

Let's Dig Deeper!

Summary of Meeting Held
January 14, 2010, École Greenfield School
Edmonton, Alberta

In May 2009 attendees at a community conversation in SW Edmonton hoped that the ideal COMMUNITY of 2030 would be ...

- SAFE
- Welcoming & Caring
- A place where everyone is in, and no-one feels excluded, a place where there is less poverty and fewer social problems, a place where everyone is valued and respected and where all cultures are celebrated.
- A place where people of all ages come together to do things, where they are involved and know their neighbours
- A place where we can get our needs met through appropriate services and supports.
- A place that is evolving and always open to new ideas.
- A place of opportunity!

And what about the ideal SCHOOLS in that ideal community of 2030?

Three main strands can be found in the vision of what the hallmarks of a great school will be in 2030 – a) what they will do for students, b) what they will have to be like so they can serve students well and c) the necessity of a strong connection between schools and community.

So, with respect to the first, in the schools of 2030, students will ... PROSPER. They will learn how to think (not regurgitate), learn how

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Introduction

On January 14, 2010, 45 people came together at École Greenfield School to continue a community conversation started in May 2009 about the sorts of schools and communities we – the village that it takes to raise a child – envision for 2030. In May the participants zeroed in on three areas of importance where “we” need to take action in the present to shape the future. Namely, they suggested we need to strengthen families, enhance innovative citizenship education, and improve communication. But what, exactly, is meant by those statements? On January 14, participants dug deeper into these topics.

During the first hour participants had the chance to hear and ask questions of three speakers: Susanne Frolek and the Familles Sub-Committee of the SW Community Mapping Group (Strengthening Families), Karen Linden, Principal of École Greenfield School (Enhancing Innovative Citizenship Education), and Councillor Don Iveson (Improving Communication). For the last hour, people self-selected into groups to discuss one of the three topics in more depth.

The wisdom of the speakers as represented in Q&A sections as well as the wisdom of the participants as captured from the table conversations on flip charts and from individual worksheets form the bulk of this report and have been compiled by theme on the following pages:

Strengthening Families (page 4)

Improving Communication (page 8)

Enhancing Innovative Citizenship Education (page 11)

Action Arising From This Meeting

Posting a WIKI – for Easier Sharing and Better Communication

In terms of Improving Communication and providing opportunities for active citizenship participation, I have started a wiki on behalf of “the village” in SW Edmonton. You can access it and contribute to it at

<http://swedmontonittakesavillage.wikispaces.com/>

For those of you like me who may have never used a wiki, a wiki is “a website that allows the easy creation and editing of any number of interlinked web pages... it is often used to create a collaborative website [and/or] to power a community website.” (Definition from Wikipedia, founded on this principle). As the original owner of the wiki, I will be notified of any changes to the wiki and will guard against any misuse, but my purpose is to encourage joint ownership by those in SW Edmonton – so that any and all may use the wiki

to talk about the three themes identified here, notify people about upcoming events, raise new issues pertinent to achieving the schools and communities we all want now and into the future (2030). The wiki will be as successful as those who visit it, add to it, and use it. Let me know what you think!

Carry on the Conversation – Face to Face

Thanks to the inspiration from a mother's group belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, who brainstormed on the subject of Strengthening Families *before* the January 14 meeting, I have committed to meeting with any small group who would like to keep the conversation going around these topics. As of March 2010, I have visited with students at Vernon Barford, George H. Luck, and Earl Buxton to find out their thoughts on Innovative Citizenship Education. You can see what they had to say on the wiki (under the Citizenship sub-theme page – menu bar at the right).

Another idea would be to have the conversation without me, and then post your ideas to the wiki directly.

Host a Book Discussion Related to Families

With respect to Strengthening Families, I am hosting a book study on *Hold On To Your Kids* by Dr. Gordon Neufeld and Dr. Gabor Maté for Wednesdays during April and into May. The first meeting will be on April 7. Please contact me if you are interested in joining.

Pass Along Your Ideas

On behalf of everyone at the meeting, I am sending the report and highlighting your suggested actions under each theme to the appropriate decision-makers. Specifically,

With respect to ideas for Edmonton Public Schools, I am sharing your ideas with the Superintendent and with my fellow trustees on the Board. I am also copying Trustee Marilyn Bergstra as she may see some good ideas for Edmonton Catholic Schools.

With respect to ideas for City Council, I am sharing your ideas with Councillors Bryan Anderson and Don Iveson.

With respect to the ideas for the Provincial Government, I am sharing them with our SW MLAs The Honourable Dave Hancock and Mr. Fred Horne.

With respect to the ideas for the Federal Government, I am sharing your ideas with MP James Rajotte.

With respect to ideas for our local community organizations, I am sharing your ideas with the Southwest Association of Community Leagues (SWAC) and TRAC (Terwillegar Riverbend Advisory Council)... and individual organizations cited.

With respect to ideas for our local schools, I am sharing these ideas with the principals and school councils in Ward H as well as with the Superintendent and my fellow trustees.

Draw on Your Ideas in My Decision Making

Continue to reflect on the values and ideas expressed by “the village” as represented here and in the “Let’s Talk the Future!” (Summer 2009) and “It Takes a Village” (Spring 2008) reports and use them in my decision making.

Thank you!

