

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 22, 2007

TO: Board of Trustees
FROM: B. Holt, Acting Superintendent
SUBJECT: Possible Closure of Newton School
ORIGINATOR: C. McCabe, Executive Director

RESOURCE

STAFF: Jenise Bidulock, Randy Billey, Mike Brown, Josephine Duquette, Michael Ediger, Leanne Fedor, Andrea Furness, Kerry-Ann Kope, Roland Labbe, Sandra Mason, Bob Morter, Cindy Skolski, John Nicoll, Larry Schwenneker, Darryl Sutherland

RECOMMENDATION

That the closure of Newton School at the end of the 2006-2007 school year be approved.

* * * * *

Recommendation

Based on the information received by the administration from the public and the Board of Trustees, it is recommended that Newton School close and that the students be designated to Montrose School for Regular and Opportunity programming. A special education district centre Opportunity program will be established at Overlanders School for students residing in the Clareview area, as part of the annual program distribution plan to meet criteria requirements.

School Closure Process and Public Meeting

On October 10, 2006, the Board of Trustees approved an *Annual Implementation Plan* which identified 10 district schools where the viability of the school or a specific program was of concern. Sustainability and Program Fit Reviews were undertaken at these schools which included Newton School. On January 16, 2007 the Board of Trustees received information on the results of the sustainability reviews and initiated the provincially mandated process to consider Newton School for closure (Appendix I). The recommendation to close Newton School was considered in accordance with the criteria outlined in Board Policy FL.BP – School Closures (Appendix II).

A public meeting was held on February 12, 2007 to hear public representations regarding the potential closure of Newton School. The following arrangements were made prior to the public meeting. These meet or exceed requirements as set out in the *Closure of Schools Regulation*:

- Parents/guardians of students registered at the school received a letter notifying them of the public meeting and a Q&A that answers questions set out by the *Closure of Schools Regulation* (Appendix III)
- Parents also received a Question Submission Form to submit their individual inquiries, in addition to using letters and e-mails. The district did not respond to individual inquiries prior to the public meeting. Submissions were reviewed by the administration and representative questions were answered at the public meeting, following the opening presentation. This approach allowed all participants to benefit from the responses to the individual questions that were submitted.
- Notice of the public meetings appeared in The Edmonton Journal, Edmonton Sun, and the Edmonton Examiner.
- Public meeting notices were posted in five or more conspicuous places in the area or areas of the school or schools affected by the closure.
- Posters advertising the public meetings were e-mailed to principals and administrative assistants of schools identified for closure and receiving schools as well as any other schools that may be affected by closure to post.
- A letter was sent to the City of Edmonton providing notice of the public meetings and requesting that the municipality provide a statement to the board of the impact the closure may have on the community.
- The president of the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues and presidents of the local community league received notification of the meeting and an invitation to attend.

The purpose of the February 12, 2007 public meeting was to share information and receive input from parents and community members about the possible closure of Newton School. Of those people who attended the meeting, there were 26 parents, 33 community members, three principals, two school staff and 32 other individuals, who included MLA Brian Mason and MLA Jack Flaherty, City Councillors Janice Melnychuk and Ed Gibbons. The following trustees were in attendance; Board Chair Esslinger, Trustee Colburn, Trustee Fleming, Trustee Gibeault, Trustee Gibson, Trustee Hansen, Trustee Keiver, Trustee Nicholson, and Trustee Williams. District staff from the Superintendent's office and Planning Department were also in attendance.

The minutes and results of the public meeting are posted on the districts website at www.epsb.ca, as well as information regarding the possible closure of Newton School including the Notice of Meeting sent to parents/guardians, and the PowerPoint presentation made at the public meeting.

Through the closure process some parents or community members expressed a desire to keep Newton School open for the following reasons:

- belief that the sustainability review process was flawed
- perception by the residents that the community will be rejuvenated in the near future as the community ages and new families move into the area
- belief that Newton community and the surrounding neighbourhoods need enhanced services that are outside the Kindergarten to Grade 12 education mandate such as full day kindergarten, daycare and before-and-after school care, senior programs and activities, and community outreach services
- require time to implement the Northeast Learning Academy concept

Rationale for Recommending Closure

Enrolment, Programs and Grade Organization

Newton School was built in 1955, and a ten classroom addition was built in 1956. The school has a capacity of 351 student spaces based on provincial calculations. However, based on the Alberta Learning Commission's class size guidelines the capacity would be 340 student spaces. Enrolment at Newton School was 112 students as of September 30, 2006. Of the 112 students enrolled, 55 receive regular programming and 57 students are enrolled in the district site for Opportunity programming at the school.

Newton School's student enrolment and grade configuration as of September 30, 2006 is as follows:

	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Total
Regular	5	9	10	8	5	10	8	55
OPP		4	6	7	17	12	11	57

Educational Impact on Students

The rationale to consider closure of Newton School is based on factors that include: low and declining enrolment; a maturing neighbourhood with the number of school aged children in decline; the condition of the building requiring major capital to modernize it to a current standard and to provide upgrades and replacement of mechanical and boiler systems; the availability of excess space in elementary schools in this area; and the changing needs of the population residing in the neighbourhood. The school continues to experience operational challenges, for example, the need to organize multi-grade class groupings; the transportation of the majority of Opportunity program students to the school from outside of the neighbourhood; and the limited capability to hire support and custodial staff to support the daily school operations and care of students. Potential closure of Newton School is consistent with a long term strategic approach to ensure the learning needs of students are met and the programs are sustainable to serve the Newton community and north east Edmonton for years to come.

