

Grande Yellowhead Public School Division Evansburg-Wildwood Facilities Review

REPORT ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



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Executive Summary

Modernization of the three schools in Evansburg and Wildwood are the highest priorities in Grande Yellowhead Public School Division's (GYPSD) current Three-Year Capital Plan. Alberta Education will only fund modernization of one school at a time for a school division, and two of these schools have been in the Capital Plan awaiting modernization for more than a decade. With this in mind GYPSD launched a Facilities Review to look for options to make its capital projects a higher priority for Alberta Education. A change in the capital plan could include amalgamation of schools and the GYPSD administration and trustees determined public input was needed before any decision was made.

Community engagement was started in June 2018 with a number of pre-engagement sessions. The purpose of these sessions was to start the dialogue on how GYPSD can provide the best learning environment and educational programs for the students of Wildwood and Evansburg. In addition, the sessions helped determine how community members wanted to be involved in the next stages of the engagement process, as well as what information they needed to participate in a meaningful way.

Input from the pre-engagement was used to create a Community Engagement Plan for the Facilities Review. The plan stated that the goal of the engagement process was:

- *To work directly with key stakeholders throughout the facility review to ensure that community concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.*

To support this goal, a number of engagement objectives were developed, including:

1. *By September 15, 2018, work with community stakeholders to identify decision criteria, reflecting community, school division and Alberta government concerns, and identify a list of school facility options that meet these criteria.*
2. *Work directly with community stakeholders to evaluate each of the school facility options against identified decision criteria. Produce a report by September 25, 2018 summarizing this evaluation.*

Based on the stated goal and objectives, a number of community engagement activities were implemented. These included:

- Hands-on Community Workshop – September 13, 2018
- Staff Workshop – September 17, 2018
- Student Engagement Sessions (3) – September 17 to September 19, 2018
- Drop-in Option Review Sessions (2) – September 19 and September 20, 2018
- Online Survey – September 19 through September 22, 2018

The Hands-on Community Workshop allowed the community to co-create the decision criteria that would be used to evaluate facility options. This workshop also allowed the community to suggest new options for consideration, thus meeting the first engagement objective listed above. Two new options resulted from the Community Workshop so that the list of options moving forward was:

- Current Capital Plan
- Evansview Amalgamation and Replacement
- Modernize Grand Trunk and Wildwood

- New Central School
- Grand Trunk Amalgamation

The staff workshop helped to further refine the decision criteria and started the process of evaluating the Facility Options. Staff felt there were few benefits to the Current Capital Plan and more concerns than benefits related to the New Central School. Staff saw both benefits and concerns for the Evansview option, including shorter school day for Wildwood students and issues related to resizing. For the Modernize Grand Trunk & Wildwood option, staff saw a benefit in both communities having a school, but were concerned that students from Evansburg might change school divisions.

The Grand Trunk Amalgamation option was seen to have the most benefits. In addition to collaboration amongst staff and concentration of specialized services, staff felt this option would provide continuity for families and students.

Student Engagement Sessions helped identify what was most important to students. The top factors identified (in no particular order) were:

- Your friends that live near you go to the same school as you
- Your school has extra-curricular activities
- You are in a modern school with good access to technology
- There are lots of program options offered at your school
- You have a convenient bus ride to school
- Your school is reasonably close to where you live

The last two of these factors were more important to the Grade 7 – 9 students at Wildwood School.

The Drop-in Option Review Sessions and the Online Survey were designed so that community members could evaluate the Facility Review Options, which they added to, against the decision criteria that they helped to create. This process took a fair amount of time – whether in-person or online and a lot of information needed to be considered. Over 50 people attended the Drop-in sessions and 16 people provided input on line.

Participants that completed the worksheets felt the Current Capital Plan option did not meet the established criteria. The New Central School option was also deemed not to meet criteria. Both the Evansview Amalgamation and Replacement and the Modernize Grand Trunk and Wildwood options had their critics, though the respondents at the Drop-in Session in Wildwood preferring the latter.

While it must be stressed that the Facility Option Review was not intended to be a quantitative process, the Grand Trunk Amalgamation option received more “Meets Criteria” ratings than any other option. Perceived benefits included better programming and attracting students from Parkland School Division.

It cannot be stressed enough that many respondents expressed considerable concern for the loss of the school in Wildwood and the impact that would have on the community. It is felt that the closing of the school would have a permanent and devastating effect on the community.

Comments were made at various times that the process was designed to give GYPSD the answer it wanted. However, the community co-created the decision criteria, added to the Facility Options and independently evaluating their options using their criteria, resulting in a sound process.

Background

The Grande Yellowhead Public School Division (GYPSD) is a rural school division in West Central Alberta. It stretches from Grande Cache and Jasper in the west, along the Yellowhead Highway to Evansburg in the east. Modernization of the schools in the hamlets of Evansburg and Wildwood are the highest priorities in GYPSD's current Three-Year Capital Plan. Alberta Education will only fund modernization of one school at a time for a school division. With this in mind GYPSD launched a Facilities Review to look for options to make its capital projects a higher priority for Alberta Education.

