

Medicine Hat Public School Division
Board of Trustees
School Amalgamation Community Engagement Report

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Background

The government of Alberta announced the new School Construction Accelerator Program that includes an investment of \$8.6 billion to create more than 100 new and updated schools over the next seven years. This initiative informed Medicine Hat Public School Division's Capital Planning, resulting in a three day "Value Scoping" (VS) process to inform the development of the 2026-2029 Capital Plan. The costs for the process were paid by Alberta Education (\$38,000).

Participants at the Value Scoping included Medicine Hat Public School Division (MHPSD) School Board Trustees and Administration, Alberta Education Staff and external architect consultants experienced in replacement and new school construction. The Value Scoping process is an in-depth analysis to inform Capital Planning and focused on three sectors of the city (Southeast Elementary Schools; North Elementary Schools; Hill Schools) and related enrolment, building utilization and building conditions.

On Day One participants established Project Evaluation Criteria and agreed that all criteria must be met for any capital options to be considered. The criteria included:

- **Priority A (Fiscal)** - responsible use of government resources.
- **Priority B (Fiscal)** - right-size facilities for operational and staffing efficiencies.
- **Priority C (Facilities)** - address aging infrastructure and facility inefficiencies.
- **Priority D (Education)** - facilities that provide spaces for 21st Century Learning.

Day Two started with brainstorming all possible building options by sector. Each option was measured against the criteria, which resulted in the list of two to three possible solutions for each priority. The architects then created costing for the next meeting.

Day Three began with the architects presenting the costs for the options in the three categories. The participants then determined the final priorities for the different areas being considered. This was a tool to develop the MHPSD 10-year Capital Plan that included three Priorities:

- Priority 1 – Southeast K-9 on Crestwood Site
- Priority 2 – Elm Street Replacement School
- Priority 3 - Vincent Massey Replacement School

Due to the excess capacity the amalgamation of Southview Community School and Webster Niblock School would be a positive move toward these projects.

MHPSD Board of Trustees and Administration then engaged Value Scoping process data collection and dialogue that included city birthrate trends, enrolment trends by school, benefits and educational opportunities of possible school amalgamations, projected cost savings, as well as operating and capital savings from school closures. A major focus of these deliberations was the many educational benefits of school amalgamation.

The next steps in the process involved staff engagement at potentially impacted schools. Presentations were made to the staff and school council meetings. As well as a stakeholder

survey. On December 3rd and 4th Southview Community School Community Engagement and Webster Niblock School Community Engagement sessions facilitated by external consultants were held to provide school community members with the opportunity to share ideas, concerns and questions in the form of input. The consultants established four key questions to guide the dialogue at each Community Engagement Meeting:

1. What are some considerations you would like the School Division to think about when deciding on possible school amalgamation?
2. What might be some possible opportunities for students if schools are amalgamated?
3. What might be some possible challenges for students if schools are amalgamated?
4. What might be some supports students and families may need to make a smooth transition to a new school if amalgamation takes place?

At the Community Engagement sessions, participants were seated at tables of five participants and a district staff member who served as recorder/facilitator. The responsibility of the recorder/facilitator was to record every comment shared at their table to each question on large poster paper. During each engagement session, the consultants set parameters and guided participants to reflect on, and then share ideas for each question, and served as timekeepers for the dialogue. After each question, all posters were placed on the walls so they could be reviewed.

In addition to the four guiding questions, participants were invited to add any ideas, suggestions, concerns, or questions to the poster titled “The Parking Lot.” This was intended to ensure that all participants’ ideas would be recorded and included in the report.

Participants were invited to record additional thoughts on sticky notes about the process that was used for engagement as either “Gots,” or “Wants.” “Gots” included ideas received, something learned, or a positive response to the process. “Wants” included comments and suggestions about the process, pacing, or a request for more information.

The information/data from every poster was compiled, processed, analyzed and synthesized to form the basis of this report, which was submitted to Medicine Hat Public School Division. Consultants then proof-read, edited, and analysed the processed data and prepared the final report for presentation to the Board of Trustees. **Statements that identified an individual by name or position were removed.**

Acknowledgements and Commendations

The consultants commend the Board of Trustees for their diligence in adhering to an open, detailed decision-making and consultation process. School community members from Southview Community School and Webster Niblock School are to be commended for their willingness to participate in the process, express and share their perspectives and for their demonstrated concern for their children, their respective schools and for the School Division. Thanks to the facilitators/recorders for their assistance. The consultants also acknowledge the role played by Lee Krasilowez, MHPSD Communications Manager, for her time assisting with the compilation of the vast amount of data.

Introduction

The Report opens with a description of the background to the report and to the School Amalgamation Consultation Process.

The data in this report is presented in several stages.

- The first presentation of data is the aggregated responses from both schools. This provides a general overall of the needs and actions that schools may want to pursue for a successful transition. It may also serve as a guide for planning and decision making.
- The second set of data is the responses from Southview Community School participants and Webster Niblock School participants. The data is segregated by school.

The Appendix is the information transcribed from every chart from each of the sessions. This is unprocessed data, and includes every comment recorded directly from each chart at the two Community Engagement Sessions verbatim. This is information was used for the aggregate analysis and the analysis of each school. Also in the Appendices is a copy of a handout shared by the MHPSD at each Engagement Meeting. Statements that identified an individual by name or position were removed.

The consultants acknowledge the vast amount of data that has been compiled to inform the dialogue and decision-making process of the Board of Trustees. The rationale for incorporating the full volume of data was to ensure that every voice was heard, and every idea recorded at each table during both Community Engagement sessions was honoured and included. **Statements that identified an individual by name or position were removed.**

Aggregate Data Summary - Overview

The aggregate data summary is an analysis of all the charted data. The information for both schools is included. This includes the four guiding questions, the Parking Lot and the Gots and Wants.

1. What are some considerations you would like the School Division to think about when deciding on possible school amalgamation?
2. What might be some possible opportunities for students if schools are amalgamated?
3. What might be some possible challenges for students if schools are amalgamated?
4. What might be some supports students and families may need to make a smooth transition to a new school if amalgamation takes place?
 - The Parking Lot
 - Gots and Wants

In total there were 102 participants for the two evenings. From Southview Community School there were 26 families and community members and from Webster Niblock School there were 76 families and community members. In total over the two days there were 862 responses provided by participants.

The data charts that immediately follow include an aggregate of the 862 responses and the aggregate of the Southview Community School representatives and the Webster Niblock School representatives.

Total Aggregate Southview Community School and Webster Niblock School

Aggregate Theme Counts & Percentages

Theme	Aggregate Count	% of Total (N=862)
Relationships, Belonging & Community	149	17.3%
Capacity, Class Size & Facilities	109	12.6%
Transportation & Access	104	12.1%
Supports, Staffing & Services	104	12.1%
Transition & Change	62	7.2%
Communication & Information	40	4.6%
Programming, Clubs & Opportunities	39	4.5%
Mental Health & Wellbeing	31	3.6%
Diversity, Inclusion & Equity	27	3.1%
Family Engagement & Input	19	2.2%
Decision-Making & Transparency	37	4.3%
Other/Uncategorized	142	16.5%

Note: Minor rounding may cause totals to sum \approx 100%.

Aggregate Executive Summary

This aggregate analysis of 12 consultation and feedback documents reveals several dominant themes shaping family and stakeholder perspectives:

- **Relationships, Belonging & Community (17.3%)** is the most prevalent theme, reflecting strong concern for maintaining social continuity, peer connections, and a sense of belonging within schools.
- **Capacity, Class Size & Facilities (12.6%)**, **Transportation & Access (12.1%)**, and **Supports, Staffing & Services (12.1%)** represent practical concerns about learning environments, logistics, and adequate resources for diverse student needs.
- **Transition & Change (7.2%)** and **Communication & Information (4.6%)** highlight the importance of clear transition strategies and proactive communication.
- **Programming, Clubs & Opportunities (4.5%)**, **Mental Health & Wellbeing (3.6%)**, and **Diversity, Inclusion & Equity (3.1%)** show a desire for enriching experiences, emotional support, and inclusive practices.
- **Family Engagement & Input (2.2%)** and **Decision-Making & Transparency (4.3%)** round out the data, indicating opportunities for greater family involvement and transparent processes.
- **Other/Uncategorized (16.5%)** includes statements that did not clearly match one of the defined categories, often broad or multi-topic prompts.

Key Insights

Families and stakeholders are most concerned with preserving relationships and community, ensuring robust supports and resources, and managing transitions effectively. Practical issues such as class size, transportation, and programming are significant, while emotional wellbeing and inclusion remain important cross-cutting themes.

Southview Community School

Aggregate Data

Total Distinct Statements (N)

- Question 1 (54)
- Question 2 (54)
- Question 3 (62)
- Question 4 (74)
- Parking Lot (13)
- Gots and Wants (8)
- **Aggregate N = 265**

Southview Community School – Aggregate Theme Counts & Percentages

Below are the recurring themes, their aggregate counts, and their percentage of the total data set. Themes are grouped by similarity across documents.

Theme	Aggregate Count	% of Total (N=265)
Student Support, Staffing & Services	45	17.0%
Transition, Change & Planning	43	16.2%
Relationships, Belonging & Community	39	14.7%
Capacity, Class Size & Facilities	29	10.9%
Programming, Clubs & Opportunities	22	8.3%
Transportation & Access	34	12.8%
Emotional Impact & Wellbeing	20	7.5%
Diversity, Inclusion & Equity	20	7.5%
Family Engagement & Input	8	3.0%
Other (Planning, Demographics, etc.)	5	1.9%

Southview Community School Summary

This aggregate analysis of six consultation and feedback documents reveals several dominant themes shaping family and stakeholder perspectives:

- **Student Support, Staffing & Services (17%)** is the most prevalent theme, reflecting widespread concern for adequate resources, specialist staff, and tailored supports for diverse student needs.

- **Transition, Change & Planning (16.2%)** is nearly as prominent, highlighting the importance of clear transition strategies, adaptation to new environments, and proactive planning for students and families.
- **Relationships, Belonging & Community (14.7%)** underscores the value placed on social continuity, peer connections, and a sense of belonging within schools.
- **Capacity, Class Size & Facilities (10.9%)** and **Transportation & Access (12.8%)** represent practical concerns about learning environments and logistics.
- **Programming, Clubs & Opportunities (8.3%)** and **Emotional Impact & Wellbeing (7.5%)** show a desire for enriching experiences and attention to the emotional toll of change.
- **Diversity, Inclusion & Equity (7.5%)** signals ongoing attention to inclusive practices and equitable access.
- **Family Engagement & Input (3%)** and **Other themes (1.9%)** round out the data, indicating opportunities for greater family involvement and strategic planning.

Key Insights

The data set demonstrates that families and stakeholders are most concerned with ensuring robust supports for students, managing transitions effectively, and maintaining strong community connections. Practical issues such as class size, transportation, and programming are also significant, while emotional wellbeing and inclusion remain important cross-cutting themes.

