



**The Board of Education of
School District No. 83 (North Okanagan-Shuswap)**

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December 19, 2017

The Honourable Rob Fleming, Minister of Education
Room 124 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

VIA EMAIL

Dear Minister Fleming:

RE: REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON TRUSTEE VARIANCE OPTIONS

I recommend that the Minister establish a **five-member Board of Education** for School District No. 83 (North Okanagan-Shuswap) commencing with the election of October 2018. I further recommend that the electoral regions/wards be organized as follows:

- North Shuswap/Sorrento/Carlin: 1 trustee
- Salmon Arm: 2 trustees
- Sicamous/Malakwa/Enderby/Grindrod: 1 trustee
- Armstrong/Spallumcheen/Falkland/Silver Creek/Ranchero: 1 trustee

This recommendation is made in the context of the following background and feedback from community consultation and as a result of observations during my work in the district since June 2016.

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT:

In April 2016, the Minister of Education appointed a Special Advisor for School District No. 83 with a mandate to:

- ***“evaluate the governance practices of the District’s Board of Education (Board)”***; and
- ***“evaluate the Board’s capacity in respect of financial matters and effective fiscal management”***.

Upon completion of that review, Special Advisor Liz Watson issued a report on June 3, 2016 with 42 recommendations. Recommendation #2 reads as follows:

	School District No. 83 Special Advisor's Report June 3, 2016
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Recommendation #2

“Simplify Regional Representation and Reduce the Number of Trustees”.

We recommend that the current regional representation model be retained but simplified and that the allocation of Trustees be revised to better reflect population within the region.

We recommend that the number of Trustees be reduced to five or seven.

This recommendation should be addressed and implemented in advance of the next election (2018). The effectiveness of the revised Board composition and Board size should be reviewed and assessed within six years after that election and fine-tuned if needed.

The Special Advisor's detailed commentary regarding board efficiency and effectiveness and the overall operation of the school district can be read in the full report available at <http://bit.ly/2A16ryS>. One key comment regarding the board in office at the time of the report states:

“The overriding concern is that while the Trustees are elected to represent the District as a whole, they are often conflicted in also representing the needs of their communities, who in fact, elect them. The current structure is broken; and the allocation of Trustees by region is unbalanced”.

Another recommendation in the Watson Report was to replace the elected board with an Official Trustee. In that role, starting on June 15, 2016, I have worked with staff and the community to consider and act on each of the Watson Report recommendations. Many of those recommendations have been implemented and some continue to be in development. Still others are most appropriately addressed by the Ministry of Education.

In taking action on Recommendation #2 regarding the number of elected trustees, the Board (in this case the Official Trustee) is required to engage in consultative processes with representatives from the community, other local government agencies and Partner Groups. Following those consultations, the Board may request that the Minister of Education consider varying the size of the board.

Local discussions took place during Fall 2017 and have included opportunities for input via:

- on-line overview of options and feedback from community members;
- discussion with local area government agencies and local First Nations Band representatives; and,
- consideration of options at the Partner Group Table and through a Working Group sub-committee of the Partner Group Table.

I have determined that it is appropriate for me, in my role as Official Trustee (The Board) to recommend to the Minister that he consider varying the size of the Board and to do so well in advance of the upcoming trustee elections in October 2018.

Currently, the size of an elected board for School District No. 83 (North Okanagan-Shuswap) is set at nine members elected through a ward system with the following allocations:

Salmon Arm:	2 Trustees
Armstrong/Spallumcheen:	2 Trustees
Enderby/Grindrod:	1 Trustee
Sicamous/Malakwa:	1 Trustee
Falkland/Silver Creek/Ranchero:	1 Trustee
Carlin/Sorrento:	1 Trustee
North Shuswap:	1 Trustee

It is my view that retaining a ward system is important in order to ensure representation and perspectives from across the school district. I also believe that a Board of Education of nine trustees is larger than necessary for the efficient operation of School District No. 83.

As the community engagement process began, the Partner Group Table sub-committee considered a number of options, some of which were referenced in the Watson Report while others emerged from the discussions at that sub-committee table.

Community members and those involved in face-to-face meetings were asked to share their thoughts regarding seven options: one being the status quo (nine trustees); three with a seven-member board structure; and the remaining three as five-member models. Participants were also invited to offer other suggestions/configurations beyond those listed on the website. The options and maps are included in the Appendix in this report.

Throughout the feedback process, it became clear that there wasn't a single option that was universally supported. There were many reasons people spoke for or against a particular electoral design. For example, some respondents supporting a seven-member board stated that it was better than a board of nine trustees. Others who spoke against a seven-member board believed it was still too large – they would prefer five. Some responses suggested that a trustee elected from a ward has a primary role to represent the interests of the schools and communities within that part of the school

district. Others expressed the hope that the district could move on from “silo approach” into a new governance culture where each trustee acts as part of a collective that attends responsibly to priorities across the district. There were some comments suggesting a form of “proportional representation” while others noted that regions with small student populations and few schools still need to have their perspectives represented.

In summarizing the feedback from the in-person meetings and the 62 respondents to the on-line feedback, themes that emerged included:

a) Support for decreasing the number of trustees on the board in order to:

- symbolically and practically move away from the previous board structure and size;
- create a broader governance mandate for all trustees to act on behalf of the entire district rather than “silos of representation”;
- reduce governance costs by approximately \$15,000 per trustee in compensation and expenses and allocate those funds to direct service to students;
- streamline governance and spread trustee workload/responsibilities more evenly and with greater emphasis on the priority roles of trustees;
- create a governance climate that encourages consensus building; and,
- find ways to fully immerse Armstrong into the district rather than it being perceived as a separate silo more than two decades since amalgamation.

b) Opposition to a change from nine trustees to a smaller number included concern for:

- trustee workload with fewer board members;
- geographic size of various wards;
- trustee capacity to be familiar, and in regular contact with the schools in their zone;
- a lack of proportional representation;
- decreased board size reducing diverse discussion and opinions; and,
- relatively modest cost savings (approximately \$15,000 per trustee in compensation and expenses) that would be realized by reducing the size of the board.