In the spring of 2018, Alberta Education and Alberta Infrastructure facilitated a "Values Scoping" process for GYPSD as a first step in the Facilities Review. The process centered on discussions of the different options and possibilities for school facilities in both Evansburg and Wildwood. In addition to the current Capital Plan, three options for modernization and amalgamation of the schools were identified for further consideration.

The Values Scoping process provided a clear understanding of the current conditions of the three schools and identified some potential modernization scenarios. However, very few external stakeholders participated in the process and those who did, were not representative of many of the potentially interested stakeholder groups. In addition, the criteria used to evaluate the various options were predetermined by Alberta Education and did not reflect community and GYPSD concerns. The GYPSD administration and trustees determined more public input was needed before any decision was made on changes to the school division's Capital Plan.

Project Overview

The Evansburg – Wildwood Facilities Review focuses on three school facilities in the Lobstick Zone: Evansview School and Grand Trunk High School in Evansburg, and Wildwood School in Wildwood. The Board of Trustees requested that input from the community be an integral part of the Facilities Review.

The goal of this review is to determine how to provide the best learning environment and educational programs for the students of Wildwood and Evansburg, given the resources available. Input from engagement will be used to determine if the school division's current capital plan should be changed and re-submitted to Alberta Education by the end of September, 2018. GYPSD'S current Three-Year Capital Plan lists modernization of Grand Trunk High School, Evansview School, and Wildwood School, in that order, as the top priorities. A change in the capital plan could include amalgamation of schools or a change in priorities.

Engagement Overview

Four community pre-engagement sessions were held in June 2018 with members of both the Evansburg and Wildwood communities. Two sessions were held June 12 in Evansburg – one at Grand Trunk High School and one at Evansview School and two were held June 14 at the Wildwood School. Approximately 100 people attended the sessions. They included parents, school councils and staff from all three schools, as well as businesses, organizations and community members from Evansburg, Wildwood and other parts of Yellowhead County.

The purpose of the engagement sessions was to provide accurate information on the Facilities Review and start the dialogue on how GYPSD can provide the best learning environment and educational programs for the students of Wildwood and Evansburg. The sessions were designed to gather input on community members' aspirations and concerns related to the Facilities Review and potential changes to the GYPSD's Capital Plan. In addition, the sessions

helped determine how community members wanted to be involved in the next stages of the engagement process, as well as what information they needed to participate in a meaningful way.

For those that could not attend the engagement sessions, an online survey was available through the GYPSD website. The survey questions were similar to those asked at the engagement sessions and 53 community members responded.

Information from the pre-engagement sessions was used to create a Community Engagement Plan for the Facilities Review. This plan was submitted to GYPSD's administration in August 2018. The plan stated that the goal of the engagement process was:

- *To work directly with key stakeholders throughout the facility review to ensure that community concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.*

To support this goal, a number of engagement objectives were developed, including:

- *By September 15, 2018, work with community stakeholders to identify decision criteria, reflecting community, school division and Alberta government concerns, and identify a list of school facility options that meet these criteria.*
- *Work directly with community stakeholders to evaluate each of the school facility options against identified decision criteria. Produce a report by September 25, 2018 summarizing this evaluation.*

Based on the stated goal and objectives, a number of community engagement activities were implemented. These included:

- Hands-on Community Workshop – Thursday, September 13, 2018
- Staff Workshop – Monday, September 17, 2018
- Student Engagement Sessions (3) – Monday, September 17 to Wednesday, September 19, 2018
- Drop-in Option Review Sessions (2) – Wednesday, September 19 and Thursday, September 20, 2018
- Online Survey - Wednesday, September 19 through Saturday, September 22, 2018

Details of these events are outlined within this report.

Hands-on Community Workshop

The Hands-on Community Workshop was designed to meet the following engagement objective:

- *Work with community stakeholders to identify decision criteria, reflecting community, school division and Alberta government concerns, and identify a list of school facility options that meet these criteria.*

The proposed decision criteria presented at the workshop were based on criteria used during the Value-Scoping process, input from the community at the June sessions, and important considerations for the school division:

Values Scoping

- Programming
- Operations & Maintenance
- Construction Phasing
- Building Design & Condition

Community Input

- Bussing (also important for the school division)
- Impact on Community
- Partnerships

School Division

- Enrolment

For each decision criteria category, a list of specific criteria was developed based on information from the Value-Scoping process, June community sessions, and school division. The *Potential Decision Criteria* document is Appendix 1a.

The Facilities Review options presented at the workshop were those that resulted from the Values Scoping process:

- Current Capital Plan – modernize all three schools as per the current capital plan
- Grand Trunk Amalgamation – all three schools amalgamated into a modernized Grand Trunk school
- Evansview Amalgamation – Kindergarten to Grade 6 amalgamated into a modernized Evansview and Grades 7 – 12 in a modernized Grand Trunk
- Evansview Amalgamation with Replacement School – Kindergarten to Grade 6 amalgamated into a new school at the Evansview location and Grades 7 – 12 in a modernized Grand Trunk

At the June sessions, the community had expressed interest in having some other options considered. However, these options had not been fleshed out at that time and were not included in the list for the workshop. The *Current Facilities Review Options* document is Appendix 1b.

