



November 26, 2015

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The purpose of this letter is to advise you that at its November 24th public meeting, the Board of Education approved a consultation process to consider reconfiguring all remaining K-7 schools in the district to K-5. This includes Barrowtown and Upper Sumas Elementary Schools, as well as four schools on the west side of the district. If approved, this would take effect in the 2016-17 school year. In addition, the Board will consider realigning the catchment area for Barrowtown and Upper Sumas Elementary to be part of the Abbotsford Middle and Secondary School catchments, also for the 2016-17 school year. Currently, your child's school is part of the WA Fraser Middle and Yale Secondary catchments.

Parents/Guardians, along with students and staff at those schools, are important to such a consultation process, so we wanted to alert you as soon as possible about this process. We will provide parents with the date for a January public information meeting, and will establish other channels for providing feedback. This is in addition to an opportunity to provide feedback at the Board meeting which has been tentatively scheduled for February 23, 2016.

BACKGROUND:

The district is currently completing revisions to its Long Term Facility Plan which includes a comprehensive review of school catchment and demographic trends. Throughout the review, the inconsistency of elementary school grade configurations (i.e. most elementary schools are grades K-5; some are grades K-7, middle schools are grades 6-8) has been identified as contributing to ongoing capacity and utilization challenges at some elementary and middle schools.

In addition, we remain concerned that not all students are benefitting from a full middle school educational experience. Currently, students enrolled in a K-7 school attend three different schools in a three year period: grade 7 at an elementary school, grade 8 at a middle school, then grade 9 at a secondary. These transitions can be difficult both academically and socially. A stable and consistent learning experience better prepares students to fully participate in the curriculum and life of the schools they attend.

We will be advising you of a date for the January information meeting and how to contribute feedback in the near future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Godden', is written over a horizontal line.

Kevin Godden
Superintendent of Schools