



ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY MEETING - Delia School General Comments Wednesday, January 21, 2009

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

- Additional Government Funding; Revisit how schools are funded.
- Traveling Teachers; have specialized teachers teach one semester in one school and next at another.
- Video Conferencing.
- I do not have an option. I believe the school is justifying the means. Our utilization plan is doing well our student enrolment is consistent including the up and coming children. I believe that we don't have a problem so why change it.
- We are one of the families that are 1st picked up and last dropped off with already 1 hour on the bus. We do not need any longer.
- I would prefer that the school stay status quo. Best utilization throughout PLRD. We moved here to raise our family in a small community. I like the smaller #'s, don't want my kids to fall through the cracks per say.
- Fill unused space with community services.
- Partial split-classes.
- 4 day school week.
- I definitely wish to keep my two daughters (gr. 8 and 2) in the Delia School. Busing to Hanna seems extensive. Double up classes or do extensive fundraising. I love the small school and feel safe knowing who my children are associating with.
- I would prefer to keep my 2 children here. There is a lot of options that would help and keep this school open. I would not bus my children. Provide better athletic programs, more trades being provided would be great, lets entice them to come here make it look exciting.
- Spend surplus.
- I believe the school remaining open from K-12 is my option, with community support and business support. We will fade away if the school is taken.
- Do not move our students – keep our community alive (to help bring more families in).
- Bring other students to Delia.
- Continue to be innovative – VC, multigrade, etc. but always keeping student's needs a priority.
- Continue to lobby gov't.
- I would consider homeschooling or send them to Drumheller.
- Financial and enrolment factors will greatly decide the issue although parental input/backlash needs to be considered.

- Quality first. Stop worrying about cutting, if you cut education, you pay it out in EI, health care, infrastructure and social programs.
- Keeping the school open, and maybe increase tele-conferencing or long distance learning if possible.
- Maybe setting up a specialty program, say for green technologies, science courses (maybe with Tyrell Museum) and so on.
- I feel our school is very important to stay open if we don't our community will slowly decline.
- Do not close any part of Delia School.
- Develop the process of Video Conferencing.
- Possibly increase multi-grading for optional subjects such as music, art, etc.
- That my taxes alone can pay for my kids education that I pay to the government a year.
- 4 day school week – VC Conferencing – Specialty School.
- Look at bringing students to Delia School! Because of our location we are also the option. What about Hanna/Morrin.
- Consider only one school for Hanna – Hanna's loss of students should not effect Delia which is holding it's own.
- Resourceful and innovative, i.e.: in high school, do as resource room rather than individual grades. Student can progress at their own speed or excel. Teacher, library/resources, video-conferencing etc. would be there to motivate, facilitate and guide students.
- Maybe the school board could look at moving their office into the unused spaces in the Hanna schools. Maybe even have a heavy duty mechanics course for students. Eg: working on buses.
- Doubling up classes (no more than 2 grades together).
- Video-conferencing.
- (Surplus) - Invest in small communities (PLRD) to help with sports, etc. Maybe incentives to employees to move to small communities by having maintenance shops or similar employment in these small communities.
- I think that if the Delia School closes or thinks of moving the senior high to another school, it would have to consider homeschooling. But I think PLRD should cut back on other things and give more money to smaller schools.
- The school stays open at all costs – elementary and high school.
- Promote use of Video Conferencing to provide courses for which teachers are not available.
- Lobby MLA to change the way rural schools are funded. If need be video conference classes and merging classes to keep the school open.
- Spend Surplus.
- Get Surplus down so Alberta Gov't will fund more.
- At this point, it seems Video Conferencing is the best option.
- We need to impress upon and our MLA and the Minister of Education how important is it to have separate funding for sparsely populated areas with declining enrolment. Make this happen and all the other problems go away.
- We need to keep our school open therefore if we need to combine a few classes or utilize video conferencing then we should do that. Bottom line we must keep our school in full K-12. Our village depends on this.
- Remain in Delia, look at new/innovative ways to expand education here.
- Fund what the school needs for educating, don't base on head count. Base funding on results of Education, not numbers.

