



# ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY MEETING - Altario General Comments Wednesday, June 11, 2008

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If student enrolment continues to decline and funding is continuously reduced and the school Board has to make a decision about the future of Altario School, what is your preferred option for educating your children?

- Triple grading in the lower ECS grades. VC with a teacher in the classroom to help when there is problems. Look to cut costs in other areas in the school system. Look into getting more of our tax money back into the school system.
- If we are to have VC then we need a teacher 's aide to help those kids that cannot learn that way.
- Administration in PLRD head office could take a wage cut and therefore that would free up money to pay a teacher's wage. Why do we need a superintendent and an assistant superintendent?
- If we need to have video conferencing in our school, I think that is something we have to work with. We have to keep the kids here to keep the community working. So busing the kids out of here shouldn't be an option.
- If the worst occurs, I would tolerate video-conferencing but, there MUST be a teacher assistant or aid in the classroom at all times or possibly widening out school borders to rake in more students for more money to fund a teacher at the school.
- I want my children to continue their education in Altario, even though it may change in delivery of it. VC is an acceptable form of delivery as long as it is not done for the majority of the school day.
- I will send my kids to Consort – Grade 10-12.
- I am from a different community and drive my children to school simply because a small school with a strong community equals a strong individual.
- We must keep our school here and valid if we need to triple grade or increase video conference classes or increase the school day and cut it to 4 days a week. Whatever it takes to allow our kids to be graduates of Altario School.
- Try to draw more students from outside the boundaries. Keep tax dollars and oil money in the area for our education and roads.
- I made the commitment to bring my daughter 5 hours north to make sure she has the opportunity to get a good education. If the school closes, I will then home school her. I refuse to let her go to another school.
- Keep our funding from dissipating right to Hancock and keep our taxes in our area.
- Keeping the school open in this community is top priority. If money is the issue I feel any extras should be cut to keep our basic education if possible.
- Combine grades, V/C, give the students a basis education.

- No changes for two years, funding is based on per student. Should be based per program. Specialized schools – hockey/baseball. V/C classes for low enrolment classes. Change school boundaries to bring in students.
- Keep Classes down to two grades per classroom. Would except 4 day week with longer days. VC class is okay for some junior high and senior high school.
- Would rather not use more than 25% video conferencing. Would rather see the school expand and bring in other students for specialized programs and bring up our numbers.
- If had to, would send children to Consort.
- Elementary students continue to attend school in Altario. High school students sent to Consort as a last resort only. Use of V/C classes in our school throughout so our students learn early on how to excel in the classes once more difficult curriculum comes along.
- VC would be a big option or home schooling. No busing to larger schools – this would be harder on the families in the community and if they close the school it would ruin our whole community as a whole.
- This school needs to stay here! We need to work as a community, school included to toot our horn about what we can offer. Creating a niche school and making ourselves a multimedia school would be a boom. The students would leave with a breadth and depth of education not given anywhere else.
- It does come from funding.
- I expect my school board to press for more funding for our school. Funding and/or staff cuts should begin at HEAD OFFICE. Too much money spent on goodies such as career counselors and workers on internet curriculum.
- We will do what it takes to keep this school open as long as we can hold up our quality of the basics. Technology can and should be used, but should be across the board used by administration as well as extras (counselors, coordinators, etc). Let us not set any double standards for our students.
- Cutting costs with bus maintenance, triple grades in ECS, 4 day week to cut costs, VC to have better supervision/teachers.

General Comments:

- Absolutely no way the children can be on the bus anymore then they are.
- The meeting was informative and well organized.
- I felt the time here this evening was well spent. Will put more pressure on our MLA to be aware of the difficulties rural schools are facing.
- Busing our kids is NOT an option. The kids spend enough time on the bus just to get to the school here. Our kids need the school and so does our community! There needs to be more feedback done with VC. From all areas. To see if it is helping and hot the kids feel about it. We as parents are for it, but how is it working for the kids?
- Quite a few students do not like VC they find it hard to learn and you as a board are not listening to the students or their parents.
- If we go to a 4 day week there is a transportation, power and support staff saving. Also going to a 4 day week teachers would use that day for field trips thereby using all 4 school days for school. As a parent, I think this would make far more sense than missing school for a trip to Edmonton, etc.
- Video Conferencing must have a T/A to help class constantly on the receiving schools end. Closing the school is NOT an option; it's the glue that holds our community together. There

must be a gaining of more students somehow, whether its expanding borders or perimeters of the school or promotion systems that would ultimately support the school. We need to take a serious and extensive look at our funding and spending methods and trends. At this point, we must consider what is good or bad about our methods. Also, what is essential and what is not essential. Basically, we need to stop and think about our funding, our planning, and our spending/purchases and generally where our money is going and if this is how we want our money to be handled.

