

# Future Programming and Facility Use

Presentation of the YK 1 Facilities Committee  
May, 2014

# Welcome

On behalf of the YK 1 Facilities Committee welcome to our continuing discussions of future programming and facility use in the District.

# Introduction to the Evening

- Our agenda for this session is to:
  - Familiarize those new to these discussions with the work of the YK 1 Facilities Committee's to date
  - Provide a summary of the results of the recent survey
  - Pose several key programming and facility questions
  - Hear your thoughts and comments regarding future programming and facilities use
  - Describe the Facility Committee's next steps

# Impact of Meeting Results

- The Committee members will:
  - take the information collected here tonight and combine it with that which has already been collected
  - after consideration the Committee will be making a recommendation to the School Board regarding future programming and facility usage

# Some Guidelines for the Meeting

- To assist with the conduct of the meeting tonight we ask that you:
  - Silence any electronic devices
  - Raise your hand and wait to be recognized before speaking
  - Be respectful of others during the meeting
  - Speak in a thoughtful and positive manner
  - Ask for clarification if necessary

**We will take health / stretch breaks periodically throughout the session**

# Background Information

- The Facilities Committee was established on February 11, 2014 and is advisory to the Board
- The purpose of the Committee is to:
  - Recommend grade configurations for YK1 schools
  - Present these options to YK1 stakeholders to gather input
  - Report back to the Board of Trustees with a report summarizing the results of the public meetings, along with any resulting recommendations based on stakeholders input.

## Background Information (2)

- The YK 1 Facilities Committee includes:
  - Selected trustees
  - School representatives
  - Parent representatives
  - Senior District administrators
- A final report from the Committee to the Board is due during the current school year

# Past Considerations of this Matter

- This is not the first time that future programming and school facility use have been discussed.
- In the past discussions also occurred when:
  - YCS required space to accommodate students displaced as a result of the fire at École St. Joseph School
  - The Commission scolaire francophone was first organized
  - The decision was made to make J.H. Sissons a French language immersion school
  - Space was needed for Aurora College

# Summary of Committee Work to Date

- Over the past three months the Facilities Committee has:
  - Reviewed existing and projected school enrolments
  - Examined school utilization rates
  - Conducted meetings with the public and school staff regarding key characteristics of school system excellence
  - Conducted a survey of parents, guardians and interested stakeholders and
  - Examined potential options for programming and facility use

# Survey Highlights

- A survey, titled *Future District Programming and Facility Use Questionnaire* was released on April 29 and remained open for response for 1 week.
- The survey was available in printed form and it was posted on-line
- 399 responses were received
- Many of the responses included extensive comments and suggestions

## Survey Highlights (2)

- Some highlights from the survey include:
  - High quality teaching, academic core subjects and class size were seen as the most important contributors to student success
  - Over 50% of those responding, felt that continuing the range of grade configurations was not important
  - Proximity to home and the grades offered by a school were the most common reasons given for choosing a particular school

## Survey Highlights (3)

- Some highlights from the survey include:
  - The most important programs identified for K to 8 (other than academic courses) were French immersion, intensive and post intensive French and Sports
  - About 45% indicated that they did not support “signature programming” for each school, 39% said “yes” and 15% were either unsure or suggested a more limited approach

# Survey Highlights (4)

- Some highlights from the survey include:
  - When considering whether a school facility could be eliminated:
    - About 58% indicated support if there is a budget savings of 1 to 3%;
    - 70% indicated they would not support the school elimination if there was an impact on current programs
    - 71% supported elimination if the result was a change in the grades offered at some schools

## Survey Highlights (5)

- Some highlights from the survey include:
  - 239 responses included suggestions as to how the District could improve schooling for students; and
  - 146 responses included other comments regarding the District, its operations and the work of the Committee

# What does the Survey Tell Us?

- It is important to note that drawing absolute conclusions from surveys is a risky business
- However, surveys do give a sense of interests and areas in which there is either some consensus or sharp disagreement
- The number of responses received to the survey was very impressive – this suggests that there is strong interest

## What does the Survey Tell Us? (2)

- Some general statements related to the survey might include:
  - Of greatest importance to survey respondents is the quality of teaching and programming offered
  - French immersion programming is strongly supported
  - There are mixed views regarding the benefits of JK to 5 plus middle school; when compared to JK to 8
  - Respondents are open to changes in programming, grade configurations and facility use - but not “at any price”

# Taking the Next Steps Considering Change

- From the Committee's perspective there are some questions:
  - Should change be considered?
  - If change is to occur, what changes should be made?
    - Program changes only?
    - Grade configuration changes?
    - Reducing the number of schools?
  - What are the potential advantages and disadvantages of change?
  - Are there risks to not making change?

