



Yellowknife Education District No. 1
École J.H. Sissons School Renewal Survey
December 2017

Methodology

The following survey was distributed to parents of École J.H. Sissons School parents on December 13 ,2017 and closed on January 5, 2018. The target demographic was parents who currently have children registered at the school. A total of 67 people responded to the survey, which consisted of seven open-ended questions (the same seven questions that were posed during public visioning workshops at the school on December 9, 2017 and December 11, 2017).

Question 1: What do you like about the current École J.H. Sissons School building?

"Music room is fantastic, I like the library in the middle of the school, I love the school grounds and playground equipment."

"The centrality of the library."

"I like that the library is central to the school, the heart if you will. I like that there are sinks in most of the rooms. There should be water access in all classrooms."

"Large open area for library, classrooms are in a curved fashion, nice sized gym, has a sliding hill, has a foyer for after school program and other events, built on natural landscape retaining northern flare."

"Small size. It is a JK to grade 5 school The teachers are great Small class size École is a single track French school."

"Location."

"I like the open concept."

"It's position on the hill, the centering of the library with the classrooms fanning out from the centre."

"I like that the library is central."

"The atmosphere."

"The original open-concept design, though somewhat dismantled over the years and perhaps problematic re: sound etc., has helped foster a sense of community and collaboration inside the school. Open areas in which students, staff and guests can share space or work in the open are beneficial. Efforts by students and staff to feature artwork inside and out (murals, fish on fence etc.) in recent years helps build pride. The school does not have a cold, institutional feel - students are not segregated and closed off from one another. Showcases of students' work on walls is appreciated. Library as central hub - meeting space - is wonderful. Nice to have a dedicated music room."

"Location, layout of classrooms and library."

"Central library."

"Younger grades and older grades on different floors. The library is the epicenter of the school."

"Open concept, no doors on classrooms."

"The open feel. How the library is central."

"Color."

"Location, organization of the rooms around the central areas, decent gym."

"I love how open it is and centred on the library. How most of the classrooms don't have doors. I love the physical location and how it sits high on the rocks."

"It's still standing. :) Honestly, nothing stands out right now, it functions as a school in terms of class rooms, yes?"

"The building is small and easy to get around."

"Location, lot space, how library is in the middle and open concept."

"How small it is, love the open concept with the library in the middle."

"The library in the middle. Open and bright."

"I love that the classrooms are centered around the library. I think it sends the message that learning is central. I also like the open concept of the classrooms."

"The playground, the location."

"Spacious."

"Not much, it is old and out dated."

"Library as centre focus."

"Central library, natural surroundings, stage in gym."

"It's small and homely feeling. I also like how the classrooms are in the same general location and you must pass by the school office to proceed to where our children are."

"Central library/ common space."

"The location in our neighborhood is great."

"Love the feel of a more open concept setup. Results in a friendlier atmosphere and a more connected student body. Love how the open library area is a central space that other areas open into. I think a new school should aim to be even more open and connected."

"Open concept. Library being the centre. Gym with a stage in it and a classroom behind. Location up on the hill and set back from road. I liked the kindergarten classroom with cooking facilities (until it was taken apart)."

"Library is a central hub. There is a dedicated music room, albeit with problematic acoustics. We like the open concept - doorless classrooms. Art murals. Display spaces for student art and work."

"Open classrooms, central library."

"I like its smaller population and the central, open library."

"Central library, connectedness of classrooms to common space, circular shape, classrooms on different levels, stage in gym backing on Music room."

"Small family feeling."

"The open library."

"That the library is the heart of the building."

"That the library is the focal part of the school."

"The open library."

"Location, size, layout."

"So far is very good but it need some expansion a little crowded."

"Grounds, open concept surrounding the library."

"Open concept library in centre of the school."

"That the library is in the centre."

"I like the school yard because it has mature trees and rocks to climb and several play areas."

"Warm open feeling. I like how it is centred around the library - it gives a common space that is not just a hallway. It also gives a cozy feel."

"I love the central library and how the kids can all meet around it."

"I like the layout."

"Library as the centre of the school and the big and diverse yard."

"Location."

"I love the unique design, the circular design with the library in the centre which encourages a sense of closeness and community in the school. I love that the school is built ON the rocks (and not blasted flat for the school)."

"Playground nature/equipment, open feel."

"Library."

"The library."

"Library is the centre of the school."

"The library is central to the classrooms and the very large playground area."

"How most of the classroom surround the central library area." The classrooms are close together and keep JK, K, Grade 1 on same floor. Open library in centre. Awesome playground!"

Common Themes: Centrality of library, location, open concept.

Question 2: What do you like about the current École J.H. Sissons School grounds?

"Lots of tree cover, interesting relief and rise and run for the kids, playground equipment."

"The grounds are great! The best in the city. Lots of different spaces and terrains, and an excellent variety of different play equipment throughout."

"I like that there are wild areas for students to play in, the bush gives them a place to explore and imagine. I like the sliding hill."

"Large, multiple areas for groups of children to play. a green space amongst residential neighbourhoods, decent amount of equipment to play on or with, tree's in some areas."

"Huge size. New playground equipment."

"Sliding hill, treed playground."

"It is very spacious with lots of greenery."

"Varied naturalistic landscape, the best playground in the city."

"The trees! the rocks! the natural play spaces for kids. I think it inspires imaginative play, which I deeply value."

"There is lots of room. The trees. the playground equipment."

