that is so beneficial to all children, all children could get the benefit of learning another language*

- *I feel the Board owes something to the community and those families who have children in the program already, and we moved here for this program*

What are the barriers to achieving and sustaining program quality in Golden?

- *There has been a constant threat towards keeping FI in the community, and a majority of our resources haven't gone to optimize the program to its full potential. It's "us against them" that we're trying to break down, we haven't put as much energy into optimizing this program. You can tell the teachers care, the community trying to maintain the status quo is keeping it alive, but we're just as eager to get into the schools to help out*
- *Resent being called "elitist" because I come from communities where it's a matter of fact that you have French & English training*
- *How can we make it the best education we can for all students? How can we communicate with all parents and professionals, rather than it being based on misperceptions and fears?*
- *It astounds me that Canada has a worse French language program (BC anyway) than other countries – England brings French in at the primary level*
- *I didn't initially understand what the problem was at the initial meeting with the data presented, I hope to gain a better understanding of the challenges being faced by the administration*
- *I would like to see our district have a Core French teacher dedicated at the elementary and middle level*
- *If you improve on the rest (collaboration etc) do you have to do anything with the early FI? It is working as it is, lots of interest*
- *Wouldn't it be good if we could look at the interim report with the points of reference to help everyone understand the situation better, rather than speaking from a perspective of ignorance?*
- *It would be good to have integration of the stakeholders of this program, it would be good to allow facilitated gathering of identified stakeholders where they all sit together and explain their roles to the rest of the people, and everyone understands what each person's role is, to know who to go to for what, "cross-pollination at the stakeholder level"*
- *Many moved here for FI program – some lived in Invermere and moved here for that reason*

What suggestions/recommendations do you have for Board action in this matter?

- *Found many suggestions on the internet. One example was to have different entry points: K, Grade 4 ... this would make it not too late for those not ready in Kindergarten, put Grade 4 into Intensive French and then put them in FI, also in Grade 6 level. That would have significant impact on the cohort level entering high school.*
- *The above along with introducing French in Kindergarten, so parents and children are exposed a bit so by Grade 4 they know which child is exhibiting motivation, in Ontario it starts at the Kindergarten level as these are the key years for 2nd language acquisition.*

- *Interested families could enroll in Intensive French and then stream into FI.*
- *The College of the Rockies is right down the road, there are alternatives to deliver the programs*
- *At the elementary level there doesn't seem to be a problem with declining enrollment in FI, full class this coming year*
- *You get attrition in FI because you don't allow new people to come into the program*
- *If the person(s) in charge were passionate about collaboration with the entire community of the school, if there were challenges, then they would look at how to keep this child going, maybe the parent didn't know which questions to ask, or took the comment too quickly when told their child would do better in English*

The feedback from the Canadian Parents for French represented a strong pitch for keeping the Early Immersion (K-12) Model intact. Indeed, this group argued strongly for growing the program by encouraging different entry points for student access in order to ameliorate the negative effects of attrition in the program at the higher grades. In addition, they advocated for stronger supports for the Core French (FSL) program in terms of staffing and resources going so far as to offer support from their own organization. They acknowledged the weakening effect of the WE/THEM attitude that had, over time, attenuated to create a cultural divide between French and English in the schools and broader Golden community. Their commitment to work harder to bring the schools more to the community and to have more community resources brought to bear in supporting the schools was advanced as one way to combat the effects of enrollment decline and resource depletion.

Feedback from the Principals' Group

In many respects the school administrators in Golden have the least enviable role for they are charged with managing a complex and difficult problem. They are often at the centre of conflict arising from tough choices concerning access and egress from programs, the allocation of scarce resources and for implementing tough policies. That they manage to perform their role with integrity and good grace is a credit to them. Herewith, is their response to the consultation questions:

What are your perspectives on the nature of the problem?

- *When French Immersion started in our district we had close to 1,400 students and the FI program started with one class of 20+ students and progressed incrementally until it reached its current enrollment. As of next year we are projected to have fewer than 900 students in the Golden Zone of which 220 will be French Immersion*
- *The Early Development Indicator (EDI) data shows that 30-40% of pre-school/primary level learners are vulnerable. The difference between the 2 K classes in Eng and the Fr Immersion is quite evident.*

- *There are rural children that are hard to reach. Strong start does not reach the most vulnerable.*
- *Board Policy says one class only in Kindergarten FI. This results in lots of politicking accompanied by hurtful and divisive parental relationships*
- *Impact of inequity sees more special education and learning disabled students in English program classes. There are twice as many designated kids in the English Program Inter classes*
- *Processes for transfer out are not well defined*
- *Students arriving in town are bouncing around – often more vulnerable kids have to go to the English Program*
- *Secondary-Immersion is one of many factors- no different than others- but there are also positives – the International students are also attracted to FI*
- *The level of what the teachers perceive as needy is different from Eng/FR*
- *Current realities indicate that we have been and will continue to lay off more English Program teachers with a fair amount of seniority in order to maintain some of our FI teachers with less seniority*

How would different configurations help?

- *I can see the benefits of an early FI program and in many cases it has been successful, but sustaining an early FI program with the reality of diminishing numbers in the English Language program is becoming more problematic*
- *Should improve the Core French through using the most qualified personnel available*
- *Teachers across the programs need to make a concerted effort to do things together, play together, etc (especially at APES and LGES)*
- *Cross fertilization between programs would help*
- *SMART learning strategies help differentiate- had smart learning sessions in French this year and 2 teachers went*
- *Distributed learning courses- Illuminate LIVE, Rosetta Stone*
- *The secondary timetable finds ways–once there was a Fr Lang 11 split with a Core Fr 11!! The Core Fr kids really came along in the environment*
- *Elevate the outcomes at different levels – each program has value*
- *Primary units and experiences at Primary to introduce languages and French*
- *How about Intensive followed by Late?*
- *Independent studies, etc, instead of ScHu11? More flexible*

What are the logistical implications?

- *Staffing implications over the next 5 years if any transition needs to take place*
- *Revisit the French funding priorities- all French programs*
- *Some things can start now, e.g., supports for differentiation, elevation in Core French Programming*

The responses of the principals group echoed those of many of the other groups that were consulted. We were most interested, however, in ascertaining how they felt about the program issues, the impact that they felt present configurations had on learning and in the kinds of program configurations that they considered might best be implemented in the drive for program quality. They pointed to the divisive nature of politics, the inequities in programs reflected in the large number of special needs students in English program classrooms and to the Early Development Indicator data that reveals that 30%-40% of pre-school/primary level learners are vulnerable. It appears that this circumstance, if left unattended, will exacerbate the imbalance of special needs children in English program classes in the years to come.

The Question of Quality

There are many definitions of quality and there are many programs designed to assess how program quality can be guaranteed to be evident in service organizations. The Board did not articulate what benchmarks for quality might be used to assess the present circumstances in the Golden Zone nor how these might best be employed to support recommendations for refinements and/or reconfigurations in programs and services.

