



MEMORANDUM

March 5, 2024
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 1: Division Foundational Statements Board Policy 2: Role of the Board Board Policy 12: Role of the Superintendent
ADDITIONAL REFERENCE	BP 1: Vision, Foundational Statements BP 2: Education Planning and Programming <i>Education Act: 19-23, 33, 196-197</i>
SUBJECT	STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT REPORT

PURPOSE

For information. No recommendation required.

BACKGROUND

The Board is charged with the responsibility of providing, for its students and their parents, an education system organized and operated in the students' best interests. It exercises this responsibility through setting of local educational policy and the wise use of resources. The Preamble for the *Education Act* notes:

“... education is a shared responsibility and requires collaboration, engagement and empowerment of all partners in the education system to ensure that all students achieve their potential.”

Furthermore, Board Responsibilities (s. 33(1)(c) notes that a board, as a partner in education, has the responsibility to

(c) provide, where appropriate, for the engagement of parents, students, staff and the community, including municipalities and the local business community, in board matters, including the board's plans and the achievement of goals and targets within those plans.

In upholding those responsibilities, the Board of Trustees engages Parkland School Division stakeholders, consisting of Elders, parents, staff, students, community members and local government members to provide insights and wisdom in setting the strategic Education Plan for 2024-2027.

This Stakeholder Engagement Report summarizes the feedback received from stakeholders, and includes all items shared for consideration, as received, up to February 22, 2024.

This Stakeholder Engagement Report additionally serves as the Engagement Summary for the November 22, 2023 held at Westview School.

Survey responses are included as received. Survey responses are edited for spelling and identifiable information is redacted as required. Where prudent, the Report sorts stakeholder comments into thematic topics; however, it is possible that one quote could be categorized in multiple ways. The comments are summarized per-section, and a summary precedes each section.

Administration would be pleased to respond to any questions.

SJ:kz



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY REPORT

FEBRUARY, 2024

Presented to the Board of Trustees, March 5, 2024

Scott Johnston, Associate Superintendent, Education and System Services

Resources: Parkland School Division Stakeholder School Summaries

BACKGROUND

The Board of Trustees engages stakeholders throughout the year to review and refresh the Division's Education Plan. Educational stakeholders, including parents, school council executive and members, school staff and the larger community provide great input into the direction set forth in the education planning process.

Parkland School Division held an open stakeholder engagement evening on November 22, 2023 at our newly constructed Westview School in Stony Plain, Alberta. The evening provided an opportunity for stakeholders to share their concerns and accolades, and also to participate in focused conversation on one of three topical areas, based on their individual choices:

- Workplace Wellness,
- Community, Equity and/or Belonging, and
- Teaching and Learning – 2024 and Beyond.

Engagement events provide an opportunity to hear directly from stakeholders, and to reveal considerations for future planning. Specifically, the November engagement occurs at a time when our schools are reviewing data from the previous year, and adjusting strategies for improvement, accordingly.

For our November 22 engagement, a total of 215 individuals received or acknowledged an interest in participation. Of the 215 who expressed an interest, the evening event had 119 participants in total.

The engagement event provided an opportunity for Parkland School Division to launch a permanent, ongoing engagement tool through our ***Share-A-Thought*** survey process. The intent of the continuously open surveys – available at individual schools, and for the Division as a whole – is to gather perspectives in an ongoing manner. Stakeholders at the engagement event were invited to add their perspectives to the divisional survey, and the survey for the division and at individual schools remains open.

Participants were asked to consider their table conversations, and add their perspectives through the survey process. QR Codes, for easy access, are posted in schools and the links to the surveys remain continuously available on school and divisional web pages as an easy access "quick link".

STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

This Stakeholder Engagement Summary report provides the feedback received from stakeholders through our engagement process and through the surveys up to the time of publication (November 22, 2023 through to February 22, 2024). The contextual summaries additionally draw from the shared perspectives of our Administrative Lead Team.

The following sections include all of the thoughts received through the stakeholder engagement evening and subsequent survey process. Comments were corrected for spelling only, and identifiable statements were redacted.

Important note for the reader:

As indicated, the following sections directly share the feedback received from various stakeholders, and they are compiled herein for consideration and transparency. It is important to note that the inclusion of these comments does not imply endorsement or agreement by the Board. We acknowledge that, from our experience, some of the statements listed below may contain factual or procedural inaccuracies.

The Board respects the diverse perspectives of all stakeholders, recognizing that these views contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the educational matters at hand. However, the Board may not necessarily concur with the opinions, suggestions, or conclusions presented.

The Board is committed to making educational planning decisions that are in the best interest of Parkland School Division as a whole, considering a wide range of factors beyond the stakeholder feedback.

For this report, comments are grouped based on overall themes, and are presented as follows:

- On Behaviour, Conflict, Safety and Matters of Civility;
- On Communication;
- On Community, Equity and/or Belonging, Including Respect for Diversity;
- On Matters Related to Instruction;
- On Specialized Services;
- On Wellness;
- On Operational or Organizational Considerations; and
- On Appreciation

Each section begins with an overall stakeholder summary. The comments are presented as received, and any statement, provided next to a bullet point, is directly derived from stakeholder feedback.

Stakeholders express both concerns and aspirations for the school system, reflecting a deep commitment to creating a nurturing, inclusive, and effective educational environment. A recurring theme is the need for enhanced support for students with learning and behavioral challenges, with many expressing that current resources do not adequately meet these students' needs. There's a palpable concern that while efforts are being made to accommodate certain students, the balance of attention might inadvertently affect the quality of education for other students. Classroom behavior emerges as a critical issue, with disruptive behaviors not only affecting teaching and learning but also contributing to a broader concern about school safety and the overall school environment.

The impact of targeted mean behaviour by students on some families is expressed as an inadequacy of the impact of anti-bullying measures; stakeholders suggest a disconnect between existing policies and their effective implementation. Stakeholders are calling for a more robust civil culture, underscored by clear communication and active involvement of the entire school community in fostering a safe and respectful environment.

There is also a strong desire for more community-building initiatives that encourage student-led groups, promote kindness, and facilitate engagement among students, parents, and teachers. Such activities are seen as vital to fostering a sense of belonging and mutual respect, and that this is deemed essential for a healthy school culture. The feedback also highlights concerns about the socialization process within the school system, including the need for respect towards authority, adherence to a coherent code of conduct, and initiatives that support students' social, emotional, and intellectual development. This feedback aligns to previous years' stakeholder engagement summaries; aligning particularly to what we have heard from student engagements.

The aftermath of COVID-19 on students' perceptions of education's value, alongside concerns about vaping and the behavior of specific students, indicates broader issues of health, wellness, and discipline that stakeholders believe need addressing. Some comments may fit multiple categories, and issues of wellness and health are taken up later in this summary.

The community's feedback paints a picture of Parkland School Division at a crossroads, facing challenges in balancing diverse needs while striving to cultivate an environment where every student feels supported, safe, and valued. Stakeholders envision a system that not only addresses immediate behavioral and safety concerns but also commits to the long-term development of a school culture that champions kindness, inclusion, and academic excellence.

Direct Stakeholder Comments Received:

- There are not enough supports in the classrooms for students with learning or behaviour needs.
- My concern is that [our school] has become a last resort for special needs children within PSD that are not having their needs met in traditional public school. I appreciate that [our school] is trying to put more EAs in the classroom to support the teachers and all students. Years ago, upon joining [our school], we were told that [our school] was not able to accommodate special needs. When/why did that change? Are "average" students getting their learning needs met?
- I hear a lot of stories about students being generally disrespectful to each other, to teachers and to the facilities. Generally, my kids enjoy school and their teachers, there are many

complaints regarding disruptive kids taking over classes and missing out on activities because of the same people's behaviour over and over. I love that there are more clubs and community building groups.

- I am finding that the kids that aren't in the office or causing issues in the classroom are being left to fend for themselves, whereas the focus is on the students who are constantly disrupting the class or coming to school without the proper tools for class/ attendance problems. There is no motivation for these kids to do better when the focus is on the ones trying to get them to school and focused to just be there.
- I think that recess should be separated for K-2 and 3-6. My kinder just started and is terrified of the big kids (grade 5&6) at recess. They run and scream & are very intimidating. I know of other schools that have separate recess for the older grades or ease the kinders [kindergarten students] in towards the end of the year. It's a lot of chaos for the little kids.
- Children need to feel safe from harassment and bullying, junior highs need more teachers and better options and better access to the library, school fields need to be safe to play on and free of gopher holes, would be lovely if the community school had a sense of community back in it.
- I think we need to have more groups that are children led. Have the kids be a bigger part of creating groups they might be interested in order to find the cohort of kids that might be right for them.
- As a parent who was left in the dark when my child was threatened with physical harm, I believe that updates should be made to policies regarding this. I felt completely alone and ignored by staff and it wasn't until the superintendent reached out to me that I was finally given some sense that my children would be safe.
- I am concerned with the number of cases of bullying which I am aware of at [our school]. I am also concerned with a lack of information as well as communication with parents about what strategies the school uses to contend with bullying. We relocated here from another School Division which had anti-bullying instruction and culture that was robust. The absence of this (or perhaps just need for more communication about this) has been our biggest surprise in relocating to Parkland School Division and [school]. I am aware that dealing with bullying is potentially one of the issues that could be a resource issue. There are only so many cases staff can attend to. At the same time, I do feel this a school culture challenge and wonder if some assessment can take place at the School Division level for the reference of the Trustees, Superintendent and School Leadership everywhere about this issue. Without assessment, I don't know how the School Division will benchmark or monitor a problem of higher-than-normal levels of bullying. I feel uncomfortable hearing many anecdotes and not feeling like there is a Division strategy or just not knowing what that strategy is. While school leadership has been really receptive to one on one conversations, I really feel that all families need communication about an overall strategy and values articulation about student rights to safety, protection from harm, and support when harm occurs. I think the kids would come right on board with an anti-bullying culture. I've seen it happen at another Division. This is the change I would most like to see at [school] as well as the entire School Division.
- Bullying and taunting, as well as damaging school property that the other children cannot use properly! (Bathroom)
- You do have a bullying protocol but I would like to see it have more priority. Maybe more assemblies, some role play about bullying and how to prevent it.
- Let's prepare young people to be thoughtful participants in society with strong base of life skills, so that they can be critical thinkers and display kindness, courage, and creativity.
- I think engagement (between parents and teachers as well as student to student) can bridge some of those gaps in a consistent school culture. I've noticed my daughters have a

difficult time understanding how to enforce boundaries with different kids and that teacher enforcement of boundaries varies widely throughout the school. Teachers have a difficult job to set a tone of respect when kids are coming to school with very different ideas of what respect looks like. Someone in our group suggested school potlucks to get the community together. I think student to student engagement that is moderated by teachers can also set a town for culture too.