First, thank you to Al Parsons of Gray Scott Consulting (who has organized many consultation sessions for the City) who suggested that what I needed to do next after the May 2009

Ideal Schools & Communities of 2030... continued from page 1

to be flexible, learn how to be respectful of everyone. They will be connected to others around the globe, attain a good level of reading, writing, and math skills, but also life skills and citizenship skills from an early age. They will learn how to collect, evaluate and use information.

To enable this, the schools of 2030 will be welcoming and accepting. They will have high expectations for every single child. They will have all the tools and resources they require such as leading edge technology, ability to offer

good class sizes, excellent teachers who can adapt their teaching styles to match the needs of the kids, and programming and structure that is flexible. In short the schools of 2030 will be beautiful, sustainable, and joyful places to learn in.

Finally, very definitely, schools will still be connected to the community. They will be “gathering spaces for all ages” and places where everyone can go for education.

For further detail on what the May 2009 participants envisioned for their future schools and communities, please read the full “Let’s Talk the Future” report available online at

**[http://
swedmontonittakesavillage.
wikispaces.com/](http://swedmontonittakesavillage.wikispaces.com/)**

“Let’s Talk the Future!” meeting was to “dig deeper” and find out what people really meant by Strengthening Families, Improving Communication, and Enhancing Innovative Citizenship Education. Thank you, too, to Cheryl Miller and Marlene Haymour, whom I first met in conjunction with The Whitemud Coalition of Schools, for helping me work through an agenda for the evening.

Thank you to Principal Karen Linden who invited me to host the meeting at École Greenfield School and to the BLAST (Barford Leadership and Service Team) students who assisted with the set-up, clean-up, and the facilitation of the meeting. Their cheerfulness and willingness to roll with the evening as it unfolded were much appreciated! These students were Nikki Chau, Vic Chu, Oshin Gupta, Richard He, Angaha Kiran, Feifei Tian, Goutam Venkatramanan, Rose Wu, and Gloria Zhao. Also, thank you to Pat Proudfoot, their teacher, who helped me to find these students and arranged for a chance to brief and de-brief with them.

Last but not least, thank you to “the village” -- first, to those who expressed an interest in attending but who could not attend for a diversity of reasons: Mary Lou Andrais (ABC Headstart), Brad Baird (Community resident & parent/Ermineskin), Corinna Chetley-Irwin (Community resident/The Ridge), Terry Connolly (Richard Secord School Council), Vanessa Desa (Community resident/Brander Gardens), Andrew Happer (President, Blue Quill Community League), Marlene Haymour (Rhatigan Ridge resident), Kelly Hennig (ABC Headstart), Lindsay Kelly (Task Force on Community Safety, Co-Chair), Shelley Kwong (Community Recreation Coordinator, City of Edmonton), Artem Medvedev (NDP federal candidate for Edmonton-Leduc), Cheryl Miller (Community resident/Brander Gardens), Karan Nikhanj (Twin Brooks Community League), Christine Peters (Community resident/Brookside), Kathy Prusakowski (retired teacher), Barbara Jean Lake Ramnath (George P Nicholson School Council), Debra Scharff (Brookside School Council), Karen Stewart (Riverbend Junior High School Council), and Ariel Zola (Community Librarian, Whitemud Crossing Public Library).

And second, a HUGE thank you to all who participated on January 14 itself: Peter Adamski (Community member/The Ridge), Joyce Backstrom (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints), Sam Belony (teacher, dad), Sue Blocksidge (Riverbend Junior High School Council), Kathryn Burke (Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta/DS Mackenzie School Council), Mimi Chan (Evangel Baptist Church, SW Community Mapping Group), Kathleen Dempsey Glegloff (The River Community Church), Peter Dempsey (The River Community Church), Laurie Elkow (Principal, École Richard Secord School), Michelle Ewoniak (Parents at Greenfield School), Susanne Frolek (Community Services, City of Edmonton), Zanette Frost (Community Recreation Coordinator, City of Edmonton/SW Community Mapping Group), Bruce Gritter (The Ridge Community League/ The River Commu-

nity Church), Kate Gunn (REACH, City of Edmonton) Sanjay Gupta (Parents at Westbrook School), Karen Hann (Harry Ainlay School Council), Mike Hanna (Rotary/Greenfield resident), Margot Hrynyk (Lillian Osborne School Council), Don Iveson (Councillor, City of Edmonton), Colleen Knechtel (Greenfield, Avalon & Ainlay parent), Nayanika Kumar (United Cultures of Canada Association), Angele Leong-Sit (École Brander Gardens School), Karen Linden (Principal, École Greenfield School), Wendy Melnyk (SW Community Mapping Group/Alberta Correctional Services), Jason Openo (Edmonton Public Library/Whitemud Crossing), Deb Olmstead (Parents at Ainlay project), Ambere Rosborough (REACH, City of Edmonton), Pat Sawatzky (Community member/Duggan), Jeff Shin (Grade 10 student), Al Sibilo (Rotary), Latika Srivastava (Twin Brooks resident), Nigel Stevens (Superintendent, SW Division, Edmonton Police Service), Michael Tang (UofA student), Jeffery Tian (dad), Katie Turzansky (Edmonton Public Library/Riverbend), Mary Wagner (Community member/Riverbend).

