

Ecole Connaught Community School Options

Community Survey

Completed March 22, 2014

Purpose

This online survey was launched in response to community comments at a public meeting on Feb. 25, 2014, in which participants were asked to consider options for relocation of Connaught students, presented by the Regina Board of Education. During the meeting, several participants questioned why significant options – such as repairing the school – were not offered among the choices. This survey was developed to encompass a wider range of options, including options suggested by community members.

Design

As noted, members of the public requested options other than closing the school in June 2014. Doing recommended remedial repairs to ensure the school would stay open at least until 2015 was one alternative option participants expressed interest in; this was echoed in a statement from the School Community Council. There was also considerable interest expressed in gaining a second opinion on the school structure and additional renovation estimates. These options were included in the survey, along with the option to close in June 2014.

Prior to the public meeting, the School Community Council was asked to consult with school community members and develop a list of options, which were forwarded to the school board. These options were shown briefly in the RBE presentation, to honour community ideas, but were not discussed. This survey includes those options, along with a few more that were put forward during the public meeting and in subsequent communications with parents and community members.

The survey was also designed to gain insight into what people feel is important to themselves, their school and their community. Options choices were crafted from comments made at the public meeting, from the record of discussions during public consultations held in 2012, and from general public discourse surrounding the school over the past two years.

Limitations

In recent years, the ability of parents to distribute printed material to students to take home to their families has been limited by board policy. As well, it has been some years since a Connaught School Directory has been published. As a result, the survey was provided online only, excluding any individuals who do not have Internet access. The link was distributed via email to a few parents, who were asked to forward it their friends and neighbours. With this method of distribution, the survey did not have as high a response rate as we would like, although it can be considered a representative sample, with some French Immersion stream bias. Its

findings are strengthened by similar results found in content analysis of the Feb. 25 public meeting and responses to the board's survey. Survey responses overlapped before and after the announcement of planning funding for a replacement school, however this does not appear to have impacted preferences. The survey remains open to capture further responses.

