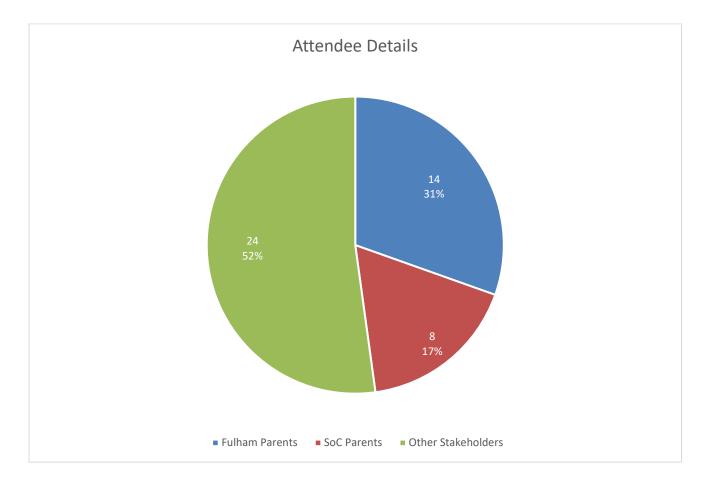
46 attendees registered their attendance. Three teaching and one administrative staff were also in attendance. Of those registered:

- 14 attendees have 18 children attending Fulham school.
- 8 attendees acknowledged their children attend a school of choice in Edson.



An invitation was distributed to Fulham stakeholders to attend a meeting with the GYPSD Board on October 10th. The invitation provided an option to submit questions ahead of time for anonymity. The Trustees addressed many of those questions during their presentation and also addressed questions from the floor.

Questions not addressed due to time have been addressed in the following Q and A.

Note: The questions/comments the Board received from stakeholders reflect the opinion of that individual.

Comments not conducive to Section 32(d) and (f) of the Education Act have been edited or not included.

Questions / comments received – no	Questions / comments received – not addressed at the event. Trustee Responses	
Why are the requests of a few loud parents in a minority of greater importance than the needs/ wants of the majority? Only a few Fulham parents attended the Wildwood meeting so why are they being given a platform now? GYPSD's own documents which were provided at the meeting in Wildwood showed only 43% of stakeholders supported the school, and there have been more students who have left since.	The Board received a request from the Fulham School Council for a conversation to be held just on Fulham.	
Why is this debate being reopened despite the resounding NO that was received in regards to any changes at/after the last event? Is this not a waste of resources?	The Board received a request from the Fulham School Council for a conversation to be held just on Fulham. It was requested that the meeting be in-person, at Fulham, and that all Fulham stakeholders be invited.	
I believe there is a lack of discipline and poor behavior at Fulham that is not being addressed.	The process for raising a concern is outlined on the front page of the Division's webpage.	
If there are changes to bussing/ boundaries will those students already attending a school of choice be grandfathered in at their current school with bussing?	Hypothetical scenario – many subsequent decisions would have to be made if this where to occur.	
Will the board be considering the student's mental health as an important factor if mandating attendance area registration?	The process for raising a concern is outlined on the front page of the Division's webpage. See hyperlink above.	
If students are forced back to Fulham, will the Board be providing funding for additional supports such as liaison counseling/ OT and speech therapy as these services in my opinion are severely lacking in comparison to the time and attention students receive in town?	Students identified for needing specialized services are seen as quickly as possible at the school once the referral has been made. The timeline is determined by when the referral is made, and the availability of staff - not the location of the student within the division.	
Is the Board aware that parents feel they have the right to choose the education that is best for their child, and that right is protected by The Choice in Education Act?	The Board does have the authority as per section 10(1) of the Education Act to determine attendance areas for schools within the jurisdiction and to determine whether a request for attendance at a school of choice can proceed.	

