

Parent/Trustee Forum – November 18, 2017

Question 1: Do you feel your child is being prepared for the world beyond school? Provide examples.

EY

- Yes and no – have a basic understanding.
- Son has autism, has strong academic ability and needs higher grades challenge
- Wonder about work experiences in future school
- Great group of teachers at our school (teachers and staff)
- All arts vs. All academics – balance is seemingly off.
 - Math curriculum has changed significantly – are students prepared for future academics?
- Academically would like more. Provide info at home
- Are there enrichment programs?
- Do split classes push students in older grades to achieve higher?
- Should we expect less from strong students?
- Supports for ADHD are there at early and middle years levels, but challenged at senior years. Seen as behaviours, not as needs for support.

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- What would this look like at early years? Discussion re: citizenship/social skills
 - Some concern too much time is spent on social issues at early years
 - Some concern students aren't prepared with context to understand at early years (ex. Topic of suicide brought up at WE Day field trip; playground discussions re: Trump)
 - Social studies curriculum more NB than ever – could class time focus on more variety of topics (i.e. fur trade, US treaties)
 - Could social studies time be focused more on *now* (current events) related to indigenous peoples/Treaty education vs. historical issues (fur trade)
 - From construct of socialization, school is doing good job or preparing students for future
 - Potential room for growth
 - How kids can manage anger/frustration
 - Know what NOT to do (hit/shout, etc.)
 - What is the replacement? Conflict
 - Resolution comes after... How do they deal with the emotion in the moment?
 - Math – Parents would like to see more homework. Waiting until parent conference time is too far away
 - Would like more regular insight into what is happening in classroom so can support kids learning along the way, not just after the reporting period. Helps parents understand what is happening in the classroom (skills for students with managing responsibilities, a little more push on expectations of curriculum.
 - Helping kids be ready for the future (i.e. Grade 3 multiplication only to 5x5)
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- Building character/learning how to deal with conflict (resolution)/values
 - Restitution
 - Emotional intelligence/whole student/child
 - Grand-buddy (retirement center connection)
 - Roots of Empathy
 - Sports/Arts/Choral programs
 - Science Fair – Divisional (WE Fair)
 - Inclusion
 - Early Learning/Jump Start programs
 - Literacy Links
 - Diversity of our classrooms increases student/family understanding/empathy
 - Diversity teaches “how” to work with people of different challenges and skills/strengths
 - Academics: Schools taking the time to understand where the student is “at” to create a plan of supports (always giving a chance)
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- Excellent at inclusivity. Very integrated.
 - Curriculum could be updated to reflect current issues (currently meeting needs, but needs to keep updating).
 - Would like to see cursive writing remains as a “life skill”
 - Like seeing an emphasis on collaboration, community, critical thinking. Also, communication and student voice. “6 Cs” are not basic knowledge
 - Keeping current in technology so that students are prepared for the world after school that we can’t yet imagine.
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- Indigenous education
 - Considering age-appropriate life skills at school
 - Appropriate technology
 - Can we create more of an “attitude of gratitude”?
 - Service-oriented activities
 - ROE, kindness challenges, talking circles, student voice, compassion activities
 - Mindfulness, physical literacy
 - How do we build critical thinking around technology? History of technology? Info owned and produced by individuals?
 - Gender equity – just beginning to explore (i.e. character in a play is male, girl plays role but dresses like male); showing males as nurturers – this will be in their futures
 - Sharing their own culture and language
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- Access
- Wits (using words effectively, open and effective communication, independence)
- Support: Common language
- Accessibility: Advocate for public

- Life skills
 - Learning disabilities
 - Split-combined grades (connections)
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- Media, home, school = community (working together)
 - Are we prepared for university? (i.e. math, science). (IB/AP = university credits)
 - Annual guidance checks to ensure students have what they need
 - Projects, presentations, tests, etc. prepare students for future, standardized tests
 - Need for “Soft skill” i.e. interview, resume writing, employability (social/human interactions)
 - What is success? Redefine what this means
 - Balance
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- Exposing younger students with career/educational options
 - Start this earlier – grade 10 is too late (career fair)
 - Post-secondary options (diploma vs. degree)
 - Kids need to accept responsibility for their actions (restitution)
 - More exploration of transition from agendas and electronic agenda
 - More accountability in secondary (e.g. deadlines extended/honour roll middle school and then failing in high school)
 - Life skills training – finances, etc.
 - Expand the focus of beyond self (different families, Sam’s Christmas, etc.)
 - Celebrate our work with Reconciliation and Indigenous culture
 - Technology very important – the price tag is huge but the costs are to be supported for the careers in the future
 - What about families who are not able to afford the devices?
 - Need to teach more about responsible and ethical use of technology at younger/elementary levels
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- Full day kindergarten: decreases daycare costs, increases school skills
- Focus on communication skills/social skills provides children with life skills
- Benefits from a balanced approach to literacy and numeracy instruction. Strong focus on foundational skills (recent curriculum)
- Benefits from “credit” system – no benefit in no fail system (motivation)
- Need an increased focus on homework, studying, and work ethic
- Why is there differences in programs/organization? (Multi-age classrooms, full day kindergarten at all schools)
- Need to increase communication regarding school programs/uniqueness
- Need to increase communication regarding school division wide programming/daycare partnerships, etc.
- Increase communication partnerships pre-school age, etc.