In Conclusion

I appreciate the following comment that Pat Sawatzky, one of the attendees, sent me after the meeting:

“Not sure that I can think of something for each level [with respect to Strengthening Families], but I think you really have the right idea when you try getting together our local MLA, city councillors, public schools representative, general public, etc. to work on this issue. I believe we will only have strong families once all levels of government and all departments that deal with families and their issues, start working together. There have always been boundaries, finger pointing, and passing people on in the system, which does nothing for people in need. I’m not blaming people in the jobs, just the whole setup. It is not conducive to how families have changed so dramatically over the last two or three decades.”

I agree.... “We” (the village) need to work together more collaboratively and cooperatively, but I suggest that it is not just “government” and “elected officials” who must do this, but all of us. Truly, it takes the entire village to raise a child, and the Pre-Reading Package assembled for this meeting (available online at <http://swedmontonittake-savillage.wikispaces.com>) shows how much “the village” is already doing and how much we have to celebrate. And yet, there is still room for growth in the journey to our ideal schools and communities of 2030... or as one person said... *Why not 2010?*

If you have thoughts or ideas on how to keep the momentum building in smart, productive ways, please let me know. As someone wrote in their evaluation form for the January 14 meeting: *Keep going until proven otherwise!* OK!

SW MAPPING PROJECT: Q&A

Susanne Frolek writes:

Thank you all for your wonderful questions and interest in the South West Mapping Group, and in particular the Families Sub-Committee. We enjoyed sharing out project with all of you.

We received many questions some of which were similar so I tried to put them together into themes. As we are just at the beginning stage of working as a subcommittee, some of your questions were premature as to the stage of development of the project. I shared them with the group, and some of your questions point to areas that we had not yet considered. We are most appreciative of that.

What services will be offered to the participants in the pilot project?

Having noticed the lack of support services in the south west, the group decided to focus efforts on bringing satellite services into the schools where needed, and where possible. We are currently in the process of selecting the participating schools, so some of the programs will be contingent on the specific school populations as well as on available resources in the community. However, we envision that there will be a need for homework club, mentoring program, recreational program, Report Card Suppers.

Where does funding come from?

At this point we have very little funding. We are currently identifying agencies who are able to provide some "satellite" type program at a school. Typically this might be a service that they already provide, and we

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Strengthening Families

From one table at the May 2009 "Let's Talk the Future" conversation in SW Edmonton came the following family-related ideas as a key way to achieve a bright future for our community and schools in 2030.

We need to build strong families. Strong Families = Strong Communities

To kickstart the discussion around "Strengthening Families" on January 14, 2010, members from the Families Sub-Committee of SW Community Mapping Group spoke about their work to enhance services for families. The group is an inter-agency group that has been working together to create demographic and social maps of the SW area of Edmonton. Another connected sub-committee is working on enhancing services for Newcomers in SW Edmonton.

Members from the Families Sub-Committee in attendance included Susanne Frolek and Zanette Frost (Community Services, City of Edmonton), Mimi Chan (Evangel Baptist Church), Jason Openo (Whitemud Crossing Public Library), and Wendy Melnyk (Alberta Correctional Services). After they spoke, participants were then invited to write down questions for the group. Several questions were answered during the meeting and Ms. Frolek generously agreed to answer the unanswered questions in writing. Thank you to the participants for some great questions and to Ms. Frolek and the Families Sub-Committee for taking the time to respond.

Table Conversation & Written Feedback on "Strengthening Families"

On January 14, those discussing Strengthening Families as a way to realize the schools and communities we envision for 2030 completed the three statements: 1) A strong family is.... 2) The best way to build strong families is.... 3) To build strong families, (this government body/group/person) needs to.... Here are their thoughts...

A strong family is....

- Supportive to each other, full of hope.
- Loving and healthy.
- Where everyone is encouraged to learn and grow.
- The connection of generations.
- Spends quality time together (i.e. play).
- Where everyone has a strong sense of belonging.
- Parent and children living together.
- Healthy.
- A resilient family.
- Able to handle conflicts.
- Supported and feels part of a community.

The best way to build a strong family is...

- Engender Community friendliness and reduce stress for families.
- Help families find right balance of spending time with each other.
- Provide Community recreation opportunities; Denmark, for example, provides short, creative, cheap, recreational programs (which are different than the daily routine). These programs allow people to help each other out. Denmark has a better simpler life.
- Survey the resources of a community.
- By the community sticking together; encouraging people to meet their neighbours as opposed to visiting tourist places.
- Helping people know their neighbours (it takes years for communities to work together and create recreation centres and places for families).
- For families to spend time together (i.e. have meals together).
- To have open communication; to listen.
- To make friends (build community connections).
- To be supportive of each other.
- To have resources you can go to.
- To be aware of what helps.
- To build a substitute family.
- To teach parents about adapting.
- Focus on a balanced lifestyle and fitness.
- Organize frequent parent-teacher meetings to apprise the parent about the development of their child (and/or other issues about their child).
- Continue to explore the changing role of schools in the building community.
- Ensure teachers are supported as they are front line for many of the family issues. Teachers should not have to be social workers, psychologists, etc., but should be able to refer students to this type of help without red tape and huge costs to the individual schools, which in turns means the student will not get what is required.
- Make it clear to parents of faith that they can write a letter to the school board to excuse their high school ages children from CALM class based on religious reasons. CALM is a mandatory class and some of the components covered are great (such as budgeting and career planning) but a fairly large unit discusses sex education. My daughter has often defended her beliefs in this class (which I don't feel is a bad experience for her to have) but at times the activities have divided her against the entire class.
- Institute permission forms for movies being viewed in class, which would include the rating of movie and description of content. Some children report they are uncomfortable staying in a class when they feel the content is inappropriate to their family morals and values, but don't know if they can walk out.
- Re-examine the sibling rule for Junior and Senior High Schools and extend it from two to three years – i.e. if an older sibling is attending a Jr. High or Sr. High, a younger sibling who is three years younger could attend the same school, even if the family is out of boundaries and the older child has moved on. This would permit the relationships developed between the school (and teachers) and the family through the older sibling to continue for the younger child. Practically, EPSB would need to link students in family units in their Student Information System. Currently, they have no record of each student's siblings who attend public schools.
- Provide parenting education classes for parents – e.g. Love and Logic classes to help parents understand how to teach their children natural consequences, the importance of families eating at least one meal a day together, the dangers of violent video games, etc.