# Some Facts to Consider

- Currently 1169 students in K – 8 grades within the District. With the addition of JK this is expected to increase to 1392 by 2016/2017
- The current utilization rate for schools in the District is 61%(YK 1 est.) / 54% (ECE est.); with the addition of JK utilization rates will rise about 10%+
- Following the addition of JK in 2016/2017, enrolments are not expected to significantly increase during the next 5/10 years

## Some Facts to Consider (2)

- WMS utilization of 35% is NOT expected to increase by 2016/2017
- Closing a school would save the District about \$500,000 per year (there would also be some savings to the GWNT)
- By 2016/2017 both JHS (88%) and RLN (79%) are expected to have relatively high utilization rates

## Some Facts to Consider (3)

YK 1 School Utilization Estimates 2016/2017 (Including JK)		
School Name	ECE est.% utilization	YK1 est. % utilization
Ecole J.H. Sissons	88	91
N. J. MacPherson School	76/64	81/68
Mildred Hall School	63	79
Range Lake North School	79	99
William McDonald School	34	38

# Some Potential Directions

- Potential Programming Directions
  - Make all elementary schools JK – 8
  - Increase enrolment at WMS by adding grades 6 – 8 from Range Lake
  - Consolidate existing Intensive and Post Intensive French offerings
  - Expand French immersion offering to include JK to 5 to JK – 8

# Some Potential Directions (2)

- Potential Facility Options:
  - Retaining 5 Schools
    - Option 1 - Status Quo
    - Option 2 - Enhance WMS – transfer 5 - 8 students from RLN (which currently has high utilization)
  - Retaining 4 Schools
    - Option 3 - Use WMS for French Immersion school – all elementary schools become JK to 8

# Some “Pros” and “Cons”

Option 1	Status Quo – 5 schools + SJF
Pro's	Con's
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- No disruption of current patterns</li><li>- Permits choices for parents based on grade configurations</li><li>- Allows for future enrolment growth – if any</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Inefficient program delivery</li><li>- Unlikely JHS renovations are funded</li><li>- Internal competition for students</li><li>- RLN (79%) and JHS (88%) reach relatively high utilization in 2016/2017</li><li>- Does not position District for future construction if enrolments increase</li><li>- Continuing pressure from GNWT</li><li>- Overall District utilization about 64%</li></ul>

# Some “Pros” and “Cons”

Option 2	Expand WMS enrolment 5 schools + SJF
Pro's	Con's
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Place FI and IF/Post IF in the same school (economies of scale)</li> <li>- Increase consolidation of middle school programming</li> <li>- Increases WMS utilization to 52%</li> <li>- Eases enrolment pressures on RLN – reduced to an estimated 53% utilization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduces JK – 8 options for parents</li> <li>- Some RLN students would have to attend another school – WMS is not a “neighborhood school” for most</li> <li>- Unlikely JHS school renovations would be funded by GNWT</li> <li>- Very limited room for FI growth</li> <li>- Does not position District for future school construction if enrolment grows - Overall District utilization about 64%</li> </ul>

# Some “Pros” and “Cons”

Option 3	Place French Immersion at WMS 4 schools + SJF
Pro's	Con's
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Expand FI to JK to 8</li><li>- Provides room for FI growth</li><li>- Expands NJM to JK to 8</li><li>- Removes requirement to renovate JHS</li><li>- Increases WMS utilization to over 70%</li><li>- Annual cost savings of about \$500,000 to the District</li><li>- Addresses GNWT request</li><li>- Raises District utilization to over 76%</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- JK to 8 becomes the only grade configuration option in the District</li><li>- Some retrofit requirements for NJMS and WMS may be required</li><li>- RLN utilization remains relatively high</li><li>- Some student disruption (not during the school year)</li></ul>

# It is Important to Remember!

- Student enrolment numbers within the City of Yellowknife has declined by 290 students (8%) over the past six years
- Any changes to schools will be carefully planned
- Some of the changes would require financial support from ECE for renovations
- It is not possible to predict GNWT decisions / actions that might result from any of the options
- Future enrolment estimates to do not show enrolment growth for the foreseeable future

# So Some Questions Are...

- As the Facilities Committee considers making its recommendations to the School Board:
  - What should the focus of recommendations?  
Programming? Facilities?
  - Which “go forward” options should receive the greatest consideration and why?

# To Support the Discussions

- Break into Groups
- Focus on each of the questions
- Plan to return to the full meeting in at 8:40
- Each Group will provide a report on comments and suggestions made during the discussions

# Reporting Back

- As you report back from your group:
  - Please keep your comments focused on the questions
  - Be concise and direct in your reporting
  - If there are additional points that the group wishes to make, please make the comments following the comments on the questions

# The Committee's Next Steps

- Following this week's meetings the Committee will:
  - Compile all of the information collected during the project
  - Discuss the programming and facility use options
  - Prepare a report for submission to the School Trustees – for the Trustees' consideration

# Thanks

Thanks for attending the session today.  
Your thoughts and comments are appreciated!