

WORKING-GROUP MEETING NO. 1

SESSION SUMMARY: OCT. 29, 2018

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. 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 high programming in Andrew going forward.

Session Overview

On Oct. 29, 2018, Superintendent Mark Liguori met with Andrew School staff, 18 in total, to discuss senior high programming. Superintendent Liguori spoke to the group, explaining his concerns with the current senior high programming, and reiterated the Board of Trustees were approaching the community consultation with an open mind as to possible solutions.

Staff were reassured the decision to examine senior high programming has nothing to do with the quality of teaching. In fact, employees in Andrew do an excellent job; however, what the Division is asking teachers to do is extremely difficult.

All staff indicated they want what is best for Andrew senior high students and the school isn't able to offer that. Staff also feel the community has a lot of trust in them and respect their opinion about what is best for the students attending Andrew School.

Key Themes

WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT ANDREW

- Small class sizes.
- Teachers are wonderful.
- One-on-one education.
- It's a wonderful experience for students.
- It's convenient for school families.
- For a town that is struggling economically, the school is an import symbol of sustainability for the community.
- The school has an excellent elementary and junior high program.
- The school does great job with high risk kids, getting them to the 50 per cent grade.

CONSIDERATIONS

- For kids who want to stay and don't want to travel, it would be good to offer a high school outreach program in the multipurpose room.
- Offer video-conferencing options.
- Create an academy to draw students.
- A lot of these students and families aren't ready for a really large high school experience.
- K-9 works, eliminating the high school would remove the negativity currently influencing the elementary and junior high grades.
- Senior high students need be part of a culture where post-secondary is encouraged.
- They need to witness more perspectives to be challenged.
- Combining courses doesn't work.
- They need to have the option to be part of extracurricular programs—sports and fine arts.
- Exposure to more people will help kids build more aligned friendships.

BIGGEST ISSUES FOR THE ANDREW COMMUNITY

- Residents are worried about a full-school closure.
- The closure of a school represents the death of the town.
- Transportation costs, ride times and pickups are concerns.
- People will worry about boundaries—where will students go and do families have a choice?

Next Steps

EIPS senior administration and the Board will review the input received through the working-group meeting. A second working-group meeting is planned for Oct. 31, 2019 and student forum on Nov. 6, 2019. A public meeting with the community will follow on Nov. 22, 2018. 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.