To build strong families....

In Canada, “the village” (that it takes to raise a child) is our democratic society. Our democratic society is made up of many different people, groups, organizations, institutions, and governments – all of which have specific roles to play in building strong and healthy communities.

To move from conversation to action, and based on the definition of strong families and our ideas about the best way(s) to build strong families,

Edmonton Public Schools needs to ...

- Work with partner community agencies to support families with programs such as after-school programs, mentorship programs.
- Open its doors for community-based activities – meeting spaces, gymnasiums, and other amenities (such as home ec rooms for cooking classes).
- Provide orientation to schools and create better understanding about school.
- Teach and empower leadership skills, communication skills, problem-solving skills.

- Consider instituting a dress code for teachers. Some students report that they are uncomfortable asking a female teacher for help because her top is too low and shows too much cleavage when she bends down.

Parents associated with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints group, who contributed some of the above ideas, also wanted to express thanks for the very good relationships they have with the administrators of their children's schools.

City Council needs to ...

- Use good urban planning principles when developing new communities. In Riverbend Terwillegar, for example, there are very few daycares, early childhood programs, after school programs, mentorship programs for newcomers.
- Facilitate the development and maintenance of community hubs (i.e. provide financial grants/subsidies).
- Build parks.
- Fund communities and build rec centres, build a library nearby.
- Have a balance, health & fitness focus.
- Value stable, two-parent families.
- Strengthen all families to build loving, caring relationships.
- Continue to support citizens and neighbourhoods and to engage them as true leaders in building a safe and connected city.
- Work more effectively with the school systems in providing space for recreation and meeting space for families.

The Provincial Government needs to ...

- Provide *leadership* in the area of family supports and community development. Encourage citizenship engagement!
- Ensure affordable childcare and also, allowances for those families that choose to have a stay at home parent.
- Tax more so it can offer more social programming.
- Fund education.
- Pay more for university and support communities.
- Have a balance, health, and fitness focus.
- Support the concept of strengthening families and make laws to strengthen marriage and families.
- Give supports to parents who are compelled to leave children alone because they have to go to work.

- Provide leadership, support vulnerable people and youth, and help the City and all communities better support families.
- Provide tax relief for working families, especially in the early years, ways for one parent to be home with children if they wish.
- Ensure access to post secondary education.
- Provide solid health care system.
- Allow parents to play a larger role in what is currently the curriculum for sex education. Making the assumption that all kids in the class will experiment and teaching abstinence is not appropriate. Teaching Abstinence should be the most important part of the teaching.

The Federal Government needs to...

- Model democratic principles!
- Provide adequate funding to support community initiatives (eg. Summer parks programming).
- Fund education; subsidize university education.
- Have a balance, health & fitness focus (fix inequities, unemployment versus people who are overworked and working 12 hours a day... need less hours of work).
- Strengthen families and communities by recognizing the need for laws that protect traditional families.
- Use its infrastructure to provide some support to working parents with child care issues.
- Support a prevention focus to community safety.
- Provide tax relief for working families, especially in the early years, ways for one parent to be home with children if they wish.
- Ensure access to post secondary education.
- Provide solid health care system.

Our local community organization, which is ...

- *Riverbend*, needs to work with local community agencies to provide opportunities for *bumping places* – community meeting places – as well as information about services in our neighbourhoods.
- *Blackmud Creek*, needs to build tennis courts and community centre; have more parks and rec programs; network.
- *Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, needs to support and engage with the community (eg the school board, city council, service organizations) and educate its members about opportunities to serve.
- *Duggan Community League*, needs to continue to draw

in young families, but keep older people participating in the community for their knowledge.

Our local school needs to ...

- Individualize student learning
- Build kids who are caring, confident, and have hope that they CAN change the world and their community
- Not quite sure. They seem to try and keep the community informed of what is happening within their walls. Probably need to allow more recreation/meeting space for families.
- Look at the amount of homework. Sometimes the sheer volume of homework that children bring home, especially for elementary-aged children, prevents families from spending time together in more productive ways. Homework should only review concepts covered in class and should not be a way to complete course work that teachers did not have time to cover in class.
- Consider lengthening the lunch hour so children can go home for lunch. For example, a few years back, École Greenfield School changed the school schedule, shortening lunch hour because most of the stu-

dents stay for lunch. This made it more difficult for the children who did go home for lunch. My children enjoyed coming home for lunch; it gave them a break from the school and me an opportunity to see them and how their day had been so far.