"Natural rock outcrops, including a boulder in the playground, and lots of trees are great for children to play around. Even better than any purchased playground equipment (though that's important, too) Baseball diamond/soccer pitch and basketball courts popular. The sliding hill is cherished! Nice residential neighbourhood. Garden space outside. Play equipment for smaller children, though not enough, is appreciated!"

"Wooded area, play structures."

"Large."

"Play area is nice and large. Good mix of open and treed area."

"Location is great, lots of room and equipment."

"Lots of room to explore and play."

"Lots of play area."

"The inclusion of the natural elements like the trees and rocks into the play structures. Good size for kids to play."

"How the school sits high on the rock. There are hills for sliding, rocks and trees for playing. It would be impossible for someone in an office to design grounds."

"Great playground."

"Lots of playground space for the kids. But Also easy to drop off kids and see them get into the school from the parking lot."

"Large space."

"It's fine, new parking is great."

"Some natural areas with trees and bushes, the rocks for kids to play on. Also like to have some degree of separation for age groups."

"The hills and natural terrain. I know kids all over town, not just JHS students love sliding on the hills during winter. I like that there are a lot of trees and nature for the kids to be around."

"The forest, rocks and natural areas."

"Massive playground."

"Nice open area with lots of space."

"Natural grounds - trees, wide open area, hill for sliding, playground equipment."

"I like there is a separate play around for the JK students and the bigger kids."

"Wooded, natural area."

"Lots of space."

"The multiple Playgrounds and the wildness of the place."

"Lots of natural features for kids to play on and explore (i.e., exposed rock, bushy areas, tree covered areas, spots that run with water or pool water in spring or after heavy rainfall, changes in elevation to move up and down on through climbing and sliding)."

"It's fantastic! Large play area with diversity of terrain and mature trees and rocks for adventurous and nature-based play. (Children can climb on rocks and create dams with streams in the spring, etc.) Lots of play structures. Sheltered from wind. Large field to play on, ice rink and basketball court. Mostly one area without fences dividing areas. No structures casting cold, dark shadows on playground during school day."

"Sliding hill is wonderful. Boulder in schoolyard is fun. Potential for natural Canadian Shield play space outside and lots of trees. Garden plots started outside school by parents and students. Art murals outside."

"Large, wide variety of 'nature', easy access to the front door, lots of equipment."

"I like the various little pockets of play areas and the snow hill."

"The large size, number of natural features (trees and rocks) and variety of spaces for kids to play in. It's the best school grounds on the city!"

"Playground at back."

"Nothing."

"Lots of parent parking and space for drop offs and pickups."

"That there is green space to play plus natural elements like rocks for kids to climb and explore."

"The playground! I love how it incorporates nature and the natural environment. The location is also great."

"Size of playground area."

"Rough land scape on the playground area and the pickup and drop off is very small."

"Large, lots of options for play, bare rocks and natural features."

"Sliding hill."

"Rocks to play on Natural features, trees."

"I like that the school is up on the hill and the play equipment on flat even surface. There is a very nice mixture of open space and small low rocks and trees to play in. The forested bit is very popular with kids. Having a sliding hill is great too. The current grounds set up is wonderful, don't change it!"

"The rocks and natural park area at the end of the school ground."

"I like the drop off pick up system. Seems to work well."

"Lots of space, lots of green space (trees, rocks, etc.) and the hill."

"Size Trees Safe."

"I love the naturalized playground; rocks, mature trees, sandy areas, grass, and the play structures. This was one of the primary factors of enrolling my children at Sissons."

"Equipment and nature around it."

"Treed lot."

"I like that it is big- with multiple areas, trees, and places for exploration and fun."

"The combination of park with the nature."

"Very large with lots of play structures and swings."

"I like all the rocks and natural play areas."

"Playground is treed and offers great hills and places for curious kids (and foxes!) to play. Trees need to be kept."

Common Themes: Size, trees, playground, surrounded by nature, sliding hill.

Question 3: What do you dislike about the current École J.H. Sissons School building or grounds?

"The grounds could be a little bit larger. The Pre-K area needs a little more interest and shade."

"Mostly the entrance: it is narrow, crowded, cold and inaccessible. Overall the building seems like a disconnected set of square classrooms."

"I really dislike being expected to take my boots off but have nowhere to put them where they aren't just lying in the middle of a crowded space, and then having to climb stairs up without shoes. The staircase is steep and unsafe for small children who use it. It is unsafe in an emergency situation if everyone in the gym is in their socks. I dislike that there is no safe space for the kids in case of emergency. I dislike that the music room and gym are connected in such a way that they can affect each other's teaching. (gym can hear music, music can hear the gym) There aren't enough windows in the classrooms."

"Not much. It is an older building and of course needs piping, insulation, etc. updated, but it is set up quite well I believe both inside and out."

"Terrible parking and drop off area Front door is not Handicap accessible open concept, too noisy, air quality, too far from the school to the playground for the younger students, play ground is not visible from the school bad acoustic's, and lighting to many stairs for the smaller students."

"Stairs at the front, asbestos, rocky field, parking lot."

"The drop off area is hard to maneuver."

"School capacity, entrance."

"The wet corner by Forrest Drive you cannot see the kids from the school very well to many stairs no Handicap access at the front doors."

