

**DOCUMENT D:
QUESTIONS ASKED IN SESSIONS
FEBRUARY 7, 2017 AT THE PUBLIC MEETING**

Transportation, Session 1

Questions Asked:

1. As a former bus driver, we are adding miles for every child. Because this is a community school, we used to have to ride 2.5 hours per day for rides on the east end. Because this is a community school, we were able to agree to reverse the route so that the ride at night was shorter.
 - EIPS reverses bus routes where possible and this usually occurs in an urban setting. Rural busing does not allow for as much flexibility in reversing routes as travelling a distance adds time to a bus route and would actually increase overall student ride times.
2. What is the maximum ride time that the board allows for a K - gr 3; 3 -gr. 6? Does the board have a specific guideline for this?
 - The board does not have a guideline for maximum ride time. This allows for students who are attending a program out of their designated attendance boundary or school of choice to be transported.
3. What time does the school start?
 - In the proposed routing, buses will continue arrive at the current scheduled time.
4. I have concerns about the school start time and what time they get on the bus.
5. The first stop at Fultonvale is at 3:08. My preschooler is picked up when the bus is supposed to leave. (After 3:10) These times cannot be realistic? These times need to be revisited and we need to have better answers than what we have provided.
 - Buses will depart at 3 p.m. in the proposed routing.
 - Refer to Document B, question 5.
6. As an elementary student I rode the bus for 5 minutes. In junior high it was longer. The bus rides are too long for the younger (K) students.
 - Average times for all rural students is 36 minutes. Average ride time for the proposed Ministik students is 24.5 minutes.

7. The perception is that we are going to add an hour of additional travel time for the bus ride. Is this realistic?
 - Students may be boarding buses earlier due to an earlier school start but the ride time will not increase by an additional hour. See ride time comparisons in **Ministik Report** on page 26, table 17. The report is found on the Division website.

8. How many students will be on each route? How many kids per bus?
 - An average of 33 students per bus route. Detailed information on each proposed route including the number of students is provided on the website under “proposed transportation maps.”

9. Do we have any child care in plans? Is there an after school plan in place for parents who work later?
 - Finding suitable child care outside of school hours is the responsibility of parents/guardians. EIPS does not provide child care as part of its core business.

10. Currently Ministik has a PAT score of 88%. Having to extend this travel time by an hour each way, will this not have an effect on their retention and knowledge? Will longer bus rides affect a child’s learning?
 - Ride times are not increasing by an hour. Many students will actually see a decrease in their ride time.

Longest Current vs Proposed Ride Times for Ministik Students

| Longest Current Ride Time (Morning) | Longest Proposed Ride Time (Morning) | Longest Current Ride Time (Afternoon) | Longest Proposed Ride Time (Afternoon) |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 43 minutes | 43 minutes | 65 minutes | 46 minutes |

*Note: An outlying student with a current ride time of 81 minutes due to a personal choice was removed in order to avoid the skewing of data.

11. Other activities are also a concern. If they do not get off the bus until 4:30 (Plus an additional hour) this is too much. Will the extended bus ride affect their after school activities? Homework and other activities?
 - The latest proposed drop off is 3:46 p.m. while current latest drop off is at 4:40 p.m.

12. This makes a total of 331 students. When I look at the new routes, to cut bus time, we are going from 10 buses to 8 buses, we are travelling further, the totals do not add up - they add up to 225? There is a decrease in the afternoon. I just want to make sure that we are accounting for all of the students in the Ministik area.
 - We are increasing the number of buses by two. All students have been accounted for in the proposed option.

13. If Trina Boymook is concerned about the carbon tax, I am concerned about the routes. Will we decrease buses? We are missing large numbers of students. If we are doing this for money, how much does this involve?

- We have added two. All students are accounted for in the proposed option (see information and table below):

As Ministik and Fultonvale students are transported utilizing bus equipment that services all students transported through the Fultonvale transfer site, a proposed and current bus cost breakdown specifically for Fultonvale and Ministik students cannot be provided.

Currently, 1,393 students, kindergarten to Grade 12, who reside in attendance boundaries located in Strathcona County south of Wye Road are transported through the Fultonvale transfer site or en route to their respective schools. These students attend Ardrossan, Fultonvale, urban Sherwood Park and Wye schools. A total of 18 buses are currently contracted to transport these students.

