

DATE: December 13, 2016

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Consideration to Close Junior High Programming at Winterburn School

ORIGINATOR: Lorne Parker, Executive Director, Infrastructure

RESOURCE STAFF: Jenifer Elliott, David Evans, Kim Holowatuk, Roland Labbe, Valerie Leclair, Shannon Mah, Marilyn Schmitke, David Sloan, Adam Snider, Jennifer Thompson, Christopher Wright

REFERENCE: *School Act*, Board Policies [EA.BP – Infrastructure Planning Principles](#), [AA.BP – Stakeholder Relations](#)

ISSUE

To present to the Board of Trustees the Superintendent's recommendation for consideration of school closure as defined by the *School Act* as the closure of three or more consecutive grades.

In accordance with the *School Act: Closure of Schools Regulation*, the first step for the Board of Trustees (the Board) is to approve a motion to consider the closure of Grades 7–9 at Winterburn School.

If the Board approves a motion of closure, there would also be the potential for the Board to request ministerial approval for exemption from Sections 4 through 7 of the *Closure of Schools Regulation*. These sections include the requirement for consultation. Since extensive consultation has already occurred (Attachment I), going through this process again is viewed as unnecessary given the strong support for this closure.

BACKGROUND

In February 2014, the Province announced funding for Michael Phair School in the Webber Greens neighbourhood. The school will accommodate Grades 7–9, with a capacity of 900 students. It will open to students in September 2017. Michael Phair School will provide state of the art learning opportunities for students with enhanced learning spaces for junior high programming.

In 2014, Winterburn School was facing growth accommodation pressures. In response to these pressures, options to address the problem were put forward for public consideration. The options included creating a smaller geographic attendance area for the school and relocation of the Logos program. It was during this process that parents, community members and staff suggested that closing the junior high program should be considered.

Stakeholder feedback collected told us that Winterburn School was not adequately equipped with the proper learning spaces to offer high quality junior high programming. As there was not another junior high nearby for students to attend at the time, closure of the program was not considered. Now that

space is available at the new Michael Phair School, it is recommended that closure of the junior high program at Winterburn School be considered at this time.

As part of the work of setting the attendance boundary for Michael Phair School, stakeholders were notified of the intention to consider closure of the junior high program at Winterburn School. Letters were sent to all Winterburn School families explaining the rationale for the consideration. A meeting was held June 6, 2016 to share proposed attendance area options for the new school. Stakeholders were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the options, both at the meeting and through an online survey, all of which clearly articulated consideration of closing Grades 7–9 at Winterburn School. Communication of the approved attendance area for Michael Phair School included a letter (Attachment II) to Winterburn School families, once again outlining the intention to recommend closure of the junior high program at the school. The attendance area for Michael Phair School was approved on November 8, 2016. A second meeting was held on December 6, 2016 at Winterburn School to answer questions and address any concerns about the closure process.

RELATED FACTS

- Michael Phair School will open in September 2017 providing a state of the art facility for junior high programming.
- All attendance area options presented for public feedback included consideration to close Grades 7–9 at Winterburn School.
- Feedback received through the attendance area process presented little opposition and much support for the closure of the junior high program at Winterburn School.
- The final decision for the attendance area for Michael Phair School (Attachment II) includes the areas currently designated to Winterburn School for junior high programming.
- These areas will be dual-designated to both schools for Grades 7–9 unless a closure is approved.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Board consider a motion to close Grades 7–9 at Winterburn School.
2. That the Board consider a motion for the Board Chair to send a letter to the Minister of Education requesting exemption from Sections 4 through 7 of the *Closure of Schools Regulation* in the *School Act*, be approved.

OPTIONS

Based on the information provided in this report, the following options are considered most appropriate:

1. Consider Recommendation 1.
2. If Recommendation 1 is approved, then consider Recommendation 2.

CONSIDERATIONS and ANALYSIS

Rationale for the Superintendent's Recommendation Subject to Board Approval of Closure Motion

The feedback from principals, public meetings and a survey were analyzed to determine support for the recommendation to close the junior high program at Winterburn School. The feedback demonstrates strong support for the closure.