"The office is too far from the entrance to provide proper security --- foyer not welcoming for students/guests (thankful staff greet students at door each morning to compensate!) The stage is off limits due to safety issues - so drama is almost non-existent --- students miss out on creative opportunities! Gym is too small to accommodate assemblies/concerts. One library door is locked due to security concerns - so it's awkward to travel around building for students/guests. Air circulation is poor --- one JK room is too hot and one is way too cold, for example. Acoustics are poor. Some classrooms a bit congested. Outdated electrical system requires microwaves in the hallway. There is not enough space to provide recreation for students during the 20 or more coldest days when children are inside all day for recesses and lunch hour. Not fair to kids/staff. Sight lines in the playground not clear enough for student supervision. Especially the periphery. The hill is 80% closed off to students. Wasted play space that could be amazing for playtime/adventures/sliding/exercise. The back of the school is unwelcoming and hides unwanted activity after hours. Not accessible for people with disabilities. Not enough art/colour/texture built in to the architecture itself. Not enough natural light! No kitchen area for student learning."

"Dated, open concept."

"No cafeteria. Office should be much closer to the entrance. School needs to be larger, does not seem to be sufficient space in the school to meet the school's needs. Gym too small to accommodate the entire school population (e.g. not everyone could participate in the Christmas Concert). Parking too small/inefficient for drop offs (often have to park on street)."

"It's a little old, library is small, stage is small."

"I know that the school size is too small for the number of students that attend. Can we expand?"
"Some toys are old. Basketball court could use some repair."

"All the stairs for the little kids to go up outside (safety). The entrance way needs to be redone to be more functional. Astro turf or some sort of non-pavement/sand play area is needed. The bathrooms are very bad for hygiene and not planned well at all for little kids. The current layout of where the JK classes are needs some better thought as the interaction between the older kids and younger ones during recess and end of the day make it a safety issue for the young ones."

"The entrance. The gym is small."

"Parking is a bit tight. The front entrance and boot room is horrible. Would love to see a functioning stage for assembly's and concerts."

"The staircase at the entrance."

"Access-congestion during drop off and pick up. -Desperate need for renovations -Gym size inadequate -library size inadequate -entrance size inadequate."

"Nothing."

"The security is poor due to the entry way, some classes and rooms are at risk. Office should be at the main entrance where lock down can occur. The main entrance is also a funnel."

"The gym is much too small. The building is very old."

"The school is horribly cluttered. There's not enough room for coats and boots and mitts and things. The entranceway is very overcrowded. And I dislike being told which doors to use. Doors are for opening."

"Small entrance. Packed at rush hours. Hard to get through with little ones and dealing with boots."

"All the kids going in and out of one door is very overwhelming."

"Entrance can be congested and far from office for security reasons."

"Entrance is cold, full capacity, not a lot of natural light or natural light in all classrooms."

"There needs to be more school entrances to alleviate major traffic issues for morning drop offs. ie. entrance for JK AND SK and entrance for the bigger kids. The parking lot is tiny for parent drop off but that is what it is. I also don't like that people have public access to the school just as a security feature there should a locked door policy and main entrance for public to use that is directly at the office for checks in."

"Entrance."

"Open class rooms seem impractical, artificial turf would greatly improve the field. The soccer pitch is important."

"I dislike that many of the 'fun' areas of the playground are off limits during supervised recess times. I think the school could be more open and centred around a common area."

"No cooking classroom now."

"Performance stage is dead space due to safety hazard. Security issue - creep once stole a wallet from staff after entering school. Need office near entrance. Not safe! Gym too small. Xmas concert excluded several grades due to lack of space. Bad acoustics and heating. Some rooms too hot some icy cold. Not accessible for people with mobility issues/disabilities. Periphery of school grounds under developed. Children required to stay in bounds according to where power lines demarcate property line. Erosion concerns close off most of the beautiful hill area. Dead space. What's the point of a school on a hill when most of the hill is out of bounds? Poor site lines in schoolyard. Safety issue. Entrance not welcoming. Too little space."

"Stairs (accessibility), small entryway, the open classrooms may hinder some activities? Stage appears to be unusable, Strange classrooms in front cut off from the rest of the school."

"Entrance is very congested maybe due to its small space but also the stairs."

"The lack of doors on classrooms (too many distractions for kids), not enough natural light in classrooms, entranceway and foyer are too small, not enough washrooms."

"Office in the back. Gym."

"Unsafe and crowded parking lot; poor playground and field facilities."

"All the stairs to access the building, the gym is too small. Playground equipment needs to be upgraded."

"The stairs. Very inaccessible for people with difficulty walking. There are no wings - like junior kindergarten and kindergarten kids in the same area of the school. And grades 1-3 together and 4-5 together. Having entrances for each grouping of kids would make entering and leaving the school less hectic and overwhelming, especially for the little ones."

"The many stairs leading after entering the front door to the rest of the school."

"Parking is too small."

"Pay area and the parking areas."

"Dreary gym and music room, stairs right at entry way."

"Classrooms are dark and quite noisy with lots of distractions."

"Not enough bathrooms Gym is small Not enough natural light."

"Small, old, not much light. Only one door for entering and Exiting. It would be great if the stage worked and was used for performances."

"Not much. Parking/traffic flow norms could be communicated to new parents a bit better but the design is fine."

"Not easily accessible for wheelchairs - students and families. Front entrance needs more space for shoe removal and storage. No bathrooms close to entrance exit doors for kids to use during recess. No doors on classrooms."

"Open concept of the classrooms can be distracting."

"Not big enough."

"One thing I would improve is having multiple entrances for children to enter instead of the main entrance. It gets very crowded in the morning/after school."

“Classroom too small, no storage, not enough glasses, office not in the main entrance, only one entrance/exit for students at the end of the day, no place where parents can discuss while waiting for their child, no safety (open door to everybody, no classroom doors, etc.), not enough washroom, no open "able" wall between classrooms, no handicap ramp in the main entrance nor inside, etc.”