Is the board aware that should they try to force students back to Fulham through boundary enforcement, that most of the community is prepared to homeschool, switch to the Catholic division or even move to avoid attending Fulham? Our children's education is important to us. Fulham is lacking in all areas.	The Board has received feedback from a variety of stakeholders who have voiced their opinions on the best way to move forward. Fulham is staffed by certificated teachers addressing the Alberta curriculum. The Board has to consider all of the implications of the decisions it makes – short term and long term. Regardless of the decision, the Board is aware there will be unhappy stakeholders on either side of the issue.
When will Fulham be shut down?	The process to close a school is outlined in the Education Act.
How would a specialized school be funded? From the Board? Community support? Province?	This would require community contribution and support. School funding is determined by Alberta Education and is based on student enrolment.
Has there been any discussion about changing the start time to 9 am to alleviate early bus pick up times?	This question was directed to the principal to discuss further with families.
Comment.	Small class sizes are a specialty these days. Population isn't declining in the Fulham catchment area if there are 94 elementary aged kids attending schools. I have concerns over the bus times being correct and the early start times and length children are on the bus, especially on young students.
Comment	What does Fulham School have to offer compared to schools in Edson? No comparable (participant answered own question on the submission).
Why is the Board providing free School of Choice Busing for people to leave their attendance area?	The Board does not provide free School of Choice Busing. In March, 2023, the provincial government announced their decision to fund eligible students to attend a school of choice after the student's enrollment had been approved by the receiving school. Prior to this change by the provincial government, boards collected fees to address the operational gap created by offering a non-mandatory service, like busing to a school or choice rather than the designated school.

RESPONSE TO FULHAM COMMUNITY CONVERSATION PARTICIPANTS' QUESTIONS
COMMENTS FROM OCTOBER 10, 2024

Frequency of Question/Comment

Trustee/Board Response

Note: most of the questions were addressed in the trustees' speaking notes or during the Q and A.

Topic: Small, Rural Schools

What is the Board doing to support Fulham Community School aka small, rural schools?

(3)

For many years, the Board has supported Fulham financially.

The funds Fulham receives for facilities and maintenance, transportation, and staffing have not met operational costs for a while. Student enrollment determines the school's operating budget. Currently, Fulham School is subsidized by the Board to keep it operational as its funding from the province does not cover all of its costs – this includes facilities, staffing, and transportation. The Board has made the decision to support Fulham by redistributing funds from other sources to ensure the operation of Fulham.

For example, the grant allocation school divisions receive for **property maintenance** are based on the student number. With 43 students enrolled in a building with the capacity for 147 students means Fulham's utilization rate is only 29%. That means that the grant allocation for maintaining the Fulham property is very small; the Board has to reallocate funds from other areas to maintain Fulham's building and grounds.

On average, it takes approximately **26 students to cover the base cost of one teacher** as funding is based per student with additional funding for other items such as special needs. Based on a student population of 43 students, the budget allocated to Fulham could support 1.6 teachers. Fulham has 3.5 teachers serving children in kindergarten to students in grade 6. This is supported by the transfer of funds from other areas.

The Board also funds full-day, full-week kindergarten programming at Fulham (the provincial funding is only for half days).

Why is the Board not doing more to protect Fulham Community School?

In February, Principal Marshall and the School Council Chair shared the concerns from the School Council with the Trustees.

Possible ideas to address the school attendance area and issues caused by school of choice service were brought forward to the Fulham constituents for their feedback in May of 2024. The Board hosted an in person event and an online survey with identified Fulham constituents. The Board also received a signed petition from 49 families.

The majority of Fulham stakeholders said they wanted the Board to maintain the status guo for Fulham. This does not negate the Board's governance right to direct student school attendance under 10(1) of the Education Act. Trustees represent all of the division's constituents and have to find a balance between competing expectations when they make decisions as a Board. It is the Board's hope that the Fulham area folks support their Why does the Board not enforce the attendance community school by registering their children there. area for Fulham? Families just beginning their child's learning journey are expected to enrol at Fulham - this is stated at the top of Policy 17. In the last year, changes to Policy 17, AP 300 and 305 were put in place to direct all new students to their designated school. GYPSD principals are expected to direct non-attendance area applicants back to their attendance area school to discuss their child's educational needs with that principal. Last year, the Board held The engagement session was intended to address two different community engagement issues - one specific to the Lobstick area and one specific to sessions in Niton and shrinking enrollments at both Fulham and Niton. Wildwood. Wildwood was chosen initially as a central location for all families Why was it held in potentially impacted by these discussions. Fulham stakeholders Wildwood when it also were invited to the in-person event to understand the shrinking affected Fulham families? enrollment numbers at the school and to provide input on consideration for changes that would have implications for them. Fulham stakeholders were also invited to provide their input in an online survey. The Fulham feedback was reflected in the data for Board consideration. **Topic: Busing** Bus registration is only completed **AFTER** a student's school Why does the Board provide bus service out registration is confirmed. of the school attendance These bus routes were established a long time ago for older students areas? attending junior high/high school in Edson. Over time, parents began registering their younger kids to also attend school in Edson and demanded previous boards to provide school of choice bus service. The province requires school boards to allow parents to drive to a designated bus stop to access an existing bus route to their preferred

bus route stops at the family's residence.

