

ANDREW SCHOOL WORKING-GROUP MEETING: STUDENTS GRADES 7-11

MEETING SUMMARY: MARCH 19, 2019

Project Overview

Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) Board of Trustees is reviewing programming for senior high students living in the Andrew School attendance boundary. The goal: To determine what factors are most important to Andrew students, families, staff and community members when it comes to providing equitable educational opportunities for senior high students.

Throughout fall 2018, public consultations were conducted with students, families, staff, town and county officials, and community members. These included two working-group meetings, a student forum and a community conversation. Topics presented at all four sessions were similar in nature—background information, Andrew school successes and challenges, and important considerations. The feedback received through the working-group session, the student forum and community conversation was invaluable. Collectively, the input gathered helped the Division develop three preliminary programming options, which were presented to the community at a public feedback session on Feb. 20, 2019. Attendees were also invited to comment and give feedback on the preliminary options through an online survey. Based on feedback from the public feedback session and online survey, Trustees hosted a third working-group meeting.

Working-Group Meeting Overview

On March 19, 2019, members of Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) Board of Trustees hosted a working-group session with students, grades 7 to 11, from Andrew School to discuss senior high programming. Students sat in four groups—two junior high groups, one Grade 10 group and one Grade 11 group—and answered a series of questions asked by teacher. Trustees listened to the responses. Each bullet point represents a separate response from a student.

At the working-group meeting, 34 students and four members of the EIPS Board of Trustees attended—Board Chair Trina Boymook, Trustee Randy Footz, Trustee Skip Gordon, and Trustee Colleen Holowaychuk.

Question 1:

“Some of you spend quite a bit of time on the bus, some of you less. What do you think you would gain or lose by spending more time on the bus if it means going to another school that offers more programming?”

JUNIOR HIGH GROUP 1 RESPONSES

- It would be better if bus ride time was longer if more course options were available as a result.
- I don't take the bus. I would like if Andrew got options, but wouldn't mind short bus ride for more options.
- If it is a long ride, I'm not sure. A short ride would be okay.
- I have been last off the bus for 5 years, would like it if the ride was shorter.
- I would love more options in school but I have a hard time sleeping, so I would lose more sleep.
- More options would be fantastic but could take away from time at home and time to do homework. Longer bus ride would not be the best
- Andrew School is across the street, I don't want to take bus
- If there are better options, I'm fine with it.
- I am already on the bus route to Lamont, so it wouldn't be very long. I'm willing to add 20 minutes to the ride if it meant having better options and more opportunities.
- I don't take the bus, I can't do work on buses. I prefer shorter rides. There should be more options to help people pursue what they wish.
- I don't mind longer rides if I get more options and more sports opportunities.

JUNIOR HIGH GROUP 2 RESPONSES

- I don't want to lose the good schedule I have now, but after a while I'd get used to it. So it would probably be worth it to be in a school with more kids. I ride the bus for 25 minutes currently. More classes and more kids is more important than long rides. I sleep on the bus anyway.
- More opportunities are good. The times don't matter to me. The sleep that you lose can you just get back on the bus. There are opportunities to do homework on the way home. More opportunities, more choices, more kids.
- Same thing from me. I live a block away and I don't take the bus currently. If I took the bus I could go to a bigger school with better classes, so I could get used to a bus ride. We don't really have the population here for a lot of extra things.
- I would like more classes. More sports would be good.
- I live across the street. The bus would be different but once I get used to it, it would be fun to have more sports.

- It would be more annoying to get to school, but I'd do it if I have to. I don't really like having more people around, I like the one on one help. A bigger class would be an adjustment.
- More options would be nice, but taking the bus for longer than 10 minutes would be annoying.
- More opportunities would be worth the longer bus ride. In most classes you could have a better opportunity for more friends, more job skills.

GRADE 10 RESPONSES

- It would be good getting to know people, socializing, engaging. But losing sleep would be difficult. I might not be able to stay awake.
- A longer ride would be ok for programming.
- It would be good to get more options and be able to play sports. I wouldn't be losing much, sleep is not a big issue at all for me.
- I bus an hour to and from school already. I wouldn't really gain or lose any time. It would be nice to get more options.
- I spend 45 minutes on the bus already. I don't want to do two more hours.
- It wouldn't be a huge loss of sleep. I could sleep on the bus.

