



ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY MEETING – Berry Creek Community School General Comments Wednesday, October 15, 2008

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

- Video conferencing if necessary but I believe no matter what we need our high school.
- A 4 day school week!
- More class options through video conferencing.
- Expand bus route borders.
- Co-ordinate with Apprenticeship Board for trades training – possible 1st year apprentice certification at graduation.
- Cycling options at senior high on a three year cycle; continue use of video conferencing to supplement on-site courses.
- Look into more Video Conferencing classes; instead of doing away with high school.
- We cannot close our minds to any and all suggestions. Things that were not practical years ago should be re-visited.
- Keep the school open – whatever it takes!
- Bussing – wider area if feasible (schools that only go to Grade 9 they want to come LET THEM).
- 4 day school week (cut costs).
- Maybe write to our MLA – get all that we need and deserve for our kids.
- My preferred option is my children get their deserved education at our local school, however should it be closed as suggested you would kill our community as we would be forced to move else where.
- Keep as many teachers as can – not fun to learn by DLP.
- This school needs to remain open we need to do whatever we need to do to make this happen. I will educate my children at this school if it remains open.
- Keep the school open. Find a course that could be unique to BCCS that would draw students here. Become the only VC school in the division and become a VC specialized school.
- I would not like to see this school close. We need to look at ways to bring in more kids. #1 We need the housing for families. Special Areas keeps fighting against more housing because of the lack of water – water is necessary in order to change anything.
- Video conferencing.
- Rotation of teachers from one semester to another with other schools.
- Continue on with the parent taught courses that are preparing high school kids for trades or general interest like cooking and photography.

- BCCS should become the technical hub of PLRD. Our school would use the existing technology to beam out VC courses to the rest of the division. We could then retain our classroom teachers as well as provide # courses to the rest of the division.
- Change boundaries for school division.
- Offer work experience for Mennonites.
- 4 day week.
- Work experience for Mennonites.
- Beam out VC classes.
- Offer incentives to keep Mennonites in school.
- Whatever it takes to keep the school open!
- Offer incentives to keep the Mennonites in school.
- Offer a specialty program to lure students in.
- Re-work the boundaries, bring kids in from Jenner and Duchess.
- 4 day work week – would save transportation funding, staffing and facility spending. Would attract teachers and other families to our families.
- 4 day week, exchange program (students), find ways to keep Mennonite families here and keep them in school.
- Co-ed sports teams.
- Create an Agricultural Charter with ESL learning as well.
- Bus parents to work in other areas.
- Have them live here with their families

GENERAL COMMENTS:

- This meeting was terrific. If for no other reason then to help people in the community know that they matter. Our school is important and we will all fight to keep it open.
- Thanks a lot to the board for listening to us.
- Losing the high school is not an option. In our discussion we learned that several students in school boundaries, i.e. between Hanna and Cessford schools, families in these areas should be able to decide which way to go, even if two buses overlap.
- I liked the rotating teacher idea. For example a teacher in Youngstown to teach English 10+20+30 in first semester and teach English 10+20+30 in Cessford second semester.
- Look at a three or five year plan at a multi-school level to be proactive about what they (teachers) will be teaching, both on-site and VC, (more time related to specific planning) and what students will be learning in any particular year.
- Informative meeting.
- Mixed discussion groups were great (added lots of perspective)
- The question was vague and not direct. IE needed to be explained better.
- Four day school week was a great idea.
- As a group, the school divisions in this province need to become more flexible about borders. The territorial attitudes need to change.
- Find ways to attract and keep teachers.
- Find ways to attract students for our sports teams (some students from schools like Duchess haven't "made the team"). Let them come here to play on our teams.
- Designate our school as a "_____ " school; ie an IT school, a trade high school.