- Look at whether or not they have a dress code, whether it could be improved, and how it is enforced. The standards are quite low and not often enforced unless the wording on a T-shirt is inappropriate. Administrators seem more concerned with offensive slogans than covering the body. It would be nice if the entire dress code would be enforced, such as no spaghetti straps.
- RE: Christmas or “Winter Celebration” concerts. Within these concerts that include all the diverse religions found within public schools, welcome references to Jesus Christ’s birth. Focusing on the diversity of religious culture and practices would strengthen families.

I need to...

- Learn more about the needs of residents in our neighbourhoods. But even more, learn to build on

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want to focus the efforts of several agencies at a couple of schools. For example, YMCA, City of Edmonton, Edmonton Public Library.

Also we would hope to use community-based resources such as Service Clubs and Faith Communities. Our resource mapping has indicated that the South West has a rich resource in these areas.

It is important to note that this is NOT what one thinks of as a regular Out-of-School Program, but rather an effort to enrich the lives of children and create an environment where families can connect with each other in a positive way.

Where do Newcomers fit in?

There is also a Newcomers’ Sub-Committee with the South West Mapping Project that is working on some specific projects aimed at increasing accessibility of newcomers to the community at

large. Our project, while not focused specifically on newcomers, will include those families who would benefit from additional help in the after-school time period. Because the programs will be at the school, we see this as being more accessible to families who might otherwise have transportation issues, for example.

How do these programs strengthen families?

Research has shown that the more families make positive connections with the community, the more that they build something referred to as “social capital.” This refers to building quantity and quality of the social networks for an individual and/or family. This has been shown to be positively associated with the health and well-being of family members.

How will you get space for the program?

Part of the criteria for selecting a pilot school will be based on the available resources within the school, such as space, as well as the willingness and eagerness of the school staff to be involved in such a program.

How can I view the maps?

Go to the website:

www.mapsalbertacapitalregion.ca

I hope I have answered most of your questions. Should you have any more questions, please feel free to connect with me.

Susanne.frolek@edmonton.ca

780-944-5335

OPEN DATA: Q&A

Councillor Don Iveson writes:

Q: If the Open Data information (provided by the City) can be manipulated by anyone, what is to stop it from being altered incorrectly without consequences? (i.e. like Wikipedia)

A: *The city's data sets will be secure. If someone takes them and then alters them for their own malevolent purpose then this is their own fraud. In a debate about the facts the authoritative source will be the city. Basically, the city doesn't take responsibility for someone's misuse of the data acquired via open data - in the same way that someone who misrepresents, say, Federal Census data does so at their own peril and at peril to their argument.*

Q: How do you make sure that Open Data is going to be effective and accessible to everyone?

A: *I don't think that's a realistic standard. It's not for everyone unless everyone has internet access and the skills required to interpret and manipulate complex sets of information. The point is that those who do have access can do things with it that may serve the public interest, which is of value to everyone.*

Comment: Using current popular technologies as a venue to improve communication and connect people in positive ways is key to our future.

Reply: *Agreed, provided it's in balance with meaningful personal relationships....*

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Improving Communication

From three tables at the May 2009 "Let's Talk the Future" conversation in SW Edmonton came the following communication-related ideas as a key way to achieve a bright future for our community and schools in 2030.

Communities must educate the people who make decisions.

Communicate better.

We need to provide more opportunities for people to share the success stories that are already happening.

To kickstart the discussion around "Improving Communication" on January 14, 2010, Councillor Don Iveson spoke on OPEN DATA (i.e. making up-to-date government information freely available on-line in generically accessible data formats) and the City of Edmonton's new work in this area. Participants were then invited to write down questions for Councillor Iveson. He answered one or two questions during the meeting and generously agreed to answer the unanswered questions in writing. Thank you to the participants for some great questions and to Councillor Iveson for taking the time to respond.

TABLE CONVERSATION ON "Improving Communication"

On January 14, those discussing Improving Communication as a way to realize the schools and communities we envision for 2030 (or 2010!), first spoke in general terms about the importance of communication, and then completed the three statements: 1) We need better communication about.... 2) We need better communication between.... 3) To improve communication, (this government body/group/person) needs to....

General Comments about Communication

- Communication is the underlying factor of how everyday life goes on.
- It gives opportunities that are beneficial for life.
- As ways of communicating are growing, we need to concentrate on spreading out access to the various ways and make them accessible to all people; i.e. level the playing field.
- We need to increase knowledge and competency in using the various technologies.
- Communication needs to be close and honest

To achieve the schools and communities we want in 2030, we need better communication about...

- Our world, nation, province, and communities.
- Different perspectives about an issue.
- The future of human beings.
- Children taking action toward good actions and the results.
- Global understandings.

To achieve the schools and communities we want in 2030, we need better communication between...

- People.
- Service providers, government agencies.
- Parents/teachers and children (and guidance on what information they should grab).
- The two sides of the digital divide.
- Members of the general public.

To Improve Communication...

In Canada, “the village” (that it takes to raise a child) is our democratic society. Our democratic society is made up of many different people, groups, organizations, institutions, and governments – all of which have specific roles to play in building strong and healthy communities.