- Get kindness back. It doesn't cost anything. Do kindness challenges with your class, or within your school. Acts of kindness, like holding a door, taking turns on the swing, or as simple as please and thank you, cost nothing, yet change a mindset. Wouldn't it be wonderful if those children learn to be kind, and in turn, go home and teach their parents how to be kind? What kind of societal ripple would that create? There would be no more judgment, no more bullying, no more segregation or discrimination. And, like small children, we would see other people as people.
- My children have been enrolled in PSD for 10 years now. So the experiences that I bring to the table are credible and can be used as a resource. From what I have observed, there has been a significant lack of Socialization in the school system for quite some time. For reference only (Socialization: the process of learning the expected behavior's, values, norms, and social skills of individuals who occupy particular roles in society) School is the institution where secondary socialization occurs. Children adopt the attitudes of the wider society through socialization; Therefore we must understand that it is our job as parents to encourage the school system to put into place social competence.
 - The following questions are important for me to ask:
 - What are the values, norms, and expected behaviors of PSD
 - Do you feel that they are being represented or followed/displayed by the students and staff?
 - How are our children taught to obey authority?
 - What are some socially sanctioned goals put into place?
 - What are we doing to ensure our children are functioning socially, emotionally, and intellectually so they can achieve social acceptance and academic achievement?
 - How are the children learning to be independent?
 - How are the children learning to form bonds?
 - How are the children learning work ethic?
 - Conformity plays a large part in child development at school, so what are the-standards, rules, or laws with which our students are being asked to comply?

It is important to remember that the-standards, rules, or laws with which our students are being asked to comply frame behavior's in a manner such that they produce obedience to authority

I have seen a large lack of respect displayed by our students towards our teachers and by our principal towards our teachers. I feel that an overall assessment of the above questions may be warranted in order to instill the fundamentals of learning back into our school system.

- We need gentleness breaks. We need to acknowledge that we have to allow the teachers and students to slow down. More welcoming activities or groups for new students or kids looking to make friends. Especially at the high school level.
- Code of Conduct for students being the same protocol across all the schools in PSD. Including dress code and expected student behaviour.

- The importance/relevance of school took a massive hit; courtesy of COVID & lockdown. I find that my children don't view education as a means to secure a "future". After seeing how our lives were drastically altered, my kids lost all faith that there's a point to school/career. This seems to be a growing sentiment---one that schools need to try to counter.
- I think it is very important to teach children about kindness, inclusion, acceptance, diversity. We are all different, whether those differences be visible or not. We must be kind to each other. We must accept each other regardless, or in spite, of differences. Our current world allows us to bully and discriminate without repercussions. We need to be kind.
- Build strong citizen by being sensible to the society around us.
- There seems to be a growing trend of disconnection amongst students. It seems that many kids have school & work as their main focus, vs having down-time & socialization. Perhaps it's time to consider introducing ways for kids to interact? Dances? More clubs?
- I am concerned to hear my students referring to the new unisex bathroom as the "vapers bathroom". When they have the option, they choose not to use that bathroom to avoid walking into a stall filled with vapors. That is horrific! Why can't this be monitored? If the entire student body is aware of the problem, surely admin and teaching staff is aware.
- There is one student in particular that is becoming increasingly unstable. He's menacing, and has no qualms trying to induce fear in other students. How long will this be allowed, before being fully addressed?
- I am concerned about the difficulty in removing instructors that should not be teaching.
- Student safety and parental communication has been a problem at our school. My children have been both physically and verbally assaulted with little to no communication. When we were communicated with, it was very vague and made us feel unsure if we should continue their education there.
- It is important that teachers and staff truly care and follow the school's guidelines while fostering a positive environment where students can feel safe and respected.
- I am dismayed to hear from our student that there are some other students smoking weed near the school. However, it may be legal for some students over age 18 to use cannabis inside or on their own home property, I believe it is illegal on public property and should not be tolerated around the school or in the parking lot.
- I believe [our school] needs to reconsider its locked door policy! I've recently been informed that as soon as 1st class starts the doors are locked and only opened during lunch. If students have a spare they can only be in the library. I find this to be terribly oppressive. Is this a school or a jail? I understand this is aimed at addressing certain issues but in my opinion, there are other options that would not restrict my child movements and negatively impact her daily life.
- The general safety of students, as there is a guardian who is unafraid to confront parents, and well as students when it concerns her grandson. This cannot be accepted and will end up warranting intervention from the authorities if it persists.

ON COMMUNICATION

The feedback received from stakeholders captures concerns regarding communication practices within the school system, touching upon various aspects of interaction between parents, teachers, and school administrations. A common thread is the call for more effective, streamlined, and modernized communication channels to enhance the engagement and participation of the school community.

Stakeholders, at times, express frustration over the inconsistency and inefficiency in communication, particularly noting the variance in teacher responsiveness and the use of multiple platforms, which often leads to confusion and information overload. Notably, there are differing perspectives of how each stakeholder wants to receive communication from the school. For some stakeholders with students in multiple schools, there is a desire for a universal communication standard, like the *Remind* application or *Class Dojo*, to facilitate clear and consistent messages received from schools.

The feedback received also underscores the importance of timely and relevant information sharing, with suggestions for improving the delivery of school newsletters and school email processes to avoid clutter, and ensure that critical information is not overlooked. Stakeholders suggested the idea of improved segmenting of communication to target specific groups, and to tailor information more effectively.

Concerns about the current state of parental engagement and the effectiveness of school councils present concerns, for some, regarding issues of trust and involvement within the school community. Stakeholders suggest that addressing concerns promptly and transparently can help restore faith in the system, advocating for a more collaborative approach to problem-solving and decision-making.

Further feedback, specific to our surveys, highlights a need for privacy and anonymity in gathering input from parents; suggesting that fear of identification may hinder honest participation. Ensuring anonymity and clarifying the use of collected data could improve response rates and the quality of feedback received. Notably, however, schools indicated that the Share-a-Thought survey, when anonymous, created some issues with inappropriate responses, and left the schools with no avenue for response.

In essence, the stakeholders are seeking a more integrated, efficient, and respectful communication framework that acknowledges the diverse needs of the school community, enhances parental involvement, and supports the educational and developmental needs of students in a cohesive manner. The feedback calls for a shift towards more adaptive, user-friendly, and transparent communication practices to bridge gaps, foster trust, and build a stronger, more engaged school community.

Direct Stakeholder Comments Received:

- Encouraging the Board to offer reasonable priority to concerns/suggestions made by School Council to administration wherein administration finds the concern/suggestion to be valid - example: a request to have facility services visit a school to discuss ongoing parking lot concerns. School Council loses the faith of the school community when concerns are not addressed within a reasonable time frame (referencing a belief that concerns won't be addressed any way so what's the point).
- There are some teachers that communicate well with parents; however, there are others that rarely connect with parents. There also doesn't seem to be a standard for replying or getting back to parents via email. It would seem reasonable to have a standard guideline for teachers to follow when communicating with parents. The [school] newsletter should be sent out at the beginning of each month, especially if there are dates on there that parents should be aware of. There were some months last year where it was sent halfway through. Finally, [school] needs to get up to date on technology. Many other schools ([Other school] for example) have apps that allow teachers to communicate easily with parents and vice versa. The communication style at [our school] is archaic and should be updated.

- As a new kindergarten parent it is very hard to keep up with all the updates and communication. Do I look on the app the teacher uses, did she send an email, do I look in PowerSchool, or do I look in the website? Our teacher let us know teacher interviews were open and it honestly took me an hour where to find the sign up because there are so many forms/platforms of communication. It's hard and overwhelming.
- I appreciate when teachers are willing to reach out and discuss child specific strengths or concerns. I like to know what happens while my child is at school. I feel like sometimes child specific communication is missed but strong points for willing to meet, [and send] emails about classroom specific things. I like how [teacher] sends updates through *Remind* and [teacher] reached out to me when she realized I didn't book [child] an interview. I like using the Remind app best.
- I am interested in learning more about [school] regarding each of the items listed. I would be happy to attend this meeting to learn more specifics about [school] and would appreciate the opportunity to listen and participate in these discussions.
- I would like the opportunity to participate in the PSD engagement evening. I enjoy having the opportunity to provide my thoughts about the positives and negatives of our school and learning what is working or isn't working in other school communities. I have many thoughts related to the change in reporting periods, specialized services, student supports/wellness, school community and would enjoy the opportunity to connect with other stakeholders in this regard. Thank you.
- Universal school/parent/teacher communication. That may look like the Remind app, or dojo in the younger grades. Strong school to home communication is key to connection and accountability for students.
- I am interested in supporting my student to make deeper connections with what they are learning in class and how it related to the life of my student. How do I get feedback to prepare for these experiences, how do I ensure that my student's leaning is reflected and they know how exactly what to improve upon, and that they have supports on how to do it, and or do things differently to improve their outcomes and class marks?
- It would be nice if communication on behalf of the school was more frequent and clear.
- [our school] used to have a great communication with all parents. Now I find we receive little to no information unless it's found on social media which I do not access on a regular basis. More communication to parents is needed.
- Please shorten the weekly email from the principal. There is so much extra information each week, that we end up missing the important information. Perhaps a separate email to parents of student doing PATs, or for 6-9 parents only if the information pertains to them? The general email would be more helpful if it were concise and included only necessary information.
- I have been very impressed with on-going communication that I have received from my child's teachers and leadership team.
- My thoughts are actually about this survey. If you remove the question which asks for an email address then more parents may respond. Parents could feel uncomfortable sharing their thoughts when they can be identified by their email address, especially if their response is raising a concern or some dissatisfaction. I am not clear if the survey is anonymous or not. I assume it isn't as it is not possible to complete it without giving an email address. I am a researcher and we only collect personally identifiable information if it is absolutely necessary (which is very rare). I'm not sure why an email address is necessary. You give the option for people to share their identity at the end, so I don't think the email question is necessary (or at least it shouldn't be mandatory). So, if you want parents to feel comfortable sharing honest thoughts, it is very important to make the survey anonymous and state this very clearly in the introductory statement. The introduction should also clarify

how data will be used and shared (internally and externally). I hope this is helpful. I am happy to review future surveys from a researcher's perspective if needed.

- My daughter does not have a cell phone but there are times when I need to get a message to her. Her teacher only communicates through email which doesn't allow for quick responses. I don't always want to bother the office with something that isn't urgent. I've found it very helpful at other schools when teachers use apps in communicating with parents.

Through the survey process, and at our Engagement Event, we receive significant stakeholder feedback that vividly illustrates the complexity and contentious nature of discussions surrounding diversity, inclusion, equity, accessibility, and the curriculum within the school system. Our Administrative Procedure 390: Community, Equity and Belonging takes up these issues from an operational perspective.

Stakeholders express a wide range of opinions, highlighting deep divisions and strong feelings about how these topics are addressed in schools. On one side, there is a strong call for more inclusive and comprehensive education that embraces diversity, promotes equity, and provides a safe and supportive environment for all students, including those who are from diverse cultural backgrounds, those who require specialized supports and those from the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Some stakeholders emphasize the importance of early exposure to diversity and inclusion training to combat stereotypes, foster empathy, and prepare students for a global society. Advocates for this approach argue that it is essential to create a more accepting and understanding school environment that reflects the real world's complexities. Conversely, some stakeholders express concern that the focus on diversity and inclusion may overshadow traditional academic subjects and they express a further concern that discussions around gender identity and sexual orientation may be inappropriate for students or not best handled in school. These individuals express that there is a potential for political and ideological beliefs to infiltrate the curriculum and influence children in ways that may conflict with their family values. There is also apprehension about the physical safety and comfort of students in relation to gender-neutral facilities. These diverse perspectives are further polarized through representation in different ways by different forms of media. Overall, stakeholders express a strong desire for clear, respectful dialogue around these issues.

