

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Let's Talk SCHOOL!
Let's Talk the FUTURE!
Let's Talk COMMUNITY!

In 2009
SCHOOL IS _____
Community is _____

In 2030
SCHOOL will be _____
Community will be _____

How do we get from 2009 to 2030?

YOU ARE INVITED
to a Community Conversation
Hosted by Catherine Ripley, Ward H Trustee
Edmonton Public Schools

Wednesday, May 20, 7 - 9 pm
Riverbend Community Centre
258 Rhatigan Road East

RSVP 780-887-1002 or Catherine.Ripley@epsb.ca by May 18
Please come prepared to fill in the blanks, share ideas, and
help shape PUBLIC EDUCATION into the future.

IDEAS FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION

On the evening of May 20, 2009, 34 people gathered in the Riverbend Community Centre in southwest Edmonton to participate in a community conversation entitled "Let's Talk Schools! Let's Talk the Future! Let's Talk Community!" hosted by me, Catherine Ripley, Ward H Trustee, Edmonton Public Schools.

This Community Conversation arose out of my ongoing passion for public education. Simply, the degree to which we are successful in educating our children today so they can fully develop their potential and take their place in the world as contributing and active citizens, the stronger, healthier, and happier our communities will be in the future. It also arose out of my deep respect for the wisdom of the community -- "the village" -- which is so necessary to hear and understand if we are to continue building a dynamic, responsive, and excellent public education system in Edmonton. The conversation was split into five main segments:

- (2009) School Is ... and people's values around what schools do (pages 4-6)
- (2009) Community Is ... and participants' values around the communities they belong to (pages 7-9)
- Looking to the Future: Food for Thought from Councillor Don Iveson
- (2030) Aspirations for our Communities and The Hallmarks of Excellent Public Schools (pages 10-12)

How Will We Get from 2009 to 2030?

A) Stumbling Blocks and B) Decisions, Actions and Initiatives that We Need to Take Now to Achieve the Communities and Schools We Want in the Future (pages 12-14)

From the energy and animation in the room, it was clear that the attendees appreciated the conversation and had many thoughts and ideas to offer. The entire conversation is captured here and offers much food for thought, especially for community and education leaders.

After the last discussion of the evening (What Actions, Initiatives and Decisions Do We Need to Take Now to Achieve the Communities and Schools We Want in the Future?) each of the five table groups was asked to pick their top choice for action. The five top choices were:

- We need to build strong families. Strong Families = Strong Communities
- 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.
- We need innovative methods to engage students about citizenship and the importance of community involvement.

Background on Conversation Format The organization of the Ward H conversation, which was focused around the strong connective interplay between public schools and communities both now and into the future, arose out of several parallel activities launched or underway during 2008-09: Edmonton Public Schools' SCHOOL IS... campaign, the Public School Boards of Alberta Association, and the Minister of Education's Inspiring Education dialogue.

The Spring 2009 SCHOOL IS campaign of Edmonton Public Schools was an innovative response to the Board's deep desire to reinforce the important role that public education plays in building strong and vibrant communities. The goal has been to rekindle people's memories of school and spark conversations about what public education means to them. Too often we take our public schools for granted! You can find out more about this campaign at www.school4you.ca.

Since 2007 The Public School Boards of Alberta Association (www.public-schools.ab.ca) has been helping trustees across the province "break out of old ways of talking about education and take the first steps toward developing a new approach...and explore how public education relates to what people want for the community and for children." Late in 2008 the organization developed a discussion guide called *Straight Talk* for use by trustees, which was a valuable resource in developing the Ward H conversation.

In Fall 2008, the Honourable Dave Hancock, Minister of Education, launched "Inspiring Education: A Dialogue with Albertans" (www.inspiringeducation.alberta.ca) which has given people across Alberta the chance to "exchange ideas, hopes and wishes for the future and for our students." I attended the first public session on April 29, 2009, and this experience was invigorating and useful in developing the Ward H conversation. The quote from Mahatma Gandhi (page 12) and the question "What actions do we need to take NOW to achieve what we want in the FUTURE?" (page 13) were derived from the Minister's event along with the introduction to Wordles (pages 5 & 9).

