MEMORANDUM

May 24, 2022
Regular Board Meeting

TO	Board of Trustees
FROM	Shauna Boyce, Superintendent
ORIGINATOR	Scott Johnston, Associate Superintendent
RESOURCE	Parkland School Division Stakeholders
GOVERNANCE POLICY	Board Policy 2: Role of the Board Board Policy 12: Role of the Superintendent
ADDITIONAL REFERENCE	BP 2: Education Planning and Programming BP 2: Stakeholder Engagement and Communication BP 2: Collaboration
SUBJECT	**STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT REPORT**

PURPOSE

For information. No recommendation required.

BACKGROUND

In support of education planning, the Board promotes positive community engagement with the Division, represents the community's needs, hopes and desires, and supports the school's programs and essentials to the community. On April 7th, the Board of Trustees engaged community stakeholders in consideration of forward planning actions. The following Stakeholder Engagement Report is in support of these responsibilities.

REPORT SUMMARY

Parkland School Division utilizes a robust Assurance Model to better understand stakeholder feedback. Working with an Assurance Model means that Parkland School Division and the Board of Trustees actively seeks to reveal all avenues for stakeholders to tell us how we are attending to our goals and priorities. The Stakeholder Engagement Report summarizes stakeholder insights from the May 2022 Stakeholder Engagement Day.

Administration would be pleased to respond to questions.

SJ:kz

PARKLAND SCHOOL DIVISION

Our Students Possess the confidence, resilience, insight and skills required to thrive in, and positively impact, the world.

BACKGROUND

On April 7th, 2022, the Board of Trustees and Superintendent spent a full day engaging stakeholders on a variety of educational topics. Parents, teachers, support staff and administrators, as well as community members, civic leaders and Indigenous Elders gathered to assist the Board in consideration for future planning. This document organizes the thematic concerns, considerations and celebrations raised by stakeholders. The material is presented thematically in alphabetical order to ensure that all concepts discussed are captured.

STAKEHOLDER CONSIDERATIONS BY TOPIC AREA

ALBERTA EDUCATION:

Some stakeholders expressed disdain that it does not appear that the government is acting in support of students.

> CURRICULUM: Stakeholders had concerns regarding the rollout of the new Provincial Curriculum. There is a general concern that this rapid deployment will emerge as a major disruption for schools and students. Parent and teacher stakeholders expressed concern with the proposed content.

How do we respond to complaints that we are teaching "socialism"? The curriculum has been represented as a political tool and this has created negativity and conflict with some elements of the community. Stakeholders identified that we need to ensure that we are teaching in respect of diversity (see also: *equity*).

ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS:

Stakeholders noted appreciation for alternative programming. One stakeholder noted that the "development is phenomenal." In particular, the *Parkland Student Athletic Academy* was identified as a positive addition. During the conversation on this topic, stakeholders wondered at what other areas might be considered.

Stakeholders expressed appreciation for *Building Futures* as "an amazing program."

Stakeholders expressed an appreciation for Outreach programming.

Stakeholders noted a desire for more programming for gifted and/or talented students. They expressed that there may be a greater need for this type of program as we emerge from COVID. We have some acceleration programs (ie., accelerated math at Broxton Park); can we look to providing more programs like this?

ATTENDANCE AREAS:

Stakeholders discussed the current Attendance Area review and, considering the growth of the Division, wondered how often this process would be necessary.

CARE PROGRAMS (BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL):

Care programs are extremely appreciated. Stakeholders considered how we might find ways to increase the number of before and after school care programs. Would it be possible to consider older students supporting these programs?

CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY STUDIES:

Stakeholders appreciate access to these programs and would like to see greater cohesion between career and technology studies, and career and technology foundations (junior high). (see also: *work experience*).

CHOICE:

Parent stakeholders, in particular, expressed a strong appreciation for choice in schools and in educational programs (see also: *alternative programs*).

CITIZENSHIP:

Citizenship education needs to be specifically addressed. Students have not been developing social skills and there is a significant amount of conflict and bias in the world. An increase in prosocial skill training is desired. Stakeholders asked: "how can we help students to appreciate diversity in perspectives?"