Additional considerations that have influenced my recommendation to the Minister:

- *Concern about trustee workload and the challenges that would occur if there are fewer trustees responsible for larger geographic areas.* This highlights a perception about the role of trustees. The Watson Report makes significant reference to this issue, so it will be important to emphasize for trustee candidates and for the community at large what effective trustees and boards do. A corporate board is responsible to govern and establish policy for the district and

to supervise and monitor progress toward student success. Effective boards engage in this work through oversight of their superintendent/chief executive officer and by extension, the rest of the staff. The superintendent has overall responsibility for the functioning of the district – it is not the role of trustees to intervene in day-to-day district operations;

- *Several comments also referring to the trustee liaison role with schools in their ward.* While establishing a linkage between a family of schools and a trustee is often positive, it should not lead to any perception that the trustee has priority allegiance to one school or group of schools over others. A trustee elected from the farthest north region of the district has an equal duty to work on behalf of the needs of students and schools in the farthest point south; and,
- *Individual trustees do not hold power.* Rather, they serve as part of a corporate board with duty and authority for the entire district. By creating a new, streamlined structure, it is hoped that effective governance norms can be established and sustained.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS:

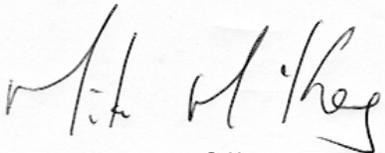
There is a unique opportunity to act decisively at this time to support transparency, build a culture of respect and an enhanced focus on student success. A five-member board would be well placed to accomplish those outcomes and to work as a cohesive unit on behalf of all learners.

If, during its mandate, a five trustee board believes that there is a need for a larger board, it can refer to Special Advisor Watson’s comment as part of Recommendation #2. She contemplates the potential for a request for a future adjustment once an elected board has been in office for a sufficient period. The Report includes:

“...(the) effectiveness of the revised Board composition and Board size should be reviewed and assessed within six years after that election and fine-tuned if needed”.

This report and recommendation is submitted to Minister of Education Rob Fleming for consideration and action as appropriate.

Respectfully,



Mike McKay, Official Trustee
School District No. 83 (North Okanagan-Shuswap)

Appendix: Trustee Variance Options and Maps

SD 83 – Status Quo: 9 Trustees

North Shuswap
- 1 school
- 99 students
- 1 trustee

Sicamous/Malakwa
- 2 schools
- 306 students
- 1 trustee

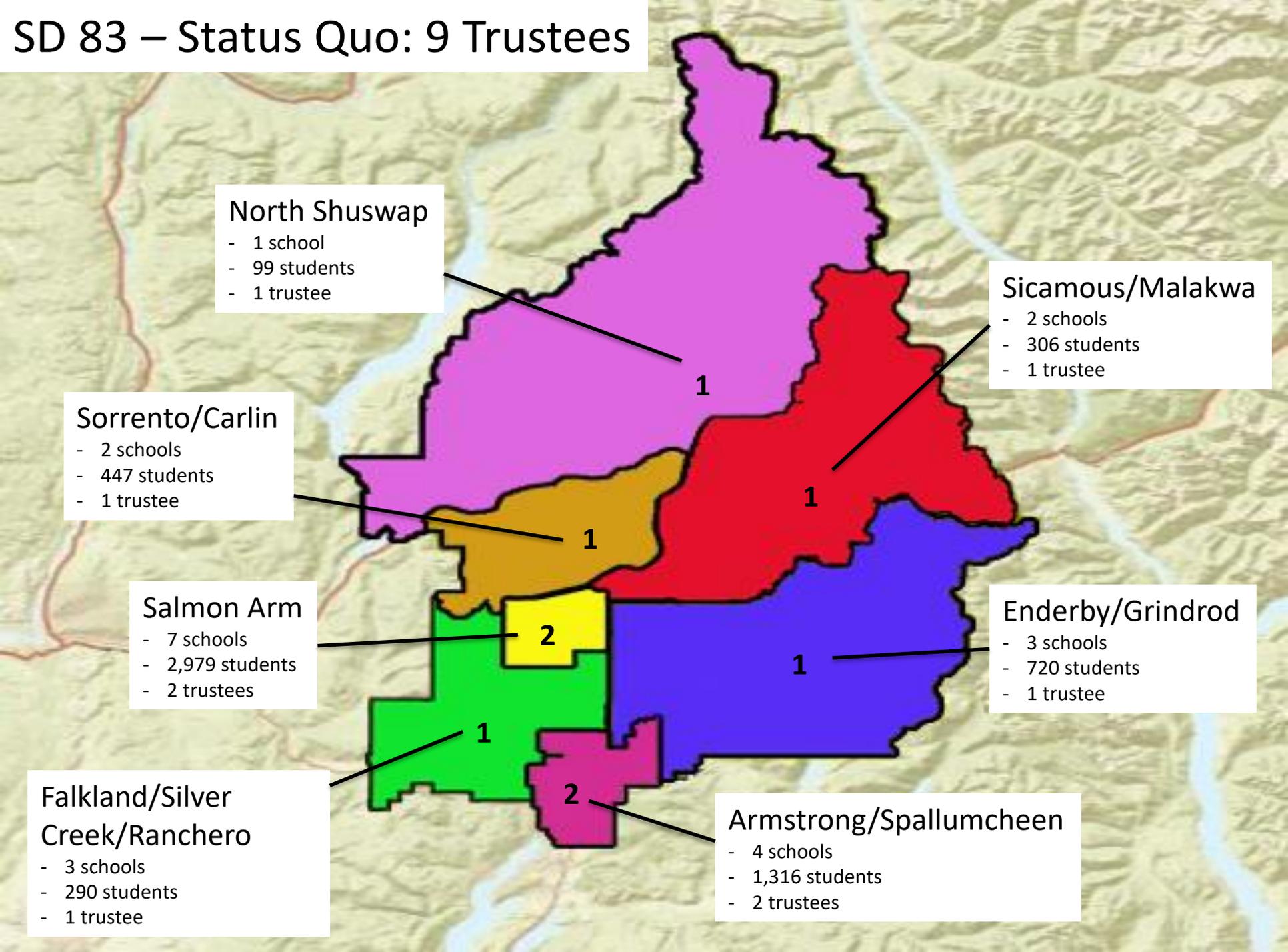
Sorrento/Carlin
- 2 schools
- 447 students
- 1 trustee