The potential closure of Newton School addresses the needs of parents, staff and community members as they relate to learning opportunities and enhanced services to students and families. Re-designating students from Newton School to Montrose School will strengthen and solidify enrolment in a facility that is well-equipped to provide students with expanded program choices and learning opportunities. In addition, students will also have greater access and opportunities to engage in extra-curricular activities. In time, students will also have an opportunity to attend a modernized facility that will better accommodate students both operationally and academically, while also providing more and extended services to the broader community.

Neighbourhood Population and Demographic Information

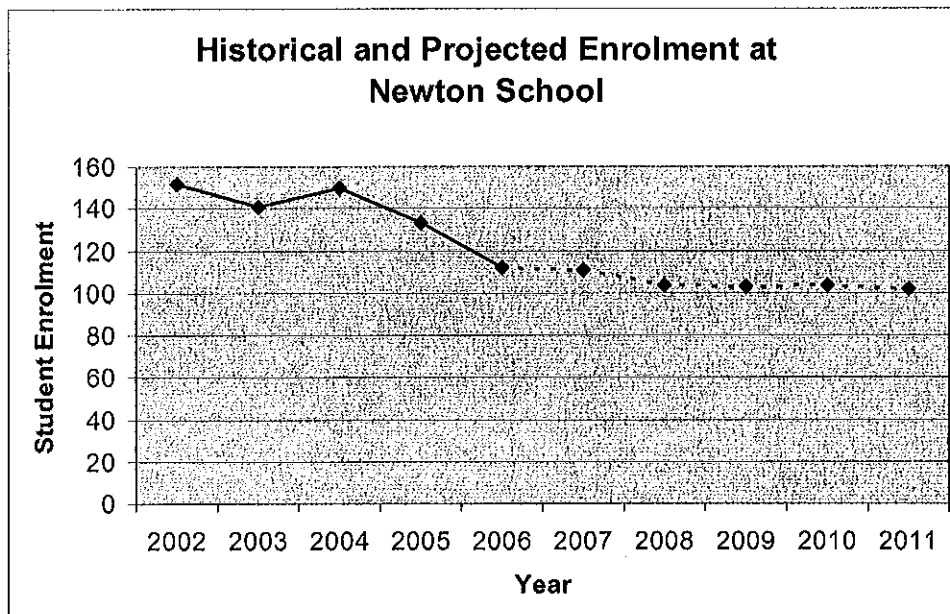
The Edmonton Public School district utilizes numerous demographic data sources to review, analyze and project student enrolment. Sources include federal census data, City of Edmonton census data, and public student information data derived from the district's own Student Information System. Data for non-census years includes federal government data (typically made available through Statistics Canada), provincial government data and the district's own Student Information System data. Federal census data is collected every five years by the federal government and is approved by the House of Commons as the population for

Canada. The last federal census was in 2006, this data has not been approved or released, so the current federal census is 2001. Municipal census data is also collected every five years and approved by City Council. The current municipal census is 2005.

The City of Edmonton acquires any civic, provincial or federal data, and formats it to match city defined neighbourhood boundaries. It is then distributed to various regional demographic data users including school districts, health regions and other community services groups or organizations. This ensures that all users receive the most current demographic data available in a consistent fashion.

The district's own Student Information System data provides historical and current public school student residency information by neighbourhood. This provides accurate data on trends and choices of Edmonton Public School students.

As part of its budgeting process, the district conducts an annual enrolment projection for the district as a whole and on a school-by-school basis. All external demographic data is used in addition to a review of historical and current student information data. External data is used extensively to monitor pre-school populations and residency patterns, while internal data is used to project enrolments up to five years into the future. Both external and internal data are used in congruence with one another in any district projection. The historical and projected enrolment at Newton School is as illustrated on the following chart:



The District also utilizes a number of other sources when considering demographic data. These include but are not limited to:

- The study of current population growth and attrition to a school on a community basis;
- Population and housing construction (City of Edmonton Building Permits);
- Annual analysis of demographic and economic forecasts (national, provincial and civic) from Canadian Housing and Mortgage Corporation;