In the proposed option, a routing scenario would transport current Ministik students to Fultonvale with all other Kindergarten to Grade 12 students residing in the Ministik attendance area. This would eliminate the need for buses to travel through the Ministik attendance area twice thus reducing overall transportation costs incurred. These savings will be used to add additional bus equipment to reduce ride times for students. Below is a breakdown including funding and busing costs for current and the proposed busing option.

| Fultonvale Transfer | Current | Proposed |
|---------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Grant Funding | \$974,764 | \$1,019,378 |
| Contracted Transportation | \$1,184,755 | \$1,179,106* |

14. Why is only Fultonvale an option? Why not other schools?

- Parents/guardians can choose from other schools in the Division that best suit their needs. Fultonvale is the closest in terms of proximity to Ministik School (16 km).

15. Adding an hour of travel time is too much, even a half an hour is too much to add to the bus route.

- Refer to Document D, question 10.

Transportation, Session 2

Questions Asked:

- 16.** How has the cost of transportation been weighed with the social impact for children? How did you come to the conclusion that this is a good idea? What studies have been done? What research? How will longer bus rides affect the sense of community and sense of neighbours?
- Should a closure proceed, a transition plan will be put into place for students to ensure that they are welcomed and supported in their new school, and provided with the same high-quality education students receive throughout the Division.
 - In the proposed busing option only some ride times will increase while others will decrease and are still lower at 24.5 minutes than the Division average of 36 minutes.
- 17.** What is the length of a bus ride for these kids? What is the longest length of a bus ride? What is reasonable?
- Refer to Document D, questions 7 and 10.
- 18.** Will the ride have an impact on family life? Can families still have dinner together? Will this affect extra-curricular activities?
- The latest drop-off for students in the proposed routing option is 3:46 p.m. Currently, the last drop off time is 4:40 p.m.
- 19.** Did people purchase in the area because of the elementary school here?
- We can't speculate as to why individuals chose to purchase property in the area.
- 20.** Are there any growth projection studies for this area including Beaver County?
- Refer to Document B, question 29 regarding Strathcona County. As our jurisdiction does not extend to Beaver County, we did not research growth projection studies for that area.

Infrastructure, Session 1

Questions Asked:

- 21.** Is the board is considering letting parent association pay for the remediation of lead in the pipes with their own contractor (parent selected)?
- Refer to Document B, question 14.

- 22.** Why was Ministik not on the 10 year plan? If a portable lasts 20 years and are now 40, why weren't they on the list?
- Priorities are set based on issues which require more immediate attention, such as health and safety issues, major component failure or imminent failure, and program needs.
 - We submit a plan to Alberta Education. Modularity is used to reduce enrolment pressures and regular maintenance increases the life of those units significantly. There was no requirement to replace them as the health and safety problems were not identified earlier.
- 23.** Do you acknowledge right now that you have received the money for the new portables? To replace the 3 portables and to prepare the new portables for September for the children and to take the 3 that are in existence right now out?
- EIPS was informed in January 2017 that the requested portables and the related funding were approved.
- 24.** Is the closing of Ministik coming to light because of the over expenditure of Fultonvale? And Ardrossan? Are our children filling the gap because of the over expenditure?
- Refer to Document B, question 48.
- 25.** Is centralized schooling a mandate of the school board?
- No.
- 26.** What is the capacity of Fultonvale? How quickly is it going to come to capacity? How is it linked to the municipal development plan of the county?
- Refer to Document B, question 28 regarding the capacity of Fultonvale. Refer to Document B, question 29 regarding development plans.
- 27.** What is the cost of replacing the water lines (both hot and cold)? Have alternatives been considered? Many of us live on acreages and use trucked-in water or wells.
- Refer to Document B, question 13. Options are currently being investigated.
- 28.** Why are we being lied to about transparency? Why have the answers changed when the initial concerns were about health and safety and now they are financial? Reasons have always been a moving target.
- Refer to the "Value Scoping Session–Fultonvale and Colchester Schools" document found on the Division website in the Ministik section, under the Ministik Report.

- 29.** Is Wye scheduled to be closed? Will Wye school be funneled into Fultonvale? Have parents from Wye been informed of students going to Fultonvale? Have parents from Fultonvale been informed of how many students from Ministik coming?
- Refer to Document B, Question 23 regarding Wye School.
 - If a closure occurs, we won't know how many students will be attending Fultonvale.
- 30.** Why are plans being shared about distributing Ministik assets e.g. desks/chromebooks if no plans have been made?
- Refer to **Ministik School Report**, Page 22. This report is on the Division website.
- 31.** Need more transparency about closure of Wye and how it relates to Ministik?
- Refer to Document B, question 23.
- 32.** Why are no Trustees in this meeting when they are the ones making the decision? They need to understand what we're actually about.
- There were nine trustees in attendance at the February 7, 2017 meeting.