Next Steps

At the meeting I committed to share our collective findings with a variety of leaders and citizens. These include:

- The participants (and with those who had signed up to come but had a conflict),
- My fellow colleagues on the Edmonton Public Schools Board of Trustees and the Superintendent of Schools so as to inform our decision making into the future,
- The Minister of Education and the Co-Chairs of the Inspiring Education dialogue,
- The elected officials working in Southwest Edmonton (MP James Rajotte, MLAs Fred Horne and Dave Hancock, Councilors Bryan Anderson and Don Iveson, and Edmonton Catholic Schools Trustee Marilyn Bergstra),
- The Public School Boards Association of Alberta,
- The Alberta School Boards Association,
- Ward H Edmonton Public School Council Network representatives and Ward H Principals,
- SWAC and TRAC,
- Visitors to *catherineripley.ca*, and
- My Insights email group (a group of people, primarily from Ward H, who have signed up to receive information about upcoming Board decisions and public education events).

Other next steps, still under exploration, might include:

- Hosting the conversation all over again within smaller geographic regions of the southwest community and make the conversation more specific i.e. Let's Talk George P. Nicholson School! Let's Talk the Future! Let's Talk Twin Brooks!
- At such a meeting, encouraging the use of the Developmental Assets list mentioned on page 14 as a way of looking at strengths and weaknesses of a community (Thanks to Christine Peters for this idea).
- Hosting a follow-up conversation to explore three key areas identified in the top five areas of action (see page 2): 1) Communication (how to do it better, venues for sharing success stories, making it two-way and meaningful) 2) Building Strong Families, and 3) Innovative ideas on Democratic Citizenship Education.
- Hosting an electronic discussion on these issues and thus creating a place to track what other people are doing now to create a better brighter future.

Thank you

Thank you to the following people who contributed their ideas and energy in discussing their values and their aspirations for schools and communities in 2009 and 2030. Most live in southwest Edmonton, and many are also working or volunteering to support children, youth, families, excellent public education, and strong communities. Also, a special thank you to the five recorders of the evening: Vanessa Desa, Samantha Gabrys, Teresa Harder, Christine Peters, and Jeff Shin. They worked hard!

Syed Afzal
 Rob Agostinis (President, Terwillegar Riverbend Advisory Council)
 Ibrahim Alnaami
 Karna Antoniw (Youth Librarian, Whitemud Crossing Public Library)
 Joyce and Rune Backstrom (Edmonton Local Council of Women, Church of Latter Day Saints)
 Brad Baird (Greenfield School Council)
 Jon Connell (Holy Trinity Riverbend Anglican Church)
 Vanessa Desa (Strategic Alliance for the Advancement of Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth)
 Laurie Elkow (Principal, Richard Secord School, Edmonton Public Schools)
 Samantha Gabrys (Student, Riverbend Junior High)
 Kate Gunn (Riverbend resident)
 Teresa Harder (Westbrook School Council)
 Jackie Hildreth (Assistant Manager, Riverbend Public Library)
 Fred Horne (MLA, Edmonton Rutherford)
 Don Iveson (City of Edmonton Councillor, Ward 5)
 Lindsay Kelly (Co-Chair, Edmonton Task Force on Community Safety)
 Shelley Kwong (Community Recreation Coordinator, City of Edmonton)
 Nandita Kumar (Student, Vernon Barford)
 Nayanika Kumar (United Cultures of Canada Association)
 Carmen and Paul Leung (Riverbend residents, Edmonton Regional Coalition for Inclusion)
 Sara Macala (Student, Vernon Barford)
 Karan Nikhanj (President, Twin Brooks Community League)
 Pat Martin (George H. Luck School Council)
 Deb Olmstead (RN, Harry Ainlay School Council)
 Tammy Lynn Peters (Terwillegar resident)
 Christine Peters (Riverbend resident, retired Assistant Principal)
 Selina Rawe (DS Mackenzie parent, Omniglobe Books)
 Baldwin Reichwen (Greenfield resident)
 Chris Simonson (Supportive Networks and Families Subcommittee Co-chair, Edmonton Task Force on Community Safety)
 Latika Srivastava (Twin Brooks resident)
 Katie Soles (Riverbend resident)
 Jeff Shin (Student, Riverbend Junior High)
 Michael Tang (Student, Centre High)
 Heather Tansem (Teacher, Aspen Gardens resident)
 Katie Turzansky (Community Librarian, Riverbend Public Library)
 Harry and Mary Wagner (Riverbend residents)
 Alisa Wheeler (Community Recreation Coordinator, City of Edmonton)

Those who expressed interest in attending but were unable to include: Councillor Bryan Anderson, Jay Ball (Executive Director, Junior Achievement), Les Brost (Former Trustee), Shaun Fielding (Riverbend Community League), Bruce Gritter (The River Community Church), Jenny Peetoom Haida (Elmwood School Council), MLA Dave Hancock, Marlene Haymour (Rhatigan Ridge resident), Angele Leong-Sit (Brander Gardens School Council), Cheryl Miller (Brander Gardens resident), Matthew Rolheiser (Excel Society), MP James Rajotte, Jason Rolfe (Blackmud Community League), Pat Sawatzky (Harry Ainlay School Council), Superintendent Nigel Stevens (Edmonton Police Services).