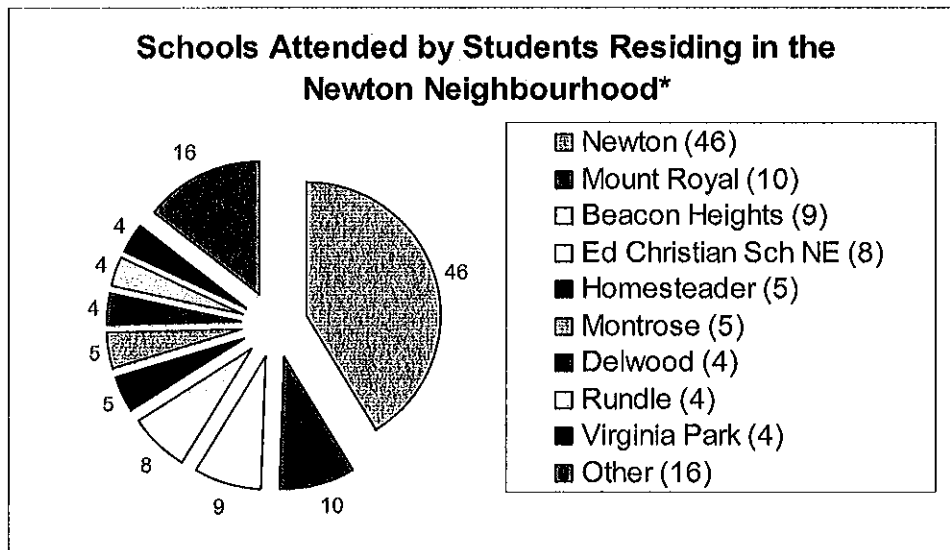
- Direct input from principals on school enrolment and local conditions on a school by school basis.

The attendance area for the regular program at Newton School consists of the Newton neighbourhood.

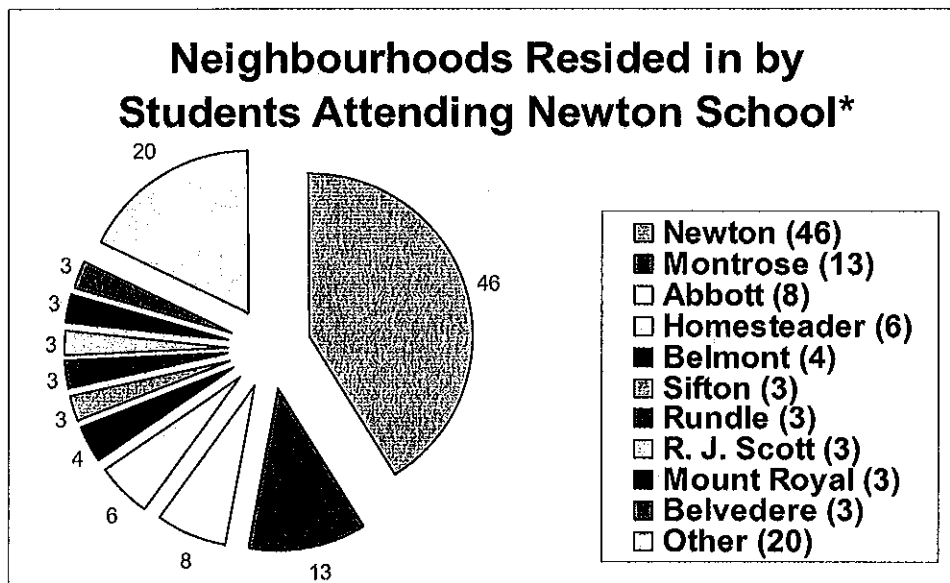
Newton Attendance Area 2006-2007



There are 111 students residing in the Newton School attendance area. As shown in the following pie chart, 46 students attend Newton School and the remaining 65 students attend various other district schools. This information is based on September 30, 2006 enrolment.



The following chart indicates the neighbourhoods in which current Newton School students reside. This information is based on September 30, 2006 enrolment.



Accommodation of Newton School Students

If Newton School were to close, the 112 students currently registered would be designated to:

- Montrose School for regular elementary programming (55 students);
- Montrose School would provide special education district centre Opportunity programming to meet the needs of students residing in the greater Highlands area and Abbottsfield area;

- Overlanders School would provide special education district centre Opportunity programming for students residing in the Clareview area;
- Montrose School would provide full day Kindergarten programming.

It is anticipated the majority of students currently enrolled at Newton School would enrol at Montrose School, with some choosing to attend Mount Royal School and other district schools in north east Edmonton. The establishment of a district special education centre for Opportunity programming at Overlanders School will provide local accommodation for students residing in the Clareview area.

Currently there are 14.7 full time equivalent staff positions at Newton School, consisting of nine certified teaching staff including the principal, 3.7 teacher aides, one administrative assistant, and one custodial worker. Potential closure of Newton School and relocation of students to Montrose School would result in fewer combined grade classes, and other educational benefits would be available through enrolling students in a larger school setting.

In the event of relocation of students, every effort would be made to ensure as much continuity as possible with current staff, in particular for those students in district center programs for students with special needs. The establishment of full day Kindergarten at Montrose School will be considered as part of the district budget planning process this spring.

Should parents request registration in another school, other than Montrose School, students would be able to register in that school, provided the school provides the appropriate program.

Cost to Staff and Operate the Educational Programs at Newton School

The total operating and instructional allocations provided to Newton School for 2006-07 was \$1,080,844. Instructional and Plant Operational and Maintenance funding is distributed by the province on a per student basis. There are 239 unfunded student spaces in the building at a cost of \$149,737.

Cost to Maintain the Facility in Operable Condition or to Restore the Facility to Operable Condition

Newton School received a provincial facility audit score of 290 in 1999. Edmonton Public Schools' internal inspection rated the facility as 'poor'. The following factors contributed to the poor rating. The mechanical system, washrooms, flooring and exterior doors have reached the end of their usable life and need to be replaced. In addition, the steam heating system needs to be converted to hot water heating, and the washrooms fixtures and exterior building finish are in need of upgrading. Newton School poses no immediate threat to the health and safety of students. Since 1990, records indicate that Facilities Services and the school have cumulatively spent \$577,774 on modifications and upgrades. Major expenditures include \$165,100 spent on replacing windows in 1991 and \$172,009 on re-roofing in 2004.