“NO SAFETY FOR LOCK DOWNS! Classrooms need doors!”

“I very much dislike the bottle neck at the front door, and how the school is not visibly accessible. A disabled student would have to go to a separate entrance, which doesn't seem right.”

“Parking lot is designed badly, no grass area, the building is dark no natural light, not very accessible, first classroom in the building is JK the office is hard to find not the focal point.”

“The gym is too small.”

“Too many stairs and it is hard to in and out of the school especially when I have younger siblings with me.”

“The new school should be built without disturbing the current school!!!”

“Not much. It's great. A kid's/teachers kitchen and bigger classrooms would be nice. Climbing wall in gym please.”

Common Themes: Bottleneck entrance way, parking situation, too many stairs, no doors on classrooms, limited accessibility, location of office.

Question 4: What qualities would you like to see in a new school building?

"A sense of community within the school (which I think the library in the middle lends itself to), advanced use of technology and smart boards."

"Lots of windows, a central and accessible library, plenty of good and enticing gym space."

"I would like to see better planning for 'boots' and outdoor gear near the entrances if that is a priority for the whole school. It's unrealistic to have everyone carry their winter gear in and out in a climate such as ours. An indoor garden would be amazing."

"Capture much of what the old building has but with newer material."

"A new school built for the future that allows our kids to stay in the old school until the new one is complete More natural light better air quality More water fountains More wash rooms plus sized for JK to grade 5 larger gym More storage space. dedicated arts and music rooms new drop off and parking design less stairs Class rooms that have 4 walls Space for indoor recess and afterschool program office close to front entry of the school."

"Same location, media room/library, music room, art room, gymnasium, more light in rooms."

"More natural light."

"Lots of Windows, bright, spacious, less desks with more varied seating options."

"Large atrium, with the central gathering spot like the library. Open classroom concept."

"Natural light, outdoor access, outdoor classroom."

"Natural light. Built for the future not the past. (new design built along Forest drive so that the school keeps running until the new school opens) Easy access to the playground from the gym and hallways a dedicated afterschool program space that could also be used for indoor recesses good acoustics in the building. main office close to where people enter the building A building that could be locked down nurse's office where minor cuts and scrapes can be taken care of a gym large enough to fit all students, parents and staff at once."

"Support sense of school community - with open spaces for large gatherings of students and community gatherings. Classrooms that are innovative - and that respect many learning styles --- as discussed by architects at meeting, spaces for children to read in window seats or alcoves and open space for group work. Perhaps new kinds of desks, like the S-shaped desk styles or modular desks that can be grouped or isolated depending on students' needs - which the architects showed to parents. Local art that features collaboration or input from students. Walls/floors/ceilings feature texture/colour of natural environment as teaching tool. NATURAL LIGHT and sightlines into playground - windows to trees etc. Courtyard etc. Make space for hands-on learning, perhaps a student kitchen!"

"Keep central library."

"More modern, larger library."

"More natural light throughout the building (perhaps skylights, and more glass to allow natural light to the interior of the building. Students need more organized space for their belongings. Soft calming colour scheme. Interior that resembles the Ndilo school (Ndilo has a beautiful school)."

"Bigger gym, library."

“Clean, lots of light and space, 21st century classroom design (not just desks in rows).”

“Modern, colorful, open.”

“More focus on an open play area in the gym (think indoor recess with the cold weather). Bathrooms need be redone to accommodate smaller children and have better soap dispensers for kids (think to make everything touchless or as much as possible to reduce germs).”

“I'm not sure why a new building is needed. It is a very nice school and wouldn't a retrofit be much cheaper.”

“Modern, open, fuses that allow students lunches to be warmed. Lots of natural light. Passive solar?”

“Entrance Accessibility and more bathrooms.”

“Large Gym and equipment -large Library -multiple emergency exits -classroom doors with emergency "door lock" mechanisms -explore pellet boiler option -explore in-floor heating -no carpets -indoor playground.”

“Office closer to the front entrance so you are able to see who is coming in.”

“Bright spaces with natural light.”

“An eco-friendly school with lots of nature. Larger classrooms and a larger gym, a spare classroom or activity area for events as needed and the after school program. Also the school needs to be more accessible for students with different physical needs.”

“Natural light, less junk, less stuff overall. More storage room for teachers so school materials can be out of sight. I find the current clutter fairly stressful.”

“Quiet and spacious rooms.”

“Bigger entry way - free of asbestos -nicer bathrooms/more.”

“Natural light in all rooms, natural materials, space for quiet time when kids need it, building that meetings environmental standards (e.g., LEED).”

“Added security for children's safety. Multiple drop off areas for morning drop off. New technology for computer labs and continued learning. More drop off parking space. Clean and welcoming.”

“More space than you think is necessary - natural lighting - calming decor (wood, pale tones, closed cupboards and shelves) - environmentally friendly - central learning space (like the library now).”

“Air conditioning, lots of windows.”

“Natural light, practical entrances with practical storage for winter gear, what they have now works well. A good library, gym, and music space, and keep the rest simple.”

“Openness, connectedness, natural light, focused around a central common area, built with Passive House principals in mind.”

“Energy efficient! Lower operation and maintenance costs mean more \$ for teachers and programming. A simple building structure without complicated alcoves jutting out of the building because these are much cheaper to build and maintain and less likely to have problems with leakage, subsidence, and heating/ventilation issues that make

the areas unusable. Welcoming. Areas where teachers can work together, and where students can work together and special classrooms like a room that could be booked by any teacher and used for cooking, messy crafts, science activities, dissections, etc. Natural light. Entry way and halls should be designed to showcase students' work (not architectural features, as is common in many new schools). A second gym or a climbing room with a climbing wall and a climbing structure for kids in grades 2-5."