Salmon Arm
- 7 schools
- 2,979 students
- 2 trustees

Enderby/Grindrod
- 3 schools
- 720 students
- 1 trustee

**Falkland/Silver
Creek/Ranchero**
- 3 schools
- 290 students
- 1 trustee

Armstrong/Spallumcheen
- 4 schools
- 1,316 students
- 2 trustees



SD 83 – Option A: 7 Trustees

- Combine North Shuswap and Sorrento/Carlin
- Reduce Armstrong by 1 trustee

**North Shuswap/
Sorrento/Carlin**

- 3 schools
- 546 students
- 1 trustee

Sicamous/Malakwa

- 2 schools
- 306 students
- 1 trustee

Salmon Arm

- 7 schools
- 2,979 students
- 2 trustees

Enderby/Grindrod

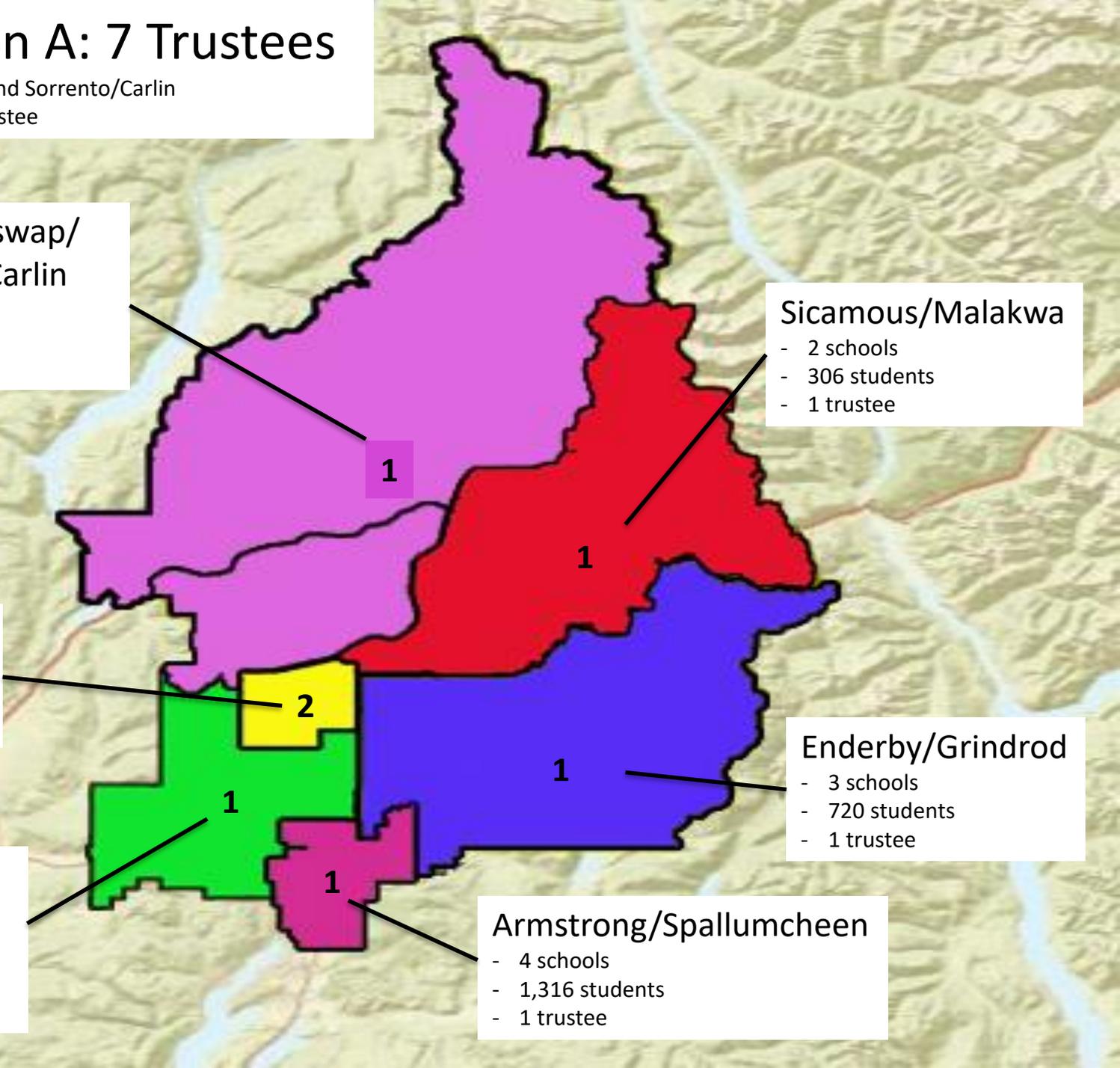
- 3 schools
- 720 students
- 1 trustee

**Falkland/Silver
Creek/Ranchero**

- 3 schools
- 290 students
- 1 trustee

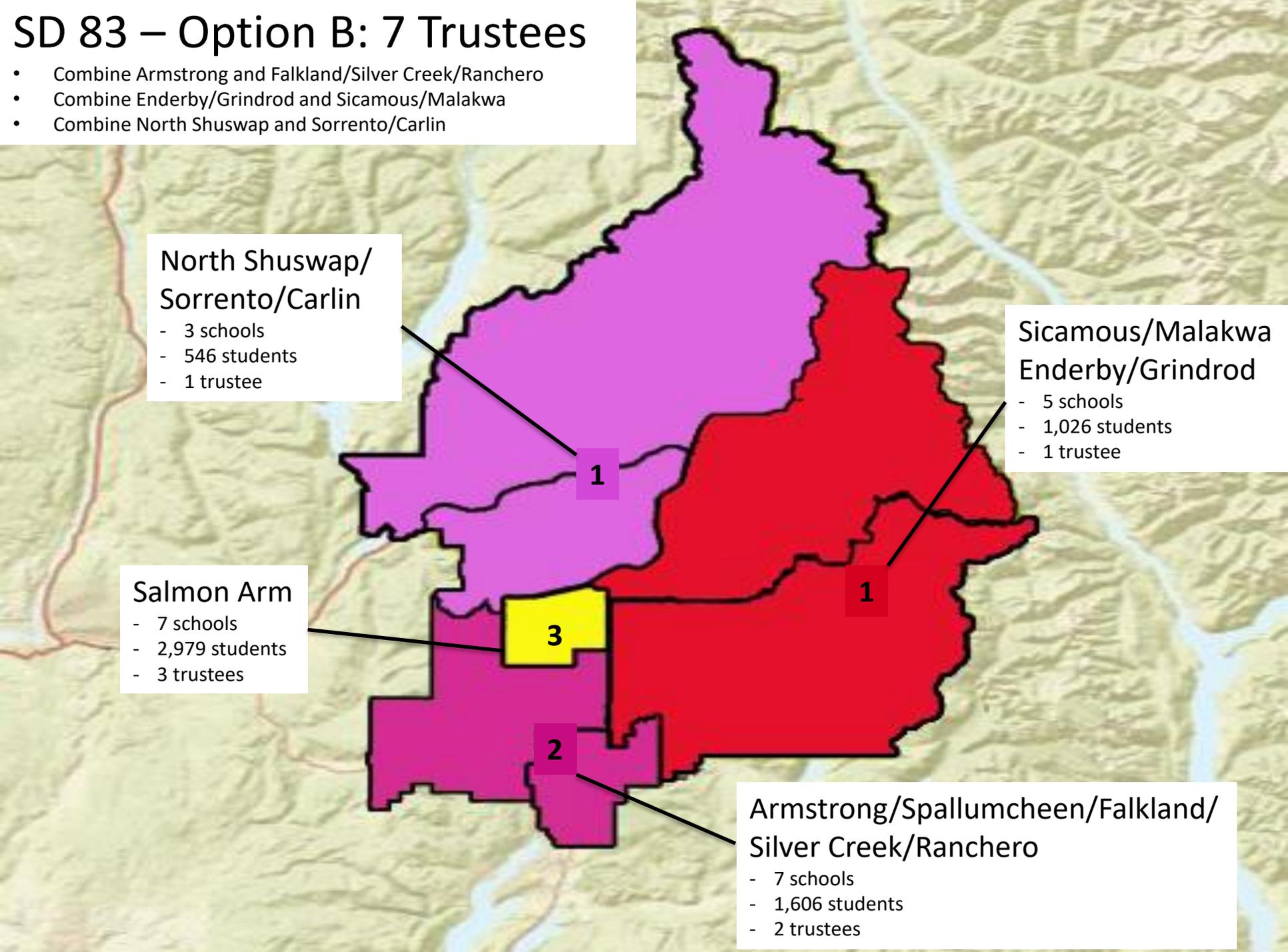
Armstrong/Spallumcheen

- 4 schools
- 1,316 students
- 1 trustee



SD 83 – Option B: 7 Trustees

- Combine Armstrong and Falkland/Silver Creek/Ranchero
- Combine Enderby/Grindrod and Sicamous/Malakwa
- Combine North Shuswap and Sorrento/Carlin



**North Shuswap/
Sorrento/Carlin**
- 3 schools
- 546 students
- 1 trustee

**Sicamous/Malakwa
Enderby/Grindrod**
- 5 schools
- 1,026 students
- 1 trustee

Salmon Arm
- 7 schools
- 2,979 students
- 3 trustees

**Armstrong/Spallumcheen/Falkland/
Silver Creek/Ranchero**
- 7 schools
- 1,606 students
- 2 trustees

SD 83 – Option C: 7 Trustees

- Combine Armstrong and Falkland/Silver Creek/Ranchero
- Combine Enderby/Grindrod and Sicamous/Malakwa
- Combine North Shuswap and Sorrento/Carlin

