



Prairie Valley School Division

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– MEDIA RELEASE –

November 13, 2008

PVSD Board Announces Decision on Tuition and Transportation to Schools Outside the Division

The board of education announced today that it has reached a decision on tuition and transportation for PVSD students attending schools outside of Prairie Valley School Division.

Prairie Valley will revise the Regina attendance area boundaries based on the principle of nearest school, effective for the 2009-2010 school year. The board will provide the option to families living in the revised Regina attendance area to attend and receive transportation services to a PVSD school. Over the long-term, the board's goal is to educate all PVSD students in PVSD schools. The goal will be incorporated into future board program and facility planning processes.

As a transitional strategy the board agreed to continue (grandfather) current tuition and/or transportation arrangements for all grade 9, 10, 11 and 12 students registered in a Regina school as of October 31, 2008 who are impacted by the November 2008 change in the Regina attendance area, for as long as those families reside in the transitional area.

Because the division is required under provincial legislation to provide access to French Immersion programming, students who choose French Immersion will continue to have access to Regina schools, although the schools to which busing service is provided may change as a result of rationalization of transportation services into Regina.

“Our decision follows an extensive review of several potential options,” said Board Chair Janet Kotylak. “In early June we held public meetings to invite input into development of a new PVSD tuition and transportation policy. Our intention has always been to develop a consistent and equitable policy regarding out of division tuition and transportation that provides a high quality education for all students. As a board, it is our responsibility to prudently manage division resources, effectively utilize our school facilities and provide efficient transportation for our students. To achieve those ends, we assessed the options based on five factors: cost per student; facility implications and costs; feedback from PVSD stakeholders; program options for students and travel time on bus.”

The division will rationalize its transportation services into Regina for students who live in the revised Regina attendance area or who attend French Immersion schools based on efficient transportation corridors that minimize time on bus for students. PVSD has defined four transportation corridors for students travelling into the city: north, south, east and west. As a result, the number of Regina schools to which PVSD will provide busing services will decrease from 22 to 15 schools. High school students impacted by busing changes will be grandfathered. The board also amended *Board Policy 16 Student Transportation* to restrict courtesy rider privileges to students attending schools within the division.

Kotylak also confirmed that Prairie Valley will continue to pay tuition to Regina Public, Regina Catholic and Luther College High School on behalf of students who reside in the revised Regina attendance area or who attend French Immersion programming.

Families of students impacted will receive notification in writing about the board's decisions. Parents/guardians who do not receive a letter prior to the end of November should contact PVSD at 306-949-3366.

Approximately 400 students living within the boundaries of PVSD currently attend school outside the division, mainly in Regina.

Prairie Valley School Division serves more than 8,100 students in 38 schools throughout south-eastern Saskatchewan. To support its vision of leadership in learning and in life, and through a commitment to shared values, the division strives to ensure a high-quality education that provides students with the tools to reach and exceed their potential.

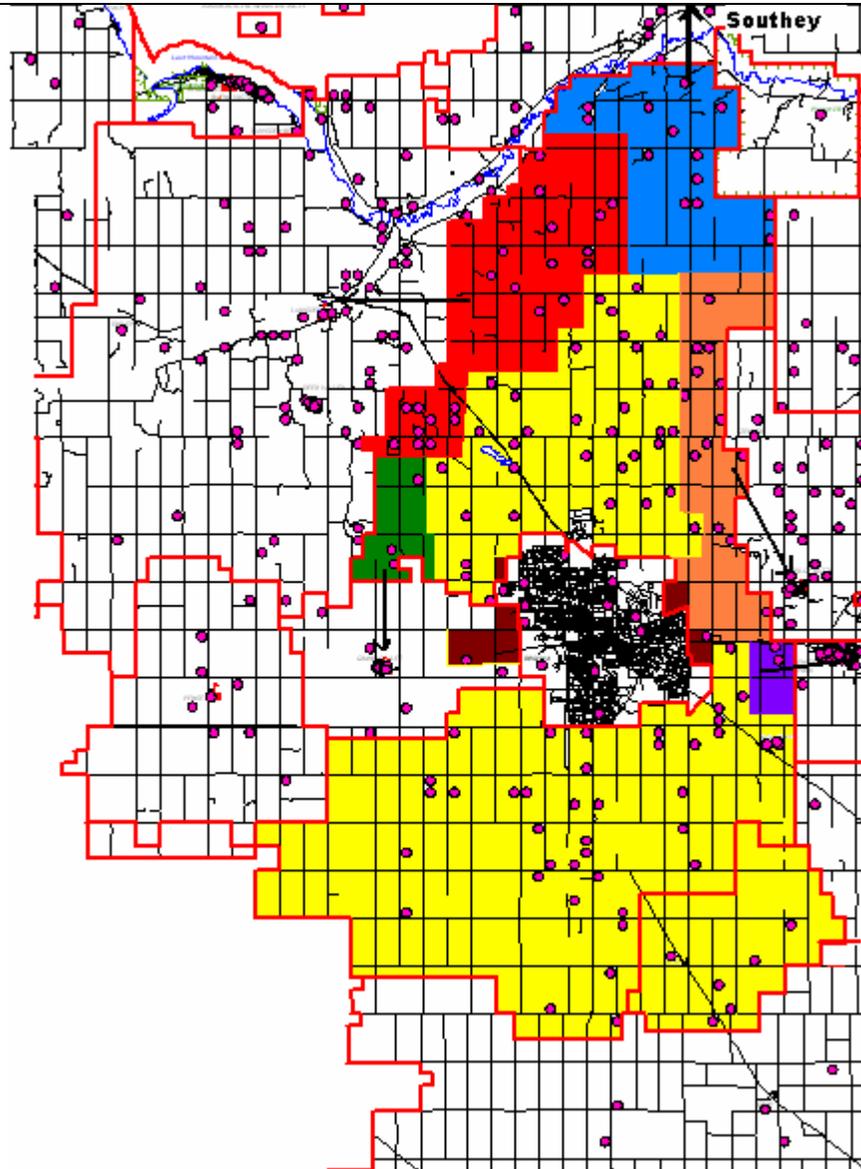
Attached:

