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# Drayton Valley resident advocates to stop demolition plans of former H.W. Pickup School

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H. W. Pickup Middle School (Harold Lowe)

With students from H.W. Pickup Middle School now attending classes at the new Powerhouse campus in the town of Drayton Valley, some residents are raising concerns about the old school building, and the future of the site it's located on.

Mainly because the old school, isn't old at all. It was built in 2010.

Long-term Drayton Valley resident Kelly Dressler says he believes there is plenty of potential to convert the

enrollment and utilization rates, adding that government funding is on a per student basis, not by square footage of school space.

In 2020, the government announced funding for the replacement and demolition of H. W. Pickup Middle School, to be combined with the students of DCS. Both would be demolished.

As of January 2024, the Drayton Valley Christian School, for K-9 students, and [H.W. Pickup Middle School](#), for Grade 5-8 students, have moved into the new Powerhouse Campus.

## REPURPOSE BUILDING

Dressler, an industry professional in fluid and waste materials management, believes the H. W. Pickup School building can be repaired and repurposed.

"I would see the upscale of this building being used as a detox centre for west central Alberta, combined with a number of different facets," he said. "A trades training area or school for people that are the working poor, the man who can buy food for his family, but he can't buy a car; he can buy food for his family, but he can't afford a home. It restores their self-esteem and gives them a re-launch. It's not a hand-out, it's a hand-up."

Wild Rose School Division Deputy Superintendent Greg Wedman says the school was scheduled for demolition due to several issues, primarily due to the soil.

Brendan Procé, Director of Communications for Alberta Infrastructure, said new publicly funded schools are designed for a 75-year lifespan; but the former H.W. Pickup School building was built by the Wildrose School Division.

Neither Wedman nor Procé would elaborate on what those issues were though.

Dressler says when he reached out to the Division for the soil report, he was met with resistance.

Wedman says the geotechnical report is only available through proper channels such as a Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) request. However, Dressler notes this process will take too long as the demolition is scheduled for this Spring.

Dressler raised concerns about the lack of fiscal responsibility, claiming structural materials like windows, and other objects like monitors and LED lights, were crushed during demolition of the Eldorado school building.

"That's your and my tax dollars that they're burning," he said.

When asked about salvage recovery efforts, Wedman says the Division took a number of steps to salvage items not taken to the new campus.

"First, other schools within WRSD were able to salvage items that they could use at their schools. We also worked with Black Gold School Division to allow them to salvage items.

"We also opened up both the HW Pickup and Eldorado buildings for staff to salvage 'loose items', meaning items that were not attached to the building. WRSD facilities also removed fixed and mechanical items that

“We’re unable to speculate on hypothetical actions against the project. We remain committed to completing the project as planned,” he said.

Once the school is demolished, the site will be turned over to the Town. The Town said they are unable to provide comment on the land’s dollar value and future plans.

*BigWestCounty reached out to Alberta Education, Krawford Construction regarding demolition, and Group 2 Architecture and Marshall-Lee Construction Corp regarding the H.W. Pickup School project. All did not respond back in time for publishing.*

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