CLASSES and CLASS SIZES:

Stakeholders recognized the challenges presented by large class sizes and determined that an exploration of a "hard cap" may be necessary. Split and or mixed classes are more common in our rural schools and there is a concern that this may have a detrimental impact on learning; although these classes also tend to be smaller and that may have a balancing effect.

COHORTS:

Cohorts provided an opportunity for strengthened relationships between teachers and students, and this was great, however it minimizes the breadth of relationships in the schools (for instance, students did not know students in other grades or cohorts).

Stakeholders noted that we may now need to teach social skills to students, so that they know how best to interact with students of other ages.

COLLABORATION:

Are there ways in which we can improve school collaboration? Stakeholders identified that there are great things that happen in some schools, that could happen in others. How do we get the best of any school into every school? Stakeholders explored ways in which we can increase teacher collaboration across schools; notably, the staff Compass was launched this past year as a Google Site with that intended purpose.

COLLABORATIVE RESPONSE:

The focus on Collaborative Response is viewed as being very positive. Stakeholders expressed appreciation for supporting students who are not the ones with extreme needs.

COMMUNICATION:

Stakeholders expressed appreciation for school-to-home communication. Some noted that the limitations on parental access, due to COVID, had increased the school's communication in positive ways. In particular, the email system works well and there was recognition for the promptness of responses; in

some schools there are weekly emails from the school administration and this is appreciated. There are also many technology application that provide effective means for communication, including: *SeeSaw, Class Dojo* and *PowerSchool*.

Some stakeholders disagreed. They noted that there is a concern that they are not always informed about what is happening in the schools; that there has been an increased disconnection due to COVID.

Stakeholders would like us to consider how we may improve our communication with stakeholders who represent a lower socioeconomic status, or who are from minority cultures.

One stakeholder group wondered at the extent that increased communication is affecting the boundaries of teachers' personal lives.

SURVEYS:

One idea expressed is to utilize surveys to verify that we are providing the right supports for our families.

COMMUNITY:

The Pandemic has had an impact on the community and it will be essential for education to work with municipalities to ensure access to services for students. How can we improve understanding of the community services that are available for students?

Some stakeholders expressed that a public forum and/or community conferencing will continue to enable all voices to be heard.

COUNSELING:

Stakeholders identified the extreme need for counseling services. Some wondered if it is possible to support this program financially, and then receive a tax receipt for counseling services.

CULTURE:

Stakeholders identified that we can continue to work on how parents are welcomed into our schools (see also: *parents*).

EARLY EDUCATION:

Stakeholders wondered what it would take to have Early Education programs in every school.

EQUITY and DIVERSITY:

Stakeholders expressed the concern that there are still issues regarding racism in our schools. Some stakeholders identified that this is particularly problematic in our high schools. A concern was raised that Indigenous students may step back from self-identification once they are in high school, due to fear of racism.

We have increased our understanding of equity and this needs to be specifically maintained within our hiring practices; the intent is that all students can see themselves in the individuals we hire.

Staff stakeholders have particularly appreciated the work on equity that we have undertaken with Dr. Toni De Mello. Can we continue to find ways to ensure that our speakers and presenters represent diversity?

Stakeholders noted that it is essential to promote understanding that the system has not, traditionally, been equitable; we need to explore and understand the challenging aspects of our history.

Stakeholders noted that the resources for equity work need to be current. We need to increase the resources that are available. In particular, we need to ensure that our libraries have resources that respect the diversity of our students.

Our conversations around "language" continue to evolve. This progress is recognized as being helpful to promote an understanding of diversity; words that may have been historically acceptable many now need to be questioned.

<u>EXTRA-CURRICULAR</u>:

There is a strong desire to return to extra-curricular activities as much as possible. Students and families are craving opportunities outside of school.

The Archery in Schools program was recognized as a great addition for younger students.

<u>FACILITIES</u>:

Stakeholders shared the perspective that our buildings are in great shape, and they recognized the efforts of the Facilities Department for continuous improvement.

As our buildings reach capacity, the loss of accessible spaces has a significant impact on students.