To move from conversation to action, and based on the aforementioned ideas about communication, to improve communication...

Edmonton Public Schools needs to ...

- Close the digital divide among schools.
- Improve teachers’ education as the leading group in our society.
- Let go of the ties to doing things “the way they have always been done.”
- Look outside of the organization.
- Be receptive in a really genuine way to the voices of parents/the public – perhaps this will happen through more formal adherence to IAP² standards.

City Council needs to ...

- Organize/arrange some activities for communication improvement, lead families and communities to better and better communication.
- Expand a collaborative spirit, especially to areas beyond recreation.
- Make its communication simpler. Get rid of the legalese and embrace and utilize new media and alternate strategies more fully.

The Provincial Government needs to ...

- Manage funding to keep schools up-to-date with technology.
- Make some specific policies to lead all families into the future strongly and full of hope.
- Have a real change to reflect ALL Albertans with strategies to hear and implement policies that are not

just geared to the party members.

- Support schools and families in having equitable access to technology and the online community.

The Federal Government needs to...

- Ensure people have access to basic methods of communication (phone, Internet).
- Do something to open some easy communication tools and methods.
- Makes it easy for everyone to give feedback (good or bad information).
- Merge information and communication tools with local and international sources.
- This is really tough. I don’t want to sound like an anarchist!

Our local community organization, which is ...

- *the Southwest community*, needs to inspire school students to communicate with their families, tell them useful information, and encourage them to attend some activities.
- *Riverbend*, needs to welcome newcomers and be open to new ideas. Encourage and regenerate involvement.
- *(blank)*, needs to invest more effort in communications; be creative in approaches, particularly in considering the audience so as to target the message to their need.

Our local school needs to ...

- Make sure technology is used to its fullest extent.
- Share space, services, equipment, people as a hub of the community.
- Organize some “communication” meetings; encourage parents to attend the meeting and learn new information.
- Realize that for ELL families material needs to be accessible/readable/understood by people for whom English is not the first language. Also, need to better use email, web, other strategies.

I need to...

- Make sure that technology is used to INCREASE productivity, not DECREASE.
- Support my children to attend leadership programs to learn more knowledge for the society.
- Speak up, get connected.
- Try harder.

Open Data: Q&A continued from page 8

Q: Is Open Data analogous to Farmer Call Centre?

A: *This was all I could find in reference to Farmer Call Centre (<http://www.angrau.net/FarmersCallCenter.htm>). I would say yes, philosophically.*

Comment: User manipulation of Open Data, although a highly salient concept, requires more transparency as to how those changes get taken up, used, and validated by the City.

Reply: *If the data is used for commerce, then the user has an interest in accuracy, unless there is fraud. If it's used in Academia, there is peer review. If it's used in the public interest or for advocacy, then if there is suspicion of improper use, it will be tested by the audiences of that advocacy. A degree of trust is required along with a measure of scrutiny.*

Q: Sometimes all of the electronic communication tools are very isolating. When I can't figure it out, where do I get help?

A: *The library might be a good resource in this area.*

Q: What are the two I-Phone applications built in Edmonton? Are they programmed by the City of Edmonton or private developers? If not, is the City planning on it?

A: *These two apps I mentioned were developed privately: <http://www.route411app.com/> <http://mystopsapp.com/> The city is developing a city app for reporting issues (e.g., potholes) and requesting service (e.g. Bylaw enforcement)*

but not for Transit.

Q: Can you see a possible sharing of community safety and crime stats through Open Data?

A: *The police share the info here: <http://crimemapping.edmontonpolice.ca/> - but it's not open in the fullest sense since they display the data, but don't post it for download and independent analysis. There's some interesting commentary on the restricted terms of use here: <http://blog.mastermag.ca/2009/07/16/edmonton-police-service-eps-crime-mapping-tool-now-online/> Decisions to do more here would fall to the Police Commission.*

Q: Is there one specific idea/area you'd suggest as a place to start to empower citizens?

A: *Frequent topic of interest: market value assessment information, which we're putting on line now.*

Q: How will the public be "educated" on the merits of Open Data? What is the communication "plan" and what will be the cost to the taxpayer?

A: *I am sensing sarcasm in this question but will answer it seriously: there is no planned expenditure that I'm aware of. We've so far relied on coverage in the press and word of mouth within the community of tech leaders.*

Q: How do you encourage everyone (family) to go through the Data page?

A: *Not sure the audience is that general, but some school projects could make use of some of the simpler data.*

Q: What would it take to "marry" city, school district, and provincial databanks?

A: *Two things: 1) availability of data from all the agencies; 2) someone of industry to build a tool to translate it and overlay it all and make sense of it as needed.*

(Comment) No question. Just a comment that Open Data seems to help bring about more open communication.

(Comment) Open data... Fantastic idea!

In March, Councillor Iveson also sent along the following link to a 5-minute set of neat examples of where the data is moving.

<http://www.ted.com/talks/view/id/788>

To explore Open Data in the Edmonton context further, please visit <http://data.edmonton.ca/>

Enhancing Innovative Citizenship Education

From one table at the May 2009 “Let’s Talk the Future” conversation in SW Edmonton came the following citizenship education idea as a key way to achieve a bright future for our community and schools in 2030.

We need innovative methods to engage students about citizenship and the importance of community involvement.