Stakeholders are calling for transparency regarding the content being taught and the methods used to address diversity and inclusion. There is a request for balance, ensuring that while striving to be inclusive, schools do not alienate or stigmatize students with differing views or backgrounds.

The diverse feedback received through our surveys and through our engagement processes also underscores a significant concern for mental health initiatives. There is a request to respond to a perceived need for supportive spaces that allow students to explore their identities safely and without judgment. Notably, there's a consensus about the importance of kindness, respect, and empathy as foundational values that should permeate all areas of education.

In navigating these diverse perspectives, the challenge for Parkland School Division exists in finding a way to respect diverse viewpoints while upholding principles of equity and inclusion. The feedback indicates a critical need for dialogue, education, and policies that consider the welfare of all students, ensuring that schools remain places of learning, growth, and acceptance for everyone.

Direct Stakeholder Comments Received:

- With so many discussions about inclusion, acceptance, diversity, and bullying, there seems to be no easy solution. When I think about these topics, I look to my children. When you are at the playground, you see kids play together. They don't see race, religion, socio-economic status, political leaning, gender orientation. They just see other kids. As the kids get older, they start seeing how their parents identify other people. And that's when race, religion, socio-economic status, political leaning, gender orientation, and others become factors. Why? Why do they matter? People are people, and they are allowed to be however they want to be, and shouldn't feel like they are being judged for something that they can, or can't, control. It seems that basic kindness is lacking, not just in schools, but in the community, and the world as a whole. Kindness starts at home. But what if children have never experienced kindness at home? This creates a problem at school. (PSD)
- The recent conversations around diversity and inclusion are fantastic and absolutely need to continue. Tackling racism, gender equality and acceptance of the LGBTQ community are

necessary and long overdue. At the same time, I feel a much needed and essential part of the conversation is missing which is ableism and disability inclusion. Students with disabilities (physical, cognitive, neurological etc.) are constantly and consistently excluded, forgotten, under supported and left behind. A large missing piece is teacher education and mentorship around disability rights and inclusion. Another piece is physical accessibility to all spaces. Neurodiverse affirming practice is completely absent in the school division.

- PSD should consider working with ASCA on the upcoming "walk alongside" engagement they are planning.
- Race - sub section of Community, Equity and/or Belonging. The book "Courageous Conversations about Race" is being used as a component of staff EDIAR professional development. I thought I would share this idea.
- Consider supporting EDIAR in classrooms by having staff spending time to really know the students in their classes. Students can optionally share details about themselves through private means (such as Google Form) with their teachers in order share things like: preferred name, pronouns, home status, ethnicity, family members, etc as well as things that help them feel welcome and brave, things that are hurtful to them or that they find uncomfortable within their classrooms. These optionally methods for students to share can be very eye opening for teachers and allow for an opportunity to create a thoughtful inclusive learning space. Administration shared at the stakeholder engagement event that they do not focus on truly getting to know their students in a deeper way.
- In reference to EDIAR consider ensuring that curricular support materials (example: novels, stories, guest speakers) along with the wording and names chosen to be included in scenarios, examples, assignment questions, etc. are thoughtfully constructed to be fully inclusive - race, gender, belief systems, ethnicity, persons with disabilities. We should be representing our students' equality within their school work.
- I was disappointed to still see well-meaning parents who are afraid and believe that diversity and inclusion is being "rammed down their throats" because it is actually being addressed in school. This is all the more reason to ensure it is shared and normalized in the school system.
- How can the school, other children and other parents support children with disabilities and better foster their own abilities and community skills?
- I do not believe teaching that there are more than two genders is appropriate for elementary or junior high school aged children. I also disagree with children being encouraged to keep these teachings and views secret from parents. Students should not be ostracized for not joining the queer club or not conforming to gender ideology. Gender neutral bathrooms are not a safe environment for any student.
- We need a classroom designed for specialized needs/learning abilities.
- Does the school board have any intention on making a statement in regards to the newly proposed legislation?
- The curriculum needs to change. Stop focusing everything around the Indigenous and start focusing on Canadian history. History is history for a reason whether what happened was wrong or right. If we can't learn from our actual CANADIAN history why are we living in Canada? You try to teach these kids to accept who they are and not to bully. Asking children what they identify as and teaching LGBTQ when they don't understand those concepts is horrifying. Pushing unacceptable views and misinformation in their faces doesn't help. Take it back to the curriculum from 20-30 years ago. Simple math, history, reading, and writing!! French should be left as an option for grade 7, not mandatory grade 5. If I wanted my child learning French I would of put them in a French school. The teachers need to spend time in the classrooms instead of constantly sending them out to learn the unacceptable new curriculum. I'm surprised we haven't lost more of our great teachers because of this. I also

see more and more parents not caring whether or not their kids go to school, and now understanding why.

- I am extremely concerned that the far-right extremist element in Alberta, will be pushing their anti-LGBTQ, bigoted, parental rights nonsense here, as they have in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. I would like to know how PSD plans to deal with pressure from this element. I want to be assured that our 2SLGBTQ students are protected from this hatred. I would like to attend this upcoming meeting to ensure that there are advocates there, on behalf of these marginalized and at-risk students, and to counter any loud bigotry that may occur.
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (IDEA) training for students in elementary school is of paramount importance in our ever-evolving society. These formative years lay the foundation for a child's understanding of the world and fostering an inclusive and equitable environment is essential to prepare them for a diverse and interconnected world. IDEA training cultivates empathy and understanding among students. By exposing children to different cultures, perspectives, and experiences, it helps them develop a sense of empathy and respect for others. IDEA training in elementary school promotes social justice and equity. It educates students about the historical and ongoing issues related to discrimination, prejudice, and inequality. Research shows that early exposure to diversity and inclusive education can mitigate stereotypes and biases. By instilling values of empathy, social justice, global competence and reduced prejudice from an early age, we equip our children with the skills and mindset needed to create a better world for themselves and future generations. Ultimately, in the aim of also reducing bullying and fostering stronger connections.
- I would like to have more information about the diversity and equity content being taught in the schools.
- I have concerns that the moves in Saskatchewan will embolden our current government to put parental rights above the rights of a child. How does PSD plan to safeguard children and give them autonomy and safe places? This should be planned for before anything happens. It's better to be proactive rather than reactive. I also want to know how PSD is doing now that they have brought in their own social workers and psychologists. Are needs being met and has it improved access to care? I specifically want to know if there has been improvement and what those improvements have been.
- I am worried about LGBTQ2+ proponents in the near future. As per Alberta Education Act, we acknowledge that school can teach religion and sexuality, but not promote it. It also states that parental consent on such education or activities is required. Moreover, Alberta Education Act does not state or allow that the school can celebrate or promote any Political/Gender/Group Ideology or a way of living or force it on other students with different beliefs, religions, and cultural groups, especially children.
- I am disappointed with the continuous highlighting of sexual topics as schools move towards the adoption of the SOGI curriculum. I stand against the sexualization of children.
- Would like to have open dialogue around gender as it relates to student sexual education/ biology, pride events, forced pronoun usage (and proper language instruction), bathroom access/ student safety, athletic opportunities, female-safe spaces, library books and the promotion of the GSA throughout the school. Additionally, I look forward to hearing about how diversity and equity plays into real-world applications in the education sector for K-9.
- As much as they're doing their best to be respectful, teachers using they/them (gender non-conforming) pronouns on students that have personally requested for other preferred pronouns isn't always the best.
- My thought...I think [school] does a wonderful job and I have had no concerns thus far. However, in regards to the curriculum as a whole, I just want to be able to send my children to school to learn the fundamentals such as math, reading and writing. My concern moving

forward is that they are not indoctrinated with political beliefs or ideologies, and the ever-evolving recognition of gender identity. I will reiterate, I have not had an issue with[school] regarding this, I could not sing your praises enough! This is just a concern of mine moving forward into the future.

- Concerned voice on the inclusivity of students' collective programs and the diversity of their respective organizations.
- I am concerned about kids' mental health, how to encourage community after going through a pandemic that shattered theirs. How to reduce bullying to foster community through inclusion and diversity.
- We are extremely unhappy with the fact that there are teachers who are pushing their own political views on to our child. Teachers are influential to a child and their personal views and beliefs should be left out of the class as should any LGBTQ teaching or celebration. This does not include all students and if you are truly looking at being more inclusive then you should celebrate being Canadian as this is what we all are. By celebrating the rare few kids who actually are transgender you are encouraging other kids who may need or want that same attention to say they are transgender just to get it. When you start adding in hormone therapy then you destroy any chance that child has to change their mind again and reproduce. This is evil and you are hurting kids who just want to feel like they belong.
- The idea of radicalized gender ideology being supported by the school is concerning. The 'pronoun day' confirms ideas that are not true and it is hurting our children by lying to them. Sure, gender dysphoria exists. But telling the masses we can 'convert' is causing immense hurt to your children.
- Where is grammar and writing? Where is boy and girl? What happened to discipline? We should Stop coddling our children, they should learn respect not identification of an unknown being. We should Stop letting the government who's only interest is to raise a stupid generation make our decisions.
- You should keep lgbtq2s+ in the curriculum. Just because some parents can't wrap their heads around, shouldn't mean schools have to be like that too.
- I worry about the political climate and its impact on our kids' education. Principal has been a champion for inclusion and diversity, but what about other schools? Will PSD bow to pressure from the angry, vocal minority and start violating the rights of students with regards to their gender identities or sexual orientation? What steps is the division taking to protect these students from bullying, or from being targeted by those students who have been indoctrinated into this harmful way of thinking? How can we, as a community, make sure our kids' lives and mental health don't become a political football?
- I feel that kids don't need to be pushed or included in the discussions around the current LGBTQ+ conversations. Especially in the K - 6 years. I think that should be left to the parents at home. This is not because I am against it or for it or anything sexist in anyway. I just feel that it does not need to be in schools at that age range. There is enough pressure on kids as it is and this one topic can be left for the higher grade levels. Let kids be kids they don't care about that stuff and don't need to worry about it. Teach them the skills that will help them navigate life, math, spelling things like that which we send them to school for in the first place. Leave the political crap out as it is more adult conversations that adults should be dealing with and worrying about.
- In my opinion, the primary mandate of school is to provide students with academic skills and knowledge (i.e. reading, writing, math, science, history, etc) to enable them to succeed in a career or job in the future. Socialization is secondary and should only be basic skills to help them in engagement with the rest of the school children. Any ideological discussions (such as sexuality, religion (except in the case of Religion based schools) morality etc.) are the responsibility of parents. In addition, trying to erase or change what happened

historically is irresponsible as it is one of the ways that people learn - from the good things they have accomplished and the mistakes they have made.