GRADE 11 RESPONSES

- I would be losing a lot of sleep due to be in Andrew so early.
- We'd be less focused in the mornings without as much sleep.
- It would disrupt some parents to have to drive their kids that early.
- Waking up early and coming all the way here isn't good.
- I already wake up at 6, so I'd have to be up even earlier.
- I don't think it would matter if we went to another school, since we're losing so much sleep we wouldn't be focused anyway.
- I personally don't think I have anything to gain from going to another school. I am getting what I need here, I have all my cores, so I don't think I need to go to a different school.
- I feel the same.

Question 2

“There are different ways to access programs, but everyone has a different learning style. I want you to think about the following questions. What do you think of taking a class that’s live streamed from another school? Would it impact your learning? Do you learn better in a classroom with a teacher in front of you and with other students? Or, does that matter to you? Could you learn by watching a class being broadcast from somewhere else? Keep in mind, in this scenario you’d be able to ask questions during the class, same as if you were there.

“What about self-directed learning? There’s a web platform called Moodle, for example, where you can watch and read course content, submit assignments and take tests. Some schools have sites set up where you can come in and do that work. Other schools offer students the flexibility to take courses at times of the day that work for them. In this scenario, there’d be a teacher on site on specific days of the week to assist, if required.

“Given your own personal learning style, would courses offered through either live-streaming or self-directed learning work for you? How so?”

JUNIOR HIGH GROUP 1 RESPONSES

- I prefer to be face to face with a person. I learn a lot better that way.
- I like to have a big class and like to be there. Have done classes over calls before, it is very difficult for people to be focused on what’s happening when there’s not a teacher there. There is much more room for error. I’m a fan of self-directed learning, but not for full courses, supervised self-directed learning would be ok for options but not core courses. Going to a different school would be better, where you have more teachers and students.
- I’m taking a Moodle class and it’s very confusing. I prefer face to face, I’m not able to learn remotely.
- Certain courses like math would be fine to livestream. One class of explanation and then do work. For other classes, self directed would work better. Face to face is easier, you can ask questions as needed.
- Live stream might work, like self-directed as you can work at own pace. You can spend time on areas you don’t understand.
- I need to have a teacher in order to learn. I can’t do it remotely.
- I learn best by engaging in class time with booklets and reading and things like that. With live stream, it wouldn’t work because you can’t have everything at once like you can in person.
- I do better with self-directed learning.
- OK with it, it’s not as noisy. It’s quiet doing a test.

JUNIOR HIGH GROUP 2 RESPONSES

- To me, I think that would be a lot harder. It’s easier to learn in person. We’d still be in Andrew and that wouldn’t fix any of the population problems. There still wouldn’t be opportunities for more friends.
- If there was an internet issue, would we just not have class for the day?
- Learning in a class by yourself would be harder. Because there wouldn’t be as many questions from other students to learn from.

DO YOU LEARN BETTER IN A CLASSROOM WITH A TEACHER?

- Unanimous yes.

DO YOU ENJOY BEING IN CLASS WITH OTHER STUDENTS?

- Unanimous yes.
- I can’t do self-directed learning. I need help from the teacher.
- I wouldn’t do well if I had to teach myself.
- I could do self-directed learning. Core courses and options.
- I would be able to do it, but I’d still need someone to explain stuff to me sometimes. Someone coming in once a week probably wouldn’t be enough for me.

- I could do math, but English would be hard because I need someone to explain certain grammar rules. One day a week might work, but it would take some getting used to.
- I like having a teacher up in the front of the class to explaining things. I prefer a teacher.
- It can be kind of confusing for me, so I prefer to have a teacher. It's better for my learning style to have someone there.
- I think I would be good at it because I could set the pace and get more work done.
- I wouldn't like it, because it's better to have a teacher to explain things to me. I would much rather a teacher.
- I could not self-teach myself. I like asking questions and having the opportunity to be walked through a question so I really understand it. It would be a huge change and I don't think I could do that.
- I don't think I could self-teach. It would be easier to have a teacher in the class to walk through things step-by-step.
- It's better to have a teacher so you don't have to wait to ask your question.

GRADE 10 RESPONSES

- I'd love to do it on the Smart Board at Andrew School.
- Both could be beneficial. I could do livestream or self-directed. It's good to do it at school instead of on the laptop at home
- I learn better with a real teacher, need them to demonstrate. Otherwise, don't learn easily
- I'm doing a Moodle course, CTR1010: Pre-CALM. It's going ok
- I've done courses on Moodle, some are difficult. It's easier when a teacher is there to come over and help show you how to do the work
- I like a classroom, having a relationship with teachers, talking in person. I prefer pen and paper over computers. It's very artificial when you're talking to someone remotely, there's no body language. In a classroom, you can learn from the teacher and other students around you can help you.
- Agreed.