- Students are able to gain from common school focus on: social skills, math life skills, community focus
 - Outdoor challenge: successful opportunity (experiences) for learning
 - Guidance counsellors: support children through needs
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- How do we prepare our students for a world we don't know?
 - Sustainable development? Where are we at? Where do we need to go?
 - Roots of Empathy Program
 - Restitution
 - Anti-bullying programs
 - Psychological services
 - Caring staff that provide support
 - Technology is great... But what about basic human skills: kindness, compromise, people skills, interactions
 - Gérants de paix: How can we extend this beyond volunteers?
 - How do we develop the SE learning in all curricular areas?
 - Recycling, reduction – how are we teaching this? (Consumerism)
 - Outdoor learning – how can we teach this?
 - More conflict resolution/mediation/restitution skills/training
 - Build resiliency – how can we better prepare all students skills and staff skills?
 - How can we provide parents information on restitution vocabulary – outside of sessions
 - How are we teaching students about diversity/accessibility/disabilities?
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- Yes – academically – field trips
- No – how to deal with an “ever changing world”
 - Racism – not born, taught
 - Respect cultures
- Our children are from a different era
- Elementary school is the time and place to teach students how to recognize and respect all the cultures our students come from
- School Division is working towards recognizing diversity and cultures – we are still working toward more understanding
 - Site-based journeys in these areas vary
 - How are we meeting the academic needs of our kids?
- Where do SJASD kids rank at the end of grade 12? Literacy and numeracy
- New technology vs handwriting

MY

- Yes: Bilingual and plurilingual citizens; fostering independence
 - Work ethic, team work, commitment exploring various gifts, talents, new abilities
 - Needs: More enrichment – learning experiences outside the four walls of the classroom and school setting.
 - Student voice/flexibility within a grade level class to support all learning levels.
 - Bring more of need for language learners to have more authentic language experiences (i.e. going to Quebec – Concentrating on in-depth where they are not surrounded by English speakers).
 - More community involvement understanding of service
 - Digital citizenship and supporting our younger students
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- More student accountability to academic integrity (i.e. work completion, due dates). Reinforces negative behavior/disrespect
 - Organizational skills/tools to be taught t elementary to assist students with transition to grade 6 from grade 5
 - Difference of expectations between levels of going to a level of independence
 - Maximize the use of technologies (i.e. Skype/telecommunication/virtual learning/conferencing)
 - Experiential hands-on learning opportunities
 - Access through technologies different cultures and communities/countries to expand understanding globally/locally
 - Leads to more informed/educated decision making as adults
 - Career development exploration prior to high school for considering course selection to align with career choices.
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- Teaching to the student not the class helps each individual grow
 - Emphasis on collaboration prepares them for workplace
 - Need more attention to consequences related to work ethic (deadlines, not so many re-dos)
 - Challenge individual strengths while supporting areas that require growth
 - Relate classroom activities to real life situations (life skills)
 - Lots of exposure to various opportunities/real life experiences (band camp, choir camp, winter camp, hockey academy, WE Day, SRO/Police presentation)
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- Parents are trying to get their child through Middle School never mind high school.
- Students are not problem solving enough – parents and teachers are solving things for them. They can't find their books, agenda, jacket, etc. then an adult is helping them.
- Parents think that teachers can solve every problem but this isn't their role. Common trend is that schools are taking on too much and are over extending their role. It takes a village to raise a child but at school and home we are solving too much for students.

- Students think that everyone cares what they think. We are telling students that the world owes them something. Students need more accountability and expectations put on them. The no-fail policy is not effective. Students are always thinking everything will be fine regardless of what they accomplish or don't do. You don't have to punish students that fail but they need to be held accountable. The world doesn't owe you anything is what we should be teaching students. They need to work for things.
 - If we want to help our students we shouldn't be giving them false reality. Deadlines don't matter, they hand in assignments whenever and teachers have to mark them. They should have to complete the assignment but not get a mark. Letting kids fall down is good but we need to help them up AFTER they fall.
 - We should be teaching the grade information. The schools are teaching too many levels as there are too many levels. In a job or profession you have to be a certain level. The job or profession is not adapted to your level.
 - Severely disabled students – staff are good at listening to parents and allowing the student to enter the class when it works for them and not all the time to upset them. Time in the special needs room, extra gym and activities are appreciated.
 - Very concerned about special needs swimming not being offered. Special needs students need the opportunity for extra-curricular and need the 1-on-1. They can't do sports or other activities that other students are allowed to do and now the activity he could do is taken away. Bussing is available to take other students to sports, the pool is available. This swimming provided emotional and social stimulation. Drowning is something that may be avoided if these SN students are in the pool as before. They shouldn't have to be tested/evaluated for this to be allowed.
 - Inclusion is important. Students are all included and our students are accepting.
 - Special needs should be getting some separate programs etc. to meet the needs
 - Parents get lots of feedback from teachers, EA's. Our students get a chance to redo things and you get support.
 - Mastery criteria is the new thing – when kids get to rewrite they shouldn't get 100%. Students need to come in for extra help before rewriting. You don't get to retake a job interview or re-do a botched surgery.
 - Parents make the choice if their child rewrites. Some students say no but parents say yes you need to re-do and get this info. Allows parents the option here to push their child to do this.
 - Students need to be held to deadlines. This is the real world.
 - If kids are put in a too competitive environment they will drop out. Alternate classes at times or alternative schools. Many kids come from low income houses and need food never mind low marks.
 - Provide real world experiences for special needs students. We have them happy, with relationships.
 - Division can be too bandwagon, jumping on the latest craze
 - Need to have deadlines for students and not a mark if they don't meet it.
 - Mastery okay but student should not get 100% the second time
 - No consequences for students' bad attendance and this isn't okay.
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- Kids don't do enough of their own problem solving
- Schools have a role... But there are limits (i.e. health care provider, training)
- Education starts at home. Home and school work together
- University students now are not always prepared
- Sense of entitlement. Lack of accountability
- Disconnect between school and outside world. Too much coddling in school
- Parents can help out where child needs academic help.
- Schools need to be open minded to listen to parents who know kids best.
- Need to keep at meeting diverse needs (i.e. swimming program – inclusion)
- Challenge is finite resources (i.e. money)
- Students given chances for improvement.
- We work now more toward mastery/success criteria. Re-dos vs. deadlines
 - Choice for some... Parent choice
 - Kids feel they fit in being given choice
- Some students shut down in a competitive environment. It's a challenge just to get them to school. That's where programming is important.
- Need to watch unintended consequences of philosophies that have been implemented
- Need more consequences for lack of attendance.

