

DISTRICT ATTENDEES:

Woody Bradford - Assistant Superintendent
Jo Abshire - Communications Manager

Jeremy Lyndon – Principal, ACSS
Jonathan Harris – Principal, BGMS
Mark Touzeau – Vice Principal, Shortreed

Aaron Powell – Principal, DW Poppy
Colleen Harvie – Principal, Fort Langley
Rhonda Krisko – Principal, Wix–Brown

Welcome, Introductions, First Nations Acknowledgement - Woody Bradford

Traditional Welcome – Kwantlen First Nations – Chief Marilyn Gabriel

Presentation by Assistant Superintendent - Woody Bradford

Overview of the District Vision – it is what guides District teachers and staff in the work they do every day.

Purpose – Woody Bradford explained the Board motion to implement middle school programming in the DW Poppy region. The Board of Education has requested staff consult with the DW Poppy and ACSS communities regarding the best educational opportunities for student success. Staff will bring a recommendation to the Board of Education in December, based on feedback gathered during the community consultations.

Focus on Students – Woody Bradford explained how the process will focus on children/students' social/emotional needs, physical well-being, and learning opportunities that are sustainable over the next 10-15 years. He spoke to the core values of the District as a guiding principle, as well as the challenges that the DW Poppy and ACSS regions are facing regarding population decline.

Relationship Building – Woody Bradford explained the importance of building trusting relationships in this process - trust between the District and parents/families, and acknowledged that not everyone will agree with each other, but people must be respectful. He spoke to the importance of seeing this as a partnership between the community and the schools. He explained how the Board will direct what the next steps are. He addressed how the District is aware of the concerns of the Fort Langley community such as transportation and the possibility of the grade 6s and 7s on the bus for two more years.

Communications Plan Overview – Jo Abshire, Communications Manager, highlighted four guiding principles specific to the consultation: Integrity, Trust, Listening and Respect. She mentioned that honesty and transparency are paramount to the process and requested that people to be mindful and respectful both in person and online.

Level of Engagement – Jo Abshire outlined the spectrum of public participation and explained the definition of consultation. Consult - we will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek feedback on drafts and proposals.

Communication Objectives – Jo Abshire described the goals of the consultation process. This includes educating the public about the background through to communicating the Board's decision once it has been made. Jo also spoke to the importance of the process, consultation and engagement.

Timeline and Audience – Two-month public consultation from September 18 to November 15, 2019. The consultation is centred around school communities impacted, but is open to the community, district-wide. Jo Abshire emphasized that all shareholders, past and present, are welcome and encouraged to provide feedback.

Method of Outreach – Jo Abshire explained the three ways to engage: (1) attend a community meeting, (2) complete the online survey, and (3) email feedback@sd35.bc.ca.

Community Meetings Schedule – as per presentation

Wednesday, September 18th, 6pm – 8pm @ Betty Gilbert Middle School (BGMS & Parkside)
Thursday, September 26th, 6pm – 8pm @ North Otter Elementary (North Otter/Wix-Brown)
Thursday, October 3rd, 6pm – 8pm @ Aldergrove Community Secondary (ACSS & Shortreed)
Thursday, October 10th, 6pm – 8pm @ DW Poppy Secondary
Thursday, October 17th, 6pm – 8pm @ Fort Langley Elementary
Wednesday, October 23rd, 6pm - 8pm @ Peterson Road Elementary (Peterson Road & Coghlan)
Tuesday, November 12th, 6pm – 8pm @ School Board Office – livestream (District-wide)
~ **DATE CHANGE from November 7th due to a scheduling conflict**

Background on DWP Transition Plan – Woody Bradford spoke to the population numbers at each school. He mentioned that currently 130 students at DW Poppy are residents of Aldergrove, and that ACSS and DW Poppy students are already intermixing in the community of East Langley.

Woody Bradford shared the timeline, beginning with consultation in the DW Poppy region in June 2017 through to the present (September – November community consultation), followed with expected Board decision in December 2019. He then spoke to the cost associated with middle school programming

Consulting with DW Poppy Community – Woody Bradford explained how there were main themes that surfaced during the transition committee meetings: people care about students, community, opportunities and learning. There were three non-negotiables agreed on: educational improvements, safety & well-being, and facility & scheduling. He explained that the community felt safety was a crucial component and that grades 6-12 in the same building was not desirable due to intermixing. He mentioned how grade 6s and 7s would experience looping, which would mean they would have the same teacher for two years.