GRADE 11 RESPONSES

- We've done a streaming class.
- I'm not really a fan of it.
- It wasn't effective for me.
- I don't think it would change much. It's still just a class.
- I could learn from a livestream. If I need to learn something I can just search up a youtube video and find the answers myself.
- I learn better with a teacher in a class.
- I would be able to adapt to a livestream.
- I could adapt to a live stream, that's how I feel. I prefer a teacher though.
- I like Moodle because I can do the work on my own time, and I can organize things myself.

- I like having Miss Chang come in once a week, because I can ask her my questions if I have them.
- Moodle is pretty easy and a good way to get credits. You can research things on your own and figure them out.
- I like Moodle, especially when Miss Chang is in. Even when she's not, you can email her and she'll answer you pretty quickly. You can do it on your own time at your own speed.
- I hate Moodle. I don't like computers. I'm not tech savvy, and the courses I've tried aren't exciting, it's just computer stuff. I stopped taking it because it was so bland. If there was a teacher, I'd like it more but the tech savvy part is a challenge. I'm doing English through Next Step and I like it better than Moodle. I can talk to the teacher and she checks in on me to see how I'm doing.
- There are three different math classes in one right now, and we've been doing that since grade 1 so we're used to it at this point. We can help each other too. Since it's a small class its easy for the teacher to talk to everyone about their studies too.

Question 3

“At Andrew School, we wouldn't be able to re-create the sorts of options available at either Lamont High or Vegreville Composite High. So, what if you had a chance to be bused to one those schools a few times a semester to chance to explore those subject areas? In this scenario, you'd still take core courses and the set options here at Andrew School. And, in addition, have a chance to sample other sorts of CTS options.”

JUNIOR HIGH GROUP 1 RESPONSES

- It would be ok to sample another course there so you know what to do.
- I'd be fine with a couple days a week or semester.
- What do you mean by sample? It makes sense to go and sample, but you can't sample everything. You have to have a general idea of what you like beforehand.
- I'd be ok with it.
- If I was missing a few days a semester, would I fall behind on work? How would I catch up?
- I'd like to go to try a different school to see what it's like—then if want to go to different school, you'd know.
- Once or twice a month would be good, it would be nice because it could broaden horizons
- It would be good, and if you were considering changing schools, it would give you an opportunity to figure it out.
- Would you be mixed with other class? Don't like big classes.
- How is it going to help with credits? If you don't take the full course, you don't get the idea what it's about. Don't get much out of it.
- I agree. If you're going to a different school, you should just switch schools. If you know what you want to do, no point in going once a month because you're not getting full idea or get credits. It just takes away from other class time. It doesn't

really make sense. You're not benefiting in the long run because you're not taking the whole course. I already signed up to go to Lamont next year. It would be inconveniencing kids already in the course, pushing them back.

- I agree. You don't get the full benefit going a few times a month.
- I agree.

JUNIOR HIGH GROUP 2 RESPONSES

- I would prefer that over losing our high school. I'm comfortable in my cores, so it would be good to go over somewhere else for the options.
- I think it would be a lot easier if we were actually at that school instead of just visiting so that we could be doing the options every day.
- I would prefer to get it two or three times a week rather than just a small sample.
- I like our core subjects. But I would like options at least once a week rather than just a few times a semester.
- It would be better to go to a school where you can just go and do it instead of bussing place to place for different options.
- Going to the school full time would be better than a sample.

GRADE 10 RESPONSES

- I'd like to go sometimes, but to take core subjects in Andrew school.
- More options would be good.
- I would rather go to that school to take options, get to know kids and play sports. I would make more friends, take whatever I want and with a teacher instead of Next Step or modules.
- I agree.
- I agree. I'd rather go to bigger school, have bigger classes. Make more friends, play sports. University has lots of people, it would make it easier to transition.
- If you're in Vegreville or Lamont and get to take those options, you'll be better rounded attending that school.

WHAT OPTIONS WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE AVAILABLE?