Infrastructure, Session 2

Questions Asked:

- 33.** Did you factor when the renovation was going on - assuming everyone is going to Fultonvale - the increased number of students? Did it factor in everyone from here going there?
- Refer to Document B, question 28.
- 34.** Jr high everyone was going there anyway
- No decisions have been made.
 - Fultonvale was built to accommodate 600 students, it can go up to 700.
 - Ministik has 127 students; Fultonvale has 408.
- 35.** What is the plan because they will have to look at Wye school in the future
- Refer to Document B, question 23.
- 36.** How much have we considered not just the impact to the school but on the Community? Every time you close one of these small schools and move to a big school, you lose community.
- We are committed to providing the highest quality education to all students at EIPS. Students will be welcomed into the Fultonvale community.

General, Session 1

Questions Asked:

- 37.** Is the Division looking at replacing school or replacing modulars?
- Approval for the modulars has been received from Alberta Education.
 - EIPS has to pay for the connecting link (approximately \$75,000).
 - The library is a separate modular.
- 38.** What are the savings for closing school, line by line?
- Refer to Document B, question 39.
- 39.** If the money has been allotted in budget for the modulars, what is the issue?
- Refer to Document B, question 56.
- 40.** Does a “yes” vote mean replacing school or maintaining school?
- In the December 2016 Board meeting, the following motion was made: “That the Board approve the motion to consider the closure of Ministik School.”
- 41.** How will the school staying open negatively impact other schools in Division?
- The Board will continue to examine options to align its expenditures and revenues. There will have to be other reductions made to balance the budget.
- 42.** Where are the answers to the questions to the document that was sent to trustees? What is the proposed enrolment for Fultonvale for the next five years?
- The answers to the questions that were provided to administration on February 2 by email are in Document A. The questions that were brought forward on February 7 at the public meeting are in Document B.
 - Please refer to Document B, question 27.
- 43.** When are the questions sent in being answered?
- This has been an ongoing process. As they are answered, documents are being posted on the EIPS website (www.eips.ca/schools/ministik-school).
- 44.** Are the trustees here tonight?
- Yes, All nine trustees were in attendance on Feb. 7, 2017.
- 45.** Is our input really going to make a difference?
- The Board is committed to reviewing and considering feedback from all key stakeholders.

- 46.** Is the Division closing Wye School? When is the estimated time? Will those students funnel into Fultonvale Elementary Junior High (FTV)? Will that not put FTV at or near maximum capacity? If so, does it make more sense to keep Ministik open?
- Refer to Document B, question 23 regarding Wye School. Refer to Document B, question 28 regarding capacity at Fultonvale.
- 47.** Is it not important for a sustainable agricultural economy to have favourable access to schools for its children? In 2016, Strathcona County won a national award for agricultural sustainability and planning excellence. How does closing Ministik School meet with that plan?
- Refer to Document B, question 61.
- 48.** Do you think about families and how long students have to spend on a bus? Are you thinking about the students with disabilities and putting them on buses and in larger schools?
- Refer to Document D, question 10.
 - The needs of disabled students are assessed on an individual basis.
- 49.** Has the Division done a study on how it affects young students to go on a bus for three hours?
- Refer to Document D, question 10.
- 50.** How does longer bus ride time affect young children?
- Refer to Document D, question 10.
- 51.** What does “equity of opportunity” mean? (from funding manual)
- This is one form of funding received by Alberta Education. Each school jurisdiction receives this money. It is comprised of a per student allocation (\$1.6 million, a density allocation (\$125,000) and a distance allocation (\$121,000).

General, Session 2

Questions Asked:

- 52.** What research has EIPS done on economic impact--on business area and property values--of removing a school from this area to Strathcona County.
- Please refer to Document B, question 60.