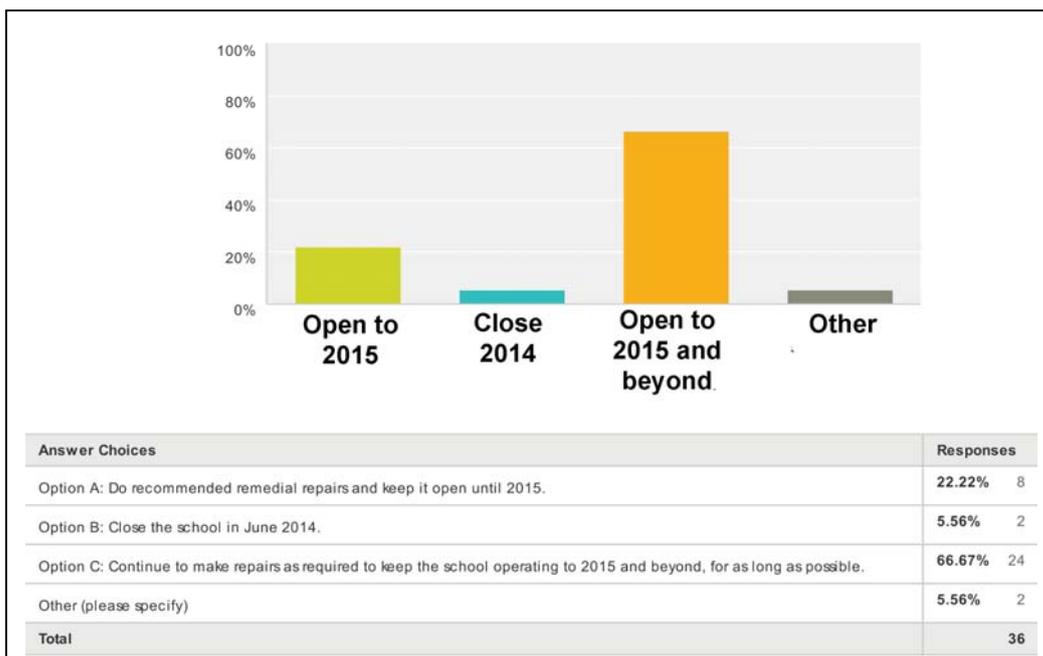
Who answered the survey

As of March 22, 2014, a total of 88 people had answered the survey. Of these, 41 per cent were parents/caregivers; assuming a single response per household, their answers would represent 17 per cent of Ecole Connaught families. Respondents were allowed to choose multiple self-identifiers, to reflect the fact that people have multiple interactions with the school (for example, being both a teacher and a daycare user). Among the other identified characteristics, 'area resident' was selected by 65.9 per cent, and 21.6 per cent were former students. Other identifications were facility users, daycare users, school staff, students, former parents and neighbourhood business operators. Among the respondents, 44.6 per cent identified themselves as being primarily connected to the French Immersion stream, 14.5 per cent to English and 18.1 per cent to both. This likely reflects the fact that the first parents to forward the email were primarily connected to French Immersion.

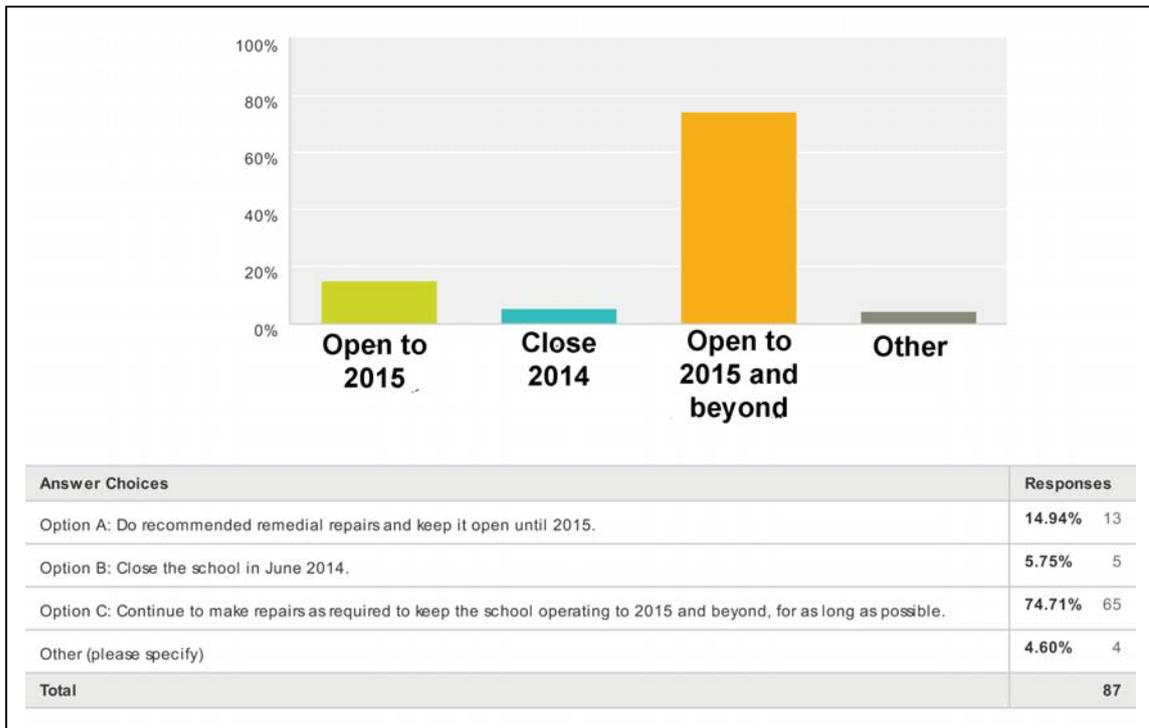
Survey highlights

- 1. Almost all respondents want the current school to remain open past June 2014.** In total, 88.9 per cent of caregivers and 89.7 per cent of all respondents chose options that would see the school remain open up 2015 at minimum, with significant majorities of each group advocating additional repairs and occupancy beyond 2015.