**North Shuswap/
Sorrento/Carlin**

- 3 schools
- 546 students
- 1 trustee

**Sicamous/Malakwa
Enderby/Grindrod**

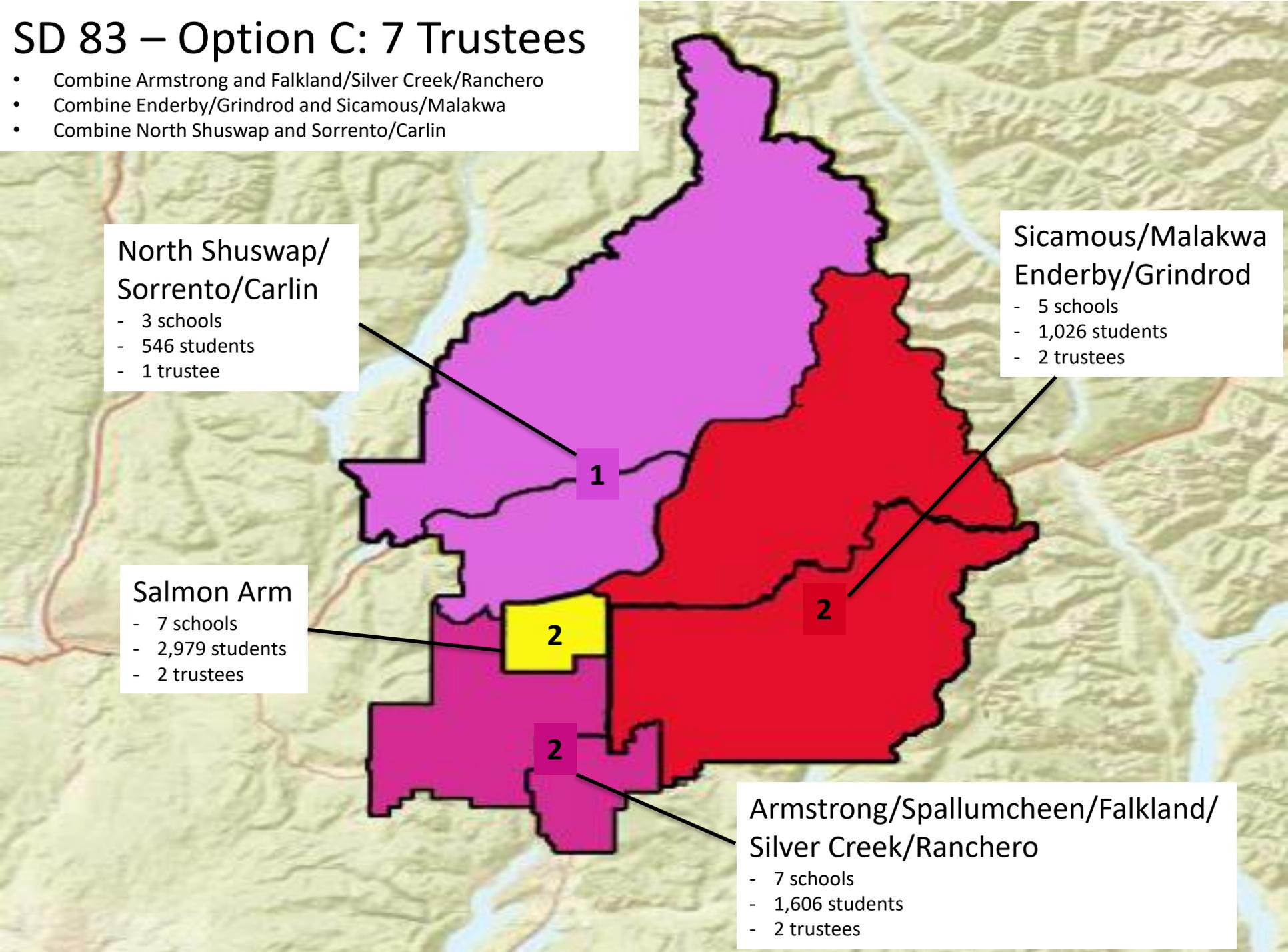
- 5 schools
- 1,026 students
- 2 trustees

