

YK1 - Facilities Committee

Future District Programming and Facility Use Questionnaire Summary of Responses

Introduction

The questionnaire was released on April 29 and was held open for a one-week period. It was circulated through schools to all students and it was posted on-line at the District's website. A total of 399 responses were received. The responses included direct answers to the questions asked, as well as a very large number of comments and suggestions related to the questions presented in the questionnaire.

This document provides a general summary of the responses received.

Responses to Questions

Question 1 – In your opinion, what aspects of the educational experience offered by YK 1 are the most important to overall student success? Please select 3 and rank them starting with 1 being the most important followed by 2 and 3.

323 responses were received. The responses were as follows:

- | | |
|---|--------|
| • High quality teaching staff | 83.17% |
| • Academic core subjects | 77.39% |
| • Programs such as art, music sports, languages, etc. | 64.07% |
| • Class size | 43.72% |
| • Social development opportunities for students | 24.62% |
| • Special needs programming | 16.33% |
| • High quality facilities | 13.32% |
| • Counseling | 13.07% |
| • Other | 7.79% |

The greatest number of "1" responses were received by *High quality teaching staff* (170) followed by *Academic core subjects* (155) and *Class size* (36) responses. The greatest number of "2" responses were received by the same top two categories – (96 and 91 responses respectively) - followed by *Programs such as art, music, sports, languages, etc.* The greatest number of "3" responses were received by *Programs such as art, music, sports, languages, etc.* (113) followed by *Class size* (65) and *High quality teaching staff* (54).

Question 2 – Currently the District offers choices in grade configuration in its schools. It offers Pre-kindergarten (Pre-K) to grade 8 studies in two schools, Pre-K to 5 studies in two schools and grades 6 to 8 are offered in a middle school. Is it important that these choices be maintained? If so, why?

323 responses were received. The responses were as follows:

- Yes 34.37%
- No (31.27% said “no”, while 26% prefer a specific configuration) 57.28%
- Unsure/unclear 8.4%

Comments made included:

- The program delivered is more important than the grade configuration
- Current configuration permits choices by parents and their children
- The District can't do everything for everyone
- Important to maximize efficiencies so as to offer the best possible programs
- Prefer PreK-8 / Prefer PreK to 5 and middle school / Prefer PreK to 6 and 7-12

Question 3 – Currently the District offers choices in grade confirmations in its schools. It offers (Pre-K) to grade 8 studies in two schools, PreK to grade 5 in two schools and grades 6 to 8 in a middle school. Please indicate the primary reason(s) for your choice of school for your child.

361 responses were received. The responses were as follows:

- Proximity to your home 36.57%
- The ranges of grades offered at the school 35.46%
- Other 35.18%
- Social experience the school offers for your child 31.30%
- School size 29.64%

188 comments were received. Comments made included:

- The matters listed as important to the choice in schools included:
 - Neighborhood schools or schools close to a parent's work permit parents to feel more involved with their child's education
 - Children staying together over a number of years provides stability
 - Programming is important to parental decisions
- The importance of programming such as Montessori, French immersion, sports learning experiences
- District's reputation for producing high academic performers was also noted as one reason for selecting one of the District's schools

Question 4 – Which of the following programs are important to your child’s K-8 education? Please select 3 and rank them starting with 1 being the most important followed by 2 and 3

355 responses were received. The responses were as follows:

- Sports 49.30%
- Arts 48.17%
- Music 41.41%
- Technology 36.90%
- French immersion 39.44%
- Intensive French and post intensive French 24.23%
- Home economics 14.65%
- Industrial arts 13.52%
- Other 9.58%
- Montessori

The greatest number of “1” responses were received for French immersion (109) followed by *Intensive and post intensive French* (72) and *Sports* (40) responses. The greatest number of “2” responses were received by *Arts* (66) with both *Sports* and *Music* receiving sixty-one (61) responses. The greatest number of “3” responses were received by *Sports* (62) followed by *Arts* (58) and *Music* (48).