The review team chose to adopt an accountability framework, describing baseline attributes for the BC Public School System, to describe how program quality in English and French programs in Golden might be attained. This framework is elaborated as follows:

Accessibility: *a variety of programs to meet a full range of student needs*

Relevance: *programs are current and relevant to the needs of the learner*

Equity: *resources are allocated fairly*

Quality: *professional teaching and administration are of a high quality*

Accountability: *resources are allocated in a cost effective manner, parents and community are informed of progress of schools, and parents are involved as partners in planning*

It is apparent that these baseline attributes find greater or lesser expression in many of the themes that emerged from the data. These themes, summarized in the following section, were adjudicated in the light of the above framework and used as a guide in the development of the recommendations that are explicated in Chapter 5.

Themes in the Data

- There appears to be little consensus among parents and teachers as to the nature of the problems attendant on the delivery of second language programs in Golden or on the solutions that might best be implemented.
- The kindergarten entry is the only pathway to an independent proficiency level in French, which creates barriers and demands a premature “all or nothing” choice for parents in the community.
- Students experiencing difficulty in the FI program appear to self-select out between Grade 3 and Grade 4.
- There appears to be some confusion with respect to the policies governing student access to and egress from the French Immersion Program; (ie) What is the process for adjudication? Who should be involved in such decisions? Where does the locus for decision-making reside?
- The majority of Special Needs students are in the English program classes.
- The Early Development Index (EDI) Data reveals that 30%-40% of pre-school children and early learners are at risk. This may reflect an increase in the overall numbers of special needs students in the Golden Zone in the coming years.
- Students in the Secondary Program in both French and English Programs value their programs, their learning experiences, and positive relationships with their teachers.
- Declining enrollment at the secondary school level will make the task of maintaining a wide array of electives, especially in two programs that never converge, almost impossible.
- Small grade numbers in French Immersion at the secondary level will continue the necessity for multiple grade groupings.
- The Core French program is not perceived to be meeting many of the prescribed learning outcomes.
- The cultures of collaboration and professional interdependence among staff in current dual track settings appear to be weak.
- Parents and teachers of students in the English Program and Parents and teachers of students in the French Immersion Program are divided on quality issues related to school programs and school program configurations.
- Tensions between and among teachers in the French and English Programs are occasioned by perceived inequity in workload and job security.
- Families in Field and in the Nicholson catchment areas are drawn away unnecessarily from their local school.
- The Kindergarten entry adds pressure to recruit and retain qualified French Immersion teachers. Recruiting and retaining FI teachers, at all levels, will continue to be a problem.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations

The Study in Retrospect

The Board of Education of the Rocky Mountain School District is committed to providing both a strong English program and a strong French language education program in the Golden Zone.

In respect to the intentions of the Board of Education to effectively and efficiently address its commitment to provide high quality French and English programs in the Golden Zone in the face of a projected decline in overall enrolment, the Board of Education engaged the SFU Centre for the Study of Educational Leadership and Policy (CSELP) to:

- *Examine enrolment trends and school capacity utilization in the Golden Zone*
- *Consult with interested stakeholder groups – students, parents and educators*
- *Assess the implications of enrolment trends and input from the consultations for existing configurations for French and English program delivery*
- *Review research respecting program delivery models*
- *Identify alternative configurations that are educationally sound for all students in the Golden Zone*
- *Make recommendations to the Board of Education*

The consultations, involving students, parents (parents advisory councils, school planning councils and Canadian Parents for French) and educators (teachers and principals), used semi-structured interviews to initiate and organize the discussions, and to provide a scheme for data collection and reporting.

In general terms, the consultations sought perceptions and opinions about the current quality of French and English programs in the Golden Zone, aspirations about what French and English programs in the Golden Zone should look like, and suggestions about what actions the Board should take in improving French and English programs. All comments were recorded and recurring themes identified. Written submissions were welcomed and incorporated into the themes.

Policy Options

There are four broad policy options (and minor variations) available to the Board of Education. The first option is to maintain the status quo, keeping the FSL program configurations and supports as they presently exist. The second option is to phase out the French Immersion Program and replace it with Intensive French within the same configurations that exist in the Kimberley and Windermere zones, thereby achieving consistency in programming throughout the School District. The third option is to phase out early French Immersion beginning in kindergarten and replace it with a middle French Immersion program, starting at grade 4. The fourth option is to phase out early French Immersion and replace it with a late French Immersion program starting at Grade 6.

In working toward the maintenance of quality programming in the Golden Zone, the Review Team believes that maintaining the status quo is, in the long term, not a sustainable option.

Neither do the findings of the study support the Board replacing French Immersion with Intensive French. The community values the French Immersion program in the Golden Zone, which historically has provided many students an opportunity to become functionally bilingual. The findings of the study, particularly the feedback received from the stakeholder consultations and reported in chapter four, suggest that the French Immersion program should be delivered in a configuration that allows it to better coexist with an improved and more supported Core French and English programs.

The findings of the study support the third and fourth policy options—phasing out early French Immersion beginning in kindergarten and replacing it with either a middle French Immersion program, starting at grade four, or a late immersion program, starting at grade six. The choice of a grade 4 start is a good fit with the change of schools at the end of primary, and children at this age are still very open to experientially based learning.

Recommendations

The following recommendations set out actions that enable the Board of Education to maintain the integrity of the goal of the Board to offer high quality French and English programs in the Golden Zone while achieving some efficiencies given the challenge of decreasing enrollment and associated shrinking resources. Overall, these recommendations support re-orienting the allocation of resources and program delivery so that, in the long run, more students in the Golden Zone will have access to second language programming to enable achievement at the “independent” competency level (B1 or B2).

Each recommendation for consideration by the Board is followed by a description of the implications, necessary actions, enablers and obstacles associated with their implementation.

Recommendation One:

Phase out the Kindergarten entry to FI starting in 2011/12 and implement a grade four start in a grade 4-12 FI model starting in 2015/16.

Implications

Students currently in the Kindergarten French Immersion cohort for September 2010 will continue with their French Immersion program.

A middle immersion model (beginning in grade 4) with follow through at the secondary level sustains the capacity of the French Immersion program to continue to achieve outcomes at the B2 level.

All catchment students could remain at Nicolson and Field for their primary years, as the French program at K-3 in all three schools could look the same [See Recommendation Two].

A positive introduction to learning French at primary levels in all three schools should bolster the numbers of students choosing a Grade 4 FI option. At the grade 4 level, there are up to 30 spaces available for student entry [See Recommendation Two].

Currently there are about 16 students in Immersion at Grade 4 and up, leading to staffing inefficiencies and pressure on the secondary school. Healthy cohorts of 25-30 students should ease the pressure on future staffing and create more options at the secondary level.

Parents will have more time to consider their choices before Grade 4.

Implementing Grade 4 as a FI year will require advanced curriculum planning and instructional support.

Special education statistics at LGES suggest that students needing extra support do not remain in the FI program. Research and recommendations from the national associations of the Canadian Parents for French and the Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers support the inclusionary nature of immersion programs for a wide range of student abilities and learning styles. Careful attention needs to be made to designing the Grade 4 start to being a real possibility for almost all students.

Communications to parent and information meetings at the end of Grade 3 should reflect the choice of program at Grade 4, highlighting the differences between choices and “what is positive” about each choice (French Immersion and high quality Core French)

LGES will continue as a dual track school. As such, concerted leadership effort must be applied to maintain the “one school, two program choices” culture. Professional collaboration between teachers at the same grade levels and opportunities for students to play and learn together regardless of program must be explicitly encouraged.

