



Yellowknife Catholic Schools
Parent Engagement Budget Dialogue
February 22, 2011
École St. Patrick High Gym

Public Engagement Session Report

1. As parents, what do you feel we need to do to ensure a well-balanced education program is offered to your child(ren)?

- Balance both physical & academics – biggest issue is indoor recess – need a program to deal with indoor recess (ie: music played during indoor recess & grade 8 students lead them in aerobics).
- Junior hockey academy has made a difference in student's energy level.
- Cultural activities at all levels and all schools so students have a change of atmosphere.
- Lack of communication between teacher & parent – need more communication (ie: emails, phone calls, etc.) Need something more than the school newsletter - weekly newsletters from teachers. Homework on website should be labeled in a “parental friendly manner” so parent & student know the assignment.
- Teacher newsletter about classroom focus for the year.
- Emphasis on Math & Science.
- CLS class – parents should be given more information about what student choices are, teacher should inform parents about K&E stream, and any other options.
- Hockey academy & junior hockey academy or any other sports academy programs should continue.
- Focus should be on fitness/cardiovascular improvement – some schools offer before school fitness to get the blood going.
- Increase physical activities/play.
- Improved communication – parent/teacher.
- High standards of academics - comparable to other provinces.
- Review Assessment / Reporting practices – demonstrate knowledge, communication, writes/re-writes.
- Review Religion program / Christian reading material.
- Early Intervention Program.
- Look at split classes.
- Balance programs – continue Trades v. Sports Academy.
- More parent input.
- Setting clear goals. Where do we see ourselves going? What do we want to improve specifically?
- Academics, but also need other areas provided for – with few blocks (little room for anything else) – streaming load is limiting.
- Well-rounded individuals – incorporate family into school – it's a community.
- More breaks in day (high school).
- High school – changes made without impact (ie: start times. Who was asked? Who was surveyed? Lack of transfer of information. Say it's good but word of mouth does not support it. Address tardiness – academic probation not working.
- Integrating health / wellness into school day.

- More options for “screen time” (ie: TV, computer, ipod, ipad, cell phone, etc. more on movement-based activities / physical activity - not in class but unstructured time.
- More PE time.
- Scheduling – especially high school prevents activity.
- Well balanced within school.
- Set high standards.
- Must have a variety of ways for students to be able to demonstrate their knowledge (ie: verbal, written). Balanced assessment model.
- Really pleased Perhaps a bit more transparency with reporting achievement levels. Need reassurances beyond emails and formalized report cards. It is easier at the younger levels but need more face-to-face at the high school.
- What does “at grade level” mean? Parents need more feedback.
- Interventions such as O.T. referrals need to be more timely. (Too late to be assessed in June.)
- Need to have more of a focus on ‘early’ intervention.
- Assessment policy with regard to “rewrites” & lack of deadlines needs to be re-examined. We need to prepare kids for the real world.
- Very pleased with exposure to trades at a young age. This is part of a “balanced” approach. Could even be younger ... prepares students for real world.
- Like the multi-faceted approach to programming: arts, support services, literacy, sports, etc.
- Sports academy has been a positive for some.
- Website good source for awareness.
- Monthly teacher reports for awareness.
- Good home/school communication.
- Ensure assessment – student achievement – parent awareness re: how students are assessed (Alberta/NT) – are we the same?
- More homework – practice sheets prepared for parents – expected outcomes for grade 3 level
- Clearly understand grade level expectations & outcomes communicated to parents.
- Play / active – intramurals for all grade levels (especially lower), after-school sports activities, more scheduled programs like swimming, field house, etc. hockey academy, judo, winter activities (cross-country skiing – parent volunteers to assist with coaching).
- Separating male and female students
- Split classes
- Monthly homework sheets home (not nightly – not available to all parents).
- A lot of the reading material is too worldly – more religious / reflect the values. (ie: Harry Potter (witch craft) library books, scholastic are not Christian based, better variety & more in line with Christian values.
- More parent involvement at the high school (ie: parent chaperones on sports trips)

TOP 3 FROM QUESTION #1 – Well Balanced Education Program

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Facilitate wellness and incorporate into daily life (K-12)2. Ensure there is strong communication in transfer of information to/from parents especially around changes (start times, programs, etc.)3. Remain committed to having <u>high standards</u> and being academically comparable with other provinces.
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Finding a balance between physical and academics, with the biggest issue being indoor recess for elementary students.2. Junior hockey academy has made a difference in student's energy level.3. Better communication between teacher and parent.
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Assessment:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Should be a variety of ways to demonstrate achievement.b. Communication & reporting on achievement needs to be timely and the process should be transparent.c. Re-examine assessment policy re: deadlines & rewrites.2. Early intervention assessments & referrals need to be supported as well as being more timely.3. Continue with balanced approach to student programming (keep focus on trades.)
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Increase physical activity / play.2. Better communication.3. Assessment / Achievement.
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Reading material / library books to better reflect Christian values.2. Review split classes. Ensure parents understand how curriculum is being covered.3. Monthly homework sheet home, not nightly.

