

BILL & JEAN LESLIE

Mentions in [The Daily Herald-Tribune](#), Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada

School board votes to go ahead with new school bus traffic route

By BILL GILBERT
of our staff

The city public school board last night agreed to fully finance the construction of a 105 St.-113 Ave. traffic route to ease school bus congestion in the composite high school, St. Joseph's high school complex in northwest Grande Prairie.

The decision was made with much reservation and most board members felt the estimated \$21,600 project should not be totally paid for by the board.

The board has been negotiating with the city for some weeks in an attempt to persuade the city to build and pay for the road which will get school buses out of the school parking lots.

The city, in its proposition, agreed Monday to lend the \$21,600 to the school board for construction of the road, at a rate of nine per cent interest. It is to be paid back in five payments over a five year period or sooner if the board wants.

Council also agreed to be responsible for the upkeep of the road.

The board voted 4-1 in favor of building the road which is expected to be started within the week.

The one dissenter, John Wiebe, held firm to his stand that the school board was not the only body responsible for

the building of the road.

Other members considered the board was not completely responsible and should have received help from the city and other school boards, but voted in favor of paying for the road because of the urgency of the situation.

They were told by Board member Bill Leslie, who headed the committee which handled negotiations with the city, that if the road was not built within two weeks it would have to be forgotten until next year.

He urged construction of the road "before somebody gets seriously injured up there."

Mr. Wiebe said he did not see how it was the board's problem.

"If the city doesn't see a problem why do we see a problem?" he asked.

"It seems to me they (the city) are abandoning their responsibilities," a board member said.

"If the land is public reserve why should it be the total responsibility of the school board?" another member asked.

Mrs. Eleanor Townend suggested the board go ahead with construction but keep negotiating with the city.

Mr. Leslie said he was afraid the city wouldn't lend the money to the board until negotiations were closed and when asked if the door to

negotiations was completely closed, replied, "If it isn't I could barely see the crack."

He said he was afraid the school board had "been had" and stated it was his personal opinion that "city council had a sucker on the end of the line."

He said he doubted whether the city which says it cannot afford to build the road within this year's budget, would not have to borrow the money to lend to the school board but probably had it in its surplus.

Mr. Leslie said he had some reservations about paving for the road because it would be the total responsibility of the public school board. He suggested the city, county and separate schools had responsibilities in the road.

City Commissioner John Miedema was reluctant to go along with the project even to the extent of repairs to the road, he said.

"The city seems to have the concept that a road is not warranted unless it benefits the whole community," Mr. Leslie said.

"What road does?" Mrs. Townend said.

Mr. Leslie suggested the roadway could be used as a sporting area when it was not occupied by buses but another member said that the city expected the road to be open to the public.

Mr. Leslie replied that if the school board paid for it it would be for school use and the public could use it only when the school was not.

"I think it is within our capabilities to pay for it without jeopardizing

student activities," he said.

Superintendent of public schools Derek Taylor would not comment on the separate school board paying part of the cost and said he did not think the county should be asked to pay for city roads.

"They are contributing to the problem but I do not see why they should be asked to pay for roads in the city," he said.

The traffic congestion in the area of the two schools became a problem when the county complained to the school board about the congestion around the schools and the unsafe buses and about 1,300 students congregated in the area at the same time.

The complaint was followed by one from the city and then parents of students and residents in the area began to phone the school board about the unsafe conditions.

The road presently planned was part of the original school plan and it was given approval by the city, the board noted.

"But apparently that approval did not include paying for it," one board member remarked.

"We have many precedents in education but we don't want to set a precedent in road building," said Mr. Taylor.

The city had proposed that the board use a road design which would include a loop at the end of 105 St. behind the two schools but Mr. Leslie said the school board did not go for that idea because it would involve too much reorganization of classes within the schools.

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Same faces

The elected trustees of the Grande Prairie public school board were sworn in at a brief ceremony prior to yesterday's regular board meeting. Gord Percy (left) takes his oath from Provincial Court Judge Thomas Janakas. He was joined by other trustees Elinor Townend, Bill Leslie, Eric Jerrard and Dave Gibson. The separate school board trustees took their oath of office at their Monday meeting.

Same faces returned to public school board

Familiar faces were involved in the swearing-in ceremony last night at the meeting of the board of trustees of the Grande Prairie School District, with the same trustees from last year returning.

ning.

Trustees elected once again are Elinor Townend, Bill Leslie, Gord Percy, Dave Gibson and Eric Jerrard.

Election by the trustees of

the chairman of board for the 1977-1978 school term saw Bill Leslie elected chairman and Eric Jerrard vice-chairman.

Six committees are operated by the board of

trustees. Last night, trustees were appointed to head the committees with an assistant to help. They are as follows: Finances—Gord Percy and Bill Leslie; employment relations—Bill Leslie and Eric

Jerrard; curriculum—Elinor Townend and Gord Percy; building—Eric Jerrard and Dave Gibson; site planning—the entire board; liaison committee—Dave Gibson and Elinor Townend.

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Public schools face fire regulation costs

By DEBBIE GUSTAFSON
of our staff

Meeting fire regulations in city schools could cost the Grande Prairie public school board between \$25,000 and \$50,000, board chairman Bill Leslie says.

At a meeting last night, the school board reviewed extensive renovations required by the new regulations including possibly vacating the music facility (old Central

Park school) near Montrose junior high school.

The board decided to proceed with minor renovations to meet the standards, but decided to hold off on major work until it receives an order from the fire protection branch of the Alberta Labor department.

"The fire department has not been all that consistent with what it requests," said Mr. Leslie. "We want to wait

for some firm regulations so we can get some accurate cost estimates to request funding.

"We are hopeful the government will come up with some of the money we need."

Mr. Leslie remarked at the meeting that he had "just about had it with the continued changes in the regulations".

He explained the regulations seem to change each year, costing the board more and more money.

