

## **Edmonton Examiner – Column #1 – April, 2010**

Greetings on behalf of the constituents of Edmonton-Gold Bar!

As many of you are aware, a Sector Review of the Greater Hardisty Area was presented to the Edmonton Public School Board on February 9, 2010 by the EPSB planning department. The recommendation of the department was that Capilano and Fulton Place schools be closed, along with several other schools in Edmonton's central neighbourhoods. As residents of Strathearn, Idlywylde and Terrace Heights know all too well, the closing of a school has a devastating impact on the local community. Since 2002, 15 Public Schools have been closed in Edmonton neighbourhoods. I say: Enough Already!

In written letters to several Edmonton Public School Board representatives I have asked the following questions:

1) Regarding the profile of Fulton Place School, presented as part of the Greater Hardisty Sector Review:

- How was the ACOL School capacity calculated at 480 in the latest profile?
- Why was the total Provincial School capacity listed as 471 three years ago?
- How was the cost of unfunded student space calculated to be \$119,178.56?
- How was the total number of weighted student spaces calculated?
- How was the Provincial Utilization Rate calculated?
- Were the three existing leases in the school considered when the Provincial Utilization Rate was calculated?

2) Regarding the profile of Capilano School, presented as part of the Greater Hardisty Sector Review:

- How was the amount of \$134,189 calculated as the cost of unfunded student space?
- How was the Provincial Utilization Rate calculated?
- Why did Capilano School go from being listed as warranting an essential upgrade four years ago at a cost of over \$1.3 Million, to being listed now for possible closure?
- Was the 2009 City of Edmonton municipal census used by the EPSB planning department in reaching its recommendation for closure? The 2009 census indicates there are now 112 pre-schoolers living in the Capilano community.

3) The Greater Hardisty Area Sector Review states that both Fulton Place and Capilano schools have low and declining enrollment, and are located in maturing neighbourhoods where the number of school aged children is in decline. In fact, the 2009 City of Edmonton Municipal Census reveals that both Fulton Place and Capilano communities are experiencing an increase in the number of school-aged children as well as preschoolers. In the City of Edmonton as a whole

the number of preschool children increased from 29,944 in 2005 to 39,215 in 2009. This represents 9,271 new preschoolers - a 30% increase. Given this discrepancy please explain:

- Why is the EPSB relying on inaccurate and outdated data when making such important decisions regarding public school closures?
- Why would the EPSB go against the City of Edmonton's own stated goal of attracting new families into older neighbourhoods to help increase the population density in central neighbourhoods?
- Is the Planning Department of the EPSB deliberately ignoring data which does not support their recommendation to close schools in Edmonton's central neighbourhoods, or are they simply unaware of the latest census information collected by the City?

To the date of this writing, I have not yet received an answer to any of these questions from the Edmonton Public School Board. The Board will vote on the recommendation for closure at its next meeting on April 13, at 6:00 pm at its offices at One Kingsway Avenue. Please come show your support for Edmonton's Public Schools!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Hughie MacDonald". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with large, connected letters.

Hugh MacDonald, MLA

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