



dialogue)))

CBE Area V - Schools Impacted by New Schools Openings

David Thompson School

Session Notes and Evaluation

October 19, 2016

This summary of the feedback from the David Thompson School engagement session on the Area V Scenario opportunities, challenges and other questions and comments was compiled and summarized by Stantec Consulting Ltd.

November 2, 2016



Number of Attendees: 39

Affected Schools: Acadia School
David Thompson School

Scenario 1 Discussion

OPPORTUNITIES

- Potential to bring students in from other areas, which could help enrollment numbers
- Provide more options for students within one school
- Potential to offer opportunity to explore different program options for students, being that many parents make the choice to live in a community because of the close proximity of the school. The decision to bus is out of necessity (i.e. required to bus to regular program), but many parents would not choose an alternative program for their child if that then meant having to bus their child. Alternatively, it is possible that if an alternative program is offered at a home school, parents may consider switching their child into that program (e.g. one parent explained that she would not bus her children to a French Immersion program, but if the program was added to their home school she would consider enrolling them in that program).
- Change in grade configuration to grade 6-9, as grade 5 is too young for Middle School
- More students able to walk to school
- With a supportive administrative staff, there can be possibilities for the separate programs to come together, such as through options and non-core programs.

CHALLENGES

- Arranging the alternative programs so that cohorts can flow from one school to the next together; attempt to keep cohorts together between kindergarten and grade 9 as best as possible
- Could result in the imbalance of attention and resources between regular and alternative programs; worry that the planning may be short-sighted regarding adding alternative programs to schools with regular programs, stating the potential for the alternative program to eventually overshadow the regular program and resources to eventually favour the alternative program, due to a perception that the alternative program is more important.
- Having regular and alternative programs in the same school creates the potential for a divide between the two programs and keeps kids separate.
- Safety concern for the grade range of 4 to 9 at Fairview
- Difficulties with different start times between schools.
- Fundraising challenges with competing values between the two programs.
- Language barriers between the two schools
- Integrating the two programs in at one school
- There are fewer options available to the elementary schools, and therefore less opportunity for integration.



- Ensuring equal support for dual-track programs within one school
- Eugene Coste does not expand to K-6 as previously thought

Scenario 2 Discussion

OPPORTUNITIES

- Has the potential to make certain schools stronger (e.g. bunching alternative programs such as the Science program and French Immersion program in the Maple Ridge area).
- Allows regular programs kept within the home community campus, allowing students to go to school in their home community and avoiding students having to bus long distances just to get to a regular program (e.g. Louis Riel used to have a regular program but lost it when the GATE and Science programs got added, creating a greater influx of students being bussed in and a lower number of students attending Louis Riel as their home area school).
- Housing regular programs separately from alternative programs could provide the opportunity to create larger and stronger regular program schools because more resources can be put towards them due to higher enrollment numbers, and consequently strengthen the perception of the regular program schools (it was noted alternative programs often get more resources/attention).
- A consistent program within a school keeps kids together and socializing.
- I believe Scenario 2 presents the strongest option for students/families that are looking for a really good quality, unified, strong education.
- Supports integration and minimizes segregation
- Keeps communities strong and together

CHALLENGES

- Parents are more willing to bus/drive their children long distances for alternative programs, because they are more specialized, than they are for regular programs.
- Concern enrollment at certain schools would not increase.
- Regular programs should have the opportunities offered to alternative programs.

Other Questions and Comments

GENERAL QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

- Consider the opportunity for students to explore other options for programs, and make these options possible for them to enroll in alternative programs, should they be interested. For instance, when implementing French Immersion, consider making it late entry French Immersion (i.e. grade 7 enrollment) so that students who are currently in the regular program can have the option of switching to an alternative program if it interests them. Do not make it so that only students who were previously in the alternative programs can remain in that program.



- How will waiting lists work for high-demand programs; will students be enrolled under a grandfathered provision? Will students have priority for getting into school programs in their home area?
- Will the appropriate teaching resources be available to support the added programs (e.g. the expansion of the science program)?
- Does R.T. Alderman still have a sports program, and if so, what will happen to that program from these changes?
- Why wasn't Acadia or David Thompson considered for an alternative program such as Science?
- Questions about how to enter the French Immersion program. Reply- will be addressed through Frequently Asked Questions/school's open house
- What is the ideal number of students for each school, and what is each school's maximum capacity?
- What are the "more" opportunities for combining regular programs in a single track?
- What are the changes to high school feeder patterns?
- Why are some alternative programs Kindergarten to grade 9, and alternative programs are not? Was this considered as an option for Group 1 schools?
- What was the long-term range considered by the CBE in the decision-making process for these Scenarios?
- What is the difference between French Immersion and a French class?
- What are the projections for the different schools/scenarios?
- If there is a change in the regular program at David Thompson will the students be allowed to stay at the David Thompson school location and attend the new programs being offered at this location?
- Is there an opportunity for parents and children who want to move with their school program, to see the new school location? Having support for the transition process is needed. Parents need to have information about what type of transition support will be available before the CBE announces their final decision.
- Is their increased opportunity for programing when there are more students at a school building?
- If enrolment drops and there are not enough children to have a school operate at this location, what would happen to the David Thompson school building?