PARENTS / CAREGIVERS



ALL RESPONDENTS



- 2. In the event of a closure, parents/ caregivers prefer options that were suggested by the community.** Choices that are in the Cathedral Area or nearby, and that keep the school community together, are the top-ranked preferences. Community-suggested options that would split the school community received lower rankings. Options suggested by the board ranked relatively low, but ranked high among options identified as completely unacceptable. All respondents were given an opportunity to answer these questions, but only the responses of parents and caregivers are provided for the purposes of this summary. There was not a significant variance between parents and community on answers.

PARENTS / CAREGIVERS

Option	Average Ranking
All students to former Athabasca, supplemented by portables	11.91
All students to Victoria Campus, supplemented by portables and community gyms	11.6
All students to College Ave. Campus	11.31
All students to Balkwill Centre, supplemented by portables and community gyms	9.83
All students to former Dieppe School	7.86
All students to Wascana School	7.31
Individual parents decide, and receive transportation support as required	7.00
Public board negotiates with Catholic board, students to Holy Rosary	6.94
English to Davin, French to Dieppe, Pre-K to Argyle	6.74

Younger grades to Athabasca, older to Sheldon	6.43
K-8 English and K-5 French to Dieppe, Gr. 6-8 French to Massey, Pre-K to Argyle	5.2
English to Rosemont, French and Pre-K to Dieppe	4.71
English to Victoria Campus, K-4 French to Wilfred Walker, 5-8 French to Massey, Pre-K to Argyle	4.66
Other	3.49

OTHER

Make repairs to Connaught and keep it open well into the future.

Separate School Division System will be a more preferable option than many of those listed by RBE, but not for my family.

MOST PREFERRED -- keep the school open while it is being repaired or until kids can be transitioned into a new school building. Renovate or rebuild on Connaught property while daily school activities continue.

Portables on Connaught site while school gets fixed.