"Architecture should embrace multiplicity of learning and pedagogical needs. Teachers are employing alternative seating and other focus aids now in classroom (wobbly chairs, bean bags, weighted lap stuffed animals, high stools, stationary bikes). The architecture should assist with these learning needs - alcoves for reading privately, alternative desks and seating. Not boxes with grid seating. A new kind of classroom. Open spaces and cozy spaces depending on learning needs in the same classroom. White board walls with storage behind. Don't waste space. Technology should be an option (electrical capacity) but not important to build it right into classroom. Local art and particularly student-made or student-influenced art as part of the permanent school design. Student collaboration/input is important. An atrium or courtyard is a good idea. More bathrooms. Less intimidating and isolated. Natural light is very important! Common space/assembly space important. Performance space such as a stage or outdoor amphitheater on hill. Gardens outside. Kitchen inside - space can be used by community on weekends and evenings. School should last 50 years. School architecture should build community. Library important, amphitheater outside, gym and assembly space. Windows with playground sight lines important. Windows into natural environment. Curves over right angles. Colour."

"Better music room, gym, and stage. More equal arrangement of classrooms. More accessible environment."

"Natural light, open feeling, I think it should be honouring the Indigenous land throughout, accessible for all people (ie. stairs exclude any children or parents or other visitors with physical disabilities)."

"Lots of natural light in teaching spaces, balance between open concept and being able to close doors for concentration, large central library and gathering space, enough space planned for dedicated music and arts classes, larger gym, more storage space."

"Modern architecture; good library; natural light; big gym; energy efficient; spacious; good technology."

"More technology."

"Lots of natural light, open spaces but also classrooms that can be closed for limiting distractions during lessons. Having a student services wing with a counselor, nurses room, breakout rooms for kids who need to change scenery to calm down etc. Perhaps for speech and OT. Also, a kitchen that the teachers can book for working with elders, guests or just the class for learning to cook and bake."

"Open concept."

"Size, larger or multiple entrances (as many parents need to pick their kids up), more lockers/designated areas for all students."

"Well leveled play areas and bigger parking space and wider space inside the class."

"Open concept still with private classrooms, lots of natural light, use of natural features."

"Should have more light, more windows, classrooms should have closed walls/doors, keep the open concept library/gathering area, better set up for school concerts."

"More floors A kitchen / eating space."

“Light and outdoor curriculum. One door for big kids and one for little kids. Coordination with the YWCA for an after school program/space.”

“No asbestos. Slightly larger JK and kindergarten rooms with easier parent access. Same location- don't move it! Current grounds are awesome.”

“Protecting our outdoor naturalized areas. Indoor greenhouse/courtyard for plant growing programming. Ability to access all around the school building - my kids would be sent outside to run around the school for extra outdoor time in BC.”

“A bigger front foyer. Gets pretty crowded in there.”

“Big yard with lots of green space. Lots of indoor space to play during indoor recess. Large classrooms with windows that open, library as the core of the building for school gatherings.”

“Bigger with lots of windows. Same location and park.”

“Unique "northern" design, community-minded, keep the naturalized school yard, respect the landscape (i.e. if building a new school please do not blast away the natural features).”

“Windows wall, energy efficient, skylights, "C" shape school with full wall windows on both side of the "C", the office/sick room/paper and art storage/photocopier all together, Principal/Vice-principal desk right in the middle, janitor in the middle as well, learning corner outside, pick nick tables for kids outside where they can eat and learn, outside deck attached to staff room. New should be built in the actual playground and the new playground should be where the actual school is now.”

“Doors on all classrooms.”

“Wheel chair accessible. A good sized gym, with a stage. A dedicated Music/arts room or one of each, if possible? I like the open library, but imagine that the total open classroom concept (upstairs) might be too noisy for some of the kids. So, open in common areas, but maybe walls for the classes.”

“More natural light, better flow, more interactive.”

“A larger gymnasium.”

“Easier access and floor that are easier to clean so that the kids can get totally ready to go at the end of the day no need to carry boots to the small boot room before putting them on.”

“Open, bigger spaces, energy efficient. Lots of light.”

Common Themes: More windows (natural light), larger, efficient, technology weaved into design, modern, reflective of community.

Question 5: What qualities would you like to see in a new school site?

"Certainly access to the building by those who are physically impaired would be an improvement."

"That the outdoor space remain as is! The sliding hill is such a winter hit! And the size and variety of other play equipment keeps the kids excited to go outside."

"The parking lot could have an exit at the intersection of 51A Ave and 57th Street instead of being located off the intersection, thereby being a 4 way stop and being more controlled. I'd like to continue to see wild areas kids could play in, and more thought and larger parking lot. Ramps and proper elevators for accessibility should be considered so all students have access to the whole school."

"Don't fix what isn't broke. Much of what you have is working well. Just upgrade the building."

"New parking plan. Plan for play ground on area the old school now New sliding hill Is it possible to not demo the old gym and use it for additional indoor recess and afterschool program? plus city use nights and weekends make the playground much more visible from the school."

"Better access, maybe off of Forrest drive instead, keep a sliding hill, improve field."

"Better parking and drop off area."

"Better traffic flow. Modifications to 51a to keep thru traffic to minimum."