- As a parent of 4, the option of having high school students shipped to Hanna is not a option. We would rather drive all of our children to one school and only have a ½ bus/drive time. With that said – we are open to video conferencing, split classes and any other options that would help keep our children in Delia.
- Video conferencing.
- If Delia school was to close I think I would seriously consider home school as it would not be fair to put a 6 year old on a school bus for at least 2 hours a day.
- CTS labs I prefer to stop drainage from our school. Combine classes to provide more education may be a drawing card to other communities.
- Great ideas brought forward.
- I think the formula for funding on head count may have to be revised. We are constantly doing this in our own businesses. If we weren't flexible we wouldn't be in business. Academic accomplishments should be considered as well. Small schools can have higher achievements.
- For the Government to re-evaluate some of the out dated formulas which are currently in place to arrive at the funding amounts.
- Have the funding arrived at to meet the needs of a particular school rather than that schools head count!
- If the school board were to close the High School in Delia, I would not send my children to Hanna – too much time on the bus already – and would send them to Drumheller (already closer to Drum). My preferred option is to work with the school board to keep the school at it's optimum capacity in terms of funding! And keep the school open.
- No option school used most in area. Very good community backing.
- My child wants to stay in Delia School, not Hanna, Drum or Morrin. My family wants to stay in Delia.
- If there is two schools in one town close one of them first.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

- Community is centered around the School – Loose the School Community Dies.
- Once older students leave, usually younger siblings go as well. Parents don't want kids in separate schools.
- Having K-12 school is incentive for people to move to community.
- Smaller class sizes = better education for those students that struggle. They don't fall through the cracks as easily.
- There are so many positive ideas that could be planned to keep the school alive and well and making our community strong.
- However there are many negatives that can be so detrimental to families, communities and children by looking at minimizing our school to 1 to 6 and 1 to 9.
- Busing, loss of community support, children with special needs may fall through cracks with bigger classes.
- Thank you for the opportunity to speak and hear about this situation.
- Delia School space is utilized fairly well. Maybe we could use space for community services.
- We are utilizing our school to the maximum.
- This was a good idea to get the community together to Brain Storm.
- Utilize facility.
- Use boundary's that are in place to up enrolment.
- Use community projects in school to up income; ie: 4H, Kinder music program.
- Increase something as a specialization; ie: computer, sports, music, farming to draw students.
- Go green in the school and village, encourage eco friendly to reduce costs.
- Encourage student's family's who need special help or services to access all extra funding and resources. In the school system this can bring in an extra aid or programs such as mat man that can then be used by more than 1 student and increase funding which benefits all students.
- Student's needs should always be considered first:
 - No extended bus rides.
 - School supports always available.
 - Provide as many programs as possible.
 - Keep teachers.
- There should not be any school closures until surplus is spend down.
- Board has done a great job lobbying gov't and needs to continue until their voice is heard!
- More use of VC for several purposes.
 - More variety of courses.
 - More familiarity with technology.
 - More chance of being creative in its uses.
- Strict limit of 90 minutes on bus (one way).
 - Using a small hub system to shorten bus routes.
- We don't need more money. Keep the budget the same for 5 years (ie: same staffing levels) so we can show our community and new people looking at Delia that we are stable.
- Focus on turning your assets, "teachers and students" into successful programs, not creating programs and hoping students and teachers fit.
- Depending on where everyone lives, I don't think families would mind driving there kids to Hanna, Morrin if they had too.

- Tonight was a good group setting that got everyone's inputs, all our concerns are very valuable and should take in consideration seriously. Keep our school open!
- Why are the nine schools with the least children not involved in the study or the utilization plan. The Hutterite Colonies should have any funding from PLRD or government stopped and the children should go to nearby schools.
- On everything I buy I pay taxes, and this is wrong to do to the children that are our future. Where does all that tax money go in our community, do the math. There are 130 kids in our school so say there is 65 parents who pay taxes put some aside for our community for our school.
- CTS Unit is the best thing that has happened to Delia School. Gives alternatives to less academic students. Delia has always focused on academics and we lose students who know they have a "trades" future. Thank you for this.
- There is a lot of "if's." Give us more exact procedures. Where is the largest decline, operating cost etc.
- We can not combine many more classes or we will be back to one teacher K-12.
- Closing one school in Hanna will not negatively effect Hanna. Closing our school in Delia will hurt our village, community and businesses.
- Our loss would not necessarily be Hanna's gain – people might move to other school districts.
- Delia is a mid-size school with a relatively stable student population. School loses when there is uncertainty.
- The bus ride should not be the major time consumer. It is lost time. Geography should not increase bus ride times.
- Combining classes – no more that 2 grades. Curriculum for each grade should be provided in combined classrooms.
- Make people aware of what Delia has to offer.
- The school board building money could go towards the division to help schools stay in the communities.
- 4 day school week is not ideal but better than closing the school.
- Better utilization of split grades and teachers like in Morrin's kindergarten.
- Combine 2 Hanna Schools.
- Don't allow Craigmyle kids to be bused to Hanna.
- Give funding or specialized Phys. Ed teacher to create good sports teams.
- This constant fear of closing the school does nothing for bringing families in and parents consider sending kids elsewhere in the future if the school is uncertain.
- I believe that Delia School is doing an excellent job of utilizing available resources (people and \$) and believe it is important to keep teachers involved with the kids.
- Use of Interactive Video Conferencing and Distance Learning have drastically improved the quality of instruction for educating students at a distance. This option is far preferable to busing students to neighboring community (in excess of 2 hours/day).
- Video Conferencing and/or a Virtual School could provide quality interactive courses to students already living great distances from the school.
- It is hoped that the Board will, first and foremost, focus on what is best for our students, not just ways to save the surplus.
- If Delia loses it's school, shortly the town will dwindle in my opinion. Possibly look at other schools that are not being utilized as much as Delia.
- Bus Rides can't be any longer.