Recommendation Two

Integrate an introduction to learning in French at APES, Nicholson and Field for all K-3 students beginning in 2011/12.

Implications

There are a variety of ways of designing this introductory experience. The research supports an integrated model with periodic units of intensity (intensive themes, co-teaching and partner teaching, literacy based experiential approaches), rather than itinerant or preparation time models a few times a week for short periods.

This recommended action should receive greater emphasis at grade 3, so that students have a positive experience with French upon which to consider FI at grade 4.

All catchment students could remain at Nicholson and Field for their primary years, as the French program at K-3 in all three schools could look the same.

A positive introduction to learning French at primary levels in all three schools should bolster the numbers of students choosing a Grade 4 FI option. At the grade 4 level, there are up to 30 spaces available for student entry.

Bilingual staffing at the schools should be maintained or implemented to ensure the teaching staff has the capacity to plan and implement this model.

Recommendation Three

Provide a quality Core French program, delivered by teachers with appropriate linguistic and pedagogical background, starting at grade 4 for “non-immersion” students at LGES and Nicholson.

Implications

This is a recommendation related to improving rather than changing programs, and as such, should be implemented immediately.

Based on the new IRP for Additional Languages (2010), quality Core French requires delivery by competent teachers with the necessary linguistic and pedagogical background. The Golden Zone currently has such teachers in its workforce and LGES has the capacity to share staffing resources for this purpose between the FI and Core French classrooms.

Literacy based strategies and the “action-oriented “ pedagogy attached to the Common Framework and the IRP should be the focus of professional development.

Recommendation Four

Improve the Quality of the FI program at Golden Secondary School

Implications

Numbers in each grade in FI for the next 9 years (2010-2019) will not exceed 16 students per year, based on current enrollments. Split grade classes are a reality. The number of courses required for the Bilingual Dogwood in French Immersion has driven programming so that teachers have an unreasonable number of preparations and course content has become repetitive in grades 8 and 9, in particular. The following actions should be explored.

Intensive periods of time dedicated to learning in French can be designed for credit (e.g. École verte, retreats, cooking camps).

Fewer courses may be included in the timetable and other more independent but supported ways of designing learning experiences for credit for the Bilingual Dogwood could be developed and piloted. Examples include an alternative to Sc Hum11, which involves speaking French in the community, exchange trips and travel experiences, the graduate profile and interviews in French.

There could be more use of distributed learning opportunities by students, while being supported by a teacher or coach in French. An example of this is Planification 11, which is available online from the Conseil Scolaire Francophone.

There should be opportunities for virtual exchanges and collaborative themes with classes of French speaking students from around the world via Skype and the Internet. These collaborative online experiences could be designed by individual students or groups of students and carried out as contracts with the support of a qualified teacher.

The implementation of the recommendations for elementary program adjustments will result in 25-30 FI students per year entering secondary school, as well as a class of Core French students who feel confident and are ready to continue. Some common activity involving the use of French should take place between these cohorts on an annual basis.

In the future (2019/20 and beyond), improved interdependence between the FI students and the Core French students may open up new opportunities for shared content based elective courses.

Recommendation Five

Improve the Quality of Core French programming at Golden Secondary School

Implications

All students in the English program at Golden Secondary School take Core French 8. With the introduction of the quality Core French program at the intermediate level, more students will feel confident to continue to learn French past Grade 8. Increasing the numbers of students enrolled in Core French and improving the quality of their learning is already an identified goal at Golden Secondary School. The following actions should be explored.

Intensive French is a program but is also a pedagogical approach, based on a systematic approach to oral language development and literacy-based instruction that works in tandem with other FSL approaches. The lessons learned from its pedagogy can benefit both Core French and FI teaching and learning. Increased combinations of motivated students may allow more “subject-matter-in-French” courses to be offered which, in turn, could attract more students. More opportunities could be made available for Core French teachers to become familiar and proficient with the pedagogy of Intensive French and literacy-based strategies for Core French.

Exchange and travel experiences as well as other “real life” simulations are extremely motivational to Core French learners. At Golden Secondary School, both Core French and FI learners could be provided with more opportunities for such experiences.

In the future, the Core French students leaving elementary school will be more competent, more confident and ready to continue their studies in French throughout the secondary years.

As the number of students (Core French and FI) may increase in the future (2019/20 and beyond), there will be more opportunities for both Core French and FI students to share some content based optional courses. The timetable at Golden Secondary

School already demonstrates good flexibility. Creative program leadership on the part of the staff at Golden Secondary School that provides as many options as possible open to students while simultaneously giving them opportunities to meet graduation requirements should be explored.

Recommendation Six

Develop and sustain staff development and other opportunities to enable students, staff and parents in dual track schools to work more interdependently in a collaborative culture.

Implications

The use of the Common Framework and Language Portfolio by teachers, students and parents provides a common lens through which to understand and assess language learning outcomes. Orientation to this framework and implementation support for it should be provided to all Core French teachers and FI teachers for use in classrooms and for informing parents as to its utility.

Common ground for professional learning needs to be established and sustained around the topics of differentiation of instruction and literacy learning strategies especially between immersion and non-immersion staff.

Finding the resources to support the implementation of change and professional learning associated with these changes will require prioritizing the use of the Federal French Funds (French Funding Guide, Ministry of Education, 2009) at both the district and the school level. Funds will need to be allocated on the basis of professional learning and student resources needs common to Core French and Immersion programs during this transition. The guidelines for the use of the Funds states that funds may be allocated in these ways as long as the district reports the process and the outcomes of their use for French education.

Recommendation Seven

Refine policy related to access to and exit from the French Immersion program and develop administrative procedures that clearly articulate processes for transfer; rationale for decisions made; personnel to be involved; and the locus of responsibility for decision enactment.

Implications

From the input received at the consultations, there appears to be a limited understanding of the processes, specific criteria, and reasoning that govern placement decisions associated with moving children out of French Immersion and into English programs.

Some teachers – FI and English - maintain that principals make decisions to transfer students from the FI program to the English Program with very little or no consultation with parents and teachers. Others claim that such placement decisions are made by the principal upon the recommendation of the classroom teacher.

When students are transferred from FI to the English program because they are perceived to be struggling, requiring specialized assistance or because they have a learning disability, the transfer process should be enacted in a more explicit, transparent and inclusionary manner.

In the absence of explicitness, transparency and inclusiveness, students may, rather than having learning needs diagnosed and addressed within the FI program, be unnecessarily transferred from FI to English. FI is not simply an enrichment program and should, like the English program, be inclusive and prepared to identify and accommodate various learning needs and provide required supports.

Concluding Comment

This Report has provided a review of enrolment, financial, curriculum and instructional issues related to current program configurations for the delivery of French and English education programs in the Golden Zone. The review was informed by a consideration of relevant literature and research on the delivery of language programs, enrollment and demographic information, and observations, appraisals and expectations/aspirations of educational participants and stakeholders.

