

Andrew School Feedback Session

Session Summary

Feb. 20, 2019

Project Overview

Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) Board of Trustees is reviewing programming for senior high students living in the Andrew School attendance boundary. The goal: To determine what factors are most important to Andrew students, families, staff and community members when it comes to providing equitable educational opportunities for senior high students.

Throughout fall 2018, public consultations were conducted with students, families, staff, town and county officials, and community members. These included two working-group meetings, a [student forum](#) and a [community conversation](#). Topics presented at all four sessions were similar in nature—background information, Andrew school successes and challenges, and important considerations. The feedback received through the working-group session, the student forum and community conversation was invaluable. Collectively, the input gathered helped the Division develop three preliminary programming options.

Session Overview

To solicit input from the community about the three preliminary senior high programming options the Division hosted a public feedback session at Andrew School on Feb. 20, 2019. The feedback session was an informal meeting featuring multiple displays where participants could rotate through the room and discuss specific options and topics with EIPS representatives. Each station featured information on a specific topic, an area to make comments and two representatives to answer questions. The goal was to offer an opportunity for community members to come together in one place to learn about the three programming options, ask questions, gather more feedback and work collectively to further develop a solution.

At the feedback session, close to 50 people attended, which included 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
- Colleen Holowaychuk, Trustee
- Annette Hubick, Trustee
- Randy Footz, Trustee
- Harvey Stadnick, Trustee
- Sandra Stoddard, Associate Superintendent
- Dave Antymniuk, Division Principal

Session attendees provided input through feedback board located at three stations, Option 1, Option 2 and Option 3 stations; feedback worksheets, located at each supplementary station; face-to-face discussion with EIPS representatives; and an online survey.

Preliminary Options

Option 1: Status Quo

- Grades K-12:* Andrew School’s grade configuration remains—kindergarten to Grade 12.
- Programming:* Remains the same where viable.
- Boundaries:* Attendance boundaries remain the same.
- Transportation:* Transportation service and fees remains the same—ride times ranging between five minutes and 75 minutes.

Option 2: Grade Reconfiguration (K-9) | Shorter Bus Ride Times | Change in Bell Schedule

- Grades K-9:* Andrew School’s grade configuration changes —kindergarten to Grade 9.
- Programming:* Access to a wider selection of required and optional programming—sports programs, extracurricular opportunities, special education
- Boundaries:* Changes to Lamont High senior high attendance boundaries. Senior high students living in the Andrew School attendance boundary redirected to Lamont High. Vegreville Composite High —optional as a non-designated school.
- Bell Schedule:* Change to the Andrew School bell schedule—earlier start time and dismissal time.
- Transportation:* Significant changes to student transportation services—ride times for senior high students range between 28 minutes and 90 minutes. All students living within the Andrew School attendance area are bused together in the morning.

NOTE: If interest is expressed, EIPS will explore with the community the possibility of onsite before- and after-school child care.

Option 3: Grade Reconfiguration (K-9) | Longer Bus Ride Times | Bell Schedule Stays the Same

- Grades K-9:* Andrew School’s grade configuration changes—kindergarten to Grade 9.
- Programming:* Access to a wider selection of required and optional programming—sports programs, extracurricular opportunities, special education
- Boundaries:* Changes to Lamont High senior high attendance boundaries. Senior high students living in the Andrew School attendance boundary redirected to Lamont High. Vegreville Composite High —optional as a non-designated school.
- Bell Schedule:* Andrew School bell schedule stays the same.
- Transportation:* Significant changes to student transportation services—ride times for senior high students range between 37 minutes and 118 minutes. All senior high students are bused independently of K-9 students.

NOTE: If interest is expressed, EIPS will explore with the community the possibility of onsite before- and after-school child care.

What Was Heard

The following is a high level summary of what was heard at the feedback session. It includes input gathered on feedback boards, worksheets, face-to-face conversations, and a survey—closed March 4, 2019. In general, feedback about the options varied. Some indicated they preferred Option 1, other preferred Option 2, and others preferred Option 2 over Option 3. For the most part, Option 3 was the least desirable. The biggest concerns were the length of ride times, how a late arrival time home will affect after-school activities, an increased need for before- and after-school child care and the cost of transportation to a choice school—one with more programming options. For more detailed information see:

- Pg. 5, Feedback Session: Option 1.”
- Pg. 6, “Feedback Session: Option 2.”
- Pg. 8, “Feedback Session: Option 3.”
- Pg. 9, “Feedback Session: Worksheet.”

Option 1

Four key themes came out of the feedback gathered for Option 1.