Salmon Arm

- 7 schools
- 2,979 students
- 2 trustees

**Armstrong/Spallumcheen/Falkland/
Silver Creek/Ranchero**

- 7 schools
- 1,606 students
- 2 trustees



SD 83 – Option D: 5 Trustees

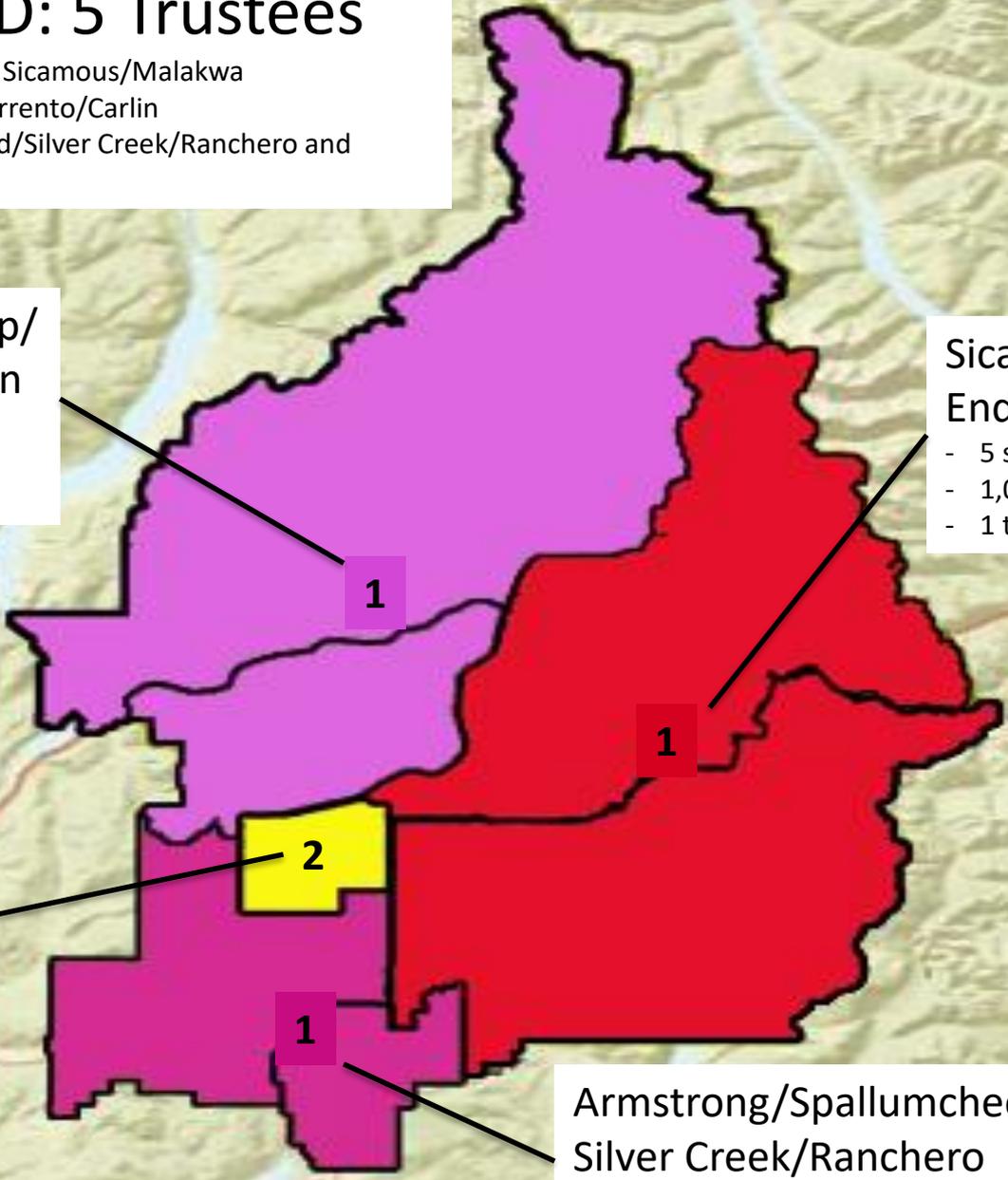
- Combine Enderby/Grindrod and Sicamous/Malakwa
- Combine North Shuswap and Sorrento/Carlin
- Combine Armstrong and Falkland/Silver Creek/Ranchero and reduce by 1 trustee

**North Shuswap/
Sorrento/Carlin**
- 3 schools
- 546 students
- 1 trustee

**Sicamous/Malakwa
Enderby/Grindrod**
- 5 schools
- 1,026 students
- 1 trustee

Salmon Arm
- 7 schools
- 2,979 students
- 2 trustees

**Armstrong/Spallumcheen/Falkland/
Silver Creek/Ranchero**
- 7 schools
- 1,606 students
- 1 trustee



1

1

2

1

SD 83 – Option E: 5 Trustees

- Combine Enderby/Grindrod and Sicamous/Malakwa
- Combine North Shuswap, Sorrento/Carlin, and Falkland/Silver Creek/Ranchero
- Reduce Armstrong by 1

