



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (PUBLIC)
Report No. 19-015

Date: 4 February 2019

Report on the 2019-2023 Strategic Planning Consultations

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PURPOSE:

1. To provide an update on the feedback received to date on the strategic plan consultation.

CONTEXT:

2. Consultation on the strategic plan is a system-wide initiative. The consultation strategy was detailed in Report 18-106 and included 4 phases:
 - Pre-consultation October/November 2018
 - Idea Exchange November/December 2018
 - Developing Strategies and Action January 2019
 - Feedback on Draft Plan May 2019

The pre-consultation and the Idea Exchange are complete and the Strategies and Action stage is underway. This report provides an overview of the feedback received in each of those stages and is one of the data sources that will help to inform development of the next strategic plan.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

Idea Exchange

3. The Idea Exchange involved a community wide online conversation using the Thoughtexchange interactive platform. This tool allows stakeholders to share their thoughts, learn about the thoughts of others, and help to identify common priorities. The exchange can be accessed by participants at any time of day, from any location with internet access, and is an ideal way support participation of large groups, and those stakeholders who may not be able to attend meetings in person.

During the Idea Exchange, there were four audience groups – parents, students, staff and community members. To facilitate the conversations, the size and membership of each conversation was structured as follows:

- Staff (3 conversations – elementary staff; secondary staff; centrally assigned staff);
- Parents (8 conversations – 4 elementary parents; 4 secondary parents);
- Students (2 conversations – students grades 7/8; students grades 9-12)
- Community (1 conversation)

In addition to ensuring a manageable size, this allowed people with common interest and experiences to be involved in conversation together.

All participants were asked the following three questions:

- What are some things the OCDSB is doing well to support learning and well-being?
- What are some ways the OCDSB could improve the way we support learning and well-being?
- What are some important priorities for the OCDSB to focus on for the next four years?

Participation in the Idea Exchange

4. This stage began on November 21 and closed on December 17, 2018.

A variety of mediums were utilized to communicate about the consultation process, including email; media; information letter distribution; School Council Newsletters; and websites. The timeline for the online engagement was extended and regular reminders were sent to increase participation levels.

Additionally, a number of steps were taken to reduce systemic barriers and facilitate participation by communities traditionally less engaged. This included the availability of parent information letters in multiple languages; making an SMS text translation feature available; and most importantly, engaging the support of the Multicultural Liaison Officers (MLOs). Through the support of the Family Reception Centre, we were able to collaborate with MLOs to provide strong support for families at the Family Reception Centre and in schools. This commitment contributed to making the consultation process a success.

The diagram below shows the participation figures for the online engagement through



Thoughtexchange:

Figure 1 - Participation Summary

Over 6000 people participated in the conversation. One area where we made important gains in terms of participation was with students.

- Students – 1020
- Staff – 1151
- Parents – 4129 (3035 elementary; 1094 secondary)
- Community - 289

What we heard - Online

5. The feedback from the Idea Exchange is reported by theme. Six Top Themes were identified including Curriculum, School Environment, Teaching and Learning, Student Supports, HR & Board, and Extra-Curricular and Physical Activity. Each theme has multiple sub-themes. The following table provides a listing of the themes with the sub-themes listed below. Appendix A provides some explanatory notes about the range of issues within each theme and/or sub-theme. (Top themes include thoughts with an average star score of 3.6 or higher).

TOP THEMES					
Curriculum	Teaching & Learning	School Environment	Student Supports	Extra C & Physical Activities	HR & Board Level
Math	Class Size	Aggressive Behavior	Mental Health	Outdoor Activity	Staffing
Modernize Curriculum	Technology	Facilities	EAs & Support Staff	More Physical Activity	Professional Development
Core Curriculum	Instructional Quality	Equity & Diversity	Classroom Supports	Variety of Activities & Clubs	Board Level Administration
Life Skills	Differentiated Learning	Culture	Wellness Strategies	Sports	Workload
Special Education	Instructional Practice	Safety	Mental Health Professionals	Benefits of Extracurricular	Funding
Career Pathways	Learning Environment	Board Level Communication	Assessment & Testing	Field Trips	Staff Mental Health

Kindergarten	Reporting	Gender Inclusive	Learning Support Programs		
Equity & Standardization		Class level Communication	IEP		
Electives		School Level Communication	Extended Day Programs		
Learning Skills		Communication Tools & Events			
Arts		Schedule			
French Immersion		Transportation			
Resources					
Specialty Programs					
Indigenous History					

Table 1 - Summary of Key Themes

6. The four (4) themes which represent the largest areas of conversation across all (14) exchanges were Teaching and Learning, Curriculum, School Environment, and Student Support. The following Bar Chart conveys stakeholders' views in response to all three questions about the OCDSB's performance, and its priority areas of focus for the next four (4) years.