As expected, there were perceptual differences among the stakeholders – students, parents, teachers and principals - as to the attributes, enablers and obstacles associated with current programs and program delivery, key policy and practice issues arising from current programming that need to be addressed, and possible alternatives and solutions to the issues identified.

The Study Team has utilized a holistic approach in its attempt to analyze the issues involved with the efficient delivery and sustainability of quality French and English education programs and to provide recommendations to the Board for its consideration.

At the highest level of generality the Study Team has concluded that the status quo is neither effective for all students nor sustainable in the long term given declining enrolment and shrinking resources. The Report presents alternatives to the status quo and some explanation for each recommendation. The recommendations are curricular in nature, and have as their aim, increasing levels of competence. They speak, primarily, to strengthening the efficacy of current programs, enhancing their

sustainability, and developing greater interdependence and collaboration between and among students, teachers and parents.

Appendix A: Community Profile

Community Profile from 2006 Census

Enrolment at schools is not an independent variable. Enrolments change in response to other changes in the communities that they serve. Sometimes these are social factors, but most often, especially in the more rural parts of BC, these are economic factors.

It is important therefore to understand how these variables are changing, and the best independent source of this is always the Census conducted by Statistics Canada every five years. Stats Can prepares a community profile and it is this data that is presented and discussed here.

The Golden Zone of the Rocky Mountain School District consists of two geographic areas for which census data is compiled (the data was prepared by **Yates, Thorn & Associates Inc.**). These are the Town of Golden and Electoral Area A of the Columbia Shuswap Regional District. In the following data, these two areas are combined and we refer to them as the Golden Region.

Age characteristics				
2006	Golden Region		British Columbia (Province)	
Total population	6,905		4,113,485	
0 to 19 years	1,675	24%	953,165	23%
20 to 44 years	2,480	36%	1,391,235	34%
45 to 64 years	2,070	30%	1,169,270	28%
65 years +	685	10%	599,800	15%

In terms of age, the Golden Region has a very similar age structure to the province as a whole, with the only difference being fewer people over age 65: clearly people move away once they start the aging process, no doubt seeking better access to health services and to be closer to their relatives or younger friends.

However this data masks a very significant change between the 2001 census and that of 2006. In 2001, the Golden region had 29% of its population, or 2,060 people under the age of 20. By 2006, this was down to 24% and 1,675 people. This is a loss of 15% of its children and youth. And they moved because their parents moved: the 20/44 age cohort declined from 2,750 in 2001 to 2,480 in 2006. Thus 270 fewer parents and 385 children.

Youth Age Groups			
	2001	2006	%
0 to 4 years	440	365	83%
5 to 9 years	1080	375	35%
10 to 14 years	1160	445	38%
15 to 19 years	540	490	91%

And the most severe loss occurred within the elementary school age groups of 5 to 14 years. Thus in 2006, each of the four cohorts of children under 20 become smaller in size, the younger they are. This does not bode well for school enrolments over a longer time period than just the next five years, although, as someone once noted 'it's the economy, stupid'...which could turn around.

In the next older age group, the number increased: from 1,725 people age 45 to 64 in 2001, to 2,070 in 2006. No doubt some of those aged 39 to 44 in 2001 just moved up a cohort. But this also represents an influx of older adults, most of who presumably did not have children. As Golden bills itself as a great place to move to, with a great quality of life, this is likely a group known as 'amenity migrants' – those who are relocating, likely in this case from Alberta but possibly from farther away, in search of quality of life. They are perhaps early retirees or perhaps are workers who are not tied by employment location. And some are indeed over 65 – that age cohort also increase, from 630 to 685 between these two years.

Selected Family and Household Characteristics			
Households		Families	
Total	2,890	1,930	Total
Couples with children	830	1,345	Married couples
Couples without children	840	375	Common Law couples
One person Households	815	—	
Other	405	210	Lone parents

In 2006, there were 1,040 family households with children in the region. Of these, 210 families were lone parents, mostly with female heads of household.

Income Levels - 2005			
		Golden Region	BC
Median Family Income - 2005			
All Census Families		\$65,322	\$62,346
Married couple		\$71,876	\$69,207
Common-law couple		\$55,936	\$62,202
Lone-parent - all		\$45,134	\$35,437
Lone-parent-female		\$47,011	\$33,592
% in low income before tax - All persons		11.8%	17.3%

In total, there were about 1,910 children living in the region, giving an average family size of 1.9. Only 14% of children lived in lone parent households.

Income Levels - 2005			
		Golden Region	BC
Median Family Income - 2005			
	All Census Families	\$65,322	\$62,346
	Married couple	\$71,876	\$69,207
	Common-law couple	\$55,936	\$62,202
	Lone-parent - all	\$45,134	\$35,437
	Lone-parent-female	\$47,011	\$33,592
% in low income before tax - All persons		11.8%	17.3%

According to the 2006 Census, incomes were generally slightly above average, although those for common-law couples were below the provincial average. Incomes for lone parents were well above the provincial average. Comparable data is not available for 2001.

Visible minority population characteristics				
	Golden Region		British Columbia (Province)	
	No.	%	No.	%
Total population	6,870		4,074,380	
Total visible minority population	400	6%	1,008,855	25%

There is a much smaller percentage of persons noting that they come from a visible minority than in the province as a whole.

Immigrant status and period of immigration				
	Golden Region		British Columbia (Province)	
	No.	%	No.	%
Total population	6,870		4,074,385	
Non-immigrants	5,870	85%	2,904,240	71%
Immigrants	940		1,119,215	
Before 1991	660	70%	605,680	54%
1991 to 2000	155	16%	335,695	30%
2001 to 2006	115	12%	177,840	16%

And the population of the Golden Region has a much lower percentage of people who arrived in the 1991 to 2000 period (16% versus 30%), but a surprising number of people who arrived in Canada since the 2001 census.

Mobility status	1 year and over		5 year and over	
	No.	%	No.	%
Total population	6,800		6,500	
Lived at the same address	5,505	81%	3,815	59%
Lived within the same province or territory 1 year ago; but changed addresses within the same census subdivision (municipality)	765	11%	1,470	23%
Lived within the same province or territory 1 year ago; but changed addresses from another census subdivision (municipality) within the same province or territory	285	4%	580	9%
Lived in a different province or territory	190	3%	545	8%
Lived in a different country	60	1%	105	2%

Since the 2001 census, four out of ten residents of the region had found a new home. Of these about half (23%) had just moved within the municipality, but the other 19% had moved into the area from elsewhere. Some of these came, as we noted above, from other countries, but the rest came from elsewhere in BC or Alberta. It is likely that a good proportion of these people were aged over 45 with no children.

	2001	2006	Change
Agriculture and other resource-based industries	370	345	-6.76%
Construction	775	600	32.90%
Manufacturing		430	
Wholesale trade	480	60	-10.42%
Retail trade		370	
Finance and real estate	75	130	73.33%
Health care and social services	425	225	-5.88%
Educational services		175	
Business services	690	660	-4.35%
Other services	1240	1130	-8.87%

As noted in the introduction to this section, economic factors tend to be the major drivers of population change and family mobility. This is clearly evident from the above noted table, where we see:

- *Small declines in primary industries, likely jobs in forestry.*
- *Other declines in wholesale and retail trade, in business and other services, and in the public sector of health care, social and educational services.*

- *Job growth in construction , manufacturing, and in finance and real estate.*

Clearly the forest industry and other primary industries are declining, while there is a real estate boom with related professions doing well.