1. **Community:** The school is important to the community, to the town’s economic viability and it keeps siblings together.
2. **Costs:** Not having to pay for busing is important.
3. **Programming:** There was significant feedback supporting Option 1 and keeping Andrew School’s grade configuration K-12. Suggestions around improving programming included satellite options for senior high students and transporting senior high students to Lamont or Vegreville for optional courses and sports. Another common theme, in terms of programming, was partnering with another educational outreach organization to offer adult programming and upgrading opportunities.
4. **Transportation:** Option 1 was also supported because of the shorter bus ride times.

Option 2

Three key themes came out of the feedback gathered for Option 2.

1. **Child Care:** The earlier start time and dismissal time creates child care issues for many families.
2. **Transportation:** Many commented bus ride times were too long. There was also concern about how late senior high students arrive home from school—suggesting it would restrict after-school activities and participating in club sports.
3. **Programming:** Comments for Option 2 varied. Many people commented they liked Option 2. Others indicated Option 2 was better than Option 3. And, others stated they preferred Option 1. What people seemed to like most about this option was the programming options available to senior high students at both Lamont High and Vegreville Composite High. In terms of suggestions for programming, one person recommended keeping Andrew School K-12 and redirecting students living in Mundare to Andrew School for senior high.

Option 3

Two key themes came out of the feedback gathered for Option 3.

1. **Child care:** The proposed bus schedule creates before- and after-school child care issues for many families.
2. **Transportation:** In general this was the least favourite option. The bus ride times were too long, which would interfere with after-school activities, clubs, sports, family time and general student well-being.

Worksheets

Four work sheets were submitted by attendees. Two key themes were articulation

1. **Transportation:** The proposed bus ride times in Option 2 and Option 3 were too long. In addition, some people commented transportation fees are too costly—to send their child to a choice school for more programming or to be in the same area as a sibling.
2. **Programming:** Option 2 is the best option for senior high students and offers more equitable access to educational experiences. The fear: Most of the elementary families prefer Option 1, which will outnumber the senior high families who want Option 2.

Next Steps

Currently, EIPS senior administration and the Board are reviewing all the input received through the various public consultation sessions. The Board will take into consideration all the information and feedback received before making a final decision.

Andrew School Feedback Session Option 1 – Feb. 20, 2019

OPTION 1: STATUS QUO

Grades K-12: Andrew School's grade configuration remains—kindergarten to Grade 12.

Programming: Remains the same where viable.

Boundaries: Attendance boundaries remain the same.

Transportation: Transportation service and fees remains the same—ride times ranging between five minutes and 75 minutes.

COMMUNITY

- Please don't change Andrew School. We would like our community to continue to grow and our children to continue to go to school here.
- All for this option but the high school will slowly phase out.
- I am pro this choice. All students in my house will attend same school. I have a graduate from 2017-18 who did struggle. Didn't get sports. But with the struggle in academics. But what high school student challenging themselves does not struggle.

COSTS

- EIPS providing transportation nice.

PROGRAMMING

- This is the only good option
- Keep it status quo.
- Keep our school status quo.
- Core Classes in Andrew; option classes in Lamont or Vegreville twice a week.
- Keep K-12.
- Keep it K-12. Offer options and core subjects, which are not covered by Andrew School, as summer school. For example, mechanics in Vegreville and **provide transportation** from Andrew School to Vegreville.
- Keep it K-12.
- Keep it K-12.
- Keep it K-12 with expansion for community courses and classes, night school and weekend programs for adults and upgrading students.
- Open satellite classes for students—senior high classes and college classes.
- Keep space for Andrew students in Lamont option classes, for example food.
- Option classes in Vegreville too.
- Like things the way they are.
- Keep our school K-12.
- Would like to keep this a K-12 school but have all main classes offered to high school kids. May have a bus that would be willing to join another school for sports.
- Run a bus in afternoon to Lamont or Vegreville for options.
- Music program.

TRANSPORTATION

- Expecting young kids, especially in K-6, to be on a bus, each way up to 75 minutes, is asking too much of them to be fresh and able to learn and participate in extracurricular activities and have quality family time. Shorter bus times are the only fair option to all students.

Andrew School Feedback Session Option 2 – Feb. 20, 2019

Option 2: Grade Reconfiguration (K-9) | Shorter Bus Ride Times | Change in Bell Schedule

Grades K-9: Andrew School's grade configuration changes —kindergarten to Grade 9.

Programming: Access to a wider selection of required and optional programming—sports programs, extracurricular opportunities, special education

Boundaries: Changes to Lamont High senior high attendance boundaries. Senior high students living in the Andrew School attendance boundary redirected to Lamont High. Vegreville Composite High —optional as a non-designated school.

Bell Schedule: Change to the Andrew School bell schedule—earlier start time and dismissal time.

Transportation: Significant changes to student transportation services—ride times for senior high students range between 28 minutes and 90 minutes. All students living within the Andrew School attendance area are bused together in the morning.