"I think preserving the playground area (natural trees) should be a priority!! encourage more people to use the bus to alleviate the parking restraints! the parking lot improvements from last year have made it much safer for everyone."

"A new professional traffic flow plan installed off of Forest drive next to the new school. short term parking and drop of in the staff parking area to access the new school from that side. redevelop the area where the old school is in to playground. Look at saving the slab at the gym for a skating rink / ball hock rink in the summer. make a real sliding hill from the area the old school was on down to the new school location and use the steel stair to go back to the top of the sliding hill."

"Parents discussed an amphitheater built into the hill for outdoor assemblies/performance. More access to the hill for play and exercise! Natural trees and rock important but sight lines important for supervision. More thought and intention needed. More gardening space that can be built into extra-curricular or curriculum activities."

"Grass."

"There needs to be more parking spaces. There are many parents who need to drop their children off at their class (i.e. can't just do drop off), and there are not enough parking spaces to accommodate this need. There needs to be a more efficient drop off system that does not require drop-off students to cross in front of car and bus lanes (need a system similar to Range Lake). Main entrance should be more accessible to individuals who cannot use stairs."

"Plenty of parking, drop off area, play equipment, fitness room, bigger music room."

"More parking!"

"Multiple tether balls, things kids can do in the cold."

"Places for teachers to teach outside (outdoor classroom facilities), more play structures for kids to climb on things. Parking is ok, but maybe a better structure so that the car's idling during drop-off/pick up isn't right where the kids play (including in front of the JK play area)."

"I would advise that the playground/grounds be left mostly alone. I do not want to see just big open spaces with playground sets in the middle of them like Mildred Hall, NJ and Weledeh. Sissons has always been the nicest school in Yellowknife and does not need "consultants" and engineers to make it better."

"Parking of course and yes, a playground."

"Safer parking lot with a better traffic flow."

"Playground equipment update, with structures that promote team effort and challenge both mentally and physically. Area created for winter sliding Multiple entrance/exit areas to avoid congestion during drop off and pick up. Specific area for buses. Separate area for general parking. Allow different entrance areas for different age groups to avoid congestion."

"Safe bus/drop off lane, playgrounds with some division for age groups."

"More parking, with a clear outline. Large play area, lots of trees and nature."

"I'd hate to see any of the beautiful trees come down. The playground is truly wonderful."

"More parking, keep the big playground."

"Definitely more parking, more windows."

"Nothing out of the ordinary."

"Natural playground equipment, space for running around and natural areas."

"Updated play area for the younger kids with a bigger running area. Fully gated school ground so public can't want through, more parking for drop offs in morning and more outdoor lighting so yard is adequately lite for winter months as currently it is very dark in the playground area."

"Keep the natural area Consider natural/ unstructured playground equipment Keep soccer field and basketball court."

"Parking, more functional gymnasium for parents to watch."

"Better thought out parking and drop off zone, a playing field is important for soccer and baseball."

"Natural areas (exposed rock, trees, bushes, elevation changes) prioritized over open fields and play structures."

"Same as there is now- it's fantastic!"

"Safer parking. School located on property closer to forest drive. Old school space demolished after new school built for continuity and less disruption. After school demolished Hill used for soccer field and sliding and outdoor amphitheater. Gardens. Natural trees and rock preserved. Basketball nets and coherent equipment layout. Seems scattered now. Some outdated. Bigger better play area for younger students."

"I am ok with the current environment."

“There shouldn’t be barriers for those with physical disabilities to access school or other playgrounds. I like the wide open spaces with different areas of play. And to keep it as natural as possible by preserving trees rock etc.”

“Maintain natural elements like trees and rocks, carefully planned parking/drop-off space, not too much playground equipment, but options there for different ages, real zip line.”

“Better access to front Accessible to all.”

“Big and safe parking lot; easy access; nice playground and sports field.”

“Like Weledeh - they have a good mix of function and kid appropriate spaces.”

“Continue to have access to green space, natural elements like rocks etc. Some playground equipment but not solely. Less chaotic parking lot with buses and drive thru lane and parking lane.”

“Natural playground. Central location close to downtown.”

“More parking, close proximity to residential areas. Large playground.”

“Bigger library.”

“Parking, easy access, playground with multiple “areas”, little fort or outdoor structure to encourage outdoor classroom.”

“More accessible parking/pick-up area(s), more playground equipment, running track - should stay at same or similar location - i.e. close to downtown - like the quiet neighbourhood.”

“More parking for sure.”

“Access needs help!”

“Just put a new school where the existing school is and don't demolish the forested aspects of the current grounds! Keep the trees and lower rocks for the sake of their imaginations! DON'T MOVE THE BUILDING PLEASE!!”

“Accessible to wheelchairs and walkers for people with disabilities.”

“Bigger parking lot, more modern technology like Wi-Fi thermostats etc. to help save power.”

“Prioritize play space over parking/drop off space. Keep trees and access to rocky areas. Diversity in play areas. Keep areas that kids can hide in and play.”

“Happy with the playgrounds, the natural landscape for children to explore, the toboggan hill (that is an important feature!). Parking and access have not been an issue for us.”

“Lots of clarity, heating system working (fans less noisy), more bathroom, energy efficient.”

“I think the current playgrounds are great. The treed area is also very nice.”

“I love the variety on the playground and I’d like them to leave the trees, rock areas and soccer field, if possible. The parking is fine?”

“More parking, more green space, better quality playground equipment.”

“More parking.”