- I am inquiring about the implementation of SOGI 123 and the hyper-sexualization of my children that it's results create. If in fact your following the ab outline stated here: www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca/education-in-alberta/healthy-schools-and-student-wellness/sogi. Then I am looking to opt both of my children out. I have no interest in introducing these subjects to my children at this age, regardless of orientation. Grade 6 and under.
- My thought is that subjects on transgendered sexuality should be left out of all grades for the foreseeable future. Teaching our children to accept those who appear differently than them and kindness towards everyone should be as far as they are taught and let the in-depth topics be covered at home. Topics as such can be confusing and misleading to young minds during a crucial time on their development.
- My thoughts on this subject (diversity, equity and human rights) are fairly strong. We in our house and within our immediate family have close relatives from all types of race, culture and belief systems. Our kids have been brought up to see and treat everyone as equal and so have their cousins. Our concerns lie with some of the "awareness" or "educational" content that has seemed to be more commonly being given to kids in school. From what I've seen or read, it's as much about how the message is given and from whom, as it is about the message itself. We agree that there are definitely people in our society that are not of the inclusive type in which we all are working to create. With that being said, I fear some of these messages could easily be taken by these kids as they are at fault of something or part of a group who is responsible for the problems we see in society with this subject. I guess I just have a tough time understanding the benefit or risk/reward for what I see as the majority of kids, already seeing society through an unbiased lens. There's always going to be some bad actors around, but I just feel like these initiatives are lumping the majority of these kids in with them with the risk of them feeling responsible for something negative that they are not guilty of, like I kind of said earlier. Our kids aren't perfect, but they definitely aren't of the racist or un-inclusive type. It is just my opinion at the end of the day, but I feel the more we bring this up to the kids, the more they will be prone to seeing the division between the groups.
- Gender questionable teams/change/washrooms.
- Curriculum to support diversity and inclusion, safe spaces for all and review of history that acknowledges and addresses systemic bias, and racism and prejudice is important. Communications courses or presentations that promote respectful dialogue despite differences would be great given the heightened social tensions and a lack of boundaries that is apparent post COVID.
- There is far TOO MUCH emphasis on Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Aboriginal history.
- As a visible minority in a school community that is increasing in diversity, I would like to collaborate and brainstorm ideas around normalizing diversity and inclusion.
- The curriculum needs to change. Stop focusing everything around the Indigenous and start focusing on Canadian history. History is history for a reason whether what happened was wrong or right. If we can't learn from our actual CANADIAN history why are we living in Canada? You try to teach these kids to accept who they are and not to bully. Asking children what they identify as and teaching LGBTQ when they don't understand those concepts is horrifying. Pushing unacceptable views and misinformation in their faces doesn't help. Take it back to the curriculum from 20-30 years ago. Simple math, history, reading, and writing!! French should be left as an option for grade 7, not mandatory grade 5. If I wanted my child to learn French I would have put them in a French school. The teachers need to spend time in the classrooms instead of constantly sending them out to learn the unacceptable new curriculum. I'm surprised we haven't lost more of our great teachers because of this. I also

see more and more parents not caring whether or not their kids go to school, and now understanding why.

- I hate that there are gender neutral washrooms. I hate that my daughters who have recently gotten their periods, need to try to manage that and all the symptoms that come along with menstruation (diarrhea, blood leaks, stained clothing, gas), in a washroom with boys just outside the doors. It was my absolute nightmare, not just as a pubescent girl, but throughout the entire time I had a period, to deal with it in public washrooms but I was lucky enough to have only women in there who could at least sympathize. My girls are horrified that they have to share this experience with everyone in the school.
- How are we indigenizing our schools and incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing and being?
- I was taken back by the Graduation speech the teachers had last week, where they said the [Indigenous students] were having a free feast at the school? So why is the school not just having one ceremony for all the kids they all attend do the same thing? why does there have to be different events? You have one school why not a free feast for the whole school everyone come together? Why is our children not getting a free feast? Why do we have to pay? We are already paying for Graduation why is it separated? Where I come from everyone is included there is no separation between Traveler children and children who go to school one party for all of them no segregation? I feel the school loves to celebrate different stuff but what about little Joe so who just goes to school works hard what do they get out of the school? Nothing because the parents who work damn hard have to pay extra! Does not make sense! Why not have a celebration for all the kids?
- What kinds of programs or programming is available at [our school] for First Nation, Metis and Inuit students. What is the success of this program? What is the attendance and participation of this program?
- Supporting Indigenous students with new curriculum geared to teach about Indigenous People's history and perspective, that may also have some traumatic themes.
- Social Studies primarily focus it seems has been indigenous history. Reconciliation is important. However, it seems there is a definite lack of sharing broader historical, political and cultural views for the students. I would be happy to discuss my thoughts on this at any time.

The feedback with respect to matters of instruction presents a multifaceted view of the instructional concerns and aspirations within the school system. This feedback captures a collective desire for a balanced educational experience that prioritizes academic rigor while also addressing the full slate of needs of students.

Stakeholders expressed some concerns about the perceived imbalance in the curriculum, with some feeling that there is too much emphasis on political agendas and not enough on core academic skills. This sentiment is juxtaposed with calls for more inclusive education, and that addresses the wide spectrum of student needs. Notably, from those requiring extra support in literacy and numeracy to students who require specialized support, and, alternatively for those identified as academically gifted. The stakeholders express a desire for programs that challenge every student and prepare them for post-secondary success and/or the world of work without neglecting their socio-emotional well-being.

The importance of community and school culture is highlighted as crucial for student engagement, with sports, extracurricular activities, and a welcoming atmosphere cited as key factors in encouraging school attendance. Yet, some stakeholders capture the concern over class sizes and the need for more support staff to ensure that teachers can adequately meet the diverse needs of their students.

Stakeholders also advocate for more professional development for teachers. This professional development should be targeted toward accommodating the diverse array of students and integrating technology into learning; the intent being to avoid leaving any child behind in the rapidly evolving educational landscape. Moreover, there is a call for curricular reforms that reflect Canada's real history and prepare students for a world increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence and digital technologies.

The feedback suggests a strong desire for educational practices that are non-partisan and focused on developing critical thinking, financial literacy, and life skills alongside traditional academic subjects. There is an evident concern about the transition challenges students face, particularly from Grade 9 to Grade 10, indicating a need for smoother academic pathways and better preparation for higher education and the workforce.

Overall, the stakeholders are seeking a more dynamic, responsive, and inclusive educational system that values academic excellence, supports diverse learning needs, fosters community engagement, and prepares students for the complexities of the modern world. Stakeholder commentary reinforces the PSD Vision – that “our students possess the confidence, resilience, insight and skills required to thrive in, and positively impact, the world;” and also our Mission – that “we assure supportive learning environments, meaningful experiences and healthy relationships that create opportunities to develop resilience, to gain diversity in perspectives and to achieve enduring success.”

Overall, the feedback calls for strategic adjustments in curriculum, instruction, and school culture to achieve our educational goals; emphasizing the need for collaboration, innovation, and a holistic approach to education.

Direct Stakeholder Comments Received:

- Math 10C seems to be a course that weeds kids out rather than building them up for success insight levels and then there is still a huge jump from there to Math 20-1 which leaves some students a bit overwhelmed and floundering even with extra tutoring. Is there a plan to fill this gap?
- I feel that the students are not receiving enough structure and guidance in their everyday learning and there is an overabundance of focused placed on political agendas in regard to equality and inclusion, forgetting the fundamentals of care and respect for every child who

attends these schools. The emphasis should be placed on academics and fundamental learning, not on the protection of particular groups of people.

- It is of vital importance to continue offering small group instruction for students that need extra support, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional skills (with a school counsellor in all grades). Regardless of the “learning loss” identified through the pandemic, children’s development is wide-ranging, especially for students who are neurodivergent. These programs are essential for continuing to provide inclusive public education.
- Having teachers collaborate, not just within a grade and subject but with other schools. For example, have teachers from multiple schools who are teaching Grade 8 Social Studies Collaborate with each other.
- Have a joint PD day for teachers in January with motivation speaker like they do at the beginning of the year. Have a half way pump up to get excitement back half way through the year. Also, might help with supporting our teachers with burn out.
- Having some competitions that student can sign up for the more gifted students. If they can sign up with different competitions that they can compete with other schools and possibly other districts. They would be able to sign in and work on this extra challenge when they are done their work in class.
- It was interesting how much community and school culture was mentioned as to why students attend school. Most of the parents said that academics was not a strong focus for their child but that students feeling at home and welcome along with various activities like sports and options is the reason that their child gets up in the morning to attend.
- Class sizes are too large, teachers need more support and more support staff to support students' needs.
- That PSD ensures that all children’s needs are being met. Right now, there is a lot of focus on special needs children. In my opinion, this causes the academically above average children to not have their needs met. These kids are not being challenged and do not reach their full potential. Sometimes, these children do not learn appropriate study skills in k-12 because they didn’t need them in order to be successful. The lack of study skills can then affect their ability to be successful in post-secondary.
- I would like to see more support for strong academic/gifted students in PSD. When a child is identified as gifted, then what? We often say it feels like we are “building the airplane as we fly” because there is not a lot of support for schools in terms of programming options and how best to support these students. It is a delicate balance trying to explain the unique needs of these children while recognizing most of the priority likely lies with the outliers on the opposite end of the scale or those children who fall more in the middle. These children deserve to learn something new at school every day too while also having their socioemotional needs met as well. Perhaps there needs to be more PD on gifted education, more online modules/resources community school teachers could access to program for those students, and perhaps more program options (like AP or IB classes) so families don’t feel the need to homeschool or leave the division to challenge their child academically.
- Help to ensure the social studies curriculum at every level helps young people understand the Canada's real history so that in the future we can better understand and work together for shared solutions. Chances are Canada will eventually need a new constitution so having everyone understand what is possible instead of being afraid of change will be helpful.
- Would appreciate guidelines that parents can point to better support children's safety and age appropriate use of the internet especially with devices, Social Media and AI.

- Noting that [our] School has an excellent reputation and culture for creating a safe and encouraging learning environment for students and teachers. How can we continue to support and foster this in [our] School and in other schools across PSD.
- I would like to see greater engagement of kids who are able to perform above average (in our case verified by psycho Ed testing) but are performing “average” in class, and it is deemed acceptable. While I agree some has to be internal motivation, in elementary especially I feel like teachers should treat this just as seriously as kids performing “below average”. Teacher also need much greater training for accommodations for students, especially where technology needs to be in play.
- Kids used to have supports, used to get assessed for delay in speech and reading and receive supports to catch up and keep with their peers.
- Why aren't we preparing our kids for a world of Artificial Intelligence better?
- Tutoring or additional supports
- I am worried about the focus on academic achievement at [our school]. The school seems to fall middle of the road to below average on academic when compared to the other public institutes around the province. Can there be more effort put into teaching the core academic subjects? Are the administrators and teachers concerned about the lower provincial scores the school is receiving?
- I am concerned about the curriculum and the support our teachers and students are receiving. I believe the expectations of teachers is too much while having to deal with extremely large class sizes and many diverse learning needs. I am also very concerned about PSDs proposed plans for the new high school.
- The MyPath program provides a great opportunity for students to explore a wide variety of interests.
- Curriculum should be nonpartisan and developed by educators with no political agenda
- I believe that it's important to have adequate staffing in classroom to allow for the needs of all students to [be] met. Also, for rural school it's difficult to find opportunities for of site activities because of the cost of busing and the limit budget given for these activities.
- I am not happy with the My Path program. I feel it separates the students based on income. I don't think it is fair that some students get to do special activities while other students have to stay at the school. Why can't all the kids go curling or swimming or learn archery? I find it elitist. Also, children with any kind of learning difficulty are not welcome because then more supervision is needed.
- It [would] be great to expand the variety of available options for grade 7-9. Also, adding developmental teams to the sports being offered would be a neat way to increase interest in the younger years while having the older students act as mentors.
- There seems to be a learning gap between the Grade 9 and Grade 10 curriculum in core subjects. Students seem to be struggling with that adjustment. Students who are strong academically in Grade 9 are suddenly finding themselves struggling to maintain that same standard and sometimes even competent grades in Grade 10. This then affects the years following
- That the Alberta school board association should take a huge consideration on how countries like Finland educate their children. Taking time to understand their students on a personal level and educate them on what is interesting to them. If I could click on all the categories below I would. The education system needs a total overhaul.
- Being new to the Canadian school system we feel that new parents and students may need more support in the setup of workload coming from class to home study. And perhaps

personalized email communication regarding up and coming assessments and assignments.

