

Networking Results

Question 1: a) What are your opinions on combining school divisions?

Pros:

- decreasing admin costs
- more money for school programs
- different cultural demographics
- better networking
- less over crowded classes; more individual child/teacher ratio
- 1 division for Winnipeg – better moving schools

Cons:

- adopting another school divisions or blending
 - different cultural demographics
 - stretching school division boundaries too far; more kids are taking the school buses and on the buses too long
 - combining 2 or more – no cost saving seen
 - free nursery school in #1 (individualized for neighbourhoods)
 - things would fall through cracks – too large
 - parents closer to division in rural areas
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- becomes impersonal, disjointed
 - standards may be lowered to keep schools even
 - large areas may not be consistent i.e. weather closures, etc.
 - even with combining S.D. each school must be treated individually
 - divisions need more staff to be able to be in contact with each school
 - in the right circumstances it can be positive
 - financial benefits – less admin costs
 - school access – more options “in division”
 - resources – more access to developed resources
 - negative, as demographics change and smaller schools may be forced to close, resulting in “super schools” larger population/larger classes. It is our common belief that the smaller the class size, the better for the students
 - harder to “supervise” i.e. superintendents
 - travel/buses must cover larger area, resulting in students being picked up/dropped off earlier in a.m. and later in p.m.
 - no cost savings
 - more disadvantages than advantages
 - will result in pooling resources; may result in loss of jobs
 - if financially feasible and education not compromised – if all parties are in agreement – it would be acceptable, however, no one should be forced to amalgamate
 - no – especially not in rural areas

- not in child's best interest i.e. travel – longer bussing
 - less accessibility for extra curricular activities
 - less effective administration
 - would/could have money saving implications
 - larger division reduces personal contact/connections between "front line" and decision makers
 - may lose local personal flavor to schools/regions
 - we value the smaller school experience
 - centralizing some administrative functions (purchasing) could equalize access to resources, maybe?
 - would still need to keep some regional representation
 - provincial division would make it easier to adjust catchment areas without having 2 divisions arguing over loss/gain of real estate, which represents tax \$\$
 - as a concept combining public school divisions could be an avenue to collaborate, reduce expenses, opportunities for streamlining finances
 - specific minorities need to meet and not get lost within a large school board.
- Leadership, hierarchy, organization and students are key
- not the place to make cuts to budgets – children are our future

Question 1: b) Do you believe that the province should have mandatory combinations of school divisions?

- no – should be choice, vote (town hall)
- some combinations won't work and parents do not want to be forced to combine
- lose sense of the individual community
- no!
- no
- no – a process should be in place to consult all stakeholders and decide the best course
- forcing is just a bad idea – no cooperation
- no
- negative, as demographics change and smaller schools may be forced to close, resulting in "super schools" larger population/larger classes. It is our common belief that the smaller the class size, the better for the students
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- definitely not mandatory
- not mandatory – needs to be examined on its own merit
- representation must be maintained (i.e. trustees) regardless of how areas are grouped together
- combining school divisions: some of our group feel their knowledge of single public school boards (i.e. Calgary) was limited and opinions/thoughts may differ
- who/what body would be responsible for this decision – stakeholders' input
- no – it should be up to the parents and staff to decide for themselves

Question 2: a) What are your opinions about the National Anthem being played in public schools?

- yes – we agree with continuing the practice
- provides our students a sense of pride in who they are and where they live
- mandatory
- pride of new Canadians
- you live in Canada, learn about Canada, why not sing anthem
- should be played – part of our heritage; for respect
- play it – we are Canadian
- the Canadian Anthem and being Canadian is one thing that unifies all the students
- absolutely
- respect and love for the country and community
- as part of the heritage
- respect for ancestors that provide our freedom
- needs to be played; singing is optional
- believe it is important to play the Anthem – we live in Canada – it's part of heritage
- very important; develops sense of national identity, pride
- creates a connecting thread across the country and over the ages
- everyone needs to feel that they belong. The National Anthem provides an opportunity for all the students to connect in their Canadian context
- why are we so hesitant to celebrate the country we live, work and raise our children in?
- Canada has so few traditions – why give this up?

Question 2: b) What are your opinions about the Lord's Prayer being recited in public schools?

- parents' choice – family choice
- provide a process whereby those students that want can leave the class and recite the prayer and then return – grades 1 – 6
- divorce state and religion
- can/cannot say Christmas in December
- should be decided by majority
- families should opt out/opt in
- let schools and rooms decide
- if there is a risk of students feeling excluded, or parents being offended, the option not to do it should be there
- possibly come up with a non-denominational/generic prayer – **this statement was not agreed with by all at the table**
- we recognize that there is multiple cultures and religions
- the Lord's Prayer should be in schools
- it is part of a culture and we have to respect other countries' cultures when in their country
- provide an alternative to respect the culture
- yes, definitely would want to have
- part of Canadian Heritage
- yes, respect other beliefs but do not erase history
- ok, with majority consent
- need to look at school's population
- look for ways to provide physical/emotional space for people to pursue their won religious traditions
- the Lord's Prayer only represents a portion of society. However, we recognize that not having the Lord's Prayer is a point of contention for some
- it is a way to teach children respect. It can be transferred to the parents' choice at home, but it teaches children to stand still, be quiet and respectful
- Canada has so few traditions – why give this up?