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SCHOOL IS....

...where you explore your talent and wisdom and achieve your potential.

... a place to make friends.

... a community-based support system to parents' efforts to educate their children.

... a treasure box holding daily discoveries for all children.

... a place where children prepare to be productive adults while having fun.

... an unique interruptive experience for each child

... an environment that fosters growth, discovery and opportunities for all.

... work.

... a place to open doors for myself.

... the doorway to knowledge.

... a place for learning and a place for children.

... a place for education and a place to make friends.

... life.

... fun, learning, and making friends.

... the heart of the community.

... where passion grows.

... where the brain gets excited.

... the place where you meet your first role models.

... where my son has the opportunity to maximize his potential.

... the place where I feel safe and connected.

... the place where you learn about the world, good and bad.

... my life.

... a learning centre.

... a place that prepares people for a successful life and builds character.

... where literacy and citizenship is taught and kids learn to be the society of the future.

... where we learned to ask questions

... where you meet new people and make social connections.

... where you build important life skills.

... intangible learning opportunities.

... where you learn to make mistakes rather than not trying.

SCHOOL IS _____.

Click here to fill in the blank
school4you.ca

Take Two: Here is what schools do that we value....

Teach discipline and fair play.

Kids are able to walk to school.

Teach children how to socialize.

The expectations.

Help children develop healthy relationships.

The changing of schools to be more environmentally conscious.

Give kids the opportunity to discover what they are good at.

Enculturate

Build self esteem and confidence.

Provide education, socialization, friendship.

Provide an understanding of community and Canada.

They create opportunities for a brighter future.

Contain committed professionals.

Fostering of critical thinking.

Provide extra curricular in schools/community.

Supports for families.

Teach about becoming good citizens.

Teaching of appreciation and acceptance for differences and diversity.

Create discipline in kids.

They inspire children; they provide inspiration.

Provide diverse learning opportunities.

Brain modeling.

Present many challenges.

Foster fitness.

Push you to achieve more and do your best.

Provide a space where everyone can belong.

Teach guidance and provide role models.

Foster independence.

Give opportunities to meet new people.

Fostering of independent thought and research skills.

Curriculum and its delivery is changing a lot for the better

Ability to adapt to cultural, technological, and other changes.

Improving technology (As technology improves, it is benefitting kids but only to a certain degree.)

Teach, educate; Occupy the children.

Leadership and citizenship development

Motivate students to learn and develop their talents.

As the curriculum changes, they need to ensure a global education (and be careful what they take out)

A place for where life skills are taught – social skills, friends, culture.

That schools are public!!!

Physical education/sports.

The safety of schools (that ensures no bullying and a good environment)

Opportunities for programs children won't have access to at home: band/clubs/choir/arts and culture.

COMMUNITY IS...

In this segment of the conversation, participants were reminded that community means different things to different people, and everybody is a member of different communities in their lives. People can be members of geographic neighbourhoods, such as Yellowbird or Blackmud Creek or Twin Brooks or Terwillegar. They are also members of larger geographic political units such as wards or ridings. In addition most people belong to “communities of choice,” which are rooted in common interests or beliefs. Examples include faith communities, arts groups, environmental groups, business associations, etc. Participants were invited to take turns telling their group the name of one of the communities they belong to, and then finish the sentence, “Community Is....”

I belong to the cultural community and for me, community is a place to retain my history.

I belong to the sports community and for me, community is a place to learn lifelong habits for a healthy lifestyle.

I belong to the business community and for me, community is a place where people can lead.

I belong to a religious community and for me, community is a place to get support and fellowship.

I belong to the marriage encounter community and for me, community is a place to be with like-minded people.

I belong to a group passionate about immigrant and refugee children and youth and for me, community is striving to be even better.

I belong to a language community and for me, community is a foundation for literacy and language development.

I belong to the education community and for me, community is fundamental for character building.

I belong to the education community and for me, community is important for teaching innovation in learning and teaching styles.

I belong to a neighbourhood community and for me, com-

munity is about building relationships, connecting, and keeping safe.