<u>SANITIZATION</u>:

The focus on students attending to sanitization (hand washing, etc.) has diminished. This is one aspect that came out of the Pandemic that should be maintained.

Stakeholders expressed appreciation for the work of our custodial staff.

<u>FEES/COSTS</u>:

Stakeholders recognize that there are budget constraints, but also noted that the Division should continue finding ways to mitigate parent fees.

<u>FOOD SECURITY</u>:

Stakeholders noted that there are socioeconomic factors that are limiting food access for students; food programs in school are appreciated.

<u>BREAKFAST and LUNCH PROGRAMS</u>:

Parent stakeholder wondered about the new limitations, due to insurance, for operating hot-lunch programs; can we find a way to ease access for parents who want to provide hot-lunch?

Parent stakeholders expressed a desire for microwaves - teacher stakeholders responded to express the challenge of these devices.

<u>NUTRITION</u>:

Stakeholders expressed appreciation for the work to bring breakfast and lunch programs into the schools. They noted that this is helpful and important when students forget their meal or are unable to provide food for themselves.

<u>First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education</u>:

Stakeholders identified that continued work with our First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities will continue to bridge the gap. There is a general appreciation for the work underway.

The Indigenous Kinship Group is an appreciated aspect within PSD. Stakeholders expressed that we need to continue to improve the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives and cultures: it is happening - but it needs to happen more often.

One suggestion is to increase use of the Medicine Wheel in schools to help students find better balance.

<u>METIS EDUCATION</u>:

Stakeholders would like to see a greater promotion of Metis education. The example of Louis Riel Day was provided as a consideration. Another suggestion would be to explore collaborative work with the Rupert's Land Institute.

ELDER PROGRAM:

Particular appreciation was expressed for Elder Violet Poitras. The Elder Programs are well received in schools and there is a desire among stakeholders to increase access to our Elders.

CLUBS and EXTRACURRICULAR:

Many stakeholders noted the strong importance of extracurricular activities to open the world up for our students. During the conversation on emerging from the pandemic, extracurricular programming was a very strong solution suggested for our students' current state of mental health (see also: wellness).

GSA/QSA:

Stakeholders expressed an appreciation for inclusivity through clubs that represent LGBTQ2S+ students. Some stakeholders expressed concern about a heightened focus in this area, but others noted that not all students fit into the same box. Overall, the ability for students to access GSAs is appreciated and stakeholders recognized there is still work to do in this area to promote acceptance.

HIGH SCHOOLS:

Parent stakeholders expressed that they are not always well-informed about how to support their children when first enrolling in high school (see also: *parents*). This conversation emerged in separate groups and parent stakeholders expressed that they would like students to have a better understanding of streaming processes prior to the end of the ninth grade.

Parents expressed some frustration that there are times when courses are full, and students do not get the courses they would like to receive.

One perspective is that the junior high Career and Technology Foundations courses could be more aligned with the high school Career and Technology Studies courses.

Some stakeholders expressed that they do not prefer the Quarter System. The problem noted is that when students have to miss school, they miss quite a bit of the course for every day absent. Teacher stakeholders indicated that the Quarter System is challenging for core teachers - but that it works very well for CTS teachers; is a hybrid system possible?

LEARNING NEEDS:

Stakeholders recognized the challenges with diverse needs within the classroom. They questioned how we might be able to find more resources to respond to promote emotional regulation and improved mental health for students (see also: *wellness*).

There needs to be a continued focus on differentiating learning for those students who struggle. Stakeholders expressed an appreciation for opportunities for professional development related to differentiating instruction.

LITERACY:

Some stakeholders expressed a desire for a greater focus on writing.

The literacy interventions have worked well, but teachers expressed that it has a significant impact on teaching practice, due to the number of students that are pulled for intervention. How can we consider ways to minimize the impact of the literacy interventions on other subjects? Additionally, it is helpful

when teachers have the full scope of why we are doing what we are doing and would like to better understand the intent and requirements of the Literacy Initiative.

From the perspective of the smaller schools, there is an appreciation for the Divisional support for literacy.