MY/SY

- More opportunities for fiscal literacy (i.e. how to balance a budget), even if it's just one unit. Especially if they don't take essentials math (fill out an application)
- Kids live in an age where information is in their hand, their phones, easy and instant. So, they need more "practice" with "social responsibility", which can get lost in technology. Things aren't always free and kids need to take more initiative to "work" for what they want.
- Yes! Children are better prepared for life beyond school because of so many diverse and plentiful groups and clubs and committee which serve multiple purpose and causes.
- Kids have opportunities to talk about and discuss real world topics and problems in a school setting which really helps them be aware of the diversity of the world they are heading towards.
- The school is a welcoming place for students. The halls are reflective of diversity as well as advertising so many things the kids can be a part of.
- The school provides many opportunities for students to understand the importance of being kind towards each other, not be bystanders of bullying; "paying it forward"; the importance of respecting others.

SY

- Some practical things not taught (resume writing, budgeting)
- Consequences of actions more severe after school (i.e. no late hand in at university/workplace)
- Not prepared for how harsh life can be. We want them to succeed so much that we drop bar of expectations
- Better to learn to deal with failure sooner than later.
- Some students learn to see bigger picture
- Confusion between role of school/role of parents (i.e. family life, budget)
- Teach parents new math/methodology
 - Vertical learning spaces, etc.
 - Info shared through website

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- Make Math Essentials course a mandatory one
 - Real life prep (cheques, banking, interest)
 - Budgeting, money management, new car, vacations, lease/buy, “do not pay events”
 - Maybe grade 10, 11, and 12?
 - Household finances in general
 - A worldly consumer perspective (internet savvy, scams)
 - More in-depth
 - Understanding “human nature”/personalities (A, B)
 - Psychology
 - How to work with various types of people
 - Soft skills
 - English (still need to focus on spelling/grammar)
 - Not rely on spell-check
 - Kids need to be able to read handwriting
 - What to do when you don't know
 - Foundational skills well engrained
 - Spelling, mental math, vocabulary, English skills fell off over the years
 - Report writing skills for the workplace and university
 - Basic language skills – integration into each class
 - i.e. Proof-reading, study skills
 - Where is the homework? Not a lot comes home any more.
 - Daily practice (creates habits)
 - Self-organization/responsibility/initiative/time management
 - Problem solving skills
 - Age-appropriate expectations
 - At home, the routine of “homework skills”
 - Explore need for “Intro Course” to cover these
 - Strict deadlines
 - Creating good habits for life
 - Less about content, more about meta-cognition

- Technology
 - Typing class
 - Screen-time/device time
 - BYOD – cell phone seems to be the device of choice
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- Recommendations:
 - Growth Mindset
 - Transfer of skills
 - Entrepreneurship
 - Financial literacy (all levels): taxes, money management, leverage curiosity into inquiry based learning
 - Problem based learning
 - Technically proficient
 - Leadership, innovations
 - Cross curricular connections
 - Problem solving
 - Prepare students for real-life application: How to communicate, how to access supports, resilience (how to deal with failure), responsibility, power skills
 - Career exploration/real-life application
 - How does technology affect the ability to problem solve?
 - Critical thinking/digital literacy
 - Thinking for yourself
 - Personal communication
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- “Make” club, technology, YIP – all important for future prep
- Cross grade activities, moving to larger school, inclusive school, will help for future learning
- “Soft skills” very important, school culture – staff models this
- Chances to be more independent: agency
- I.B. a draw for meeting the needs of all learners
- Time management with busy schedules, good life prep – a life-long skill
- School responsive to academic needs

Question 2: From a parent perspective, what are the challenges of parent voices being heard in the public education system?

EY

- How can Parent Council connect with Trustees/Senior Admin more easily when big issues arise? – eg. school grounds, play grounds
 - We need to look at why and how more parents aren't attending Parent Council, forums, etc. – always the same people
 - We aren't a community school as a French Immersion early years – because our catchment is so large
 - How can we build our community (catchment, FI...?)
 - How do we reach perpetually oppressed community members – we need to look at voter turnout, how we teach democracy
 - How can we adapt programming to teach democracy, privilege, etc.?
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- Less support from parents for the schools (back their child/entitlement)
 - Parents go to media – you're only hearing one side
 - Parents have many avenues for voices but there is a lack of commitment
 - The school will take care of it – just need to register your complaint
 - Working parents can't help during the day (assemblies, field trips)
 - Today – e.g. provide child care, provide transportation
 - Possible smaller venues today – at one family of schools
 - Parents need to be involved
 - A process defined as to how to address a complaint
 - Role of teacher
 - Role of administrator
 - Role of Trustee
 - Trustees can be invited to attend Parent Council meetings
 - What is the right way to do this respectfully?
 - More transparent ways to address issue specific concerns e.g. policy, transportation, etc.
 - Hard to get parents out to valuable parenting sessions
 - Instead of at ESS – provide at individual schools?
 - Calendars are important – schools usually do these well
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- Community Survey provides opportunity for feedback
- More short surveys
- Increase communication – re: Strategic Plan, use of social media
- Positive response to new websites – Division and schools
- Contact in electronic form on new website: sjasd.ca
- Boost Parent Councils – encourage members-at-large to attend and share views...More welcoming
- Parent engagement in schools and parent organizations
 - Increase involvement in school initiatives
- Link on Division website for parent questions, concerns, complaints, confidentiality
- Role of Community Liaison in addressing concerns

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- Fear
 - Layers of bureaucracy
 - Slow to change (time)
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 - Changes that may not be effective
 - Parents on board
 - Trustees actively involved in schools
 - Filtering communication (liaison?)
 - Loudest voices are heard (equity challenges)
 - Barriers based on income
 - Schools to share/promote message
 - Reluctance
 - ALL division treated equally? (St. James-Assiniboia Board advocating)
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- Find ways to make Parent Council more relevant and accessible
 - Stigma around parents not wanting their questions to seem ridiculous
 - Tradition of schools not being receptive to “hearing” parents – closed systems
 - Many Indigenous parents don’t feel welcome/comfortable in schools
 - How can we include diverse families
 - Can school staff “look” more diverse
 - Find more opportunities for teachers to reach out to families to invite contact
 - Cultural evenings – celebrating diversity
 - More evenings that give a more relaxed opportunity
 - A similar format to this at the school – local questions
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- Access during parent conferences
 - Social media – email
 - Information more accessible
 - Parent Council – advocate for students
 - Challenge:
 - Process
 - Access to information
 - Steps – chain of command
 - Supports available
 - Being seen as a “negative parent”
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- People communicate (giving and receiving), so how do we accommodate parents’ styles?
- Can we provide different avenues?
- How can we build relationships with families who come from: backgrounds, education level, histories, language, and cultural backgrounds?
- Challenge providing additional/alternate pathways to discuss concerns – i.e. personal or systemic with whomever they have a rapport
- How can we navigate communication better with respect to technology?