To kickstart the discussion around “Enhancing Innovative Citizenship Education” on January 14, 2010, Principal Karen Linden (École Greenfield School, Edmonton Public Schools) spoke on “The Leader in Me” program that the school has launched this school year. The program helps develop the essential life skills and characteristics students need in order to thrive in the 21st Century. It creates a common language within a school and is built on proven principle-based leadership skills found in Dr. Stephen R. Covey’s, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*:

Habit 1: *Be Proactive* – You’re in charge

Habit 2: *Begin with the End in Mind* – Have a plan

Habit 3: *Put First Things First* – Work first, then play

Habit 4: *Think Win-Win* – Everyone can win

Habit 5: *Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood* – Listen before you talk

Habit 6: *Synergize* – Together is better

Habit 7: *Sharpen the Saw* – Balance feels best

Participants were then invited to write down questions for Principal Linden. She answered one or two questions during the meeting and generously agreed to answer the unanswered questions in writing. Thank you to the participants for some great questions and to Principal Linden for taking the time to respond.

TABLE CONVERSATION on “Enhancing Innovative Citizenship Education”

On January 14, those discussing Enhancing Innovative Citizenship Education as a way to realize the schools and communities we envision for 2030 worked on completing three statements: 1) An engaged citizen is.... 2) The best way to educate an engaged citizen is.... 3) To educate engaged citizens, (this government body/group/person) needs to.... Here are the responses:

An engaged citizen ...

- Is aware of the community, outward looking.
- Is aware of their surroundings (e.g. of what factors enable or restrict community and individual growth).

THE LEADER IN ME: Q&A

Principal Karen Linden writes:

Q: Have you thought about linkages with groups and youth outside the school?

A: *We appreciate collaborating with other schools and agencies, and we are always looking for new opportunities. For example, on April 6th Greenfield is hosting a Leader in Me “synergy” meeting with other schools using/considering implementing The Leader in Me program.*

(Comment) I applaud your enthusiasm, but don’t share it. What worries me is our politicians and what little they are doing about climate change. What they are doing is undermining our children’s future.

Q: Could you define leadership? Not what a leader does (for example, the seven habits of highly effective people), but what is a leader at its simplest? I ask this because simplicity implies understanding, and you can only teach it when you understand it.

A: *A leader takes action to make a positive difference and helps to facilitate the success of those around him/her.*

How do we get “The Leader in Me” program into ALL elementary schools in Edmonton? Are there any plans to extend this program into other schools?

A: *This model is available for all schools to consider using with their students. It is exciting to hear that more*

...Continued on page 14

- Is empowered to take action.
- Educates him- or herself.
- Can see the needs and understands the first steps towards meeting the needs and following through on good intentions.
- Is open to new ideas and willing to try new things/hear new points of view.
- Is willing to express an opinion, not be afraid.
- Asks questions.
- Embraces change.
- Cares about others and wants to help those in need.
- Is informed and connected.
- Is willing to give (time, energy, etc.) and volunteer.
- Votes.
- Participates... specifically, participates in community functions and activities, invites others to the processes that produce sustainable change, and helps to monitor what effects and concerns change produces.
- Gives feedback actively (e.g. to educators and policy makers).
- Is a role model for children in his or her community; helps other less engaged citizens become more engaged.
- Shares ideas and knowledge.
- Is somebody who wants to know what is happening and wants to help improve problems in the community.
- Questions convention and doesn't settle for status quo.

The best way to educate engaged citizens is to...

- Assist them in networking and learning how other organizations do their work.
- Provide them with a variety of challenging experiences that require problem solving skills.
- Teach them about 21st Century social networking tools.
- Give them freedom to make their own choices.
- Let us educate each other.
- Help them improve, step up; Help them find the key they are looking for.
- Build systems that reward cooperation.
- Understand inter-dependency.
- Seek the win/win/win solutions.
- Provide education; provide opportunities for learning; make resources such as teachers, computers, In-

ternet available.

- Inspire them to educate themselves; let them ask questions & help them find the answers.
- Provide accurate and timely information; provide easy access to information.
- Make it relevant and meaningful (i.e. how does this impact THEIR community?).
- Inform them about the community meetings so that they can get involved.
- Empower children to think/act authentically.
- Lead by example and offer opportunity to be involved.

To educate engaged citizens...

In Canada, “the village” (that it takes to raise a child) is our democratic society. Our democratic society is made up of many different people, groups, organizations, institutions, and governments – all of which have specific roles to play in building strong and healthy communities. To move from conversation to action, and based on the definition of an engaged citizen and our ideas about the best way(s) to educate engaged citizens, the following bodies/groups need to do the following:

Edmonton Public Schools needs to ...

- Empower teachers in enabling citizenship education in the way they know works best.
- Let students learn from each other and lead their own learning.
- Take the lead and be confident in the decisions you make; lead the way as Edmonton Public Schools has some very knowledgeable and wise people.
- Initiate a citizenship program that will include all students within Edmonton Public Schools.
- Embrace change and have an open mindset.
- Consider merit-based systems for teaching profession (not just seniority), enhance integrity of profession.
- Provide more places, meetings etc. to share knowledge and information.
- STOP spending \$\$\$ on administrative programs that have no direct relation to the kids!! (such as, the multiple New Teacher Orientation meetings or endless mentoring meetings – ask your teachers what is really working!)