Education, Session 1

Questions Asked:

- 53.** If MIN students were to go to FTV, what would be the size per grade?
- [Refer to Document B, question 20.](#)
- 54.** How many aides will be at FTV? If there is a student with special needs, don't want to take an aide from another student.
- [Refer to Document B, question 21.](#)
- 55.** How are coded children integrated into the classroom, and what supports are available?
- [Refer to Document B, question 21.](#)
- 56.** If you are putting all these kids together, what is going to happen to all the coded kids? I've already had two kids pushed through the system and I won't have another one pushed through.
- [Coded students at all EIPS schools are provided with a continuum of supports and services depending on their needs. In addition to support from educational assistants, teachers and administrators provide supports such as specialized learning materials, physical accommodations or equipment, and individualized and/or smaller group instruction. Should students transition to other schools from Ministik, Inclusive Learning will work with school staff to identify student needs and services that will support them.](#)
- 57.** Looking at it from a different perspective, what is available that will benefit all children - for example, in some of the larger classrooms, there is something available (recorder note: she is referring to an FM system) - the whole class benefits, but these are requested based on the needs of a special needs child - what would FTV provide so a student could survive in a larger classroom, and how can FTV best keep them integrated so all students can benefit and learn how to become contributing members of society.
- [Refer to Document B, question 21.](#)
 - [Refer to Document D, question 56.](#)
- 58.** What happens to non-coded children that have anxiety issues? My son would be lost in a larger school. What is the plan?
- [Refer to Document B, question 22.](#)
- 59.** What are the class sizes going to be? They are going to be so much bigger. Is there enough room at FTV to accommodate the MIN students?
- [Refer to Document B, questions 19 and 20.](#)

- 60.** Just because a school says they can fit a certain number of students doesn't mean it's a healthy situation. How is FTV going to do that? Just because you can fit 35 students in a room doesn't mean you should. It comes down to real life vs. paper data. Barager data vs. AB Ed - those people aren't in the classrooms.
- [Barager is merely a tool to assist the Division in long-term planning. Planning continues to seek data from other internal and external sources.](#)
- 61.** Referring to the recommendation report from April 2016 that spoke to moving WYE school and building a new site in Heritage Hills - mentioned that rural WYE students would also be attending FTV and AEL - concern is that they will be maxed out in the next few years - what is the data showing how they would accommodate? EIPS must have done research on how they would accommodate all these extra students.
- [Refer to Document B, questions 23, 27 and 28.](#)
- 62.** Benefits of rural schools, quality time with staff, lots of examples of that in our own research - is there a benefit to consolidation?
- [EIPS provides quality educational programming at all our sites, rural and urban.](#)
- 63.** On the EIPS website, they list optimal enrollment limits - currently FTV set at 552 - are they prepared to go over that number if MIN and WYE students both end up at FTV - who sets the optimal enrolment limits as posted on the EIPS website?
- [The Optimal Enrolment Limit is set by EIPS using a formula based on Alberta Infrastructure's maximum capacity for each building. Fultonvale's current maximum capacity is 600 and the OEL is 552. After full build-out, capacity at Fultonvale will increase to 700 and the OEL is 644. Once a school exceeds its OEL it becomes a "closed boundary," meaning there is still room for designated students, but no out of boundary or non-resident students will be accepted into the school.](#)
- 64.** Further, who has the right to change that? Is the school prepared to go beyond the limit?
- [Refer to Document D, question 63.](#)

- 65.** I was a school teacher for 25 years - it seems strange that there are cost overruns (why?) question from letter January 23 (paragraph two) that was circulated by EIPS ...to ensure a fair and transparent process, a public meeting is being undertaken (Jan. 23) - how does this process benefit students? Because this school is doing a great job.
- [The process that EIPS has undertaken is part of *Board Policy 15, Program Reduction and School Closure*; and in the Province of Alberta's *School Act, Regulation 238/97, Closure of Schools Regulation*.](#)
- 66.** There is a lot of talk about the benefits of this financially - when we are talking about education we have to set that aside a bit because you can't put a dollar amount on that. Have Trustees had a look at studies (from the States) where smaller schools are consolidated? It's your responsibility to look at existing research on what happens to education when schools are consolidated.
- [The trustees are provided with a wide range of information and reports.](#)
 - [If documentation is available, please provide it for the Board's consideration.](#)
- 67.** Who is going to answer these questions?
- [Responses to questions are being provided by individuals in departments who work most closely in the area where information is being sought. The responses to these questions are being provided on the website and a great deal of this information will be presented at the February 15 public meeting.](#)
- 68.** There are a lot of articles and research about small schools, is there opposite research to students being in a larger school? Outside of their own communities
- [There is research conducted in many areas of education including research on large schools.](#)
- 69.** Alberta Ed sets occupancy rates, there are optimal enrollment limits on the EIPS website, is this different than the Alberta Ed limit? Who has the right to change that limit? Can EIPS stop or limit, capacity vs optimal enrollment limits?
- [Refer to Document D, question 63.](#)
- 70.** I am a school teacher, this is a difficult process, cost overruns. Why is there a cost overrun?
- [Refer to Document E, question 2.](#)
- 71.** Letter from EIPS, Paragraph 2, to ensure fair and transparent process, a public meeting is being undertaken. In what way is this better for the students, is this process better? This school is doing a great job, this is a successful school.
- [Refer to Document D, question 65.](#)

72. How FTV and Ardrossan will accommodate the growing population, there are many new families coming, how will the Division plan for future growth?