Location and Accessibility of the School and the Proximity of Other Schools

There are four schools within a 1.6 km radius where student learning space is available: Beacon Heights, Highlands, Montrose and Mount Royal schools.

Transportation

Newton School is located in transportation Zone 6. Currently there are 42 students receiving yellow bus service, not including students accessing parent provided transportation. Twenty-three of these students live in Clareview or north of the Yellowhead Trail. One student lives in transportation Zone 2 south of the North Saskatchewan River. The remaining seven transported students live in the greater Highlands area and 12 students live in the Abbottsfield area. By establishing a special education district centre at Overlanders School in the Clareview area, students would be provided with local accommodation and could have shorter yellow bus rides or would be able to walk to their school.

Yellow bus service would be available for elementary students to their receiving elementary school. The transportation fee would be subsidized by the district at the rate set for students who attend their designated receiving school.

Impact of Closing the School on the Community

Newton School is used on Monday evenings by a pipe band and by the Abbottsfield Youth Project on Mondays and Wednesdays. There is currently no use of Newton School outside of school hours by paid user groups. There are currently two tenants at Newton School: Newton Community League Preschool and the McCauley Community After School Care Association. Consolidation of Newton School students into Montrose School could potentially provide Montrose School with resources to provide more access to its gymnasium after school hours, in order to accommodate the current community uses at Newton School.

If Newton School were to be closed, existing tenants could remain in the building or locate to other suitable district space if desired and available. If consolidated into Montrose School, there may be sufficient space in Montrose School to accommodate some of these users and tenants. The district would look at continuing with existing tenancies and user groups and/or identifying other potential tenancies with community and not-for profit groups, and may also consider other potential district uses for the property. Discussions would be held with the Newton Community League regarding the short and long term use of Newton School building and site. Any potential disposition of the property would be subject to the *Joint Use Agreement* with the City of Edmonton and the provincial *Disposition of Property Regulation*.

The district owns the land where Newton School and adjacent playfields are located. Under the *Joint Use Agreement* with the City of Edmonton, the sports fields are maintained and administered by the city, which would continue as long as the district retains property ownership. Newton School is located on a site adjacent to city parkland. A playground utilized by students and the community is located on the city-owned parkland and it is maintained by the city. There would be no limitation on playground access if Newton School were to be closed. Montrose School has a playground and a basketball court and is located in close proximity to the community hall and skating rink.

Input from the City of Edmonton

The City of Edmonton was invited to provide a community impact statement on the potential closure of High Park School as required by the *Closures of Schools Regulation*. The community impact statement is scheduled to be presented to City Council on Tuesday, March 20, 2007. When received a copy of their response will be forwarded to trustees.

Written Submissions Regarding School Closure

Throughout the consideration for closure process, written submissions were posted on a weekly basis in the trustee's on-line reading room. This is done in accordance with the *Closure of Schools Regulation* such that a board shall give due consideration to any written submissions on the proposed closure that it receives after the public meeting.

CS:cp

- Appendix I Closure of Schools Regulation
- Appendix II Board Policy FL.BP School Closure
- Appendix III Notice of Meeting – Monday, February 12, 2007

(Consolidated up to 170/2004)

ALBERTA REGULATION 238/97

School Act

CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS REGULATION

Table of Contents

- 1** Definitions
- 1.1** Non-application of sections
- 1.2** Exemption from requirements
- 2** Closure of schools, etc.
- 3** Policies and procedures for closure of schools
- 4** Notification of proposed closure
- 5** Public meetings
- 6** Decision on closure
- 7** Closure within school year
- 8** Expiry

Definitions

1 In this Regulation,

(a) "closure" means any action referred to in section 2;

(a.1) "Ministers" means, for the purposes of sections 6 and 7, the Ministers determined under section 16 of the *Government Organization Act* as the Ministers responsible for Part 7 of the *School Act*;

(b) "school year" means the 12-month period beginning on September 1 and ending on the following August 31.

AR 238/97 s1;223/2002;257/2003

Non-application of sections

1.1(1) Sections 4 to 7 do not apply to a closure that occurs

(a) in connection with the transfer by one board to another board or to the operator of a charter school of the ownership of real property on which a school building is located and the school building will continue to be used for the instruction or accommodation of students,

(b) as a result of the Minister's having directed the board to dispose of the school building pursuant to section 200(3) of the Act, or

(c) pursuant to section 2(b) if

(i) the school has more than one education program,

(ii) the students in the grades being closed are all in the same education program, and

(iii) the education program referred to in subclause (ii) is to be transferred to another school.

(2) Where a board plans to transfer an education program pursuant to subsection (1)(c)(iii), the board shall organize and convene an information meeting for the purpose of informing the parents of the students affected by the transfer of the transfer and the alternative arrangements for continuing the education program at another school.

AR 135/2003 s2;257/2003;170/2004

Exemption from requirements

1.2(1) The Minister may, on the written request of a board or on the Minister's initiative, exempt a board from the requirements of sections 4 to 7 in respect of a closure that occurs

- (a) as a result of the board's inability to comply with section 57(2) of the Act, or
- (b) for health or safety reasons.