I belong to the disability community and for me, community is about advocating for and empowering everyone to be valued in society.

I belong to the Twin Brooks community and for me, community is a place for people to come together outside of work and school.

I belong to the Twin Brooks community and for me, community is a place to get to know the people around you.

I belong to the Blue Quill community and for me, community is a place to socialize and share.

I belong to the Promontory Point community and for me, community is a place to watch out for each other and work together.

I belong to the Twin Brooks community and for me, community is a place of support and belonging.

I belong to the Glastonbury community and for me, community is a place where one plays, lives, socializes, and feels safe.

I belong to the Riverbend United Church community and for me, community is a place where people feel connected and have a sense of belonging.

I belong to the Terwillegar community and for me, community is a place to meet different people, learn, and socialize.

I belong to the Ermineskin community and for me, community is friendly and a dog walking group.

I belong to the Greenfield School community and for me, community is enrichment.

I belong to the university community and for me, community is connection.

I belong to the Twin Brooks community league and for

me, community is like a larger family and looking out for each other (BBQ, Block Watch).

I belong to the Church of Latter Day Saints community and for me, community is being in a group with common goals.

I belong to the Church of Latter Day Saints community and for me, community is a group with common faith and goals that helps support each other through the thick and thin of life.

I belong to the Westbrook School Council community and for me, community is working together to make school the best place for all children.

I belong to the Whitemud Crossing library community and for me, community is a network of support.

I belong to the community and national safety community and for me, community is inspiring and supportive, pushing change and new ideas.

I belong to the health care community and for me, community is connecting with others across the country.

I belong to the school community and for me, community is a foundation for scholarships and gives me the opportunity to give back.

I belong to the community of Canmore and for me, community is an extension of family and a feeling of belonging.

I belong to the character education community and for me, community is being safe behind open doors.

Take One: Here is what we value about the communities we belong to....

(Twin Brooks) Getting together and hosting events, clubs, teams, etc.; connection regardless of diversity; feeling safe; opportunities that meet everyone's interests.

(Glastonbury) Parks, lakes, trails in the community, sports and events, socializing within the community, access to services (business)

(Terwillegar) Feeling safe, teams (sports)

(Blue Quill) Activities; bringing people together

(Community with parents who have children with disabilities) Learning together, supporting each other; sharing experiences

Extended family

Network of support

Connecting with others beyond geographically

Sharing of ideas

Safe behind open doors

Sense/feeling of belonging

Opportunity to give back

(Southside community) In the absence of family, we have become each other's family and we're LUCKY to have this.

Networking through activities and volunteering, and many opportunities to do this.

Feel like you know everyone

Difficult to build community due to amount of people/families moving

Feeling of security and safety within community

Nice to have a big "HUB" in the community (school)

Ability to have events/ac-

tivities in the community

(Cultural) Enriches family and personal life and tells who we are

(Sports) Values diversity, teamwork, sportsmanship, fair play, achieving your best

(Business) Spheres of influence, vast amount of resources for individuals

(Religious) Fellowship and support

Support

Safety

A voice

A united front/common purpose

Someone you can count on

Friendliness

Helping

Shared similar abilities

Mutual respect

Diversity

Considerate

Tolerance

Problem solving/looking for creative solutions for challenges

A homey feeling

Peace

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

In 2030 we hope our community will....

- ... be safe.
- ... be welcoming environment despite the differences.
- ... live multiculturalism where events don't exclude groups.
- ... be more connected.
- ... be multi-abled (people with different abilities, accessibility).
- ... have community members more involved in safety.
- ... be demographically sustainable.
- ... demonstrate closeness, less isolation.
- ... have more participation from members.
- ... have accessibility in all communities throughout Edmonton.
- ... be a place where everyone is valued, where respect is shown toward everyone.
- ... be engaged into making good decisions to benefit everyone.
- ... sustain social connections within the community.
- ... be diverse.
- ... be walkable.
- ... be multigenerational.
- ... be inclusive/accepting/welcoming.
- ... be caring.
- ... be safe.
- ... be a place to get our needs met (services, supports) for all ages.
- ... be wraparound.
- ... be a place for opportunity.
- ... celebrate all cultures.
- ... be inviting, safe, accessible.
- ... lots of activity because it makes the community come together.
- ... involve seniors in the community and in events/activities.
- ... bring people together more, ie. small communities within BIG communities.
- ... demonstrate more respect in the community through its closeness.
- ... use all the buildings around us to the community's benefit (utilize the community