- Music, band, foods, mechanics, welding, second language (French), bigger shop with more equipment and teachers who know what they're teaching (more skilled). A lot of options. There are a lot of things I want to do, like cosmetology in Vegreville, something where I can take options and get hands on experience.
- I agree – the selection of wood in shop is poor, and I can't make the projects I want to.

GRADE 11 RESPONSES

- It doesn't matter to me. It might be cool to have that opportunity, but it wouldn't really matter to me if it didn't happen.
- It would be a cool experience to go see what the other courses are like, to go experience something different.
- I could see it being helpful if you want to take a specific course that we don't have.
- To me it seems like it could be a good experience, but I think two days would be an inadequate amount of time. I don't think we would have enough time to really learn things.
- I'm happy here, I've got my courses. It wouldn't be bad necessarily, but I don't want to be on a bus for much longer than I already am.
- It would be a good experience.

Question 4

"When you think about the ideal senior high experience, what does that look like and include?"

JUNIOR HIGH GROUP 1 RESPONSES

- I'd like to see more options.
- More options and more sports teams.
- More options, school sports, and a lot more people to interact with.
- People here haven't gone to different schools. I've been to 10 schools and seen different things. I like big schools, having lots of kids and lots of options. Things like school dances, prom, a small grad ceremony. Those things are a huge part of high school experience. A bigger school has a different environment. There are more friendships there.
- I agree, there should be an actual grad class instead of just two people.
- I don't like big schools
- I agree as well. I want a big graduating class. Dances, options, clubs with more shared interests.
- It would be nice to have a lot more people and more diverse people. I feel cut off from rest of the world. I have no friends, I just hang out with you people because there's no one else. It would be nice to have celebrations at the school, but I don't know people who show up for events. It would be nice to have a party you can remember and think about at school.
- I agree.
- More options would be better, more sports. We don't have soccer here.
- I would like clubs and courses. Going to a bigger school for all that would be better. We can't do anything. Big school events would be good, and it would be better to have more clubs.
- It would be better to have a bigger class, more people would like me and there'd be more sports.
- I agree.
- It would be good if the school closed.

- If the school stays open, what's going to change? If the school doesn't close, what is going to happen instead?
- When we use moodle, we are supervised but the teacher doesn't respond. We just watch videos, it's really confusing. If a teacher was there to walk us through it that would be good, but we don't really understand it.

WHAT ABOUT THE SOCIAL PART? WHAT'S IT LIKE BEING THE ONLY GIRL IN YOUR CLASS?

- Gym class isn't fun, I sit out sometimes. I joined the 7-8-9s, so it's a bit more competitive.
- There used to be three girls – one moved, the other went to another school. It's not terrible but I would prefer to have girls in my class to talk to.
- I'm always excited when a new student comes, I always hope it's a girl.
- The entire school gets excited if someone new comes.
- I've always been an outcast, never really had friends. I would like a bigger school and more options.

WHAT OPTIONS DO YOU HAVE AND WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE?

- There are no options here. Only culinary class or shop. There's a lot of down time, and we don't get to choose at all. I want to go into physiotherapy, but I'd need science courses not provided here. I'm going to Lamont next year. There's nothing here for anyone who knows what they want to do.
- We had options, but they were not taken seriously. Kids messed around, and the school stopped offering them. Schools should have options like cosmetology. But I don't know what's out there because I haven't seen them all.
- I want art.
- If you have a friend at the other school, you could talk to them. I can't play D&D or do coding courses here.
- Shop, fixing vehicles – mechanics course.
- I'd really enjoy art choice, computers and coding
- I'd like more arts programming – drama, music, art and graphic design.
- I'd like an art program. But if you don't like it, you shouldn't have to take it.
- I take leadership and physical ed. I didn't have scheduling to take other options.
- I'd just like to do field trips where all the people go.

JUNIOR HIGH GROUP 2 RESPONSES

- Large classrooms, lots of options. Next year the grade 9s are going into the dash classes. It would be nice if they were all separate instead of being all jumbled together. Lots of sports teams would be nice. More opportunities for field trips and other activities.
- At a bigger school, there are more options. Bigger sports teams, more people. When you get to class there will be more questions asked, so you could learn from other students too.

- I haven't gone to very many schools, so I don't know what could really be different. But I agree that it's better when the classes aren't so jumbled.
- Having more options classes would be nice.
- I like this school how it is, but more options, bigger population and more sports teams would be nice.
- More population and more options. I like smaller classes, but you can't have more options if you don't have the population for it.
- More population, bigger school gives you more options.
- More people, bigger classes would be fun. There would be more friends you could talk to.
- We're always stuck with the same people here, at a bigger school there would be more opportunities to talk to different people.