Event Summary

The Hands-on Community Workshop was held at the Wildwood Community Hall on Thursday, September 13, 2018, from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. The workshop was designed to gather input on community hopes and concerns, refine the list of

potential decision criteria, review the four school facility options that came out of the values scoping process, and develop a list of any other school facility options.

Registration and sign-in for the workshop indicated that 82 participants attended. These included parents from all three schools, school council members, community members, media, and representatives from Yellowhead County. While participants were not asked where they lived, anecdotal evidence would suggest that the majority of them were from the Wildwood area or had children in Wildwood School.

The following members of the GYPSD Board of Trustees were in attendance:

- Board Chair Brenda Rosadiuk, Lobstick
- Dale Karpluk, Jasper
- Shirley Caputo, Hinton
- Ellen Aust, Hinton
- Fiona Fowler, Edson
- Ken Fate, Grande Cache

GYPSD central office staff in attendance included:

- Carolyn Lewis, Superintendent of Schools
- Ewen Murray, Deputy Superintendent
- Karen Shipka, Assistant Superintendent, Learning Services
- James Trodden, Assistant Superintendent, Secondary Learning and Programming
- Cindy Wang, Secretary-Treasurer
- Ken Baluch, Director of Facility Services
- Corey Halabi, Director of Transportation Services
- Carra Aschenmeir, Director of Curriculum and Assessment
- Nikki Gilks, Manager of Communications

The principals from all three of the schools involved in the review were also in attendance.

Upon arrival at the workshop, participants were seated at one of 12 discussion tables. Independent facilitators had been brought in to host the tables, and lead and record table discussions.

What We Asked

To start off the evening, participants were asked to think about their hopes and concerns regarding the Facilities Review. The purpose of this exercise is to give people an opportunity to express their hopes and concerns about this project off the top, so that they were more able to participate in the rest of the workshop. The two questions for the exercise were:

- What is your greatest hope for this project?
- What is your greatest concern for this project?

Participants were asked to write their responses on sticky notes. These were collected, posted on a wall and then grouped into themes. The themes were reported back at the end of the workshop.

The remainder of the workshop focused on gathering input on the list of potential decision criteria, and reviewing and developing other school facility options.

What We Heard

Hopes and Concerns

The main themes of participant hopes and concerns are as follows:

Hopes	Concerns
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better quality education• Modernized facilities• Growing the community• Wildwood is central school• Keep school in Wildwood	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amalgamation of grades• No school in community• Competition between towns• Learning environment/ class size• Transparency in decision-making• Impact on community• Bussing issues

Participants were clearly concerned about the closure of Wildwood School and the impact that would have on the community. Others, however, were concerned that love of the community and school would overshadow the educational needs of the children. Many expressed hopes for better programming, more options and an improved quality of education. The full transcription of the *Hopes and Concerns* exercise is contained in Appendix 1c.

Decision Criteria

Participants were asked to review the potential decision criteria one by one, and edit or add to the criteria on individual criteria cards. Potential edits or additions were submitted for all of the criteria cards, with the most suggestions submitted for the bussing criteria:

- Programming – 5 cards
- Operations & Maintenance – 7 cards
- Construction Phasing – 1 card
- Building Design & Condition – 6 cards
- Bussing – 9 cards
- Impact on Community – 7 cards
- Partnerships – 5 cards
- Enrolment – 7 cards

Participants could also submit potential new criteria – eight suggestions for new criteria were received. However, all of the new criteria submitted actually fit under the existing criteria categories. A transcription of all suggested changes to criteria is contained in Appendix 1d.

Facility Review Options

As mentioned previously, the facility options presented at the workshop were those that resulted from the Values Scoping process. While it was known that the community was interested in having some other options considered,

these were only acknowledged verbally, and not included on the handout. This was perhaps a mistake, as many participants felt this meant they had not been heard. Despite explaining that it would be presumptuous to list new options without community input, some community members were agitated by a perceived bias against Wildwood School.

Participants were given the opportunity to create and submit new facility options for consideration. New options were written up on option cards, which included how many capital projects would be required and what schools and grade configurations would be involved. A number of table groups submitted multiple new options and a total of 26 new option cards were received. Many of the options were similar and resulted in eight potential new options. The new options put forward at the workshop are contained in Appendix 1e.

The workshop was generally well received with 52 of the 67 participants that completed the evaluation form rating the meeting overall as “Good” or “Excellent”. Less than 11 percent of respondents indicated “Strongly Disagree” or “Disagree” to the following statements:

- The objectives of the meeting were clear.
- The information presented was easy for me to understand.
- I had enough information to provide meaningful input.
- Participation and interaction were encouraged.
- I now have a better understanding of the Facilities Review.
- Participating in this meeting was a good use of my time.

However, there was less of a positive response to the statement “I think GYPSD will consider community input in the Facilities Review Project.” Over 14 percent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, indicating a higher level of mistrust in the process than was seen at the June sessions. Complete details of the meeting evaluations are contained in Appendix 1f.

What Was Done with Input

Input from the Hands-on Community Workshop was used to create a new set of decision criteria and a new list of Facility Review Options.