French to Victoria Campus and English to Davin

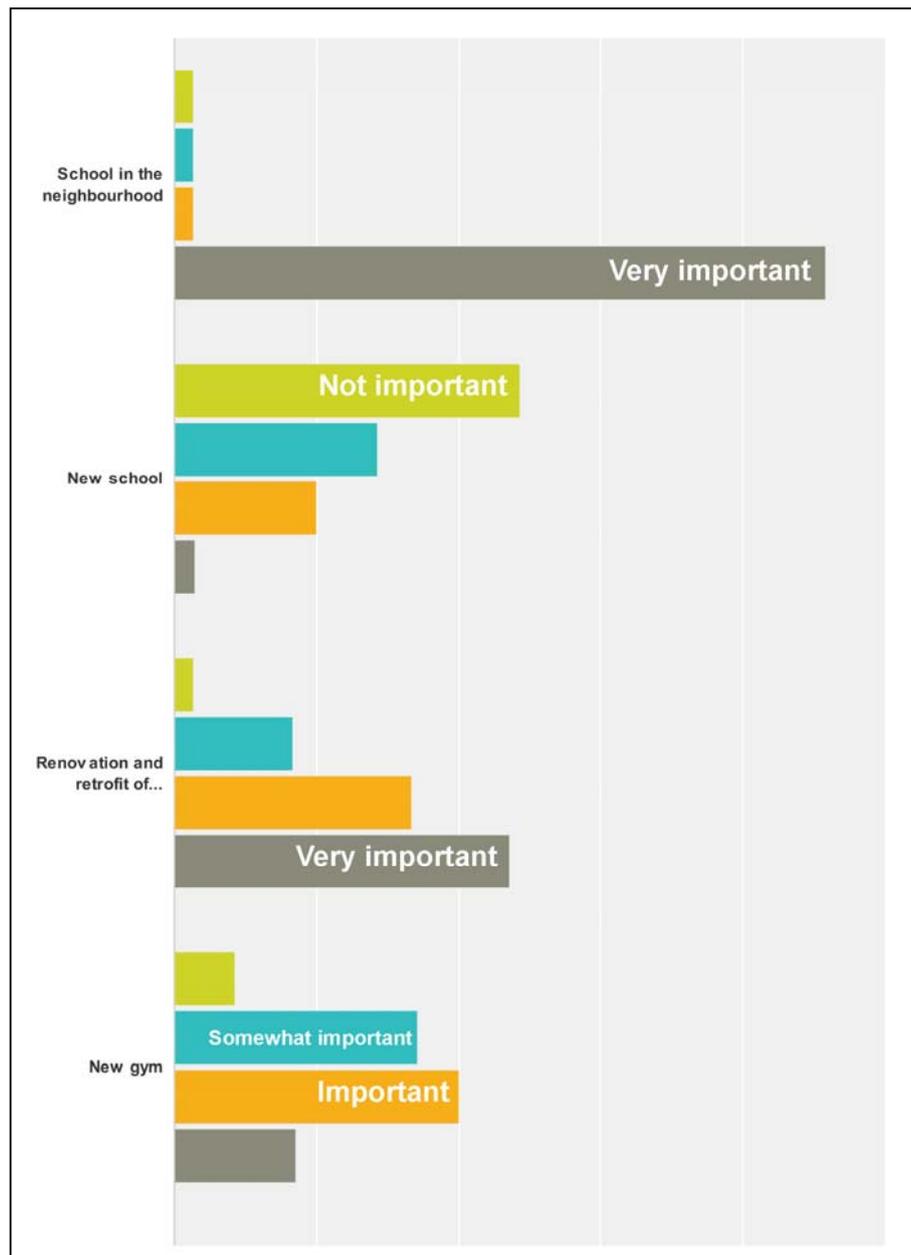
Unacceptable options

The survey question required respondents to rank all options listed, with no opt out. A follow-up question was provided to allow respondents opportunity to identify any options they ranked that would in fact be “completely unacceptable” choices. In general, those who filled out this section found options that split the school community unacceptable, although they also found some ‘whole community’ options unacceptable if they were beyond the neighbourhood.