Teachers have appreciated growing their capacity with phonological awareness. Notably, historically, it was more common to see students come to school with knowledge of letters and numbers, but that teachers are seeing this diminish; teacher experience in this area is very helpful.

NUMERACY:

Stakeholders expressed an appreciation for numeracy initiatives. Teacher stakeholders would like to see parents have a greater understanding and focus on the importance of working with their children in numeracy.

PARENTS:

Parent involvement has reduced in schools due to COVID. Stakeholders noted that, even as things open up, the parent involvement has not returned at the same pace (see also: *teachers*).

Parent stakeholders significantly appreciated the opportunity to meet digitally for student conferences, but also appreciate meeting their children's teachers. Parents expressed that it is preferable to have as much time as possible during these conferences; notably, that students on an individualized plan may require more time for parents and teachers to discuss.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:

Stakeholders questioned the extent to which students' physical abilities diminished during the Pandemic. They noted that opportunities to expand physical literacy are appreciated.

RECREATION: STAGGERED BREAKS:

During the Pandemic, our cohorts had staggered breaks and stakeholders identified that this is a positive aspect for students that should continue. Students have greater access to equipment and an opportunity for safe-play among their age group.

REPORT CARDS:

Teacher stakeholders would like to better understand why some parents are not logging in to view the report card.

RISK/INSURANCE:

Stakeholders raised the concern that insurance requirements are too limiting for events and activities. How do we continue to promote activities for students without being overwhelmed by the financial burden of risk mitigation?

RURAL EDUCATION:

Stakeholders questioned how we can best support small, rural schools to have equitable programming when compared to larger schools. The consideration is that we need to continue to find ways to support our small schools.

SCHOOL COUNCILS:

School Councils are appreciated; however, it has been very challenging to get parents to be involved. Stakeholders wondered how we might encourage more involvement by parents in our schools.

<u>SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER</u>:

The Resource Officer position is highly regarded and respected. Stakeholders indicated that this position needs to be supported, and they expressed concern that municipalities do not always support this position. There is an overall appreciation by students, as represented by our parent stakeholders, for this position.

<u>SCIENCE</u>:

Science education is important and some stakeholders expressed that we cannot lose sight of this with the increased attention on literacy and numeracy.

<u>SNOW DAYS</u>:

Parent stakeholders would like to better understand how to access education during days when transportation is canceled. How do we improve this system so that the education flips seamlessly to remote learning?

<u>STUDENTS</u>:

Stakeholder expressed strong appreciation for all that our students have been through over the past two years; additionally, that our students have had a challenging time, but overall are doing quite well to find ways to move forward.

> <u>ATTENDANCE</u>:
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> Staff would like improved strategies for dealing with students who exhibit chronic absenteeism. Stakeholders recognize that the pandemic had a detrimental impact on attendance and, for some students who already had attendance concerns, the pandemic has exacerbated this situation for those students.
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> <u>BULLYING/CONFLICT/MEAN BEHAVIOUR</u>:
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> Some stakeholders noted that social media is a negative influence on the wellness of our students (see also: technology: social media).
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> There is an appreciation for consequences, when appropriately applied, for students who demonstrate inappropriate behaviour. Parent stakeholders expressed a concern that responding to bullying, conflict and/or mean behaviour needs to remain a strong focus in schools.
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> Some stakeholders discussed the concept of "typical boy behaviour" and noted that this is not an acceptable excuse for poor behaviour as there needs to be a consistent approach.
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> <u>PEER RELATIONSHIPS</u>:
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> Stakeholders repeatedly identified that students do not seem to naturally know how to interact with each other; this has been impacted by the isolation of the Pandemic. Can we find ways to increasingly teach socialization?
>
> How can parents best place the responsibility back on students to take care of their own concerns? Some stakeholders noted that parents are too quick to rush in and solve problems and this is not building student resilience (see also: *parents*).

<u>SUPPORT SERVICES / SUPPORT STAFF</u>:

Stakeholders would like to see access to more services, such as Speech, Occupational Therapy, etc.

