



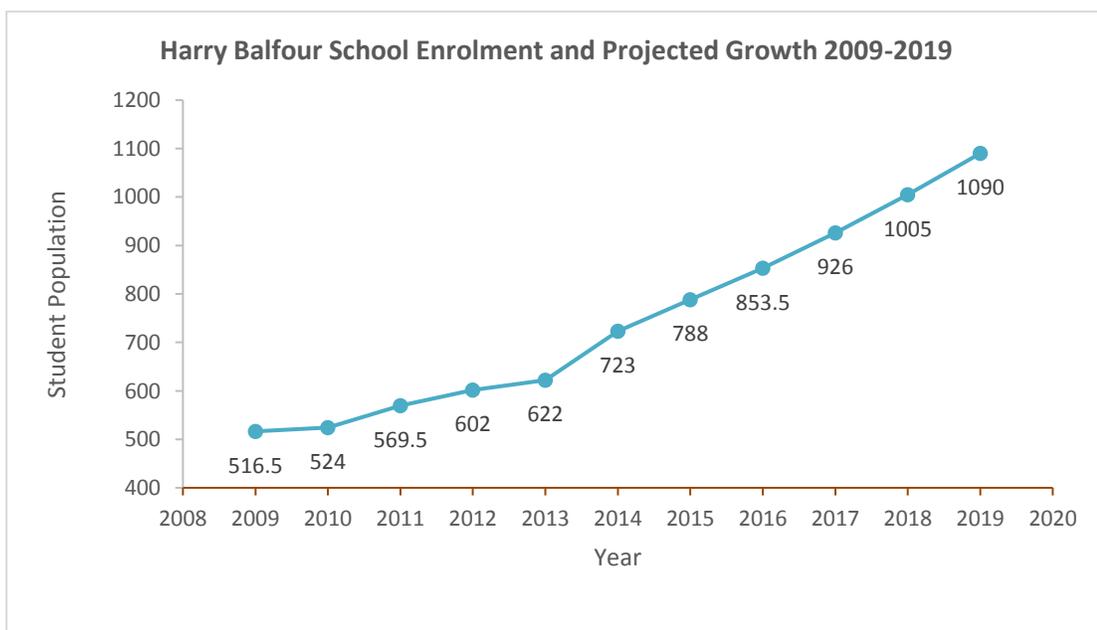
## Three Year 2016-2019 Capital Plan - Revised November 1, 2016

### Three Year Capital Plan Priorities

1. Continue the replacement process for Harry Balfour School by constructing a new K-8 school built to a capacity of 650 students and would open at 650. The preferred location would be in a residential development south east of Grande Prairie along TWP RD 712.

While the construction of the approved Whispering Ridge School will provide relief from enrolment pressure on Peace Wapiti School Division infrastructure, it does not fully address the recommendations of the Clancy Report. In keeping with this document, the Board desires to continue to work with Alberta Education, Alberta Infrastructure and sister jurisdictions to remove Peace Wapiti Schools from the Grande Prairie city limits. It remains a priority of Peace Wapiti Public Schools to address the issue of excessive ride times for rural students.

This school will serve much of the current attendance area of Harry Balfour School. Harry Balfour School is currently greater than 97.3% utilization even with the addition of three modular classrooms in the fall and continues to experience significant continuous growth in its student population. The student population growth rate at Harry Balfour over the past six years has ranged from 1.4% between September, 2010 and September, 2011 to 16% between 2013 and 2014. The average annual growth in population for the past six year period spanning September, 2010 to September, 2016 is 8.5%. At this rate of growth, Harry Balfour School's enrollment in September 2017 (an ambitious opening date for the Whispering Ridge School) will sit at 926 students, or 106% current capacity.



Note: Chart includes enrollment corrected for Severe/PUF student utilization.

We believe the 8.5% enrollment growth projection is very conservative. Given the current pace of development in all County of Grande Prairie subdivisions surrounding the city, it is entirely conceivable that enrolment growth will continue at a rate far closer to that of a recent single year span; 16%. Statistics Canada data regarding the growth rates of the communities of Sexsmith and Clairmont far exceeds 20%.

It is also important to note that despite the current economic down-turn and its impact on the development in the County of Grande Prairie, it is still predicting to see a 2% growth in areas surrounding the city of Grande Prairie.

Based on our conservative projections we expect we will open the Whispering Ridge School at, or near, 80% utilization, or approximately 520 students. Conversely, we expect that Harry Balfour's utilization at this time will drop to slightly greater than 60%. This may provide an opportunity for shared operation of the facility with sister jurisdictions or other compatible service agencies as we await completion of this project. However, the steady growth in enrolment at Peace Wapiti Academy may require the moving of Grade 9 students to Harry Balfour School until a solution to our high school enrolment pressure is found.

