

NANAIMO LADYSMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BUSINESS COMMITTEE
PUBLIC MEETING
ACTION SHEET

DATE: October 12, 2022
TO: Business Committee
FROM: Mark Walsh, Secretary-Treasurer
SUBJECT: Departure Bay Boundary Review Update

Recommendation:

The Business Committee recommends that the Board of Education of School District No. 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) rescind the following motion "That the Board of Education of School District No. 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) direct staff to draft proposed boundary changes for Cilaire, Rock City and Departure Bay Elementary schools (with the potential of other minor boundary shifts) that would shift students away from Departure Bay, for review and approval in principle, followed by community consultation and implementation for September 2023. Any students currently enrolled in Departure Bay may retain their seat in the school (as well as younger siblings), or they may transfer to their applicable catchment school as per determined boundary changes."

Background:

On June 22, 2022, the Board passed the following motion as recommended by staff:

That the Board of Education of School District No. 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) direct staff to draft proposed boundary changes for Cilaire, Rock City and Departure Bay Elementary schools (with the potential of other minor boundary shifts) that would shift students away from Departure Bay, for review and approval in principle, followed by community consultation and implementation for September 2023. Any students currently enrolled in Departure Bay may retain their seat in the school (as well as younger siblings), or they may transfer to their applicable catchment school as per determined boundary changes.

This Action Sheet outlines the work done to date and provides a recommendation for the Board to consider a delay the above noted motion.

Discussion:

The District is currently waiting on updated Baragar projections in addition to updated projections from our GIS consultants to review our enrollment projections against the previous assumptions based on our 2020/21 actual student enrolment, our internal projections for 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 and our consultant's projection for 2030-31. We note that they are likely to be slightly lower than the previous projections, however, with continued growth.

While we wait for these updated forward looking projections, we have the current school populations (including Departure Bay). The numbers for 2022-23 are close to projections in the north end but slightly softer at Departure Bay as noted below:

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Projection was 410, Actual = 402 | Departure Bay |
| Projection was 422, Actual = 421 | Frank Ney |
| Projection was 433, Actual = 451 | McGirr |
| Projection was 162, Actual = 181 | Cilaire |
| Projection was 332, Actual = 331 | Rock City |

While the numbers at Departure Bay are well above their built school capacity (295 plus 5 portables for total capacity of 415) and are problematic and need to be addressed, it is staff's recommendation that the review of the boundary should now be postponed to align with the process associated with opening Rutherford. The rationale for the immediate review in Spring of 2022 was to alleviate pressures at Departure Bay and as boundary changes often can take years to have their full impact and beginning sooner rather than later was determined to be preferable.

However, as staff have proceeded with the work and created internal scenarios, and Departure Bay's slightly slower growth staff now realize that an immediate boundary shift without considering the impact of Rutherford may result in multiple shifts (one now and one in the future) creating confusion and uncertainty for families impacted. This will mean that Departure Bay may continue to grow, however, the noted potential need for multiple shifts is a less desirable outcome.

Further, staff are increasingly aware of consultation fatigue in our community and are intending to avoid any additional processes.

Finally, staff are about to reengage our GIS consultants to review growth patterns and review our formulas to determine if anticipated growth continues to align with previous projections.

