



MEMORANDUM

May 27, 2025
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	EDUCATION PLANNING MORNING – SUMMARY 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

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 to provide insights and wisdom in setting the strategic Education Plan for 2025-2028.

This Education Planning Day Summary Report summarizes the feedback received from stakeholders at the April 16, 2025 Education Planning Morning.

It is important to note that the inclusion of summarized commentary does not imply endorsement or agreement by the Board, given that stakeholder input reflect opinion. The Board respects the diverse perspectives of all stakeholders, recognizing that these views contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the educational matters at hand.

Administration would be pleased to respond to any questions.

SJ:ly



Education Planning Morning - Summary Report

May, 2025

Presented to the Board of Trustees, May 27, 2024

Scott Johnston, Associate Superintendent, Education and System Services

Resources: Parkland School Division Stakeholders

SUMMARY

The Annual Education Planning Day, hosted by the Parkland School Division Board of Trustees on April 16th, 2025, gathered approximately 75 stakeholders (30 administrators, 45 parents) to address curriculum delivery, assessment, support systems, and wellness. Participants provided robust insights and key recommendations for improvement. These emphasized the need for better resourcing, clearer communication, and consistent support to meet diverse student and staff needs. Specific calls to action included reducing curricular pressures, enhancing direct specialist support, improving assessment clarity, strengthening family-school partnerships, implementing holistic wellness education, managing technology impacts, and prioritizing teacher/staff wellness to foster sustained success across the division.



Education Planning Day 2025 – Participants

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY AND ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING PRACTICES

Stakeholders conveyed their appreciation for the division's ongoing efforts to enhance student learning. However, significant concerns were raised regarding curriculum implementation, particularly the challenges posed by instructional volume and resource availability. The extensive curricular content, notably in Social Studies, was perceived as overly

ambitious given the allocated instructional time, leading to concerns about a potentially narrowed focus on global perspectives and its impact on students' broader worldviews.

Furthermore, stakeholders identified critical shortages in culturally and educationally appropriate resources, with the inadequacy of simply translating English materials for effective French Immersion curriculum delivery being specifically emphasized. This resource challenge was linked to the challenges that teachers face in meeting diverse student needs within single classrooms; raising worries that adequately performing students might not receive sufficient attention to reach their full potential.

To better support these diverse needs, stakeholders strongly advocated for improved direct support for specialized services in education. The current consultative model for *Speech-Language Pathology* (SLP) and *Occupational Therapy* (OT) services was deemed inadequate, and a shift toward regular, direct interventions was suggested to more effectively meet student needs and alleviate excessive burdens on classroom teachers. Enhanced collaboration and increased funding to facilitate meaningful partnerships with external specialists were also recommended.

The preparedness of support staff was another key area of concern. Educational Assistant (EA) training was highlighted as requiring more consistency, thoroughness, and timeliness to effectively support student learning, especially in literacy and numeracy interventions. Relatedly, stakeholders expressed a concern that some Individualized Program Plans (IEPs) for students are not being adequately implemented.

The necessity for clear, accessible communication regarding curriculum changes and instructional approaches, particularly in areas like mathematics instruction (often referred to as "new math"), was underscored. This need for clarity was linked to the persistent concern regarding class sizes. Stakeholders consistently emphasized the necessity of additional provincial financial investments to reduce class sizes and effectively meet diverse student needs, while acknowledging recent positive developments in numeracy support at younger grades as a model for further expansion.

Regarding Assessment and Reporting Practices, stakeholders identified both effective elements and areas for improvement. Real-time (live) reporting was praised for reducing student anxiety and providing immediate, transparent communication with families. However, the sustainability of maintaining both live reporting and conventional report cards was questioned due to the perceived burden on educators. Some parents indicated a preference for live reporting's greater authenticity, suggesting a future direction where teachers focus on live updates and minimize the distribution of the traditional report card to a single summative final report, mirroring the practice in high school semesters.

While Outcome-Based Assessment was valued, its understanding among students, parents, and educators was noted as challenging, prompting a recommendation for clearer communication. Stakeholders also urged a balanced reporting approach, advocating for a combination of quantitative metrics (e.g., percentage grades in upper grades) and qualitative reporting of social-emotional skills, suggesting personalized interactions and interviews as more effective than lengthy, generic report-card comments. The usefulness of standardized testing was acknowledged, but careful consideration of its weighting and overall impact on student assessment was requested. Finally, consistency in reporting practices, particularly

updates through platforms like PowerSchool, was emphasized as critical for effective parent-school communication.

COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT WELLNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH

Stakeholders emphasized a comprehensive approach to student wellness, advocating for explicit self-care education across physical, mental, emotional, social, and cultural domains. They proposed embedding structured mental health education, such as Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), into regular instruction to foster emotional resilience and effective coping strategies. Guest speakers, including celebrities or impactful organizations like *Mothers Against Drunk Driving* (MADD), were recommended to provide relatable, real-world experiences that would deeply resonate with students. Some stakeholders were not aware that every school provides students with counsellor access.

Acknowledging the pervasive impact of technology and social media on student wellness, stakeholders highlighted the need for increased family education regarding responsible digital use. They proposed school-hosted educational sessions to minimize stigma, encourage broader participation, and enhance parental awareness of technology's mental health implications. Further, stakeholders supported introducing parent-student agreements clarifying shared responsibilities around technology use, extending beyond current usage agreements.

TEACHER WELLNESS AND PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

Stakeholders recognized teacher wellness as intrinsically linked to student success. Participants wondered about the perspective of reported teacher burnout, especially among newer educators, as a significant concern. Stakeholders highlighted heavy workloads, assessment demands, limited peer interactions, and minimal breaks as factors contributing to teacher stress.

Recommended strategies included professional development opportunities such as *Mental Health First Aid* training, paid recess supervision allowing teachers meaningful breaks, structured mentorship programs, and regular recognition and appreciation of teacher efforts. Stakeholders further stressed the importance of open communication with parents about teachers' workloads to build mutual understanding and support, and they suggested that addressing teacher wellness would positively affect classroom environments, thereby enhancing overall educational outcomes.

ADAPTIVE SCHOOL CULTURE AND COMMUNITY-BUILDING

Participants viewed the development of an adaptive, positive school culture as essential for fostering community connections and overall wellness. Stakeholders praised existing initiatives such as sensory rooms, breakfast programs, school dances, and family events; recognizing extra-curricular opportunities as effective ways to strengthen community ties. The perspective received is that these positive aspects are making a difference for students and, therefore, their frequency should be increased. Notably, some stakeholders discussed the benefit of sensory rooms in every school.

Stakeholders recommended expanding culture and community-building programs, specifically encouraging active engagement of traditionally less-involved groups, like fathers, through physically engaging, hands-on events. Intentional actions, such as daily greetings by

staff and visible counselor presence, were highlighted as impactful strategies promoting welcoming school environments.

Stakeholders noted transportation challenges negatively impacting student wellness and equitable participation in educational and extracurricular activities. Long commutes were linked to increased screen time and subsequent mental health concerns. Some stakeholders noted that greater funding support to reduce inequities related to transportation could be perceived as critical for improving student wellness.

WORKPLACE WELLNESS AND STAFF CONNECTIONS

Workplace wellness discussions highlighted concerns around staff isolation and loneliness, intensified by reduced opportunities for peer interaction throughout the school day and lingering COVID-era separation practices. Stakeholders called for intentional activities and dedicated physical spaces to foster regular staff interaction and peer support. Further, they recommended proactively recognizing, sharing, and celebrating successful initiatives across the division to counteract negative narratives and promote positive morale.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND SYSTEM COORDINATION

Stakeholders expressed overarching concerns about mismatches between rising expectations placed on schools—such as providing mental health, nutritional, and social services—and available resources and funding. They advocated for more proactive, coordinated planning across schools and councils, moving away from perceived reactive and ad-hoc responses. Recommendations included developing shared resource banks and unified, division-wide initiatives (e.g., Cyber security education) to better address emerging challenges consistently.

Stakeholders also emphasized the importance of flexible, diverse educational options and environments to meet varied student needs effectively. A balanced approach integrating foundational academic skills and modern competencies was advised to ensure responsive and adaptive educational practices.

ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

The Education Planning Day included strong representation from among Parkland School Division's existing school councils, and so it is understandable that strengthening the partnership between schools and families emerged as a key stakeholder priority. Noting existing inconsistencies in home-school communication, stakeholders proposed standardized daily academic expectations and clear guidelines to mitigate confusion and improve parental support.

Enhanced two-way engagement was strongly encouraged. Stakeholders recommended providing detailed, accessible volunteer opportunities and actively inviting parent participation early in the school year. Practical strategies, such as offering childcare during meetings, hosting flexible meeting formats (virtual and in-person), and incentivizing volunteer efforts through special privileges at school events, were suggested to increase parent involvement and rebuild trust among previously disengaged families.

This engagement summary, in full, is represented in Parkland School Division's 2025-2028 Education Plan.