When we project future enrolment at the Whispering Ridge and Harry Balfour schools, we are mindful of the pace of development within the County of Grande Prairie and in nearby communities. Understanding that capacity across the system may be considered, we examined the utilization rates of schools in attendance areas immediately adjacent to Harry Balfour's. Notwithstanding the significant increase in ride times that would be incurred by shifting attendance areas in our rural jurisdiction, it can be seen in the data below, these schools, each experiencing sustained (if less dramatic) growth trends of their own, are already approaching peak utilization:

Bezanson: 98.1%

Clairmont Community School: 77.4%

With the addition of two modular classrooms during the 2015-2016 school year to address enrollment pressure. It is agreed that this enrolment number does not reflect the actual pressure on instructional spaces at CCS. The configuration of shared/community spaces, while calculated into capacity, does not provide for effective classroom configurations.

Peace Wapiti Academy: 82.6%

This does not provide a viable, long-term solution to Harry Balfour's utilization challenges. This school has experienced steady enrolment growth in its Grade 9 cohorts. This trend will continue as the above schools continue to grow. In addition, the physical plant is already presenting challenges due to the existence of large, specialized learning spaces (such as the theatre), narrow hallways and inadequate bathroom facilities.

Transitioning Peace Wapiti School Division to schools outside the City of Grande Prairie would serve to help us achieve another, if not equally important objective; reducing needlessly long bus rides for hundreds of rural students. As the city grows, the time it takes for our rural transportation system to move students through the city extends. Some students attending Harry Balfour School are boarding the bus just after 7:00 in the morning and are arriving home just before 5:00 in the evening; logging 2 hours and 45 minutes of bus riding time every day. Locating our schools outside of Grande Prairie with easier access to main transportation systems, would be a successful step to reducing these ride times and improving the quality of family life for numerous families.

2. New 9-12 school located north of Grande Prairie with proposed opening capacity of 900 students with build out to 1100 students. This school replaces Peace Wapiti Academy and will accommodate the rapid growth in student population in the current Peace Wapiti Academy attendance area.

This school would serve students from Peace Wapiti Academy's current attendance area. Peace Wapiti Academy is at 82.6% utilization. Increased cohort sizes at Harry Balfour School and Clairmont Community School, combined with stable enrollment at the other feeder schools (Bezanson and Penson) and feverish residential development within this attendance area indicate continued rapid growth in student population. The school could be located on one of the two school sites identified in the Clairmont Heights Area Structure Plan or on a designated site-possibly adjacent to, or immediately west of, the County Recplex.

Constructing a replacement school for Peace Wapiti Academy would accomplish important outcomes for both Peace Wapiti School Division and Grande Prairie Public School Division. Ride times would be significantly reduced by providing high school service to Peace Wapiti students in the County of Grande Prairie; eliminating the additional time required to transport students through the city. Peace Wapiti would gain a facility with a physical plant and location ideal to accommodate a growing population. One of the neighbouring sister School Boards would obtain a centrally located school capable of relieving pressure on their own infrastructure.

3. New K-8 school located in Clairmont Heights with proposed opening capacity of 350 students with build out to 600 students. This school will relieve the enrolment pressure that is building at Clairmont Community and Robert W. Zahara schools due to continued population growth in these two communities and in the surrounding rural area.

As indicated above, Clairmont Community School is experiencing enrolment pressure that the Board has sought to address through the purchase of modular classrooms. Robert W. Zahara continues to experience rapid enrolment growth. The 2015-2016 school year saw growth in enrolment of 7.6%. With this pace of growth, the new replacement school was expected and did open at 76% capacity. At this rate of growth, the replacement school will reach 88% utilization in less than two years.

This school would serve the growing population of the Hamlet of Clairmont. Clairmont Community School sits at a deceiving utilization rate of 77.4% . The pace of development has been steady and, while slower in recent months, development of single and multi-family residences in the north is progressing. Projections indicate that the school will, even with the recent purchase of two modular classrooms by Peace Wapiti School Division, exceed a utilization rate of 85% by the 2018-2019 school year.

This follows the pattern of consistent enrolment growth in this attendance area with the largest cohorts occurring at the K-2 levels (average 54) as compared to an average cohort in grades 3-8 (average 40). There are currently three major residential developments underway or in the planning stages which will add significantly to the student population. The County of Grande Prairie has designated two school sites in the Clairmont Heights Area Structure Plan.

Peace Wapiti School Division is interested in pursuing partnerships with Grande Prairie and District Catholic School Division, the County of Grande Prairie and private business' in the development of this facility.