

update

W.H. Cushing Workplace School

September 3, 2015

Background

In 1995, the Calgary Board of Education (CBE) and TELUS entered into a unique partnership for the use of corporate space for a downtown workplace school. TELUS has provided space for the W.H. Cushing Workplace School on the main floor of the Len Werry building at the rate of \$1 per year. In May, 2014, TELUS advised the CBE that renovations to their building would be undertaken which would affect W.H. Cushing School. The current lease expires on July 31, 2016 and no further lease extensions or renewals can be considered due to the building redevelopment and TELUS's own need for space.

Working with Stakeholders

CBE Administration has been engaged in a meaningful and inclusive engagement process with stakeholders, beginning with a meeting in September, 2014. At that time CBE consulted with TELUS to determine their interest in helping to locate an alternate site and CBE's Corporate Partnerships began to explore opportunities to find an alternate site in the city core with other corporate donors.

Community consultation included:

- On October 8, 2014, meetings were held with the School Principal, Area Director and TELUS to discuss engagement and communication strategy.
- In October 2014, meetings were held with stakeholders to share the issue and provide information about the engagement process and to gather feedback
- In November 2014, further stakeholder feedback was solicited through an online engagement tool called Thoughtexchange to clarify stakeholder priorities and needs.
- In December 2014, CBE staff met with parents and interested parties to provide updates, gather feedback, and talk about the engagement plan and expression of interest process for exploring alternative lease arrangements. A written update was sent to all parents after the meeting.

Expression of Interest

Given the information gathered from stakeholders, a news release seeking expressions of interest from downtown corporations was issued in December 2014. The CBE continued to work with parents to discuss options and determine what implementation plan might be necessary based on space available in the core and at existing CBE schools.

A formal written update to parents was issued in February, 2015 indicating Corporate Partnerships had sent information to 45 corporations that met established criteria. Four responses were received indicating interest in the concept but, due to the current economic situation, companies could not consider this type of proposal.

In April, 2015 a request for space was made to the Provincial Government by CBE Board of Trustees Chair Bowen-Eyre. A response was received indicating that no appropriate space was available.

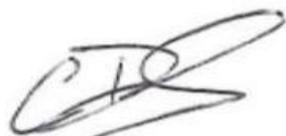
As of September 2015, the CBE has been unable to secure suitable space in the downtown core to relocate W.H. Cushing Workplace School.

Moving Forward

Throughout the engagement process, stakeholders have expressed concern about the timeline for a decision regarding whether the school would be relocated to a new location or closed. In the absence of a committed space to relocate the program and mindful of providing parents with the time required to make an informed decision regarding where to enroll their children in the future, CBE Administration is recommending the necessary steps be taken to affect the closure of W.H. Cushing School effective June 30, 2016. This recommendation will be taken forward to the CBE Board of Trustees.

If W.H. Cushing School is approved for closure, students currently attending the school will be redirected to their designated school for the 2016-2017 school year and onward. It is anticipated that, with the opening of new schools for the 2016-2017 school year, current W.H. Cushing Workplace School students can be accommodated at their designated regular program schools.

Yours truly,



Calvin Davies
Director
Area IV



Carrie Edwards
Director
Planning & Transportation