Consulting with ACSS Community – Woody Bradford explained that in addition to the consultation with the DW Poppy community, District staff have also been consulting with Administration from ACSS from September 2018 through to the present, following with an expected Board decision in December 2019. The same themes were expressed by the ACSS school community. He summarized how the District subsidizes both DW Poppy and ACSS in order to provide educational programming that's similar to other schools in the District.

Other Considerations from Community Feedback – Woody Bradford listed the other areas families expressed including extracurricular activities, transportation, enrollment, timeline. He spoke to the District's commitment to consultation; the decision has not been made and this is why the consultation process is so important.

Overview of Plans

- Plan 1 - Continue to submit capital funding request for DW Poppy
- Plan 2 - Place portables at DW Poppy for Grade 6 and 7 students
- Plan 3 – DW Poppy Middle and Aldergrove Secondary

Artefacts – Educational Programming – Woody Bradford noted the comparison of middle school explorations found on each table and encouraged people to review them. He also directed people to the course guides from the secondary schools available at the back of the room (ACSS, DWP, Brookwood, Walnut Grove).

Middle-Secondary Overview - ACSS Principal Jeremy Lyndon talked about the unique system that operated between ACSS and Betty Gilbert Middle (BGMS). He talked to the positive opportunities for culture building within the community and spoke to the leadership and mentorship that is able to develop because of this close relationship. He also mentioned that a major benefit is that student transitions are easier due to this arrangement.

Jeremy Lyndon then talked about the challenges of this relationship. He mentioned that BGMS is an elementary school and does not offer the same exploratory classes as other middle schools. Another issue brought up was that the exploratory students need to walk back and forth across the field in order to attend exploratory classes at ACSS. He also discussed the significant timetable challenges with a limited number of students. The other challenge he mentioned with the timetable is that it is very limited as the BGMS exploratory classes take up a lot of space in the ACSS timetable and this ends up limiting what classes can be taken and when for ACSS students. He mentioned that with the exception of exploratories, DW Poppy also has challenges in building a timetable with such small enrolment numbers.

Jeremy Lyndon concluded by asking if anyone had any questions regarding timetables. There was no further clarification requested.

Comparison of the Three Plans – Woody Bradford outlined what the plans would look like in relation to relevant categories.

Information for Plan 1

- Educational Programming – Fixed Timetable
- Safety and Well-being – Grade 6's and 7's inside the building
- Facility – One school Grades 6-8 and 9-12
- Extracurricular – Gym time, Split Bell Schedule, alignment with other schools in the District
- Transportation – 2 Schedules (Middle and Secondary); Split Bell Schedule
 - Middle would start earlier and secondary would start later
- Enrollment – Middle 300-350, Secondary 600-650 Students
- Timeline – Based on Ministry's Decision: unknown

Information for Plan 2

- Educational Programming – Fixed Timetables
- Safety and Well-being – Grade 6's and 7's outside of the building
- Facility – Adding portables for middle school
- Extracurricular - Gym time, Bell Schedule, alignment with other schools in the District
- Transportation - 2 Schedules (Middle and Secondary); Split Bell Schedule
- Enrollment – Middle 300-350, Secondary 600-650 Students
- Timeline – Based on Board's Decision: 2-4 years
 - This plan has a more realistic timeline than Plan 1

Information for Plan 3

- Educational Programming – Personalizing Learning – Flexible, Choice
 - Significant increase in choice and opportunity than what is currently offered
- Safety and Well-being – Standalone middle school
- Facility – Learning Spaces converted to Middle Explorations
- Extracurricular - Aligned with other Middle/Secondary Schools
- Transportation – 40-minute Max Ride Time
- Enrolment – 700 Middle, 1100 Secondary Students (enrolment is not changing in next 10-15 years)
- Timeline – Based on Board's Decision; 1–3 years

Woody Bradford stressed that regardless of what decision is made, the decision will not be rushed. The focus of this process is to identify the best option to provide quality learning opportunities for all students in the ACSS and DW Poppy regions.

Workshop/Group Questions – Woody Bradford explained the workshop activity. The first question asked participants to put sticky notes on the top three items they value the most out of a list of categories. The other three questions were completed in groups with a facilitator recording.

