



ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY MEETING - Youngstown School General Comments Tuesday, October 21, 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 Youngstown School, what is your preferred option for educating your children?

- Good meeting – ideas I thought were worth another look:
 - expand arts program,
 - alternate days for grades,
 - specialty school,
 - cold room used for businesses eg. hairdressing school, computer business, internet business.
- If we have to do Video Conference only in grade 8 and up which it may help them work on their own because they are going have to deal with in University/College. Triple grade in elementary. Only if we don't have any other choices.
- No more than triple grading. Prefer video conferencing over distance education, with the absolute most qualified teacher for the subject. And extra support for those students who may be struggling with the video conferencing.
- Video Conferencing with parameters to ensure greatest academic outcomes.
- I would like to see the greatest effort in holding as we are. I would like to see more lobbying to ensure the above.
- If we face teacher cuts I would prefer video conferencing for junior/senior high to correspondence courses or moving our students to another school. If I was faced with a longer bus ride for my children I would seriously consider home schooling.
- Try not to go to more than 3 grades together in elementary.
- Optimize video conferencing.
- There is a baby boom in our community.
- Several new families have moved to town in last couple of years, so don't cut programs too fast; it's hard to get it back.
- Do more video conferencing and keep the school open.
- This could reduce number of teachers.
- When VC'ing we'd prefer some continuity in courses so our students go into Univ. equipped.
- Need teachers that do well in VCing.
- Keep to triple grading, not more than this.
- Closing the school is not an option!
- Video Conference in High School.
- More multi grading in other grades.
- As much teacher-based programs as possible. More supervising for VC classes to ensure quality delivery and maximum understanding of subjects.

- Preferred to keep all grades and introduce a little more video conferencing.
- Try as hard as we can to keep things rolling.
- Use VC, but use in wisely and as effectively as possible so it is teaching the kids efficiently. The kids are most important.
- I would prefer to see more video conferencing as opposed to closing the high school.
- Would feel comfortable with more video conferencing delivered by quality teachers but we need to come together as a community to create businesses and job opportunities to bring in more families so our school community grows.
- I feel video conferencing is a good option. I feel the school needs to stay open.
- If we couldn't stay the same I think quality VC would be acceptable with accountability and monitoring.
- My preferred option would be for the high school to be closed and sent to a larger school. Bussing should be made shorter for the school by using feeder busses or a central bus with parents driving their kids to the central bus to make a shorter bus ride. The school districts should be flexible regarding district boundaries so that parents could choose the closest school for their children.
- Keep this school going as long as possible, if it means more VC. VC is a valuable tool, with the proper supervision, and disciplines in place. If high school is short supplied in options, focus more on K-9.
- Keep Youngstown going for grade 1-12. Use video conferencing as long as the best teachers are teaching, not just using a teacher than needs a time slot filled.
- Busing children to Hanna should not be an option for any of our students. Too long of bus rides already for our children.
- I would like to see more time spent with student's from grades 1-9. Triple grading should be looked at a little closer for the student's achievement and if all attention is being evenly spread between grades.
- I would like to see student's not be on buses for such long periods of time.
- I would like to see that teachers are still present in front of our students and video conferencing may make that possible but it shouldn't be the kids only source of education.
- No more than triple grading in elementary classrooms.
- Continue to develop video conferencing in Jr. high and high school, and elementary options -accessing expert teachers within the division to teach each subject.
- If we can no longer provide an equal and quality education, then close high school.
- 4 day school week.
- No more than 3 grades per class.
- More VC: -introduced earlier,
 -best teacher for job,
 -delivered from smaller class once per week.
- I would like to see no more than triple grading in our school.
- As for video conferencing have the best qualified teacher for the course. But also make sure the students are keeping their marks up and if there are problems have help for the students.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

