

Midway Elementary School School Closure Proposal Information Package

Consultation Process

At the regular board meeting on Tuesday, December 14, 2021, the Board of Education of School District No. 51 (Boundary) passed a motion to begin the consultation process for the proposed closure of Midway Elementary, following Policy No. 1330.

Consultation Timeline

Information Meeting: Monday, January 24, 2022, at 6pm via Zoom

- Senior management present relevant information regarding proposal will be presented to Trustees, staff, families and public
- Meeting recorded and available for viewing
- Information package also available
- Please phone School Board Office: 250 442 8258

Written Submission Timeline: Deadline Thursday, February 17, 2022

- Affected individuals may submit a written response to any proposed school closure in the following ways:
 - Mail: Box 640, Grand Forks, BC, V0H 1H0
 - Fax: 250 442 8800
 - Email: info@sd51.bc.ca
- Full name and address must be on submission
- Written responses may be referred to during subsequent public forums respecting the closure, unless the correspondent specifically states in the written response that they wish to remain anonymous.

Public Meeting: Thursday, February 24, 2022, at 6 pm in Midway

- To discuss the proposed closure, summarize and share written submissions, and listen to community concerns and proposed options.
- Individuals may do presentation at this time
- Presentations to be handed in at meeting for information purposes

Tentative Public Meeting: Thursday, March 3 or 10, 2022 at 6 pm in Greenwood or Midway

Regular Board Meeting: Tuesday, March 15, 2022, at 6 pm

- Trustees will make decision regarding proposal

Background Information on Midway Elementary School

Facility

- Built in 1948
 - Originally had 3 classrooms and went up to Grade 10
- Enlarged and renovated in 1978
 - Gym and library added at that time
- Variety of configurations over the years
 - Has been K– 3 for at least the past 12 years
- Currently 2 classrooms, with a library and a gym as well as a StrongStart Outreach program

Educational Staff

- 2.625 teaching time allocated
 - 2 full-time classroom positions
 - 1 part-time (0.625) for prep, library, Literacy Support, and release time for LST
 - Also works at Greenwood Elementary (0.375)
- Non-enrolling Programs
 - 0.25 Learning Support for students who need additional help
 - 0.125 Library
 - 0.17 Literacy Support
- 0.25 principal who also teaches prep at MES
 - 0.25 principal, prep teacher at Greenwood Elementary
 - 0.25 district responsibilities for west end of district

Support Staff

- 2 educational assistants
- 0.50 clerical (works out of Greenwood)
- 0.50 Indigenous Culture and Student Success Facilitator – also works at Greenwood Elementary
- 0.25 Child and Youth Care Worker - also works at Greenwood, West Boundary and Beaverdell Elementary Schools
- 0.25 StrongStart Facilitator - works at Greenwood, West Boundary and Beaverdell StrongStart Centres
- 1 supervisor (should have 2 supervisors)
- Custodian for 5 hours a day

- Also have itinerant staff who support students
- For example, Speech and Language Pathologists, Applied Behaviour Analyst, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist

Students

- 31 students
 - 15 students in Kindergarten/Grade 1
 - 16 students in Grade 2/3
- 29% (9 of 31) of students are from Midway
- 71% (22 of 31) of students are from Greenwood
- 36% self-declare Indigenous ancestry
- Across SD 51, students have significant needs that we need to meet, and MES is no different
- Significant support is needed for learning and behavioural challenges

Aside – a question was asked at the information meeting related to the make-up of Greenwood Elementary School.

- *42 students at Greenwood Elementary*
 - *9 from Midway (21%)*
 - *1 from Rock Creek (3%)*
 - *32 from Greenwood (76%)*

Current Challenges with Two-School Model

We acknowledge and understand that families and community members value Midway Elementary. SD 51 also values MES – the staff is a great team who care greatly for their students and families. Parents are involved and supportive of the school. The culture at the school is welcoming – students are active and engaged learners who are happy to come to school.