Question 1: *When considering options and planning for DW Poppy as a middle school, which THREE of these items do you value most?*

- Educational Programming
- Safety and Well-being
- Facility
- Extracurricular
- Transportation
- Enrollment
- Timeline

Outcome:

Transportation	46
Educational Programming	18
Safety & Well-being	18
Extracurricular	16
Facility	14
Timeline	10
Enrollment	3

Question 2: *When planning for a middle school in the DW Poppy region, what are you most excited about?*

- Not excited
- Provides more opportunities, but opportunities can be provided differently
- Increased opportunities for students through specialized programs
- Potential for good opportunities
- Not excited (not for us)

Question 3: *When planning for a middle school in the DW Poppy region, what concerns do you have?*

- Way too far for students from Fort Langley to travel. Kids here are part of the Fort (North) Langley community. 40 minutes is not realistic.
- Where is the published literature proving that middle school is better than K-7? When parents have 3-4 children having to travel to all sites, then the kids have to transition more often with a middle school which is concerning.
- Teacher retention/teacher stress is impacting students. Need details to be organized out so that a more informed decision can be made. Limited to what students can take for instruments on the bus. Where is the funding coming for the conversion at DW Poppy to a middle school? Why can't we adapt our conversion enough to keep DW Poppy a high school? I bought in DW Poppy catchment because I wanted my kids to go to a smaller school.
- Environmental sustainability - carbon footprint. Changes to transportation - will we have to pay for our kids to bus? Will parents be able to send their kids to a different school? Are you going to cancel the Rugby trip that has already been planned and paid for? What about other trips that have had money raised for them?
- The larger the school the more difficult it will be to meet the needs of students with learning challenges. Leadership opportunities would be lost for grade 6/7's in a middle school. Transportation - it's too long to spend on a bus. Will the quality of the arts programs continue, or would they be lost?

- Transportation will be way too long, conflicting with extracurricular. Time constraints. Why couldn't the Fort Langley students go to Walnut Grove? Transitions tend to be tough and stressful for students, adding in another one would add to these stressors. Children who are part of different minority groups tend to have fewer graduation rates in middle school districts. Loss of identity and traditions. There seems to be too much focus on middle school students and not enough focus on the impact this will have on the high school students. What are the plans for special needs students? Riding the bus with (gr. 6 and gr. 12) could lead to problems.
- Fear of not being welcomed at ACSS, us vs. them mentality if the two communities come together. How do you bring two communities together? Rivalry?
- Teacher - student relationships (have built connections with DWP staff). Concerned about mentors. Becoming acquainted with the physical plant of ACSS. Grade 12 students - sense of loss not being able to graduate from DWP. Loss of friend groups.
- Transportation and proximity --> natural disasters, would be further away from parents and families. Why such a focus on keeping younger and older students separate on buses etc. We don't see the same safety concerns that the transition committee saw. Concerned about being labelled as "cohorts" --> we are students, not numbers.
- How early would students need to be on the bus? What would happen to staff? Extracurricular activities would be difficult to engage in - with busing? Would there be a late bus for students who wanted to engage in extracurricular activities? Need for transition activities - get to know plant.
- Transportation - The distance of Fort Langley to DW Poppy and Aldergrove. Fort Langley is not part of the DW Poppy region. It happens to be part of the DW Poppy catchment area due to a lack of student space at WGSS.
- That no other options are being considered.

Question 4: *Are there any other ideas/needs that should be considered when planning for a middle school in the DW Poppy Region?*

- Why doesn't the Township pick up the tab to pay for middle school? Fine Arts to be a Fort Langley high school catchment school? Dual track at Fine Arts? To help increase their numbers to offer more at that school. Change catchment areas to include Fort Langley in Walnut Grove.
- If different start times, then shorten lunch so that the end of day is the same. Bus for 5pm for kids to do extracurricular. Choice program at DW Poppy to get some people in. IB at RE Mountain - should it be moved? Why not adapt LSS to accommodate Fort Langley kids?

- Build a separate middle school in the DW Poppy area. Would busing be a cost to the parents if they add more buses? It doesn't matter that middle and high school students are on the same bus?
- The 4.5 million is not that much money, fundraising could be set up to raise the funds. What would happen to the amazing band program at DW Poppy? How about having DW Poppy as the high school and ACSS as the middle school? Fort Langley going to Walnut Grove to ease the commute?
- What would happen to the Betty Gilbert facility? BGMS --> put it into ACSS, sell Betty Gilbert property and put the money into DW Poppy. Why don't students / community get to vote on this? Concern about student-teacher ratios (would there be less time for teachers to help students?)
- Fort Langley to become a part of Fine Arts or WGSS catchment. Keep Fort Langley K-7 until they can build a middle school locally. Looking at the catchment boundaries. Making the Fine Arts a middle school and high school. Giving Fort Langley families the opportunity to choose between WGSS and DW Poppy.

Closing

Summary of Ways to Engage – Jo Abshire reiterated how people can take part in the consultation.

Attend a community meeting, complete the online survey, email feedback@sd35.bc.ca.

Jo Abshire then showed the Middle School Consultation website page.

- FAQ section
- Community meeting minute summary

Woody Bradford closed the evening by thanking everyone for attending and spoke to the importance of the process.