“More accessible areas to the younger JK and K students. Currently the younger ones are very restricted in the area they can use and I see many of them just standing around as there is too many kids for the amount of resources available to them. Better/more parking.”

“Better drop off parking and safer streets around the school. Overhead crosswalks, better throughways for kids. Grass for playing.”

Common Themes: Better parking and traffic flow, better accessibility, maintain playground and natural areas.

Question 6: What learning opportunities for your children would you like a new school building to address?

“Proximity to natural resources that the students can explore with their teachers to enhance curriculum. Access to trails and water for curriculum and extra-curricular activities would be of benefit.”

“Continue to inspire a love of books. Presumably computer competence will happen in the classroom.”

“A gardening area would be a great opportunity. An area for building winter shelters could be included. Sand could be eliminated if it's a problem in the school, and replaced with soft composite materials that do not track inside. Because children like sand, a sand area could be a focus, but not everywhere. Music rooms should be properly sound proofed to assist health and safety of students and staff.”

“Teach the children how to problem solve, evaluate, think critically and value the freedom of speech our culture is built on. There is too much slipping due to political correctness and special groups who are most vocal while the silent majority follow along. Help the children think critically and separate rational thought from emotion.”

“Robotics, coding, maker spaces, bigger gym. fine arts, music, kitchen for use with functions like multicultural lunch, PAC lunches, Have the children watch the different steps the new building is going through while it is being built right in front of them. It may interest some of them in the building trades.”

“Physical education, music, art, computers.”

“I would like more outdoor freebased learning.”

“Bigger gym, multifunction rooms.”

“Increased fine arts exposure. Kids to be singing more. All students should have a chance to be part of annual school concerts - maybe that means a bigger gym?”

“The latest technology, robotics, coding a large gym that the kids could use for all sports and cultural activities maker space.”

“The new building should create community - open spaces and warm and welcoming atmosphere. Art should represent students and the environment. Student input should be sought! Classrooms should reflect many kinds of student learning - not just desks with a teacher up front.”

“Dedicated arts/music room.”

“Get an actual music teacher. then maybe a decent music room. You can make the building as fancy as you want, but if don't hire for the right priorities, it doesn't matter. Putting lipstick on a pig.”

“I am not educated/informed on learning opportunities. Perhaps some examples could be provided to parents.”

“Computer lab, more quiet study areas.”

“Classroom design for 21st century learning/inquiry style learning.”

“The children need to move more, including either stand up desks or desks that allow them to move and explore while working. More thought should go into the gym equipment to teach body mechanics (movement).”

“It is the teachers that are my concern. I have been happy with the staff so far. I think the right mix of play, social interaction and schoolwork is best for learning. The building does little to help them learn if the staff is not right.”

“Something artistic. Something competitive.”

“Maybe a science lab.”

“Computer rooms (older kids) limited time and supervised teaching -kids should be involved in cleaning their classes and school. Allow them to interact and take pride in accomplishing something together. Learn how important working together is. This was we allow for a sense of "care for our school" to evolve. -geography room or "globe room". Kids would be exposed to information on different countries, races, cultures, weather climate and more...through a room that the walls, books and videos educate and teach acceptance. -indoor playground. Teach through play.”

“Keep the cultural classes and field trips. Love what you have now.”

“Perhaps labelling rooms and objects in French, with pictures to help the students new to French. I would like the opportunity for them to learn something to be where ever they are in the school, inside or out. A science and technology area/class and a nature and biology area/class. A focus on literate and emotional intelligence throughout.”

“It could be neat to use the outside space around the school even more -- with, say, a path that goes all the way around.”

“More outdoor creative play.”

“Follow the current outlines.”

“Outdoor skills, space for yoga or other self-regulating activities, collaborative work, intergenerational learning.”

“Access to up to date computers. Updated gym equipment.”

“Area that helps kids that need extra help learn to read.”

“To be part of a community or the whole school not just a grade or classroom. Mixed age learning opportunities.”

“More outdoor learning, so an outdoor classroom would be great. More chances to cook and do messy projects, so a classroom (or two) that do not have assigned classes, but are available for any class to book, and are easy to clean up. Learn that physical activity is a normal part of every hour of people's days so have exercise bikes and treadmills in every class so students can take turns riding or walking while listening or working.”

“Hands-on learning. Space for cooking, building, art, music and construction. Drama. Hands on experience inside. Recreational space indoors for the coldest months. Recess indoors sometimes. Space for students to be quiet and alone or working in groups in the same classroom. Architecture that builds community and discourages isolation and opportunities for bullying or exclusion.”

“Age appropriate Electronics/programming and other practical STEM programming. Better music room.”

“Indigenous culture, music, physical fitness.”

“Arts: fine, performing and music. Outdoor spaces that work for teaching. Incorporating principles of physical literacy into school design.”

“Music, sports, science and technology.”

“Technology and audio visual, computer labs etc.”

“The ability to have flexible classroom space to accommodate those kids who aren’t able to sit still for long. Having an interior courtyard of some sort to hear elders speak instead of always in the gym - more personable interactions.”

“The arts (music, drama and visual arts)”

“Music, physical education, science, cooking/ baking, gardening?!”

“More coaching.”

“Dedicated fine arts room & better music facility with dedicated, quality staffing. Gym with viewing area, nice library that is like the “living room of the school.”

“Maintain gym, music room, library.”

“Outdoor education.”

“Rocks to climb? Kitchen to cook in? Outdoor space for outdoor classroom.”

“Outdoor play - keep the trees!”

“My child seems to be learning just fine. Great staff to thank for that. More access to more books and technology couldn’t hurt I suppose.”