"We are as interested as

anybody in the safety of the buildings," he said. "But there comes a time when we have to consider educating the students."

Mr. Leslie added, "Our schools are not fire traps by any means and it is certainly not our intent to defy the regulations."

It is expected that orders for the regulations will be issued by February of next year.

Buildings and maintenance supervisor Max Lorenz repor-

ted the district is still trying to meet the regulations set last year. The main changes not yet made are at Montrose junior high school, where smoke and heat detectors are still needed.

Mr. Lorenz said the devices were ordered in July, but due to a high demand for them since the recent provincial regulations were passed, the detectors have not yet arrived.

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Fire regulators 'carried away'

There may be just a little too much zeal going into enforcement of fire regulations in Grande Prairie public schools, according to public school board chairman Bill Leslie.

"We may just be getting a bit carried away," he said yesterday.

While he said he was not criticizing the local fire department for recommending more than \$136,000 in repairs to meet safety standards, he questioned whether the fire regulations are enforced as strictly in other parts of the province.

"What is good for us should most certainly be good for other areas too," said Mr. Leslie, noting it appears some other districts in the province are not being hit quite as hard by the regulations.

The report for Grande Prairie schools calls for such measures as installation of solid core doors and wired glass.

Mr. Leslie said those measures may not be necessary because schools can be emptied very quickly at the sound of an alarm. He also pointed out Alberta has an excellent record of fire safety in schools.

There are about 70 recommendations in the fire report, covering all six schools in the district. The report is now being reviewed by the provincial fire commissioner's office.

Funding from the Department of Education through the Building Quality Restoration Program will pay 80 per cent of the cost of the recommendations.

City students may have to be juggled around to fit

By NEIL WHALEY
of our staff

Grande Prairie public school board chairman Bill Leslie said yesterday the district may juggle city student populations around until it can see whether Grande Prairie will continue to boom.

Meanwhile, schools superintendent Derek Taylor told a school board meeting he is concerned with

the high number of Grade 1 students which can be expected next year.

Mr. Leslie said planning for construction of another school may be necessary in 18 months if growth continues as it has been. For now, it may be best to differently divide grades taught at schools — perhaps Grades 1 to 5 in an elementary school or Grades 9 to 12 at the Composite high school according to

available space. Divisions now are Grades 1 - 6 elementary, Grades 7 - 9 junior high and Grades 10 - 12 senior high.

"We should have a better indication which way the city is going to go before we start building," he said.

Mr. Taylor gives figures showing the level to which schools are filled. The superintendent estimated the percentage varied from 69 per cent

at Montrose to 110 per cent at Parkside. Parkside is estimated at more than full because the district is borrowing a wing from the city's parks and recreation department.

The percentages are calculated by comparing a school's capacity, estimated by Alberta's Education department, with enrolment figures.

The average for all schools is 85 per cent and Mr. Taylor said

schools are considered full when they reach 90 or 95 per cent.

Avondale, Hillside, Swanavon and Parkside are above 90 per cent and the Composite high is at 82 per cent.

A breakdown of this year's enrolment figures show elementary school populations have increased, junior high numbers have declined and senior high figures have remained steady.

There are 300 children in kindergarten. Students starting Grade 1 this year number 286, even though there were only 230 kindergarten students last year.

City schools need a net increase of 200 students to reach 90 per cent capacity and 600 students to reach 100 per cent.

Keith Wagner, assistant schools superintendent, said elementary schools are already too crowded.

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Leslie still has things to do

Continuity is required on the Grande Prairie public school board to carry on projects started in the school district, board chairman Bill Leslie said today.

"I believe that this board has achieved a great deal," he said in a press release. "I also believe that continuity and experience are valuable ingredients of that success, this is why I am seeking re-election."

School trustee elections are part of Grande Prairie's civic elections Oct. 15.

"I have some unfinished business to complete," the 16-year-veteran school trustee said.

Mr. Leslie, 51, has been

chairman of the board for eight years.

"The last three years represents a period of time of which we can all be proud. Parents, students, teachers, administrators, and board members — we have all worked together toward an excellence in education that we have set as our standard", Mr. Leslie said.

Mr. Leslie said all have worked together to upgrade the programs and facilities of the district, introduced a five-year curriculum plan and committed the board to an extensive evaluation and assessment program to ensure that quality education is being offered. Also the board

has overseen the introduction of learning resource rooms to serve students with deficiencies in basic skill areas, as well as introducing daily physical education into the schools.

The board has increased its efforts to meet the needs of "special" children through the QUEST, special education and SOAR programs. He said the school district is a provincially recognized leader in these fields.

"Over the next three years we will be extending our programs to include computer literacy and technology and the introduction of French into elementary schools, Mr. Leslie said. "We will continue

to assess and strengthen the "three R's" in our elementary and junior high schools. We will continue to look at alternative approaches to education along with our studies of the (Grade) 1 - 9 concept introduced at Alexander Forbes school".

Mr. Leslie said the board still faces questions related to excess high school classroom space and limited junior and elementary classroom space plus changing community housing patterns.

He said the board shall continue to explore with Alberta Education the possibility of removing junior high students from the downtown area.

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GP gets special centre for children

By ELAINE DOGHERTY
of our staff

Construction of a new Child Development Centre in Grande Prairie, expected to cost in the neighborhood of \$2.5 million, has been given the go-ahead by the Alberta education minister.

Grande Prairie will be the first city in the province and possibly the first in Canada with an up-to-date facility specifically designed to meet the needs of multiply-handicapped students, public school board chairman Bill Leslie said in making the announcement to the board meeting last night.

"The recent meeting between Education Minister David King and Mr. Taylor (Grande Prairie public board superintendent) and myself was a very positive meeting," Mr. Leslie said. "A lot of details have to be worked out and this must be done carefully as this centre will be the showplace of the province."