- Revised Regina Attendance Area Map
- Questions and Answers

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Revised Regina Attendance Area



- The yellow area represents the revised Regina Attendance Area for grades K-12 effective for the 2009-10 school year
- The green area represents the area that will be part of the Stewart Nicks School attendance area for K-8 and Regina for grades 9-12 effective for the 2009-10 school year
- The purple area represents the area that will be part of the White City School attendance area for K-8 and Greenall High School for grades 9-12 effective for the 2009-10 school year
- The orange area represents the area that will be part of the Pilot Butte School attendance area for K-8 and Greenall High School for grades 9-12 effective for the 2009-10 school year
- The red area represents the area that will be part of the Lumsden Schools attendance area for grades K-12 effective for the 2009-10 school year
- The blue area represents the area that will be part of the Robert Southey School attendance area for grades K-12 effective for the 2009-10 school year
- The Pense and Grand Coulee areas will continue to attend high school in Regina

**Tuition and Transportation to Schools Outside PVSD
(Regina Attendance Area)
Question and Answer**

Q: How many PVSD students attend school in Regina?

A: As of September 2007, 442 students lived in PVSD but attended school in Regina:

- 136 attended Regina Catholic schools
- 252 attended Regina public schools
- 54 attended Luther College High School.

Of the 442 students:

- 106 students attended French Immersion programs
- 336 attended English language instruction.

Fall 2008 data is expected from the Regina systems within the next month.

Q. How many students will be affected by the change to the Regina attendance area boundary?

A. An estimated 23 elementary students will be impacted by the reduction in the size of the Regina attendance area, as they are closer to a PVSD school than to a Regina school. The remaining English program students will continue to reside in the revised Regina attendance area and will have the option to attend and receive transportation to Regina or a PVSD school.

All 106 French Immersion students will continue to go to Regina schools because PVSD schools do not offer French Immersion programming.

Q: What process did PVSD follow? Did you consult with parents/students?

A: In April 2007, the board passed a motion to review its policy regarding payment of tuition and transportation for Prairie Valley School Division students attending school outside of the division.

In December 2007, the division sent a letter to all families with students who reside in PVSD but attend school outside of the division advising them of this policy review. In addition, the letter was sent to all PVSD schools to include in their newsletters or other communication to families.

In February, March and April 2008, the board reviewed the data and identified the following options for public consultation:

1. All (non French Immersion) students attend PVSD schools
2. All (non French Immersion) students attend the nearest school, whether in PVSD or Regina
3. Review transportation routes for Regina students (including French Immersion)
4. Other options (investigate partnering with Regina school systems; reconfigure/renew existing PVSD schools; status quo).

On June 2, 3 and 4, 2008, the board of education held public meetings to invite input into development of a new PVSD policy regarding paying tuition and providing transportation for PVSD students to attend schools in Regina. Letters of invitation were sent to all families for whom tuition is currently being paid to a Regina school, as well as to all residents of Grand Coulee and Pense and property owners in the RM of Sherwood. The meetings were also advertised in the Regina Leader-Post and the Waterford Press. In addition, the board invited the public to complete a survey.

In September 2008, the board released a summary of the feedback received at those meetings as well as all correspondence from individuals and families expressing their points of view. A decision

was promised, and is being delivered, in November 2008 with the new policy to take effect for the 2009-10 school year.

Q: Why review/change the current policy? These arrangements have been in place for many years?

A: Numerous people have asked why the board is reviewing this policy, since busing students into Regina is a longstanding practice in some areas. Much has changed in the years since these policies were originally developed, including the amalgamation of school divisions and establishment of a new, larger division in Prairie Valley.

The legacy school divisions each had different policies and practices concerning attendance outside of their boundaries. Some of the former, smaller systems did not offer all grades and programs and so, had to purchase services. Now these areas are part of a larger school division, PVSD, that can offer a fuller range of grades and programs. The provincial government's rationale for restructuring school divisions was to increase the capacity of school divisions to provide a full range of high quality education services to their students. The policy changes made by the board are consistent with this intent.