(2) The Minister may, on the written request of a board, exempt the board from the requirements of sections 4 to 7 in respect of a closure if the Minister is satisfied that the board has consulted with the community regarding any change in grades and programs in one or more of the schools operated by the board.

AR 257/2003 s4;170/2004

Closure of schools, etc.

2 A board may

- (a) close a school permanently or for a specified period of time,
- (b) close entirely 3 or more consecutive grades in a school, or
- (c) repealed AR 257/2003 s5,
- (d) transfer all students from one school building to one or more other school buildings on a permanent basis.

AR 238/97 s2;257/2003

Policies and procedures for closure of schools

3 A board may develop and implement policies and procedures with respect to closure of schools that are not inconsistent with this Regulation.

AR 238/97 s3;257/2003

Notification of proposed closure

4(1) Where a board is considering the closure of a school, the board shall

- (a) raise the matter by way of a motion at a regular meeting of the board, and
- (b) in writing notify the parents of every child and student enrolled in the school who, in the opinion of the board, will be significantly affected by the closure of the school.

(2) A notice referred to in subsection (1)(b) shall set out the following:

- (a) how the closure would affect the attendance area defined for that school;
- (b) how the closure would affect the attendance at other schools;
- (b.1) information on the board's long-range capital plan;

- (c) the number of students who would need to be relocated as a result of the closure;
- (d) the need for, and extent of, busing;
- (e) program implications for other schools and for the students when they are attending other schools;
- (f) the educational and financial impact of closing the school, including the effect on operational costs and capital implications;
- (g) the educational and financial impact if the school were to remain open;
- (h) and (i) repealed AR 257/2003 s7;
- (j) the time and location of the public meeting referred to in section 5(1)(a).

(3) A notice referred to in subsection (1)(b) may set out the following:

- (a) the capital needs of the schools that may have increased enrolment as a result of the closure, and
- (b) the possible uses of the school building or space in the school building if
 - (i) the entire school is being closed, or
 - (ii) 3 or more consecutive grades in the school are being closed entirely.

AR 238/97 s4;257/2003;170/2004

Public meetings

5(1) Where a board has given notice of motion at a regular meeting of the board that it is considering the closure of a school, the board

- (a) shall organize and convene a public meeting for the purpose of discussing the information provided to the parents under section 4,
- (b) shall provide an opportunity for the council of the municipality in which the school is located to provide a statement to the board of the impact the closure may have on the community, and
- (c) may hold other meetings with respect to the closure at times and places as the board may determine.

(2) The date and place of the public meeting referred to in subsection (1)(a) shall be

- (a) posted in 5 or more conspicuous places in the area or areas of the school or schools affected by the closure, for a period of at least 14 days before the date of the public meeting, and

(b) advertised in a newspaper circulating within the area or areas of the school or schools affected by the proposed closure, on at least 2 occasions as close as is practicable to the date of the meeting.

(3) At least 2 trustees of the board shall attend the public meeting referred to in subsection (1)(a).

(4) A board shall ensure that minutes of all public meetings held under this section are prepared.

AR 238/97 s5;257/2003

Decision on closure

6(1) A board shall not make a final decision on the proposed closure until at least 3 weeks have passed since the date of the public meeting referred to in section 5(1)(a).

(2) A board shall give due consideration to any written submissions on the proposed closure that it receives after the public meeting referred to in section 5(1)(a).

(3) A board

(a) shall by resolution decide whether to close the school, and

(b) if the decision is to close the school, shall forthwith notify the Ministers in writing of the decision.

AR 238/97 s6;223/2002;257/2003

Closure within school year

7(1) All school closure procedures shall be initiated and completed within the school year in which the decision to close the school is made.

(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), on the written request of the board, the Ministers may extend the school closure procedures beyond one school year.

AR 238/97 s7;257/2003

Expiry

8 For the purpose of ensuring that this Regulation is reviewed for ongoing relevancy and necessity, with the option that it may be re-passed in its present or an amended form following a review, this Regulation expires on November 1, 2008.

AR 238/97 s8;223/2002;257/2003

9 Repealed AR 223/2002 s5.

BOARD POLICY FL.BP SCHOOL CLOSURE

Policies -> [Table of Contents](#) -> [Facilities](#)

Edmonton Public Schools Board Policies and Regulations

CODE: FL.BP
TOPIC: School Closure

EFFECTIVE DATE: 07-11-2006
ISSUE DATE: 08-11-2006
REVIEW DATE: 11-2011

The board believes that the closure of schools is an important consideration in ensuring the responsible use of the resources placed in its trust; making efficient use of the district's school space; and safeguarding the health and safety of students, staff, and the public.

A. SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

1. The authority of the Board is derived from the *School Act* and the Alberta Closure of Schools Regulation, which say that the Board of Trustees may:
 - a. close a school permanently or for a specified period of time, or
 - b. close entirely three or more consecutive grades in a school, or
 - c. transfer all students from one school building to one or more other school buildings on a permanent basis.

The process for closure of schools under this authority is explained in section C, Process for School Closure.