North Shuswap/
Sorrento/Carlin/Falkland/
Silver Creek/Ranchero

- 6 schools
- 836 students
- 1 trustee

Sicamous/Malakwa
Enderby/Grindrod

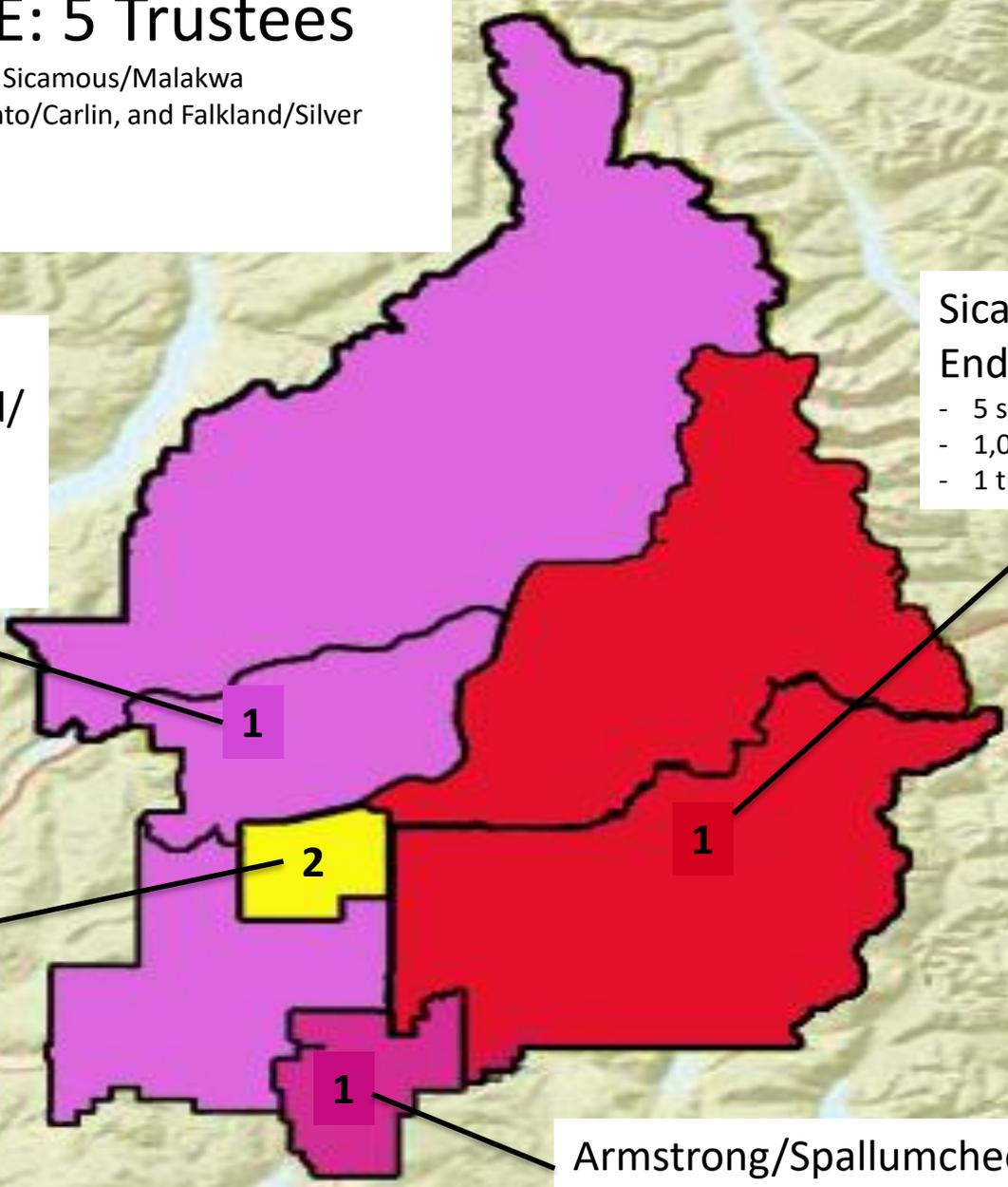
- 5 schools
- 1,026 students
- 1 trustee