As part of the conditions for the province building the centre, the school board must supply the land. A parcel of land west of 105 St. behind the Youth Assessment Centre (on

108 Ave. near the Highway 2 Bypass) has been set aside for the building, Mr. Leslie said.

"Our first step is to find an existing school that provides similar services to what Grande Prairie hopes to provide," Mr. Leslie said. Board representatives and an architect will visit and study this school.

The board will probably have to search out an American school as none are known of in Canada, he said.

The second stage involves blueprints and cost estimates.

"Most of the winter will be used for planning," said the board chairman. "We hope construction will get underway next spring."

The school will be designed as a regional school with capacity for 50 students.

"We (Grande Prairie board administration and Mr. King) also talked about a group home here to house the out-of-town students," Mr. Leslie said. "...it will be arranged that social services be responsible for the operation of the home."

Mr. Taylor told the board that the school will be set up for children aged from about three years to 18 or 19.

"The minister said there

was a danger if there was no age limit that the school would be filled with a high percentage of long-term incurable students. It was felt that after they were 18 or 19 they are no longer the responsibility of the Department of Education," said Mr. Taylor.

The 2,790-square-metre (30,000-square-foot) building is expected to cost \$2-2.5 million, Mr. Leslie said.

The existing Child Development Centre is located in the old family court building at 10807-101 St. Twenty-five students from the region attend the facility that has been in operation for five years.

Facilities are inadequate in the old building which lacks most of the specialized equipment helpful in educating these children.

"It just isn't a good facility for these kids," Mr. Leslie added.

Mr. Leslie said he is sure the new centre will become a model for this type of school in the province.

Christian school on hold

By ELAINE DOGHERTY
of our staff

A fact-finding committee will be set up by the city public school board to determine if the public wants an alternative school in Grande Prairie and what kind of school that would be.

Board chairman Bill Leslie said last night he is hesitant to solely pursue a proposal for an alternate Christian school — first presented at a meeting two weeks ago — without looking at other avenues first.

"I have some hesitation about going any further with this now," said Mr.

Leslie. "It's like putting the cart before the horse."

"I think we should do a little more water-testing first. I would hate to only look at the one proposal that's in front of us."

"The group (the Grande Prairie Society for Christian Education) pursuing this has an existing school (a Christian school that operates out of Bethel Baptist Church) and it may not be the alternative they are looking for."

The group working to set up the school, headed by teachers Merle Bradley and Art Poettcker and Christian Education Society members Jake

Penner and Gordon Meyers, is interested in setting up a school with a philosophy of education that would be God-centred as opposed to the man-centred system they see in the present school system.

The stated aim of the group is to "educate the mind, to train the will and to encourage the talents unique to each student so as to best prepare the total person for service to God, to the family, to the church and to the community in the context of modern society."

"I feel that those people that presented the ideas shouldn't influence

us unduly at this point," Mr. Leslie told the board. "They represent only a small group of people now."

"I think we should see if the public is interested in any kind of alternative school."

Deputy-superintendent Keith Wagner said setting up a Christian school or fine arts school or any kind of alternative school under the public system would be inconsistent with the community school concept where the community becomes the special interest group.

"It's unfortunate we are looking at this at the same time as we are getting Hillside set up as a community school," board member Betty McArthur said. "It would be nice to give them (Hillside) a few years to get off their feet first."

Trustee Gordon Percy said the board's first task should be inform themselves about the various alternative schools in existence.

HOMEWORK FIRST

"We should do our homework first before we involve the community," Mr. Percy said.

Mr. Leslie recommended that the board administration draw up references for a fact-finding committee.

"We can become as informed as we want but we have to find out what the community wants before we get too set on what we think the community wants," he said.

"We have to see what kind of school is most in demand. The school proposal that has been presented to us seems to include a significant amount of bible education."

"The kids would come out of it knowing a fair amount about the bible but I was thinking it would be a school where Christian principals were taught and it would be more strict with a high standard of academic excellence."

Mrs. McArthur said "their (Penner, Poettcker, Meyers and Bradley) proposal is pretty narrow and fundamentalist."

"We'll leave it in the hands of the administration then to do some soul-searching to find the best method for collecting information," Mr. Leslie said.

GP in 1958 was 'comfortable'

By ELAINE DOGHERTY
of our staff

Bill Leslie has more than 25 years of experience in varied aspects of Grande Prairie's business community and 20 years of involvement with the public school board.

"In 1958 I was running Leslie's Car Court and Leslie's Dairy Drive-Inn where the Bamboo is now. Then in the fall of 1958 I began setting up the new IGA which stood where the Ranch House is now.

"Grande Prairie was a very comfortable place to be in 1958. Everybody knew everybody and it had a real small-town atmosphere. It was just very pleasant," said Mr. Leslie.

Mr. Leslie and his wife Jean bought a house near Avondale school just north of 108 Ave.

"When we moved into the house in '57 there were only a half-dozen houses north of 108. In the spring, water from the fields would just pour down the street and into the driveway. There weren't any drainage systems then.

LOTS OF MUD

"There sure was a lot of mud around in those days. The main street was paved but at times you wouldn't even know it, it was so covered with mud."

Mr. Leslie ran the IGA for 12 years after it opened in the spring of 1959. He then set up Leslie's Travel which he operated from 1970-74 and sold real estate for Blackett and Galway until 1976.

Mr. Leslie became a shareholder in Roblyn's Travel until 1981 and he now runs Fairview Travel in Fairview.

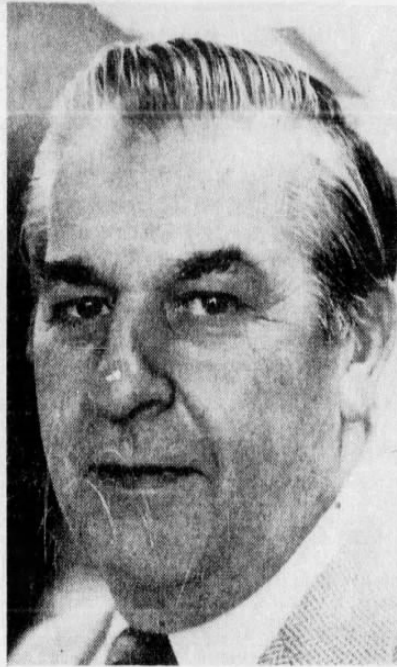
"Fun used to be visiting our circle of friends, playing all sorts of games in the winter and picnicking and taking short camping trips in the summer.