- Reading writing math science should be top priority for any school curriculum. Add in learning how to budget and balance a cheque book for the older students would help shape them into productive and successful adults.
- The new UCP curriculum is a disaster. I'm experiencing issues with my grade 6 child already. Ridiculous! We need to push back against this terrible curriculum and teach kids what really matters (not the whitewashed version we've got or! What about locating gravity on the map! Did Chat GPT write it or what?!). Again, ridiculous.
- I like the idea of [specific program] for students to get the extra help/time they might require.
- I really dislike [specific program].
- I really like the [specific program] idea at the school
- The [specific program] that the students are given every day is turning to them ruining [our school]. There is up to 30 kids directly behind my house smoking weed daily. They leave behind garbage, blast music and no regards to the neighbourhood and the people who live here. My suggestion is to move "torch time" to the mornings, like they have in most high schools in Edmonton. That way the kids who bus can go first thing, and have classes right until buses come.
- The school needs to concentrate on educating not politics. Dress codes and behavioural issues seems to be taking a lot of the time teachers and admin could use for actual teaching.
- Any thought to having a financial course that provides basic skills on day to day banking as part of regular curriculum?
- It would be nice if students did not have to miss classes for volleyball games and or tournaments. It is not great to miss classes when you are in 30-1 classes. It is also a lot to expect to have practices/games basically 5 nights a week.
- I believe that the CALM curriculum should be expanded. Sex education and study strategies/mental health coping skills would go a long way in helping student wellness and prepare them for adult life. Additionally, students should be more thoroughly educated about climate change and its effects on human life, specifically in science and social studies classes.
- Thoughts on more resources for children struggling in certain subjects. More assessments being done and parents being informed so if they kids are unable to get help within the school parents are able to try and find help tutoring outside of the school
- I believe we should be teaching our kids skills that will help them flourish when they are adults. We should be spending more time introducing mindfulness, emotional intelligence, and finance.
- Not teaching spelling is detrimental to students who are hands on learners and require more than oral vocabulary. This should be addressed.
- I am curious how the French and English programs are being supported to integrate into their blended grade 7 options now that there is no longer a Grade 6 camp that supports the improved interactions between the groups of students
- Why is it that our education system does not Teach our kids or have a focus / class on Finance or monetary system like math, social or language? Kids should be educated about the history of money, interest, credit cards, fiat currency, mortgages, banks, investments, etc... What is one of the most impactful factors on every kid's life in the future is finance. Pay

bills, earn money, debt and so on but we do NOT teach this in class why??? Is social studies, or some other teaching topic more important? Always focusing on diversity, inclusion, environment over Finance. I question why is that? Critical thinking - aka always questioning why? Why are we learning this or that? Why does this work and not that? Why are we being told this and not that? So kids can identify the lies and frauds / deceit in the world and trust and verify the truths. These are the skills that should be taught in school. These are some of the most valuable skills missing from the curriculum

- I wonder if there are any changes to the curriculum with the newish government and if any, how is that implemented and assessed on overall wellbeing of kids and their growth. Why is everything changing at the school, what is the rationale and what is happening? Is the current curriculum preparing kids well for further education and success in future life?
- Note I previously filled out this form. Not sure if the same thing though. I'm curious about some proposed changes (if and when they happen) in curriculum and what that means for the kids. There have been lots of changes in the school, what does this mean and what is the long-term strategy for the school? And simply, how do we accurately answer the kids when they ask what is happening? Is there ways we can support what's happening as parents?
- I am wondering what the Teachers at [our school] think about the new curriculum, whether it is culturally appropriate, and age/capacity appropriate. I also hope that the school has a great culture for the teachers to feel empowered and valued.
- I think children should be taught more life skills at an early age rather than just book work. Not only is it more fitting for the learning curve of students (children who learn hands on rather than a book) but it also instils in them the skills they will need throughout their whole life along with the core subjects.
- I moved from Manitoba to Alberta last year. Curriculum is almost same. I really loved the way school helps kids in every aspect of their life like any kind of physical challenge or mental health. Also, teachers are so cooperative and very helpful. Including CTF courses is very innovative. But I would love to have more options for CTF courses for kids to choose from. Thanks.
- It would be nice to see more academic opportunities provided. Things like the Science Olympics or math enrichment where kids could be grouped together to learn more advanced material at a faster pace. Or even the option for advance placement classes. More opportunities to do things like the math contests from Waterloo University and starting earlier than grade 7 would be wonderful as well.
- Life skills should be integrated in school curriculum.
- Making French Immersion a high priority as a complete curriculum.
- My thoughts are about curriculum and/or instruction and school culture. I really like the [specific program] concept that [our school] has, it provides assistance to teaching staff plus students have the ability to catch up on homework, or sleep for most teenagers once a month. As for curriculum - I like the concept of "self-paced modules" for classes which allow students the ability to work ahead and receive extra credits. A negative thought though is more related to particular teaching staff unapproachability.
- My concern is in the instructors that are in the system and should be removed. We have had some issues with the teaching ability of one instructor and due to the difficulty of my son transferring to another teacher, he decided it was better to drop the class even though he was a 90% student. The class started with over 30 students and over half dropped the class due to this poor teacher.
- The teachers are available for extra assistance, and keep PowerSchool up to date which makes it easy for a parent to monitor how their child is doing.

- I am so tired of teachers not helping out students that ask for help. Empty promises are made and then failure to the student. Not the meeting I had at the end of last year with Vice Principal and Counselor promising that their school isn't like that.
- There seems to be a huge gap between the Gr 9 curriculum and instruction and Gr 10- students who are normally academically strong in Gr9 find themselves struggling to maintain the same standards in Gr 10.
- I feel very unengaged with my child's academic journey and progress. We are told to check PowerSchool to keep up to date and some teachers do regularly update this (thank you). However, in one course for example, my child's assignments and tests from September have not been updated. I understand when assignments are late that grades may be not be updated immediately, but waiting weeks and weeks is not acceptable for the students or the parents. Parents and students have no idea how they're doing and this is very demotivating. Additionally, I feel there is a lack of communication to parents about what the students are learning, upcoming assignments etc. A simple weekly update on what is happening, any upcoming assignments and tests etc. would be immensely valuable. You say you want parents to be partners in our child's education but this is very difficult when you are completely in the dark.
- My next issue is likely a school division issue. I feel that the enjoyment of learning is sucked out due to constant assessments! We should be focusing on the process of learning, making it engaging and fun. It doesn't give students an opportunity to learn and grow as the course progresses. My child, in just 2 months of high school has now completely lost all desire to go to post-secondary. I find this very sad. This is not the teachers' fault but the need to assess and grade everything. The kids are under constant stress! Let them enjoy education, please! I now understand why our teenagers' mental health is so poor. I also want to raise the problem of assessment inequities across schools in the division. I wrote to Parkland School Division in September 2022 about this but have never received a response. I am concerned about potential test marking inequities across your schools. I have learned that at two separate schools in Spruce Grove, students have the opportunity to redo the questions in tests that they get incorrect and are then awarded half a mark for each one they get correct on the second sitting. I actually think this is a good approach, as the student has the opportunity to see where they went wrong and learn from that. My understanding is this approach varies across schools. If so, this is clearly unfair. Is this practice decided by individual schools, or is it a policy set by the school division? This inconsistency across schools is troubling as some students will obviously have an unfair advantage over others, depending on which school they attend. Does Parkland School Division have a policy to ensure equitable award of grades across schools? Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts.
- I feel I have to comment on Sports Medicine 15. In preparation for a recent exam, the teacher posted last year's exam on google classroom which my child showed me. I question how needing to know the names of hundreds of muscles at grade 10 is beneficial or necessary. This is not an undergraduate course! This is simply a memory test which is setting kids up to fail. Do you want to inspire the students or completely put them off learning and make them anxious? I ask you to look at the grades for this test and at the exam itself. Is this appropriate for grade 10? Somebody needs to look at this. What is the average grade? Very demoralizing indeed.
- I understand that you are preparing the students to move into adulthood but many of the teachers expect too much independence from them in grades 10 & 11. There are still only 15 & 16 years old and need guidance to learn the life skills it takes to be an adult. This means developing relationships with them so they are comfortable taking risks and being independent. Lecturing for 20 minutes then sitting at your desk expecting everyone to come to you instead of going and actively checking on students and TALKING to them is not teaching. You get paid the same as the elementary/jr high teachers so at least try to put

in some effort to do the same job and give a damn about the students (who ARE still kids) in your care. I cannot tell you how disappointed we are as a family at the percentage of teachers that fall into this non-teacher category currently employed at [our school]. Our hats are off to the few we have encountered that actually take the word TEACHER seriously.

- I'd like to commend my son's grade 11 teachers this year. Last year we felt there was a class (not all of them) he was not receiving the help/teaching he needed to learn. He felt left on his own and we struggled to help him over the summer. This year he feels he is being taught by his teachers and they're working with him more. Perhaps this should also be done in a student's first year in high school as well, especially given the Covid interrupted years they experienced.
- My son has found the social studies program a bit frustrating as quite often the chapter work assignments he gets have content that has no reference material attached to it. Questions are asked prior to the content being taught or the content isn't in the text book. Many of the text books are out of date.
- With the size of the younger grades I think that the classes should not be combined (K/1, 2/3) so that the teacher can focus on one class and assist those students that are struggling. Also there should be an aide to assist especially with the younger classes.
- I think life skills such as survival skills if had to survive in very cold weather, first aid (choking, CPR, insulin or EpiPen administration) should be taught in all schools.
- My thought is providing more EA's for more one on one help for students who need the help or who are struggling.
- Google classroom: this platform could be utilized better. Especially within the math department. Assignments are assigned online but are then simply shown to a teacher. There are no additional instructions added. Why not add videos explaining the certain problem? That way when students need help they can refer back to the platform for help.
- My daughter struggles with math and science and has a hard time keeping up. She works with us at home and has received special instruction from her teacher however she is still far behind. I can't afford a tutor for her, so I'm at a loss and feel like she is being set up for failure because of this
- Financial responsibility.
- My kids have really been struggling in December with the weight of course content with all the Christmas activity. I would like to see coordination between teachers on timing of exams, spreading them out over the weeks of December rather than putting all the unit finals in the last week before Christmas break. My kids are part of the PCP program, and our family greatly values when focus is put on Christmas and the reason for the holiday season; but they've had so much focus and anxiety over exams that it's been all consuming for them. Thank you.

ON SPECIALIZED SERVICES

Feedback from stakeholders underscores a pressing need for a comprehensive approach to education, particularly in addressing the diverse needs of students facing various challenges both inside and outside the classroom. Stakeholders appreciate an inclusive program, and specialized support for students with unique learning needs, including those with autism, ADHD, dyslexia, ADD, and other neurodivergent conditions.

