**Evansburg/ Wildwood Facilities Review**

**Option Evaluation Session – September 19 and 20, 2018**

Grande Yellowhead Public School Division (GYPSD) is conducting a review of three of our facilities in the Lobstick zone: Evansview School and Grand Trunk High School in Evansburg and Wildwood School in Wildwood. The goal of this review is to determine how we can provide the best learning environment and educational programs for the students of Wildwood and Evansburg, given the resources available.

At the June Engagement Sessions, the community requested a number of pieces of information to assist in their evaluation of the school facility options. This document contains the general information requested.  Information related to specific options is available at the option stations.

**Demographics**

* The population in both hamlets has declined significantly in the last decade
* The census reports a population decline in Evansburg of nearly 10 per cent between 2011 and 2016, falling from 880 residents to 795
* During the same timeframe, Wildwood’s population has decreased by roughly 7 per cent, falling from 294 to 277

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **2016 Census Data on School Aged Children** | **Wildwood** | **Evansburg** |
| 0 to 4 | 10 | 30 |
| 5 to 9 | 15 | 40 |
| 10 to 14 | 20 | 40 |
| 15 to 19 | 15 | 40 |

**Enrolment**

\*Future enrolment projections are not expected to change

**Enrolment**, *continued*

* Enrolment is in decline at all three schools
* From 2007 to 2017:
  + the enrolment for all three schools has gone from 471 students down to 376; a decline of 20 per cent overall
  + the enrolment at Wildwood School has dropped from 124 students to 107; a decline of 14 per cent
  + the enrolment of Evansburg schools have dropped from 347 to 269; a decline of 22.5 per cent
* Current enrolments for the 2018/2019 school year (as of September 11, 2018)
  + Evansview: 122
  + Grand Trunk: 157
  + Wildwood: 105

**Use of School Space by Partners**

* Alberta Education will not fund the building of new space for partners unless they contribute financially to the construction
* Alberta Education will not fund the maintenance and operation of these new spaces
* In existing buildings, the school board determines whether there is a cost for partners to use these spaces:
  + Grand Trunk High School provides space to the Lobstick Literacy & Learning Society and the Evansburg Public Library at no cost
  + Evansview School and Wildwood School each have a playschool, with space provided at no cost
* If schools are resized, there may no longer be spaces available for partners to use

**Schools in Rural Communities**

The *Impact of School on Rural Communities Study* was commissioned by Alberta Education, Alberta Municipal Affairs, and Alberta Agriculture and Forestry to understand the challenges, opportunities and impacts of schools in Alberta rural communities. Six case studies were presented by a consortium of researchers from Schollie Research & Consulting and the College of Alberta School Superintendents in March 2017.

Key findings identified that:

* Rural depopulation is the most significant driver behind the closure and reconfiguration of schools.
* The sustainability of a school is directly tied to the vitality and sustainability of the rural community itself.
* Stakeholders believe schools are one of the last pillars supporting rural life, and as such, deserve additional support in the form of further funding for programming, and transportation.
* Formal and informal partnerships are essential to the sustained well-being of schools.
* Strategies to boost and maintain enrolment are most effective when they are school-specific.
* The reconfiguration, consolidation, or closure of small schools to create larger regional schools tends to be positive for parents, students and staff. Students settle in quickly, and enjoy the wider course selection, bigger peer groups, and added extra-curricular activities, while teachers have better access to resources and fewer multi-grade classrooms.

**Funding for Rural Schools**

The division receives a variety of grants from Alberta Education to support education programs in the division. The grants include Base Instruction, Transportation, and Facility Operations and Maintenance. The *Small Schools by Necessity Grant* and the *Equity of Opportunity Grant* are part of the regular government funding to support small schools in rural and remote communities.