Webster Niblock School

Aggregate Data

Total Distinct Statements

- Question 1 (N=138)
- Question 2 (N=86)
- Question 3 (N=187)
- Question 4 (N=109)
- Parking Lot (N=56)
- Gots and Wants (N=21)
- **Total statements (N=597)**

Webster Niblock School - Theme Analysis

- **Supports, Staffing & Services** (EAs, FSLWs, service providers, staffing/placement, system supports)
- **Relationships, Belonging & Social Connections** (friendships, cohort continuity, small-school feel, peer mixing)
- **Capacity, Class Size & Facilities** (class size, classroom structure/complexity, portables, playground/gym/space)
- **Transportation & Access** (busing, walkability, routes, pickup/drop-off)
- **Programming & Opportunities** (specialist teachers, academies, options, extracurriculars, diversity/inclusion)
- **Process, Decision-Making & Communication** (transparency, consultation, timelines, open houses, clarity)
- **Transition Activities & School Visits** (tours, meet-and-greets, staged starts, buddy systems) [1](#)
- **Data, Finance & Demographics** (costs/savings, projections, birth/immigration trends, evidence requests)
- **Change & Transitions (general)** (non-specific transition/change references)
- **Mental Health & Wellbeing** (anxiety, emotional impact, stability, counseling supports)
- **Zoning/Boundaries/Enrollment & Options** (rezoning rules, school choice, assignment)
- **Public Trust, Identity & Policy** (identity/mascot/SWAG, trust, division policy signals)

Webster Niblock School - Combined Counts & Percentages (across N = 597)

Below are the recurring themes, their aggregate counts, and their percentage of the total data set. Themes are grouped by similarity across documents.

Rank	Unified Theme	Combined Count	% of Total (N=597)
1	Relationships, Belonging & Social Connections	90	15.07%,
2	Supports, Staffing & Services	89	14.90%
3	Capacity, Class Size & Facilities	68	11.39%
4	Process, Decision-Making & Communication	58	9.71%,
5	Transportation & Access	54	9.04%
6	Programming & Opportunities	41	6.86%
7	Other/Uncategorized	69	11.56%
8	Data, Finance & Demographics	28	4.69%
9	Change & Transitions (general)	19	3.18%
10	Transition Activities & School Visits	18	3.01
11	Mental Health & Wellbeing	14	2.34%
12	Zoning/Boundaries/Enrollment & Options	9	1.51%
13	Public Trust, Identity & Policy	4	0.67%

Insights

- **Belonging & relationships (15.07%)** edge out **supports & staffing (14.90%)** as the most frequent emphasis. This underscores the need to **preserve cohorts, transfer key staff where feasible, and stage relationship-building** (buddy systems, meet-and-greets) early.
- **Capacity & logistics—class size/facilities (11.39%) and transportation (9.04%)**—remain high-salience practical topics. Publish **clear class-size targets, space/portable timelines, and route/walk-zone maps**.
- **Process transparency (9.71%) and data/finance (4.69%)** call for a single timeline, FAQs, reason-for-decision, cost/benefit (including receiving-school upgrades), and feedback.
- **Programming & opportunities (6.86%)** signal community optimism for **specialists, academies, and clubs**—use this in messaging to show tangible student benefits of any change.
- The **Other/Uncategorized (11.56%)** share reflects broad or multi-topic prompts (e.g., general “supports”).

Individual School Data - For Each Chart

Southview Community School From Each Chart

1. What are some considerations you would like the School Division to think about when deciding on possible school amalgamation?

Total Number of Distinct Statements

N = 54

Theme Grouping & Counts

Grouped by keywords and context these are the main themes, their counts, and percentages:

Rank	Theme	Count	% of Total
1	Capacity, Class Size & Facilities	10	18.5%
2	Relationships, Belonging & Community	9	16.7%
3	Supports, Staffing & Services	8	14.8%
4	Transportation & Access	7	13.0%
5	Transition & Change	6	11.1%
6	Emotional Impact & Wellbeing	5	9.3%
7	Programming, Clubs & Activities	4	7.4%
8	Community Diversity & Inclusion	3	5.6%
9	Planning & Demographics	2	3.7%

Theme Definitions

- **Capacity, Class Size & Facilities:** Class size, physical space, overcrowding, small schools, impact on receiving schools.
- **Relationships, Belonging & Community:** Peer connections, sense of belonging, community school, memories, maintaining connections.
- **Supports, Staffing & Services:** Educational Assistants, service providers, sensory room, support for special needs, ISP, continuity.
- **Transportation & Access:** Distance to school, walking/bussing, transportation needs/options.
- **Transition & Change:** Transitions, adaptation, alienation, moving to larger environments, transition years.
- **Emotional Impact & Wellbeing:** Emotional impact, feelings about change, wellbeing, fear, anxiety.
- **Programming, Clubs & Activities:** Clubs, extra-curriculars, programs, services.
- **Community Diversity & Inclusion:** Cultural diversity, EAL community, acceptance of new backgrounds.
- **Planning & Demographics:** Long-term planning, birth rates, enrollment trends, contingency planning.

Insights

- **Capacity, Class Size & Facilities** (18.5%) is the most frequently mentioned theme, showing strong concern about space, class size, and the impact on learning environments.
- **Relationships, Belonging & Community** (16.7%) and **Supports, Staffing & Services** (14.8%) highlight the importance of social continuity and adequate support for students.
- **Transportation & Access** (13.0%) and **Transition & Change** (11.1%) reflect practical worries about logistics and the challenges of adapting to new settings.
- **Emotional Impact & Wellbeing** (9.3%) and **Programming, Clubs & Activities** (7.4%) show attention to the emotional toll and the desire to maintain enriching activities.
- **Community Diversity & Inclusion** (5.6%) and **Planning & Demographics** (3.7%) round out the list, indicating a need for inclusive practices and forward-looking strategies.

Southview Community School

2. What might be some possible opportunities for students if schools are amalgamated?

Total Number of Distinct Statements

N = 54 bullet-point statements

Theme Grouping & Counts

Grouped by keywords and context, here are the main themes, their counts, and percentages:

Rank	Theme	Count	% of Total
1	Expanded Programming & Opportunities	14	25.9%
2	Specialist Staff & Services	10	18.5%
3	Social Connections & Friendships	8	14.8%
4	Class Configuration & Flexibility	7	13.0%
5	Resource Allocation & Funding	5	9.3%
6	Diversity & Inclusion	4	7.4%
7	Extracurriculars & Clubs	3	5.6%
8	Support for Special Needs	2	3.7%
9	Parent/Community Engagement	1	1.9%

Theme Definitions

- **Expanded Programming & Opportunities:** More options for music, fine arts, sports, clubs, activities, curriculum, and exposure to variety.
- **Specialist Staff & Services:** Access to specialist teachers (music, PE, French), EAs, FSLWs, service providers, SLP, teacher librarian.
- **Social Connections & Friendships:** Making new friends, expanded peer groups, collaboration, social circles.
- **Class Configuration & Flexibility:** Less split/combined classes, more straight grade classes, flexibility to adjust cohorts, better classroom options.
- **Resource Allocation & Funding:** Increased funding, redistribution of resources, cost sharing, financial considerations.

- **Diversity & Inclusion:** More multiculturalism, exposure to different cultures, inclusive supports.
- **Extracurriculars & Clubs:** More clubs, after-school programs, lunch clubs, opportunities for different clubs.
- **Support for Special Needs:** Allocation of supports for special needs, embedded supports, more manageable for teachers.
- **Parent/Community Engagement:** Increased parent participation, larger school council, collaboration opportunities.

Insights

- **Expanded Programming & Opportunities** (25.9%) is the most frequently mentioned theme, showing strong optimism for more varied learning experiences and activities.
- **Specialist Staff & Services** (18.5%) and **Social Connections & Friendships** (14.8%) are also prominent, highlighting the value placed on expert instruction and building relationships.
- **Class Configuration & Flexibility** (13.0%) and **Resource Allocation & Funding** (9.3%) reflect practical hopes for improved classroom structures and better use of resources.
- **Diversity & Inclusion** (7.4%) and **Extracurriculars & Clubs** (5.6%) suggest expectations for a richer, more inclusive school environment.
- **Support for Special Needs** (3.7%) and **Parent/Community Engagement** (1.9%) round out the list, indicating the importance of tailored supports and active family involvement.

Southview Community School

3. What might be some possible challenges for students if schools are amalgamated?

N = 62 bullet-point statements

Theme Grouping & Counts

Grouped by keywords and context, here are the main themes, their counts, and percentages:

Rank	Theme	Count	% of Total
1	Change, Transition & Adaptation	13	21.0%
2	Relationships, Belonging & Community	11	17.7%
3	Capacity, Class Size & Facilities	9	14.5%
4	Transportation & Access	8	12.9%
5	Supports, Staffing & Services	7	11.3%
6	Emotional Impact & Wellbeing	6	9.7%
7	Equity, Inclusion & Diversity	5	8.1%
8	Competition & Peer Dynamics	3	4.8%

Theme Definitions

- **Change, Transition & Adaptation:** Change of routines, adapting to new environments, transitions, moving from small to large context, separation, logistics.
- **Relationships, Belonging & Community:** Loss of connections, new relationships, sense of community, identity, belonging, friendships.
- **Capacity, Class Size & Facilities:** Larger class sizes, crowding, lack of small class sizes, break-out spaces, facility concerns.
- **Transportation & Access:** Bussing, walking distance, commute time, transportation costs, inability to walk/bike.
- **Supports, Staffing & Services:** Adequate supports for teachers, service providers, support for newcomer families, after school care.
- **Emotional Impact & Wellbeing:** Stress, anxiety, emotional attachment, discomfort, wellness, refusal to eat at school.
- **Equity, Inclusion & Diversity:** Equity/inclusion, cultural competency, diversity/complexity, welcoming/inclusive spaces, socio-economic stratification.

- **Competition & Peer Dynamics:** Bullying, peer dynamics, competition between students.

Insights

- **Change, Transition & Adaptation** (21.0%) is the most frequently mentioned theme, showing strong concern about the challenges of adapting to new environments and routines.
- **Relationships, Belonging & Community** (17.7%) and **Capacity, Class Size & Facilities** (14.5%) highlight the importance of social continuity and worries about overcrowding or loss of small-school benefits.
- **Transportation & Access** (12.9%) and **Supports, Staffing & Services** (11.3%) reflect practical worries about logistics and the need for adequate support.
- **Emotional Impact & Wellbeing** (9.7%) and **Equity, Inclusion & Diversity** (8.1%) show attention to the emotional toll and the need for inclusive practices.
- **Competition & Peer Dynamics** (4.8%) rounds out the list, indicating concerns about peer relationships and bullying.

Southview Community School

4. What might be some supports students and families may need to make a smooth transition to a new school if amalgamation takes place?

Total Number of Distinct Statements

N = 74 bullet-point statements

Theme Grouping & Counts

Grouped by keywords and context, here are the main themes, their counts, and percentages:

Rank	Theme	Count	% of Total
1	Transition Planning & Activities	17	23.0%
2	Communication & Information	13	17.6%
3	Supports, Staffing & Services	12	16.2%
4	Transportation & Access	9	12.2%
5	Family Engagement & Input	7	9.5%
6	Mental Health & Emotional Supports	6	8.1%
7	Classroom Structure & Configuration	5	6.8%
8	Culture, Traditions & Community	5	6.8%

Theme Definitions

- **Transition Planning & Activities:** Orientation tours, registration assistance, buddy systems, school tours, training for transition, routines, walk-throughs, managing transitions, after school programs/clubs.
- **Communication & Information:** Clear communication, timelines, guidance for families, Q&A sessions, talking points, information sharing, child-friendly explanations.
- **Supports, Staffing & Services:** Support for students with higher needs, FSLWs, mental health support, OT, co-teaching, increased staffing, regulation supports.
- **Transportation & Access:** Bus routes, transportation support, maps, proximity to bus stops, advance notice, options for families without cars.
- **Family Engagement & Input:** Opportunities for families to be involved, input/feedback, school council, consulting parents, a place to complain, community organization communication.
- **Mental Health & Emotional Supports:** Emotional supports in classrooms, mental health support for minority/vulnerable groups, making the message positive/exciting, reassurance, regulation supports.
- **Classroom Structure & Configuration:** Classroom configuration, integration without segregation, space for increased numbers, maintaining continuity.
- **Culture, Traditions & Community:** Incorporating traditions, culture awareness sessions, farewell ceremonies, building sense of community, gifting school merch.