2. What do you feel should be the areas of focus in YCS for student programming?

- Religion Program – Catechesis.
- Alternative drop-in program – new addition of peer-to-peer.
- More communication involved in tutorials.
- Ensure fundamentals are being met – reading / math – supported appropriately.
- Nutrition & healthy choices at lunchtime.
- Quality homework – support parents with helping kids.
- Help attendance – computer at home, fun at lunch (Zumba).
- Religious Education Coordinator.
- Physical fitness & wellness / nutrition.
- Indoor recesses – planned activities.
- Communications.
- Parents understand program choices.
- Sacramental preparation at schools.
- Culturally relevant programs / Staff PD.
- Junior sports academy – interferes with school work – schedule after school.
- Languages – expand offerings (sign language, Spanish).
- Connection with environment.
- Early Intervention – Literacy / Math.
- Different programs (alternative learning) (campus perhaps for non-academic stream) Hands on learning.
- Physical fitness (not sports academy) – just being physically active.
- Participating in school competitions – increase achievement of students.
- Ensure kids get nutrition they need.
- Create own “system” policies. We believe in ... (i) outcome-based not “minutes” based education, (ii) all students participating on “mixed” teams – strong/weak, (iii) semester / no semester (student based), (iv) move away from “pushing through” quickly to finish, (v) accepting everybody.
- More of a focus on nutrition & healthy choices at lunchtime.
- Structured IEP process reviewed at end of each year. Formally assess goals to be able to be worked on for the next year. Need measurable goals, should work with the existing IEP.
- Resources to be put in French Immersion program and Band program (instruments & repair).
- Enhance alternate learning model with additional tutorial assistant – geared presently toward high school – can this idea be extended into the elementary (both alternative learning & tutors) as well as using academically, oriented high-school students.
- Service hours – become a learn 2 learn model, with 2 or 3 distinct actions (i) enhance present program, (ii) peer-to-peer and (iii) community partnerships.
- Maintain Do Edaezhe programs. Use these students as role models, establishing connections with our younger kids.
- Have a stronger staff cultural awareness program and maintain efforts in this area. “Two sets of people living in two different worlds within the same city.”
- The development of the choir in the high school is great! Further growth & support in this area would be wonderful.

- Sports academy allows many kids to play in settings that are not as competitive. Also gives academic students a different challenge. (Possibly developing or establishing more parent partnerships could help support this initiative.)
- Value focus on spiritual component in YCS. Idea of Religion Coordinator to continue this in a real way is a great idea. This distinctly sets this district apart. These spiritual connections help bring our kids through tough times. Must choose this individual wisely. “Religion” can sometimes get in the way but relationship will prevail.
- Specific & focused early intervention to ensure Kindergarten readiness & progress.
- Homework Club – levels the playing field.
- More Internet subscription programs available for students to use at home (ie: Reading Eggs, something for Math).
- A session on how to help my child in Grade xx.
- Lunch program for purchase – food at school.
- First Communion / Confirmation offered in schools during Religion class by trained teachers (student engagement may be increased).
- Intramurals for lower grades.
- YWCA program after school – provide access to the gym.
- Classroom Assistant in every Kindergarten class (extra hands due to age & range of abilities of students who have never been in school before). Most support in Year 1, even if just for 3 months.
- Religion program reviewed – Catechism, Feeding of the Fire – parents aware.
- Program to encourage attendance.
- More computer based.
- Zumba – fun activities.
- Junior sports academy – move to “Get Active” pilot.
- Literacy support interventions – early, late.

TOP 3 FROM EACH GROUP – Areas of Focus

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Alternative Programs – languages, hands-on, satellite location.2. Fundamentals – early literacy / Math skills and early support interventions.3. Physical Fitness / Wellness – <u>not sports academy</u> / PE but physical activity – wellness (nutrition/healthy mind & body).
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. More of a focus on nutrition and healthy choices at lunch-time.2. Structured IEP process and reviewed at the end of each school year.3. Resources put in French Immersion program and Band program.
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Communication is #1.2. Hockey academy or any other sports academy programs should continue, with a focus on fitness/cardiovascular improvement.
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Continue to support & enhance alternative programming (ie: Drop-In Centre). Extend concept into elementary/develop peer mentoring program/establish more parent & community partnerships/period “0” at high school.2. Balanced approach to programming (choir, sports academy, culture, French Immersion).3. Continue strong focus on spirituality (ie: Religious Education Coordinator).
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Homework Club.2. First communion / confirmation offered in schools.3. Hockey Academy.
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Religion Program Reviewed – Catechism.2. Zumba – fun activities.3. Literacy support interventions (early, late).