Peers, Niton, and Yellowhead County area.

YKCS Private Schools.

school if there is seat space. If the older child is on the bus route, that

GYPSD also holds bus contracts for Living Waters Catholic and

There are bus routes going into Edson from all over the Fulham.

Why are you letting students onto buses that take them out of Fulham?	Transportation Services does not place any students onto buses until AFTER school registration has been confirmed via the two principals or from PowerSchool, as outlined in AP 305.
	There are two aspects to know here: one is school registration. The other is eligible bus service.
	As outlined in the <i>Education Act</i> , if parents register their children at another school or in another school division, they are responsible for getting their children to the school or driving them to a spot on an existing bus route to their desired school.
	If a bus route exists, and there is seat space, transportation may be available - but it is not guaranteed.
	In some cases, the bus stops at the family home to pick up the older students attending their designated school in Edson.
	The School Transportation Regulation requires boards to outline the process for parents to meet the bus on the bus route to their desired school. Within Fulham, it may be the end of the driveway.
Why does the Board bus other school division kids?	GYPSD has provided bus service to LW and YKCS for two decades or more. The province expects school divisions with Transportation Departments to cooperate with other school divisions. The Division receives transportation funding to bus these students.
Why are the bus rides so long? (4)	In rural divisions, the distance between residences along the route and then the distance to the attending school make the bus rides long. There are not enough riders for multiple bus routes in the Fulham attendance area.
	As of today, there are 20 students riding on F-01, and 20 students on F-03. These bus routes pick up students from K-6 only going to Fulham; they do not pick up students riding into Edson. The reduction in routes has led to an increase ride time for 21 students (average 11 minutes) and an improved ride time for 9 students (average 7 minutes). Two students have a significant increase in ride time with a first pick-up time of 6:55 am. This is still an improvement from the first pick-up time in the 2021/22 school year which was 6:46 am. The department has offered to make a double run to address the early time.
If Edson parents wanted their kids to attend Fulham, could they?	Yes. Fulham is part of the Edson area, and if both principals have agreed to let the student attend their non-designated school as per Policy 17 and AP 300 and 305.
(3)	Parents would be responsible for transporting them to and from the school.
	No bus route exists in that direction.
If a large number of parents wanted to come to Fulham - would the Board put in a bus route?	Substantial numbers to support a new bus route would be required.

Why are there only two Fulham bus routes now?

The bus allocation for the 40 students registered to a bus cannot support multiple buses.

Unfortunately, the number of bus routes in the Fulham area were not reduced to reflect the actual number of students in the bused area. Last year, Fulham had three buses for 43 students, an average of 14 students per bus, with a first pickup time just before 7:15 am.

In comparison, Wildwood Elementary had three buses for 87 students with the first pick up time at **6:52 am**.

Grande Cache had one bus for 87 students with a first pick-up time at **6:35 am**.

The reassignment of the one Fulham bus was long overdue.

Funding is provided per rider and calculated from their residence to their attending school. The land mass in this area is vast but not highly populated. There are not a lot of students in the area and so the funding allotment is small. The projected cost for operating two buses during the 2024/25 school year is \$191K with funding of \$50K the deficit for the two routes will be \$140,000.

If the bus funding is not adequate to cover costs for smaller rural populations, what is the Board doing to advocate for a different funding formula to shorten rides for rural students?

This is a province-wide issue. There are simply some contexts where there is no reasonable way to shorten ride times.

There isn't the volume of students residing in some rural areas to support bus operation costs. And there is a lack of individuals wanting to be school bus drivers.

Alberta Education amended the distance criteria for eligibility – allowing for more ridership - and amended the regulation that funding was for students **only** to their **designated** school.

The province increased transportation funding to cover the cost of busing more eligible riders, covering driver training costs, and covering the operational expenses of bus service to a school of choice.

Some rural boards are turning to Parent-Parent Provided contracts as they do not have the funds nor the personnel to provide bus service for small rider numbers.

(1)

How does our Policy 17 compare to others in the province?

Every school authority has a different context. GYPSD is spread out over a large geographical land mass that includes a few small towns, and county areas that are sparsely populated.

The **designated school** for students residing in the Fulham area is Pine Grove once they begin Grade 7. The designated school for students residing in the Niton area is Parkland High School once they begin Grade 10. Students are bused into Edson to attend their designated schools, so the bus routes exist. The Edson area is unique in that there are many choice options for parents, and the bus routes exist.