These themes and the specific thoughts which generated them can be explored in more detail using the links on the district website.

Question1- What we do well

7. The following bar graph displays the top themes in response to Question 1. The top thoughts in this area speak to supportive learning environments with great teachers; dedicated office staff; promoting multi-cultural environments; breakfast clubs; and availability of technology for students.

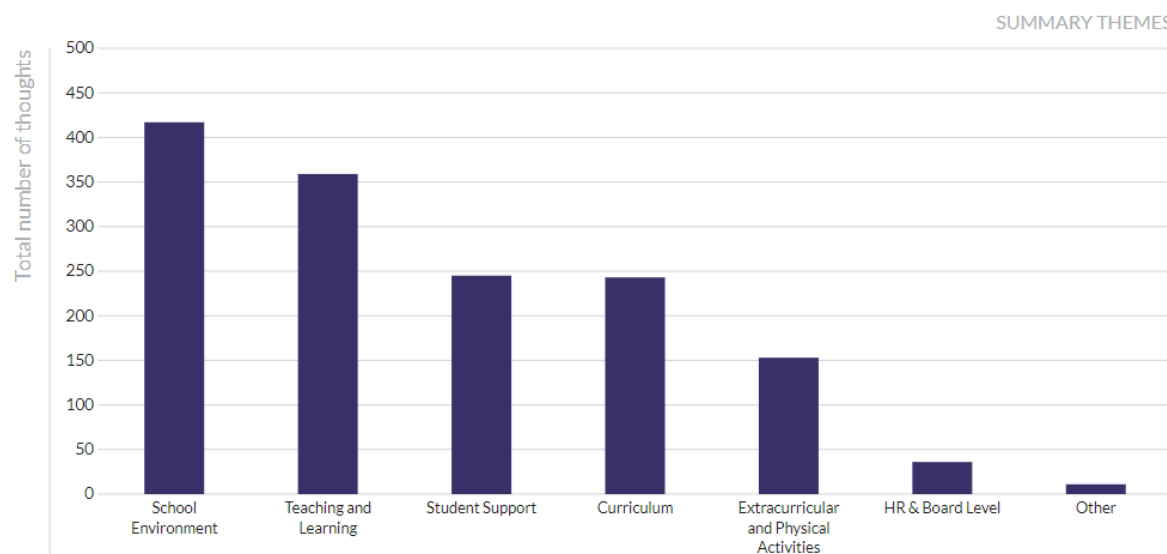


Figure 2 - Question 1 Top Themes

Question 2 – Where we can improve

8. The following bar graph displays the top themes in response to Question 2. The top thoughts in this area speak to support for smaller class sizes; the challenges associated with behavioural needs; the need for more classroom supports and resources; the age of technology

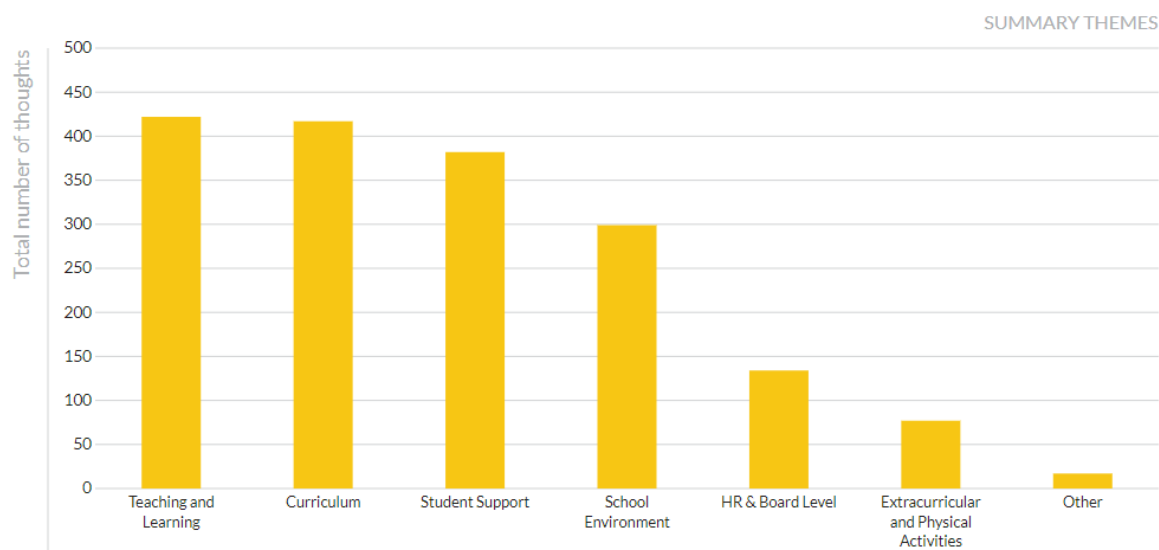


Figure 3 - Question 2 - Top Themes

Question 1 vs 2

9. The following bar graph provides an interesting comparison of the responses by top theme to question 1 compared to question 2.