GRADE 10 RESPONSES

- The options here are not great. Having teachers to help is good, but the selection of courses is poor here.
- Personal one on one teaching is great. As for options, I feel forced to take them. Taking work experience, have lots to catch up. Teachers friendly, know people's names. Kids don't show respect for teachers and other students here. Close groups, going to a bigger school, make friends right away. New kids get picked on year after year. Energy of school to be better.
- At Lamont and Vegreville, you can have different friend groups. We don't have that option.
- Agreed, it would be nice to have more possible friends. New kids here can't fit in because the others have known each other their whole lives. There are no girls sports here, I would like to play other sports and can't do it in Andrew. We're forced to take options, we don't get to pick what we want to do.
- I'm used to big classes and more friend options, other groups. I had lots of choices at my last school, but there are no real options here. There are so many more in a bigger place like Vegreville or Lamont. At those schools you can choose your friends, while here at Andrew, you're pushed into a group.
- I likes Andrew the way it is.
- It would be nice to have more sports teams than we have. We had to play junior high kids because there are no kids for senior teams. So we're the worst team in the league.
- It's demoralizing to lose all the time.
- I'd love more sports and gym. We don't get gym every semester. I can't imagine not playing sports until I graduate. There are lots of teams in Lamont, like curling, basketball and volleyball.
- There are four kids in my gym class. We can't do anything.
- I have independent study for a double period. There isn't even a teacher there.
- There are two kids on our archery team, the one sport that doesn't die. Do other schools have archery?
- The shop class has limited wood. You can barely build anything.
- I would like a bigger class. Social life is very important too.

WHAT SHOULD THE TRUSTEES KNOW BEFORE MAKING A DECISION?

- I would go to different school. I don't see Andrew going anywhere. Kids will leave anyway. It's too late for it to grow.
- I agree. It boils down to a lack of kids. And kids are leaving anyway.
- The student population is just going to keep decreasing until the school is empty.
- My mom would like me to go to bigger school, but paying for busing is a problem. I wouldn't be here if busing was free.
- Busing and gas are too expensive. I wouldn't be here either if it was free.
- The bus routes don't make sense. Why don't kids go to Smoky Lake? The bus routes need work.
- I'm willing to be on the bus longer if needed, it doesn't matter.
- I agree with everyone else. I'd rather just go somewhere else. I don't care about longer bus rides.
- Longer rides don't matter. You can sleep, read a book or talk to other people during the bus rides for however long it is. You could even do some homework on the bus.

GRADE 11 RESPONSES

- I feel like everyone has a different high school experience. I've adapted to where we are, and I'm okay with it. Someone in a bigger school has their own high school experience. But what I'm getting here is good for me. I want to stay here and graduate with my friends.
- I agree. Everyone has their own experience of what high school is. I like what we've got here with small class sizes. We've been here for a while so it would be nice to graduate together.
- I don't really need a club to explore my interests, I've got that on my own.
- We've been here since Kindergarten. I'd like to graduate with our class. We're close with the teachers and in a big school, you wouldn't know them as well.
- I haven't gone to Andrew for as long as everyone else, but I still think this is a good school to be at. Not being able to graduate here would suck.
- I don't really know my ideal experience because I haven't experienced anything else but what we have here. I've adapted to what we have here, and I'm getting what I want, what I need to succeed in my later life. I've been with these people my whole life so it would be nice to graduate with them.
- I like it here. We all grew up together. I wouldn't leave. It would be nice to have more sports teams. We had the opportunity to play on a team last year, and that was nice and it's too bad to not have that anymore, but it was good to have the experience when we did.
- If we had more sports, I wouldn't play them because I'm focused on the academic side of things and getting what I need to graduate.
- I want to focus on my academics as well, so sports teams aren't important to me.
- Most of the younger kids, they want to go to a different school. Most of them haven't been here long enough to know what it means to finish here. We're so close to the finishing point, it would be nice to be able to finish here.
- It's nice how the school is close to where we live. The other schools are another 30 minutes at least. It's convenient to have it in the area where we don't have long bus rides.

Next Steps

Currently, EIPS senior administration and the Board are reviewing all the input received through the various public consultation sessions and survey. The Board will take into consideration all the information and feedback received before making a final decision, which is expected to take place within the 2018-19 school year.