- See Baragar Report on EIPS various schools, which is found on the Division website (www.eips.ca/schools/ministik-school).

73. Is there an academic reason to close this school?

- No.

74. Who is going to answer these questions?

- Refer to Document D, question 67.

Education, Session 2

Questions Asked:

75. I have a higher needs student with anxiety issues, and I'm from out of district - how will he be accommodated?

- Refer to Document B, question 21.

76. My child is on an IPP - how closely will they follow them? What is the adult to student ratio?

- Refer to Document B, question 21.

77. How many EAs are there per student at FTV? 8 EAs at MIN, FTV has 6?

- Allocation is based on need – you could have a family of students with high needs and each would need an EA. Comparing one school to another can be deceiving and you can't just look at the raw numbers.
- What about a child that is not coded? I have two boys that benefit from the fact that there are EAs in their classes - they are not going to have that benefit at FTV.
- Class configurations and the EA support in classes has not been determined at this time.
- What happens to my son (code 53) if there is no EA in that class – worried about the “in between” students, don't want them to fall through the cracks.
- Please refer to Document B, question 21.
- Please refer to the first bullet, question 77.
- Want to note that my son benefits from 1:1 - who wouldn't benefit from that?

78. We've been asking a lot of questions - lots of routes we could take - we've given you the questions, we want answers - even if you group them into similar themes, we just want answers.
- Responses to questions are put on the Division website when they are completed.
 - Refer to Document D, question 67.
79. Why not just come out and say you are closing the school because we don't have the money - it's optics. (Felt that at first it was for one reason, now it's another).
- Refer to "Value Scoping Session: Fultonvale and Colchester Schools" document found on the Division website in the Ministik section, under the **Ministik School Report**.
80. At the first Board meeting we attended, the issues regarding move to consider closure were health & safety - we answered that as a parent group - the problem is preaching about transparency, first it was about health and safety and now it is about money. It seems pre-meditated, coincidental that FTV is being finished and now they want to close MIN.
- Please refer to "Value Scoping Session: Fultonvale and Colchester Schools" document found on the Division website in the Ministik section, under the **Ministik School Report**.
81. PAT results are higher here - Ministik is consistently achieving at higher levels - this is not just a coincidence. At some point, financially there has got to be some kind of monetary value put on our kids. How much are we really saving?
- Refer to Document B, question 39.
82. I heard questions about lead in the water here, but also have heard that other schools had the same issue - we have some other cheap remedies - not one person at EIPS said that we have other schools with lead in the water and it is being looked after.
- The parents at all schools facing issues regarding lead in the water were informed of the issue, and EIPS implemented a flushing protocol to ensure that exposure was minimized. The protocol is a temporary measure while a more permanent solution is investigated.

83. This amazing parent group worked and fundraised to get laptops and projectors - and so I want a clear answer about why are we doing this - over 400k - is it actual savings? In the last 5 years they have spent 10k on maintenance (doorknobs?) - was this inevitable - we were at 59% capacity now we are at 90%.

- [Refer to Document B, question 39.](#)
- [Refer to the PO & M document on the Division website found in the Ministik section.](#)

Things have changed, population has changed - 60 more kids here now – more pressure within Sherwood Park and outer acreages - they will fill up FTV and Ardrossan- will be driving 25 minutes just so my kids will be in a portable in FTV instead of a classroom.

84. Do the people who make the decisions get to see the questions and concerns?

- [Yes, the trustees are provided with all the questions, comments, concerns and responses.](#)

85. Seems left hand isn't talking to the right - have article on economy growing - what happens when oil boom comes back and people move back?

- [The information goes into Central Office. Board Chair Trina Boymook attended, she listened and heard. Laura McNabb, our director of Communications, has also been in here, so you have been heard.](#)
- [All documents are provided to all the trustees.](#)
- [Refer to Document B, question 61 regarding economic growth.](#)

86. One more quick thing - in the form of finances, they said we aren't having events that are bringing in money - (i.e. school rentals) - just because we aren't charging doesn't mean the facility isn't being utilized.

- [Please refer to **Ministik School Report**, page 20.](#)