Andrew School Community Conversation

Project Overview

Because Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) is committed to providing access to equitable educational opportunities for all its students, the Division is conducting a review of the senior high programming at Andrew School—enrolment numbers in the senior high grades are low, which has resulted in programming challenges for senior high students in the Andrew area. As such, the Division's gathering feedback from the Andrew community about possible ways to address the issue. Input received through the consultation process will ultimately help inform decisions about senior school programming in Andrew going forward.

Engagement Overview

To solicit input from the community about the senior high programming, several engagement sessions were held throughout October and November 2018. In October, two working-group sessions were held with Andrew School staff and officials from Lamont County and Andrew, to help shape proceeding engagement events. In November, the Division hosted a [student forum](#), with Andrew School students in grades 8 through 12, and a community conversation, open to everyone from the Andrew community.

The community conversation was held at Andrew School, in the gymnasium on November 22 from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The session was designed to gather input on what the Andrew community considers most important about a senior high education and gain a better understanding of their concerns and aspirations related to equity of education for senior high school students in the area.

Approximately 40 people attended the session. They included current and former students, families, teachers and staff; local politicians and community members.

From the EIPS senior administration and Board of Trustees the following were in attendance:
- Trina Boymook, Board Chair
- Skip Gordon, Trustee
- Colleen Holowaychuk, Trustee
- Annette Hubick, Trustee
- Randy Footz, Trustee
- Don Irwin, Trustee
- Harvey Stadnick, Trustee
- Mark Liguori, Superintendent
- Brent Billey, Associate Superintendent
- Sandra Stoddard, Associate Superintendent

Session attendees provided input through small-group discussion of a series of questions. Participants sat in different groups for each question. The discussion was recorded on flip charts. Participants could also provide their input on a worksheet that contained the same questions. Nine completed worksheets were handed in at the end of the event.

What We Asked

Participants attending the Community Conversation were asked three questions:

1. What is most important to you about Andrew School?
2. What learning opportunities are most important for students in the senior high grades?
3. What are the most important factors EIPS should consider when making decisions about programming for senior high students in Andrew?

After each round of discussion the table groups picked their three most important points and indicated these on the flip charts. After the third question, participants were asked to rank the factors identified by their discussion group and these priorities were recorded on large sticky notes.

Discussion questions were designed to gather input on what the Andrew community considers most important about a senior high education and gain a better understanding of their concerns and aspirations related to equity of education for senior high school students from the Andrew area.

What We Heard

The following is a high level summary of what was heard at the Community Conversation. It includes input gathered on flip charts, worksheets, sticky notes and evaluation forms. More detailed information can be found in the following appendices:

- Appendix 1: Transcribed Flipcharts
- Appendix 2: Round Three Priorities (sticky notes)
- Appendix 3: Transcribed Worksheets
- Appendix 4: Transcribed Evaluations

Importance of Andrew School

Four key themes came out of the discussion on what is most important to participants about Andrew School. The quality of education was a key theme. Participants want the school to have quality education for all grades, including the availability of diverse programming. Participants also commented on class sizes, indicating classes were not too big or too small, and that they provided for one-on-one support. Proximity was also important to participants. They indicated the school was close to home, which allowed for reasonable travel times. Participants also commented about the role of the school in the community and how it contributes to community spirit. Some participants expressed concerns about the impact on the community should the school close.

Some other comments recorded during this round of discussion were people liked that the school was from kindergarten to Grade 12 and had a strong elementary component; and the need for consistency of staffing. There were also questions around why students have left the school and whether there was an opportunity to bring them back; and what the transition plan would be should there be changes to the senior high programming.

Important Learning Opportunities

Discussions about important learning opportunities for senior high students focused on two key themes—programming and support. Participants felt students should be able to receive programming that provided good basic skills, academic and life skills, along with electives and options such as trades and the arts. Programming should prepare graduating students to go on to further education—university or trades, with opportunities for career choice. Participants felt it was important to have various levels of the core curriculum subject, such as sciences, with less combined classes and teachers who are strong in those subjects.