It is also important to acknowledge and understand that there are challenges in having 2 schools for Midway and Greenwood students. These challenges affect **all** students' learning and wellbeing

Staffing / Student Learning

Attracting qualified specialist teachers is becoming very difficult when a position is divided between 2 schools:

- Learning Support Teacher who is qualified to give Level B assessments
- Librarian / Literacy Support teacher
- These are invaluable positions that need fully trained staff
 - Instrumental in learning for all students, especially for those students who have other challenges
 - If we as a district are serious about equity and bridging the learning gap that exists, we need to have trained staff to ensure learning needs are addressed
 - Currently, it is an employee market – simply put - teachers are choosing assignments that don't require travel
 - As I have shared before, we had 3 different qualified applicants at MES this year, 2 of whom signed contracts, who left b/c of better opportunities

Student support fragmented for students at both MES and GES with each school receiving:

- 1 day a week from Child and Youth Care Worker
- 2 days a week from Indigenous Culture and Student Success facilitator
- We know that issues don't arise for our students on a fixed timeline
 - Many times, a student who is struggling needs a check in with support people multiple times a week

Principal who travels between schools

- When at one school, cannot physically support other school
- Valuable time lost in travel – sometimes multiple times a day
- Difficulty offering intramurals or coaching because of travel between schools
- If staff absent with no replacement, domino effect for both schools
 - Principal must cover and is unable to do prep or other components of job
 - Takes away time from other students, not able to give full attention
- Additional supervision during unstructured times
 - If supervisor unable to work, falls on principal or other staff to cover
 - Takes time out of classroom if educational assistant covers
 - Principal again can be pulled from other school
- Principal never able to be fully present at site
 - Always planning/worrying/anticipating what is happening at other school

Logistics around supplies that are shared between 2 schools

- Not easily available for staff who need something for their teaching

Facility

Age and condition of building is a challenge

- In 2018, SD 51 completed a provincial architectural review that is used to calculate the facility condition index (FCI) comparing the maintenance, repair, and replacement deficiencies of the facility with its replacement value.
- MES is rated as “very poor”
 - Roofing assessment in 2020
 - Needs replacement and insulation added: \$400 000
- Has priority 3 asbestos removal assessment
 - Any project requires pre-inventory assessment and abatement (project audit)
- However, MES is not the only school that has a low rating

Facility Condition Index Rating

- Excellent – Under 0.05
- Good: 0.05 – 0.15
- Average – 0.15 – 0.30
- Poor – 0.30-0.60
- Very Poor – 0.60 and above

SD 51 Facilities		SD 51 Facilities	
School Board Office – Midway	0.85	Technology Building	0.57
Bus Garage – Grand Forks	0.80	Hutton Elementary	0.55
Boundary Central Secondary – Main	0.73	Boundary Central Sec – Industrial/Arts	0.55
Perley Elementary	0.70	Greenwood Elementary	0.52
Midway Elementary	0.69	Board Office – Grand Forks	0.45
West Boundary Elementary	0.69	Christina Lake Elementary	0.42
Beaverdell Elementary	0.66	Hutton Hideaway	0.36
Glanville Centre	0.63	Perley Indigenous Education	0.36
Grand Forks Secondary	0.62	Big White Community School	0.21
Bus Garage – Midway	0.61		

- Most of SD 51 buildings are of an age that require significant maintenance and renovations
 - It does not mean buildings are not safe or aren't being maintained
 - Absolutely safe for students and staff.
- At one time, the district could ask for a new school to be built, but the Ministry will not replace a school like Midway Elementary when a newer school that is not at full capacity is 20 minutes away
- This rating system helps the district plan for maintenance and renovation projects.
- The bottom line is that the amount of money for maintenance and other projects is finite and must be divided up between the buildings we have.

Implications of Proposed Closure

Configuration and Staffing

- Effective date would be June 30, 2022
- Students in Midway would be bused to Greenwood Elementary School which would become a K to 7
- No staffing change for 2022/23 year - MES educational staff will transition to Greenwood
 - 4 divisions/classes (Kindergarten/Grade 1, Grade 2/3, Grade 4/5, Grade 6/7)
 - 5 full-time Teachers (Learning Assistance, Library, prep)
 - 4 full-time Educational Assistants
 - 1 full-time Indigenous Culture and Student Success Facilitator
 - 1 half-time Child and Youth Care Worker
 - 0.50 Principal who still teaches .25 prep and has .25 district responsibilities most of which can be completed at GES
 - 1 full-time clerical
 - Custodial to be determined

Financial

As a public school district in BC, we receive funding from the provincial gov't, through the Ministry of Education. In addition to capital funding and special purpose grants, we receive an annual operating grant.