Insights

- **Transition Planning & Activities** (23.0%) is the most frequently mentioned theme, showing strong concern for practical, hands-on support for students and families during the transition.
- **Communication & Information** (17.6%) and **Supports, Staffing & Services** (16.2%) highlight the importance of clear, proactive communication and adequate support for all students.
- **Transportation & Access** (12.2%) and **Family Engagement & Input** (9.5%) reflect practical worries about logistics and the need for active involvement of families.
- **Mental Health & Emotional Supports** (8.1%), **Classroom Structure & Configuration** (6.8%), and **Culture, Traditions & Community** (6.8%) show attention to the emotional toll, learning environments, and maintaining school identity.

Southview Community School

Parking Lot

Total Number of Distinct Statements

N = 13 bullet-point statements

Theme Grouping & Counts

Grouped by keywords and context, here are the main themes, their counts, and percentages:

Rank	Theme	Count	% of Total
1	Student Support & Needs	6	46.2%
2	Student Transitions & New Experiences	7	53.8%

Theme Definitions

- **Student Support & Needs:** Plans for students who need extra support, have complex needs, are currently thriving or struggling, or need support staff.
- **Student Transitions & New Experiences:** Plans for students who are new to the division, Canada, community, school, classroom, grade, program, or teacher.

Insights

- **Student Transitions & New Experiences** (53.8%) is the most frequently mentioned theme, showing a strong focus on how students will be supported as they move into new environments, grades, programs, or relationships.
- **Student Support & Needs** (46.2%) highlights the importance of having clear plans for students who require additional support, whether due to complex needs or current challenges.

Southview Community School

Gots and Wants

Total Distinct Statements

N = 8

Theme Analysis

Theme	Count	Percentage
Plan for children	2	25.0%
Plan for children needing extra support	2	25.0%
Plan for children with complex needs	2	25.0%
Stability	1	12.5%
Plan for children new to division	1	12.5%

Observations

- The dominant themes revolve around **planning for children**, especially those needing extra support or having complex needs (combined 75%).
- Stability is mentioned but less frequently (12.5%).
- Concerns for children new to the division appear in only one statement (12.5%).

Webster Niblock School Data From Each Chart

Sources (6 files)

- Question 1 (N=138)
- Question 2 (N=86)
- Question 3 (N=187)
- Question 4 (N=109)
- Parking Lot (N=56)
- Gots and Wants (N=21)
- **Total statements (N) = 597.**

Theme Groupings and Counts

- **Supports, Staffing & Services** (EAs, FSLWs, service providers, staffing/placement, system supports)
- **Relationships, Belonging & Social Connections** (friendships, cohort continuity, small-school feel, peer mixing)
- **Capacity, Class Size & Facilities** (class size, classroom structure/complexity, portables, playground/gym/space)
- **Transportation & Access** (busing, walkability, routes, pickup/drop-off)
- **Programming & Opportunities** (specialist teachers, academies, options, extracurriculars, diversity/inclusion)
- **Process, Decision-Making & Communication** (transparency, consultation, timelines, open houses, clarity)
- **Transition Activities & School Visits** (tours, meet-and-greets, staged starts, buddy systems)
- **Data, Finance & Demographics** (costs/savings, projections, birth/immigration trends, evidence requests)
- **Change & Transitions (general)** (non-specific transition/change references)
- **Mental Health & Wellbeing** (anxiety, emotional impact, stability, counseling supports)
- **Zoning/Boundaries/Enrollment & Options** (rezoning rules, school choice, assignment)
- **Public Trust, Identity & Policy** (identity/mascot/SWAG, trust, division policy signals)
- **Other/Uncategorized** (broad, multi-topic, or ambiguous items left as-is)

Combined Counts & Percentages (across N = 597)

Rank	Unified Theme	Combined Count	% of Total (N=597)
1	Relationships, Belonging & Social Connections	90	15.07%
2	Supports, Staffing & Services	89	14.90%
3	Capacity, Class Size & Facilities	68	11.39%
4	Process, Decision-Making & Communication	58	9.71%
5	Transportation & Access	54	9.04%
6	Programming & Opportunities	41	6.86%
7	Other/Uncategorized	69	11.56%
8	Data, Finance & Demographics	28	4.69%
9	Change & Transitions (general)	19	3.18%
10	Transition Activities & School Visits	18	3.01%
11	Mental Health & Wellbeing	14	2.34%
12	Zoning/Boundaries/Enrollment & Options	9	1.51%
13	Public Trust, Identity & Policy	4	0.67%

Insights

- **Belonging & relationships (15.07%)** edge out **supports & staffing (14.90%)** as the most frequent emphasis. This underscores the need to **preserve cohorts, transfer key staff where feasible, and stage relationship-building** (buddy systems, meet-and-greets) early.
- **Capacity & logistics—class size/facilities (11.39%) and transportation (9.04%)—**remain high-salience practical topics. Publish **clear class-size targets, space/portable timelines, and route/walk-zone maps**.
- **Process transparency (9.71%)** and **data/finance (4.69%)** call for a single source timeline, FAQs, reason-for-decision, cost/benefit (including receiving-school upgrades), and where feedback lives.
- **Programming & opportunities (6.86%)** signal community optimism for **specialists, academies, and clubs**—use this in messaging to show tangible student benefits of any change.
- The **Other/Uncategorized (11.56%)** share reflects broad or multi-topic prompts (e.g., general “supports?” questions).

Webster Niblock School

1. What are some considerations you would like the School Division to think about when deciding on possible school amalgamation?

Total Statements (N): 138.

Ranked Themes (by frequency)

Rank	Theme	Count	% of Total
1	Supports, Staffing & Services	32	23.19%
2	Other/Uncategorized	25	18.12%
3	Relationships, Belonging & Community	22	15.94%
4	Transportation & Access	16	11.59%
5	Capacity, Class Size & Facilities	13	9.42%
5 (tie)	Data, Finance & Demographics	13	9.42%
7	Mental Health & Wellbeing	5	3.62%
7 (tie)	Process & Communication	5	3.62%
9	Zoning & Boundaries	3	2.17%
10	Change & Transitions	2	1.45%
10 (tie)	Programming & Academies	2	1.45%

NOTE: Rounding may cause totals to sum \approx 100%.

Insights

- **Supports, Staffing & Services (23.19%)** dominate concerns—families want assurance about **EA/FSLW capacity, service-provider coverage, and staff placement** to maintain continuity for complex needs. Prioritize communications that detail **who is available, ratios, and how services will scale** post-amalgamation.
- **Relationships, Belonging & Community (15.94%)** show strong emphasis on **peer groups, teacher–student relationships, and small-school culture**. Plan to mitigate social disruption (e.g., **buddy systems**, teacher transfers aligned with cohorts).
- **Transportation & Access (11.59%)** and **Capacity/Class Size/Facilities (9.42%)** are practical, logistics-heavy themes—clarify **bus routes/times**, walkability impacts, **class-size targets**, and **space (portables/green space)** implications.
- **Data/Finance/Demographics (9.42%)** reflects a desire for transparency: the **cost case, enrollment projections**, and how **immigration/birth-rate trends** factor into decisions. Consider publishing an **FAQ + data booklet** addressing these.

Theme Definitions

- **Supports, Staffing & Services:** EAs, FSLWs, service providers, staffing levels/placements, success coaches.
- **Relationships, Belonging & Community:** Friendships, continuity with known staff, small-knit community, “small fires,” family feel.
- **Transportation & Access:** Busing, routes, walkability, commute time.
- **Capacity, Class Size & Facilities:** Class-size, classroom complexity, space/green space, readiness of receiving schools.
- **Data, Finance & Demographics:** Financials, savings, projections, birth rates, and immigration.
- **Process & Communication:** Timing, consultation, open houses, communication plans.
- **Mental Health & Wellbeing:** Emotional impact, anxiety, stability, wellbeing.
- **Zoning & Boundaries:** Rezoning, boundary rules, parental choice.
- **Programming & Academies:** Specialized programs (STEM, Fine Arts, Hockey, Just Right Room), academies.
- **Change & Transitions:** General change/transition references not specifically covered by other categories.
- **Other/Uncategorized:** Statements too broad/mixed to fit.

Webster Niblock School

2. What might be some possible opportunities for students if schools are amalgamated?

Total Number of Distinct Statements

- N = 86 bullet-point statements

Theme Grouping & Counts

Rank	Theme	Count	% of Total
1	Expanded Programming & Opportunities	22	25.6%
2	Specialist Staff & Services	15	17.4%
3	Social Connections & Friendships	13	15.1%
4	Class Configuration & Flexibility	10	11.6%
5	Resource Allocation & Funding	8	9.3%
6	Diversity & Inclusion	6	7.0%
7	Extracurriculars & Clubs	5	5.8%
8	Support for Special Needs	4	4.7%
9	Parent/Community Engagement	3	3.5%

Theme Definitions

- **Expanded Programming & Opportunities:** More options for music, fine arts, sports, academies, field trips, activities, curriculum, and exposure to variety.
- **Specialist Staff & Services:** Access to specialist teachers (music, PE, library, French), EAs, FSLWs, Success Coaches, system supports (OT, PT).
- **Social Connections & Friendships:** Making new friends, expanded peer groups, collaboration, social circles, opportunities for team sports.
- **Class Configuration & Flexibility:** Less split/combined classes, more straight grade classes, flexibility to adjust cohorts, better classroom options.
- **Resource Allocation & Funding:** Increased funding, redistribution of resources, fundraising, food programs, allocation of supports.
- **Diversity & Inclusion:** More multiculturalism, exposure to different cultures, inclusive supports, spreading out complex needs.
- **Extracurriculars & Clubs:** More clubs, after-school programs, lunch clubs, opportunities for different clubs.
- **Support for Special Needs:** Allocation of supports for special needs, spreading out needs, more manageable for teachers.
- **Parent/Community Engagement:** Increased parent participation, larger school council, collaboration opportunities.

Insights

- **Expanded Programming & Opportunities** is the most frequently mentioned theme (25.6%), showing strong optimism for more varied learning experiences and activities.
- **Specialist Staff & Services** (17.4%) and **Social Connections & Friendships** (15.1%) are also prominent, highlighting the value placed on expert instruction and building relationships.
- **Class Configuration & Flexibility** (11.6%) and **Resource Allocation & Funding** (9.3%) reflect practical hopes for improved classroom structures and better use of resources.
- **Diversity & Inclusion** (7.0%) and **Extracurriculars & Clubs** (5.8%) suggest expectations for a richer, more inclusive school environment.
- **Support for Special Needs** (4.7%) and **Parent/Community Engagement** (3.5%) round out the list, indicating the importance of tailored supports and active family involvement.