- resources).
- ... have schools that can be used by the community.
- ... be more welcoming for ANYONE.
- ... have improved transit in our community.
- ... be thriving and growing (still here!).
- ... be integrated into school life and space (joint use).
- ... be united around similar goals.
- ... be respectful of all members' visions.
- ... be enriched and sustained by the next generation.
- ... be truly caring and connected, taking collective responsibility for children, seniors and all.
- ... live the "it takes a village" philosophy, rural attitude.
- ... be a place where everyone feels they belong/inclusive.
- ... be better informed and connected to immediate technology.
- ... be evolving and continually improving, open to new experiences and change.
- ... be demographically diverse.
- ... still be here.
- ... still be vibrant.
- ... be functional for all/children to adults.
- ... be diverse.
- ... be walkable to services/schools.
- ... remember "local" and still be connected to neighbours.
- ... be a greener environment.
- ... have a slower pace.
- ... be safe.
- ... have less poverty, fewer social problems.
- ... show good citizenship.
- ... be a strong support system.
- ... continue to maintain what values we hold special
- ... be adaptable – services for all, hospital/library....
- ... value family units/ traditional and diverse.
- ... be educated.
- ... invite more involvement from members.

The feedback in this report clearly shows that to improve schools, we definitely need to work on a multifaceted approach where building a stronger sense of community is a key component to any of the plans.
From Christine Peters, one of the attendees, July 9

In 2030 we believe the hallmarks of excellent public schools will be....

- ... that all students are successful (but there will be a different meaning of success than at present).
- ... that they have all the tools and resources needed to help students achieve.
- ... that they provide a place for students to realize their potential and a variety of learning.
- ... that there is application of learning in real life (careers).
- ... more focus on character building.
- ... technology that shortens the time to learn something.
- ... a good level of reading, writing, and math skills.
- ... innovative teaching techniques to interest kids more.
- ... diverse ways of evaluation.
- ... that all students are welcomed and valued as members of the school.
- ... good class sizes.
- ... leading edge technology that connects students to the world
- ... that community resources are in schools.
- ... that schools are open & accessible to the community.
- ... collaboration of community-based organizations and government to support after-school initiatives.
- ... that they are places to strengthen family units.
- ... that they reflect diversity (students and staff).
- ... that they are beautiful, sustainable, and joyful.
- ... that they focus on thinking, not regurgitation.
- ... more citizenship within schools.
- ... people engaged more in citizenship.
- ... the ways they make students and parents more involved in education in spite of the grade level.
- ... that they are more connected to community.
- ... an increased emphasis on each kid realizing their potential, i.e. making it a part of school for kids to discover their talents and create programs for them to prosper.
- ... the encouragement of social interaction, more parent/teacher interviews, and volunteering.
- ... the encouragement of flexible and creative thinking
- ... that they teach kids skills that allow them to use the skill in everyday life; confidence in using those skills (through application).
- ... global connectivity where students learn/accept the other countries in the world.
- ... that they teach you how to use the information and gather it in today's world.
- ... that they are shared with the community.
- ... that they are open evenings and weekends.
- ... that they are gathering spaces for all ages in the community.
- ... the daytime use that engages parents.
- ... that they are the space that parents and other community members go to for education.
- ... that they counter negative influences.
- ... that they are places where children learn responsibility (parental perspective) and values of family relationships, showing respect.

- ... a curriculum that includes public speaking, motivational skills, and leadership training so students feel empowered.
- ... that they are places where students learn successful life values and skills.
- ... that young and old people are learning business skills.
- ... their high expectations that they will support ALL children to succeed to their fullest potential.
- ... they are inclusive of all the children in the community who want to attend.
- ... they offer progressive career and life management from an early age.
- ... their innovation, adaptability, flexibility.
- ... that they are accepting.
- ... their integrated programs that work for all children i.e. allow children to access classes that they need for success.
- ... that they have more flexibility in programming and accessibility than in 2009.
- ... that they teach skills needed after our education to make it in society, so that as a group of students we can make society work.
- ... that they are greener schools: they use thermal power, recycle paper, etc.
- ... that they are the focal point of the community, the hub.
- ... that there is increased participation and involvement, the school and community are integrated.
- ... their teaching styles that promote successes in learning in both genders.
- ... the teaching of citizenship, values and leadership.
- ... hands-on learning.
- ... their mentorship/technology.
- ... their modelling of respect for humanity.

HOW WILL WE GET FROM FROM 2009 TO 2030?