Other reasons for this review include the board's responsibility to periodically review all policies to ensure they are in the best interest of all stakeholders in the division. As well, the board has a responsibility to prudently manage the budget, adequately plan for facility needs, and provide an effective and efficient transportation system.

Q: Why did the board decide on Boundary Option 2: to reduce the size of the Regina attendance area (non French-Immersion students attend their nearest school, whether in PVSD or Regina)

A: After lengthy deliberation on several options, the board concluded that it was in the best interest of the students to adopt a nearest school approach. This is the same principle that is generally used to determine attendance and transportation areas elsewhere in the division. The principle of closest school minimizes time on bus for students, provides for optimal utilization of Prairie Valley schools and reduces tuition costs while recognizing that PVSD schools do not yet have sufficient capacity to educate all students. As well, the public feedback PVSD received in June indicated support for this option. The board's long-term goal is to educate all PVSD students in PVSD schools, and reducing the size of the Regina attendance area makes progress toward this goal in a phased and planned manner.

Q: Why would the board force a child to change schools; would children from the same family attend different schools?

A: Boundaries have to be drawn somewhere and are now based on a clear rationale, closest school. The board tried to be as fair as possible in making its decisions and providing a transitional strategy to grandfather current high school students. Allowing high school students to complete their education at their current schools minimizes the disruption for students and families. Students in grades Kindergarten-8 will be expected to move to their designated Prairie Valley school for the 2009-10 school year; tuition and transportation for these students will only be provided for the balance of the current, 2008-09 school year. If parents wish to make other arrangements, they should contact the Regina Public or Regina Catholic school divisions directly.

Q: How will the grandfathering provisions work for students currently attending Regina schools?

A: As a transitional strategy, the board will continue (grandfather) current tuition and/or transportation arrangements for an estimated 29 grade 9, 10, 11 and 12 students registered in a Regina school as of October 31, 2008 who are impacted by the November 2008 change in the Regina attendance area, for as long as those families reside in the transitional area (i.e., the area

that is in the current Regina attendance area but that will no longer be included in the revised Regina attendance area as of the 2009-10 school year).

Q: Why does the board need to rationalize transportation routes?

A: PVSD currently provides bus services to 22 schools in Regina. Rationalizing the transportation routes reduces that number to 15, thereby reducing the time on bus for students, reducing complexity and improving the efficiency of PVSD transportation services.

Q: Which Regina schools will PVSD bus to?

A: Effective for the 2009-10 school year, transportation will be organized on the principle of four main transportation corridors into Regina that provide a full range of programming including French Immersion education:

- a. From the north, bus service will be available to Elsie Mironuck, St. Peter and St. Mary elementary schools and to Thom and O'Neill high schools. Service will no longer be provided to Imperial School.
- b. From the south, bus service will be available to Deshayes, Massey and St. Pius X elementary schools, to Regina Christian School and to LeBoldus and Campbell high schools. Service will no longer be provided to Ethel Milliken, Athabasca, Sheldon Williams, Miller and FW Johnson schools.
- c. From the east, transportation will be available to Wilfred Walker, St. Andrew, St. Gabriel and Jack MacKenzie elementary schools and to Campbell and LeBoldus high schools. Service will no longer be provided to Miller High School
- d. From the west, bus service will be available to Campbell, LeBoldus and Luther College high schools (elementary students attend Grand Coulee and Pense schools). Service will no longer be available to Sheldon Williams High School

Q: How will the grandfathering provisions work for the transportation changes into Regina schools?

A: As a transitional strategy, the board will continue to provide busing to all 22 schools for students in grades 9, 10, 11 and 12 as of October 31, 2008 who are attending schools impacted by busing changes. This ensures that high school students will be allowed to complete their education at their current school.

Q: What is the change to the policy on courtesy riders?

A: The board's courtesy rider policy (see *Board Policy 16 – Student Transportation*) allows students to ride the bus to a school outside of their designated attendance area provided that there is and continues to be room on the bus, there is no significant diversion from the established route or if arrangements can be made for pick up at an approved stop, and there is no significant additional cost to the division.

The board agreed to continue to allow courtesy riders on PVSD transportation routes, but only for students attending PVSD schools. In other words, the division will no longer allow courtesy riders on PVSD buses into Regina and parents will be expected to make transportation arrangements for their own children.

Q: When will families be notified?

A: Letters will be mailed to parents/guardians of all affected students explaining the changes and any grandfathering options. Parents/guardians should receive communication the week of November 16, 2008. If a parent/guardian does not receive a letter by the end of November, and is concerned his/her student(s) may be affected, contact Prairie Valley School Division at 306-949-3366.

Q: Is there an appeal mechanism?

A: Parents/guardians will be asked to confirm their land locations, and other information to ensure that we apply the new policy correctly. If parents/guardians have any questions about how the policy is applied, they should direct questions to reception@pvsd.ca or call 306-949-3366.

Q: What about special circumstances/special needs students?

A: PVSD schools can accommodate a wide range of student needs. If parents/guardians have questions, they can contact PVSD Student Services at 306-924-2944.

Q: What if a parent disagrees with the administrative decision?

A: If families believe that any PVSD policy has been applied incorrectly or unfairly, there is always an avenue of appeal to the board.