Appendix B: Financial Profile

Financial Profile of the Rocky Mountain School District

Attached in the following pages is a summary table highlighting the current financial profile of the Rocky Mountain School District and the Golden Zone.

PARAMETERS				2009/10									
				Final									
				Operating	Allocation	Field	Nicholson	Alexander	Lady	Golden	Golden		
				Budget	Factor			Park	Grey	Secondary	Alternate		
REVENUES:				ALLOCATION METHOD									
SCHOOL-AGED ENROLMENT (Sept. 30/09)					3,122.5625	4.0000	80.0000	190.5000	220.0000	386.4375	38.2500		
SMALL COMMUNITY GRANT				Actual small school supplement. Open schools	\$1,193,994	\$70,000	\$126,000			\$197,419			
OTHER REVENUES:													
Direct													
Ministry Grant													
Unique Students													
		ESL	Actual ESL count * Allocation factor	\$68,092	\$1,174			\$13,501	\$3,522	\$1,174			
		Ab. Ed.	Actual Ab. Ed count * Allocation factor	\$498,888	\$1,014		\$19,773	\$25,350	\$35,490	\$63,882	\$8,112		
		Level 1	Actual Level 1 count * Allocation factor	\$160,000	\$32,000				\$32,000	\$32,000			
		Level 2	Actual Level 2 count * Allocation factor	\$1,528,000	\$16,000		\$32,000	\$56,000	\$80,000	\$208,000			
		Level 3	Actual Level 3 count * Allocation factor	\$464,000	\$8,000		\$8,000		\$48,000	\$64,000	\$72,000		
		Adult Ed.	Actual Adult count * Allocation factor	\$18,086	\$4,019						\$4,019		
		Basic Enrolment	Actual School age FTE in school * Allocation factor	\$18,129,689	\$5,851	\$23,404	\$468,080	\$1,114,616	\$1,287,220	\$2,261,046	\$223,801		
		Distributed Learning (Sept. only)	Actual DL FTE in school * Allocation factor	\$140,424	\$5,851								
		Course Challenges	Actual course challenges * Allocation factor	\$183	\$183								
Other Ministry													
		Ready Set Learn	Actual grant received by elementary school	\$24,500		\$2,450	\$2,450	\$2,450					
		French Language Grant (includes I/F)	The French grant is based on enrolment in both French Immersion and Core French programs. The grant was broken down into three areas: French Immersion, Core French and Common and allocated base on each individual schools enrolment in each area.	\$103,230			\$265	\$21,457	\$18,813	\$20,354			
		StrongStart (contracted service)	Actual grant allocated to specific school	\$90,000				\$30,000					
		Education Guarantee	Actual grant allocated to secondary schools	\$11,052									
Other Fees and Revenues													
		School Based Prevention	Actual grant allocated to specific school	\$59,840									
		Restricted Operating Surplus	Actual rollover from prior year - school-based			\$7,153	\$34,205	\$164,145	\$75,971	\$478,756			
Indirect													
Ministry Grant													
		Salary Differential	Actual School age FTE in school * Allocation factor	\$195,681	\$63	\$251	\$5,013	\$11,938	\$13,787	\$24,217	\$2,397		
		Unique Geographic Factors	Actual School age FTE in school / Total school age FTE * (Revenue less open small school supplements)	\$2,655,595	\$850	\$3,402	\$68,036	\$162,011	\$187,100	\$328,647	\$32,530		
		Transportation	Actual School age FTE in school * Allocation factor	\$1,597,209	\$512	\$2,046	\$40,920	\$97,442	\$112,531	\$197,665	\$19,565		
		Labour Settlement Funding	Actual School age FTE in school * Allocation factor	\$3,913,995	\$1,253	\$5,014	\$100,276	\$238,783	\$275,760	\$484,382	\$47,945		
		Enrolment decline supplement		\$39,530	\$13	\$51	\$1,013	\$2,412	\$2,785	\$4,892	\$484		
Other Ministry													
		Pay Equity	Actual student FTE in school / Total all students * Revenue (Adults Included)	\$207,823	\$71	\$284	\$5,684	\$13,536	\$15,632	\$27,458	\$2,716		
		SSEAC Funds	Actual student FTE in school / Total all students * Revenue (Adults Included)	\$131,884	\$47	\$187	\$3,739	\$8,903	\$10,282	\$18,060	\$1,786		
		District Literacy Plan (SPF)	Actual student FTE in school / Total all students * Revenue (Adults Included)	Not part of operating budget									
		FSA Scorer Training (SPF)	Actual student FTE in school / Total all students * Revenue (Adults Included)	Not part of operating budget									
		CommunityLINK	Actual student FTE in school / Total all students * Revenue (Adults Included)	\$22,138	\$12	\$46	\$927	\$2,208	\$2,550	\$4,479	\$443		

Appendix C: Consultation Schedule

Consulting Phase Time Frame:

Tuesday May 25th through Friday May 28th

Each Consult:

Two (2) hours

Groups:

PAC Executive and School Planning Councils including Principals in each school

The Golden Parent's for French Executive

French Immersion Teachers

English Program Teachers

School Administrators

Students (Seven groups: Current and Graduated French Immersion Students,

Graduated FI Students and, English Program only Students)

Schedule:

Tuesday, May 25th

9:00 – 9:45 FSL Grade 10-12 Students (Helene's French 10-12 class)
10:00 – 10:45 French Immersion Grade 8/9 Students (Hugo's Sc.Hum. 8/9 class)
11:10 – 11:55 French Immersion Grade 11/12 Students (Hugo's Sc.Hum. 11 class)
1:05 – 1:50 French Immersion Grade 10 Students (Hugo's Sc. Hum. 10 class)
2:10 – 2:55 GSS Students who have dropped out of French Immersion
5:00 – 7:00 GSS PAC Executive/School Planning Council (with Principal)
7:30 – 9:30 LGES PAC Executive/School Planning Council (with Principal)

Wednesday, May 26th

2:10 – 3:00 English Program only Students (Photo Non French students)
3:30 – 5:00 French Immersion Teachers
5:15 – 7:15 APES PAC Executive/School Planning Council (with Principal)
7:30 – 9:30 NES PAC Executive/School Planning Council (with Principal)

Thursday, May 27th

2:00 – 4:35 Principals
5:00 – 7:00 English Program Teachers
7:30 – 9:30 Golden Parent's for French Executive

Friday, May 28th

9:00 – 11:00 Field PAC Executive/School Planning Council (with Principal)

Appendix D: Consultation Questions

Context

Three conditions prevail which create challenges for program sustainability in the Golden Zone. These include:

1. An overall decline in student enrollment;
2. Attrition in student enrollment in particular programs at specific grade levels; and,
3. A shrinking resource base to support program status quo.