Input on some decision criteria varied significantly between table groups. Every effort was made to incorporate as much of the input as possible, while still producing decision criteria that would be useful for evaluating the various school facility options. Some input received related more to policies and partnerships, or was outside the mandate and jurisdiction of the school division. These points could not be incorporated into the decision criteria, but are still included in the transcription of input and will be passed on the GYPSD staff and trustees through appendices to this report.

Numerous changes were made to the sub-points for the decision criteria, with the most changes being made around building design, programming and busing criteria. The following outlines the number of changes that were made to decision criteria sub-points:

- Programming – 4
- Operations & Maintenance – 1
- Construction Phasing – 1
- Building Design & Condition – 8

- Bussing – 4
- Impact on Community – 2
- Partnerships – 2
- Enrolment – 3

Appendix 1g represents the new set of decision criteria resulting from the Hands-on Community Workshop. New sub-points and edits are highlighted in yellow.

While eight new facility options were submitted at the Hands-on Community Workshop, only two were moved forward for future consideration:

- New Central School (K-12)
 - New centralized school between the two communities
- Wildwood School (K-6) & GTHS (7-12)
 - Fully modernize Wildwood as a K-Grade 6 school with Evansview students included
 - Fully modernize Grand Trunk for all Grade 7-12 students

Given that the purpose of the Facility Review is to increase the chances of Alberta Education funding GYPSD’s capital plan, some options were not seen as feasible. The reasons for not moving the other six options forward are contained in Appendix 1e.

The community had expressed concern that all the facility options presented involved closing Wildwood School. Even with the addition of the two new options, there were still two options involving amalgamating all kindergarten to Grade 6 students in Evansview School (either a modernized building or a new replacement building) and only one that involved amalgamating all kindergarten to Grade 6 students in Wildwood School. GYPSD staff and the board chair saw the replacement building option to be as likely to be approved by Alberta Education as the modernization option. Therefore, the option to modernize Evansview School was removed from the list.

Staff Workshop

The staff workshop was designed to assist in meeting two engagement objectives:

- *Work with stakeholders to identify decision criteria, reflecting community, school division and Alberta government concerns, and identify a list of school facility options that meet these criteria.*
- *Work directly with stakeholders to evaluate each of the school facility options against identified decision criteria.*

The proposed decision criteria presented at this workshop were the ones that were co-created by the community at the September 13th workshop. The Facility Review Options discussed were the revised set resulting from community and GYPSD input. These are contained in Appendix 2a.

Event Summary

The Staff Workshop was held at the Tipple Park Museum in Evansburg on Monday, September 17, 2018 from 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. The workshop was designed to refine the list of potential decision criteria, review the new set of school facility options that came out of the Hands-on Community Workshop, and start the discussion of benefits and concerns related to these school facility options.

Sign-in for the workshop indicated that 22 participants attended, which represents 50 percent of the total staff for the three schools. Those attending included teachers, support staff and both the principal and assistant principal from all three schools. It should also be noted that six of the staff who participated also have children in one of the three schools.

In addition to Board Chair Brenda Rosadiuk, and Trustee Fiona Fowler, a number of GYPSD central office staff were in attendance. These included:

- Carolyn Lewis, Superintendent of Schools
- Ewen Murray, Deputy Superintendent
- Karen Shipka, Assistant Superintendent, Learning Services
- James Trodden, Assistant Superintendent, Secondary Learning and Programming
- Ken Baluch, Director of Facility Services
- Nikki Gilks, Manager of Communications

Additional staff were in attendance to assist with the process.

What We Asked

The workshop focused on two topics – refinement of the decision criteria, and discussion of benefits and concerns related to the school facility options on the revised list. Participants were asked to review the updated list of decision criteria and offer suggestions for additional sub-points. Participants were then asked to consider each of the school facility options and provide input on the benefits and concerns related to each. Opportunity was provided for participants to suggest new options, but none were brought forward.

What We Heard

Decision Criteria

Unlike the community workshop, participants at the staff workshop had only a few suggested changes and additions to the criteria list. Most of the suggested new criteria related to building design and condition, including important facilities that they did not want lost in any resizing of the schools. Many of the suggestions that came forward were things that should be considered regardless of which option was eventually selected. It should be noted that participants at this workshop questioned why “Impact on Community” was considered a decision criterion. They felt this was outside the scope of the school division’s mandate. A transcription of all suggested changes to criteria is contained in Appendix 2b.

Benefits and Concerns

Staff saw few benefits to the current capital plan and expressed concern that there would be no capital project approved without some sort of amalgamation. Staff saw many benefits to the various amalgamation options including collaboration amongst staff and concentration of specialized services. For the options that included two capital projects (Evansview Amalgamation & Replacement, and Modernize Grand Trunk & Wildwood) staff expressed concern about the timeline of getting two schools approved.

More concerns than benefits were provided for the New Central School option. While it would provide for collaboration, the need for land on which to build the school, loss of specialized instructional space and need to bus all students were of concern.

For the Evansview Amalgamation & Replacement option, participants felt there would be a shorter school day for Wildwood students if they attended Evansview but were concerned about what resizing would mean to the schools.