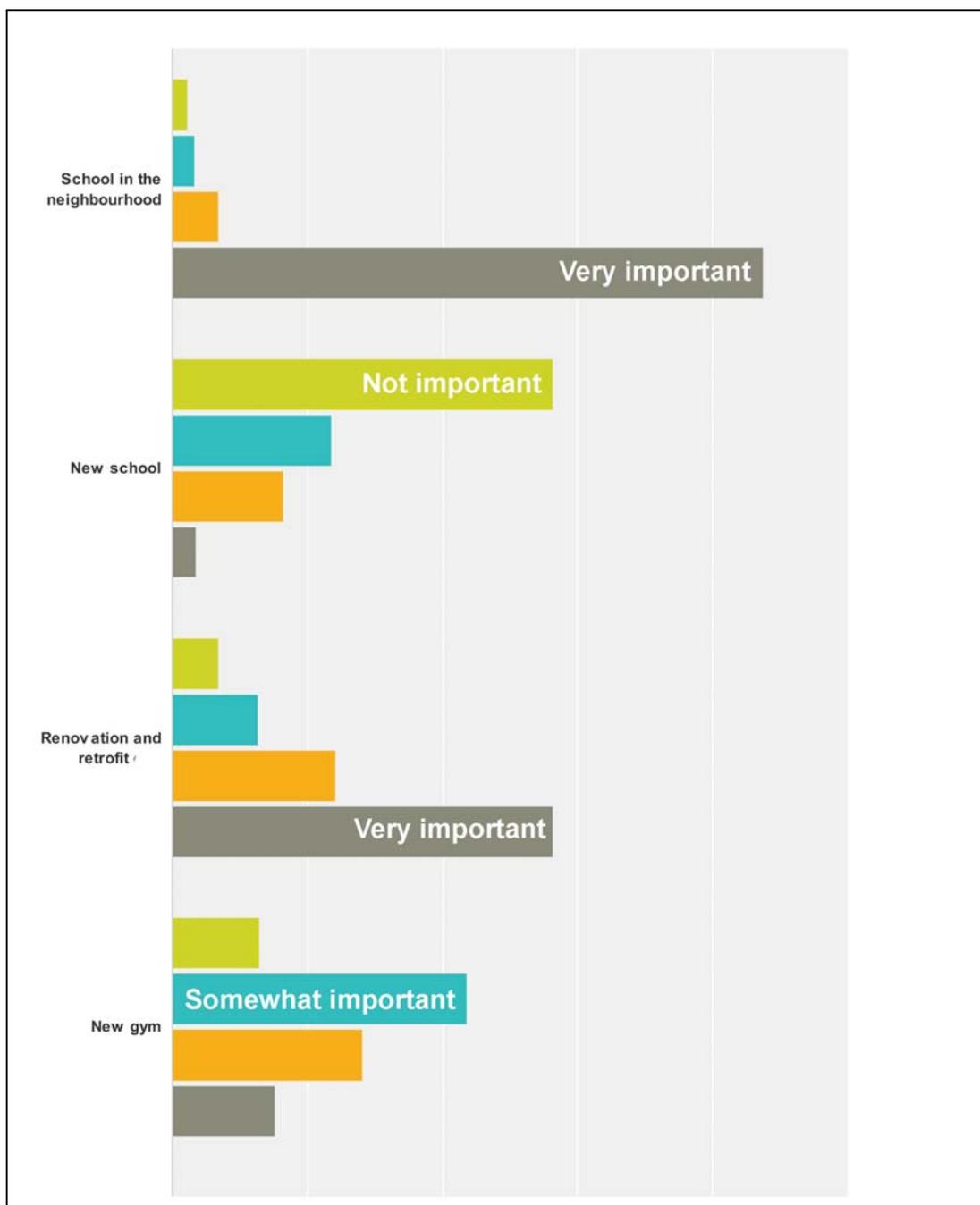
Option	“Completely unacceptable” options – percentage of respondents
English to Victoria Campus, K-4 French to Wilfred Walker, 5-8 French to Massey, Pre-K to Argyle	60 %
K-8 English and K-5 French to Dieppe, Gr. 6-8 French to Massey, Pre-K to Argyle	60 %
English to Rosemont, French and Pre-K to Dieppe	60 %
English to Davin, French to Dieppe, Pre-K to Argyle	52 %
Younger grades to Athabasca, older to Sheldon	32 %
All students to Wascana School	29 %
Individual parents decide, and receive transportation support as required	26 %
All students to former Dieppe School	17 %
Public board negotiates with Catholic board, students to Holy Rosary	11 %
All students to former Athabasca, supplemented by portables	6 %
All students to Balkwill Centre, supplemented by portables and community gyms	6 %
All students to Victoria Campus, with portables and community gyms	6 %
All to College Avenue Campus	3 %

3. **Respondents think a school in the neighbourhood is important, but most do not think a new school is important.** Parents and community members alike feel it is more important to renew the current school. Interest in a new gym is mid-range.

PARENTS / CAREGIVERS



ALL RESPONDENTS



4. **Access to a full range of services is important to respondents.** Beyond access to education services such as French Immersion / Dual Track education, parents/caregivers regard the nutrition program, playground, childcare, support services and community use of building as highly important. A strongly expressed desire for as little disruption and relocation as possible would extend to these items as well as to the learning program.
5. **School and neighbourhood heritage are highly valued.** Items considered 'important' or 'very important' included school history and heritage. (86.1 % of parents; 83.9 % of all respondents;) and neighbourhood heritage (89.4 % of parents/caregivers; 86.6% of all respondents). The high rating given by parent/caregivers would suggest that heritage retention concerns are not external to the school community.