General Group Questions

Within the context of the board's aspiration to "efficiently and effectively address its commitment to provide high quality French and English programs in the Golden Zone in the face of a projected decline in overall enrollment:"

- What is your perspective on the nature of the problem?
- What are the implications/consequences of maintaining the status quo?
- What opportunities are available to reconcile the Board's desire to effectively maintain high quality French and English Programs with the reality of shrinking enrollments and resources?
- What do you understand by "program quality" and, given the constraints described above, what are your expectations for quality maintenance?
- What are the barriers to achieving and sustaining program quality in the Golden Zone?
- What suggestions/recommendations do you have for Board action in this matter?
- Other related issues that you may wish to raise.
- These questions would form the framework for substantive discussion with the SPC PAC/groups; school based administrators; teachers in French and English programs; and, the Golden Branch of the Canadian Parents for French.

Questions for Students

- What is your level of satisfaction with your current learning experiences?
- What do you like most about the programs you have taken?
- What have been your most powerful learning experience?

- Is your current second language program meeting your expectations? Why or why not?
- How would you rate your ability in French? What skills do you feel are strong?
- Where would you like to get better?
- How do you think your programs have equipped you for the future? What do you intend to do after secondary school?

What recommendations do you have for program planning for the future? If there was something you could have added to the program experience, what might that be?

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ENTRY/EXIT PROTOCOLS FOR FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAM
GOLDEN ZONE
June, 2011

DISTRICT PRACTICE

Program Entry at Grade 4 (commencing September, 2015):

- A letter will be sent to all parents of Grade 3 students within the zone in February of each school year explaining the program and the registration procedures.
- There will be a deadline set for registration to the program. If more than 30 registrations for the program are received by the deadline, a lottery will be held to determine the students who will participate in the program. If this occurs, a waiting list for the program will be formed, according to the order in which the names were drawn after the class limit of 30 had been reached in the lottery.
- Siblings of students already enrolled in the program will not be included in the lottery, but will have space in the program if a registration form is received by the deadline (a sibling is defined as one of two or more individuals having one common parent, or for whom parents have legal guardianship).
- Late registrations will be placed on the wait list in the order that they are received.
- Schools are required to inform parents of the opportunity to stay on the waiting list. However, in consideration of language acquisition challenges and student learning needs, entry into Grade 4 Immersion is closed after the first reporting period of the current school year.

Program Entry after Grade 4 (or after Kindergarten during phase-out of Primary Immersion):

- Entry to the Immersion program in a year following the usual intake will be on the basis of:
 - a) available space;
 - b) previous experience in French Immersion acquired in another school district; and
 - c) language competency and the student's learning needs, as determined by the principal in consultation with parents, district program personnel and the teacher(s) concerned, and within staffing allocations (Ministry of Education policy will serve as a guide in making program decisions).
- Notwithstanding the above, the priority for enrolment among competing students in this situation will be:
 - a) children on the waiting list established for that cohort group;
 - b) siblings of students already enrolled in the Immersion Program; and
 - c) children wishing to re-enter the immersion program having previously withdrawn.

Program Exit:

- The organization of teaching and learning in French Immersion classrooms is designed to accommodate the diversity of student learning needs. Sometimes, however, students and parents wish to leave the French Immersion program to transfer to the English program.
- The process for exiting the program will be managed by the Principal, and will involve consultation with the parents/guardians, the classroom teacher, and other appropriate school and district personnel including but not limited to the School Based Team.
- Re-entry into the Immersion program will be based upon considerations which will include program continuity and linguistic competence, as verified by the teacher and a district representative.



DATE: March 9, 2021
TO: Board of Trustees
FROM: Karen Shipka, Superintendent of Schools
SUBJECT: Budget Utilization Summary – February 28, 2021
ORIGINATOR: Dale Culler, Secretary Treasurer
REFERENCE: Budget Utilization Summary – February 28, 2021

ISSUE

That the Board of Education receive a report on year-to-date operating expenditures compared to budget and prior year data as information.

BACKGROUND

This report is to provide the Board with information concerning fluctuations in operating expenditures on a monthly basis.

CURRENT SITUATION

Instruction: reduction of approximately \$557,000 from prior year. Primarily attributable to decreases in transportation, travel and homestay fees due to COVID-19 and the reduced international student program.

Administration: increase of approximately \$114,000 from prior year. Primarily attributable to increases in salaries and benefits previously coded to instruction. As well as staffing increases.

Operations and Maintenance: reduction of approximately \$132,000 from prior year. Primarily attributable to decreases in supplies, utilities and equipment costs mainly due to COVID-19 funding.

Transportation and Housing: a slight increase of approximately \$60,000 from prior year attributable to an increase in supplies and equipment due to multiple major engine repairs.

CONCLUSION

Expenditures to date are slightly below annual budget and less than the prior year for the same timeframe.

RECOMMENDATION

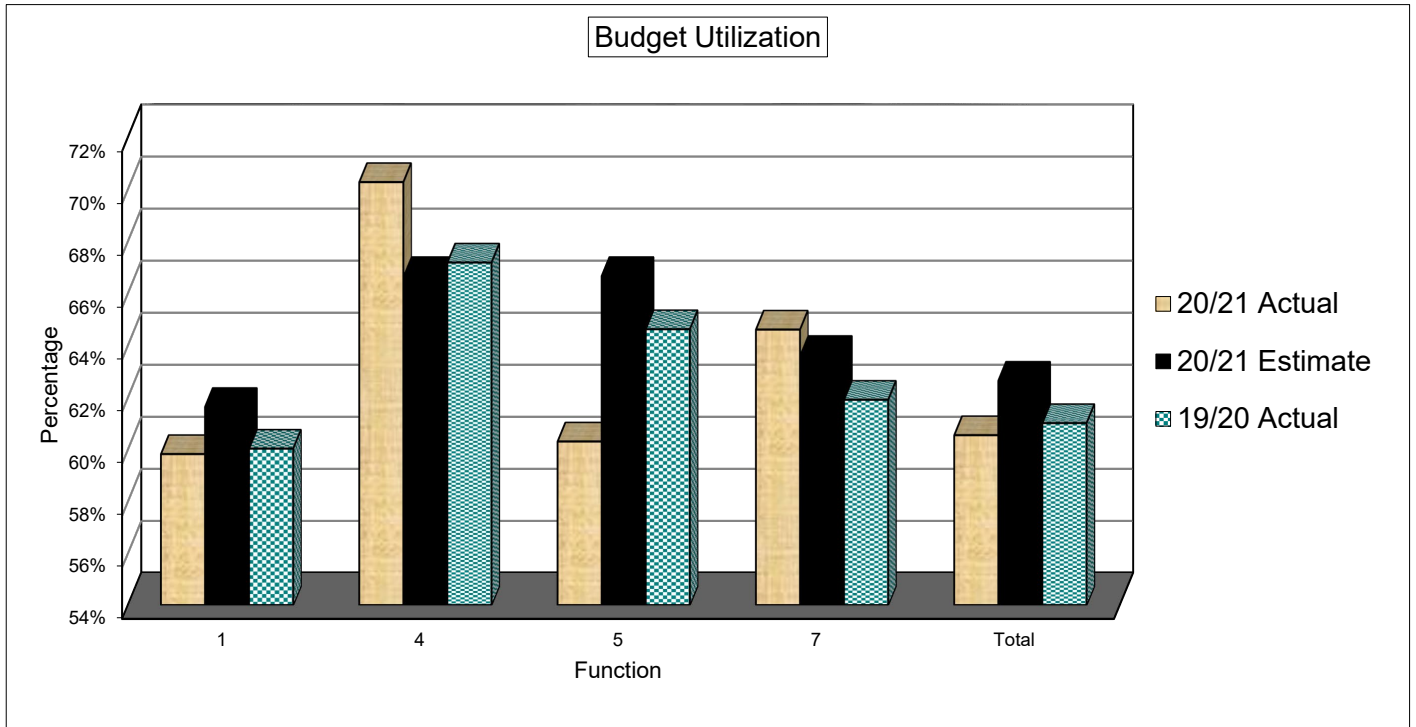
Continue to monitor and report to the Board on a monthly basis.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMNET

Resource allocation for student success, budget monitoring and financial stewardship.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 6
BUDGET UTILIZATION SUMMARY
February 28, 2021

<u>FUNCTION</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>MONTHS</u>	<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>EXPENDED</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>ESTIMATE</u>	<u>2019/20 ACTUAL</u>
Instruction	1	10	\$ 31,909,452	\$ 19,090,358	59.83%	61.64%	60.04%
Administration	4	12	\$ 1,782,800	\$ 1,252,857	70.27%	66.67%	67.19%
Maintenance	5	12	\$ 5,778,000	\$ 3,484,757	60.31%	66.67%	64.62%
Transportation	7	11	\$ 1,777,000	\$ 1,148,091	64.61%	63.64%	61.91%
Total			\$ 41,247,252	\$ 24,976,063	60.55%	62.65%	61.02%



BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS:

	<u>APPROVED</u>	<u>AMENDED</u>	<u>EXISTING</u>	<u>DIFFERENCE</u>
Function 1	\$ 33,649,375	\$ 31,906,979	\$ 31,909,452	\$ 2,473
Function 4	\$ 1,762,801	\$ 1,782,800	\$ 1,782,800	\$ -
Function 5	\$ 5,609,070	\$ 5,778,000	\$ 5,778,000	\$ -
Function 7	\$ 1,780,849	\$ 1,777,000	\$ 1,777,000	\$ -
Local Cap.	\$ 2,340,044	\$ 3,666,240	\$ 4,555,240	\$ 889,000
TOTAL	\$ 45,142,139	\$ 44,911,019	\$ 45,802,492	\$ 891,473



DATE: March 9, 2021

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Karen Shipka, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity (SOGI)

ORIGINATOR: Viveka Johnson

REFERENCE: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/erase/sogi>

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/erase>

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/factsheets/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-sogi-in-schools>

<https://bc.sogieducation.org/>

[ARC Foundation | SOGI 1 2 3 is our primary program.](#)

ISSUE: This report is an information item regarding programs and Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity (SOGI)

BACKGROUND: In July 2016, the provincial government amended the BC Human Rights Code to include gender expression as prohibited grounds of discrimination (sexual orientation was already included in the Code). Later that year, the Ministry of Education announced that explicit references to sexual orientations and gender identity must be included in all public and independent school districts' codes of conduct throughout the province. The Ministry of Education recently implemented a redesigned curriculum, which provides educators the opportunity to teach in a more inclusive and personalized way. At that time, districts were given professional development days, by the province, to implement Expect Respect and a Safe Education (ERASE) which SOGI falls under.

CURRENT SITUATION: There is no separate and distinct SOGI program or curriculum. Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) are important topics that are interwoven through several curriculum areas, most notably, Physical and Health Education, Language Arts, and Social Studies. Teachers will determine how and when topics are introduced to students because it is dependent on the age and stage of their development. These topics may also be discussed as they arise in the daily lives of students. As a district we have a SOGI working committee made up of teachers, PVPs, CUPE and Trustees. Every school is represented by at least one person. Meetings take place every 6 weeks; the committee discusses various topics, have guest speakers, or look at resources that can support students. Each month, all schools have SOGI as a discussion item on their staff meeting agendas and committee members speak to the work and



answer questions monthly. As a district we are working to ensure that we have a gender neutral washroom and signage has just been ordered for each school.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

- Costs to facilities to ensure we have gender neutral washrooms in every school.
- School based projects and purchasing of resources that are inclusive to all groups within in our schools and libraries is ongoing.

IMPLICATIONS:

- As the work evolves, the district will continue to meet the ongoing needs of both staff and students.
- Professional development opportunities for staff will continue in this area for all school district employees.

CONCLUSION: As SOGI is part of the BC Human Rights Code, as prohibited grounds of discrimination, the district will continue to ensure that we are meeting the needs of all within our schools and buildings and address gaps in a timely manner.

RECOMMENDATION: That all schools have an accessible gender neutral washroom by the start of the 2021-2022 school year with signage.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMNET: Rocky Mountain School District honours diversity and inclusion



DATE: March 9, 2021

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Karen Shipka, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Early Learning

ORIGINATOR: Viveka Johnson

REFERENCE: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/EDUC-Whiteside-mandate.pdf>
<https://bcpsea.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/06-SL-CUPE-Local-440-Collective-Agreement-2019-2022-compressed-size.pdf>

ISSUE:

That the Board of Education receive an update on the status of the new Ministry mandate to oversee Child Care programs in BC.

BACKGROUND:

Currently, British Columbia is one of the few provinces that does not oversee Child Care. The new NDP government, as stated in the Minister’s mandate letter, will be moving this portfolio from the Ministry of State for Child Care and the Ministry of Children and Family Development to the Ministry of Education by 2023.

CURRENT SITUATION:

The Ministry of Education has been running a pilot program focused on early learning; an example is StrongStart and Strengthening Early Years to Kindergarten Transition. The Ministry of Education (MOE) currently does not have jurisdiction/governance over day care facilities which is part of the new mandate. Schools currently do not have early access to future students unless families have participated in StrongStart or Ready Set Learn programs. Most often the district will not know the student population until they are registered in a Kindergarten program. Early Learning opportunities in schools has the potential to identify learning needs earlier and to begin early intervention strategies giving kids a better start to the K-12 learning experience.

As the Early Learning Framework, as it is implemented across the province it will provide a solid foundation that will support early childhood development encompassing children from 0-8 years of age. The shift will be from merely providing child care options for families to creating early learning environments with equitable access to child care and pre-school options for all families.

What we have learned so far is that programs can take many forms. The District could choose to offer before and after school care to the current student population, providing them with endless day care. It could choose to offer early learning programs for children who are 3 and 4 years of age or full day care services for children from birth until they enter school or any combination of the above.

There are significant opportunities that will arise as well such as the opportunity for a partnership with



College of the Rockies offer Early Childhood Education dual credit courses in our high schools. Early identification of learning needs and early intervention and easier access to quality child care for parents. There are however many things to consider as we think about the possibilities. There would be significant implications on both facilities, staffing, funding and overall logistics. There are many conversations that are just beginning that will require coordination and attention and may require staffing.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The MOE is currently developing the plan for this new initiative so little is known at this time. That said, a proactive approach to determining what kind of programs that SD6 might offer given our current context will be necessary.