Participants also want to see a supportive environment for senior high students. Students should have access to academic support from caring teachers, who challenge and encourage them to achieve a diploma. Students should also have access to career planning and opportunities to explore interests. Participants also felt there needs to be support for students who are struggling—to encourage them to stay in school.

Some other comments recorded included the need for work experience and job-shadowing. Participants also commented on the need for extracurricular, such as drama, music, athletics and field trips, and social opportunities. One table group suggested the high school experience include "joy," with positive morale and strong relationships with teachers.

Important Factors for Decision-Making

During the last round of discussion table groups discussed the factors EIPS should consider when making decision about programming for senior high students. As part of this round, table groups were asked to identify their top three priorities. These priorities were then grouped into themes as follows:
- Programming: Giving students the best opportunities; electives and core subjects for all levels of learning.
- Teachers: Access to teachers for core classes; are multi-course classes best for students and teachers; need to provide respect for everyone; strengthen the program to retain staff and students.
- Division considerations: Share data and communicate plans; consider what parents think makes a quality education in Andrew.
- Community: Consider the community perspective and economic impact; community should be attractive to new residents; school should have community connections.
- Small School: Small caring environment; need the same opportunities for these students; create a community of learners.

Some additional priority factors related to attracting area students, acknowledging that not all home lives are equal, and having designated areas for elementary, junior high and senior high.

Meeting Evaluation

The Community Conversation was generally well received, with 28 of the 32 evaluation form respondents rating their satisfaction with the meeting as *Strongly Satisfied* or *Satisfied.* All but between one and five of the respondents indicted *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* to the following statements:
- The objectives of the session were clear.
- The background information provided was clear and easy to understand.
- There were sufficient opportunities to provide input.
- The facilitators encouraged everyone to participate.
- I understand how my feedback will be used.
- Participating in this session was a good use of my time.

Participants seemed less clear on what happens next, with only 19 of the 32 respondents indicating they *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* with the statement *"*The next steps are clear." Complete details of the meeting evaluations are contained in Appendix 4, "Transcribed Evaluations."

Next Steps

Currently, EIPS senior administration and the Board are reviewing the input received through the community conversation. Collectively, the input will help the Division develop possible options to address the issue of equity of education in the senior high grades at Andrew School. The Division expects to share these potential options with the Andrew community in early 2019.

<p style="text-align: center">Andrew School Community Conversation</p>
<p style="text-align: center">Transcribed Flip Charts – Nov. 22, 2018</p>

Round 1

1. What is the most important to you about Andrew School?

Priorities*

- Stays part of the community
- Level of education provided for students x2
- Family feel
- K-12
- Utilize facility
- Travel time
- Community Spirit
- Consistency in staff
- Great education/quality
- Quality of education
- Proximity to home
- Class size – not too big or too small
- Close to home
- Smaller class size preferred (1 on 1 support)
- Availability of course programming
- Bussing is easier when the school is here – less commuting
- Offer opportunities for kids who drop out and all grades of kids
- They know the kids in the school – not just a number!
- Keeping it open
- Strong elementary – making our school different
- Transition plan
- Pillar of the community
- Like the small classes regardless of split – split programming not an issue
- Is there data on why kids have left?

Others

- Level of opportunities that is equal to other schools in EIPS (across all schools)
- Proper bussing if the choice to go to other schools
- Elementary needs to stay here in Andrew
- K-12 Loved that!
- Parent involvement and being connected to the schools
- People will move away
- Businesses will suffer

*Priorities were determined by table groups at the community conversation event

- Best for community
- Keep it LOCAL
- Course options available
- Busses
- Better prepared for future
- Need school spirit
- Teach independence
- Strong community
- Very large elementary
- Small class equals more help where needed
- Teacher/student relation
- Increase bus boundary
- Sports needed (kids suffering)
- Bring local kids back
- We lack government support
- Everyone knows everyone
- Kids can't play afterschool
- Industry support
- Smaller class size
- Prepared for the 'real world'
- Welcoming school
- Sense of community
- Heritage of the Andrew school
- Unique events
- Close knit families
- Recognition of family members
- Serves needs of local students
- How many students are in each grade (and moving up)
- Students don't have to commute to other communities
- They fight for kids!
- More time and willingness to help kids
- The history of our community is kept in our school
- Students are proud to have been a part of Andrew
- Give kids in the area chances to join together
- Love it's a part of our community – it's our hub!
- Opportunity to display our accomplishments
- Welcoming, don't have to make lots of new friends each year
- Giving people a reason to move to Andrew
- Proper high school education
- Opportunity to rebuild high school
- Having teachers willing to stay
- Options to build strong elementary – Special programs, Green, Ukrainian

