



North Glenora Community League
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Ms. Bev Esslinger, Chair
Edmonton Public Schools Board of Trustees,
Centre for Education,
One Kingsway Avenue,
EDMONTON, AB
T5H 4G9

November 13, 2006

DELIVERED BY HAND

Dear Ms. Esslinger:

Re: Sustainability Review of Coronation School

I am writing on behalf of the North Glenora Community League (NGCL) and Coronation School parents who attended a public meeting on November 8, 2006 regarding the sustainability review which is being conducted by consultants for Edmonton Public Schools, to request that you amend this review process. Before outlining my request in detail, I want to put it in the context of the relationship between NGCL and Coronation School.

For over 50 years, the parents of Coronation School's students and the members of NGCL have worked together. Our projects have included:

- Developing a community plan which was approved by Edmonton City Council in 1998.
- Supporting the school's environmental education program by planning and constructing an outdoor classroom and landscaping the school grounds with indigenous plants.
- Designing and constructing new playgrounds, play areas, and pathways that integrate Coronation School with North Glenora community lands.

In June 2006, NGCL Executive became aware of the EPSB's request for input on the proposed new school closure procedures. NGCL convened a meeting and forwarded comments to EPSB outlining our opposition to some of the proposed changes. To date we have received no response.

It was not until mid-September that we became aware of EPSB's intention to launch the sustainability review process – with Coronation School and our neighbouring schools of Grovenor and High Park under consideration in the first year. We are puzzled that other neighbouring schools are left out: Woodcroft is not being considered until later and Glenora is not included in the review at all.

By searching the EPSB website, we found out more about the process, including the criteria and ratings of each of the five, aforementioned schools. In June 2006, the website indicated Coronation had received a positive rating on two of the five categories. In September, it had no positive ratings. We are at a loss to understand the change.

In September 2006, NGCL discovered from School Council members that a letter was being sent to all Coronation School parents to establish a “Coronation School Sustainability Review Committee” whose purpose was to identify scenarios which would improve the future viability of Coronation School. NGCL became concerned that it had not been formally advised of this initiative and that the tax-paying residents of our community had not been invited to participate. In discussions with Roma Paul, Principal of Coronation School, NGCL was immediately requested to identify two representatives to participate in the scenario process.

At its meeting on October 24, 2006, NGCL named Ross Bursey and myself from its Executive, as its representatives. After participating in the discussions at the first Scenario Team meeting on October 30, 2006, we concluded that the timelines established for the process were unrealistic. Most community members were unaware that this process is underway. From a community perspective, it will be less than one month between this meeting – the first at which there was *community* representation, and the final schedule meeting of November 21, 2006.

As a result, the NGCL Executive called an urgent community meeting on November 8, 2006. Our Trustee, Don Williams, was represented by his wife as he was unable to attend.

At this meeting I was asked to write a letter to you, stating our concerns and related requests:

1. **We are concerned about the unrealistic timelines that are being imposed on the process.** The eight-week period allotted for this process is too short to engage busy parents and residents in any meaningful discussion to identify new programs or initiatives which could secure the future of Coronation School. As mentioned previously, from a community perspective the process is only one month long. Moreover, the nine schools under sustainability review this year are at a disadvantage compared to all schools under future review, because these future schools have at least one year’s notice of the review and thus more adequate time to prepare. *Therefore, we ask that you extend the process to April 1, 2007.*
2. **We are concerned about the unmet commitment of EPS administration to provide information essential to our deliberations on its website, on time.** Specifically, the information promised for late September was not posted until the end of October. In addition, we believe there are errors and omissions in the information which if left unaddressed, may result in this review process being deemed inconsistent with fundamental rules of fairness and procedure. *Therefore, we ask that the process be extended (as per Item 1 above) in view of the lack of timely information provided. And we ask for satisfactory explanations for the errors and omissions we have found, not only about Coronation School but also about other, affected schools.*
3. **We are concerned about the competitive nature of the process, in which schools in the same area are pitted against each other.** It appears as if you have selected Coronation, Grovenor, and High Park as “guinea pigs” in this new process, while excluding Glenora and Woodcroft - two schools which are part of the natural geographic grouping of this area. The result is that each of the three schools is working hard to survive. There is neither the time nor the opportunity for neighbouring schools to create and examine options that are in the best interests of the area as a whole. Should one school (i.e. High Park) be closed and parents of that school send their children in the subsequent year to a neighbouring school, such as Woodcroft, they may have to move their children, yet again, if it should be closed as a result of its

sustainability review the following year. ***Therefore, we ask you to consider regional planning approach: Bring all schools in the regional area together to plan the most appropriate way to assign program clusters for each school. This will ensure the best option for public school education in the region.***

Please give careful consideration to our requests, most importantly to extend the current time-frame to April 1, 2007 rather than ending it in January. We believe that the Scenario Development Teams from each of the schools now under sustainability review will be able to put forth options based on better information and more meaningful community participation. As a result, the EPSB will be able to make better decisions about the future of all of these schools. Extending the timeframe will still give individual parents ample time to make appropriate school choices for their children, in April of 2007.

Thank you for giving these requests careful consideration. I look forward to your reply. Should you need more information, I can be contacted directly at 455-8660.

Yours truly,

David Beckman,
Vice-President, North Glenora Community League
League Representative, Coronation School Scenario Development Team

c.c. All Trustees