- Some families may need “outreach” to encourage family communication
 - Shift-working families can find it very difficult to participate
 - French Immersion – the catchment is massive – can we do a needs assessment, look into how data applies to geography / French Immersion (old beliefs)
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- Important to have an atmosphere that supports a parent being heard
 - Presentations (i.e. Budget) can be boring and dry
 - Parents who volunteer a lot / Parent Council less likely to be intimidated
 - Time – many don’t have the time or take the time
 - If one has taken the time most likely experiencing some challenge/issue
 - Do not have (necessarily) all the voices around the table that we should
 - Should be looking at other practices – more informal; intuitive; how tech etc....that can be used to reach a wider range of voices
 - Schools have to consider family backgrounds, previous school experiences, etc...all these things impact on the likelihood of them raising a concern
 - Having schools/teachers ask directly if the ways we are communicating are working for them (What is your preferred method of communication?)
 - A system/format/person that people can approach if not comfortable taking to school administrator
 - Give other channels
 - It takes a great deal of courage to raise a concern
 - Not all are approachable
 - If community is not engaged – there will not be communication – voices won’t be heard
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- With young students – we feel that concerns are addressed quickly and effectively by the school – teachers and staff
 - “Puts me at ease when I know my child is going to be okay and I am being heard”
 - Email is a great way to connect with teachers and principal
 - School yard safety is a concern – things found on yard from weekends and evenings is an issue
 - Lights in the yard have been a welcomed addition – “Love the lights”
 - Facebook page – or private portal
 - Need to put a face to the name of the Trustees. Some areas of the Division doesn’t get recognized as part of St. James-Assiniboia School Division.
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- Lots of opportunity if you want to get involved
- First contact with Trustees provided with email address and invited to reach out at any time
 - Excellent at level of Trustees – for most part
- From Division level what is the mechanism?
 - Trustee level? Higher.Minister of Education?
 - Seems reliant on principal to initiate the dialogue
 - Must research/go online/what closes loop?
- Suggestion to implement metrics for two-way communication at Division level and higher
- Mechanics are in place at Trustee level

- Idea – Trustee set up “coffee talk” opportunity for principals to stop in and communicate
 - Suggestion: Could Trustees provide information for principals that is available at the schools?
 - More info about structures in place
 - Some parents at French Immersion feel disconnected due to not being able to communicate with students in French. Kids need their principals. It would not be ideal for senior years students to be able to communicate in a language the principal does not understand.
 - Performance/Evaluation metrics for Trustees. How would my voice as a parent be heard in changing this process?
 - Is there a way to report concerns about Trustees anonymously? Fear of blow back on kids
 - Method for principals to provide feedback at end of year regarding child’s experience and parents’ experience in that classroom that year. Maybe be part of Trustees evaluation.
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- Parents don’t have time during the week to meet with teachers
 - Weekend time to meet?
- Less accessibility to teachers’ email addresses – why?
- Instagram accounts are appreciated, parents can dialogue with their children about their school day – parents feel part of their children’s school day
- Help children understand that everyone’s job is respected
- Volunteer opportunities allow parents to talk to teachers directly
- Like the electronic connections (Remind app)
- As kids get older, more teachers teach the kids more teachers to contact
- Parent Councils – same small number commit
- Balance needed of all parents’ voices

MY

- How do we get more parents involved/engaged in the school to share info (not feel obligated to work)
 - Enhance interest in participating in/sharing voice (i.e. parent survey celebrated as chance to share voice/different time/manner of sharing survey/voice opportunity)
 - Need to transition parents (5-6) to Parent Council/other voice opportunities
 - More “educational” opportunities in evening to give parents opportunity to share “human” voice
 - Develop partnerships to bring community into the school
 - Skills assessment/identification of parents who could present?
 - Use tech (YouTube) to share in school presentations (i.e. AFM) to parents who could not attend and develop feedback device so voice can be shared
 - Parent Council meeting used to highlight speakers of interest (vaping)
 - Invite Trustees to Parent Council meetings for open forum
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- Lack clear understanding of where/when they can speak
 - Complacency
 - Desire to have more opportunities to create parent community (i.e. forum, meet and greet)
 - break down the walls/barriers
 - informal – coffee chat about important topics
 - a forum type at school level before Trustee forum – to gather ideas from parents
 - Fear of speaking up
 - Children at the age where they don't want their parents as involved in school – how can we break down this barrier? Help our children use their voice regardless of age?
 - Trustees in schools and at meetings
 - More opportunities outside this forum
 - How can we get to know our Trustees better?
 - And their role?
 - Addressing one of the challenges, the new website design is now more informative, user friendly, engaging
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- Opportunities for parents to answer anonymously
 - Time/schedule – both parents working
 - Maximize responses by targeting school events
 - People answering this question are already engaged...what about others not here?
 - Parent perspective:
 - not be afraid to ask the question...socially, academically
 - transparent response
 - Communication with teacher – opportunity to reach out
 - Very positive: continue opening day meetings (chance to meet school team)
 - **Making parents know they are part of school team – share expertise of parent
 - PowerSchool useful: personal communication
 - Connections with students/parents/teachers
 - Finding that balance of communication between student/parent/teachers
 - Gender inclusivity reflected on divisional forms
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- Unaware of lines of communication/avenue for having voice heard
 - Open house at Board level to get to know who's who
 - Better communication of existing opportunities for parents to interact at divisional level
 - Apprehension from parents to be viewed as complaint versus being helpful
 - Increased opportunity for involvement at schools to be more aware of what child/school doing
 - Stigma of parents who speak up
 - Child's wish for less parental involvement as students age
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- This forum is a good idea
- Teachers and administrators emailing parents is great
- Triads not valuable for some