<u>TEACHERS AND TEACHING</u>:

Teacher stakeholders expressed that they often have an abundance of information and it is helpful to have the support of individuals like the Division Principals to help make sense of the information.

There is a strong expression that teachers are currently at their capacity and, therefore, there is a heightened sensitivity to new programs or directions.

Teachers expressed that they take note of parent appreciation in various forms; parents expressed an interest in knowing more about how they can support and appreciate teachers. Stakeholders wondered if there are ways in which parents and volunteers could inject more time into the teachers' day (see also: *parents*). For instance, can we encourage more parents to become involved in coaching?

One suggestion is to create a document or shared site for ideas and strategies to support teachers.

Parent stakeholders expressed an appreciation for our teachers' flexibility during the Pandemic.

Team Teaching programs are appreciated as an alternative to requiring Educational Assistants.

How can we improve our "flip" to online learning during the days when transportation is canceled? Stakeholders expressed a desire for a better plan.

<u>TECHNOLOGY</u>:

Students are now far savvier with respect to digital tools; there is a new normal for students to utilize *YouTube, Screen Castify*, etc. Some stakeholders noted that there is now too much technology and that they would like to see the amount of time spent on devices reduced.

One stakeholder group expressed appreciation for digital student records.

Stakeholders appreciate the increased competency with remote access and would like to see more live-streaming of events. Live-streaming school events (ie., concerts) opens up the school for remote family members.

Stakeholders noted that there was (and still is) a technological inequity with respect to Internet access in rural areas; this added a complication to learning during the times where remote learning was mandatory.

> <u>CELL PHONES</u>:
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> Stakeholders expressed a concern that the excessive recording available through cell phones is limiting student privacy. How do we teach students the importance of privacy? The need for cell phones in classrooms is disputed with opposing views: some noted that this is a powerful device for learning, and others noted that it is a distraction.
>
> <u>SOCIAL MEDIA</u>:
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> Stakeholders would like a better understanding of how to reduce "mean behaviours" online. More social media training would be appreciated.

<u>TRANSPORTATION</u>:

Stakeholders expressed appreciation for the attitude and service of our drivers. One aspect that was identified and appreciated is that the drivers call and introduce themselves and engage with families.

Stakeholders raised driver remuneration as a concern; noting that they have heard that it is challenging, at present, to attract drivers.

The 2.4 km walk distance was suggested as being too unrealistic for many families. Additionally, stakeholders noted that this penalizes families who are working and cannot bring their children to school. One suggestion is to consider a flat fee for all riders.

UNFINISHED LEARNING:

Teacher stakeholders identified that the significant benchmarking, conducted at the beginning of the year, seemed overwhelming at the time - but now they can see the benefit of better understanding the impact of strategies on growth.

UNIVERSITY:

How do we change the focus for students that University is the only way to go after high school? There are great options for trade studies or other approaches, and a heightened focus on university enrolment may have a detrimental impact on our students' self-perception and mental health.

WELLNESS / MENTAL HEALTH:

The notion was expressed that everyone needs to have a moment to pause and be present; to gain some momentum from what we have accomplished thus far. Wellness can be improved by recognizing the many successes we have already accomplished, despite the adversity of the Pandemic.

Stakeholders indicated that they can "see" the impact of the Pandemic on the mental health of staff and students.

Stakeholders noted that the Health Curriculum is from 2002; much has changed since then.

WORK EXPERIENCE and WORLD OF WORK:

The Chamber of Commerce stakeholders indicated a desire for greater involvement in Work Experience programming. The Division should continue to support a diverse array of perspectives regarding career choices after graduation; notably, that there are significant needs within the trades. Stakeholders wondered if there is a perspective among students that "University is the only way to go."

Stakeholders identified that conversation about trades should start earlier than in high school.

Some stakeholders expressed a concern that Indigenous students may have a more challenging time accessing employment and that it will be necessary to consider strategies to overcome the challenge of transportation, as this is the key issue for many Indigenous students.

There is, apparently, a problem with retiring tradespeople within the Registered Apprenticeship Program. How can we assist in removing these barriers? How can we best appeal to businesses to take on more apprentices?