Webster Niblock School

3. What might be some possible challenges for students if schools are amalgamated?

N = 187 bullet-point statements

Theme Definitions

Note: The “Other/Uncategorized” bucket (23.53%) consists of items that did not clearly match one of the defined categories

1. **Relationships, Belonging & Community**
(e.g., splitting friendship groups, loss of close teacher–student ties, community “small-knit” feel, “outsider” concerns)
2. **Capacity, Facilities & Physical Space**
(e.g., overcrowding; larger class sizes; availability of portables/modulars; playground capacity; access to gym/flexible spaces)
3. **Transportation & Access**
(e.g., loss of walkability, longer bus rides, bus availability, pickup/drop-off safety, cost of transportation)
4. **Change & Transitions**
(e.g., extra transitions, schedule/routine changes, general adjustment to a new school/culture)
5. **Supports, Staffing & Services**
(e.g., thinner spread of service providers—SLP/OT/PT/FSLW; short-staffing; ability to meet complex needs)
6. **Mental Health & Wellbeing**
(e.g., anxiety, emotional strain, feeling of safety lost, wellbeing impacts for students/teachers)
7. **Bullying & Safety**
(e.g., more anonymity → more bullying; “Webster vs. Vincent kids”; bus-ride bullying)
8. **Programming, Inclusion & Personalization**
(e.g., fit with academies/STEM; loss of personalization/inclusion)
9. **Public Trust, Identity & Policy**
(e.g., trust in the process, division funding concerns, identity (mascot/SWAG), zoning)
10. **Routines & Predictability — 1.07%**
(e.g., structure, predictability) **Other/Uncategorized**

Statements that were broad questions, multi-topic prompts, or items not clearly attributable to a single theme (e.g., “What supports will be available?”, “Ensuring smooth & safe transition?”, “Is DKS already maxed out?”).

Theme Grouping & Counts

- Relationships, Belonging & Community: **34 → 18.18%**
- Capacity, Facilities & Physical Space: **23 → 12.30%**
- Transportation & Access: **23 → 12.30%**
- Change & Transitions: **17 → 9.09%**
- Supports, Staffing & Services: **17 → 9.09%**
- Mental Health & Wellbeing: **11 → 5.88%**
- Bullying & Safety: **6 → 3.21%**
- Programming, Inclusion & Personalization: **6 → 3.21%**
- Public Trust, Identity & Policy: **4 → 2.14%**
- Routines & Predictability: **2 → 1.07%**
- Other/Uncategorized: **44 → 23.53%**

What this indicates

The **social fabric** (relationships/belonging) is the single largest concern. Messaging and plans that **preserve peer groups, maintain teacher–student continuity where possible, and build welcoming cultures** will matter most.

- **Capacity/space and transportation** are tied for second; clear, concrete information on **class sizes, portables/modular timelines, playground and gym access, and bus routes/walk zones** should be prioritized.
- **Transitions/change management and availability of supports/staffing** are strong mid-tier themes; consider publishing a **transition roadmap, service-provider capacity plans, and who-to-contact** guides.

4. What might be some supports students and families may need to make a smooth transition to a new school if amalgamation takes place?

N = 109 bullet-point statements.

Theme Grouping & Counts

Rank	Theme	Count	% of Total
1	Communication & Information	22	20.2%
2	Transition Activities & School Visits	18	16.5%
3	Transportation & Access	15	13.8%
4	Social Connections & Peer Support	13	11.9%
5	Staffing & Support Services	12	11.0%
6	Mental Health & Wellbeing	9	8.3%
7	Family Engagement & Input	8	7.3%
8	Classroom Structure & Complexity	7	6.4%
9	Culture, Values & Community Building	5	4.6%

Theme Definitions

- **Communication & Information:** Clear, regular, transparent communication; early/correct information; clarity on boundaries/zoning; open book approach; plans for questions.
- **Transition Activities & School Visits:** School tours, open houses, orientations, meet-and-greet events, buddy systems, opportunities to visit before transition.
- **Transportation & Access:** Bussing, trial runs, safe routes, flexible options, concerns for walkers, bus route maps.
- **Social Connections & Peer Support:** Keeping peers together, buddy systems, peer mentor matches, connection opportunities, not splitting up classmates.
- **Staffing & Support Services:** Support staff (EAs, FSLWs), counselors, success coaches, increased support staff, staff transitions, supports for EAL families.
- **Mental Health & Wellbeing:** Mental health supports, robust plans, support groups, coping strategies, recognition of emotional impact.

- **Family Engagement & Input:** Family nights, BBQs, opportunities for parent input/feedback, family tours, engagement opportunities.
- **Classroom Structure & Complexity:** Class size caps, balancing classroom complexity, staged approaches, reassurance on class sizes.
- **Culture, Values & Community Building:** Rebuilding community, development of culture/values, rebranding, incorporating traditions/events.

Insights

- **Communication & Information** is the most frequently mentioned theme (20.2%), showing that families and staff want clear, proactive, and transparent updates throughout the transition.
- **Transition Activities & School Visits** (16.5%) and **Transportation & Access** (13.8%) are also prominent, highlighting the importance of hands-on orientation and practical logistics.
- **Social Connections & Peer Support** (11.9%) and **Staffing & Support Services** (11.0%) reflect the need to maintain relationships and ensure adequate support for students and families.
- **Mental Health & Wellbeing** (8.3%) and **Family Engagement & Input** (7.3%) indicate a desire for emotional support and active involvement in the process.
- **Classroom Structure & Complexity** (6.4%) and **Culture, Values & Community Building** (4.6%) round out the list, showing attention to learning environments and school identity.

Webster Niblock School

Gots and Wants

N = 21 bullet-point statements

Theme Grouping & Counts

Grouped by keywords and context, here are the main themes, their counts, and percentages:

Rank	Theme	Count	% of Total
1	Process & Communication	8	38.1%
2	Decision-Making & Transparency	5	23.8%
3	Capacity, Supports & Outcomes	4	19.0%
4	Emotional Impact	2	9.5%
5	Alternatives & Options	2	9.5%

Theme Definitions

- **Process & Communication:** Requests for information, clarity, open discussion, feedback forms, table discussion, clarity on rumors/misinformation.
- **Decision-Making & Transparency:** Perceptions of decisions being made, transparency about why, accounting, timeline, forced positivity.
- **Capacity, Supports & Outcomes:** School capacity, allocation of supports, outcomes for kids, transition timing.
- **Emotional Impact:** Anxiety, emotional aspect of closures.
- **Alternatives & Options:** Desire for other options to be revisited, suggestions for transition pacing.

Insights

- **Process & Communication** is the most frequently mentioned theme (38.1%), showing a strong desire for open, clear, and transparent communication about the process and opportunities for feedback.
- **Decision-Making & Transparency** (23.8%) and **Capacity, Supports & Outcomes** (19.0%) reflect concerns about how decisions are made, whether they are transparent, and whether adequate supports and outcomes are considered.
- **Emotional Impact** (9.5%) and **Alternatives & Options** (9.5%) highlight the emotional toll and the desire for alternative solutions or slower transitions.

Webster Niblock School

Parking Lot

N = 56 bullet-point statements

Theme Grouping & Counts

Grouped by keywords and context, here are the main themes, their counts, and percentages:

Rank	Theme	Count	% of Total
1	Process, Decision-Making & Transparency	15	26.8%
2	Capacity, Class Size & Facilities	11	19.6%
3	Supports for Students, Staff & Families	9	16.1%
4	Community, Relationships & Emotional Impact	8	14.3%
5	Data, Evidence & Consultation	7	12.5%
6	Zoning, Enrollment & Options	6	10.7%

Theme Definitions

- **Process, Decision-Making & Transparency:** Requests for reasoning, transparency, influence, communication, timing, consultation, and clarity about the process.
- **Capacity, Class Size & Facilities:** Concerns about school/classroom capacity, portables, small class sizes, facility upgrades, and space needs.
- **Supports for Students, Staff & Families:** Questions about supports in place for students, staff, and families under various scenarios (closure, amalgamation, etc.).
- **Community, Relationships & Emotional Impact:** Value of community, relationships, trust, emotional responses, and impacts on property values.
- **Data, Evidence & Consultation:** Requests for data, stats, evidence, and consultation with staff, students, and families.
- **Zoning, Enrollment & Options:** Questions about enrollment, rezoning, automatic enrollment, school choice, and alternative options.

Insights

- **Process, Decision-Making & Transparency** is the most frequently mentioned theme (26.8%), showing a strong desire for open, clear, and transparent decision-making and communication.
- **Capacity, Class Size & Facilities** (19.6%) and **Supports for Students, Staff & Families** (16.1%) reflect practical concerns about space, resources, and the well-being of all affected groups.
- **Community, Relationships & Emotional Impact** (14.3%) and **Data, Evidence & Consultation** (12.5%) highlight the importance of maintaining community ties and making decisions based on evidence and stakeholder input.

- **Zoning, Enrollment & Options** (10.7%) rounds out the list, indicating interest in how students are assigned to schools and what choices families have.

APPENDICES

Southview Community School

Unprocessed, Transcribed Data from Each Question - All Charts

Question 1 – Southview Community School

- 1. What are some considerations you would like the School Division to think about when deciding on possible school amalgamation?**

Page 1

- Availability of resources at receiving schools
- Staff, space, Educational Assistants, service providers, Sensory room
- Consider physical space availability in receiving schools
- Class size impact on S.V. students—parents appreciate the small classes at S.V.
- Consider promoting "small schools" to increase enrollment
- Emotional impact on students and families, especially students who struggle with change
- Distance students will have to travel to school
- Will parents have choice in the school their child attends—parents want this
- Impact on family schedules—may require childcare & costs

Page 2

- How will our children with a higher level of need be affected by a change in schools?
 - Transitions
 - Relationships
 - Trust
 - EA
 - Environment
 - Friendships
 - ISP and supports
 - Continuity and progress
- Students in existing schools & new students—how will transition be supported to encourage cohesiveness and avoid alienation
- Making the shift from students being known very well with a personal connection to a larger environment with more students & staff

Page 3

- ESL—making sure they are supported
- Ensure connections are maintained to support all students (e.g., students with special needs)
- Transportation—getting students to a further distance (students can no longer walk—busy roads)
- Maintain community/sense of belonging
- Enrollment trends in each community
- Extra-curricular/clubs—ensuring they still exist
- What happens to the building/space/playground?
- Transition years (move for Gr. 6, then transition again the next year)

Page 4

- Some students will need to travel
- Will this overcrowd a different school?
- Impact student relationships
- Students need a community school—more schools, not less
- Education first, funding second
- Students/families have memories at schools
- Students not reporting problems
- Students are learning/improving at this school
- More cultures

Page 5

- Considering transportation needs/options
- Will families leave MHPSD to attend other schools in closer proximity or walking distance?
- Any additional expenses for out-of-school care when kids can't walk home
- How students feel about making the transition
- Loss of peer connections
- Whether clubs, groups, programs, services, support will be available at the new school
- Will amalgamation increase class size and burden the teacher & reduce learning?

