

Meadow Ridge School – Planning Forward March 2022

Background:

Community consultation to welcome Meadow Ridge School began in 2016. This process included the development of [values statements](#) to guide future decisions. A summary of these values follows:

- Maintain neighborhoods to the greatest extent possible
- Minimize impact on existing school families
- Maximize 'walkability' and modes of active transportation
- Create stable long-term boundaries
- Honour student experience (reduce the number of school changes for families)

In planning forward, the values remain as we address the potential for **overcrowding**.

The Foothills School Division sees growth in the school population since 2019 as positive. This growth, and the future projected growth in the geographical areas surrounding the school (Lamont, Wedderburn, D'Arcy developments), are to be celebrated. This will increase enrolment at the school and in the Division, which benefits all students. This is also indicative of continued overall growth in the Division.

Alberta Education calculates school **capacity/utilization rates**.

- The formula calculates net capacity by looking at Instructional area then dividing that number by a recommended area per student; then adding the capacity of other spaces such as CTS rooms, gyms, learning commons, etc.
- Some areas that are used for both instruction and corridor space do count as instructional space which may increase the capacity of the building, which are outside of regular classroom space

It is also important to consider the **design of the school** and shared collaborative spaces of the school in any discussion of future planning for the school. A consultation on the school's design took place with a community-wide planning advisory team from [September 2016 to March 2017](#). This team included Okotoks school Principals, vice principals, teachers, school councils, specialists, trustees, and the division office team. The chosen design prioritized:

- Shared collaborative spaces throughout the school
- Spaces that are purposefully used by multiple classes or cohorts of students at one time
- Spaces that promote collaboration across classes and grades

Current context:

Considering this background, and working in line with the values that guided the initial school boundary consultation in 2019, the Division does not recommend moving forward with a full boundary review at this time nor a request for modular classrooms from Alberta Education. This decision is based on the following considerations:

- We will not receive support from Alberta Education a request for modular classrooms given Meadow Ridge's current capacity numbers and the fact that space remains at nearby schools
- Recent modular installation approvals were only given to schools having greater than 95% utilization

- The Division directed additional staffing to the school during the 2021-2022 school year to address larger grade level cohorts at the school which required additional teaching spaces for these cohorts.
- Projections for the 2022-2023 school year show an overall decline of 15 students in the total student population. We recognize that this could and likely will change over the course of the next several months.
- School growth and design of school should be viewed as positives and healthy for this school despite perceived space challenges resulting from the school's design

Planning Forward

The division suggests monitoring student growth in the next year while engaging with the Meadow Ridge, and then larger Okotoks school community (specifically Doctor Morris Gibson School, Big Rock School and École Okotoks Junior High School) in advance of a potential boundary review during the 2022/2023 school year.

We recommend the following scenario be considered:

- Schedule and advertise a public meeting at the school prior to launching a broader school community engagement on school capacity in early April. This engagement will gather voice around:
 - Reviewing possibility of repurposing the Learning Commons space by installing 'DIRTT walls' to create two additional semi-permanent classroom spaces for the 2022-2023 school year.
 - Considering rezoning new construction in Wedderburn to Dr. Morris Gibson School (with consideration given for current Wedderburn families to be grandfathered at Meadow Ridge until all siblings attend the school)
 - Considering rezoning the new construction in D'Arcy being directed to Big Rock School (with the same consideration for grandfathering applied)
 - Considering Lamont development, being directly across the street from Meadow Ridge School, remaining zoned for Meadow Ridge.