- I think we are one family who would take our kids to Oyen. Our younger kids would attend the Catholic School, and the other kids would attend public school. We are already going that direction for Hockey and it would be very plausible for us. Of course convenience would not be good, but we would have to consider living there during the week.
- Asking for help in Alberta Education. Have parents help out as much as we can. Our kids only go to school for a few years so parents have to sacrifice a little more for your kids sake.
- Parents have to start helping kids and encourage kids with homework.
- Please ensure that you continue to involve the community. Working together we can make great things happen.
- I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to be involved in this process.
- I also appreciate the commitment from the board to allow Mr. McKeage and Mel and Kelly to provide administration. It is working well and has allowed many positives.
- I think video conferencing would work well if:
 - the most qualified teacher teaches each course
 - it does not affect the core subjects in elementary
 - support is available for students who need help
 - it is monitored to make sure acceptable grades are being achieved by each student.
- Before any scenario is considered for the future of our school I believe we need to re-evaluate the funding formula per student in rural areas. It simply costs more to travel out here and to bring in any services. That needs to be considered if the future of country schools is going to be secure.
- I do not think that it would be fair to ask teachers to teach any more than 3 grades together unless there is a change in the curriculum. They cannot be expected to teach 3+ different curriculums for each subject.
- Mr. McKeage principal is a good idea. Hopefully he won't get burned out.
- Save loads of money at head office by cutting staff in half there. Surely you don't need so much head office staff for such a small division (number-wise).
- Ensure schools in rural areas have equal funding.
- If needed to cut back in staff, would you be able to cut back staff in the office?
- Provide more mentorship for new teachers to help them succeed, make their transition from University to the classroom more positive.
- Try to limit the number of courses a new student teaches to prevent burnout.
- Positive with Administration from Hanna, we have one more full time teacher to allow the junior high students less triple grading.
- Good general discussion.
- Lots of positive feedback and ideas.
- Good size groups for brainstorming ideas.
- Nice to see a mix of parents, community members and stakeholders within community.
- Raise awareness for much needed help from government, Alberta Ed., etc to help meet the needs of triple grading and problem solving with financial needs.
- VC needs to be assessed constantly for the well being for all students. Not all students will learn or accept VC the same. A support system needs to be in place for those students and parents as well.
- Moving the teacher out of his class in one school to another class in the other school to keep interaction between students is a necessity.

- It's hard to cut things back and still keep a school that is a school. Keep putting your heads together to prepare for the future and what it may bring.
- Thank you for this chance to brainstorm. Keep them coming you may get more ideas.
- We need to focus on the core subjects and ensure the students learn them well.
- Make sure the best qualified teacher in each subject is the one doing the video conferencing.
- This is a great opportunity for our community to come together to keep our rural schools viable and operational. Thanks for continuing to look for solutions.
- Best Ideas were:
 1. Parents delivering kids to central location (Youngstown South especially).
 2. 4 day School week.
 3. Teaching staff to travel more.
- If reserves stay same – no change.
- If things change – board will again discuss and meet with community.
- Glad to see PLRD is willing to come out to every area and listen to the people. It gives everyone a chance to work together.
- Good meeting.
- I am concerned with the amount of time my kids spend on the bus. The route they ride is just too long for one school bus to cover. It is possible to have a feeder bus on this route to pick up the kids living well back off the main route. The day is just too long for them. My kids get on the bus between 7:10 to 7:20 a.m. depending on kindergarten days. The ride home is equally as long.
- I thought the seminar was good. We will be watching the school board to see if they have heard our ideas.
- Get rid of Ipods, cell phones, M.P3's at school, work on personal relationships, work ethic and other things rather than personal entertainment devices.
- As I was on the School Council over 5 years ago I really appreciate the meeting tonight. The subject talked about tonight is not popular to discuss but necessary for discussion.
- The evening was good.
- Video Conferencing is a good idea for all ages. Introduction of VC in younger grades would benefit the student's later on when they reach a high school level.
- I feel that to expect these small schools to put more than three grades in one classroom is not a viable option. The Youngstown School is all ready triple grading, and in my experience so far, the kids are going to suffer. I have a grade 4 child learning exactly the same as what a grade six student is learning with math being the only exception. How do they expect a grade four student to learn the same material as a grade six student. If that is what triple grading is, we want no part of it. To put more than three grades in one room would end badly.
- I have had no personal experience with the video conferencing as of yet, but have heard very positive results from others.
- The busing is another huge issue, it is unreal the time the kids are expected to ride on a school bus these days. More funding should be put into transportation. Smarter choices could be made with the bus routes our children are currently taking. We have a bus making an extra trip to Youngstown everyday, putting on miles, all ready. This could be the feeder bus we need!
- Busing kids to Hanna is not really an option due to time on a bus.
- Set up a specialty school to attract students (trade school).

- Video conference p.d. and admin meetings. Save on full day subs, travel meals, stress (on teachers to leave classroom), and loss of principal. If our kids can learn with VC and we already have the tech. lets utilize it.
- Look into contracting transportation to save \$.
- Support teaching by Division, Instead of teaching Gr. 1, Gr. 2 and Gr. 3, teach concepts to be learned by end of Division 1, end of Division 2.
- Look into sharing more admin – save \$ actually more admin support than possible before.
- Really need continuity for kids – need to retain teachers.
- Need more support staff for classrooms.
- Need a different formula for gov't funding, since rural is different from urban.
- Maybe look at a 4 day week.
- But most important is to keep the kids interests, education #1, as they are our future!!