- Triad conferencing - great for kids to show the work but parents want the time 1-1 with the teacher. There is value in seeing the work but teacher meetings should be a different night. In high school teachers only see the best student's parents.
- Parent apathy...parent trusting the school is doing their job, so less involvement
- Parents just say good you are getting 85% but no conversations because life is too busy which isn't good. Sports coaches see students more than teachers.
- Phoning to parents is better but email can be tricky with the wording
- Taking a cell phone is a good thing but not all parents support this. Again a consequence that students need.
- Face to face can be more valuable than email or a phone call
- IEP meetings needed early in the year
 - They are valuable
 - Can report on behaviours
- Some IEP meetings are delayed. Some are earlier - Like a parent workshop for what student needs to work on
- Some may feel disconnected from the school but is it because parents are busy?
 - Sports can build community
- Policies – need to be living, up-to-date
- Are voices getting where they need to go?
- Do parents know the system? Policies, documents?
- Parents need to form relationships with teachers
- School's job to teach fundamentals.
 - Sense of community though seems to have diminished
- Size of population
 - Higher numbers possibility of kids falling through the cracks
- Larger population equals more diverse and higher number of communities
- Good to offer varying school size to meet needs of students
 - Kids need different scenarios
- New report card allows teachers to comment on behaviours in high school. This should happen in middle school as behaviours are affecting student progress and parents should know this
- PowerSchool is great - parent communication great but comments can only come from teachers. Could be more interactive with parent being able to comment to teacher as well
- More of a community feel at a private school compared to the public school. Parents take the time to communicate. Disagreement here and comments about only certain students allowed to attend private schools.
- Sports builds the sense of community. Here again why the SN swimming is important. We send students to play sports to tournaments etc. and parents don't pay.
- Some parents volunteer from one school to the next. They get to know the staff and what is happening at the school.
- Division policies need to be up to date. Parents don't know the system. Teachers and admin. Have too much to deal with. Parents need to take the time to get to know the teacher etc.
- Size is important. The culture of the school has continued when numbers increased. Easier for students to make a connection with a classmate when there are more students.
- Alternative schools need to continue as some students need this small focus.

MY/SY

- I have nothing but good things to say, I've felt that teachers and admin are very open
 - The school staff are very available and when there are opportunities provided by the school for parents to come out to, even better to make connections.
 - Staff visibility is high at formal and informal events – Appreciated!
 - Technology helps parent voice and concerns
 - PowerSchool, Instagram, Email, school websites – all provide up-to-date and quick access / communication with teachers/admin/school events
 - The approachability of the school staff is very evident – VERY WELCOMING!
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SY

- Electronic surveys are good / year-end surveys
 - A fair opportunity / anonymous
 - How honest are they?
 - Wondering – how one parent/small collective can swing the pendulum easily too easy? “It's not about them” DEMOCRATIC/checks and balances.
 - Decisions must be for the whole; not the one
 - Empowered parents/students – Silent Others – Disempowered parents/students with voice with NO VOICE
 - How do we give all voices strength?
 - We wonder about timing of report cards going out after conferences
 - Parents need to know they are always welcome to contact/meet with teachers - email, call or meet, even in high school
 - Parents want updates about their kids in high school; like in EY and MY
 - In balance with student maturity/self-responsibility
 - NEW WEBSITE – some don't like – less intuitive
 - Course outlines provided to students/parents – with email. Tie parents to this with signature
 - Teacher webpages – no longer
 - Balance “One stop shop” with multiple websites/blogs/Instagram/twitter
 - Teacher communication with parents
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- Finding chances to provide input (this forum is a good one ☺)
 - Parent Council – good
 - Comfort level a challenge
 - Raising unpopular topics – cell phones – a challenge
 - Unionized environment a challenge
 - “Hoops to go through”
 - Staff actions communication not always open in the system – a challenge
 - Barriers
-

- Staff who are parents fear to speak for fear of reprisal
- Inconsistency between message given between different staff/representative
- Better communication about info
- Balance between transparency/accountability and privacy (Ombudsman)
- Parents may not know that they can contact Trustees (Don't know who they are)

Question 3: What are your thoughts on the current priorities and direction of the School Division? And why?

EY

- Like Outdoor Learning Spaces
 - Appreciate Nature
 - Physical Activity
 - Mental Health
 - Full Day Kindergarten
 - Child Care Needs
 - Increased Professional Development for School Staff
 - Infrastructure – at one point start with new structure
 - Private funding to support infrastructure
 - Cuts to front line supports affecting student learning
 - Learning success for ALL
 - Consequences of one impacting many
 - Budget Review – Can we look at other 28.3 % prior to cutting 81.7%
 - Paid Lunch (cost for program)
 - Pro-rated
 - Accessible
-

- Literacy
 - Welcome to Kindergarten
 - Literacy Links
 - Love of Learning
 - Free books/resources
 - Real World Connections
 - Applying learning
 - Innovative
 - Outdoor learning
 - Partnerships
 - Prioritized Needs
-

- Maybe post the school plans/Division strategic plan and show success/links
 - Our school is up to par or what is listed on strategic plan
 - We hope that the same follows through the middle and high schools
-

- To ensure we are equal in a global standard
- Division as a whole find partnerships with business and industry
- Possibly a lower standard in terms of academics?
 - Grammar/phonics
 - Numeracy
- Need to ensure we are maintaining the “mechanics” and not relying on technology
- Love the partnership with Niigaan