Page 6

- Planning for the next 10–20 years
- Birth rates
- Plan in place in case a situation changes suddenly (e.g., a natural disaster relocates many people to our community, how fast can we open up to accommodate)
- Schools coming to end of life vs. which schools are just "in the wrong place"
- Consider the impact closing a school will have on the other schools (overcrowding?)
- Is it possible to shift students to the smaller schools to balance enrollment?

Page 7

- SV: lots of families live close to the school, walking distance, don't drive—new schools further away
- School Bus—over 2km, currently CN to SV is 1km, difficult for kids in bad weather. Would school division reduce the distance for bussing—i.e., bus runs 1km–2km away?
- Considering cultural diversity & EAL community; fear & emotions involved with this community

Page 8

- Potential larger class sizes
- Potential impact on receiving schools
- Loss of small schools—learning needs may be more challenging to meet in a larger setting
- Smaller school environments feel calm
- Loss of cohesion for school community
- Consider acceptance of new school communities to receiving new students from varied backgrounds

Question 2 – Southview Community School

2. What might be some possible opportunities for students if schools are amalgamated?

Page 1

- More opportunities to hire specialist teachers.
- More volunteer opportunities.
- Students can be dispersed across classrooms.

- Student can be recombined to meet targeted needs.
- A more diverse school community is created.
- Full buildings and increased utilization increases funds and opportunities.
- Potential cost savings supports students.
- Community supports could increase.
- More dynamics for class combinations – increased social opportunities.
- More time for embedded supports/more presence.

Page 2

- Fewer split/combined classes with increased enrollment (reduced age gap for friendships).
- May help students transition to junior high if they're transitioned before.
- New friendships.
- Increased staffing.
- Increased resources (service providers, staffing, FSLW etc.).
- Additional sensory tools available.
- Potentially smaller class sizes.
- Decreased deferred maintenance – cost savings can be put into classrooms.

Page 3

- More programs can be offered.
- Bussing – new/good experience.
- Flexibility – students help students.
- New friendships possible – students will enjoy more.
- Possible to have specialized programs (x2).
- More culture.
- Students get bigger network.

Page 4

- Savings to spend on programs and projects for students.
- Addition of opportunities such as choir, clubs, groups, etc.
- More access to classes like art.
- Utilization of "manpower" in one school rather than spreading between two.
- Opportunities may make students happier and engaged.

- Able to learn new things.
- Access to technology.
- Not spreading resources thinly.
- Access to a larger library and teacher librarian.

Page 5

- Activities – more opportunities.
- Access to more services and resources.
- Opportunity for PE, Music, French specialists.
- Opportunity for cost sharing due to larger enrollment (field trips).
- Larger parent council to share the load.
- Tapping into more parental resources.
- More diversity and inclusion.
- Opportunity to explore their talents.
- Competitiveness in a respectful manner.

Page 6

- Meet new people.
- Better/increased opportunities for extra-curricular.
- Fresh start = opportunity to reimagine themselves (break away from possible stigmas).
- Learn about new cultures.
- Reduce/possibly eliminate split grades/teachers – focus on one grade level.
- More opportunities for parents/volunteers.
- Better access to services (SLP, staffing).
- Increased School Council attendance/ideas.

Page 7

- Increased exposure to more specialized opportunities (i.e., music).
- Financial considerations.
- After school programming opportunities.
- Access to transportation.
- Newer facility.
- Less duplication of services.
- Increased opportunity to meet new people.

Question 3 Southview Community School

3. What might be some possible challenges for students if schools are amalgamated?

Page 1

- Change of people (staff, children, parents), routines
- Loss of some connections—students/staff into 2 different schools
- New community members—requiring supports/skillset (ESL)
- Everyone feeling welcome/new relationships for families
- Establishing new relationships for students
- Bringing together 2 communities (needs to be well planned)
- Will adequate supports be in place for teachers
- Bullying/peer dynamics

Page 2

- Transportation—expenses, long rides/time, wake up time
- Not living within walking distance
- Additional difficulties for newcomer families
- Class size/crowding
- Diversity/complexity
- New peer relationships
- Difficulty with transitions
- Potential loss of learning opportunities if not available at new school
- Less individual attention for students
- Crowding may make it harder to focus
- Stress for kids may increase dysregulation, anxiety, refusal to eat at school, etc.

Page 3

- Adjustment and adaptation to a new environment
- Emotional connectedness
- Identity and belonging
- More students will compete for the limited resources like teachers' attention
- More students may equal more conflict and harder for staff to manage
- The distance, time spent going to & from school (walking and/or bus time)

- Cultural competency, understanding diverse cultures

Page 4

- Less opportunity for equity & inclusion
- Angry parents
- The perception of downsizing education field services might have a negative impact on students and their parents (government doesn't have enough \$)
- Parents without cars, challenge to reach their children in a crisis
- Not every student thrives in a large environment
- Less opportunity to create small class sizes
- No opportunity to balance overcrowded schools if we have less buildings
- More bussing & transportation costs
- Longer commute
- Possible hostility towards "New kids"
- Socio-economic stratification—"Rich" vs "Poor" schools; good grades vs poor grades; streaming
- Fewer places to transfer kids if problems arise

Page 5

- Larger class sizes could result
- More competition between students
- Bussing—takes time—might need to walk—bus can be overcrowded
- Issue for students/parents with no vehicle—wellness
- More busses needed - cost \$
- Some students learn better in a smaller population—more students could decrease quality of education
- Lost relationships
- Larger numbers—students might "give up"

Page 6

- Challenge of moving from a "small world" to a larger context
- Inability to walk/bike to school
- Students may be anxious about riding the bus
- Loss of sense of community

- Emotional attachment to building
- Separation of students (going to other schools)
- Change—adapting to a new facility/community
- Not having break-out or additional spaces
- Adding new students to the receiving school community

Page 7

- Change of routines, discomfort
- Distance to school
- Mode of transportation changes
- Loss of friendships
- Trying to make new friends
- Challenges for receiving school if defined friend groups already exist
- It will be harder on older students
- Hard for students who thrive in smaller settings/quieter environments
- Some students may require after school care—cost and longer days for students

Page 8

- Access to transportation, less walkability, increased cost
- Class size increase
- Newcomer students being asked to move again
- Environment amalgamation concerns about creating welcoming and inclusive spaces
- Changes, adjustments to environment, rebuilding relationships and trust for all students & students with higher needs
- Leaving established relationships with trusted adults and peers/friendships
- The feeling of sudden change/loss
- Logistics of combining schools
- Concerns for families who are newcomers, families whose first language is not English, who have already been uprooted

Question 4 - Southview Community School

4. What might be some supports students and families may need to make a smooth transition to a new school if amalgamation takes place?

Page 1

- Supports for students with higher levels of need & all children
- Mental health, language, students with ISPs
- Strong transition planning
- Registration assistance
- Orientation tours for new families
 - Meet staff
 - Q&A session
 - See spaces
- Opportunities for families to be involved in grade level transition
- How will existing aspects of school culture & traditions be incorporated in the new amalgamated environment?
- Farewell ceremony or "swan song" year

Page 2

- Lunch program/breakfast programs
- Organizing visits to their new schools
- FSLWs talk to students and families to support transition
- Helping parents & students to navigate services & resources available to them
- Mental health support for minority groups & vulnerable groups
- Keeping familiar teachers
- Preparing teachers to support more diverse students
- Cultural awareness sessions, EAL instruction
- Consulting parents about their concerns
- Survey the kids to see what they need
- Bus routes (no/short rides)
- Transportation support for less than 2km
- May school may need more staffing—parents need to know there will be staff to support the increased numbers

Page 3

- Transportation—parents don't have a car
- Map to help families know what bus to take
- Bus stop close to homes
- Good orientation days for new families—learn about the school, chance to develop relationships
- School tours

Page 4

- Reassurance, using previous school closures/experience, offered to families
- Explain which additional resources will be added to receiving schools
- Ensure short/efficient bus rides
- Clarity on how students will be placed
- Boundaries/parent choice
- Child-friendly explanation about school closure
- Offering walk-through/celebration to join schools
- Buddy teams/classes between two schools
- Increased flexibility in out-of-school care hours (charge by the increment, not a flat fee)

Page 5

- Training students on managing transition before the end of this school year
- Being mindful of the impact a transition can have on students with needs & kids in general (trauma)
- Routine—how to maintain continuity
- Traditions—new and old
- After school program—space to accommodate an increased number of students
- After school clubs
- Highlight the opportunities students will have in a new school
- Providing parents with a choice about where their children will attend
- Communicating with community organizations to support (Saamis)
- A place to complain that listens when decisions are made to address last minute concerns

Page 6

- Clear communication about timelines & process

- Open lines of communication for families to ask questions—possible liaison to answer questions
- Guidance in communicating to the kids
- Making the message positive/exciting
- Focus on opportunities
- Create a video to share about the new school
- School tours for all students & families
- Set up "school buddies" to support transition
- Communication provided in the languages of the school community
- Talking points for parents of all schools involved
- Provide opportunities for input/feedback from schools who may receive incoming students

Page 7

- Emotional supports in classroom to address complexity/diversity
- Options for transportation—advance notice of these options
 - Consideration of bus routes & stops to be close to home
- Transition planning that involves a tour
 - Meet the teacher, visiting school (process)
 - Welcome process/warm welcome
- Regulation supports to help with transition, busy classrooms, etc.
- Continuous encouragement to join, participate
- Introduction to parent council—get involved
- Strong communication between teachers & parents
- Gifting of school merch/shirts/etc. to new students
- Strategies to build sense of community
- Safe Arrival program for students

Page 8

- Transportation
- OT support (transitions can be difficult)
- Co-teaching (mixing staff so students know adults)
- Sharing information with students in the way that is best for the students

- ESL supports pushed in
- Classroom configuration (well thought out—integration without segregation)
- Communication
- Childcare (what opportunities would help families—PD days, after school, etc.)

Southview Community School

Gots and Wants

Wants

- Families want stability for their children.
- Families want to know what the plan is for their children.
- Families want to know what the plan is for their children who need extra support.
- Families want to know what the plan is for their children who have complex needs.

Gots

- Families got some answers about what the plan is for their children.
- Families got some answers about what the plan is for their children who need extra support.
- Families got some answers about what the plan is for their children who have complex needs.
- Families got some answers about what the plan is for their children who are new to the division.

Southview Community School

Parking Lot

- What is the plan for students who need extra support?
- What is the plan for students who have complex needs?
- What is the plan for students who are currently thriving at their school?
- What is the plan for students who are currently struggling at their school?
- What is the plan for students who are new to the division?
- What is the plan for students who are new to Canada?
- What is the plan for students who are new to the community?
- What is the plan for students who are new to the school?
- What is the plan for students who are new to the classroom?

- What is the plan for students who are new to the grade?
- What is the plan for students who are new to the program?
- What is the plan for students who are new to the teacher?
- What is the plan for students who are new to the support staff?

Webster Niblock School

Unprocessed, Transcribed Data from Each Question – All Charts

Question 1- Webster Niblock School

1. What Are Some Considerations You Would Like the School Division to Think About When Deciding on Possible School Amalgamation?

Page 1

- How would an amalgamation affect class size?
- What might be a plan to support students who don't handle change well?
- Families who live within walking distance—if they miss the bus, their attendance would suffer.
- If closed, what plan does board have to allow visits for students and families to their new school, prior to beginning of year?
- If parents can select school of choice, regardless of boundaries to support friend groups, how will board balance this?
- Has board considered opening schools to other groups that could support financial needs?
- What considerations will be made to ensure familiar staff are stationed at the new schools (for students)?
- Has thought been put into the timing of these potential closures?

