



## News Release

For immediate release, April 28, 2003

Tonight Edmonton Catholic School Board Trustees approved the closure of one of three elementary schools following a lengthy consultation process that began March 3<sup>rd</sup>.

St. Patrick School at 12050 – 95A Street will close June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2003. St. Jerome, 3310 – 107 Avenue and Our Lady of Peace, 15911 – 110 Avenue, will remain open.

‘It was an extremely difficult decision,’ said Charlie Koester, Board of Trustees Chairperson. ‘But in the end the present low enrolment of St. Patrick and future predictions of no significant increase in enrolment made it necessary to close the school,’ Koester went on to say.

St. Patrick School currently has 155 students in the regular program, 36 students in the special education programs as well as leased areas in a space for 551 students giving St. Patrick School a 42% utilization rate. The Edmonton Catholic School District overall utilization rate is 69%.

‘Alberta Infrastructure has indicated that a district utilization rate below 85% will likely result in no new funding to modernize schools or build new schools. Unfortunately, this is a funding reality that we had to take into consideration,’ said Koester.

A letter will be sent to St. Patrick parents tomorrow outlining the next steps in the process. A Transition Team comprised of district administration as well as School Administrators of St. Patrick, St. Alphonsus and St. Catherine will be put into place, holding a parent meeting in the next few weeks to discuss program relocation as well as the transportation of students to St. Alphonsus or St. Catherine Schools.

Trustees also voted that St. Jerome School with 121 students will remain open to give the community time to implement the action plan that was presented at a public forum in March. Ideas in the plan include a ‘Focus School’ proposal that will identify St. Jerome as a ‘Science Academy.’

Our Lady of Peace School with 161 students will also stay open. District Administration will now work with the community to develop a ‘School Community Plan of Action for Facility Utilization’ for the school. This will include identifying surplus space for potential leasing; a review of transportation to increase enrolments through different transportation options and the possibility of adding district programs.

Superintendent, Dr. Dale Ripley acknowledged the difficult change ahead for the St. Patrick School community saying, ‘We recognize that change is difficult but we would like to assure parents that the district will do everything possible to ensure a smooth transition for your children to wonderful schools at St. Alphonsus and St. Catherine.’

- 30 -

For more information call:

Charlie Koester  
Board of Trustees Chairperson  
Edmonton Catholic Schools  
(780) 445-4722

Lori Nagy  
Media Relations  
Edmonton Catholic Schools  
(780) 441-6189