- Thanks for humoring us! The government will do what they see fit i.e. closing our school. I like our school and my community. I like the values taught by our school and I would like to see our school stay open until grade 10.
- Close a school – loose a community e.g. Bodo. We need to look at the local community to help support the school with the help of the local MLAs. To go further up the ladder. Altario School does a lot of in school cost cutting – we need to look in other areas. Look at the surplus from other schools and use accordingly.
- Keeping the school here, keeps families here. If parts of the school close those families will move to where their children can get that quality education.
- We can not fund on number of students, in our areas our numbers are small but our tax dollars are larges where it comes to taxes. Please make sure we get our share.
- The KAC communities have lost enough businesses and members to lose Altario School will mean the death of these communities. VC is viable option to keep the school open just improve the operation. If you send high school or junior high school elsewhere that is the beginning of the end for any school or community. Altario school has been well known for putting out highly educated and highly motivated students, a great percentage of which who have gone on to further education. Let's keep that outcome continuing, we are a small part of this province but we still are a part of this province and country and there may be possible leaders in this small community. Let's not have another small community die.
- How do you put a price on education? 20 kids or 500 kids, why and how can school board members put a cost value ahead of kid's education? Shut down schools and you kill communities!
- I feel it doesn't matter where the money comes from as long as it's going toward our children's education whether it is for a power bill, gas bill, books or VC or possible teachers pay. I don't think it really matters how you spend as long as the kids profit.
- Four day work week would capitalize on savings on transportation and wages.
- At the present time we have a very good staff. I feel that people teaching and working at the school are one of the most important factors in a positive attitude among the students. So a careful hiring policy is important. I hope that will always be considered. My impression of this meeting was that the board is trying to keep things as good as they are able and hopefully will be able to continue to do so.
- I appreciate the board taking the time to include us in this process. I feel like the school board is really concerned about us and don't want us downsized or closed.
- We live too far from any bigger centers to ship our kids. You could try to extend the busing boarder to gain more population.
- Do you guys get OT when you present these meetings? Is that why you keep moving them?
- If video conferencing is our only option then I would prefer the teacher be at our school. Or at least a fair split among the schools. In this world of machines, computers (press #1 to speak to...or #2), I would really want for my children to have a real person standing in front of them. Perhaps having an aide or supervisor, with some training in the subject could help

somewhat, but I really believe those students need contact with an educator. I am not convinced that this would be the best method for educating my children.

- I think the way the meeting was set up was very good. I felt the group discussions were excellent and everyone was more open in talking because of the small table group. I just hope after all this, something becomes of it.
- It was a great turnout and a great discussion was held by all. It is nice to know we all are sharing a common goal in keeping the school open. It is also good that the school board is keeping us in the loop with what is going on.
- Meeting was good. 4 day school week would be a great way of cutting transportation and infrastructure costs. Is the natural gas and power pre-bought to control costs and predict costs? Look into alternative energy costs to keep those costs under control, look into solar, wind, coal, hot water, and other sources of energy for all schools. Keep taxes in the school board.
- I feel that this meeting was valuable in that we were able to express our opinions and some worthwhile suggestions were brought up.
- Good discussion and positive support from our school board trustees.
- The meeting has a lot of repetition. The first two groups covered all the concerns in the community, after that it was duplicate and triplicate. Putting the meeting in a general format would be quicker and more efficient. Groups slow down the flow of the discussion.
- This meeting should not have been made strictly up to the parent council to organize and then switch dates. Seemed somewhat a 'make work' project to make the Parent Council feel involved. However, the evening seemed to run well. Possibly smaller work groups might get more discussion flowing. PLRD should be lobbying to have buses run into other divisions. If there is parental interest. E. g. 18 kids from Monitor, 13 kids from Bodo could be here if the routes were opened up.
- The meeting was very informative. I learned many different views and thoughts. Although there were a few that have stuck in my head. Making a four day week with the children being in school for more hours per day. Leaving busing out for the fifth day would save money there. Looking into having children from Monitor or Bodo bringing more children to Altario would be prosperous. Also by paying an isolation bonus or helping pay for student loans would help teachers choose to teach here. Also providing a home for them would be beneficial, adding to their bonus over a few years would also keep the teachers around, and this would be great. Thanks for the meeting. It is important to keep this school running.
- I believe this meeting was informative and very helpful in choosing the right thing for our rural schools and students.
- I certainly agree with streamlining the central office to ensure we have no wasted money there. I would also like to see VC used for administration and Board positions. Also, staff like career counselors, curriculum coordinators (if they are even necessary), special ed positions use VC and save us the big travel expenses for these people. I'll take some VC over school closure as long as other staff and administration are prepared to do likewise.