2. The board authorizes the administration, under the direction of the superintendent of schools and with consultation as determined by the Alberta Closure of Schools Regulation to:
 - a. close or permanently relocate fewer than three consecutive grades in a school, or
 - b. temporarily relocate any number of grades from one school to another.

The process for this shall be in accordance with the Alberta Closure of Schools Regulation, which says that, the board will convene an information meeting with parents of the students affected by the transfer and the alternative arrangements for continuing the education program at another school.

Discontinuance or relocation of a regular program or an alternative program or a special needs program, is not a school closure. The process for discontinuance or relocation of an alternative program is addressed in HA.BP - Student Programs.

B. CRITERIA FOR RECOMMENDING SCHOOL CLOSURE

Before recommending the closure of a school to the Board of Trustees, the administration will develop viability benchmarks and school profiles through the Ten-Year Facilities Plan and will consider all of the following criteria:

- the educational impact on students in the school;
- the enrolment of the school and programs within the school;
- the population and demographic data;
- the amount and cost of excess space in the school;
- the cost to staff and operate the educational program at the school;
- the cost to maintain the facility in operable condition or to restore the facility to operable condition;
- the location and accessibility of the school and the proximity of other schools;
- the necessity to safeguard the health and safety of students, staff, and public;
- the need to consolidate or relocate existing programs;
- the impact of closing the school on the community taking into account existing or proposed development plans.

C. PROCESS FOR SCHOOL CLOSURE

The process for closure will be in accordance with the *School Act* and Alberta Closure of Schools Regulation

A process for school closure flow chart is provided for reference. In case of conflict between this policy and the flow chart, the policy shall prevail.

Reference(s):

HA.BP - Student Programs

School Act Section 58

Alberta Closure of Schools Regulation

Ten-Year Facilities Plan 2007-2016

Process for School Closure Flow Chart

Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation - School Infrastructure Manual



NOTICE OF MEETING

MEETING TO CONSIDER CLOSURE OF NEWTON SCHOOL

Date: Monday, February 12, 2007
Time: 7:00 P.M.
Location: Newton School
 Gymnasium
 5523 – 122 Avenue

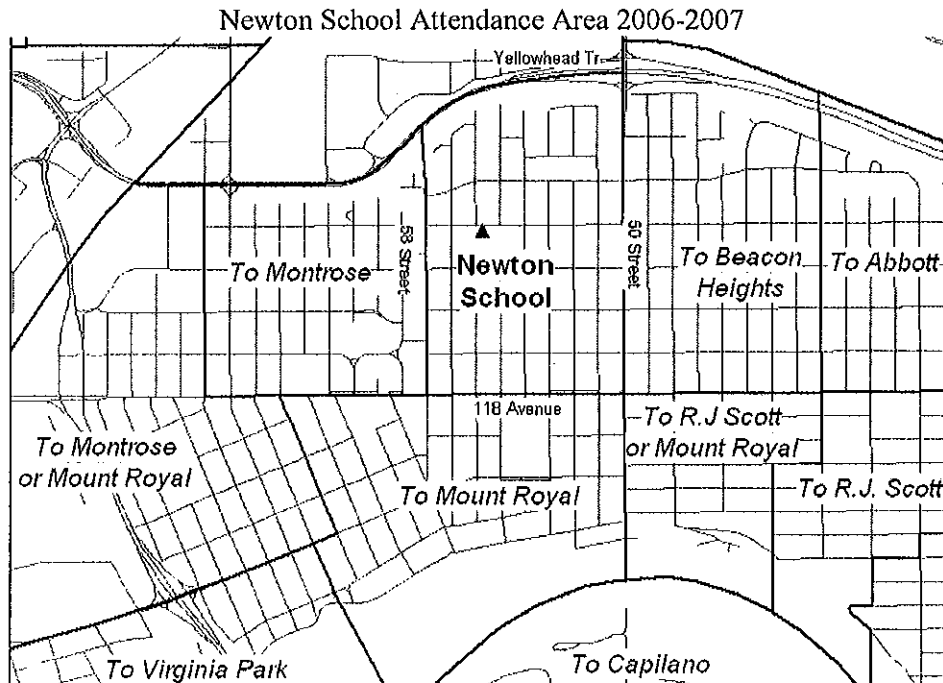
INFORMATION REGARDING THE POTENTIAL CLOSURE OF NEWTON SCHOOL

1. How the school closure would affect the attendance area defined for Newton School.

Newton School, located at 5523 – 122 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, offers a Kindergarten and grades one to six regular program, and Grades one to six Opportunity program. The Board of Trustees is considering the closure of both the elementary and Opportunity programs.

The Newton School attendance area consists of the Newton neighbourhood. The Opportunity program is a special education district centre program that accommodates students, most of whom reside in Northeast Edmonton.

In the event of the closure of Newton School, the Newton attendance area would remain unchanged. Students residing within the Newton elementary attendance area would be designated to Montrose School, and the Opportunity Program would also be relocated to Montrose School. Montrose School is located at 11931 - 62 Street, Edmonton, Alberta.