Parents express gratitude for the support their children have received but also highlight significant gaps in the system, especially in the continuity of care and support from early education into later grades. Some expressed the concern that resources such as speech and language pathologists and behavioral psychologists (as deemed vital in kindergarten) become less accessible as children progress through the school system. This transition often leaves students without the necessary

support to build on the positive behaviors and coping strategies they have learned, potentially leading to regression.

Responses to our survey and engagement events include a desired need for more comprehensive assessments, like Psych-Ed assessments, to aid in the development of tailored strategies that address individual student needs. There's a perception that the public education system, while striving for inclusivity, may not be fully meeting the needs of students with learning disabilities. This has led some families to seek alternatives, which may not be accessible to all due to cost.

There is also a call for an increase in teaching assistants and support programs to ensure that students with learning disabilities receive the attention and assistance they require. The feedback also suggests a desire for a more collaborative approach to Individual Education Plans (IEPs), involving regular communication and strategy sharing among all teachers and staff who interact with students on IEPs.

Concerns about the social and extracurricular inclusion of students with special needs highlight the broader issue of creating a school environment where every student has the opportunity to participate and excel, regardless of their athletic or academic abilities. Suggestions include offering recreational teams or leagues to provide all students, especially those who may not excel in traditional competitive sports, with a chance to engage in extracurricular activities.

Overall, PSD stakeholders are advocating for a more inclusive, supportive, and flexible educational system that recognizes and addresses the wide range of challenges students face. This includes enhancing access to specialized assessments and support, improving the continuity and accessibility of support services, and fostering a more inclusive environment both academically and socially. The feedback underscores the importance of understanding and addressing the unique needs of each student to ensure their success and well-being in the school system.

Direct Stakeholder Comments Received:

- I would like to highlight the growing need for specialized services for different students going through the education system today. More and more kids have different challenges outside the classroom that affect how they learn and interact with others. Those challenges also have a part to play in how their peers learn and interact with each other. I believe students should be taught the basics of recognizing mental health issues and different social disorders (?) and how they can interact and feel safe around their peers who face these challenges every day.
- My thought is related to Student Supports and/or Wellness. [our school] has been very supportive in working with my ASD child, developing strategies to help him learn and regulate in the classroom and during other activities. One thing I would like to see incorporated in ALL schools is more funding for assessments like Psych-Ed assessments. I feel like this would help tremendously in the long run to aid the teachers and students in developing even more specific strategies for that particular child.
- I have a child with a learning disability. Dyslexia and ADD. I found the teachers were not educated in what that means and created trauma with regards to how he was taught that we have had to undo with the new private school. 'You aren't trying', staying in at recess to complete work, not providing help when needed have all been things that brought him down and made him feel stupid. He is thriving in his new private school. I am sad that many families can't access this because it is cost prohibitive but I have essentially voted against the inclusive education paradigm by pulling my child out of the parkland public school system. The public system in my experience is failing these kids.
- My 5-year-old was in Kindergarten last year. She had a speech and language pathologist as well as a behavioral psychologist assigned to her. Now she is in grade one and I've been informed that the resources from her kinder year are not available for her in grade 1. I feel if the specialists monitored cases like her for the first 1/4 or first 1/2 of the school year following

to ensure that there is no regression and to enforce positive learned behaviors, that would be appropriate. Even if just for a session or two.

- More support should be offered to neurodiverse students. Peer support groups that encourage social skills/life skills.
- I was wondering if they make autism/ADHS assessment through the school. My son is diagnosed with Combined ADHD / Tourettes via questionnaire that me and [teacher] filled out. But I'm not sure if it's an official one as the Doctor said to wait it out after he's in grade 1. Are there any supports for neurodivergent kids through the school? Thank you so much.
- [school] does not offer enough academic support to children with diverse learning needs.
- I would like to see more children assessed (psycho-ed) when there is a concern from parents/guardians regardless of concern in the classroom. It is not fair to only assess the "severe" or "stand-outish" children as many females do not display these obvious behaviours and could be struggling inside with focus/attention/perfectionism etc.
- Please find more funding for special education. It's outrageous that extra supports are provided in post-secondary education but little to nothing after Gr 4. Please look to adapt a mentoring/team building curriculum for classrooms that would help to support inclusive learning. It would assist teachers and reduce EA requirements.
- Inclusivity. My son has been a student in both the Click, REAL & LAWS programs with PSD for 14 years.
- There is not enough supports in place for learning disabilities. There needs to be an increase in teaching assistants and more support programs.
- I'm finding it very difficult to have a special needs student within the school system in a regular program within a school. The target IEP are strictly academic which often are poor measures of success with spec needs. My student's IEP is focused strictly on how to get his work done but doesn't list the actual things he struggles with leaving staff with a broad and overstated sense of capabilities and a high bar to reach for him. He has come to a place of not wanting to be at school because it is one frustration after another. Full inclusion service is "pie in the sky" - a wonderful thought but not one that always treats the student with respect. Due to some of the accommodations made for him in regular programming, he is now a target of dismissed bullying which makes him even less inclined to any kind of academic setting (one teens word against another).
- I am concerned that students have a perception that if you have a diagnosis such as Autism that they have more rights than a student that doesn't. The diagnosed student is not expected to follow the same rules and everyone else is expected to allow them to behave as they want without consequence and "suck it up".
- I wish there was a program for kids like mine who struggles in mainstream school, but also can't cope with loud learning environments and needs a calm space with a lot of support and positive reinforcement to keep her on track.
- We would love to ensure that all teachers and staff are debriefed and meet at least once a year (more would be preferable) to discuss students on IEPs, their diagnoses, their needs and helpful strategies to help them be successful. Since every teacher that teaches them are included on the legal IEP document ie. phys. ed teachers, it is crucial that they all fully understand targeted needs and strategies. We feel there is a bit of a disconnect between teachers sometimes and it feels like there isn't enough communication regarding what student needs and strategies that are in place. One example is that we would love to see teachers share when they are planning exams or big projects so as to not overload kids who struggle with already being able to handle day to day workload. We would also love to see there be a more inclusive approach for extracurricular activities. Currently, the tryouts for each seasonal sport only ever accept "the best" or those that make it. Our concern with our

son is that he wanted to be a part of sports but never was "good enough". School is already a very big challenge for him mentally and physically so it would be nice for him to have something that he looks forward to being a part of. Would it be possible to offer rec teams/leagues to the students that aren't the most athletic or the best performers so as to include everyone? I know that requires extra volunteers so I would gladly volunteer my time to host a rec league and I am sure other parents would be willing to also volunteer.

ON WELLNESS

The feedback on "Wellness" from stakeholders expresses an image of a community that is deeply concerned about the mental, physical, and emotional health of students within the educational system. The overarching theme is a call for a more integrated approach to wellness, emphasizing the need for comprehensive mental health support, inclusive physical activity, and a reevaluation of academic pressures.

A significant number of Parkland School Division stakeholders continue to advocate for the presence of increased access to counseling services, highlighting the critical role that mental health plays in overall wellness. Notably, Parkland School Division recently (and significantly) added to our counseling profile. There's a consensus on the need for more dedicated therapists and educational assistants (EAs) in schools, suggesting that such support not only enhances workplace wellbeing and student satisfaction but also creates a calmer, more conducive learning environment that reduces teacher stress.

The feedback received also suggests a desire, by some, to shift away from a sole focus on academic performance and rigid timelines towards a more holistic view of student development that prioritizes well-being. This includes addressing trauma, promoting free play to support development, and creating more opportunities for students to engage in movement and physical activities throughout the school day.

There is a call for enhanced support for students who may be struggling with boundaries. The expression of thoughts and feedback calls for respect, and emotional regulation, and indicates a broader need for programs that help students manage their emotions effectively. Some stakeholders suggest incorporating sustainability initiatives and green practices into the curriculum as a means of fostering a sense of responsibility and connection to the environment, which can also contribute to overall well-being.

As was discussed earlier, there are mixed opinions expressed regarding the role of the education system in addressing issues of morality, with some stakeholders urging schools to focus on academic learning and leave moral and ideological education to families. However, there's an acknowledgment of the importance of mental health supports and the suggestion of incorporating more cultural and community-focused approaches to wellness.

Stakeholders noted a perception that parents are concerned about the use of technology, such as phones and television, during school hours. They cite potential negative impacts on communication skills, mental health, and eating habits. The feedback calls for a balance between leveraging technology for educational purposes and ensuring it does not detract from students' overall well-being.

Overall, stakeholders are advocating for a school environment that supports the whole child, recognizing that academic success is deeply intertwined with mental, physical, and emotional health. There's a clear call for policies, procedures and/or processes that foster a supportive, inclusive, and balanced educational experience, ensuring that all students have the resources and environment they need to thrive.

Direct Stakeholder Comments Received:

- We should also aim to have a counselor employed at every school. We need to have a focus on wellness that includes mental health. If you don't have mental health, you have no health.

- We need more full-time therapists dedicated to individual schools (In schools that have a dedicated therapist, there has been an increase in workplace wellbeing and student satisfaction.) We need more dedicated EAs per class. (In schools that have a dedicated EA in classes that have students with IPPs or IEPs, or require extra support, the classroom is calmer, more learning gets done & the teacher's stress levels are reduced.) We need more breaks for teachers and students.
- We need less focus on grades, goals and timelines and more focus on overall wellbeing.
- Today my child was in a lockdown at school, this is becoming too common an occurrence. I feel for the kids in crisis who need more support to help them through the struggles that lead to the behaviour that causes a lockdown. I also feel for the kids who are trying to focus and their classrooms are disrupted, this is a scary and traumatic experience being in a lockdown.
- I feel as if there isn't enough free play in school settings. I feel that the lunch and recess breaks are very rushed. If the lunch and snack breaks were even 10 minutes longer, the children would have the patience to concentrate on what the teachers are saying and it would benefit the children socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually. Children's play is crucial for development. This will help children get better grades in school and improve their learning skills.
- Students lack of boundaries not being able to keep their hands to themselves and it affecting my child. That students are having difficulty keeping their emotions in check which results in children being rude and disrespectful swearing at other kids. Children are relay struggling and they need help and they should not be able to take it out on other kids. We need more programs helping the kids manage their emotions.
- It would be great to incorporate more focus on sustainability initiatives in the school board. Maybe getting classes involved in doing waste, water or energy audits in their schools, as a start to brainstorming ways to make the schools more eco-friendly? Or if there are green initiatives the board is implementing, promoting them so the kids could learn more about what's being done in their schools to help the environment?
- I would like to see movement breaks/activities available for all kids who need that extra little something throughout the day, a space where they can run, move their bodies without being a distraction to the rest of the school population. In a sense get those wiggles out so they are better little versions of themselves during class time.
- I have noticed that many teens (and younger) have difficulties establishing healthy boundaries and maintaining respectful relationships with other students and occasionally staff. It is understandable that COVID may have contributed to this disparity. It is very apparent that literacy and numeracy has been stunted over the pandemic, but it seems obvious that social interactions have been affected as well. Social expectations have been blurred as well due to ever evolving rule changes over the pandemic, leaving youth with little understanding of how to handle conflict, consent, change and boundaries with each other. As schools have increased focus on literacy and numeracy, I would like to see a unified focus as a school. This is sporadically being addressed in various classes with inconsistent expectations. The school should develop a school culture expectation (communicated to parents and students) that is modelled and enforced on a consistent basis.
- Safety of children and drugs in the schools.
- My kids don't need to be checking in on their feelings at school. Please just teach them literacy and math. Air them out in the playground, or in the gymnasium, show them the intricacies of science and the beauty of music etc. But please keep the radical leftist ideologies, from political predators (activist teachers), away from them! Individual teachers and staff are free to have their own personal beliefs, Section 2 of the Charter guarantees this, but they should keep them private. The education system has no right to use taxpayer

money to indoctrinate children. Just teach them academia, then leave them the hell alone. We will take care of the morality part in our own household, amongst our own family!