"The camping wasn't as crowded then but it's really not bad up here yet anyway.

"We seemed to do a lot more reading then too. We didn't have TV then and it sure wasn't something we needed."

Mr. Leslie became a trustee on the public school board 20 years ago and it's been an important part of his life ever since.

"I've sure seen tremendous changes in Grande Prairie schools over the years. When I started there was Avondale, Swanavon, Montrose Elementary and Junior High, Central Park High and they were just opening the Grande Prairie



Bill Leslie

Vocational and Technical School that's now the Comp.

"Since then we've made two additions to the high school, added to Avondale, built Parkside, Forbes, put an addition onto Swanavon, tore down Montrose Elementary and the old high school. That's not bad for 20 years."

During his first year as a trustee the board had a budget of less than \$1 million while the 1982 budget was up in the area of \$14 million.

Speaking with pride, Mr. Leslie said the board has always had the reputation of being an innovative school board.

"We've had a lot of good locally-developed programs, teaching aids and materials. We've also made a lot of advances with kids with learning disabilities and the handicapped."

The board is currently building a Kindergarten to Grade 9 school integrated with a school for the handicapped that will be one of a kind in Canada.

"This has been a difficult project. A lot of negotiations went into getting this school," he added.

"Working with the school board has been very important to me and very satisfying. I've been fortunate to be involved with a district that has received recognition. It's really a credit to the teachers and to the administration.

"The board just receives the ideas and I guess we've been receptive."



Public school board trustees were sworn into office yesterday by school superintendent Derek Taylor (left). The victors in last week's civic election were Gordon Pearcy (second from left),

Bill Leslie, Eric Jerrard, Betty McArthur and Tom Zasadny. Mr. Leslie was later elected board chairman.

For 11th year

Leslie back as board leader

By BRENDA BROCHU
of our staff

Bill Leslie is back at the helm of the Grande Prairie public school board as he enters his 19th year on the board and his 11th year as chairman.

He was re-elected to the position last night by acclamation at the first school board meeting since the Oct. 17 civic election.

Mr. Leslie told reporters he wanted to remain in the chair for another year to see the construction of Crystal Park school through to completion. However, he plans to give up the chair next fall.

Elected vice-chairman and defeating incumbent Eric Jerrard was 12-year board veteran Gordon Pearcy.

Three trustees will make up the new finance committee and two of these will be responsible for collective bargaining. The committee will be comprised of Mr. Leslie (chairman), Mr. Pearcy and newly-elected trustee Tom Zasadny.

The employee liaison committee will be comprised of Mr. Jerrard (chairman) and Betty McArthur; the curriculum/pupil personnel committee of Mrs. McArthur (chairman) and Mr. Leslie; the land, buildings and

transportation committee of Mr. Pearcy (chairman) and Mr. Zasadny; the external liaison committee of Mrs. McArthur (chairman) and Mr. Pearcy and the city liaison committee of Mr. Leslie (chairman) and Mr. Jerrard.

The SCORES (Standing Committee On Recreation and Educational Services) representative will be Mr. Leslie.

Mr. Leslie said he has approached newly-elected Mayor Oscar Blais and suggested a get-acquainted session for city council members and the members of the two city school boards.

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Crystal Park school a showpiece among its kind

By DAVID OLINGER
of our staff

When the \$15.3 million Crystal Park school opens Wednesday in Grande Prairie for classes, it will mark the unveiling of a showpiece among facilities of its kind.

Located at 9351-116 Ave., it is the only school in Canada which will integrate regular and special needs students on a wide scale.

The 114,000 square-foot building will accommodate 420 kindergarten to Grade 9 students this year and 80-85 special needs pupils.

Public school board chairman Bill Leslie, a driving force behind the project, said the school is modelled after a facility in Modesto, Calif.

Members of the board toured that school and nine others in the western U.S. during a fact-finding mission. The best points from each were used in the design of Crystal Park school.

One of these details was to build the school four times bigger than currently needed. Mr. Leslie said the schools the board toured were all built for twice their population and are now over capacity.

In terms of space, 60 per cent has been allotted for special needs and handicapped students and 40 per cent for regular students.

At present, though, the school has reached its limit for regular students.

LARGE STAFF

Crystal Park School will have 76 staff members, not including a five-member assessment team which will evaluate all special needs students.

Most of the staff for the school came from within the jurisdiction while 11 from outside were hired for such specialties as speech therapy.

A prosthesis technician will also be available to make adjustments to artificial limbs and design appliances.

John Schoepf has moved from the central office to become principal.

The school was built with the handicapped population in mind while at the same time catering to the integration plan — even the playground equipment is designed for both handicapped and regular students.

In the courtyard at the centre of the school, there is a set of stairs and an elevator device for handicapped students to get up to the balcony.

"They (the handicapped) have been looking up to people all their lives. This (the elevator) is a chance

for them to look down over the world," said Mr. Leslie.

In addition to the usual classrooms and facilities for regular students, the school will offer occupational therapy, physiotherapy, audiology and speech pathology, an area for learning gross motor skills and a home skills area.

The home skills area includes a kitchen, laundry room, dining room and bedroom so students can learn how to function in those areas.

There are also three swimming pools — a regular pool, a pool for therapy and a babies pool.

Other features of the school include special doors for the handicapped, a wheelchair storage facility complete with a shower to clean the units, a couple of time out rooms, observation windows and greenhouse areas.