- Concerns over the transition of students to high school and relationship with staff who don't fit into a sport or club
 - Continue to provide opportunities to have students exposed to the trades (plumbing, electrical, mechanics), and to remove any stigma related
-

- Can parents be more informed of, part of, given criterion for measurement of school goals and planning? What does the RTC mean?
 - Hard for families to evaluate if they aren't part of it
 - How do we involve stakeholders in child's life (i.e. daycares) to help work towards Strat. Plan (build community)
 - Can we resolve daycare/school placement (K's)
 - How can we work with other divisions to support students?
 - Should relationships move higher on strat plan? (within values) i.e. seniors, daycares, businesses which leads to greater understanding and advocacy and engagement.
-

- Precision Reading = excellent program
 - 1-1 time for S w/adult to read
 - Like the emphasis on literacy
 - Is there something similar for math? (i.e. Math buddies)
 - Social issues seem to be out weighing ore academics
 - Too much weight to electronic methods of learning (RAZ kids, Reflex math)
 - Focus of education should be on S.T.E.M. – needs to be a priority
 - If technology assists with learning great, needs to be one tool, not the content
 - Focus on the specific tech i.e. iPad not the key, it is the tool, focus needs to be on the content, innovation in the field is too rapid to let the tool be the focus
 - Discussion Re: How Strat. Plan is implemented
 - “Learning is connected to real world applications”, why big focus on music programs not science program (co-curricular), i.e. field trips to movie vs more academic tactics, could the S.D. connect w/other organizations (Red River, Universities)
 - What could Division do to prepare/expose student to the opportunities for life beyond school/careers, prep for future, greater exposure to these @ EY not just sports, music
 - Return of GATE
-

- Central funded playground (responsibility, division vs PC vs School Budgets) – equity?
 - Engagement – we need to ensure num & lit is engaging and not cut programming
 - We need to shift our mindset that student engagement is not separate from curriculum
 - Catchment, daycares, siblings (grandfathering in), school populations
-

- Clear that diversity and inclusion are priorities
- Not all parents are clear about what priorities are – not informed for various reasons: busy, not accessing the correct info, too overwhelming to keep track of all?
- Encourage involvement in parent council, in asking questions @ school level – be part of “the village”
- More specific targeted info via social media
- Use of technology/new skills for ever-changing world is so important

- Focus on child's strengths is highly valued – also engaging in meaningful learning experiences, tapping into multiple intelligences, which open up new interests for children real-life connections!
 - What will benefit our children in the real world? School approaches are supporting these connections
 - Value traditional ways of learning and also embrace the new flexible approaches to same problem, deeper learning via asking question to help students make connections – in response to questions about new vs old math curriculum
-

- Divisional priority on Indigenous education is great
 - Social/emotional and behavioral challenges have skyrocketed and these need to be better supported.
 - Alternative schools are great. Need this kind of programming for middle schools and younger
 - need more creative, alternative programming in ALL schools, need more staff and resources to support this concept
 - A priority to ensure the budget can support increasing technology needs to make sure all students are fairly and equally included in the school system
 - How can parents help the division when they rent technology
 - What about recycling old technology to schools? and/or students for their personal use.
 - Penmanship – not enough of a priority
 - More creativity in the classrooms especially at middle and high schools
 - Novels that are more relevant
 - Curriculum – is very comprehensive
 - Students (h.s.) more than one way of demonstrating their competencies (not just essay writing or tests)
 - More dynamic classrooms for increasing student engagement
-

- Strat plan is there a more comprehensive detailed by year plan? Literacy and Numeracy skills
- School plans reflect strat plan goals – schools review data – report card, gr 3 prov assessment, staff review school goals regularly through discussion and admin walk through
- Historical data highlight trends
- What is the school division doing to assist pre school
- Mixed grade classroom discussion

MY

- Very Comprehensive
 - Ensuring working towards priorities and have balance without compromising
 - Parent information sessions for Social Media/Drug/Addiction Awareness
 - High level of value placed on involvement opportunities within schools FOR EVERYONE and inclusion opportunities within schools FOR EVERYONE
 - Media literacy – opportunity to learn, grow and be more critical thinkers of what's happening in our “news” and “world”
-

- Parent forums – step in right direction
 - Outcomes need to be balanced across all areas – academics/arts/athletics (including award ceremonies)
 - Need to create a better sense of identity for IB students
-

- Each learner is active global, local citizenship – enriching environment empowered in the lang. dev., problem solving helps to have meaningful conversations at home
 - Literacy – want more explicit numeracy, statements on communication
 - Responsive, meaningful instruction and appropriate, current and relevant programming, need more higher level, challenging opportunities for some learners
-

- Demographic Education – Strategic Plan covers a “changing world”, development of a student council (advisory to administration) * engagement of student
-demographic rights (school uniforms?)
 - Community involvement in school wide events
-lens of inclusivity
 - Inclusive washroom, safe school alliance
 - Ally training
 - Indigenous education/reconciliation
-for everyone
-learning circles
-Pow Wow grad
-Take lead from Indigenous culture, elders *Learning partnerships
 - MY participation in Pow Wow
 - Celebrate personal identity
-

- If desire to save \$ cuts valuable program it's not helpful, it's a failure
- Buying books for each staff is big \$ for example
- Hockey WJHA – such a great program, builds confidence, be part of a team
- Programming for others needs funding – whose door do we knock on, community partnerships help, grants
- Want to see programs that are higher for students that need the challenge – give them time to learn concepts, enrichment
- Division needs to support more programs, need specialists and input at either end, high or low functioning students
- Would rather see more staff than iPads, more EA's and teachers
- Which responsibility is the home vs the school? Strat plan outcomes
- Support – social justice, indigenous/cultural supports
- Inclusion, global citizen, social justice – what are they exactly – are they labels of ideas
- Bullying is not down because of social media
- Students need more focus on preparedness for life
- Takes a village to raise a child
- “French immersion is private school in a public school system”