PARENTS / CAREGIVERS



ALL RESPONDENTS



6. **Inclusive, comprehensive decision-making about the future of Connaught School is very important to the community.** The establishment of a joint committee is important or very important to 93.1 per cent of respondents. Further, 88.2 per cent would like to see a wider range of cost estimates and options for the school.

Items of importance / non-importance
ALL RESPONDENTS

	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	Total
School in the neighbourhood	2.27% 2	3.41% 3	6.82% 6	87.50% 77	88
New school	56.47% 48	23.53% 20	16.47% 14	3.53% 3	85
Renovation and retrofit of existing school	6.90% 6	12.64% 11	24.14% 21	56.32% 49	87
New gym	12.94% 11	43.53% 37	28.24% 24	15.29% 13	85
Access to French Immersion	4.65% 4	4.65% 4	26.74% 23	63.95% 55	86
Access to Dual Track (English and French)	9.41% 8	12.94% 11	27.06% 23	50.59% 43	85
Access to on-site support services and staff (special needs)	2.30% 2	16.09% 14	21.84% 19	59.77% 52	87
Access to community school supports (nutrition program, etc.)	2.35% 2	12.94% 11	23.53% 20	61.18% 52	85
Retention of playground space	0% 0	7.14% 6	25% 21	67.86% 57	84
All kids together in the same school	1.18% 1	12.94% 11	15.29% 13	70.59% 60	85
As little disruption/relocation as possible	2.33% 2	6.98% 6	11.63% 10	79.07% 68	86
On-site childcare	14.12% 12	14.12% 12	24.71% 21	47.06% 40	85
Access to facility for recreation and community programs	3.45% 3	20.69% 18	27.59% 24	48.28% 42	87
School history and heritage	3.45% 3	12.64% 11	24.14% 21	59.77% 52	87
Neighbourhood heritage/character	5.81% 5	8.14% 7	19.77% 17	66.28% 57	86
Additional assessment of the building's condition	6.98% 6	8.14% 7	18.60% 16	66.28% 57	86
Direct public involvement in decision-making (joint task force or committee)	2.30% 2	4.60% 4	13.79% 12	79.31% 69	87
Wider range of options and estimates	2.35% 2	9.41% 8	18.82% 16	69.41% 59	85

PARENTS / CAREGIVERS

	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	Total
School in the neighbourhood	2.78% 1	2.78% 1	2.78% 1	91.67% 33	36
New school	48.57% 17	28.57% 10	20% 7	2.86% 1	35
Renovation and retrofit of existing school	2.78% 1	16.67% 6	33.33% 12	47.22% 17	36
New gym	8.57% 3	34.29% 12	40% 14	17.14% 6	35
Access to French Immersion	0% 0	2.78% 1	16.67% 6	80.56% 29	36
Access to Dual Track (English and French)	11.43% 4	14.29% 5	17.14% 6	57.14% 20	35
Access to on-site support services and staff (special needs)	0% 0	25% 9	11.11% 4	63.89% 23	36
Access to community school supports (nutrition program, etc.)	0% 0	11.11% 4	27.78% 10	61.11% 22	36
Retention of playground space	0% 0	0% 0	20% 7	80% 28	35
All kids together in the same school	2.78% 1	8.33% 3	11.11% 4	77.78% 28	36
As little disruption/relocation as possible	0% 0	5.56% 2	11.11% 4	83.33% 30	36
On-site childcare	16.67% 6	8.33% 3	25% 9	50% 18	36
Access to facility for recreation and community programs	5.56% 2	13.89% 5	33.33% 12	47.22% 17	36
School history and heritage	2.78% 1	11.11% 4	33.33% 12	52.78% 19	36
Neighbourhood heritage/character	2.78% 1	8.33% 3	30.56% 11	58.33% 21	36
Additional assessment of the building's condition	2.78% 1	5.56% 2	25% 9	66.67% 24	36
Direct public involvement in decision-making (joint task force or committee)	2.78% 1	0% 0	13.89% 5	83.33% 30	36
Wider range of options and estimates	2.78% 1	5.56% 2	19.44% 7	72.22% 26	36

COMMENTS

*If the current school is renovated, significant retrofit is required (very important) to support our kids learning environment
financial considerations need a broader focus*

maintaining a school in the neighbourhood, and taking a full and fair look of the cost of repairs versus new construction on a new site is key, also having a clear plan for students prior to closing the school is very important!