Criteria and Infrastructure Planning Principles

Closing the junior high program at Winterburn School and moving it to Michael Phair School will address the educational needs of students for the long term and provide quality learning environments for all students. It will provide a state-of-the-art facility with improved Career and Technology Studies (CTS) spaces, a larger gym and up-to-date classrooms. The closure and movement of students to Michael Phair School considers the values and needs of the community since there is strong support for this action. The new Michael Phair School and the closure of junior high programming at Winterburn School meets the objectives of the Infrastructure Planning Principles.

Feedback from the Public

Strong support for the closure of the junior high program at Winterburn School was demonstrated through the web based survey and public meetings. The community sees the recommendation as an investment in the students of Winterburn School and the community as a whole. The new school will provide improved junior high educational spaces and can contribute to retaining junior high students who are currently choosing to attend schools outside of the area.

School Closure

Every effort has been made to follow the intent of the process outlined in the *Closure of Schools Regulation*. The consultation process is aligned with the provisions to inform and gather input from parents and the public. A detailed account of the communication and invitations provided to parents and the public to participate in the process is provided in Attachment I.

NEXT STEPS

- The first step for the Board is to approve a motion to consider the closure of Grades 7–9 at Winterburn School.
- If the Board approves a motion to consider the closure of Grades 7–9 at Winterburn School, then there would also be the potential for the Board to obtain ministerial approval for exemption from Sections 4 through 7 of the *Closure of Schools Regulation*. These sections impose the requirement of extensive consultation, which has already occurred. Going through this process again is viewed as unnecessary, given the strong support for the closure. Therefore, it is recommended that the Board approve a motion for the Board Chair to send a letter to the Minister of Education requesting this exemption.
- If the Board ultimately approves closure of Grades 7–9 at Winterburn School, the decision will be communicated to affected families in time for students to pre-enrol at Michael Phair School for the 2017–2018 school year.

ATTACHMENTS and APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I	Process of Public Consultation for the Consideration of School Closure – Winterburn Junior High Program
ATTACHMENT II	Letter of November 29, 2016 to Winterburn School Families

KH:ks

**Process of Public Consultation for the Consideration of School Closure -
Winterburn Junior High Program**

December 2013	Growth accommodation meeting regarding the issue of overcrowding at Winterburn junior high. Stakeholders suggested the closure of the junior high program as a solution to be considered. Other measures were applied to address the issue.
May 25 and June 1, 2016	Advertisements ran in the Edmonton Examiner – all zones. Note: all advertisements clearly articulate that closure of the junior high program at Winterburn school will be considered.
May 25, 2016	News post on District website announcing meeting date and location. Consideration of closure included in messaging.
May 27, 2016	Letter to parents of students attending Winterburn School, informing them of the process to set the attendance area for Michael Phair School and the intention to consider closure of the junior high program at Winterburn School in all options.
May 27, 2016	Information sent to community leagues for posting on websites or Facebook pages.
May 27, 2016	Facebook advertising and ad graphics posted to EPSB Facebook platform.
June 6, 2016	Public Meeting – meeting was livestreamed and posted to District website.
June 6 – September 12, 2016	Public Feedback Survey to gather feedback on options. Consideration of closure of the junior high program at Winterburn school is articulated in each of the options presented
November 29, 2016	Letter to parents of students at Winterburn School, informing them of the attendance area decision and the intention to ask the Board to consider a motion to close Grades 7–9 at Winterburn School. The letter invites stakeholders to attend a meeting to address concerns with the closure process.
December 6, 2016	Public Meeting at Winterburn School
December 13, 2016	Public Board meeting. Motions to consider the closure of Grades 7–9 at Winterburn School. Motion considered for the Board Chair to send a letter to the Minister of Education requesting exemption from Sections 4 through 7 of the <i>Closure of Schools Regulation</i> in the <i>School Act</i> .