MY/SY

- Appreciate the “one page” format of the Strat Plan
 - Like the “vision” and “mission” of SJASD
 - Glad to see that RESPECT is the first listed in VALUES. Should be a priority of all schools.
 - Nice to see that DIVERSITY is reflected in this because SCHOOLS & SOCIETY are diverse
 - Glad to see that the Strat Plan is living document with such a consultative process attached to it
 - Achievement is valued as well as the SOCIAL SKILLS necessary to be productive citizens in a democratic society
 - Modelling good face-to-face communication skills. “Greeting student every morning when they arrive.”
-

SY

- Rather than keep up to technology, buy something that will last 10 years
 - Save on equipment
 - Save on retraining
 - Emphasis everyone feeling good about how they are doing
 - We adopt for them in school
 - After school world does not adapt to them
 - Have been passed along
 - Worry/spend time/resource on 5% not succeeding that we are not helping other excel
 - No awards day at elementary b/c make some kids feel bad for not winning
 - GATE/ACE
 - Teach students that it does not matter to try harder
 - Need to promote more that it is not good enough to settle
 - Greater emphasis on career exploration
 - Division should celebrate more successes/achievements
-

- Remember THE BASICS/THE ESSENTIALS (know how to learn for life)
 - All sounds good on paper
 - Promotion of active/healthy/lifestyle
 - Out of CLASS Phys-Ed/1 hr daily record (afterschool)
 - drives parents crazy!!!!
 - Fabulous – amount of professional development for staff
 - Sharing @ Parent Council as well as staff meetings
 - More concise
 - Discussion: diversity inclusivity values/beliefs – representation of all groups?
 - History
 - Set up of the school year – historically the same for 100s of years
 - Length of breaks/timing
 - Length of school year
 - Decisions based on economy NOT learners
-

- I.B. prep for University and well-rounded education
- I.B. meets the needs of learners who need a challenge and can promote a healthy culture
- Social justice I.B. CAS and YIP positive
- Outdoor learning space a good thing
- Expend social justice even more – send student into the world
- How is the school division setting out to meet stated outcomes?
- Numeracy and Literacy – keep the focus
- Reduce use of cell phone in and outside of classrooms
- Look at essentials/basics in math curriculum – move away from political influences
- Determine core math curriculum $4 \times 5 = 20$
- Look to international standards

Question 4: Is there anything we have not discussed that you believe the Board should consider in its upcoming budget deliberations?

EY

- Continental Breakfast – building community
 - Partnerships – Save On Foods
 - Specialized education for children with additional needs
 - Professional Development
 - Current and relevant topics
 - Funding Model
 - EA supporting exceptional student needs
 - Determining Needs
-
- Are there supports for parents to assist us in helping our children with subjects like Mathematics (& others)
 - Curriculum reviews
 - Strategy reviews
 - How do we get more real world math into our curriculum? Same for other subjects
 - Is there an opportunity for career exploration at the middle years level so that parents and children can direct courses at high school
 - We need to explore/resolve daycare and school catchment area issues (both in and out of catchment)
 - How are we planning for growing numbers in French Immersion and collaborating with daycare for future
 - More transparency and cooperation between divisions
 - What kind of incentives/awareness do we have to attract or keep people in SJASD (urban development perspective)
 - Not amalgamation, but can we share resources/programming
 - i.e. staffing in FI
-
- Keep going with phasing in support education re: technology at early age (not specifically electronic)
 - Foster partnerships/resources for individuals based on student strength and individual interest (art gallery → Quantum program @ Seven Oaks)
 - Career Trek → ways for parents to nominated students (not just teachers)
 - Take students to university, city hall, the Leg → budget support for admission/registration/transportation for all students at all 3 levels to participate in this type of student experience. Enrichment education.
 - Could division seek financial partnership with Big Business to support increase?
 - Continued support for grade 3 swimming program
 -
 - Could the school division explore other sources of revenue?

- i.e charging outside organizations for the distribution of flyers from for-profit organizations (museums, summer camps, etc) ← all the flyers that come home in child's backpack
 - money is being spent well right now
 - could divisions look at sharing monies and resources (similar to InformNet partnership with PTSD)
 - asset sharing?
-

- Space, ie. Gym reno
 - Additional of EY dual track
 - Late start FI (EAL)
 - Intensive French
 - Understanding language learners
 - Reducing barriers (busing)
 - Should be no kids leaving FI because they can't afford to get there
 - Comprehensive look at equitable access
 - Electronic sign
 - Supervision for patrols
 - More communication
 - How will the information be used and shared?
 - Small/low income family school ability to raise funds for outdoor learning spaces and playground refreshes
 - Class sizes – will the upcoming budget have an adverse effect (size and composition)
 - Ability for schools to provide nutrition
 - “breakfast” and “snacks for students who needs
 - We serve 25% or more on a daily basis

 - Child care supports at school (before, after school)
 - Community supports (ie: YMCA) at the end of the day
 - Budget ideas. Being creative in ways to reach families/guardians to get a sense of their needs/wants/concerns
 - Come to the school to directly be available and visible to parents/community (Trustees, Board Office)
 - Conferences/Concerts/events/iPad survey station with a link to the survey
 - Divisional Icon = means we are open/welcome, we are listening K-12 logo idea
 - Community survey to continue
 - Continue with free lunch supports
 - Budget – classroom sizes/smaller number impacts learning in a positive way, composition and relationships
 - Budget priority
 - Student support (classrooms, before and after)
 - Staff professional development
 - Focus on sharing educational practices and the reason “why” with parents and caregivers
-

- Raise taxes
- Outdoor/land-based learning
- 4th French Immersion school in Crestview
- More FI schools could raise community, sustainable development
- Paid lunch program instead of free?
 - Rethinking lunch program
 - This raises the question of equity?
- 2 IB programs?
 - Student enrichment
 - Equity?
- Rethinking busing (km from school – SJASD vs provincial)