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CHILD CARE & AFTER SCHOOL

- 2:45 p.m. is too early to dismiss. Parents work until 4 p.m. or later.
- I like the earlier start time and the shorter bus rides students will have to deal with. My only concern is kids arriving home with no parents (due to not being home from work). After school care would have to be provided.
- I am concerned about after-school care options. If you have K-9 students at Andrew, and rely on senior high students to watch the younger siblings.

PROGRAMMING:

- Another option perhaps, combine Mundare high school students and have them come to Andrew. Make two small schools viable. Rather than feeding into already large schools.
- Looks like the best option.
- Prefer this option over No. 3. Prefer No. 1.
- I'm all for this options!
- Love this option. More opportunity at another school!
- Keep it status quo.
- Good option to allow equal opportunity to go either to Vegreville or Lamont High schools
- I really like this option.
- Love this option. More opportunity at another school.
- I would rather Andrew stay K-12. My son's going in to Grade 10 feels the same. My son just graduated Grade 12 (2017-18) and he did get the education he requires to succeed. He is now almost done first year college.
- It's hard enough to get my kid out of bed for an 8:30 start.
- So many kids have extracurricular activities, for example hockey. Some games don't finish until after 10 p.m. making it already hard to get up in the morning.
- I like this one.

TRANSPORTATION

- Why would my child walk to this school to get on a bus?
- Would rather my child on a bus a little longer and get a better education.
- Bus rides too long.
- Could be hard on high school students—length of day.
- This earlier option is good, however it would restrict our sports and activities in our community. Adding three hours to a student's school day is crazy.
- This restricts students from after-school activities and puts all students at a disadvantage.
- Long bus rides equal unsafe situations.
- Too long of a day for students—long bus rides!
- Leaving Andrew School at 4:10 p.m. gets kids home very late. Too late at times to take part in extracurricular activities.
- Shorter school week (four days) would help keep busing costs down.

OTHER

- When will a final decision be made? When will we know?

Andrew School Feedback Session Option 3 – Feb. 20, 2019

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CHILD CARE & AFTER SCHOOL

- Andrew students would have to catch a bus separate from my high school kid. I would have to stay.
- Would need before- and after-school care options to accommodate younger kids not coming home on bus with big kids.

TRANSPORTATION

- Unacceptable for kids to be on the bus up to four hours per day. This will result in kids going to school elsewhere in a different school division.
- Agree [Unacceptable for kids to be on the bus up to four hours per day. This will result in kids going to school elsewhere in a different school division.]
- Too long of bus rides for the students.
- Transportation time is unacceptable.
- Increased risk to students due to travel routes and time.
- Would you travel four hours a day for work???
- Bus ride way too long. Safety of the children, higher risk on the road.
- Hard to justify long bus ride when my child can walk to school.
- This is crazy! Is education that different that putting a child on the bus for three hours is that worthwhile?
- This works best for us. We are one of the stops after the Andrew transfer. So our bus ride would be 40 minutes instead of 20 currently.
- Would not allow students to participate in after-school activities.
- Transportation is way too long with this option. The only way I can see this working is if parents are able to take their kids to a drop-off or pickup location and be bused straight to the school.
- Having children several years apart could increase a lessening of family time and extra confusion in the morning. Mass confusion.
- Yes, I agree [with the above].
- This is the worst case scenario for our families.
- Would interfere with participation in field trips.

- This should not even be on the table!!

Andrew School Feedback Session
Transcribed Worksheets – Feb. 20, 2019

Four worksheets received from participants

We want to hear from you: Preliminary Options for senior high programming.

1. Bus ride times are long enough already. If ride times were any longer, my child would be riding the bus for almost three hours each day.
2. Advocate for an agricultural program. Opportunities are great in agriculture.
3. I'm not liking the Division of my two children. One child has to go to Lamont and the other has to stay in Andrew, or pay a fee of \$800. I think this is too costly. I would want both my sons to be in school together! The fee should be exempt OR much more affordable!
4. If it stays status quo, I feel our vote doesn't matter (having a child going in to high school). All the elementary kids' parents want to keep status quo. They will outnumber high school parents as there are less kids in high school. They will outnumber high school parents as there are less kids in high school. Elementary kids are receiving a far more normal social experience in school. I feel like those parents would feel the same way when their kids reach Grade 10. I want more for my child, more sports, better and more options, a social life in a school, instead of having a class with only a few kids where kids feel that they don't belong.

I want my voice heard. I feel like there are more parents for status quo because they are elementary parents. And, I feel my child going to Grade 10 will suffer and be sheltered from a normal high school life because parents of younger kids want to keep status quo.

If it stays status quo, we should have options to send our kids to another school for a better education for not cost, \$800 per year is highway robbery.

Andrew School is a great K-9 school. High school kids need more!

I have a daughter who graduated last year and really missed out on a lot during her high school years. No sports teams, lack of friends, no social experiences, no courses, options. Option 2 all the way!!