- Are more mental health supports needed within schools?
- I'd like to see and help to discuss the school in creating a more holistic, community and cultural approach to student supports and wellness. I feel mental health, student/teacher/parent communication could use a boost in a positive direction where preventative measures are the forefront rather than reactive. Cultural sensitivity utilization awareness can be part of this and I feel would be beneficial.
- My children and I love [our] school. Thank you for providing a safe space for them to learn and grow! I have noticed over the years that more and more teachers are having the kids watch T.V. during their lunch. Once in a while this seems like a nice treat but I am concerned that it is happening every day. This can cause overeating as children aren't paying attention to their body's cues that they are full as well as under eating because they are too distracted. Eating together with their peers can be a communal activity where they can talk about their food and learn more about each other. Similar to when they are at home with their families.
- I would like to phone's to be banned at school. Multiple studies have shown regression in communication skills, increased anxiety and depression stemming from social media, excessive distractions, lack of focus, digital dependence, reduced attention and ability to actively listen. I'd love to talk more and provide scholarly reviewed studies.
- I would like to see an emphasis put on academic learning as opposed to social learning in the educational environment as there has been a serious regression in this regard the last few years.
- I'm concerned about kids mental health in schools, if kids are still struggling with all the changes they experienced over the last few years, they won't be able to focus and learn. I would like to see mental health supports increased or mental health guest speakers brought in.
- I think a child's emotional, mental and physical wellbeing is just as important if not more important than grades. We are constantly asking or inferring that grades are so important to students. I have spent many hours these last few months talking to my daughter about her math grade. She struggles to understand that she is doing well in math. All she can focus on is the grade. A couple of weeks ago the art lesson were taken over by math instead. She sobbed in the car. She felt like they had been punished for not getting good enough math grades. Surely, in a situation like this, students should be given a choice?
- Whole school wellness is important to me. Everyone benefits when mental/physical health are prioritized for all.
- Kids need to have a snack time. Hungry kids don't learn well and NO ONE likes to eat outside in the winter. There's no reason why kids can't have 10 minutes INSIDE to eat snack. It is absolutely shameful that kids are forced to use their outside time to eat their snack.
- Mixed messaging regarding importance of school attendance vs "stay at home when sick". While I understand the importance of attendance as a predictor of success perhaps having an easier "catch up" system should be looked in to (harness the power of AI and virtual learning for this. (This applies especially to kids with prolonged symptoms (fever etc.) and even mental health conditions like acute anxiety where supportive measures haven't been mobilized at yet to facilitate a return to school.

ON OPERATIONAL OR ORGANIZATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Share-a-Thought Surveys provide an opportunity for stakeholders to indicate what is on their mind, with respect to our schools and education. It is, therefore, understandable that many of the

comments received are organizational and/or operational in nature. Many of the suggestions are directed at enhancing the educational environment and supporting organizational systems within schools. These comments reflect a community deeply invested in creating a nurturing, inclusive, and effective learning space for all students.

PSD Stakeholders express their thoughts on the structure of our programs; they call for expanded access to specialized programs, like CFL & MyPath, to include full-time kindergarten and afterschool care, and to address the growing need for a more comprehensive support system that accommodates the schedules of working parents. Stakeholders suggest that making these programs more accessible could significantly benefit students and their families by providing continuity in care and reducing logistical challenges related to transportation and aftercare. Operationally, there is an expressed desire for more welcoming and positive messaging within schools, smaller class sizes, and better working conditions for staff and students.

Operational concerns, such as the state of school facilities, parking lot conditions, and the efficiency of school transportation, reflect a broader call for infrastructure improvements and more efficient resource allocation to enhance safety and accessibility for students and their families.

Stakeholders expressed a request for transparent and collaborative communication between parents, teachers, and school administrations. Stakeholders suggest that improving dialogue and engagement can help build a stronger school community, better address individual student needs, and enhance the overall educational experience.

In summary, the stakeholder feedback highlights a community eager for educational reform that emphasizes inclusivity, wellness, environmental sustainability, and effective communication. There is a clear desire for policies and practices that not only support academic achievement but also foster a healthy, safe, and engaging learning environment for all students.

Direct Stakeholder Comments Received:

- Please consider expanding the CFL & My Path programs to include both Full time Kindergarten and AfterSchool care.
- Kindergarten - It would be so beneficial for our youngest to attend the same amazing program that his older sibling has access to, especially in a full-time capacity. Our eldest was able to attend the Nature Program in 2020 which was considered "full time" until 3pm.
Afterschool care - It takes an hour and two busses to be transported from [school] to Daycare which is less than 4 km or a 5 minute drive. By the time they arrive at daycare, they are only there for 40 minutes before I pick them up after work and they've spent the majority of their time on the bus yet parents have to pay for a full time spot. I've tried to get them into the care program at [school], which is across the street but am told the spots there are held for [school] students. The system in PSD is unfortunately still very much set up for a one income household with the modern reality being two parents working beyond the hours of the school day.
- Updating signage on doors from things like "visitors must report to the office" to more welcoming messages "we are happy to see you, please see us at the front office/desk to let us know you are here".
- My thoughts basically surround improving working conditions and workplace wellness for staff and students. I am a big proponent of smaller class sizes. If we could get to already laid out target class sizes, that would be awesome. My kid's school, [our school], does a pretty good job in the elementary years. Junior high is overcrowded. I'm sure you know all the benefits of smaller class sizes.
- I also would like to see a full time EA in every class. 2 would be amazing but will never happen. They are essential for keeping classes running smoothly. I'm sure you're aware of the benefits of a well staffed classroom.

- I also want AC in every school. This will be essential as we get warmer and warmer. One of my kids has already missed school in June because it's too hot in her class and she overheats easily and will vomit (not a good time). When classrooms aren't a comfortable temperature, kids aren't able to focus.
- The HVAC systems of all schools should be upgrade. Not only to include AC, but heat and clean air as well. Teachers should not have to bring in their own space heaters to keep classrooms warm. As for the clean air piece, we need to have hepa filters. This is so important for staff and student health during respiratory virus season, as well as when we see the air quality dip when wild fires raging. Climate change is happening and we need to think ahead and be prepared. All of these things are working condition related but it also is the basis for a happy, well functioning classroom. A class where kids and staff are comfortable, can focus, get the help they need, and don't feel overwhelmed, is class where students are supported, successful, less stressed, and happy. We want to have inclusive classrooms but that's extremely difficult (to say the least) when a teacher has 30+ kids (multiple with IPP's to support) and no help in perfect conditions - let alone when it's too hot/cold, smoky (kids can't focus, kids with asthma, etc).
- Teachers and students have had a lot to cope with these past few years. Teachers and EAs need pay increases. Inflation is increasing. We are going to lose teachers if wages don't increase.
- Within our school it feels like there has been a lot of staff movement - movement across grades and movement out of the school. While we welcome new faces and new perspectives, some stability is also important. Having this year's teacher be able to talk to last year's teacher about issues that arose, what they found successful in dealing with those (for a class as a whole or a specific student) is beneficial. How do we retain our amazing staff?
- Respiratory outbreaks: I'm concerned with the recent studies regarding long covid, kids deserve clean air and someone to take some leadership and recommend kids mask when they can to avoid missing school to illnesses and to encourage they protect themselves from long covid. We should insist that classrooms have HEPA filtration and potentially far UV lights to keep airborne viruses to a minimum.
- Too many PD days. The calendar for next year
- I find it really frustrating that our staff and students are all stuck waiting for various facility tasks to be completed due to a lack of resources. This is from simple things like pulling balls off a roof to awaiting installation of a small play item like a gaga pit. I understand that need to ensure things are built safely, and the need to prioritize facility requests when we are in a tight budget, but we are now creating tension between parents, school admin, donors, and at the end of the day failing kids with appropriate options for active play.
- Please stop the garbage-less lunch system. It just makes a mess of lunches and is a huge pain for parents.
- I am a substitute teacher at a variety of schools in Parkland School Division and have been surprised at how common it is for teachers to put on 'shows' (Arthur, Magic school bus, wild Kratz) while students eat lunch. From everything that I have read, research shows that consuming food while watching TV is not recommended (for a whole list of reasons). Eating time should be a time to learn to socialize, especially in light of the fact that more and more children eat alone at home as well. In my mind, as teachers we should be encouraging students to engage in conversation and not simply put on shows to babysit them while they eat. As a parent who really restricts tv in my home and carefully chooses what we watch, I'd be very upset if my children watched 'shows' 5 days a week while eating lunch. I would like to see this discussed within the school division.

- The start and end time at [our school] is extremely inconvenient. Having a 3:45 dismissal means you are either late for after-school activities or you have to pull your child out of school early to make it on time.
- The grade 6 classes are too large.
- I'd like to share some thoughts on school holidays and PD days. Given many households are now blended families I would encourage all school boards across the province to align school holidays. As a blended family we struggle to find holiday time where we can all be together due to these differences. Spring break is the greatest challenge. I would also like to suggest, given most families are now two income households, that the education system consider longer school days with longer school breaks. Our family highly values our summers and would like to kick off the season earlier and have back to school later in September, much like they do in the US. And finally I would like to suggest childcare facilities on school property much like they do in Edmonton. Again with two income households the greatest challenge is juggling the 3pm pickup from school just to drop off at a daycare for 1 to 2 hours. Parkland Transportation is not helpful nor ideal for young children. That's another issue. Anyway, those are my 3 points. Thank you for this opportunity. We love [our school] BTW!
- Classroom sizes in Stony Plain are continuing to be a problem. I know this isn't new information for anyone but outside of Stony Plain Central being replaced the last time Stony got a proper new school was when High Park was built. Advocacy for another school here, especially with continued population growth, I feel will only benefit those already in the school system as well as the many more to come.
- We need better classroom conditions/working conditions for staff and students - smaller class sizes (need more money from govt to hire, I know), more EA's, proper ventilation/cleaner air, updated HVAC systems so teachers aren't having to bring in space heaters in winter and fans in summer (purchased at their expense!) to try to make classrooms bearable. What a bandaid fix! We need to "stop the bleeding" so to speak.
- My child is suffering with not having enough one-on-one (or even one-on-a-few!) time, as well as having to miss school in June due to overheating. The way things are is wild and unsustainable.
- We need more sustainability initiatives. More solar panels on all schools. Newer schools in PSD have them and some that have been renovated may as well but it has come to my knowledge that we are not continuing this. We need to be able to heat and cool the schools efficiently. With climate change becoming more of a reality, the updated HVAC mentioned in my first point will become necessary (it kind of already is and we're making everyone in the schools suffer currently) and we need to be able to power the systems efficiently without using govt money as that is better spent on staff!
- School parking lot is a nightmare. Pot-holes, students just about crashing because people don't know how to drive in the winter. There is simply not enough parking for everyone.
- The hot Lunch program should include more healthy choice options. Fruit/Vegetables options should be included in every lunch. Right now, it is mostly fast food, pizza, burgers and chocolate milk.
- I would like microwaves to be available at the school so my kids can warm up healthy lunches. Also, please do not turn the library into a lab that only the grade 9s can use. A library is essential for a school.
- Transportation why are students on a bus before the end of day? Eas why are we not paying EAs to stay past 3:30 at a school where last bell us 3:40?
- Please fix the potholes. Especially the one in front of the office directly in the path of the sidewalk. I saw someone take a good spill with the first snowfall covering up the hole. A few

buckets of cold asphalt (only \$25 per bucket) and a hand tamper could temporarily fix that till there are funds to fully pave the parking lot. Also turn the front where the playground used to be into outdoor learning space with benches and a space for the teacher. Like an outdoor classroom. Seems like a shame for that space to go unused.