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

WARD A Cheryl Johner
 WARD B Michelle Draper
 WARD C Orville Chubb
 WARD D Ray Martin
 WARD E Ken Gibson
 WARD F Michael Janz
 WARD G Bridget Stirling
 WARD H Nathan Ip
 WARD I Sherry Adams

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Darrel Robertson
 Centre for Education
 1 Kingsway NW
 Edmonton AB T5H 4G9
 T 780-429-8000
 F 780-429-8318
 E info@epsb.ca

November 29, 2016

Dear Parents, Guardians and Families,

I would like to take this opportunity to share the decisions made about the attendance area for Michael Phair School. Thank you to all of you who participated in our consultations, either by attending a meeting, watching the meeting online and/or filling out the online survey. Your input was important and helped Edmonton Public Schools decide the attendance area for your school, which is scheduled to open in September 2017.

Decision:

The Superintendent has approved the following attendance area for Michael Phair School:

- Students living in the following neighbourhoods are designated to Michael Phair School: **Breckenridge Greens, Kinglet Gardens, Pintail Landing, Potter Greens, Rosenthal, Rural Winterburn, Stewart Greens, Suder Greens, Webber Greens and Westview Village.**
- All students **currently attending Winterburn School in Grades 7–9 will be redirected to Michael Phair School** in September 2017.
 - It is anticipated that **Winterburn School will become a K-6 school.** Grades 7–9 will no longer be offered.
- Michael Phair School will have an **open attendance area**, which means if there is still room after students in the primary attendance area are enrolled, students living outside the primary attendance area can apply to register. If there are more students that apply than spaces available, students will be chosen through our random selection process.

Transportation:

Yellow bus service is not provided for junior high students. Edmonton Transit is the preferred mode of transportation.

Winterburn School junior high programming closure:

As part of this decision, the Superintendent will ask the Board of Trustees to consider a motion to close the junior high program at Winterburn School. Under the *Closure of Schools regulation* in the *School Act*, closing three or more consecutive grades requires a formal school closure process. The Superintendent will also ask the Board of Trustees to consider a motion to have the Board Chair write a letter to the Minister of Education, asking for an exemption to the formal closure consultation process because we addressed the closure during our attendance area consultations for Michael Phair School last spring.

Parents and other stakeholders will have the opportunity to drop in to the Winterburn School library on December 6, 2016, between 7-8 p.m. to speak with District staff to address any questions or concerns about this process.

.../2

How we made this decision:

We chose an attendance area that would allow as many students as possible to attend a school close to home, and we did our best to keep families and communities together. We also made careful decisions to make sure the school doesn't fill up too quickly while communities are still growing. This is a lesson we learned from opening other schools in new areas.

Public feedback supported the decision to make Winterburn School a Kindergarten to Grade 6 school and move Grades 7-9 to Michael Phair School instead. The communities of Kinglet Gardens and Pintail Landing also indicated that Michael Phair School would be their preferred designated school closest to home.

Students who live in the primary attendance area are guaranteed a place at the school. If there's still space once students from the primary attendance area have registered, students from outside the attendance areas can register and will be selected through our random selection process.

The school will carefully manage enrolment to make sure there's room for new students who move into the school's primary attendance area, and we hope this will minimize the need to change attendance areas in the future.

Please know that we chose this new attendance area with thoughtful consideration. We listened and incorporated public feedback, where possible, from our attendance area meetings and surveys last spring and made decisions with your children's best interests in mind. These decisions ensure that, regardless of where your children attend school, they will receive an excellent education in a safe and caring environment. The pre-enrolment process for all schools begins in spring 2017. Information about this process will be shared shortly on SchoolZone and our website, epsb.ca.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Edmonton Public Schools. If you have any questions, please contact our Planning department at 780-429-8539.