- Increase in technology (\$ for tools that prepare children for the future: iPads, coding materials, laptops)
- How do school level grants and division funding “get along”
- Playground development \$ - grounds development is too expensive for many school parent councils (charitable reg # is not easy)
- Daycare playground developments and school relationships – some school benefit, some don't
- More focus on nature-based learning development in school
- Accessibility for all buildings in 2023 Daycares too! (?) ← leases in SJASD buildings
- Textbooks or technology ... what's our replacement plan? Do we want to move away from textbooks and focus on investing in tech based learning? Is it a blend (fusion)? Balance?
- What is the school division's priority for money allotted to “experiential learning”? Is it equitable?
- Nutritional money for schools

- Social/emotional/mental health and behavioural challenges are becoming more prevalent in each classroom. Resources and staff are needed to support these student needs
- Parents – learning at home – apps and new methodology
 - Parent presentations – on new math
 - Tutorials on school division home page, on math lessons, LA lessons, etc.
 - Utilize teachers across the division
 - High school students observe and then create the tutorials
- More focus on communities
 - How do we reach parents?
 - Healthy child needs to expand their age level
 - Special topics → at a school, not ESS
- Workshops done (same time every year) like JumpStart Math and Welcome to Kindergarten
- More interactions between families and schools

- We have arts and sports but expand grounds for children with different interests, ex: math, science (cross the division like divisional choir and divisional theatre)
 - Eg. Public speaking, debating. Older kids become mentors
 - Extend to parents as well
 - French Immersion
 - Many parents consider it a mini-private school. How can this be addressed?
 - More emphasis on community schools
-

- Amalgamating school divisions – is this an option?
- 1 school division in city – what would that do?
- Will there be any more schools allocated to the growth in French Immersion?
- Will more school provide full day kindergarten?
- Will Allard site be sold for \$ to Capital funds?
- How is our school division's fiscal management rating in comparison to other school divisions? (FRAME report)
- Review transportation with regard to bussing
- Increase child care spots in schools (discussion)

MY

- Parents need better understanding of how funds are distributed to schools/programs
 - How do schools handle their budget/allocations
 - Do school budget considerations impact school culture (i.e sports focus or academic/arts focus)
 - Blanket policies vs leveled policies
-

- Parent awareness sessions
 - Drug awareness
 - Mental health
 - Social media
 - Virtual learning/teleconferencing platform
 - Enrichment – technology/virtual opportunity
 - More choice
 - Programming
 - Resources
 - IT budget
 - Leveraging opportunities within schools
 - Field Trips, educational opportunities
-

- State of school fields (more engaging outdoor learning spaces)
- More partnerships with Universities and career development programs
- Alternative schools for E.Y or M.Y (big picture school)

- Fourth FI E.Y. school due to increasing F.I. population
-

- “A Beautiful Constraint” - novel resource
 - How to combine without sacrificing level of education
 - Explore business partnerships with schools
 - Should not influence or bias students/curriculum
 - Aligned with school division values/strategic plan
 - Partners in curriculum
 - Explore how to mitigate risk (eyes open) vs avoid risk
 - Maintain Public education system (community)
 - More help in classrooms
 - Library → learning commons model
 - Possible transition
 - Collaborative spaces
 - Innovational learning
 - Living book initiative
-

- Resource materials for students that have disabilities. Music therapist for these students.
 - More teachers not coordinators. Lower teacher to student ratio. Teachers teach better when there are less students. EA's play a big part in supporting students.
 - Libraries need to be re-purposed. Kids don't check out books. They need books but the model needs to be changed. Libraries are a study space at high school. Websites is where they look up info. Not books
 - Ground up approach not top down. Teachers need to be consulted. Teachers and trustees should have a forum but not a complaint department. Some admin not in the classroom. Principals not needed at forums.
 - Purchasing for toilets. Present ones too loud especially for special needs students. Bathrooms need to not be gender specific. Like Brazen Hall restaurant.
 - Teachers and principals cannot be psychologist, nurse etc. Student services, counsellor. Psychologist not effective in some schools. Could we build a partnership with our health field? Student Referrals for mental health etc. Not jack of all trades. Roofing should be done by a roofer and not our division staff.
-

- Teachers should take courses about people management. Some teachers not adaptable to all personalities. UDL -need to work with a variety of families and students. Internal training.
- Teachers should sit in on other staff classes. They learn more this way and should be part of their week.
- Every kid should not be in the classroom. Look at the needs and if they benefit from working in a different environment then they should. Occupations and jobs have different environments too.

SY

- Review 1.6 km bussing
 - How much would we save? Want to see numbers
 - Very expensive to chase technology. Find equipment that lasts 10 years (save time and \$ on training)
 - Field Trips are most meaningful experiences in student life. Division restricting access (more flexible policy – not simply defined by financial costs)
 - Cuba
 - Senior Choir can't go to New Orleans because an inservice day
 - Students learn meaningful life lessons while on these trips
 - Need to be careful not to jump on educational bandwagon
-

- Holiday lights on all schools. Outside lighting increase in general
 - Reasonable class sizes
 - Allocating budget funds/commitment to ensuring classroom environments have all they need to ensure accessibility for all learning (furniture/manipulatives)
-

- Provincial funding formula a problem
 - IB and outdoor space for learning a priority
 - Demographic shift – what are the plans to deal with this
 - Fees for use – athletic fee a concern – should be open to all for free
-

- Better use of resources for the school community and community at large
 - Infrastructure → community → daycares
 - Staffing
 - Balanced school year, school day
- Day programs for our senior citizens
 - Intergenerational integration
- Invitation to seniors → sharing of knowledge and resources
 - Example: Hamilton House residents invited to use JT cafeteria ← SAFETY
- Buildings need updates → space for events?
 - We want “newer” schools → modernization
 - What can we offer to draw families in?
- Multi-use facility
 - Campus concept
 - Part of community – not just school
 - Enrich our neighbourhood
- Integrated system – sustainability
- Alternate energy sources/use of IT to run our buildings more efficiently?
 - Reduce energy costs
- Discussion re: additional available space for other uses (i.e. child care, seniors)
- Discussion re: International Students