2. How the closure of Newton School would affect the attendance at other schools.

Newton's enrolment as of September 30, 2006

	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Total
Regular	5	9	10	8	5	10	8	55
OPP		4	6	7	17	12	11	57

Newton's projected enrolment for September 30, 2007

	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Total
Regular	5	9	9	10	8	5	9	55
OPP		3	4	6	12	18	13	56

With a provincially-rated total capacity of 383 students, Montrose School can accommodate all students currently enrolled in the regular and Opportunity programs at Newton School. Current enrolment at Newton School includes students who reside inside and outside the Newton attendance area. The September 30, 2006 enrolment at Montrose School was 107 students (Kindergarten and Grades 1-6), and the projected enrolment for September, 2007 prior to consideration of closure of Newton School, is 102 students (Kindergarten and Grades 1-6).

If Newton School closes, an additional projected enrolment of 111 students (Kindergarten and Grades 1-6) would be designated to the Montrose School for a projected enrolment for the 2007-2008 school year at Montrose School of 213 students (Kindergarten and Grades 1-6). Further, consideration would be given to establishing a Division II opportunity site north of the Yellowhead (Clareview). This site could meet the needs of students currently being bussed out of Clareview, to the program at Newton School. This would serve to provide students with local accommodation.

Currently there are 111 public elementary students living within the Newton School attendance area. Forty-six students (41 per cent) currently choose to attend Newton School. Nine per cent attend Mount Royal School, 8 per cent attend Beacon Heights School, 5 per cent attend Montrose School and the remaining 37 per cent attend other district elementary schools. On average 47.5 per cent of all elementary students district-wide attend their designated school. Some of the students currently attending Newton School could choose to attend district schools other than Montrose School.

The current utilization rates for other neighbouring schools are as follows: Abbott 57 per cent, Beacon Heights 63 per cent, Highlands 68 per cent, Lawton 40 per cent, Montrose 35 per cent, Mount Royal 38 per cent, R. J. Scott 48 per cent, and Virginia Park 87 per cent.

3. Information on the Board's long-range capital plan.

Edmonton Public Schools has a plan to build new schools in growth areas, renew existing schools in areas where enrolments are sustainable and transform the way facilities are managed into a model of efficiency for the future. Please find enclosed:

- brochure with information on Edmonton Public Schools Ten-Year Facilities Plan (2007-2016) and Three-Year Capital Plan (2007-2010)
- copy of the Ten-Year Facilities Plan (2007-2016)
- copy of the Three-Year Capital Plan (2007-2010)

Newton School is located in the North East Sector, which has a provincial utilization rate of 65 per cent for Kindergarten to Grade 9. A strategy to decrease the amount of excess space in this sector

will be undertaken, that may necessitate program relocations, program closures and school closures, in order to maximize learning opportunities for students.

4. *The number of students who would need to be relocated as a result of the closure of Newton School.*

If Newton School were to be closed, the 111 students projected to be enrolled for the fall of September 2007 would be designated to Montrose School for regular elementary programming (55 students) and special education Opportunity programming (56 students). There is space available in Montrose school to accommodate all Newton School students.

Students have direct access to the designated school for their attendance area as defined by their residence. If Newton School were to be closed, some students may choose other district schools. Should parents of Newton School request to register in a different school other than the designated receiving schools, students would be able to register in that school and as long as the school provides the appropriate program and the student meets entrance criteria. Further as mentioned above, consideration would be given to establishing a Division II opportunity site north of the Yellowhead (Clareview). This site could meet the needs of students currently being bussed out of Clareview, to the program at Newton School. This would serve to provide students with local accommodation.

5. *The need for, and the extent of, busing.*

Yellow bus service would be available for elementary students to their receiving elementary school. The transportation fee would be subsidized by the district at the rate set for students who attend their designated receiving school. While no major changes are anticipated to transportation services for students currently attending the Opportunity program, should students choose to attend the planned site in Clareview, it may result in dramatically decreased ride times, or bussing not being required.

6. *Program implications for other schools and for the students when they are attending other schools.*

If Newton School were to close, the projected 55 regular students designated to Montrose School could have access to single grade class groupings. There would be increased funds to purchase resources, curriculum-related resources, library upgrades, physical education equipment, technology upgrades and mathematics and science manipulative materials. Students could also have access to a wider range of options and opportunities to be involved in a wide variety of clubs, and leadership opportunities. In addition, full day kindergarten would be planned for Montrose School.

If Newton School were to close, the 56 students in the Opportunity program would benefit in the same way as students in the regular program. They would also gain from the financial supports for inclusion in a larger school. As well, specialized teaching for students with special education program requirements can be more readily provided in a school with a larger population. Any students currently enrolled in the Opportunity program at Newton School would be able to enrol at Montrose School. In addition, a division II Opportunity program would be made available in Clareview to better meet the needs of students who reside north of the Yellowhead and wish to receive programming closer to home.

Edmonton Public Schools will continue to implement average class sizes recommended by the Learning Commission for the 2007-2008 school year. In the fall of 2006-2007 the district distributed additional funds to schools designated specifically for hiring additional staff to meet the smaller class size recommendations. Montrose School can accommodate Newton students and still meet the reduced class sizes.

Additional educational opportunities and benefits that would be available to Newton School students through the elementary program offered at Montrose School are outlined below.

