

A message from your Walter Lee Elementary PAC (May 26 2016)
Response from Lee PAC Post-LRFP May Open House

We had a great turn out last week at the various Open Houses. A special thanks to all staff and parents who attended. **We have requested Alice Wong, School Trustee, to have a meeting at our school with our community. The meeting will take place at Walter Lee Gym at:**

Wednesday, June 15 @ 7 pm

It is vital for us to be heard and seen in this process. We are asking everyone interested in keeping our school open to attend this meeting. Alice Wong will vote on the proposals prepared by the School District. School Trustee is an elected position. She needs to understand that we strongly support Walter Lee and are concerned about it.

At the Open House, the two potential outcomes of closing Walter Lee would be:

- Keeping the school population together and having them attend either Ferris Elementary or Kidd Elementary. Regardless, each of those schools would require six portables to house our children.
- Breaking up the school population and dispersing them between nine other schools by re-defining the catchment areas.

In either case, we believe neither of these options are viable. According to Google Maps, the walking distance from Walter Lee Elementary to Kidd Elementary is 27 minutes and 36 minutes to Ferris Elementary. Google Maps generally is quite accurate for a reasonable adult to walk the respective distance. Unfortunately, elementary school children tend to walk slower and with less purpose even when accompanied by an adult. With both of these options, Lee students would be required to cross a major arterial road. Lastly, accommodating children in portables is less than ideal as a long-term solution. Even though this would provide a Band-Aid solution to providing children classrooms, it would not address the accepting schools inability to provide the other facilities related to the school curriculum (i.e. physical education with limited gym space, etc.).

The concept of dispersing Walter Lee students throughout eight schools shatters any remnants of Walter Lee's legacy in this generation of learners. Friendships and bonds would be torn. As we have previously stated, the school is the center of our community. When dealing with children, this option is inhuman and lacks compassion. In our opinion, this option is completely unacceptable.

As you know, in our geographical area, we have two French Immersion schools. In our previous meeting with the School District they re-iterated that these programs are "portable" in nature. Lee would be able to accommodate all of Bridge's or Maple Lane's regular enrolment students, if the decision was to close one of these schools. In addition, we have the room to accept 80% of all regular enrolment students from either Errington or Whiteside if the decision was to close

them. This information is based on the projected enrolment for 2018. In each case, the transition and resolution would be more “clean” than those proposed for Walter Lee. All students would be situated within the main building with no need for portables. In respect to walking distance, Whiteside is a 6 minute walk from Walter Lee along a path which has designated walk and bike lanes which were constructed due to a PAC initiative from our school. Our building capacity allows us to provide seamless integration for any affected school in our area.

Action Items for Parents:

Be Seen –Make sure you attend the meeting on June 15th.

Be Heard –Ask your questions and become more informed.

Additional information can be obtained from our PAC News website at:

<http://lee.sd38.bc.ca/parents/pac/news>.

Thanks for your help in keeping our school open.