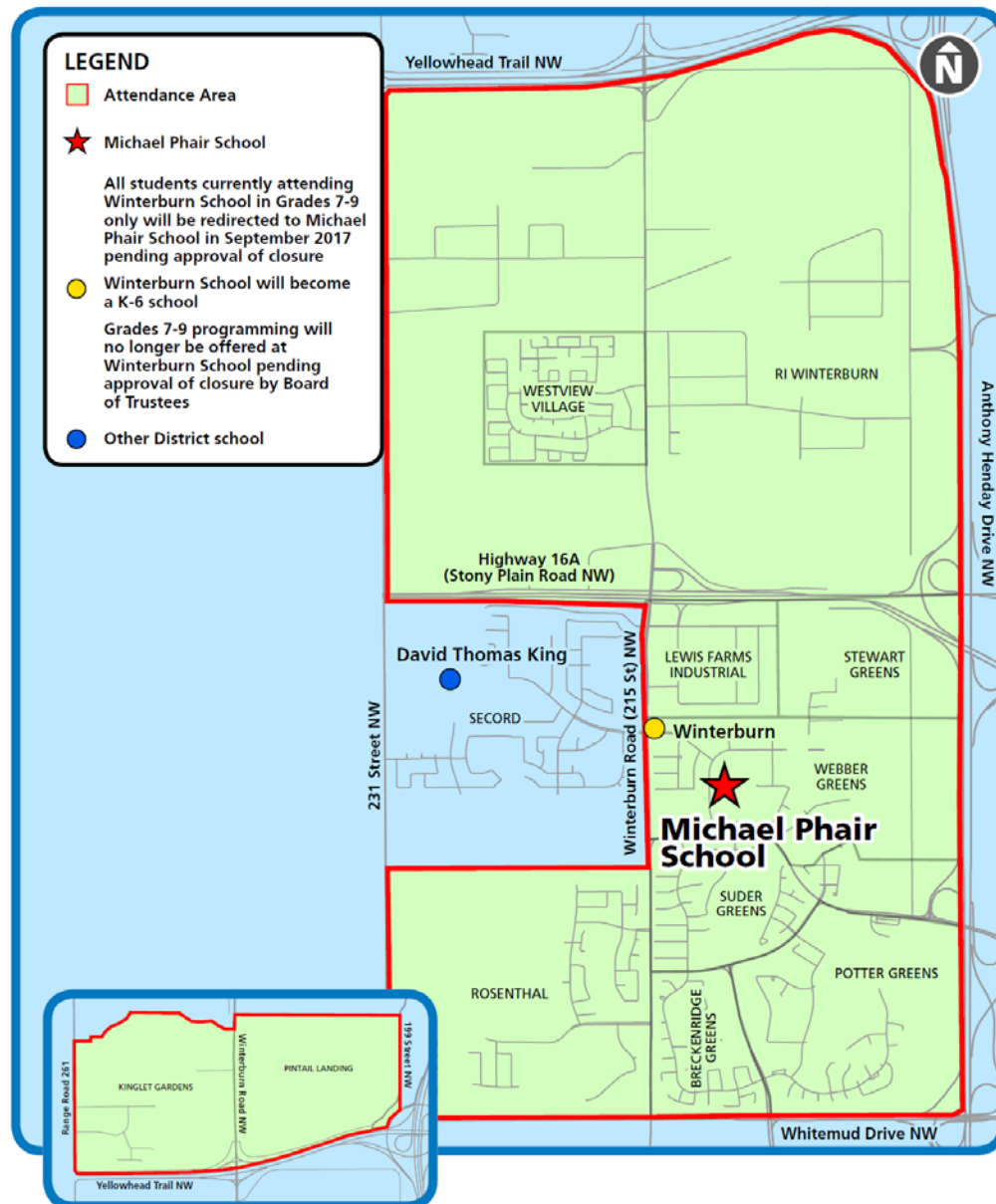
Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Wright". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chris" and last name "Wright" clearly distinguishable.

Christopher Wright
Managing Director
Infrastructure

CW/em

Michael Phair School (7-9)



C17 – November 21, 2016