The courtyard area features benches, numerous plants and a fountain which flows into a pool containing fish.

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

The cost of the building itself was \$13.8 million but another \$1.5 million in special equipment was added.

Surrounding the school is a six-acre grassed playground area. Beyond that is a 16-acre area which the city and the public board are developing. Features of this area will be a ball diamond and an outdoor rink.

Total cost for that project will be \$240,000 and completion is expected to take place next spring.

Aside from all the shiny new facilities and special equipment, Mr. Leslie said another highlight of Crystal Park has to be the growth that will take place on the part of the regular students as they learn to understand the handicapped students.

"They will realize that the handicapped students need the same things to fulfill their growth," he said.

The public board has operated programs out of temporary facilities for the past 11 years.

Board vice-chairman Gordon Pearcey said the school is a result of the board taking the initiative in programming for the handicapped.

The district had operated the program out of the old family court building which became too small for the needs of an ever-expanding program.

"The minister changed his mind once he saw what the program was being offered out of. The kids sold him on it," said Mr. Pearcey.

The board received approval to go ahead with the



Crystal Park school has been decorated with several murals by local artists. Original paintings were done then transferred by computer onto carpet. The picture was done by Norma Larson, with local children involved. From left in this large mural are Owen Borstad, Jenny Billek, Noel Borstad, Nancy Billek and Jennifer Sherman.

school five years ago and construction has been going on since November 1982.

An official opening ceremony will take place some time in October with Premier Lougheed and Education Minister David King on hand.

Mr. Leslie said they have had people visit the school from the U.S., B.C. and other parts of Alberta but no plans have been made for official tours yet.

"That's a problem that hasn't been solved yet," he said.

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Cost-cutting delays Comp. job

Herald-Tribune staff

Cost-paring on a renovation/modernization project at the Composite High School may delay a start on the job until December.

City public school board member Bill Leslie told fellow trustees last night the architectural firm of Field, Field & Field will go over drawings this week to see if any cuts can be made to reduce costs.

School system officials met with the provincial school buildings branch in Edmonton last week and received a "sympathetic response"

to a request for futher funding for the project, Leslie said.

He said Alberta Education officials have agreed to work with the board on the project.

Once the architect has seen if anything can be left out Alberta Education officials will come up and see how much further funding might be applied to the project, said Leslie.

Last week, the the board rejected all four tenders it received. They ranged from \$10.7 million to \$11.6 million. Original estimates called for the project to cost \$6.9 million of

which Alberta Education was to provide \$5.5 milllion.

The project was to be done in three phases and be completed by summer 1987. Leslie is hoping the project will still be completed in 1987.

Work was originally slated to get underway this summer.

There are already some ideas on how to reduce costs.

For example, said Leslie, there were some things that would have been nice to have such as projection screens for every room.

"We can continue to use portable

screens. Cuts like this would have no effect on the delivery of education services."

Leslie said there was some indication from Alberta Education that it would be prepared to fund further items. For example, he added, there is going to be some heavy demolition in certain areas. That might be classified under new construction instead of modernization.

"We'll make it, but it's going to take time."

The Comp was built in the early 1960s.

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Key role of Human Rights Commission is education

Grande Prairie low turnout may be positive

By DAVID HOWELL
Herald-Tribune staff

An Alberta Human Rights Commission public forum in Grande Prairie this week attracted only five people.

But Bill Leslie of Grande Prairie and Stan Scudders of Edmonton, both of whom sit on the seven-member commission, say the low turnout may indicate good things about the area.

Leslie and Scudders hosted the forum at Grande Prairie Regional College.

"One of the large roles the commission plays is as educators," Leslie said.

"I guess we're a little bit disappointed about the people who didn't show up, but we're pleased some people did show up."

"Generally we don't expect we're going to get a great turnout," said Scudders. "We just want to show we're there."

Leslie said the Grande Prairie area does not normally generate many human rights complaints.

"Grande Prairie as a community is very receptive to minorities. There certainly are some (minorities) here and if there is discrimination I know nothing about it."

"If we were to have complaints in Grande Prairie they would probably be in the order of sexual harassment," said Scudders.

Discrimination on sexual grounds is the most common type of complaint received by the commission province-wide.

All seven human rights commissioners are currently on a speaking tour.

A series of public forums is designed to educate Albertans about recent amendments to the province's Individual's Rights Protection Act (IRPA).

Leslie and Scudders explained the workings of the commission, which is responsible for the administration of the act.

The commission is charged with educating the public about its own operations, the provisions of the act, and about human rights issues in general. It also investigates complaints of alleged discrimination lodged under IRPA.

Amendments to the act, passed in the legislature June 5, include provisions for protection against job dismissal because of pregnancy.

"The amendment comes about because up to now, the only protection women had came through their collective agreement, if they had a collective agreement, or through the employment standards act, which says women are entitled to 18 weeks maternity leave," said Scudders.

"The only problem with that is that they had to have worked a year. Women who had worked less than a year and became pregnant, the employer could simply dismiss them, but not now. If they are able to do the job they were hired to do they can remain working until they are no longer able to do so."

Another amendment has been the replacement of the term 'bona fide occupational qualification' to 'bona fide occupational requirement'. The new term places emphasis on the special requirements of the job rather than the special qualifications of the employee.

Also in the amended IRPA, the term 'age' has been amended. The act now protects people age 18 and older from job discrimination based on age. Previously it only helped those between 40 and 65 years.

"It was felt basically we were trying to protect people having trouble getting jobs," said Scudders. The act now complies with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, he said.

Two people who attended the meeting were Composite high school teachers Phil Barber and Campbell Ross.

"I think we've got a better idea of what the amendments are," Ross said after the meeting.

"Human rights is one of the units in Social Studies 10, the last compulsory social studies course high school students take."

\$400,000 more given for Comp renovations

Herald-Tribune staff

Alberta Education will add another \$400,000 to its support for the public school district's massive renovation and modernization project at the Composite High School.