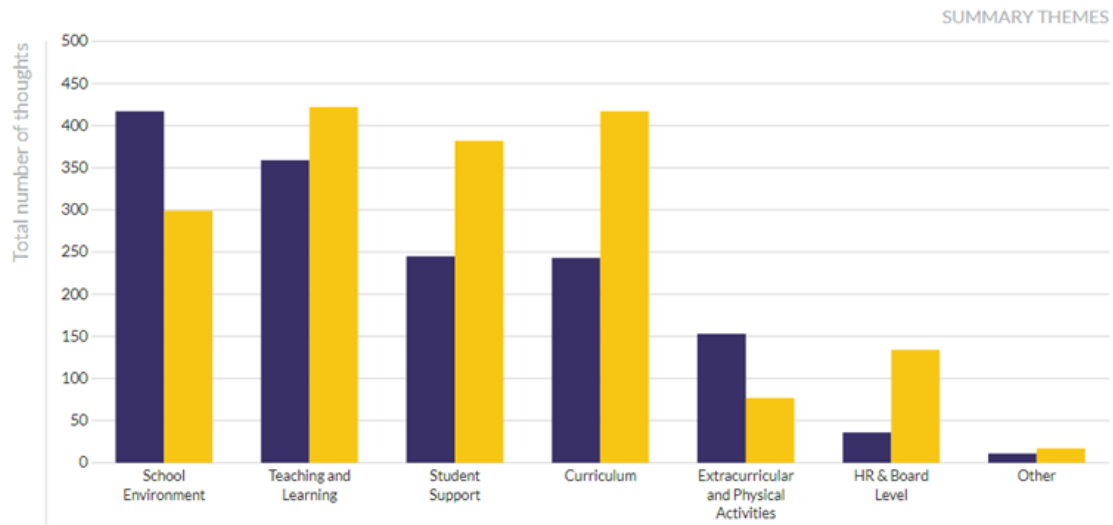


Figure 4 - Comparison of Top Themes Q1, Q2

Question 3 – Priority Areas

10. In terms of areas of priority, the following bar graph shows the response to Question 3 by theme for all respondents. The order of priority is consistent across all audiences; however the volume of responses varies based on the size and interests of the audience.

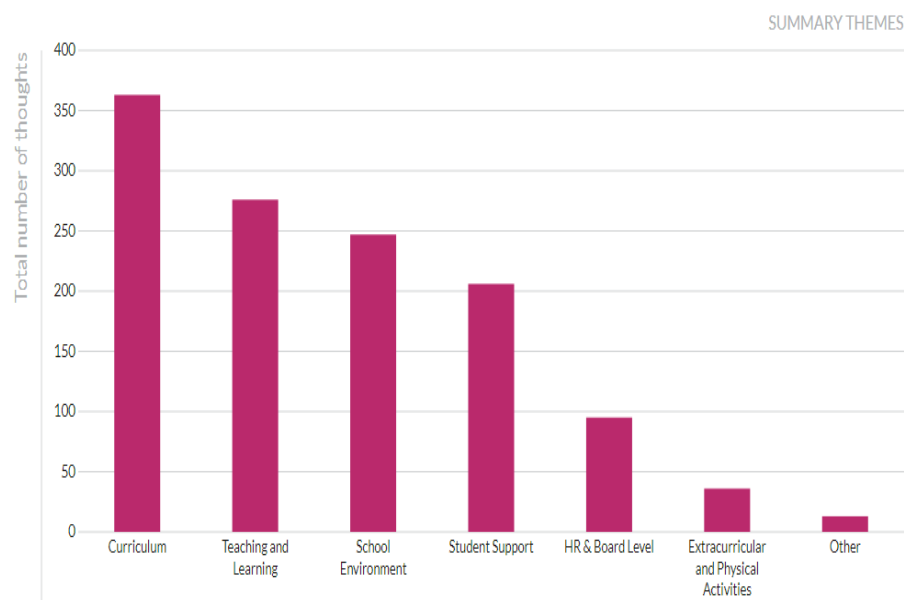


Figure 5 - Top Themes Q. 3

A detailed overview of the feedback is attached as Appendix A – Powerpoint of Thoughtexchange Discover Stage. Using the links in the power point or on the district website, users can explore the actual thoughts and priority areas.