- Using tech we currently have access to
- Home value decrease with no high school
- Relationships and community (life long relationships)
- Shorter ride times, proximity to school – reasonable travel times

Round 2

2. **What learning opportunities are most important for students in the senior high grades?**

Priorities

- Career planning support - discovering what they need
- Encourage not discourage
- Challenging students to achieve diploma, not just 100 credits
- Core subjects – all sciences, ELA, Math
- Providing opportunities if there is an interest
- Work experience
- Good basic skills (academic and life skills)
- Extracurricular opportunities
- Courses for university entrance
- Electives and options to gain experience
- Various levels of core curriculum subjects
- Social aspect
- People to take notice of students who are struggling
- Social opportunities/extra-curricular
- Academic support with caring teachers
- Strong core subjects & teachers; teachers who stick around; experienced, content strong teachers who want to be here
- Joy – positive morale/culture; strong relationships with teachers and leaders
- Make sure kids stick around as well
- Drama, music, CTS, athletics – intramural, welding shop, extra curricular
- Course specific classes – less combined classes
- Career choice opportunities
- Access to extra curricular – sports and ski trips, etc.
- No combined classes for Core curriculum
- Providing all opportunities for students graduating to enter further education or trades

Others

- Opportunities to access teachers in specific course work
- Access to outreach programming in the school? Support
- Instructor lead course with lesson planning
- Offering courses for students to discover themselves
- Distance learning
- Video conferencing

- More structure
- Variety of options
- Career counseling
- Social opportunities
- Courses for students interested in trades
- Quality of education
- WORK EXPERIENCE
- CORE SUBJECTS
- Free publicly funded education
- Virtual learning
- Person to person learning with a teacher in the room
- Having an opportunity for career counseling
- Students have a path to life after high school
- Opportunity for work experience, employment skills, career exposure
- Fine arts/second languages
- What's the plan to improve Andrew as a K-9 school?
- Will this decision be reversible?
- Can we annex Smoky Lake? Change boundaries
- Find out why kids are leaving!
- Positive culture
- Field trips
- Sports teams
- Trades/work experience
- Activities for all students
- Consistency with teachers and programming
- Community is invested in the school
- Positive promotion and marketing
- Breakfast programs
- Social aspects in and out of classes
- All voices heard
- Hands on teaching
- Having options and arts, etc.
- Access to online core courses and option courses
- How to use community resources for teaching
- Providing programming for special needs students

Round 3

3. **What are the most important factors EIPS should consider when making decisions about programming for senior high students in Andrew?**

- Attract teachers for the school (retention)
- K-12 is more attractive to people moving to the community
- High school students deserve the best
- Communication of the plan
- If K-9 high quality education
- K-9 students need to be included
- Access to the data, transparency of the decision
- Need to consider the impacts on the entire school if program is closed
- Do we have to be everything to everybody?
- Career focused
- Transition rate data – Andrew student going to Vegreville
- Surveying parents of students of choice
- Ability of teachers to teach what they are asked to
- About the students and is it fair to teachers
- Is support available to access virtual opportunities
- Importance of human and hands on experience in classrooms
- Economic factors – to families and the District
- Opportunities for social experiences for students
- Transportation proximity
- What are the other schools offering
- Electives and core subjects equally distributed throughout school year
- Full year course study for core subjects
- Class length per subject too long or too short
- Designated areas for elementary, junior high, and senior high
- Bussing
- Social opportunities
- Teacher fit and flexibility
- Provide core/non-core opportunities based on interests
- Career counselling
- Work experience
- Arts – music, band, drama
- Not every background and home life are equal
- Why don't Mundare kids come to Andrew for high school?
- Keep giving them the opportunity to know and build their community
- Think about how we can strengthen the program so everyone stays (kids and teachers!)
- Think about how we can make Andrew THE destination school!
- When school leaders leave, can't take strong teachers with them
- Give Andrew kids wider social opportunities
- Understanding how to build a senior high culture – knowledge of the adolescent brain/learning/mental health