SCENARIO 1

- In order to better keep cohorts together from kindergarten and grade 9, a recommendation was made that the French Immersion program should be moved to Acadia (from Sam Livingston), since Acadia is a feeder school to David Thompson, which is slated for a French Immersion program under Scenario 1.
- If two separate programs are going to be implemented in the same school, they should be programs that are distinctly separate anyways and a natural divide between students is to be expected, such as Science and French Immersion.
- How were the decisions made on which alternative program would move to which school? Was keeping cohorts together considered in this process?
- How will the fundraising/parent council and resources be managed between the two separate programs at a school, since the programs will require very different resources (science equipment for



the Science program, French textbooks vs. English textbooks, etc.)? How will the resources be managed and split between the separate programs, and who will be the decision makers regarding those resources? How will current school council funds be handled once the programs are rearranged – will current financial resources be transferred over with each program? How will resources be handled during the shift? What resources will move (e.g. laptops, iPads, band instruments, audio-visual equipment, etc.)? (Participant – name withheld – requested immediate follow-up)

- Would there be one Principal for the two programs?
- Will French Immersion push out the regular program at David Thompson?
- Where would the regular program students go from Maple Ridge school if the regular program school closes (under Scenario 1)?
- How are school start times affected?
- How are the volunteers and support staff affected by French Immersion into a school (i.e. language barrier)?
- How are the different alternative programs run? And how are they run as a dual track.
- French Immersion wait list numbers? Science Program wait list numbers? Hard to make any real valid comments regarding these programs to run in “conjunction” with regular program – worry that wait lists for special programs are not being shared as these will make the alternative programs the “main” program with regular program becoming secondary.

SCENARIO 2

- Take into consideration the communities with an aging population and the potential for those soon to be filled with young families enrolling into local schools (or was this considered in the planning process?).
- Take effort to keep continuity of programs and cohorts.
- If Scenario 2 is implemented and the enrollment numbers remain low, what will happen?
- What is the ideal number of students for each school, and what is each school's maximum capacity?
- What are the “more” opportunities for combining regular programs in a single track?
- What are the changes to high school feeder patterns?
- Why are some alternative programs Kindergarten to grade 9, and alternative programs are not? Was this considered as an option for Group 1 schools.



Participant Engagement Evaluation

David Thompson School – Host Location: October 19, 2016

- Acadia School
- David Thompson School

Number of participants in attendance: 39

Number of evaluations completed: 28

To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements:

P1) I was encouraged to share my thoughts and/or feedback during this engagement.

26 Agree 2 Somewhat Agree 0 Somewhat Disagree 0 Disagree 0 Not Applicable

P2) I was able to ask questions and learn about the opportunity for input/feedback prior to my participation in this engagement.

17 Agree 7 Somewhat Agree 1 Somewhat Disagree 2 Disagree 0 Not Applicable

- "One" no answer

P3) I had the information I needed to participate in a meaningful way.

7 Agree 15 Somewhat Agree 5 Somewhat Disagree 1 Disagree 0 Not Applicable

P4) I was able to provide input on the best way for me to share my thoughts and ideas.

17 Agree 10 Somewhat Agree 0 Somewhat Disagree 1 Disagree 0 Not Applicable

P5) I clearly understand all of the factors being considered in the decision making process and which of these factors I can and cannot influence.

11 Agree 13 Somewhat Agree 4 Somewhat Disagree 0 Disagree 0 Not Applicable

P6) My input was documented as part of the engagement process.

20 Agree 6 Somewhat Agree 1 Somewhat Disagree 1 Disagree 0 Not Applicable



P7) What did you like most about this engagement? What did you like least about this engagement?

Comment: 14 No Comment: 14

- It was nice to hear the potential for other programs to the schools in the community
- The real issues was not addressed being what is going to happen to our schools if they don't have enough kids
- Note takers tried to make sure they were capturing correct information
- There were a lot of hands in the cookie jar
- All thoughts were written down and clearly identified
- Not enough control to move conversation along
- Knowing that my input was being seriously considered and documented so that all questions could be answered
- The free cookies
- Talking going round in circles
- The ability to give input openly was great
- That aggressive speakers could share their thoughts first. A way to take turns is better
- I like big ideas
- The variety of opinions and input
- Good turnout, felt like a full discussion
- I liked being able to voice my concerns
- Need to have numbers to help make decisions between scenario 1 and 2
- Not understanding what difference between French class and French Immersion and what is science, sports, art programs etc.
- Side chatter so distracting
- The individuals that led the program were amazing
- Circle was nice / miss out on all opinions by separating
- Liked that they summed up and compared group discussions
- Least – why or how our school (David Thompson) was chosen for French Immersion program and why not Science program? Needed more concrete numbers
- Like – have a conversation to see what other people feel or ideas that came up
- Just being able to have conversation and listen to others comments and questions – thanks
- Hearing similar concerns from people in my community
- Some of our group members getting too focused on personal scenarios and were very difficult to divert back to the task at hand
- The various techniques / methods of engagement (group discussion, small groups, cards to list concerns)