Salmon Arm

- 7 schools
- 2,979 students
- 2 trustees

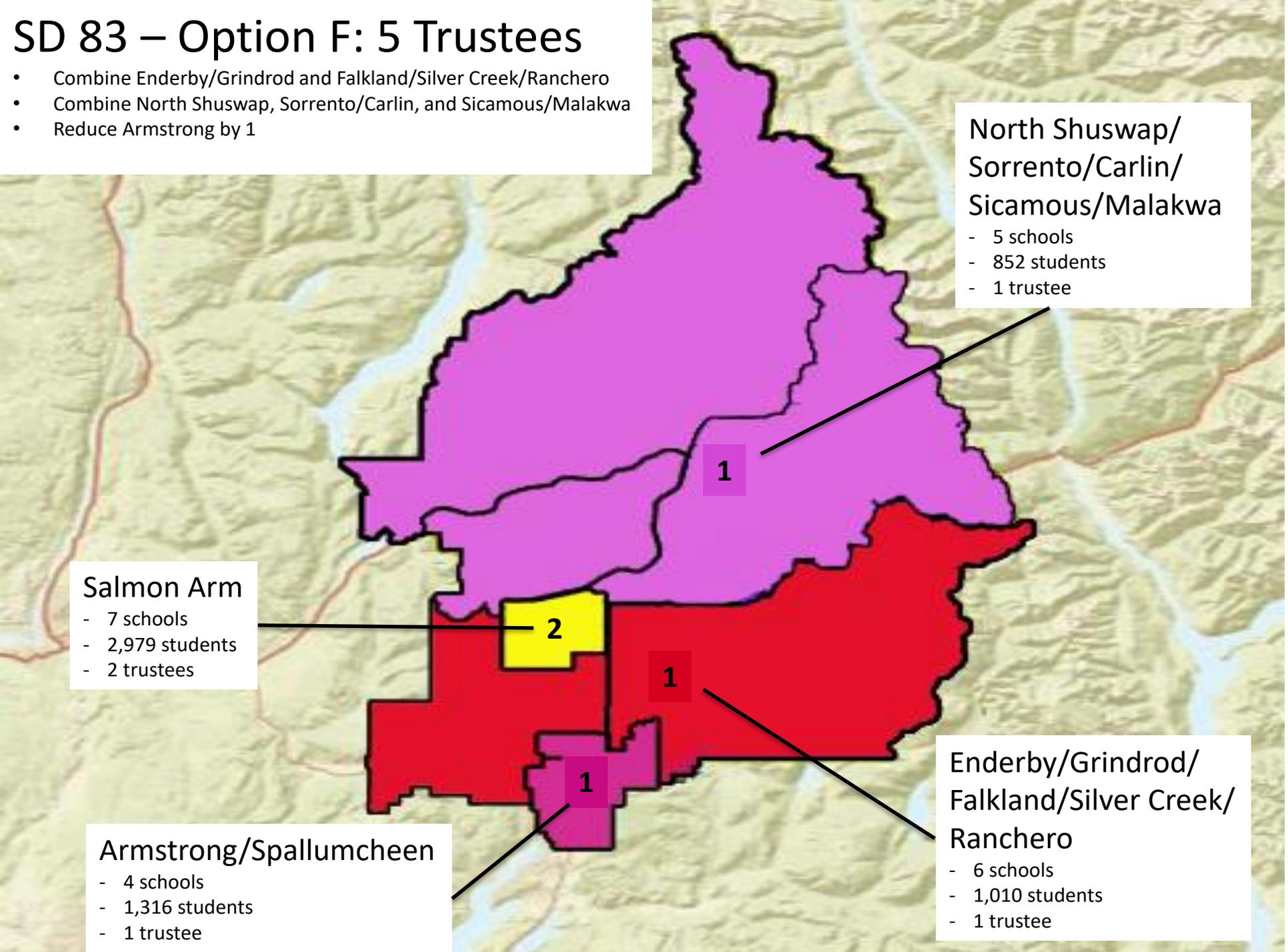
Armstrong/Spallumcheen

- 4 schools
- 1,316 students
- 1 trustee



SD 83 – Option F: 5 Trustees

- Combine Enderby/Grindrod and Falkland/Silver Creek/Ranchero
- Combine North Shuswap, Sorrento/Carlin, and Sicamous/Malakwa
- Reduce Armstrong by 1



**North Shuswap/
Sorrento/Carlin/
Sicamous/Malakwa**

- 5 schools
- 852 students
- 1 trustee

Salmon Arm

- 7 schools
- 2,979 students
- 2 trustees

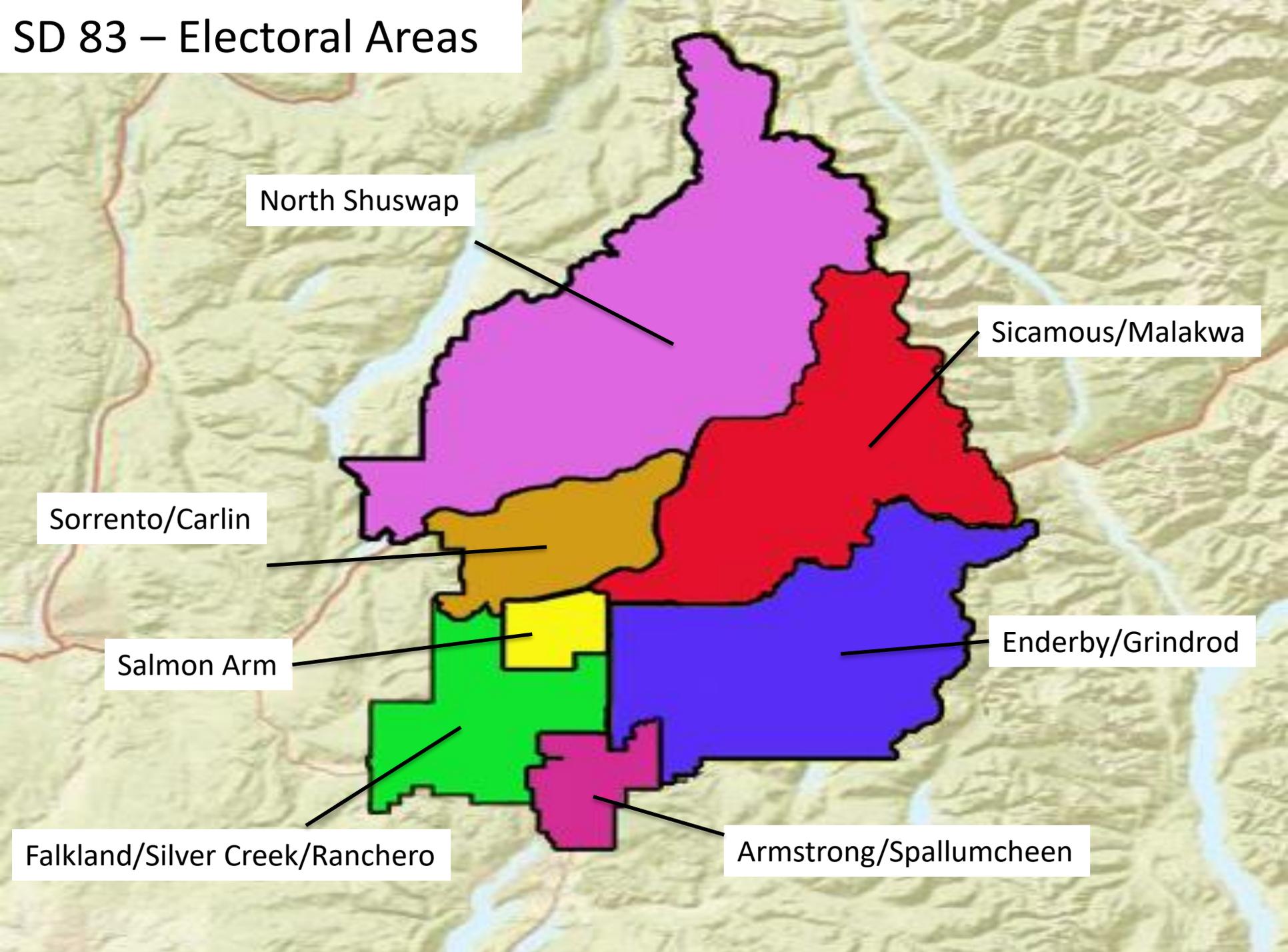
**Enderby/Grindrod/
Falkland/Silver Creek/
Ranchero**

- 6 schools
- 1,010 students
- 1 trustee

Armstrong/Spallumcheen

- 4 schools
- 1,316 students
- 1 trustee

SD 83 – Electoral Areas



North Shuswap

Sicamous/Malakwa

Sorrento/Carlin

Enderby/Grindrod

Salmon Arm

Falkland/Silver Creek/Ranchero

Armstrong/Spallumcheen