- The community needs to stay in contact with our MLA to lobby for more money for the division through altered funding methods.
- We are aware of all the options although not necessarily comfortable with them.
- I learned a great deal tonight and appreciate PLRD keeping us informed.
- Continue expanding Video Conferencing with improved techniques and higher quality media that motivates kids and provides supervisors with tools to use media properly. Video education is still new, needs improvement.
- Combined grades/student knowledge levels – combine students that are matched mentally and age.
- * In future, only discuss motivating the future of Delia school, not shutting down programs, use time wisely. If Hanna is having trouble with numbers, why don't they combine schools for better utilization.
- Utilize CTS units throughout the entire year – not just for the kids, market it for adult learning during summer months, X-mas downtime, Easter, etc.
- Use Casinos for fund raising.
- Rent school rooms out for adult education – evenings, weekends.
- I think these community meetings are used to help ensure parents and community members of the future of our school and community. Unfortunately if the school or part of the school is closed down the community will also crumble.
- As far as our children we all want the best education for them and you will find most parents will be willing to adapt to change in order to keep our school open.
- Investigate “specialty” school. We have a curling rink and figure skating.
- We must lobby the local government to change the funding also revitalize our communities to attract families to the area.
- Offer “accelerated learning” to students willing to take on the extra work load. Teachers would support the “on-line” work.
- I think options would be very beneficial to our school.
- On line teaching may cut costs.
- You need to think of the children first!
- Maybe the community can fundraise as well. We have worked many Casinos that have brought in a lot of money.
- Something else to consider would be to reward schools for going above and beyond. Like for extra training. Eg: Hunter training, scuba diving.
- I appreciate the level of education offered at Delia school (my wife started school here) and would hate to see it disappear, but I will do whatever I can to offer my children the best possible education that they can get.
- I think the school board should look outside the region. Take a look on how they are handling the problem of declining #'s.
- I know we are the richest province in Canada. We should not have this problem of money to educate our children.
- A lot of the time school cuts grades (eg: 10, 11 and 12) you will lose the other kids as well so whole school will lose. As a parent if I move 1 student to another school I would pull all other kids to be moved as well.
- The kindergarten kids should count as 1 person, no ½.
- Nice to see parents and teachers that turned out.
- If it means combining classes I would rather have a teacher than 4 aids (aids help but cannot teach our kids)!

- Do not want our high school closed – will lose kids out of division both high school and junior high.
- Bus from Craigmyle to Hanna needs to stop – stop the drain from the school.
- Previously lost students for sports – CTS courses. Hopefully CTS lab will solve part of this problem.
- Video conferencing can be successful needs to be looked at :
 - a) self-motivation of kids
 - b) number of kids
 - c) receiver – sender needs to go to opposite school to switch
 - d) better than distance learning
 - e) train people to be video conferencing specialists – senders
 - f) question why video conference certain subjects
 - g) not for core courses
- Cut aids – keep teachers. Cut central office, not workers in the schools – people who work with kids.
- Don't cut anything – increase funding per head – province must increase funding for rural eastern AB.
 - Increase student credits – get paid in high school by # of credits.
- Reexamine how we combine grades and classes. There are schools that do innovative groupings that are working successfully.
- Look at 4 day school weeks in order to save money.
- Don't combine grades any more than 2. Fight for keeping only 2 grades at most combined.