Page 2

- What would be the effect on the receiving schools?
- How will class sizes be distributed? Staff distribution?
- Bus transportation—does Medicine Hat have enough buses? (Southlands)
- Financial considerations—is it better?
- How will neighbourhoods be zoned?
- If we close schools, will receiving school be ready in time? (ex. DKS)
- What are some of the unintended consequences?

Page 3

- The current feeder area for WN is likely to move increasingly to a lower income bracket. How does this decision provide for their needs?
- Would you consider re-zoning to keep Webster friendships intact?

- Would Vincent Massey renovations, if required to accommodate the students from Webster, occur prior to students moving in?
- Relationships between students and teachers already built.
- Impact on family schedule due to amalgamation—new schedule, bell times, etc.—not due to personal choice or move.

Page 4

- Have immigration rates been considered—right balance out birth rates?
- With a number of things that have happened in recent years (Covid, strike), how are you considering stability for students?
- Consider student mental health and well-being (loss of friend groups, community, teachers).
- Moving to a larger school could result in students slipping through the cracks. What plans/supports will be there for those students?
- Service providers may have less schools but will have more students. Will service be increased to support those students?
- What is before/after school capacity? Can receiving schools accommodate this?
- Could the closure of Elm be reconsidered as the age of that building is more costly than WN and historically Riverside was closed as only school in that area?

Page 5

- Support of particular EAs for individual students.
- Job loss for support staff & teachers.
- Negative impact of students with complexities.
- Will amalgamation result in lower class sizes?
- Is there space for more students at VM/DKS?
- IDEA: could rezoning of DKS & VM result in an increase to WN population & avoid closure?
- WN is in the middle of a residential area serving families who live very close to the school.
- Changes needed to bell times? Meet in the middle?
- What other data is (or could be or should be) used in making this gigantic decision? Make this data public! The data on the one-pager is not enough.

- Has anyone consulted with parents at DKS or VM?

Page 6

- Separating kids, broken connections with peers.
- How many kids from our neighborhood will be displaced? Why not bring more in to CON?
- Who gets to decide where my child goes to school? Will we have a choice?
- The impact on students, teachers, families. Can teachers be intentionally placed in schools where they know the kids? Connection.

Page 7

- How does school capacity impact the decision about where students are directed to go (i.e.—Ken Sauer)?
- What might be the financial considerations in building 3 schools?
- How will the division decide about zoning—buses?
- How will the School Division balance demographics?
- Have you considered shifting enrollment boundaries to target increasing numbers at low enrollment schools?
- Where are incoming people (new Canadians, new Albertans) accounted for in the data/numbers?
- Could Webster consider having an academy or special program to encourage enrollment—lost students to DKS for fine arts, etc.?
- In an effort to increase enrollment, could Webster consider catering to specialized programming/students with additional needs?

Page 8

- Birth rates in addition to other metrics (immigration, etc.)
- What does the projected population for Medicine Hat look like?
- The data presented does not reflect all factors.
- Bussing & safety concerns.
- Emotional/mental health considerations for students involved.

Page 9

- Preference of small schools.

- Small schools encourage "small fires." Small fires get lost when we have larger school populations.
- What happens when birth rates go up?
- Birth rates could be linked to trends in oil and gas—if there's a boom, you won't have school infrastructure to support the increase in population.
- Consider timing—there's a lot going on in our province right now.
- Lower population schools seem to reflect those schools that do not have anything "flashy" to draw enrollment (i.e., STEM, Fine Arts, Academies)—creates have/have not scenario.
- For kids who require specialty programming (i.e., Just Right Room), spaces to accommodate this are invaluable & needed for success of all children.

Page 10

- How will staff transfers be decided & timeline of movement?
- Have considerations been made for student transfer out-of-building?
- Is it possible to build the same quality of relationships & feeling of community comfort in an amalgamated building?
- If students & staff are amalgamated into unified buildings, what considerations have been made to ensure there will be increased student access to supports & resources, while ensuring classroom complexity ratios do not increase?
- How will school boundaries be determined & how much parental choice will be allowed?

Page 11

- Needs of children with disabilities (anxiety, autism).
- Impact of change on students (age).
- Amount of new families drawn to the city (L.C.O.L.).
- Shift in demographics of aging communities.
- Birthrate not the only consideration.
- Investments in the current buildings.
- Community (school) size—large city vs. small town.
- Communication.
- Transportation for students living the furthest.
- "Walkability" to & from school.

- % of families with access to a vehicle.
- Walking access to businesses & extra-curricular areas.

Page 12

- Value in a small and comfortable, familiar environment.
- Inclusivity can be developed by being able to provide individualized support. This looks different in every school (not "cookie cutter")—i.e., EA's, FSLW, etc.
- Value the relationships developed (the teachers know the kids and their needs).
- The Webster admin assistant is "the glue" of the school, could lose this.
- Development of a Webster "family."
- The importance of stability (COVID, strike).
- Many students will lose the ability to walk & school transition.

Page 13

- Classroom sizes—will they be too large when amalgamated? Busy & loud. Added teacher stress.
- Loss of friends and other relationships.
- Commute time.
- What will bussing time be like?
- Bell times and how this may affect schedule.

Page 14

- How can enrollment be increased?
- Programming—hockey academy, Fine Arts, STEM, etc.—to increase enrollment in lower populated schools.
- Strict boundaries/zones.
- School of choice—transportation to provided school?
- Loss of enrollment to MHCBE.
- Families wanting small, community feel.
- Staffing job loss?

Page 15

- Staying connected to peer groups/special consideration for non-zoned schools.
Acceptance.
- How will an amalgamated school accommodate large numbers for after school program?

- Do larger schools mean less personal contact with families?
- What will happen to the land? Loss of green space.
- Ensure that extra support is implemented.

Page 16

- Peer consideration, re-zoning of boundaries.
- Bussing.
- Clubs, activities, extra-curricular.
- Transitions for students.
- How will it be communicated to the children?
- Opportunity to tour the school before transitioning.

Page 17

- Human impact—stability, relationships.
- School safety net / belonging.
- Connections to neighbourhood school/community.
- Importance of early relationships leading to resilience, independence, SEL, stress.
- Long term effects due to impact of pandemic & strike (unpredictability)—timing of closure.
- About more than academics.
- Rebuilding relationships/dependence on teachers they love.
- Is this a numbers game to get new schools/money? End justifies means?
- How much does academy influence? It's at VM.
- Within year registration numbers/enrollment.
- Planning for upcoming growth in neighborhood.
- Not deciding based on what-ifs when there is an established school already.
- Transportation—burden on parents.
- As demographics shift across city, all kids need option to be within walking distance.

Page 18

- School boundaries—school of choice.
- Class sizes numbers/classroom complexity.
- Clarification of bus route changes for new boundaries.
- Parent association/fundraised \$—what happens?

Page 19

- Mental health—concern about how a transition may impact children.
- What might support—worried that there might not be enough support in larger class size.
- Concerned about how moving myself was really difficult.
- Demographics—the younger population is moving in, feel like there could be a shift.
- Bigger classroom sizes won't benefit students with unique needs.
- What happens to their teachers & staff?
- Smaller schools—they know all the children & families.
- Concerned about families leaving our division.
- Friendships & rezoning impact on them.

Page 20

- Student, new to Canada—mom is concerned about going to a bigger school—fearful about what the change will mean for them—they are near to Webster and concerned for safety as well.
- How will the school board ensure that the cost savings are directed towards maintaining class sizes and complexities—directly used for the kids.
- Wondering if they will be increasing the busing to get students to their new schools.

Question 2- Webster Niblock School

2. What Might Be Some Possible Opportunities for Students if Schools are Amalgamated?

Page 1

- Would this have an impact on ensuring an increased teacher-student ratio?

Page 2

- If this decision is for financial reasons, then hopefully additional funds would go to school to enhance programs and the available resources.

Page 3

- Money saved from requiring less clerical/admin could be spent on teachers/EAs.
- Less split classrooms.
- Additional programming—specialists (music, PE, digital media).

Page 4

- Programs might be available at an amalgamated school that aren't available now (e.g., Fine Arts).
- More chances for specialized options like music, hockey, etc.—all schools might have the same opportunity.
- More resources available.
- More multiculturalism/diverse population for students to see themselves in and to learn from/about.

Page 5

- Flexibility to adjust classes/cohorts (if conflict or not working).
- Access to facilities or opportunities may increase.
- Increase in funding to schools (less schools to distribute to).
- Could make new friends.

Page 6

- Hopefully build resilience in students that move schools.
- Availability of programming.
- Fewer split classes.
- Exposure to variety.
- Concentration of services.
- Allocation of supports for special needs (if adequately funded).

Page 7

- Extra-curricular opportunities—clubs/sports, music specialist/focus.
- Less combined classes.
- More same grade teacher collaboration.
- Admin teams can teach less and support kids more.
- New opportunities to meet new friends/create new friendships.
- If students struggle with peers, they can be in different classes the following year.
- Equipment and resources from closing schools could be redistributed.

Page 8

- For every opportunity for one student, can be a disadvantage for another.
- More staff—easier to schedule supervision.

- Offer specialty classes/options.
- Increased options for flexibility with staffing.

Page 9

- Meet new people.
- More programs.
- More teacher/parent volunteers (because more parents).
- Reduction, possibly, of split classes.
- Gaining new friends.

Page 10

- More access to system supports (OT, PT, FSLW).
- Specialty positions (Phys ed, music, CST).
- More funding for food programs/hot lunch.
- Flexibility for staffing with multiple classes of a grade level.
- Grade level partner collaboration.
- Spreading out needs (IPP's).
- More access to different teachers to build relationships.

Page 11

- Opportunity for academy—hockey.
- New friendships.
- More field trips.
- More support daily—less schools, less movement, focused resources.
- For teachers—increased support, CST, EA's.
- Specialist teachers (art, music, gym).
- Lunch clubs, after school clubs.
- Balance the ebb and flow of large/small enrollment groups.

Page 12

- New relationships/peer group expansion.
- Straight grade classes.
- More teaching specialists.
- More sports/physical literacy.
- More options for students/try new activities.

- Resources are pooled and allocated more effectively.
- Ability to spread out students with complex needs into more classes—more manageable for teachers/less stressful, more attention for all students.

Page 13

- Better chance of full grades—fewer split classes.
- More service providers in the school.
- More opportunity to separate or mix up kids when there is more than one class of a grade level.
- Better opportunities for specialized teachers like music, PE.
- A bigger school would have more extra-curricular activities.
- Larger School Council could result in better fundraising and more opportunities.

Page 14

- Specific/specialized staff/teachers (music, library, PE, French).
- Opportunity for more classroom options (placements).
- More supports (FSLW, EAs, Success Coach, etc.).
- Opportunities for team sport.
- Expanded social circles.
- Less combined classes.
- Greater numbers to support different clubs.

Page 15

- Greater friendship opportunities.
- Greater classroom configuration options.
- Access to specialists.
- Access to sports.
- Smaller staff—may be harder to secure a teacher to attend out-of-school events.
- Collaboration opportunities if bigger staff.
- Bigger numbers = more time for FSLW/HOG in the building.