Bill Leslie, building committee chairman, said this week the department re-assessed the project at the district's request and found further funding was available.

Government funding for the project now stands at \$7,824,930.

The project has a construction budget of \$8.5 million and the board expects the total project to cost about \$9.1 million.

District officials will be taking revised plans to the school buildings branch on Thursday for approval. Tenders are to open the following day.

The opening of tenders was put off from this week because of a problem getting plans printed on time, Leslie said.

"There was no use going to tender until we had plans."

When school buildings branch officials view the plans next week there will about \$1.5 million worth of changes since the the last set of plans.

Leslie said all extensions to the mezzanines at the school were dropped and that accounted for most of the

\$1.5 million that was axed.

All the millwork, painting, door systems and hardware were modified as well, Leslie said.

"With all the cuts we should be able to make the budget now, said Leslie.

When tenders were let earlier this year all came in over the \$10 million mark.

Program will die without support

By DAVID OLINGER
Herald-Tribune staff

Public school trustees were urged by a delegation of parents last night to continue their financial support for the community school program at Hillside school.

Members of the delegation asked the school board to write letters of support for the program to Premier Don Getty and Education Minister Nancy Betkowski and continue to cast share the program with the province.

Come September, provincial community school funding will be chopped in half and Marge Riley, past chairman of the Hillside advisory committee, said without the school board financial support the program will go under.

"If the funding disappears, so does the program," she said.

Provincial funding for the school totalled roughly \$72,000 this year while the school board chipped in another \$30,000.

With the provincial cut, the school district would be required to put in a minimum of \$15,000 for the school to be eligible for provincial funding.

Virtually all the community school money pays the salaries of community school staff.

"We do not want to say goodbye to our co-ordinators and secretary," Marion Morrison, current chairman of the advisory council, told trustees. "They are the people who make the community school system happen. Together with them, the staff, students, and community strive to do our best to fulfil the community school charter."

School administration and the council are already preparing to function with less money, she said.

"We'll strive to economize and we'll volunteer more, but please leave us the foundation on which to continue to build the community school concept," Morrison urged trustees. "We feel it is economically sound that the taxpayers who support our school benefit from the use of the school. It is imperative in this economic downslide that we keep the concept alive. So other schools can benefit in the future, the program which you encouraged must remain in place."

Morrison said if funding for the community school is discontinued the concept might stay around two years.

But then teachers and volunteers would suffer burnout without the co-ordinators, she added.

In the past school year volunteers contributed roughly 3,900 hours to the school.

"The place is just buzzing with moms, dads and grandparents," Riley said. "But there needs to be co-ordination to pull it all together."

Morrison told trustees the idea of charging adult groups has been suggested to help offset the loss of funding.

Some community groups have indicated they could afford a fee for using the facility, she said.

"But some groups aren't making any money," said Morrison. "Where are they going to get the money?"

Board vice-chairman Bill Leslie told the parents trustees are aware of the community school program's value.

"My assurance to you is you are a very important part of the system," Leslie told the delegation. "But I'm not going to make any promises. . . You will get fair and just consideration (in budget deliberations). If we have the opportunity to provide you with sufficient money to allow you to scrape through, we'll be the happiest people in the world."

However, he explained, the board has to look at the coming years and funding prospects are not looking good.

"It would really be a step backwards if the program quits," Leslie said.

Public board shoots down smoking draft policy

By DAVID OLINGER
Herald-Tribune staff

Public school trustees last night shot down a draft policy which called for an all-out smoking ban in schools by next September.

Instead, they amended it to say the district will work toward a ban by 1990 through such moves as sponsoring programs to help teachers quit smoking.

The revision will go to the teacher-trustee liaison committee next week.

Board vice-chairman Bill Leslie, who along with trustee Eric Jerrard voted against the amended policy, said he could not support a total ban.

"You're dealing with a habit here that up to a short time ago was an acceptable habit," said Leslie, one of four smokers on the board. "I just feel it is unfair to impose that hardship of being denied a habit that was acceptable a short time ago."

"I understand the other side's rights. I try personally to respect the rights of others. All I want to do is show the same respect for somebody that smokes as somebody who doesn't. I want a balance."

Trustee Tom Zasadny, who initiated action on a no-smoking policy, said the board has to make a start.

He said government buildings are sup-

posed to be smoke-free by the end of 1988.

"At Hillside school only three of 25 staff smoke," said Zasadny.

But Jerrard, also a smoker, said a total ban is unfair and called for designated smoking areas.

"It (a total ban) is a great infringement," said Jerrard. "It's like me telling you that you can't put ketchup on your steak, Tom."

"I think a lot of teachers are just waiting for the word to come down," Zasadny replied.

But Leslie had a different view.

"I think some of our employees will be forced to change their jobs if they are not successful in kicking the habit," said Leslie.

"I've heard the board labor for hours to protect one employee (who is facing an unfair situation) then all of a sudden we change a policy which will affect a significant amount of people."

"It's unfair. You're willing to write off the smoker."

But chairman Gordon Pearcy countered the idea is to help teachers quit smoking by sponsoring programs to aid them in their effort.

Superintendent Derek Taylor, who drafted the policy, said the amended policy would show the board is taking a stand and yet allow more time for teachers to quit smoking.

"Obviously it (the draft policy) was too tough and too hard at this time," said Taylor.

Leslie wondered if that meant the district would be hiring only non-smoking teachers in the meantime to help ensure there are no smokers.

"(If that's the case) we'll have you before the human rights commission for discriminatory hiring practices," Leslie said.

Leslie is a member of the Alberta Human Rights Commission.

Taylor said smoking by teachers is not currently a major issue, but added the school board needs to adopt a policy before it does become one.

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BILL LESLIE

Leslie resigns

Herald-Tribune staff

After 24 years of service to the Grande Prairie Public School Board, Bill Leslie tendered his resignation at last night's meeting.