Question 5 – In your view, should each school develop “signature” programs that result in it having a particular area of programming expertise (e.g. French immersion, Montessori, technology, arts, sports)?

328 responses were received. The responses were as follows:

- Yes 39.06%
- No 45.45%
- Maybe or some signature programs 15.49%

Comments made included:

- The development of signature programming can make the District’s program delivery more effective and efficient
- Signature programs can meet needs of students
- All students should have the benefit of being able to access all programs
- Specialization should not occur at the expense of core programs
- Delivery French and Montessori signature offerings are important but other programs should be delivered at all schools

Question 6, 7 and 8 - The District has five schools providing elementary education. The utilization rate in some schools is relatively low. Because of this, the GNWT has requested that a school facility be transferred to them. Please answer the following three questions (6-8) “yes” or “no” and add any comments that you wish too make.

Would you support eliminating the use of one of the schools if this resulted in:

6. Cost savings to the District of 1% to 3% of the District’s overall budget – allowing monies to be used to support continuing programs and services?

335 responses were received. The responses were as follows:

- | | |
|-------|--------|
| • Yes | 57.61% |
| • No | 42.99% |

Comments made included:

- Savings seem limited given the school space that might be given up
- Empty school space and poorly utilized space is not needed
- The school is needed – each school is valuable to the community and students it serves
- Restructuring of all of Yellowknife’s school space – sharing space between boards - makes more sense
- Only if class sizes are not effected
- Increasing efficiency is important - money is needed to support programs

7. Elimination or significant change to programs currently offered by the District (e.g. French Immersion, Montessori, the middle school experience)?

330 responses were received. The responses were as follows:

- | | |
|-------|--------|
| • Yes | 30.30% |
| • No | 70.30% |

Comments made included:

- Program choices need to be maintained
- A French immersion school is an important option
- Montessori is an important option / Eliminate Montessori
- Middle school is important / Eliminate middle school

- If enrolments don't support programs then they should be altered/eliminated

8. Changing of grades offered at some schools?

330 responses were received. The responses were as follows:

- | | |
|-------|--------|
| • Yes | 70.91% |
| • No | 30.0 % |

Comments made included:

- Increase the middle school population
- Preference for K-8 grade configuration – k-8 and 9-12 would be best
- Programming is more important than grade configurations
- Develop a consistent model for all schools operated by the District would help to build efficiencies

Question 9 - What changes could be the District make to improve schooling for students?

239 responses were received. Comments made included:

- Consistency in programs and improved class/school discipline is needed
- Strengthen core subject delivery – increase performance expectations / make students more accountable
- Improve balance in school facility usage
- Very pleased with options and opportunities provided by District
- District schools should stop competing for students
- Improve communications between schools and parents
- Consult students on programming needs
- Increase enrichment programming
- Emphasize the importance of high quality educator / administrator skills and abilities within the district
- Keep class sizes small, if at all possible
- Provide more attention / support for students with special needs
- Do what's best for students
- Offer a broad range of programming for students.

Question 10 – Are there any other comments that you would like to make?

146 responses were received. Comments made included:

- Appreciate the opportunity to participate and have a voice – please continue to seek feedback

- Overall satisfaction with the District's educational activities – District has amazing staff and excellent programs
- Students needs must come first – resources for students must be maintained
- It is important to take a long term view – the information from this survey is one aspect, but the Board must also look at facts, such as population trends, social issues and long term results from its schools
- ECE should construct the facilities required by the Commission Scholaire
- Maintain French immersion programming /Maintain middle school / expand grades in existing PreK-5 schools
- Doesn't make sense to maintain schools with very low utilization – eliminate a school if this will address the matter
- Eliminate competition between schools
- More Aboriginal content in programming is needed
- Buildings are far less important than what goes on in them
- Teachers must be accountable for school performance