Despite years of Board Policy attempting to limit bus service out of the attendance area, the majority of parents residing in those areas demand access to the choice bus service.

Was the bus that was moved from Fulham used to accommodate the students who left Fulham to attend Edson schools?	No. The bus was reallocated to address first pick-up times before 6:30 am for students attending their designated schools in Edson and to address the increase in new eligible riders within Edson town limits. The 40 students attending Fulham have their own buses.
Are the school of choice students being charged for busing?	No. The province announced Transportation Funding changes in March 2023. Provincial funding for transportation is provided from the student's residence to their attending school.
What is the seating	Depends on the age of the riders.
capacity on a school bus?	Alberta Education calculates a bus load based on the age of the riders on the bus:
	Elementary riders – 3 to a seat
	High School riders – 2 to a seat
	GYPSD does not overload buses. The division employ double- runs on its high density routes to ensure all students are seated safely.
Choice	
If the Board removes the school of choice option, how are they going to ensure that students are being returned to their catchment area? (5)	The Board can direct students to attend a specific school within their boundary and they can restrict choice bus service options. Legislatively, the Board is required to inform parents of how they can access bus service on an existing route to their desired school – if there is seat space.
	Hypothetically, if the Board were to restrict school registration and limit bus service out-of-the-area, parents have the choice to attend another school division. Even if GYPSD did not provide contracted bus services, parents can chose to drive their children into Edson to attend Vanier or YKCS.
	The best encouragement to attend Fulham is the strength of its educational program.
Why are families not required to apply annually for a school of choice similar to other school divisions? (2)	This has never been a process established in GYPSD.
	Perhaps because historically, schools have not been over- crowded.
We want the choice to send our kids where we want to register our kids, not the Board. (2)	The Education Act recognizes the range of educational choices for parents to determine the kind of education they want their child to receive. Within the school division itself, the Board determines school attendance areas and has the right to direct students to a school. Additionally, the Board weighs the immediate and long-term implications of non-attendance area registrations not just on the preferred school, but also on the desired school.
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Why are some attendance applications declined and some aren't?	Depends on the reason. Factors considered include: impact to the school's overall resources, ability to provide the necessary supports, classroom complexity, class size.
Can the school council be provided with written confirmation on why	This information was provided from comments received from families that responded to the online survey in May of 2024. This was shared at the in-person event on October 10.
families have chosen to leave so they can assist with making changes at the school to address these concerns? (2)	The reasons were convenience, range of experiences and opportunities, and preference/choice to attend a larger school. Information from individual families will not be shared due to confidentiality.
What was done by the Board, the previous superintendent and/or the principal, to address why 14 families left at the beginning of the 2023/234 school year?	Instructions for how a family can share a concern or question about their child's education are provided on the front page of the Division's website. The school principal was encouraged to reach out to parents in the attendance area to gather feedback as to their decision.
Has the option of supporting a school of choice created larger class sizes in Edson?	All of the Edson and area students come together at Pine Grove in Grade 6 and then the Fulham students in Grade 7. This naturally creates larger class sizes in junior high. In the past few years, non-attendance area requests to attend Pine Grove as a school of choice have been denied.
Has the Board received any concerns from designated Edson families about non-designated students creating larger class sizes? (2)	No.
Why hasn't a meeting been requested with the families that do not go to Fulham who signed a petition back in May about <i>why</i> they are not going to Fulham?	The reasons for why families are choosing to attend schools elsewhere was captured in the in-person and online survey.
How many people responded to the previous surveys?	At the in-person event held in Wildwood, 14 participants identified themselves from the Fulham attendance area, out of the 57 attendees. When we reviewed the responses on the proposed ideas for change, 13 of the 14 Fulham participants said that they did not want a change to the Fulham attendance area and they did not want to see a change to the school of choice bus service into Edson.
	An online survey with the same change ideas was sent out to all Fulham families on May 15th until the 19th. 84 Fulham constituents responded to the proposed change ideas in the online