CONCLUSION:

With the MOE assuming responsibility for Early Learning by 2023, SD6 will need to engage in proactive conversations regarding the implementation of Early Learning initiatives. Exploring options early will position the district to implement new program offerings easily.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMNET:

Rocky Mountain School District ...

- Develops academic and practical skills for lifelong success



DATE: March 4, 2021

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Karen Shipka, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: **Trans-Canada Highway – Kicking Horse Canyon Upgrade Project**

ORIGINATOR: Steve Jackson, Director of Operations

REFERENCE: Government information bulletin: www.kickinghorsecanyon.ca.

ISSUE

This report is to inform the Board of Trustees regarding the status of the Trans-Canada Highway project east of Golden.

BACKGROUND

The Kicking Horse Canyon Project is one of the Province's top transportation priorities. Phase 4 is the final part that will bring the remaining 4.8 kilometres of narrow, winding two-lane highway up to a modern four-lane, 100 km/h standard. Highway 95 between Golden and Radium will be used to detour traffic during certain hours and specific time periods throughout the year. The School District's concern is the expected increase in traffic on Highway 95 and how it may affect safety of our bus stops that are located along Highway 95.

Four school buses operate on Highway 95 serving approximately 245 students with 24 highway bus stops.

CURRENT SITUATION

Al Ure, Operations Supervisor in Golden and I attended the Kicking Horse Highway stakeholders meeting February 17th. The following day our Operations Leadership team from across the School District had a separate meeting with the Contractor and the Project team to discuss school bus safety as it relates to the project and the alternate route on Highway 93 and 95.

Work on the project is commencing. The work will involve significant traffic disruptions on Highway 1, including 20-minute stoppages, overnight closures, and multi-day closures during off-peak seasons. The first multi-day closure will be Monday, April 12 to Friday, May 14, 2021. During this closure we are expecting a noticeable increase in traffic along Highway 95 between Radium and Golden.

The Field school bus will be allowed through the construction zone on Highway 1 regardless of closures. We have coordinated with the contractor and will have radio contact to ensure the bus can get special access to travel through the construction site daily.



The Ministry of Highway is installing overhead electronic signage northbound from Radium and southbound from Golden. The signage will warn motorists to watch out for school buses and children waiting at bus stops located along the highway. It will also provide other warnings such as to watch out for animals on the highway. New crosswalk signage has been installed in Golden. These high intensity strobe lights should improve safety for any of our students in town walking across Highway 95 to school.

Our buses on Highway 95 are being outfitted with additional care and comfort items should any of the buses be stopped in traffic for an extended period of time. We will maintain contact with our buses on Highway 95 via cell phone, radio and or GPS. The increased traffic may cause delays in our school bus schedules. During the first multi-day closure, we will be monitoring our bus arrival times at schools. There is a possibility that we may need to adjust those four bus routes to start earlier in the morning. Based on our experience with the first week of multi-day closure we will be in a position to determine if a change to the bus schedules is required. If so, communication will be sent out to parents.

We have been in contact with Emergency Responders from Golden to Radium to coordinate communication. We will continue to work with the Regional District of East Kootenay and the Town of Golden throughout the project.

CONCLUSION

Correspondence from the Superintendent (APPENDIX 1) will be sent following the Board Meeting to all the affected families. The District is committed to student safety and as such we will continuously work with the contractor and the Ministry of Highways and monitor conditions to determine if any operational changes are required throughout the duration of the project.

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March 10, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians in Golden and Windermere;

Re: Trans-Canada Highway - Kicking Horse Canyon Upgrade Project

Construction of the fourth and final phase of the Kicking Horse Canyon Project, located just east of Golden BC, is commencing this spring.

The work will involve significant traffic disruptions on Highway 1, including 20-minute stoppages, overnight closures, and multi-day closures during off-peak seasons.

The first multi-day closure, requiring motorists to use Highways 93 and 95 as an alternative route, will be Monday, April 12 to Friday, May 14, 2021. During this closure you can expect a noticeable increase in traffic along Highway 95 between Radium Hot Springs and Golden.

Our Operations Department has been an active member on the project's stakeholder group and have been working with project team to ensure our bus stops are as safe as possible. Risk assessments have been conducted on all highway school bus stops between Radium and Golden. Our school buses that operate on highway 95 have been outfitted with comfort and care items should the bus be stopped in traffic for an extended period. Extra traffic may affect our bus schedules, therefore we will monitor and if an adjustment in pickup times is required, we will provide sufficient notice to all bus parents.

The attached document contains some simple guidelines to help your child(ren) be seen and be safe while waiting for their bus to arrive and when getting on and off their school bus. Additional information regarding school bus transportation is on the School District web site at www.sd6.bc.ca.

If you have questions please contact the Operations Supervisor in your area.

Golden – Al Ure, 250-344-0217
Windermere – Brian Nickurak 250-342-1728

More information on the project can be found on the Kicking Horse Canyon project website at www.kickinghorsecanyon.ca.

Sincerely,

Karen Shipka

Karen Shipka, Superintendent of Schools

Cc: Board of Trustees
Golden and Windermere Principals
Operations Department



SCHOOL BUS SAFETY AND AWARENESS

What's going on?

Highway construction for the Kicking Horse Canyon Project will close the Trans-Canada Highway from time to time for the next three years. During longer closures, you will see more traffic than usual on Highway 95 between Radium Hot Springs and Golden. Remember the tips below to Be Seen and Be Safe while waiting for the school bus to arrive, and when getting on and off the school bus.

School bus safety

- Arrive early at the bus stop and never run after a bus if you're late.
- Wear visible, bright clothing and add reflective tape to your backpack or jacket for dark or rainy days.
- Keep an eye out for younger children to ensure they're safe; be a role model for safe choices when walking with others, particularly when they're younger than you.
- Stand at least two steps back from the road while waiting for the bus and move further back when the bus arrives. Wait until the bus comes to a full stop and the bus driver has signalled that it is safe for you to get on the bus.
- When leaving a school bus, walk 10 steps ahead of it before you cross the road so that the driver sees you. Make eye contact with the driver – a bus driver cannot see you when you're close beside, behind or right in front of the bus
- Check for traffic in both directions and wait for a signal from bus driver before crossing the road.



 Rocky Mountain School District needs your help to keep our students safe

WHEN WE STOP, YOU STOP!

School bus signals are just like traffic signals.




PREPARE TO STOP




STOP!

March 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 Labour Relations Committee Meeting, teleconference 8:30 am	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 Board of Education Meeting, video- conference from 3 Zone Offices 6:00 pm In-Camera 7:00 pm Regular	10	11 District Technology Advisory Committee meeting, Virtual, 9:00 am	12	13
14 	15	16	17	18	19 Last Day of School before Spring Break	20
21	22 Spring Break	23 Spring Break	24 Spring Break	25 Spring Break	26 Spring Break	27
28	29 Spring Break	30 Spring Break	31 Spring Break			

April 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Spring Break	2 Good Friday	3
4 	5 Easter Monday	6 First Day Back to School after Spring Break Labour Relations Committee Meeting, teleconference 8:30 am	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 Board of Education Meeting, Golden Secondary School 6:00 pm In-Camera 7:00 pm Regular	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	