"The future depends on what we do in the present."

Mahatma Gandhi

Each group brainstormed the barriers and then the actions and initiatives they thought "we" needed to take. Then each group was asked to identify THE most important action that would ensure a bright future for community and schools in 2030.

The five top choices were:

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

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.

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

First, what are the stumbling blocks to achieving our dreams for public education?

- Different method of managing school populations
- Better teachers to keep kids interested, more teachers (core/option)
- Financial problems; put more \$\$\$ into education
- Green school (Lillian Osborne)
- Push/pull factors to achieving higher learning
- Redefine childhood to lower dropouts
- Teaching techniques not meeting all students
- Funding
- Government limitations
- Existing school architecture
- Silos (lack of connectedness)
- Social factors (equality, socioeconomic status)
- Bill 44
- Lack of engagement by many levels of community
- Apathy
- Pace of society
- Demands of society
- Government
- No clear process for change management
- Apathy
- Getting things implemented
- Tunnel vision, seeing things in a very limited way, fear of changing
- Conversation is good but we need to work together to create action
- So many different things that are going on that we could be putting first
- Message from the public needs to be brought to the government's attention, implement what it is important to community members.
- Need to educate officials with respect to community concerns
- Jurisdictional issues
- Lack of dollars, space and personnel
- Boundaries and territorialities "Who does the space belong to?"
- Improved mentorship role for teachers through more training
- Teachers need to want/have "the passion"
- Involve other supports "to create the village" (businesses, seniors, peer tutoring)
- Lack of shared values and vision between school and community
- Distribution of funds
- Lack of coordination between complementary learning
- Lack of opportunity for collaboration
- Competing/incompatible agendas
- Lost sight of the common good, i.e. "all children"
- Lack of gender segregation
- Money/better management
- Resources/stakeholders/time
- Apathy, feeling that "you can't make a difference"
- Communication: "I didn't know I could be involved in my children's education"
- Working in separate silos
- Partnerships need to be fostered
- Understand where we are and where we are going
- Need to adapt to changing world
- Need a vision
- The fear of trying new things
- Transitions
- Resources for integration of children of all ages, nationalities, diversities
- More collaboration with businesses to meet life/work balance
- Lack of sense of appreciation and love for the community, for our country, need to do better for our country, be more patriotic, take more pride.

Second, what initiatives, actions, or decisions do we need to take in 2009 to achieve the schools and community we want in 2030?

Turn the page....

Here is what “we “ think we need to do...

- Be the government; become more active in influencing decisions made.
- Become informed and more conscientious about the issues.
- Share ideas.
- More involvement in government meetings to deliver knowledge to the citizens.
- Make kids realize the importance of education and voicing opinions.
- Learn about citizenship as a child.
- Create innovative methods of engaging students in teaching kids about citizenship and involvement.
- Provide more opportunities for groups of people to get together for talking, sharing.
- Expand who is invited to these meetings/discussions.
- Survey families in the community (i.e. what would it take to get them engaged)
- Share and highlight success stories.
- Processes for change need to be defined, and then the processes for ownership of that change need be in place.
- Start with public/community, educate them, invite them to bring their concerns.
- We need to define the scope of where it starts and ends.
- Changes need to be timely and efficient.
- Need to educate the decision makers so they can make informed decisions.
- Better communication through all the parts of the education system.
- Find ways and a leader to unite people around one action.
- School trustees need to find ways to improve communication.
- Ask parents what they can do for the school more effectively.
- Build communication and trust and good relationships with parents and community.
- Be open to pilot initiatives.
- Find ways to bring families and communities together within school space.
- Involve communities and schools in joint after-school programs.
- Work together/develop partnerships where we are all working collaboratively to raise a child to be an educated child/a better community.
- Break down the walls/barriers.
- Keep family intact through support. More focus on the value of family. To support a family whatever situation they are in.
- Focus on Parents: teach skills on how to be successful parents, i.e. Missouri program Parents as Teachers. (Visit www.parentsasteachers.org and read ABOUT US for background).
- Reset the foundation: Family success = community success.
- Communication with parents, teachers, students.
- Become involved with school board /school councils.
- Implementation of 40 Developmental Asset fundamentals. <http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets>
- Make school planning broader than parents and staff/open it up to other stakeholders.
- Create awareness that people can make a difference, get involved, and make your community better.

What can you do today to impact our collective future? Please send your ideas and the actions you take to Catherine.Ripley@epsb.ca. Thank you!