Page 16

- Teacher partners—improved collaboration, subject specific interests, sharing resources.
- Supervision.
- More teaching staff to share the load.

- Access to activities, events (having enough kids to participate).
- PE, music specialist, librarian, clerical time.
- Funding allocation—W.N. staff for staffing (EA's) to follow (?)

Page 17

- Opportunities for specialist teacher (ex. Music, P.E).
- Exposure to diversity—cultures.
- Access for more inclusive supports (instruction, SLP, OT).
- More opportunities for increased parent participation, field trips.
- Teachers moving with students to receiving schools—adults that know them.
- Fresh start, new connections with peers and adults.

Question 3- Webster Niblock School

3. What Might Be Some Possible Challenges for Students if Schools are Amalgamated?

Page 1

- Overcrowding – 2 comfortable schools → 1 overcrowded
- Transportation – walking not an option
- Struggle emotionally with transition
 - Mental health
 - Busy hallways
 - Behaviour
 - Extra stimulation
- Kids getting lost in the shuffle – getting less attention or might not stand out
- Friendships / long-term connections will be split up
- Current teachers know students so well
 - Loss of those relationships
 - More difficult to do in a larger class
- Harder to keep track of students in large school
- Portables – noise, temperature, sewer, size of rooms, weather, safety concerns
- Even big schools can be short-staffed
- FSLI ratio to students
- Impacts learning of students in receiving school

- Cultural work needed to blend schools
- Bullying from bringing more schools together
- Feeling like an outsider or displaced
- Older students need to make another transition
- Instability after could + strength
- Zoning

Page 2

- When you close schools, you may lose some trust. What next? How far might this process go?

Page 3

- Social structures – friends/support networks – split from peers
- Adaptation & adjustment for new environment
- How to support students that might face different socio-economic challenges
- Larger school might be less personal
- Larger class sizes
- Bussing & safety concerns (e.g. 2nd Ave)
- Parent perception of the education field – lack of trust

Page 4

- Before / After care spaces
- Peer relationships
- Assigned to a school you don't want
- Bussing availability if not zoned
- Unable to walk to school, bus dependent
- Will academies dictate how schools run? – favoritism
- School focus doesn't fit a student learning style – STEM
- Multiple transitions in a short time
- Familiar staff for students/families
- Big schools – make it feel small

Page 5

- Splitting up friendship groups

- Splitting up teacher – not seeing former friends/teachers if they don't move to the new school together
- Potential negative peer relations – might end up in the same class
- Students who walk now need to ride the bus
- Could struggle feeling connected at the new school
- Students feeling sad about leaving their school

Page 6

- Change in schedule/routine
- An extra transition before middle school
- Loss of peer and teacher relationship
- Dealing with change and uncertainty
- Will play spaces (indoor/outdoor) be big enough to accommodate all students?
- Webster kids vs. Vincent kids – bullying (not wanting to accept “newbies”)

Page 7

- Change in schedule/routine
- An extra transition before middle school
- Loss of peer and teacher relationship
- Dealing with change and uncertainty
- Will play spaces (indoor/outdoor) be big enough to accommodate all students?
- Webster kids vs. Vincent kids – bullying (not wanting to accept “newbies”)

Page 8

- Students may struggle with context & safety with more adults (unfamiliar)
- How can we support students becoming comfortable in a new environment?
- In what ways will intentional planning of time be provided to communicate student needs or complexities to amalgamated school staff & community resources?
- Ensuring smooth & safe transition?
- How can we ensure that at-risk students are able to navigate transportation once they are past walking distance?
- Challenge of lost friendships due to rezoning & school choice?

Page 9

- Large class sizes (groupings)

- Developmental level of the students
- Small class sizes at W.N. now are a benefit to teachers & students
- Peer connection (family feel to classrooms)
- Mental health (change) – what support/planning?
- Establish community (“The Webster Kids”)
- Bullying/Exclusion
- Loss of routines (children needing structure)
- Lost stability + predictability
- Loss of a place students feel safe and cared for
- Additional challenges of students with special needs & service providers
- Transportation/walkability, time on bus, “pick-up”
- Feeling of loss in relationships with current staff & family feel – trust with new staff
- Structures separation + recess

Page 10

- Larger classroom sizes a concern
- A need to adjust to new surroundings
- Larger school creates more opportunity for bullying
- New kids coming in feeling like outsiders
- Access to new or renovated schools/spaces
- Is DKS already maxed out?
- How long will it take to get portables?
- Loss of trusted supports (e.g., SLP, OT, PT, FSLW)

Page 11

- Some families will be substantially farther from their school – longer bus rides or walks
- Friendships take time and some students may be separated from friends due to new zoning
- Lose some of the close relationship between teachers and students/families
- Could be intimidating for some students to move to a larger school
- Larger class size could be a risk
- Could it decrease access to places such as the gym

Page 12

- It will be difficult for students to transit
- What supports will be available?
- How will schools create a welcoming environment for students & families?
- How will transition information be passed on to their new school?
- How will the addition of new kids impact the students in the receiving school?
- How will they be prepared for a larger student body?

Page 13

- Transitioning into a new school culture (students + staff) + keeping with a shared vision
- Could be overwhelming for a lot of students
- If kids miss the bus, they won't be able to walk to school (transportation)
- Safety for pick up and drop off
- Transitioning for complex students
- Bigger schools could make more opportunity for issues, such as bullying
- Knowing each school has students that present with challenges, how do you plan & support when combining?

Page 14

- Loss of friendships and staff relationships/connections
- Loss of community
- Kids in neighbourhood can no longer walk to school (bussed)
- Challenges for students who walk who have attendance issues, will they catch the bus?
- Mental health – change will be very hard on kids
- Feeling of safety lost
- Larger class sizes, larger population
- Potential for bullying to increase with a larger student population (more anonymity)
- Will the modulators necessary even be available in time to support student movement?
- If before and after can't handle greater numbers, this will impact families
- Knowing each school has students that present with challenges, how do you plan & support when combining students from different schools with staff that might not know them?

Page 15

- Will service providers be spread even thinner with more students to serve in one location?
- With fuller schools how do you manage with the loss of flexible spaces?

Page 16

- Bigger classrooms – would this increase class sizes?
- Loss of small knit community
- New relationships for students and families
- What happens if the population increases and we don't have available space?
- Will the incoming schools be able to manage the influx of new students to their buildings?
- Kids can walk to WN but won't be able to if they change schools – they may struggle with transportation/buses
- What happens if students won't get a bus to their area but can't walk?

Page 17

- Kids who have spent years forming relationships and making connections may be split up or get lost in the transition
- Student mental health might suffer
- Uncertainty about where everyone is going causes anxiety
- Students from different schools could struggle to get along at their new school
- Other schools may also feel the effects of schools amalgamating
- Webster + VM would both lose the small school community feeling/experience
- Will the incoming schools be able to manage the influx of new students to their buildings?
- Kids can walk to WN but won't be able to if they change schools – they may struggle with transportation or buses
- What happens if students won't get a bus to their area but can't walk?
- Bus rides can be difficult for students, and they could face bullying

Page 18

- Finding a friend circle
- Learning the lay of the land in a new school

- Getting accustomed to new teachers, teaching styles
- Relationships with teachers – in small school they all know each other
- Mental health – impact
- Transportation – kids who walked now have to bus
- Miss out on mentorship of older students who know the younger ones
- Concern that they will be outsiders and may get picked on
- Loss of the familiar support staff – clerical, janitor, etc.
- Mental health for teachers
- The impact on students with established routines + new need a new area
- Potential job loss
- The playground – more crowded
- School spirit
- The kids in G the move again
- 5 or 6 next year – only get 1 or 2 years in
- Occasions

Page 19

- Mental health negatively impacted due to school change, split friendship groups, loss of relationships – staff
- Space available at DKS? Full? Portables?
- All of WN population will not fit in VM ...
- Is there a plan for YMCA care? Already full.
- Impact on working parents + kids (more home alone?)
- Resulting in lowering SES – job impacts?
- Creating big tumultuous change for kids that they don't understand or want – or they do & it's sad to close a community school to save money
- Sends message to WN kids that they aren't worth the \$ to keep their school open

Page 20

- Split from friends
- Attendance issues
- Kids who struggle with change/transitions

- Loss of relationships & connections for students and families, outside the school, that were built at the school
- If people go into an amalgamation with a fixed mindset, it may lead to barriers/challenges for the students
- In a bigger school, you may lose the close-knit feeling
- Fear of the unknown
- Loss of personalization with a larger school

Page 21

- Distance/transportation for students, challenges getting to school
- Unknowns and transitions difficult for students who crave routine – too many transitions + change
- Access to Before/After care – space?
- Playground – developed for a larger population? This will cost \$\$
- Dynamics of mixing two (or more) cohorts of students from different schools
- Ability to focus on and address specific medical needs diminished with a larger school
- Inclusion – loss of personalization

Page 22

- Fear of losing the “small town” feel & connection
- Concern of losing familiar teachers or connections
- Loss of friendships
- Will teaching styles change?
- Transportation, traffic
- Inclusion in the next/receiving school
- Mascot, clothing, SWAG
- Space considerations for special occasions

Page 23

- Transportation vs. walking
- Cost of transportation – increase transportation
- Capacity – Before/After school care in the schools provided
- Large classroom sizes
- Receiving supports in larger classroom sizes

- Transitioning to new school
- Friendships being split up
- Don't want to lose small community feel
- Loss of funding if students leave division

Question 4 - Webster Niblock School

4. What might be some supports students and families may need to make a smooth transition to a new school if amalgamation takes place?

Page 1

- Clear & regular communication
- A chance for students & families to tour the new building—during the school day
- Bussing initiation/practice from homes to the new school
- How are we supporting the students and families in the receiving schools?
- How are we supporting students & families to stay within our district?
- Is bussing going to be provided for K students who are only half day? Many families currently walk to pick up their child.
- Information about the supports/resources/culture within a building

Page 2

- Clear communication about what to expect and what will stay the same and what will be different
- Opportunities for students to visit/tour the new school
- Incorporating traditions/events from WN to the new school to bring some of their history with them
- Early open house PRIOR to registration so families can see the school and get a feel
- Extra supports/availability of supports for students who struggle with transition
- Acknowledging & understanding the impact of the change for kids and giving the time & space to acclimate/figure their way out
- Hosting a "meet the family" BBQ to help kids & parents mingle and meet families at their new school (early connecting to make friends etc.)
- Will there be after school programming available?

- What happens if there is no bus available in our area?