Leslie, who cited personal and business reasons for his resignation, said, "it is difficult to leave something that has brought me so much enjoyment."

The city businessman first joined the board in 1964 and has, with the exception of the 1968-1969 term, served continuously.

During his tenure on the board, Leslie served as chairman and more recently as vice-chairman.

He stepped down from the vice-chairman's position at the Oct. 25 board meeting.

Leslie also serves on the Alberta Human Rights Commission, has served on the Jubilee Insurance board and was an executive on the Alberta School Trustees Association.

The board will not hold a byelection to replace the seat vacated by Leslie but will operate for the rest of the year with only four members, said Mazer.

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Leslie: always realistic

By SUZANNE LUNDRIGAN
Herald-Tribune staff

Bill Leslie has spent almost half his life sitting on Grande Prairie's public school board.

But last Tuesday the 59-year-old Leslie walked away from his 23-year-old seat at the board table to become a district employee.

Leslie, who has worked closely on the construction of other district schools, has been hired by the district to oversee the building of the new Country Club Estates school.

His mission: to get the delay-plagued project back on schedule. The district experienced a surprise population influx this year and they are cautiously predicting another increase next year. Now more than ever they need the new school.

But Leslie, always realistic, isn't making any promises about getting the school done for the September target date.

"It will be very difficult but we will try our best," he said. "We have been working down there for two or three weeks now and we should have the foundation in by Christmas."

As he embarks on what will likely be his last project for the district, Leslie hearkens back to the building of another district school — Crystal Park — as the highlight of his board career.

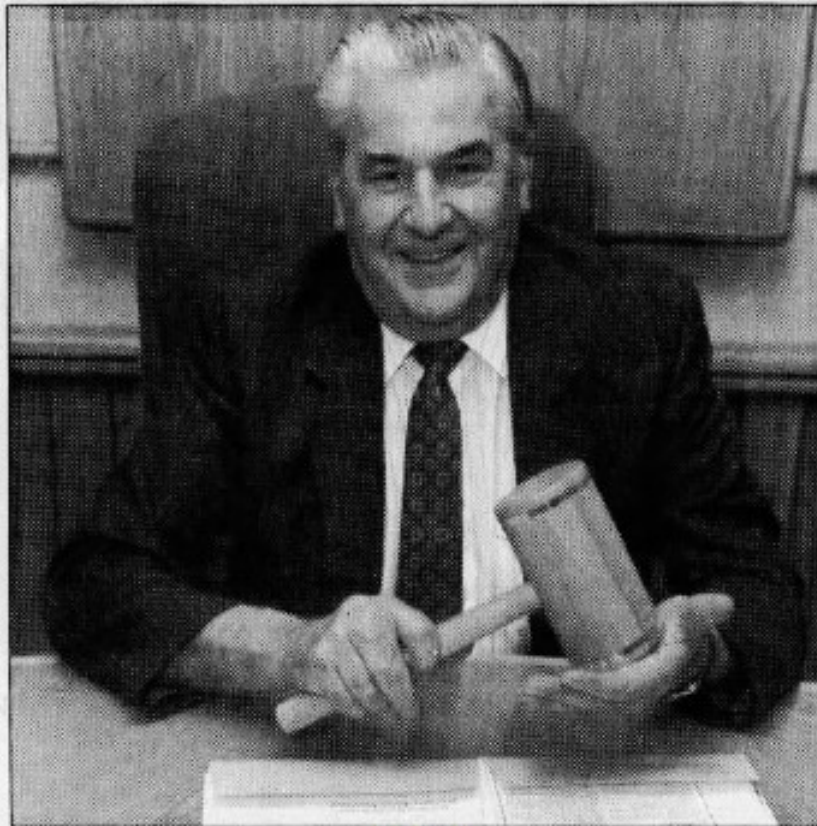
Crystal Park School, which integrates disabled students with able students, was recently named a "lighthouse school" by Classroom Magazine.

A fact Leslie is very proud of.

But even as he discusses his pet project, Leslie's tendency to look at the other side of the coin surfaces.

"I have a soft spot for people who have problems — with the less fortunate side of things — but I'll admit that for the disabled and handicapped we seem to be trying to maybe go a little too far," he says.

Of his record for posing the tough



BILL LESLIE

Staff Photo by Rick Rycroft

questions, Leslie says, "It doesn't hurt a trustee to come down on the unpopular side of an issue. I don't think being forthright is a bad thing."

In his role as a questioner, Leslie has asked a lot of tough questions and raised a lot of sticky issues over the years.

Though he admits he tends to "see in black and white," Leslie says he is always open to the alternatives his fellow board members advance to his stated views.

"People do know it's not as if I'm inflexible. People can change my mind," said Leslie. "I say, 'Hey convince me that you are right'."

After 23 years, Leslie says he has learned that change does come... but slowly.

"The first meeting I went to I thought that I'd change something but I found out that everybody that went before were not absolutely

stupid and there were reasons behind what they did," said Leslie.

Change has occurred during Leslie's tenure and he is proud of it.

"We did change the district from being an everyday district," said Leslie.

Once the Country Club Estates school is complete, Leslie hopes to clear the decks. His four-year term on the Alberta Human Rights Commission ended recently and he has been freeing up as much time as he can.

"I'm looking forward to heading to warmer climes in winter time," said Leslie.

He leaves office extending an invitation to other Grande Prairie residents.

"I encourage anybody particularly the generation that has young kids, they should get involved," he said.

Bye-bye Bill

Leslie was hard-nosed trustee

By **STEPHEN FLETCHER**
Herald-Tribune staff

Bill **Leslie**, a 24-year veteran of the Grande Prairie school board, was given a cheery send-off by friends and colleagues at a retirement party last week.

The hard-nosed trustee was roasted for his driving habits and his strong stance on district issues over the years, but he was also acknowledged as a strong believer in the school system and as an advocate for further growth in the Grande Prairie district.