Strategies and Actions

11. In January 2019, the District began work on the Strategies & Actions stage which includes focus group discussions as follows:
- Parent Involvement Committee and All Advisory Committees
 - Student Senate and Student Presidents Council
 - Principals
 - Community Members
 - 2 Parent Sessions (January 23rd and 31st)
12. At the focus group sessions, participants were provided with feedback from the Idea Exchange and asked to work in groups to explore and discuss the results from the online consultation. The activity was specifically focused on the feedback in response to Question 3. Participants were asked to review the feedback, discuss the issues raised and to develop specific strategic goals which may help the district move forward over the next four years. The sessions have been well received by participants who have expressed appreciation for the opportunity to go deeper into discussions.
13. The following is a summary of the strategies and actions, by theme area, and which were most common to all focus group sessions:

Theme	Strategies and Actions
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Standardized math curriculum and instructional practice which builds capacity and skills from K through 12;• Revamp curriculum with emphasis on decolonizing Indigenous curriculum;• Increase focus on teaching life skills including self-care, self-regulation, conflict resolution, financial literacy
Teaching & Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase resources to reduce class size and provide more classroom supports;• Develop technology plan which ensures current and accessible technology to create consistent, effective and sustainable digital learning environments;• Increase number of specialized teachers and availability of professional development opportunities;
School Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reinforce commitment to safe, caring and inclusive learning environments where every student feels valued and respected;• Identify and eliminate bias and systemic racism using evidence informed decision-making;• Increase staff and resources to support behavioral and academic needs of all students;
Student Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue commitment to well-being of students and staff;• Build staff capacity to support student mental health and provide resources for parents;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to build partnerships with community based organizations to ensure integrated support networks;
Extra-curricular & Physical Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritize physical activity through physical education, Daily Physical Activity and increased physical resources; Improve standards for quality, availability and renewal of equipment for athletics; Increase opportunity for all students to equitably access extra-curricular sports and clubs;
HR & District Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a healthy, vibrant workplace; Increase supports and resources to deal with aggressive behaviours; Continue to be innovative in strategies to ensure sufficient number of occasional teachers, educational assistants, and early childhood educators;

Table 2 - Summary of Strategies by Theme

This information will be reviewed and updated as required once all focus group sessions have been completed.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- The costs associated with the consultation were covered within the existing operating budget.

COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:

- A summary of the remainder of the consultation activities and respective timelines is as follows:

Dates	Activities
February 8-9, 2019	Staff Retreat with new Board of Trustees, Director of Education, and Director's Executive Council
May 7, 2019	Present draft strategic plan to COW
June 7, 2019	Deadline for public comment on draft strategic plan
June 18, 2019	Present revised strategic plan to COW
June 24, 2019	Board approval of strategic plan
June 2019 onward	Promote awareness of the approved strategic plan

Table 3 - Key Dates for Next Steps

STRATEGIC LINKS:

- The development of a new strategic plan is a legal responsibility and major priority of the Board. Effective consultation connects to the engagement and stewardship objectives, as outlined in the current strategic plan. Therefore, by seeking input from a variety of stakeholders, the OCDSB is not only able to demonstrate its commitment to enhancing engagement and demonstrating accountability through stewardship of resources, but more importantly is able to develop strategic priorities which reflect the input of stakeholders.

SUMMARY:

17. A detailed consultation process is an essential component of the strategic plan development and our process encourages consultation at the front-end. Through the consultation, the Board will develop a better understanding of the issues, concerns, and ideas for improvement, as voiced by stakeholders. Moreover, the consultation provides an opportunity to engage and gain the support of the broader community in shaping the vision, mission, and priorities for public education in our District. As such, a viable process must be focused, engaging, relevant, manageable, and reasonable.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

18. The following questions are provided to support the discussion of this item:
- What does the feedback tell us about where the district is doing well and how can we build on that?
 - What concerns or new ideas emerge as a result of the responses to areas where can the OCDSB improve?
 - What are some of the emerging goals, and strategies from the consultation?
 - How do our current strategic priorities of equity, learning, well-being, stewardship, and engagement connect to the feedback and priorities identified in the consultation?

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APPENDIX A: Summary of Top Themes and Sub-themes topics

APPENDIX B: Building Brighter Futures Together @ OCDSB- Discover the Results
Power Point Presentation