

Current Situation

Sherwood Park is a very fast-growing community and our population has climbed 24.2 % over the past 10 years and our student numbers have increased by over 700 students. What complicates this even more is that most of the growth has occurred in one geographical area and not throughout the entire hamlet. We have some schools at 47% student capacity and other schools at 94% - we need to create more balance in our school capacities so as all EICS students have the best educational experience possible.

EICS has been planning for Holy Spirit Catholic School (HS) to reach full capacity for many years since the reconfiguration decision in 2012. In light of the significant restructuring throughout Sherwood Park, the Board made a conscious decision to not adjust Holy Spirit other than move the grade 9's to Archbishop Jordan Catholic School (ABJ) to alleviate overcrowding in order to not have too much change all at once in the community. Every year, EICS looks at all municipal and provincial data as we plan for school grade configurations and infrastructure requests in our capital plan.

The reality is that the Board has kept Holy Spirit status quo as long as possible and in 2018/19, it will lack the space to accommodate the students expected from its current boundaries. As well, this is where a large number of new housing developments that are slated to go over the next decade and growth is not slowing down. EICS is looking to create a long term solution that will be sustainable until a new school is built in Cambrian Crossing (expected in 2030).

Thought Exchange Consultation Process

For a 2 week period ending January 21, the community was provided the opportunity to provide their thoughts, prioritize the thoughts of others and review the results of the entire consultation. The total participation in the survey was as follows:

- 1,222 unique respondents
- 1,703 thoughts
- 48,269 thoughts starred

Thought Exchange Major Themes

Question 1: What are the most important factors the EICS Board should keep in mind when making decisions of future school configurations in Sherwood Park?

Top points when balancing themes by school were as follows:

1. Have a long term focus that balances schools: 22.11 points

- 2. Maintain Proper Class Sizes: 20.76 points**
- 3. Student needs and program options: 14.39 points**
- 4. Have students attend schools closest to them and limit ride times: 8.55 points**

Question 2: What solutions would you suggest that the EICS Board of Trustees implement based on your understanding of the current situation?

Top points when balancing themes by school were as follows:

- 1. Have Grade 10-12 High School: 14.71 points**
- 2. Have a long term focus that balances schools: 13.09 points**
- 3. K-6, 7-9, 10-12 model: 11.62 points**
- 4. Maintain Proper Class Sizes: 9.73 points**
- 5. Ensure boundaries and Catholic residency are enforced: 7.86 points**
- 6. Do not have one large middle-years school/jr. high: 3.93 points**
- 7. Change Boundaries to balance enrolments: 2.66 points**
- 8. Ensure proper consultation and communications: 2.55 points**
- 9. Have students attend schools closest to them and limit ride times: 1.38 points**

Next Steps

We now want to hear from parents, staff and community members on their thoughts/suggestions on the four options that have been presented. In order to assist this step, we have created an easy online survey to provide your feedback in one easy step. Both the survey link and additional background information is available at eics.ab.ca and on your school website. Feedback from the survey will continue to inform the option or modified option recommended to the EICS Board of Trustees. This recommendation will be shared once again with the community in late February and a final decision will be made by the EICS Board of Trustees at the public meeting on March 21st. If you would like to prepare an additional information piece for the Board of Trustees, please contact EICS communications at (780) 449-7487 and we would be pleased to assist you.