Page 3

- School tours—as soon as possible
- Field trips
- Orientations
- Sharing parent group information with new parents
- Early participation in the clubs & activities in the New Year

Page 4

- Development of culture & values
- Rebuilding of a community as a VM/WN combo
- Rebranding of school as a "new" school
- Transportation considerations: kids with poor or inconsistent attendance who relied on walking to school
- Class size cap
- Trying to keep peers/students together—ability to request a buddy
- Teachers from IN at moving with them
- Increase in success coach/FSLW time
- Ensuring clerical/admin staff are taken care of/max with them
- Balancing classroom complexity
- School of choice after rezoning to help with transition

Page 5

- Increased bussing to support displaced families to have as short of ride as possible
- Try to keep as many kids as possible together in classes
- Try to transfer as many teachers as possible to maintain relationships/familiarity

Page 6

- Staffing to support student needs
- Communication: open houses, meet and greets, tour, rapid after 'decision'
- Mental health supports for students (transition)
- Transportation trial runs
- Time this year with new peers or classes or teacher
- Go into summer with limited uncertainty

- "New Opportunity" messaging
- Facility upgrades
- Culture coming in
- Choice for families (which school)

Page 7

- Importance of thoughtful, detailed transition plan for students & families—collaborated with current school staff to have a voice in the transition plan to help students & families—they know the students best
- Being mindful of where staff is placed and how class lists are made
- School tours with empty school—drop in/out (not in August)
- Meeting staff—parents & students
- Input from families on zoning
- Supports for staff through the process for a smooth transition—for themselves and others
- Kids should know by end of school year which school they are going to for connection opportunities (before/after more)
- Linear timeline that is clear for everyone impacted
- Consultation with receiving school when getting more students

Page 8

- How do we make sure the large number of students are welcomed at a new school?
- Flexible transportation options
- More spots for before/after care
- Field trips to the new schools, going both ways during spring (soccer match/pep rally)
- Peer mentor matches (buddy system)

Page 9

- Transportation options
- Early, correct information
- Zoning information provided early
- Open house, school tour
- Welcome BBQ, family events
- Split up teachers to allow students and families to see familiar faces at new school

Page 10

- Consideration for not splitting up classmates/friends
- Staged approach
- Team building events/activities
- Providing transparent/open communication to students and parents
- Long term supports for the transition
- Mental health supports
- Consideration for "outliers" (students that might require more support)
- Providing support with coping strategies for students prior to the end of June

Page 11

- Being really diligent to place students with needs appropriately
- Consider current friendship groups/classmates when creating classes
- Families informed on boundary adjustments prior to registration
- No boundary when it comes to bussing (at least for transitional year)
- At-home supports to help families who may struggle with transition, attendance (home visits)
- Flexibility for students to move with friends, not necessarily to their boundary school
- Support groups with students who might be feeling anxious about move
- Opportunities for open houses but also maybe attending for a day before this school year ends
- FSLW doing ongoing check-ins before, during and after school year starts

Page 12

- Opportunities to feel comfortable—transition support, mental health support
- What is alternative if transition does not work for some students?
- Could there be a slow transition? (Grandfather it?)
- How will students with special needs be accommodated?
- More opportunities to provide input & feedback from parents
- Transition support for parents to learn the school

Page 13

- Intentionally keep peers together connected to peers
- Ensure programs are not lost before/after program

- Family engagement opportunities: tours, family nights, meet the teacher (more frequently)
- Transportation
- We would prefer to keep our school open!

Page 14

- Open house—welcoming new families
- Transition plans for students
- Transparent communication
- Make sure new students become "our" kids
- Teachers learning about their new students—who will know my child's needs?
- More students reduce closeness/personalization
- Staggered start
- Personal feelings about the decision being displayed in front of students

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- Keep families, students informed every step of the way, no surprises, open book
- Robust mental health plan—counselors for children as needed
- Bus route maps well in advance
- Boundaries before February—be able to tour, meet the teachers—open houses at potential new schools
- Non-restricted enrollment—if my kids' friends go to VM, want my kids to go
- Room for new kids in Academy (Hockey)
- Want to know what each school has to offer
- Opportunities—reassurance on class sizes (don't want my child in a class of 32)
- Have teachers work together between the two schools to plan for welcoming the students who are moving in & the students who are currently attending
- Balance around classroom complexity

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- Opportunity to get to know new school/staff—spring "new school visits"
- Increase in support staff to support transition (even if for first few months) (EAs, FSLWs)
- Communication schools → parents
- Increase in before and after school care

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- Financial concerns for families if Y care is full, or bell times cause impact to parents' ability to maintain work hours
- Concerns for kids who currently walk needing to begin taking the bus

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- Could the receiving school hold an evening/time during the day where the Webster kids could go to VM/OKS and meet teachers, get a tour and have some time at the school to familiarize & become comfortable?
- Have the receiving school ready in September!
- Parents want to know how the zones will be made. The sooner the better (i.e., January/early)

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- Clarity of timeline of boundaries (early)
- Opportunity to meet & greet staff and tour the facility
- Clear communication plan & a person to direct questions to
- Supports & accommodations for our EAL families
- Intentional FSLW & mental health support transition
- Recognition & support for the emotional weight of such a large change to our community

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- Open houses for the new families so parents and students become familiar with the new school
- Counselors available for students who need support
- Look at safe bus routes for students to get to their new school
- Buddy system—new students are paired up with a current student

Webster Niblock School**Parking Lot****Page 1**

- If closed, what are the roles of parents?
- Are kids automatically enrolled in schools in their community/area?
- Is this what is best for all the kids... Webster & Vincent alike?

- What happens if there ends up being too many kids in one school?
- Portable classrooms.
- What happens to kids who have complex needs that are thriving at a smaller school like Webster?
- Our children are not just numbers and dollars in your pocket.
- I want all the math. Transparency.
- When the final decision is made, could we please be given the reasoning of why they chose whichever decision the board makes?

Page 2

- Has the board collaborated with the city's planning department to understand projected family growth within affordable neighbourhoods like ours?
- Is the potential for increased immigration/housing factored into enrollment projections? Cheaper, affordable = more families.
- Can the board provide full cost-benefit breakdown including transportation costs, facility updates at receiving schools, and transition supports for families?
- What would it cost to repurpose or modernize Webster? STEM school - bus Elm kids up - make more than 85% capacity > Elm will never get to that.
- How can you access 8.6 million if the numbers aren't up? Cost effective & smarter to bring those kids up STEM school for capacity.
- How much do the operational costs per student at UN compare to division average?
- What happens to the teachers and other staff at the schools? Will they have jobs?
- Would have preferred the letter did not go out to students until it was decided.
- We are Webster Wolves!
- Webster Niblock is a small "Five" which fosters community, collaboration, and a sense of security and trust.
- Proposed rezoning maps?
- Children with needs will drown or be forgotten or overlooked for their needs.
- My five-year-old daughter said to me before I left, "Daddy, don't let them close my school!"
- The strike was about "too big class sizes." Now you are closing schools because class sizes are small.

- No one would dispute the benefit of amalgamation (increased resources, etc.). We just value the community, connections & relationships.
- Bussing considerations?
- You have my kids' best interests at heart? Prove it!
- Can we revisit doing 4-3 at one school & 4-6 at the other? VM+WN. If parents knew this before, we would have been more in favor.
- Where can we see school capacities?
- Can we get a copy of the slide show?
- Why were notices sent home with the kids before we had a chance to discuss it?
- Would it stay K-6?
- Did not feel like the process allowed parents to ask questions and receive answers.
- Personal teachers with small classrooms build trust with kids and help with transition from year to year.
- You will negatively impact property values in Crescent Heights.
- Are you prepared for a loss of kids from public system into other options (Catholic, home school)?
- People chose to move to Crescent Heights because of Webster.
- What percentage of savings in facilitative costs will be saved off the books if most of the staff are relocated?
- How much influence will parents/community have on the final decision?
- With where you live in Crescent Heights, how will they come up with where you will be zoned now for what school?
- Why would you give a note of the closure to the kids and discuss who will go to what school if it's not a for sure thing?
- What would an amalgamated school look like?
- Small class sizes.
- Are portables being considered on Ken or Vincent if more space is needed?
- What have you done to try and improve enrollment at Webster?
- Siblings will be more separated during recess, assemblies, etc.
- Have data/stats on the current school capacity, current enrollment, and past school capacity/enrollment.

- Are there stats showing how many students are currently walking to school?
- Are there stats showing how many students are currently bussed to school?
- Do you have evidence/data on how amalgamation affects students and families?
- Do you have evidence/data on how amalgamation affects staff?
- What is the current feeling in schools about the possible closure?
- Are staff being consulted? If so, how?
- Are students being consulted? If so, how?
- Are families being consulted? If so, how?
- What supports will be in place for students, staff, and families if closure happens?
- What supports will be in place for students, staff, and families if amalgamation happens?
- What supports will be in place for students, staff, and families if closure does not happen?
- What supports will be in place for students, staff, and families if amalgamation does not happen?

Webster Niblock School

Gots and Wants

Wants

- Information on capacity's
- Where do I find information?
- Instead of the possible closure as the only option, could the K-3/4-6 VM/WN option not have been revisited first?
- Regarding process: This could have been an online form to expedite community feedback; form could be open more than 1 night.
- No table discussion.
- More upfront and transparent info pertaining to why! (the main points), (accounting), (timeline of events). Where do I find this information?
- My impression is the decision is already made. We gave you a good plan to make it happen.
- I WANT my kids' school to stay open.
- Other schools have the capacity, but will there be adequate allocation of funding to provide adequate supports?

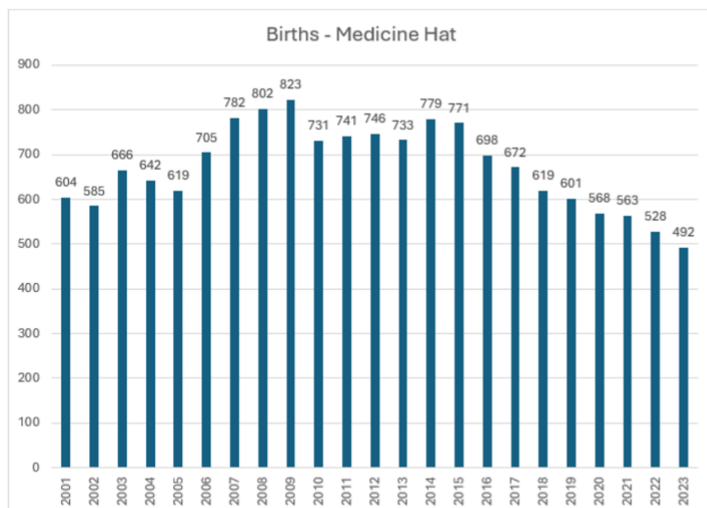
- Information about what the potential outcomes are for our kids.
- This meeting left me with more anxiety and zero answers as to what comes next.
- Please make the transition spread out/slower. Not just over a summer.

Webster Niblock School

Gots

- Got some answers to questions & concerns.
- We feel clarity on rumors & misinformation.
- This process feels like it is being rushed and pushed through (too fast).
- I have heard from many that they feel the decision has already been made quickly.
- I completely understand the financial perspective of the proposed closures; however, you cannot remove the emotional aspect! And their input doesn't really matter.
- Why were we forced to keep everything positive?
- Why was there not time for open discussion?

Graph Data Shared at Each Community Engagement Meeting



Births: Medicine Hat (2001 – 2021)

Source – Government of Alberta <https://regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/region/medicine-hat/births/#/?from=2014&to=2023>

	# Students 2025/26	Category	# Schools
Riverside	-		
Elm Street	118	Under 200 students	4
Southview	137		
Herald	148		
Webster Niblock	174		
Vincent Massey	204	Between 200 - 299 students	6
George Davison	208		
Ross Glen	222		
Crestwood	286		
Christian School	286		
Dr. Ken Sauer	298		
River Heights	312	Between 300 - 399	2
Connaught	379		
AMS	421	400+ Students	4
DRWLC	727		
CHHS	1,177		
MHHS	1,297		
Traditional Schools	6,394		16

Enrollment Trends