For the Modernize GTHS & Wildwood option, participants saw a benefit in both communities having a school but were concerned that students from Evansburg might change school divisions. The cost of bussing the elementary students to Wildwood and the impact of resizing were also concerns with this option.

The Grand Trunk Amalgamation option was seen to have the most benefits. In addition to collaboration amongst staff and concentration of specialized services, participants felt this option would provide continuity for families and students. The concerns around this option included bussing, and stress being experienced by students because of parental concern.

A transcription of the benefits and concerns discussions can be found in Appendix 2c.

The workshop was well received with 18 of the 20 participants that completed the evaluation form rating the meeting overall as “Excellent” and the other two rating it as “Good”. One participant indicated that they strongly disagreed with the statement “I think GYPSD will consider community input in the Facilities Review.” Another participant disagreed with the statement “I now have a better understanding of the Facilities Review”. For the remainder of the evaluation statements, the majority of participants indicated that they strongly agreed.

One comment in the evaluation forms stood out – “Do what is right, not necessarily popular”. Complete details of the meeting evaluations are contained in Appendix 2d.

What Was Done with Input

Input on decision criteria from the Staff Workshop was used to create the final set of decision criteria. The points that could not be incorporated into the decision criteria are included in the transcription of input (Appendix 2b) and will be passed on to GYPSD staff and trustees through the appendices to this report. Appendix 2e shows the changes to the decision criteria resulting from the Staff Workshop. New sub-points and edits are highlighted in yellow. Participants at both workshops commented that the order of the criteria suggested some sort of priority. After this workshop, decision criteria were put into alphabetical order, as no order of priority had been determined. The decision criteria as shown in Appendix 2e was used at the Drop-in Option Review sessions.

The input received during the benefits and concerns exercise was taken into consideration when creating the collateral material for the Drop-in Option Review sessions. It was felt that some of the points raised by staff were relevant in the evaluation of options. All benefits and concerns were recorded and will be passed on to GYPSD staff and trustees through the appendices to this report.

Student Engagement Sessions

When the Board of Trustees requested that input from the community be an integral part of the Facilities Review, they specifically asked for input from students. While the student engagement sessions were not designed to meet a specific engagement objective, they did provide input that could be used to help evaluate options.

Event Summary

Three Student Engagement Sessions were held, and all Grade 7-12 students were invited to attend one of the sessions. The sessions were held during school hours and lasted about 90 minutes. The session dates, locations and attendance were as follows:

- September 17, Grand Trunk High School Grade 10-12 students – approximately 63 participants
- September 18, Wildwood School Grade 7-9 students – approximately 23 participants
- September 19, Grand Trunk High School Grade 7-9 students – approximately 67 participants

Students were not required to sign in for the engagement sessions. As a result, the exact number of participants is not known. However, the polling application used recorded the number of responses, which gave us the approximate numbers.

Principal Heidi Zadderey was in attendance at both the Grand Trunk sessions, along with a number of other staff members. Principal James Randall and a couple of staff members attended the Wildwood session. A Family School Liaison Counselor was in attendance at each session in case a student became anxious or distressed by the discussion. This was a proactive measure and none of the students actually required assistance at the time of the session.

Efforts were made to limit the amount of time spent presenting information, as the purpose of the sessions was to gather input. The amount and type of information presented varied from session to session as modifications were made to make the sessions more engaging and interesting. Student input was gathered using a polling application called PollEverywhere. Students that did not have their own device were provided with a Chromebook or iPad to use for the session. Participants were encouraged to provide thoughtful, appropriate responses. However, the anonymity of the process seemed to prompt some attendees to provide less meaningful responses.

What We Asked

Students were asked 24 questions using the PollEverywhere application. The first question was a fun question (“How are you feeling today?”) using emoji’s. The purpose was to test the technology and provide baseline data on how people were feeling at the start of the session.

The next three questions were about the Facilities Review. They were designed to gauge awareness and determine what questions students might have. These questions led into the presentation on the Facilities Review and a short question and answer period.

The next 12 questions related to the importance of some potential considerations associated with the Facilities Review. While these questions did not correlate specifically with decision criteria, the responses could help in evaluation of the various options.

Students were also asked:

- What other things would you like the school division to consider for the Facilities Review?
- What concerns do you have about the Facilities Review?
- What excites you about the Facilities Review?

The session ended with five questions designed to evaluate the engagement session.

What We Heard

Participants had varying levels of awareness of the Facilities Review, with the students at Wildwood School having the greatest awareness (70%). When asked what they knew about the review, not all of the responses were accurate and many responses (anecdotal and through the poll) would suggest the students had been significantly influenced by parents or other adults.

Participants had lots of questions about the review, with the Grade 7 – 9 students from Grand Trunk having the most insightful questions. Questions included if, and when changes would occur, how long it would take for changes to be implemented and how things would work if kindergarten to Grade 12 students were all in one school.

Participants at all three sessions indicate the following three considerations as most important when evaluated against other considerations:

- Friends that live near you go to the same school as you
- School has extra-curricular activities
- You are in a modern school with good access to technology

However, participants at Wildwood School rated having a convenient bus ride as being as important as the school having extra-curricular activities. And, they rated having their school reasonably close to where they live as important as being in a modern school with good access to technology. In addition, participants at the Grade 7 – 9 session at Grand Trunk rated having lots of program options offered as important as having friends that live near you go to the same school as you.