School board chairman Gordon Percy called the creation of Crystal Park School the "pinnacle" of **Leslie's** achievements as a trustee, saying his "strong determination" was instrumental in the school's formation.

Percy also noted that **Leslie** always showed a commitment to practical education and was a "great believer" in both administration and the teaching profession during his years on the board.

Fellow trustee Doreen Lakusta lauded his abilities as a board member and said he would be missed.

Although she was initially "intimidated" by the burly trustee, he eventually "treated me as one of the boys," joked Lakusta.

Eric Jerrard, a board trustee for 18 years, said **Leslie** was a great teacher for less experienced trustees. Although **Leslie** often appeared to be "running the show," Jerrard soon realized that "Bill was teaching me. . . he said you don't let your own personal biases get involved. . . he taught me a lot."



BILL LESLIE

Leslie "was widely known across the province and very widely respected," said Alberta Education's Fred Reinhold. Calling **Leslie** "aggressive" and a superb negotiator, he said the retired trustee "has been good for the children of Grande Prairie."

School superintendent Derek Taylor added that **Leslie** should be bestowed with a B.Ed because "he is one of the sincerest educators."

Leslie said he considered himself fortunate to serve as a trustee for nearly a quarter of a century.

"In 24 years, I've seen 19 trustees. . . all were very dedicated people," he said.

He added that, sitting on the board of trustees was the single stabilizing factor in a career that included a variety of business ventures.

Leslie family Pioneers of Month

By PAULA BOWERING
Herald-Tribune staff

It might be a little worn but it's still more than just an old coat.

To Bill Leslie, the jacket his father Edward bought from a native during his first trek over the Edson Trail in 1910 is a connection with the past - a sentimental attachment to the pioneer days and the pioneer spirit.

Leslie's father was one of the first pioneers in the Peace Region. In 1912, Edward came with a team of horses, a wagon, his father Thomas and his two brothers - Norman and Bruce. They filed on homesteads east of Grande Prairie and the area, Glen Leslie, was named after them.

This weekend they will be named pioneer family of the month at the Pioneer Museum. A display of mementos, including the special jacket, will be set up for public viewing.

In the early days the Leslie home was the hub of the district. It was a stopping place for travellers and a boarding home for teachers. The first post office was opened there in 1914 and run by Bill's grandparents Thomas and Margaret. The first church services were also held there.

In 1921 Edward married Dorothy Morrison. They met by



Photo by CHRISTINE VANZELLA

Nathan Leslie (left), Christopher Leslie, Rhonda Leslie, Bill Leslie and Jean Rooney show off jacket Edward Leslie bought from natives in 1910.

chance when Dorothy's family, who came to Grande Prairie in 1918, were on their way to see the Bezanson store, which they had just bought. They were travelling by car and got stuck - it was Edward who pulled them out.

When Norman was returning

from enlisted duty overseas in 1919 he was picked up by the Morrisons, who were heading into Grande Prairie to meet with the Bryenton family. It was then that Norman met Dorothy's cousin Gladys Bryenton, whom he married in 1923.

It was only these two brothers

who remained in the Peace Country. Bruce, Thomas and Margaret returned to Ontario where the family originated.

Members of the Leslie family will attend the display opening 2-4 p.m. Sunday at the Pioneer Museum.

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THE LESLIES:

Highland Games' Clan of the Day has long history in Grande Prairie area

Herald-Tribune staff

The **Leslie** family motto of Grip Fast may be good advice for those who wind up in the caber toss at the Grande Prairie Highland Games this weekend.

The Leslies are clan of the day in the ninth year of the Games, which get underway at Muskoseepi Park this Saturday.

They will be honored at the official opening of the Games. The Games are a day-long festival recognizing Scottish traditions.

Besides traditional Scottish dancing, there will be events such as stock dog trials, piping competitions, hammer throwing and skilnet tossing.

Bill **Leslie** was born and raised in Grande Prairie.

"It is an honor for the family to be recognized," he said.

"The fact my father was one of the original homesteaders, it's kind of nice to have recognition."

Leslie has been actively involved in the community for many years. He spent almost a quarter century on the Grande Prairie Public School Board, including eight years as chairman.

He joined British American Oil,



This early-1990s photo shows Jean (left front), Kenneth Keith and Bill **Leslie** and Norman (back left), Gladys, Tom, with Marion on his knee, Margaret and Dorothy **Leslie**, with Tom on her knee, and Edward **Leslie**.

owned by his father Edward **Leslie**, as a bulk agent in 1948. He later ran a motel called **Leslie** Auto Court with his mother, Dorothy Morrison, before opening the local IGA in 1959. He stayed there until 1970 when he ran travel agents first in Grande Prairie and then Fairview. He is now semi-retired.

His wife, Jean, was a nurse for 20

years before retiring.

The Leslies have a long history in Canada and the Peace Country.

William and Isabella Campbell of Morayshire, Scotland immigrated to Canada in the early 1830s, settling in Ontario.

In 1913, one of William and Isabella's grandchildren, Thomas **Leslie**, and wife

Margaret sold the family farm in Ontario and made the long, tough trip to the Grande Prairie area to join sons Edward and Norman.

Taking up homesteads about 20 kilometres east of Grande Prairie, the family eventually applied for a post office, which was called Glen **Leslie**.

In those days, there was no church so they held services in their home until a church was built. It also acted as a school house for many years.

Ed continued farming in the area, marrying Dorothy Morrison in 1921. The pair moved to Grande Prairie six years later to work in her parent's general store.

The following year they returned to Glen **Leslie** to operate a store built by Dorothy's father on a corner of the family farm.

They stayed there until 1945 when Ed bought the British American bulk plant in Grande Prairie. He died of cancer in 1948.

Ed had five children: Margaret Edith, who died after seven days; William (Bill); Marion; and Thomas (Tom).

Bill and Jean still live in Grande Prairie, as does son Robert and his wife Maureen.

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