	survey. 54 responses indicated they would not support a change to the Fulham area and they would not support a restriction to choose bus service into Edson. In addition to asking each constituent to note their support for a change, we also invited folks to explain their response. On May 15th, we also received a signed letter from 49 Fulham area constituents all confirming they did not support any change in Fulham with the reasons for their choice.
Why does the Board think the enrollment is declining or what has changed in the community? (2)	A summary of the responses, arranged into themes for what we heard from constituents in the spring noted the following: Convenience Parents work in Edson – want their kids close by in case of an emergency, illness, and/or appointments Before and after school childcare is in Edson Extracurricular activities – kids are in clubs, play on teams, and/or access after-school community events in Edson Range of Experiences Larger schools in Edson afford more staff, more options, more extra-curricular experiences for students to explore. Larger schools offer students a larger pool of peers from which to make friends. Choice Parents said they believed Edson is able to provide better education, more supports and it was their choice to select a larger school within a larger service centre.
If the Board enforces the catchment area, would it affect the students already going to Edson or just new students?	A number of factors would have to be decided. Hypothetically, if the Board were to make this decision, subsequent decisions would have to be made based on the age of the child and the number of years remaining at their choice school. It would require the Board to establish a sunset window. Currently, all new-to-school families are expected to attend their designated school for kindergarten – as per Policy 17.
	Fulham Facts
How many students are registered at Fulham this year?	43 students are enrolled at Fulham for the 2024/25 school year
Why was Fulham not listed as my designated school when I registered online as I live in the area?	This was an error in <i>BusPlanner</i> . This software is used to identify school designations. The address was input backwards in the software. It has been corrected.
What is the school's budget?	The spring budget for 2024/25 is \$573,766, compared to \$596,672 for 2023/24. The decrease is mainly due to the decrease in student enrollment
	based on the weighted moving average (3 years average) enrollment calculation by Alberta Education.

How much does it cost to maintain the Fulham building?	Plant management costs are substantially more to operate Fulham. In addition to maintenance, there is power, gas, water, and custodial. The 2023/24 school year cost Facilities just over \$107,000 to maintain and operate the school. Provincial funding was substantially lower thus the Division also subsidizes this from other areas.
Is there a minimum student enrollment number that the Board would look at to determine if it is time to close Fulham School?	Enrolment below 35 would significantly impact Fulham's operations. Fulham would lose @60% of its small school funding if the population drops below 35. Currently, the province provides small schools block funding at an enrolment minimum of 35, up to 155.
How many students does the school need to operate on its own?	Fulham has the capacity for 147 students. The budget for a student enrollment of 100 would significantly improve the school's ability to operate without subsidization from the Board.
How many K-6 students live in the Fulham attendance area?	As of the September 30th enrollment date, there are 43 students attending Fulham: 7 children in kindergarten; 5 students in Grade 1; 5 students in Grade 2; 6 students in Grade 3; 5 students in Grade 4; 9 students in Grade 5, and 6 students in Grade 6.
	Available information for the Fulham school attendance area shows that there are 94 K-Grade 6 students in the area registered at a school.
	43 Fulham area students are attending their designated school; 33 students are attending a GYPSD school elsewhere. 17 students are attending the Private Christian School or the Catholic school division.
	We do not have any data on students in this area who may be home-schooled.

Topic: School Closure	
If Fulham students were relocated to Edson, does the funding follow as I am concerned that classes would be large and not enough teachers?	Funding follows the students, and determines the size of the school budget. The more students, the larger the staff.
If the Board values 'small, rural schools" why have they	Previous boards made difficult decisions to address declining populations. If there simply aren't the student numbers, the

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closed five? Robb, Brule, Marlboro, Peers and Wildwood.	operating costs are more than the board receives to run the school. It is not sustainable over time.
	Alberta Infrastructure determines which school improvement projects more forward. The process requires boards to look at which schools are too expensive to fix, too old to update, no longer have a viable student population, under-used, etc.
	School boards receive funds based on student enrolment. Boards with small enrolments are challenged to figure out how to make small budgets stretch across the division.
Topic: Moving the Electoral Boundary – 'what we asked in May'	
If the Lobstick electoral ward boundary shifted west and the Fulham attendance area is redrawn so the juniors go to Niton, can you confirm the Grade 10-12 students will be	Yes, this was already confirmed in May for the Lobstick constituents. Niton Central Students are designated to Edson for Grades 10-12. In May of 2024, the majority of Fulham constituents said they will not support a change to the ward boundary.
designated to Edson for high school?	
Can we revisit the idea of shifting the Lobstick electoral ward boundary west so Fulham becomes part of Lobstick?	In May of 2024, the majority of constituents said they will not support a change to the ward boundary.
What would need to happen for the Fulham Stakeholders	In May of 2024, the majority of constituents said they will not support a change to the ward boundary.
to get a chance to look at this option again?	In order to change a ward boundary the process would have to be in accordance with Section 76 of the Education Act
Why is the boundary line being discussed again when a decision was already made after discussing with stakeholders?	It is not.