- What about using the front area of the school where the playground was for a greenhouse to grow food for the community and other plants to teach students to grow their own food and to utilize the space as an outdoor learning area. Win win win.
- I have some questions regarding instruction, student supports, the bussing situation and how it disrupts students learning (if allowed).
- Students of all ages should have access to microwaves so parents can provide hot/healthy lunches and increase affordability by sending leftovers
- It's incredibly frustrating being given a generic school supply list, last year over half our school supplies weren't used nor even needed to be brought to school. This is incredibly frustrating and such a waste of money especially when you have multi children in school. It would be easier to do a quarterly or even half year of what they actually need or speak with the teachers and get them to use the supply's efficiently.
- I wish there was more afterschool involvement in sports for the younger grades, as it provides them with exercise and starting the knowledge of sports sooner or different types of extracurricular activity for the less sporty kids that would more art based or something else.
- The rock and roll concert was well done. The only improvement suggestion would be the spacing/placement of the older kids vs. the younger ones. Unfortunately, numerous times you could not see your own kids in behind the older kids because they were standing in front of the younger groups. Otherwise, the older kids did well to help out the younger ones.
- I am concerned about the large school population and lack of space for students. It seems to be very crowded.
- My thought is that the school should still organize a grad celebration. Our students deserve to be celebrated after spending 12 years doing what they are supposed to do. Having a parent led celebration isn't working. I have joined communication groups and still don't feel like I'm getting the proper information. But how can they communicate properly to all the families of 1200+ students if they don't have the email list?? It's a mess and a kick in the teeth to the graduates. The school could even work with a parent group to create a celebration. Over the past 14 years of having kids in school, schools have done less and less. Now we just can't wait to wash our hands of the public school system.
- Is school admin aware of the unpleasant atmosphere our senior women's volleyball team has been playing under for (at least) the past two seasons with their current teacher/coach? As a parent of a first-year player in 2022, I was shocked and saddened to learn from veteran parents at the first few games that several of their daughter's had considered quitting the team at different times throughout the previous season, and had almost not come back for their grade 12 season, because of the shaming, yelling, name calling and generally negative attitude toward the players of one of their Sr women's coaches. The negative coach does not go unnoticed by other team's parents. I personally heard a pair of parents at one of our mid-season away games commenting on our miserable coach's attitude/words to [the] players, which was obvious to everyone in the stands. Understandably, the student players are unwilling and afraid to call out their coach's behaviour for fear of repercussions. I tried like heck to get my daughter to speak up during that season, for herself, for the team, but she was a rookie and didn't have the self-confidence to do so and made me swear not to say anything for fear she would be punished by the coach. My daughter chose not to play a second season with the school team in order to avoid the negative atmosphere that made the game unbearable for her. My daughter could not stand to watch her teammates cry in

their cars after a tough practice, or before the next game. She said the game wasn't fun when everyone was playing scared to make mistakes. What a shame that our [] volleyball program has earned this reputation. Sure, the team won a banner for the school in [] but the girls will tell you in confidence it was in spite of their miserable coach. To be clear, I am not speaking of the teacher/coach who retired in June 2023, the team adored her and played their hearts out for her! From a few conversations with past players, the now retired coach was an example of a "tough" coach who was not considered cruel. At the very least, I hope that someone can have a private conversation with this teacher/coach to bring her attention to the reputation she has. It is entirely possible she has no idea how her words affect her players if everyone is afraid to say anything to her.

- More funding for smaller schools.
- I would really like to fundraise or help in some way to have the sand from the playground removed and replaced with some other material. I'm not too sure if this has been brought up, and I understand there are plenty of other pressing matters for the school that are way more important, but it is something that I have been meaning to ask about. Thank you!
- You should give the kids schedules. From grade 4-9 please do this.
- The awards ceremony at the end of the school year highlights students' achievements. There seems to be a very heavy athletic weight to the achievements. Which is great. However, if such weight is put on awards for athletes, I'd like to see a more academic approach to the way the honors system is run.
- As a parent sending my child to school for the first time, it's very interesting looking at the relationship of parents and schools. We appreciate and trust our teachers with our child's education, yet hear stories of parents being "pushed out" of conversations and significant issues. My "thought" is to have a strong and open relationship between our teachers, administrators, and parents.
- As someone who has been on both school council and the fundraising association I feel there is very little for support available for fundraising associations in comparison to council. It seems that a group of parents are basically told to find a way to come up with crazy amounts of money for things that support the school with little help navigating the world of grants and *Join Use Committee* needs. Each school is basically out against the others to figure it out first so they get the funding that is out there before the others. A handbook of steps the group needs to take to build or upgrade a playground with who makes what decisions come from what group would be great.
- Wondering about parent volunteering opportunities. School cultures when it comes to bullying, conflict resolution etc.
- I feel biological parents should be welcomed more often and given the chance to volunteer that way other parents including me (I have always been huge on volunteering and being involved with my children's schooling, only this past year I went through something every traumatic and needed some time to work through it. I'm really wanting and needing to be around my boys and helping out with educational activities more often.
- I would like to discuss the role the school plays when involving itself in family matters.
- I think School Council is going to be a more beneficial entity when there is a more pointed effort to drive engagement.

ON APPRECIATION

Some stakeholders take the opportunity to respond to Engagement Surveys with praise. Specifically, at our November 22 Engagement Event, our administrative hosts noted that our parents and/or guardians were happy with our staff, as a whole. They felt that teachers were doing the best that they could do and further noted that they felt well-supported by the teachers.

Direct Stakeholder Comments Received:

- You guys are amazing.
- I would like to share how our family sings your praises regarding your program at PSAA. May your success be enormous in the coming years. Very pleased with the education, kids are engaged. They both enjoy the sports science TAD days and find it beneficial to the sport's performance program. They both respect the green light system and it's a motivator for them. Feedback is good via power school and Class Tag.
- I appreciate the great variety of options the school division offers students. As such, we can choose a school that will best fit the needs of our child.
- I would like to let my appreciation be known regarding the SeeSaw application. My kinder kid tends to not want to tell us all the exciting things she does or learns in class. SeeSaw is fantastic for showing us little snapshots of her day to help us engage in conversations with our child. It's been great for updating us on upcoming events as well. We love it and are so grateful for it.
- I just want to commend the school leadership at [school] for the many positive changes I've seen in the last few years. My child is excited to go to school, we feel more involved as a family and the communication is much clearer. Big difference thanks to the principal and VP.
- My thought is how can we support our staff and make them feel encouraged and let them know what an awesome job they are doing in a very difficult profession. If we can encourage and make our teachers and admin feel inspired and bring out their passions that will hopefully impact our students. Hopefully it would trickle down and create an environment for our students to strive to be good citizens and make good decisions.
- After moving to [grade 5 new school] from [grade 4 previous school], we are incredibly happy with the overall school culture. There is so much inclusivity, hope and thoughtfulness at [new school] and our children feel very much at home there. Their mental health, wellbeing and grades have all been more positive this year than years past.
- This school seriously taking care of students. Principal, assistants and teachers definitely work for our kids. I am really grateful to attend my daughter to this school.
- I'm very happy with the school's administration and teachers so far. It seems like a much nicer place to go then when I was there. I like that there is also support for neurodivergence as I know learning about that stuff would have helped me a lot.
- I love the openness that [our school] has had with its early years programs. Teachers are so good and relaying information home to parents through the use of tools like Seesaw, or email when permitted. Having an open house, early PTIs, and the ability to part of the school and community is a vital part of a good education. Keep it up!
- So far, I think we are pleased with our daughters experience this far with [our school].
- Wabamun is a great school with a community feel to it. Almost feels like family!
- I like that students get the support they need, when they need it. Teachers are responsive to inquiring parents and easily approachable for students.
- We greatly appreciate the amount of sports related activities available for our kids at [our] School.
- We greatly appreciate the opportunities that our children receive for such a small school. We do not feel that they miss out on anything attending this school. In fact, probably have more access to opportunities than students in larger schools because of numbers. Ex) Drumheller field trip, attendance rewards

- I am very happy with the sports and drama opportunities at [our school]. Also, the activities such as Christmas Cup that bring the school together.

POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE PLANNING

Our stakeholder engagements and surveys provide insights into education planning for the years to follow. Given the stakeholder feedback shared to date, there are some considerations for future planning.

- Stakeholders captured the growing concerns regarding health and wellness. How best can PSD respond to increased requests for counseling and therapists in every school?
- Stakeholders expressed a desire to expand specialized, unique programs like those available through [school]. How should we best balance inclusivity, provide funding for assessments, ensure availability of educational assistants, and provide tailored support programs?
- How do we best maintain our facilities? Planning for facilities involves consideration for improved systems, and for ensuring comfortable, welcoming classrooms, while implementing sustainability initiatives and infrastructure improvements. How can we best plan to modernize facilities and meet facility challenges?
- Furthermore, Stakeholders expressed concerns about transportation logistics, parking lot safety, and the need for better playground materials suggest operational areas that require attention. How will future planning address these logistical issues to improve safety and efficiency?
- The feedback that we received calls for a balanced focus between academic learning and the development of life skills, suggesting a need for curriculum adjustments. How will future planning consider an increased integration of more real-life skills, sustainability education, and mental health awareness into the curriculum?
- Stakeholders expressed a desire for stronger relationships between schools and families, and more support for fundraising and volunteer efforts. Increased family support for the schools underscores the need for improved communication and community engagement strategies. How will we plan to communicate effectively to a changing society?
- Stakeholders advocate for smaller class sizes, more educational assistants, and better working conditions for staff. How should future planning prioritize recruitment, retention, and professional development to support teachers and staff effectively?
- We received feedback on the importance of extracurricular activities and social skills development, indicating a need for programs that support social interaction, physical activity, and team-building skills. How will we best address these priorities while ensuring a robust educational program?
- Stakeholders discussed our current access to programs, resources, and support services across all schools and captured that these support systems within the division are crucial. How might we reveal strategies to remove barriers and create equal opportunities for all students, regardless of their socio-economic background or learning needs?

A full Education Planning Day is scheduled for April 11, 2024 to set the planning goals for Parkland School Division through to 2027 and beyond. For consideration, our November Engagement and subsequent surveys provide insights to future planning.