- Have brain storming sessions yearly with the community.
- We need Cessford School for our children and our children's children. We have a wonderful school here with a great workforce of teachers, aides and Principal. We want to work together to bring more people into our Rural area. Why not bring in Foreign exchange students or have a welding school for high school students. (Could bring in kids from the city to learn welding).
- We are a wealthy community at Berry Creek. There is no reason that we cannot have a great education for our children and grandchildren. We want our families to grow up to be great rural Canadians.
- I feel this was a very good community meeting with everyone. We all want the same good education for our children.
- A lot of very good ideas. I feel we can keep our children, teachers and community going strong.
- In general the Canadian Government, the Alberta Government, the Special Area's and Prairie Land School Division must step up to the plate!! They must continue to give our children the best education that they deserve.
- Try to keep Mennonite students past upper elementary/jr. high. Try things like: - Vocational/Tradeschool – see if can get a 'link' with a college – move towards their certificate. Exp: (mechanics/carpentry/...).
- Try to 'break-down' bus lines.
- Prairie Land Regional Division needs to step up and do everything they can to save our school. Offering perks for new teachers, not being picky with bussing boundaries within the division, using technology every way possible and sincerely listening to parent and student concerns. It might be easy for someone in Hanna to decide that the school should be shut down. It does not necessarily affect your life, or your community. As a school in your division we need the attention and deserve the respect as any other school in this division. If this school is allowed to close, this entire community will die. Our suggestions need to be taken seriously and put into action. I really do not think it would be that hard to attract new students and teachers to such a great facility of learning. Prairie Land needs to make this happen.
- Need to find ideas to keep the Mennonite kids all the way from K-12. Need to bump up Jr./Sr. enrollment.
- 4 day school week.
- Get Gov't to increase funding.
- Try to open up bus and school boundaries to have more students coming in.
- Petition special areas to open up more lots in Cessford so more families can move in and go to BCCS.
- More trades and work experience courses.
- Incentives to get staff to move to area to teach and to stay teaching in the area.
- Quality education everywhere is very important, rural areas included. Rural students develop and are apart of the community as much as urban. They have as many rights as any other student.
- Lobby SA for more community services.
- Lobby Provincial Gov't for more funding.
- The best chance for a successful school is to continue having the younger generation return to the community. Special Areas or Palliser Planning needs to get serviced lots in Wardlow, Cessford and Pollockville to help people move into the community.
- 4 day school week? Day 5 – paid trade (work) day for Sr. high.

- Are there isolation pay, incentives for Teachers?
- If we aren't able to work out bussing within our division (re: parents have to drive to meet buses), how can we expect to work out bussing with other school divisions?
- Government grants to promote trades education – links to Tech Schools? Work experience tech programs outside school.
- I a parent of Tilley School would suggest start thinking outside the box. Technology is the future specialize in computer science, and offer trades for the grade 9 including an apprenticeship with a diploma. Everything cycles hold it together for the future.
- Great group discussion.
- Was good, question could have been worded better.
- Berry Creek School has a high turnover of teachers just out of University. In schools teachers make a school good or bad. We need to look after and support these teachers to keep them in the area. More training, more social activities with members of the community (even if not parents of children in school), incentives etc. Looking after and supporting teacher s means happier teachers with less stress that can do a better quality job.
- We suggested student exchange. But what about teacher exchange? Get a well experience teacher to complete a semester (or a period of time) at BCCS to bring to the students a well informed lessons etc. from an expert in a particular subject etc. With committed, exciting, experienced teachers as incentives to keep children in school in junior high and high school.
- The community school needs to not only try to involve the Mennonite children in the school but to work to get a community bond with Mennonite parents – THERE WERE ONLY 2 PRESENT OUT OF 70-80 PEOPLE HERE!
- Australia has grouped its Rural remote schools together. They get extra funding, teacher incentives, ideas, exchanges, etc. Schools in urban settings with higher fees and more funding stay strong and rural schools suffer. So this group was created to support rural schools and help them support each other.
- Make it easier and quicker for Australians to be to be able to teach in Alberta so we can help out!!!
- Possibly look into ideas into teacher incentives to move to rural areas – like moving packages or signing bonus's in areas where we need teachers (eg: like they do for nurses and medical field).
- If parents want their children to come, boundary lines should maybe be more flexible.
- If parents can help to help cut costs let them; eg: volunteer to help as T/A's.
- Even if people do not have a certificate in teaching they should be able to come in and teach; eg: teaching welding – how many welders will teach in a school with a certificate or teachers that know how to teach.
- Duane Roy was an excellent chairman. Thank you to the Board for this opportunity to come together as a community. This was a good exercise for us all. Thank you to the board for your hard work.
- There are grants available plus a fund available.
- Walmart grant to build a greenhouse at our school.
- Rural Alberta's Development Fund available 100 million dollars, applied for by 2009, projects of all kinds, even for Education. Money dispersed by 2011.
(www.ruralalbertasfund.com)
- Agrivalue Investor Network – www.avnetwork.ca where Investors want to invest in rural Alberta.
- Partner Real Estate people and small rural schools to develop marketing kits. Incentives for businesses to develop in rural areas.

- Lobby Government to change funding so community can help fund for Teachers, etc.
- Ag. Tourism Business, Grow orchards of Saskatoons, apples, blueberries and build a canning business.
- 2000 target market Africans that eat lamb, chicken, goats are eaten 100% Canadian. We could create wealth through raising these things for Ag. Tourism education as well as apprenticeship program with farmers and students.