City Council needs to ...

- Respond to social movements and listen to the people.
- Spend more time in grassroots community organizations.
- Take charge as one city is different than another and they are closest to the problem.
- Decide what's best for different areas in the city.

The Provincial Government needs to ...

- Look closely at the provincial tapestry and where the innovative ideas are coming from.
- Give citizens of all ages free and open access to information.
- Let the City do the work and give them whatever they need.
- Enhance democracy by changing voting system to represent voters' wishes better (mixed member, proportional representation?).
- Be accountable and transparent.
- Support children who are our future leaders.
- Support schools, teachers, and children's programs, etc.
- Fund multi-year programs and evaluate them using NEW tools that reflect the VALUES of the communities they serve.

The Federal Government needs to...

- Create a national dialogue around the future WE want. It needs to invite provincial leaders to talk about what needs are present and how to level the playing field.
- Give citizens of all ages free and open access to information.
- Let the City do the work and give them whatever they need.
- Enhance democracy by changing voting system to represent voters' wishes better (mixed member, proportional representation?).
- Help children who are the future.
- Fund multi-year programs and evaluate them using NEW tools that reflect the VALUES of the communities they serve.

Our local community organization, which is ...

- *Blackburne Creek*, needs to look at the families present in the community and their needs.
- *Edmonton Public Library*, needs to become engaged in

the community as an active member, rather than an outside institution.

- (*blank*), needs to let Edmonton Public Schools take charge and provide them with what they need.

Our local school needs to ...

- Continue its good work and continue to build relationships in the community.
- Provide students with volunteer opportunities in the community.
- Be the eyes and ears that provide feedback the results to the policy makers.
- Provide learning opportunities that relate to curriculum and ensure they are aware of the value of citizenship. Ensure the whole school population is involved.
- Embrace technology and change.
- Let parents know all the things they do for children at school.
- Carry on its great work!
- Consider mirroring the "Leader in Me" program as at Greenfield (Brander parent).

I need to...

- Keep promoting social engagement.
- Volunteer in my community and at the very least, build relationships with my neighbours.
- Be more actively engaged in the community.
- Participate, learn what is new in education, converse with others.
- Continue what I am doing, participate when I can.
- Remember that it takes time to change systems and hearts.

Continued from 7 To Strengthen Families, I need to...

ASSETS that our residents represent. Also, I need to help people to become engaged at the neighbourhood level.

- Reach out to my community
- Survey community resources but not just for immigrants and disadvantaged; need to bring the bar higher for the rest of the demographics
- Spread the word about the needs in the community to church leaders and Edmonton Council of Local Women
- Spend more quality time with my kids.
- Take this information back to our new council about what's happening in SW Edmonton
- Stay informed and actively participate in my community and as a citizen of this province and country.

"The Leader in Me" Citizenship Education: Q&A continued from page 11

and more schools are becoming interested.

Q: I like the idea of teaching citizenship to young children. Will other schools be teaching this to their students, too?

A: Local and global citizenship is the heart of the Social Studies curriculum.

Q: It is wonderful to see the passion of leadership in the elementary level. How can we help this to continue into the higher grades? Seems as if the curriculum time doesn't allow this to continue.

A: Junior and senior high schools provide many opportunities for students to become involved in leadership. May I suggest you talk with the school principal and/or attend a school council meeting to find out more?

Q: What age are the student leaders?

A: Currently, our student government involves Gr. 3-6. Elections will be held in April, and we're expanding to include all K-6 classes.

Q: How are students chosen to be leaders in the Grade 3 – 6 classes?

A: We have a formal election process that takes place every April. The term of office is May 2010 – March 2011.

(Comment) RE: The Seven Habits Tree. Sounds great! I'm hoping that leadership learning touches all the children so they know and understand, like the ABCs. This is an empowerment that grows over a lifetime.

(Reply) Yes, all K-6 students will be involved in the Leader in Me. For our first step, our student leaders are teaching Gr. 3-6. This will expand to include K-2 this fall.

(Comment) I believe you are a truly dedicated principal. I find this rare and I am glad that you feel so strongly about our children's future. Indeed, hope is everlasting.

(Reply) Thanks so much, you are very kind.

Q: How can you inspire everyone to make a difference? What's your process of action?

A: I strive to champion all students, staff and parents to be solution-focused leaders. When ideas are suggested, I empower the leaders to make a plan!

Q: How can you involve the families of these students?

A: Great question! We have started including Leader in Me information in newsletters, displays around the school and at school council meetings. Students will continue to be empowered to "talk it up" at home. Perhaps next year, our student government could empower groups of students to offer parent workshops.

Q: How do you involve students/parents who are not interested and just want to stick to the traditional curriculum?

A: I am very grateful that I have not experienced students and parents who do not want to be involved in learning new skills that will help our young people to be successful in this changing world. I believe it's very important to always take time to help people understand why we want to do something so that they are clear on the desired results and benefits.

To carry on the conversation and contribute to it, please visit

<http://swedmontonittakesavillage.wikispaces.com/>

If you have questions or comments or ideas to share, please feel free to contact Catherine Ripley, Trustee, Edmonton Public Schools, Ward # 780-887-1002, Catherine.Ripley@espb.ca www.catherineripley.ca

Thank you for your time and reflection upon this report.