- Currently, this grant is around \$18.5 million annually.
 - Represents 95% of the district's annual operating revenue
- Allocation of grant is largely based on student full-time enrollment and school configurations

- Grant includes 3 main components: Enrolment-based funding, Supplement for Unique Student Needs and Supplement for Unique Geographic Factors

Projected impact if the proposed closure of Midway Elementary were to occur:

- No change to the student enrolment-based funding or to the Supplement for Unique Student Needs
- Supplement for Unique Geographic Factors would be reduced as follows:

	MES K-3, GES 4-7	GES K to 7	Difference
Small Community Supplement	2,560,868	2,339,451	-221,417
Low Enrolment Factor	1,665,625	1,665,625	0
Rural Factor	194,330	194,330	0
Climate Factor	107,893	107,893	0
Sparseness Factor	67,710	62,243	-5,467
Student Location Factor	919,657	913,726	-5,931
Supplemental Student Location Factor	91,000	91,000	0
Total	5,607,083	5,374,268	-232,815

Offsetting the decrease in operating revenue are savings that would occur if we were to stop operating Midway Elementary as a school, including:

- Maintenance of the facilities and grounds
 - Direct savings such as reduction in requirement for supplies/equipment
 - Indirect costs such as time for maintenance staff, plowing etc.
- Reduction in utilities and insurance
- Mileage costs paid to staff who currently travel between the two sites
- Educational resources – maintaining only one of the following, not two:
 - library, gym equipment, photocopier, PA system, technology equipment like iPads or laptop cart, science equipment

Savings are not quantified for two reasons:

- It is dependent on the future use of the facility
 - That decision will impact our operating costs
- The decision to embark on this consultation process is not budget-driven
 - Focus is on student learning and well-being
 - Whatever the financial impact is of the decision, the District will adjust and balance the budget - not through reductions in staffing, but rather reductions in other discretionary spending

Busing

Tentatively

- Pick up at Midway Elementary at 8 am with school starting at 8:35
- School day ends at 3:12 with drop off at Midway Elementary around 4:15 pm

Renovations

- Minor renovations to change Greenwood Elementary back to K-7 school
 - Can be completed Summer 2022

StrongStart

- No plans for the Outreach program in Midway at this time, but hours for facilitator will be maintained in some capacity in the west end of the district

Implications for Student Learning and Staffing

All staff at one site means more concentrated support for all students

- Increased capacity would allow teachers to supplement supervision and provide greater continuity and ensure safety
- Indigenous Culture and Student Success Worker able to check in with students daily and as needed
 - Students having a difficult week fully supported
 - Regular check-ins more routine
 - Build stronger relationships
 - Able to develop better programming with Indigenous teachings
 - Needs time and consistency in a building
- Child and Youth Care Worker can support students over two full days
 - Continuum of support builds greater relationships

Team approach for supporting students who are struggling (behaviourally or academically)

- Greater flexibility in moving educational assistants to where the need is (not limited by configuration of school)
- Able to connect student needs with strengths of educational assistants
- Staff able to connect about child, plan strategically to support
 - More staff means diversity of insight to share
 - Different staff able to diffuse situations easier

Principal in one school

- Able to support all students and staff every day
 - Daily check-ins for new staff, more consistent support
 - In the building when things go awry, which is part of an average school day
 - Able to offer programs as well during lunch hours
 - Intramurals
 - Coaching sports

Staff collaboration and support

- Need not only happen at non-instructional days
 - Informal conversations about practice can occur more routinely
- Teachers able to bring variety of passions and skills to the school
 - Opportunities for students to make different connections with supportive adults
 - Sharing of passions and skills positive influence on other staff members

Students have an opportunity to deepen their learning and their experiences

- Mentorship, big buddies, and role modelling
- Multi age learning can happen every day
 - Interaction with younger children helps build empathy
- Students not limited to specific activities
 - Athletic students in grade 3 can begin to participate in sporting practices that occur at the grade 4-7 level
 - For many students, this helps build confidence and keeps students engaged

Clerical able to support and interact with all families fully

- Handle emergencies with students because present in building
 - Able to coordinate emergent requests like busing
- Connecting to families dropping children off or picking children up
- Provide support for all staff in terms of
 - Attendance records
 - Permission forms
 - Collecting money
- Improved communication with staff and parents

- More ease, less interruption
- Provide the care that clerical give to students in a school
 - Another adult able to provide additional support

Possible Uses of Midway Elementary Facility and Grounds

- Nothing definitive – legally can't make any plans until after a decision is made
- Possible to have agreement with other stakeholder groups to lease part of building
 - Grants available for capital projects so district not bearing cost of renovations
 - Lease agreements to cover costs and/or generate revenue
- Ministry of Education will soon have childcare portfolio but as a district we are very far away from assuming this responsibility.
 - It is by NO MEANS a factor in this proposal
 - District may work with non-profit groups to provide childcare or preschool, or it may decide to apply for a license
 - **Cannot be for profit**
 - Focus on quality programing which would need qualified early childhood educator
 - Would have to align with SD 51 vision and mission

District is open to discussion. If Trustees approve the proposal, then consultation on possible uses would occur.