“Dene Kede area/room(s), outdoor teaching areas (tables, tents, fire pit, etc.), more space for one on one teaching.”

“Home economics (learning how to cook) Food program Indoor playing areas for when it is too cold to be outside.”

“Enhance the library.”

“More technology in the classroom but also a room where they can build things with their hands.”

“I’d like to make sure that they keep a dedicated Music space, and look into the future to understand how many classrooms they will need. I dislike it when schools choose to make ALL labs, and other spaces into classes because they are hungry for student numbers.”

“Inclusiveness and tolerance.”

“Computer lab and more Athletics.”

“More elective classes. Cross country skiing taught in school. More resources for children who are gifted or overachievers. Let’s encourage kids to be lifelong learners not try and fit all the kids into the exact same mold. More community based and self-directed learning opportunities.”

Common Themes: Latest technology, maker space, coding, robotics, fine arts, cultural activities, physical education.

Question 7: What challenges might your children face that a new school building could address?

"More quiet rooms for individual or small group learning. Any additional space for movement (dance or yoga studio), studio space for art or music is always appreciated."

"None (fortunately/yet) for our family. But accessibility is an issue that can affect children and parents at different times and in different ways. Currently the school has too many stairs and too few alternatives."

"Lack of accessibility for students. No ramps for example. All the classrooms are accessed by stairways. A stair lift is not readily available for all people. Neither is a locked up elevator."

"Change. Help them accept that change is part of life and it's how we handle it that is most import. They don't need safe places to retreat to but helpful caring adults to set a good example on working positively with change, acknowledging it's hard but not focusing on that, and embracing the great opportunities that will come with it. I think you should also be very useful to ask seasoned and retired teachers from this school what they have observed there and what changes they would suggest as I'm sure many of them have thought deeply about a new school coming in the future and what they would like to keep and what they would like to modify."

"Accessibility Safe school - Lock down blind spots in the playground that don't get properly supervised space for exercise for all students at indoor recess."

"I lived through the renovations of Sir John when I was in high school and it was very chaotic. I would hope that with building a whole new school there would be less of that interruption/moving around of classrooms multiple times throughout the year."

"More civilized entrance procedure!"

"Quiet center - a place to go if kids are feeling overwhelmed."

"Better vision from the school to the playground to stop any bullying better access into and out of the building for the lower grade kids. (no stairs) Belter air quality in the new building more water fountains and more bath rooms built for little kids."

"The present school should remain in use until a new school is built - moving students for months or years would not be a good thing at all! No need to build new school on hill. Hill can provide its own play and learning opportunities."

"Attention deficit is an increasing trend, and the school should be designed/programmed accordingly. My child struggles with reading and writing. I would hope the new school will have good space and resources for students who need extra help."

"Can't think of any challenges, just at first it would take a bit for the kids to get used to, but they would be excited for a new change."

"Not planning out how the children move through the school during the day, such as putting the JK classes where all the large kids have to run by so they can leave for the day. Safety."

"Small classroom sizes. My child likes her quiet reading during recess so maybe couches in the lobby for kids that want to sit and read during their break."

"Allow for large windows and plenty of natural light. Allow specific lighting throughout the school that will help with SAD."

"Would be nice to have a couple day orientation so the transition is easier."

"The nature of living in the north includes little daylight in the winter, a new school could address this. Also a sensory or therapeutic room would be good."

"I think it's time for gender neutral washrooms -- for all kids, not just my own."

"Current challenge is overly sedentary learning environment, too much sitting. New building could allow of more physically active learning environments."

"I like the open concept. If the school is built with doors to the classrooms, I think my kids could be more intimidated and worried by what goes on in other rooms. I think that being able to see into other classrooms gives them comfort and they are not as worried about changing grades. If there is not enough space for kids to go to other rooms occasionally when it's cold and they aren't allowed outside for several days, they will get bored."

"Disruption is a problem. New school should be built while old school remains open. Once students move into new school old school can be demolished and hill can become an exciting part of the new playground (amphitheater, stepped gardens, climbing course, soccer field on top) New school can be placed by forest drive to accommodate this. Portables and sending our children to other schools for 2 years would not work well for our large family."

"I am lucky my child is adaptable, and makes the best of all her environments. Disabled students would be challenged or discriminated against at Sissons."

"Reducing distractions and ambient noise with classroom doors."

"Getting enough exercise and science and technology education."

"Breakout rooms to allow time to calm down after an incident."

"Proximity to home and perhaps the need for using the bus. Will JK be able to use the bus in the future?"

"If the same standard will be kept no challenges will face."

"Morning drop-off."

"Nothing that I can think of except getting used to a new layout and possibly some new features."

"Fewer distractions from other classrooms and visitors."

"The school is definitely overcrowded. More space needed. Otherwise we are very happy with the current school."

"Be in the portable for few months/years."

"Better flow (more entrances and exits both in the am and pm) would help children to get to their busses on time and would help parents be able to get IN the doors when needing to pick up little ones from JK. Alternately, a kindergarten 'wing' with a separate and stroller-friendly entrance would be a dream."

"Having a separate entrance for the JK and K students where they can go straight to their hooks/lockers and then take off boots gear there. The little ones struggle in the morning to get all the gear, boots, and bags to their hooks. Also because parents are required to go to the classroom to get the students in JK and K having a separate entrance would relive much of the congestion and having to swim against the current to get into the school to pick them up at the end of the day."

Common Themes: Accessibility, more quiet spaces, better flow, less crowding, smooth transition to new school.