The least important considerations for the participants at all three sessions were:

- Less than 20 other students in your class
- School is reasonably close to where you live
- Go to school with the same kids from kindergarten to Grade 12

It should be noted that while only 39% of participants at Wildwood School rated “School is reasonably close to where you live” as very important, its importance rose when compared with other factors

When asked what other factors they would like the school division to consider for the Facilities Review, participants seemed to have lots of comments about what could be improved at their schools. The need for windows and the desire for a bigger, or second, gym were mentioned by the Grand Trunk students. Wildwood students recognized the need for the school to change – one participant commented that “Wildwood has been an outdated school for a long time”.

Concerns about the Facilities Review expressed by participants included how K – 12 would work (e.g. influence of older kids on younger ones, how everyone will fit in one building), the future of the community if a school closed, and issues with bus times – especially for younger students.

Participants indicated they were excited about the Facilities Review because of the potential for change – more options, opportunities and new technology. Some participants liked the idea of being with younger siblings/relatives if they were in K – 12 school.

There was some skepticism around whether the student participants would really have a voice in this process. Of the Grand Trunk Grade 10 – 12 participants, 63% didn't think the school division would consider their comments. The Grand Trunk Grade 7 – 9 participants had a similar response, with 59% feeling the school division would not consider their comments. The participants at Wildwood School were unsure (45%) whether their comments would be considered.

Complete details of the poll results from the Student Engagement Sessions are contained in Appendix 3a, 3b and 3c. It should be noted that the text input has been edited to remove inappropriate responses – e.g. those not related to the process or containing profanity.

What Was Done with Input

The evaluation questions and staff debriefs after the first two student engagement sessions were used to make adjustments to the next session.

All input from the Student Engagement Sessions will be passed on to GYPSD staff and trustees through the appendices to this report.

Drop-in Option Review Sessions & Online Survey

The Drop-in Option Review Sessions and online survey were designed to meet the following engagement objective:

- *Work directly with stakeholders to evaluate each of the school facility options against identified decision criteria.*

The review sessions involved five option review stations; one for Current Capital Plan and one for each of the facility review options that came out of the Hands-on Community Workshop and is illustrated in the Revised Facility Review Options. (see Appendix 2a). Each option review station had a poster that provided information about the option, including points related to each of the decision criteria:

- Building Design & Condition
- Bussing
- Construction Phasing
- Enrolment
- Impact on Community
- Operations & Maintenance
- Partnerships
- Programming

As an example, on the Current Capital Plan poster, the information related to building Design and Condition was “All three schools would be resized to the student population, which means loss of classroom space, gym space, home economic space, and shop space” The posters can be found on the [GYPSD website](#). Each station also had Facility Option Review worksheets specific to that option. These worksheet described the option and provided space for participants to rate the option against the criteria and provide comments.

Session participants were given a copy of the Decision Criteria Handout (Appendix 2e, but without the highlighting) and some general information related to the project. Participants were asked to visit each of the Option Review stations, read the related information on the poster and complete the Option Review worksheet for that station. Each station

had a staff person from GYPSD central office to assist and answer questions. Additional subject matter experts were also available to answer more specific questions.

The online survey mirrored the in-person experience. The Decision Criteria Handout was available on the GYPSD website where you logged into the survey and participants were encouraged to read and download this before completing the survey. The Option Review posters were embedded in the survey so that online participants had all the relevant information.

Event Summary

The Drop-in Option Review Sessions were held on Wednesday, September 19th at Grand Trunk High School, and Thursday, September 20th at Wildwood School. The sessions were designed to gather input on the various Facility Review options. The sessions were open from 4:00 - 8:00 p.m. The sign-in sheet indicated that 27 participants attended on September 19th and 24 attended on September 20th for a total of 51 participants.

Board Chair, Brenda Rosadiuk was in attendance at both Drop-in Sessions. Trustee Ken Fate was in attendance on September 19th, and Trustee Joan Zaporosky attended on September 20th. A number of GYPSD central office staff were in attendance. These included:

- Carolyn Lewis, Superintendent of Schools
- Ewen Murray, Deputy Superintendent
- Karen Shipka, Assistant Superintendent, Learning Services
- James Trodden, Assistant Superintendent, Secondary Learning and Programming
- Ken Baluch, Director of Facility Services
- Nikki Gilks, Manager of Communications

Additional staff from GYPSD central office were in attendance to assist with the process. The principals from all three schools dropped by the sessions: Heidi Zadderey from Grand Trunk High School and Matt Kolotyluk from Evansview School came by on September 19th and James Randall from Wildwood School was in attendance on September 20th.

The online survey was open from September 19 to midnight on September 22, 2018. There were 16 respondents, though many did not evaluate all the options or leave comments.

What We Asked

Participants were asked to consider the various Facility Review options and evaluate them against the decision criteria developed through the Hands-on Community Workshop and the Staff Workshop. On the worksheets supplied, participants were asked to indicate whether the option “Meets Criteria”, “Partially Meets Criteria” or “Doesn’t Meet Criteria” and to provide comments on why the rating was given.