School	Montrose
Staffing	Increased teaching staff for additional support, leadership and collaboration opportunities Experienced Behaviour and Learning Assistance teacher on staff for programming support, if required Increased FTE Library Technician Montrose School could be considered in a project similar to the City Centre Education Project
Curriculum and Resource Program Benefits	Full day kindergarten Balanced Literacy for K to 6 Reading Recovery Program Middle Years Literacy Intervention Roots of Empathy Character Education Program 4-6 French as a Second Language
Support Services	Daily Paired Reading and Echo Reading sessions Continued support of contracted social workers Access to ESHIP
Facilities	Infusion of technology into Curriculum areas 2 year old computer lab. Large new playground Easy access to classroom from bus loading zone Consideration of modernization of facility
Extra and Co-Curricular Activities	Enhanced participation and resources for school patrol, art club, hand bell choir, primary choir, senior choir, science Olympics Strong intramural program Arts focus on music

7. The educational and financial impact of closing Newton School, including the effect on operational costs and capital implications.

Educational Impact

If Newton School closes, students in the regular program and Opportunity program would become part of a larger peer group at Montrose School.

At Montrose School, there would be the possibility of a greater number of students at the same grade level and/or ability level, and increased opportunities for peer group interactions and age-appropriate activities. Depending on enrolment, Montrose School may need to hire additional staff. Montrose School would engage in welcoming and community building activities to support successful transition to the school.

Financial Impact – Operational and Capital

The current school budget for Newton is \$1,108,687, which includes staffing costs of \$1,004,925 and \$103,762 for Supplies Equipments and Services. If Newton School was closed the above budgeted funds would be available for use in other schools. Direct savings from the reduction of a principal,

head custodian and an administrative assistant would amount to \$186,714 per year. With the closure, approximately \$70,170 in operational and maintenance costs would be saved. Based on the 2005 Capital Inspection Report of the facility's condition, the \$700,000 for upgrades at the school would not be required.

8. *The educational and financial impact if Newton School were to remain open.*

Educational Impacts

If Newton School were to remain open, its projected student population would be 111 students (projected total for September 30th, 2007). The school would continue to offer regular programming for students in multi-grade class groupings for kindergarten and grades 1-6. As well, Newton School would continue to offer the grades 1-6 Opportunity program. The school would need to continue to combine grades into multi-grade groupings classes with no opportunity for single grade groupings, and it would be limited in programming options available for its students. As of September 30th, 2006 Newton had five kindergarten students enrolled. For the 2007-08 school year, Newton School would offer a kindergarten program only if enrolment exceeded 17 students, otherwise kindergarten students would be directed to Montrose School.

In addition, resources for the purchase of instructional materials and equipment would continue to be limited or further reduced.

The challenges for teachers working in the regular program in multiple subject areas or combined grade groupings could include:

- Limited flexibility when organizing for instruction related to student learning groups.
- Challenges in managing multiple curricular levels of instruction and assessment in a single subject area.
- Challenges in daily, unit and long range planning across numerous subject areas.
- Increased responsibility to meet varying individual needs of students across combined grades in a single classroom.
- May impact ability to select adequate resources to reflect range of student interests, abilities and needs in a classroom.
- Limited opportunities to share ideas, strategies and resources with other teachers of similar course offerings at the same grade level or in the same subject area.
- May impact opportunities to attend or engage in professional development opportunities in or out of district.

Financial Impact – Operational and Capital

Based on staffing and operating costs for the projected enrolment of 111 students, the total annual cost to operate Newton School is slightly under \$1,108,687. Approximately \$700,000 would be needed to meet life cycle replacement needs of the facility. Major components facing life cycle replacements are the roof and boiler.

9. *The capital needs of the schools that may have increased enrolment as a result of the closure of Newton School.*

At Montrose School, there are minimal costs associated with the potential accommodation of students from the Newton School attendance area. Montrose School is not identified on the district's current capital plan. For Montrose School approximately \$1.1 million would be needed to meet life cycle replacement needs of the facility.

10. *What is the proposed use the school building if it is closed?*

Should Newton School be closed, the school would first be considered by the district for educational purposes, for example, district operations that are in leased space, leased to non profit organizations or sold. For example, closed schools have been used by the district for the Home School Centre, the Environment Education Centre, and the Rites of Passage Program. A few have been leased on a long-term basis to organizations such as NAIT, the Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation, and the City of Edmonton Community Services Department. A number of closed schools have been sold to: the City of Edmonton for green space, the Edmonton Society for Christian Education, and the Turkish Canadian Cultural Society.

11. *What are the impacts on Lease Agreements if the school were to be closed?*

Tenants in the building will be provided with four options.

- a) The tenant (or tenants) may remain in the building for the remainder of the term of the lease;
- b) The tenant (or tenants) may express an interest to remain in the building for future lease renewal term;
- c) The tenant (or tenants) may terminate the lease at any time without penalty; or
- d) The tenant (or tenants) may express an interest to relocate to another district school.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information regarding the school closure process or to provide feedback, visit Edmonton Public Schools website www.epsb.ca and select the link to the planning website.

In accordance with the School Act Alberta Regulation 238/97 - *Closure of Schools Regulation* a board shall not make a final decision on the proposed closure of Newton School until at least three weeks have passed since the date of the public meeting. The Board will give due consideration to any written submissions on the proposed closure that it receives after the public meeting and prior to the final debate and decision at the public board meeting on Thursday, March 22, 2007.