- Commitment to build teams/culture
- Consistency, routine, respect (for everyone!)
- Appropriate use of technology
- Working with parents as part of the educational team
- Utilize technology to provide programming
- Attract students who are designated to attend
- Preventing staff turnover
- Student choice
- Transportation must be reasonable
- Community connections
- Field trips
- Best for local students
- More opportunities to speak because class size smaller
- How to teach small class sizes, is it video conference
- Access to teacher for Core or is it correspondence
- Career/future beyond high school
- Giving the best opportunities
- Physical activities
- Outreach model that gives flexibility
- Gets 1 on 1 here not likely somewhere
- Have more time for students, builds their confidence
- Student and staff relationships
- Don't shut down the high school, K-12 is the reason why we are here
- Could lead to business closing down if we lose the senior high program
- Learning opportunities to virtual learning
- Community size and keeping community together
- Community attraction for new residents
- Transportation
- Programming be available to all levels of learning including virtual learning
- Why are families choosing to leave the community school?
- Small caring environment

Andrew School Community Conversation
Round 3 Priorities – Nov. 22, 2018

What are the most important factors EIPS should consider when making decisions about programming for senior high students in Andrew?

Programming

- Career counselling
- Giving the best opportunities (programming/future)
- Provide core/non-core opportunities based on interests
- Electives and core subjects equally distributed throughout school year
- Programming available to all levels of learning including virtual learning
- Utilize tech to provide programming
- What are the other schools offering?

Teachers

- Expect and provide: consistency, routine, respect for everyone at Andrew
- Are we asking too much of the teachers in multi-course classrooms? And is this best for students?
- Ensure teachers and administration have deep understanding and skill in working with adolescents
- Access to teachers for core and correspondence classes – how they will teach the students?
- Strengthen the program so kids and staff will stay!

Division Considerations

- Consider/review/share the transition rate data for all designated Andrew students in all their respective schools
- Communication of the plan to the community regarding programming decisions
- What makes a quality education in Andrew (to parents)?

Community

- Community attraction for new residents
- We need to consider the perspective of the community and consider economic impact for the families (proximity and transportation)
- Community connections: field trips, staff turnover

Small School

- Small caring environment
- Being part of a community of learners: hands-on, social aspects, peer groups
- This is a small school, how are the same opportunities going to be given to these students?

Additional Priorities

- Student choice/attract designated students
- Not every background and home life are equal
- Designated areas for elementary, junior high and senior high

Andrew School Community Conversation
Transcribed Worksheets – Nov. 22, 2018

Nine worksheets were received from participants.

1. **What is most important to you about Andrew School?**
   - Make it a very strong elementary school with potential to grow to strong junior and senior high
   - Good transition plan
   - Keeping teachers for long-term
   - Closing the school will destroy the town
   - Specialty programming ex: Mundare → Band
   - All children get a proper education
   - Stays open
   - Pillar of the community
   - Small classes – advantage regardless of the split factor
   - Any data on why students chose to go to another school in the district
   - Keep it operating
   - Integral to community
   - Small classes
   - Short bus rides
   - Relationships made from K-12
   - Field trips (why was ski trip cancelled, why wouldn't people switch schools)
   - The community spirit
   - The individual attention our students can get if necessary
   - Teachers know family dynamics more than normal schools which has positive

2. **What learning opportunities are most important for students in the senior high grades?**
   - Fine arts – language opportunity
   - Having people aware of new students struggling
   - Job shadowing
   - Social groups – opportunity
   - Career counselling
   - Academic support with caring teachers
   - I would like the students to have access to the courses they require
   - To be able to choose the courses that they require for entry into University/College. #Sciences
   - Have different options that other schools have
   - Why have so many kids left?? Why aren't you asking this question?
   - Strong core subjects
   - Teachers that are long term, positive, want to be here
   - Use a combination of video conferencing and live body facilitators

- THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX!!
- Make Andrew the school of choice for academics – Vegreville = options, Lamont = sports, Andrew is for smart kids
- No one defined 'opportunities' majority of Andrew alumni are contributing members of society, nurses, engineers, accountants, etc.
- More attentive teachers that focused attention to all that is happening in classes. I have had personal instances that are not acceptable.
- Open and respectful environments with teachers and students
- Team building – work with each other. Student to help success now and build healthy communication skills with peers. I.e. English 30-1 assist 30-2 students tutoring options

3. **What are the most important factors EIPS should consider when making decisions about programming for senior high students in Andrew?**
- Busing x2
- Social opportunity
- Provide opportunities in Core and Non-Core interest
- Career counselling
- Work experience and job shadowing
- The arts
- Not every background and family are equal
- Fair doesn't mean equal
- Teacher fit and flexibility
- How are they going to teach the small numbers of students the courses they require?
- How to teach the small class sizes? Video conferencing?
- More school/community overlap
- Team building – staff need respect amongst each other for healthy environment for attendees of school
- Structure – consistency with rules, lesson planning, school guidelines
- Community involvement: parent, dignitaries, all involved

Andrew School Community Conversation
Transcribed Evaluations – Nov. 22, 2018

Thirty-two evaluations were received from participants.

1. Indicate your level of satisfaction:

STRONGLY SATISFIED	SATISFIED	NOT SURE	DISSATISFIED	STRONGLY DISSATISFIED
7	21	3	1	0
Comments:	• Table discussion was very well. Unsure of outcome still. Left with limbo thoughts.			

2. Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

STATEMENT	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NOT SURE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
The objectives of the session were clear.	1	1	1	20	9
Comments:	• Explained well				
The background information provided was clear and easy to understand.	0	0	5	18	8
Comments:	• Gave a fair background – students answers were displayed on wall ▢ Some statistics i.e. grade 8 # wrong/incorrect				
There were sufficient opportunities to provide input.	1	0	0	14	17
Comments:	• Conversations tended to go one way or another, depending on the scribe. Not everything was written. • Could have been a bit longer				
The facilitators encouraged everyone to participate.	0	0	0	15	17
Comments:	• Conversations kept moving				
I understand how my feedback will be used.	2	0	3	19	8
Comments:	• For research • Wasn't defined how information will be used				
The next steps are clear.	3	3	7	13	6
Comments:	• Research, review, revisit and THEN make a decision. • Wasn't defined how information will be used • Please email evaluation to participants				

STATEMENT	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NOT SURE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
Participating in this session was a good use of my time.	0	0	3	17	12
Comments:	- Learned a lot about what people find important for education - Brainstorming is great - Succession planning				

3. **What could have been done differently to improve the Community Conversation?**

- Went well
- I think it went very well
- Nothing
- Not sure x2
- More questions. Could have been more productive if the time was used to efficiently collect even more data.
- Please be more transparent
- Well organized and very informative
- I'm happy with the way it went
- Better community turnout – my fear is so little support will affect the availability of senior high
- Have open discussion after answering the questions

4. **What worked well during the Community Conversation?**

- Smaller groups of people
- I liked a lot of the activities we did
- Different table group discussions
- Allowing each person to voice their opinion without criticism
- Loved moving to different groups
- Meeting with different people/change tables
- Sharing conversations with different people
- Moderator to lead discussion; mixing of people at tables
- Everyone was able to have input
- Conversation
- Discussions of all participants at the table
- ALL
- Was allowed to say exactly what I wanted
- We all talked at the table as a team and we all listed to everyone else's opinion
- Giving everyone an opportunity to voice their opinions
- I really like moving groups and getting other perspectives
- Switching tables
- A facilitator at each table
- Overall input
- Talking with several people with different ideas
- Opportunities were made to be heard – time will tell what the end results will be
- Speaking with different people

5. **Additional comments:**

- Thanks for refreshments!
- No clear view of what future looks like
- DO NOT CLOSE the school (high)
- Would have been nice to see more parents attend (perhaps a couple parents from each class)
- I am disappointed in the turn out of high school parents, but I'm not sure you could have anything different