What We Heard

A total of 160 Facility Option Review worksheets were completed, with 74 being handed in on September 19th and 86 on September 20th. Not all participants completed all five worksheets and it is likely that some couples only completed one worksheet between them. Only 26 worksheets were completed for the Current Capital Plan, while both the Grand Trunk Amalgamation and Modernize Grand Trunk and Wildwood had 34 worksheets. The other two options each had

33 completed worksheets. It should be noted that at least 5 participants picked up worksheets on September 19th and handed them in on September 20th.

While GYPSD explained on a number of occasions how capital projects were approved and the requirement for resizing when modernizing, there seemed to be some confusion, and perhaps disbelief, on the part of some respondents with regard to these processes. Many respondents did not believe that classroom space would be lost in resizing or that a gym could be reduced in size. At least one respondent felt modernization of two schools should be put forward as one capital project and dividing it into two would ensure that neither project was completed. Some respondents were also unclear about the rules around space for partners within school buildings.

Current Capital Plan

The Current Capital Plan option received more ratings of “Doesn’t Meet Criteria” than it did of “Meets Criteria”, particularly from the attendees on September 19th. Many respondents did not rate some or all of the criteria and a few respondents indicated on their worksheet that this was not a viable option.

The three criteria that received the most “Doesn’t Meet Criteria” ratings were Building Design & Condition, Partnerships, and Programming. The resizing of the building affects all of these criteria, as it would result in loss of facilities, loss of space for partners and loss of space for programming.

The criteria that received the most “Meets Criteria” ratings were Bussing and Impact on Community. The latter was especially true with worksheets completed on September 20th. For Bussing, it was suggested that with lower enrolment, smaller modern busses could be used. With regard to Impact on Community, comments included “Nothing changes” and “access to a school is an asset”.

Evansview Amalgamation and Replacement

Respondent did not feel the Evansview Amalgamation and Replacement option met criteria. This was particularly true for those who submitted worksheets on September 20th. This option received more “Doesn’t Meet Criteria” ratings than any of the other options, with Impact on Community being the biggest concern.

Of the worksheets submitted on the 20th, nearly three times as many respondents indicated this option “Doesn’t Meet Criteria” for Impact on Community, as did those who submitted worksheets on the 19th. There was considerable concern expressed about there being no school in Wildwood and that the community would suffer as a result. It was felt both the loss of a school and the loss of space due to resizing of a building would affect partnerships. The resizing would also impact programming as there would be less space for optional courses.

The criterion that received the most “Meets Criteria” ratings was Bussing, particularly with worksheets completed on September 19th. One reason given for this rating was that students are already being bussed and routes could be adjusted.

It should be noted that a number of respondents that submitted worksheets for this option on September 20th indicated that they wouldn’t send their children to Evansview for K- Grade 6. Some suggested homeschooling would be a better option.

Modernize Grand Trunk and Wildwood

While more respondents felt this option “Doesn’t Meet Criteria” than felt it did, there was a clear divide between those that submitted worksheets on the 19th and those that submitted on the 20th, with the latter being more in favour of this option.

There was a real desire, especially on the part of those that submitted worksheets on the 20th, to have a school in Wildwood. Respondents felt there would be a greater impact on the community from closing Wildwood School than from closing Evansview School and that the impact would be permanent. They saw this option as a win-win, with there being a school in each community.

There were some concerns, however, around this option being two capital projects, which would take longer to complete, if in fact both were ever approved. Some also felt the order of the projects should be reversed, given that Wildwood School was older than Grand Trunk.

Respondents who submitted worksheets on the 19th were concerned about what this option would do to enrolment. Many felt parents would send their children to Entwistle rather than Wildwood and that these students would carry on to high school in Stony Plain rather than returning to attend Grand Trunk.

Some respondents were concerned about the future of partnerships due to resizing of the school buildings. Some suggested that bussing would continue to be an issue and with this option, there would be bussing from both communities.

New Central School

This option did not receive a lot of positive feedback, and most saw significant problems with it. While one respondent felt this option was a win-win, more than a few saw it as a lose-lose, with neither community benefiting, and both losing a school.

With regard to bussing, more students would need to be bussed and costs would increase. Ride times for Wildwood students might be less than with some other options, but most respondents felt ride times would increase.

Initial and on-going maintenance costs were seen as a deterrent with some respondents commenting that this option was neither viable nor sensible. Respondents were also concerned about opportunities and space for partnerships and students moving to Entwistle School. The one positive related to this option is construction phasing, as there would be no disruption to students if there was a new building.

Grand Trunk Amalgamation

While it must be stressed that the Facility Option Review was not intended to be a quantitative process, the Grand Trunk Amalgamation option received more “Meets Criteria” ratings than any other option – particularly from the attendees on September 19th. Comments from respondents suggested that approval for funding of this option was more likely and the resulting school would be more in line with others in the school division. Many felt this option was the best use of resources.

That said, there was considerable concern for the loss of the school in Wildwood and the impact on the community. Parents were particularly concerned about bussing for the elementary students, particularly when the bussing times

could be over one hour. In addition, respondents expressed concerns about having kindergarten to Grade 12 students all in one building.

Many respondents saw positives in this option. Some believed the school day would actually be shorter for the current Wildwood students. Other respondents felt partners could be retained and construction phasing would be easy, given the current utilization rate of the Grand Trunk building. Some respondents felt this option might attract students from Parkland School Division. There were lots of positive comments around programming – better program opportunities and the possibility of relationship building and mentoring between the older students and the younger ones.

A summary of the Facility Option Review worksheet ratings can be found in Appendix 4a. The full compilation of the Facility Option Review worksheets from September 19th can found in Appendix 4b and the compilation of the worksheets from September 20th is in Appendix 4C.

Online Survey

Responses to the online survey varied significantly from the in-person Facility Option Review worksheets. Current Capital Plan was viewed more favourable with some commenting that there was no reason to change and that this option would not “kill any community”. However, there was concern about the impact on programming.

The Evansview Amalgamation and Replacement option was also rated more favourably in the online survey. However, as with the in-person worksheets, there were concerns over the loss of a school in Wildwood and the impact it would have on the community. The loss of programs and related space, and longer bus times were also concerns. Respondents felt this option would have a more positive impact on enrolment than some of the others, helping to stem the flow of students to the Parkland School Division. It was also felt that the Grade 7 – 9 students from Wildwood would benefit from a larger peer group.

As with the in-person worksheets, respondents were divided on whether the Modernize Grand Trunk and Wildwood option met the criteria. Again, there were comments about one school in each community, but there were also concerns about the amount of time it would take to have two capital projects completed. There were also comments about the potential to lose students to Parkland School Division.

Once again, the New Central School option was not rated highly. The majority of online respondents felt it failed to meet most of the criteria, particularly those related to Partnerships. Respondents worried about what would happen to the library and other spaces used by community. Respondents were also concerned about costs, especially to purchase land. The possibility of losing students to the Parkland School Division was deemed not to meet the Enrolment criteria.

The Grand Trunk Amalgamation was seen as meeting the most criteria. Respondents indicated that some upsides to this option were a potential for some decreases in bus times for older students and the decrease in the length of day for the current Wildwood students. Others comments were that enrolment could be positively impacted, split classes could be eliminated, and programming could improve. However, there is still significant concern about the impact this option will have on the community, given that Wildwood would no longer have a school. Concern was also expressed about having kindergarten to Grade 12 students in the same building.

It should be noted that a number of comments were made through the online survey and the Facility Option Review worksheets about processes and policies related to school closure not being followed.

The full compilation of the online survey results can be found in Appendix 4d.

Evaluation Forms

The Drop-In Option Review Sessions were generally well received with 20 of the 26 participants who completed the evaluation form rating the sessions overall as “Good” or “Excellent”. However, five of the September 20th rated the session as poor or average and one was unsure.

The majority of respondents indicated “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” to the following statements:

- The information presented was easy for me to understand.
- Staff were available to answer my questions.
- The decision criteria were clearly outlined and easy to understand.
- Participating in this meeting was a good use of my time.

However, there was less of a positive response to the following statements:

- I had enough information to provide meaningful input.
- The process for evaluating facility options was easy to complete.
- I think GYPSD will consider community input in the Facilities Review.

Respondents felt the process took more time than anticipated and there was a lot of information to absorb.

It should be noted that while some respondents were pleased with the overall engagement process for the Facilities Review, others were not. One comment was that there never was an open discussion of what parents want. Two comments suggested the criteria were biased towards a specific outcome.

Complete details of the meeting evaluations are contained in Appendix 4e.

What Was Done with Input

All input from the Drop-in Option Review Sessions and online survey will be passed on to GYPSD staff and trustees through the appendices to this report. This input will be considered by the Board of Trustees when determining if the school division’s current capital plan should be changed and re-submitted to Alberta Education.

Next Steps

This report and all its appendices will be submitted to GYPSD administration for review. It will then be passed to the Board of Trustees for consideration as they determine if changes are needed to the school division’s current capital plan.

Once a decision has been made, an addendum to this report will be created to outline how community input was used in the decision-making process.

1. Hands-on Community Workshop

- a. Potential Decision Criteria – September 13, 2018
- b. Current Facility Review Options – September 13, 2018
- c. Transcription of Hopes & Concerns
- d. Transcription of Criteria Cards
- e. Suggested New Options & “If Not, Why Not” Report
- f. Evaluation Forms
- g. Changes to Decision Criteria

2. Staff Workshop

- a. Revised Facility Review Options
- b. Criteria Comments and Changes
- c. Transcription of Benefits and Concerns
- d. Evaluation Forms
- e. Changes to Decision Criteria

3. Student Engagement Sessions

- a. Poll Results – Grand Trunk Grades 10 – 12
- b. Poll Results – Wildwood Grades 7 – 9
- c. Poll Results – Grand Trunk Grades 7 – 9

4. Drop-in Option Review Sessions – Option Evaluations

- a. Summary of worksheet ratings
- b. Option Evaluations - September 19
- c. Option Evaluations - September 20
- d. Online Survey Results
- e. Drop-in Option Review Sessions – Evaluations Forms