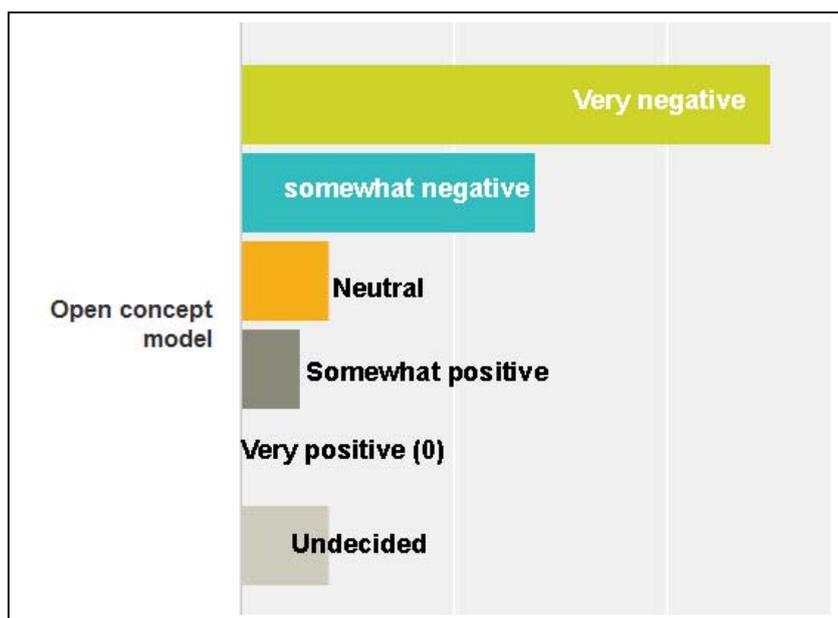
Board need to stop being so stubborn and work with the community to get the other engineer's survey done. What are they afraid of? If they are sure of their info they should allow a confirmation.

our heritage as a community is very important.

The school adds character to the cathedral neighbourhood, also with a shutdown, worries with relocating persist. While a reno could keep the school open.

Please consider getting more than one assessment of the work needed to make the school safe.

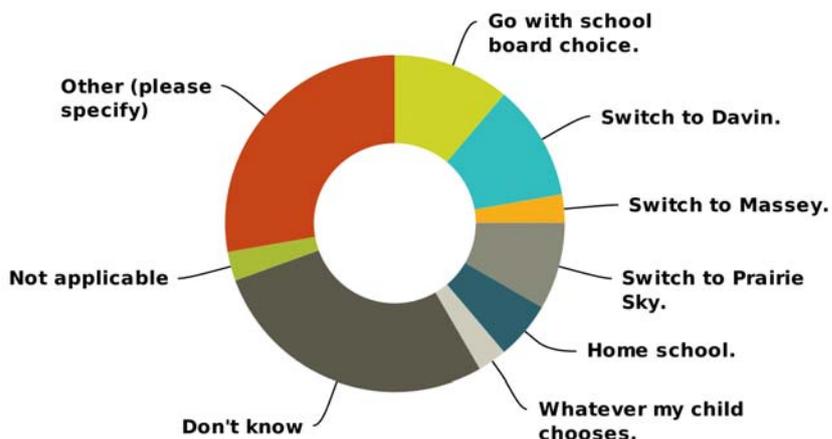
7. Parents are not supportive of recent school architecture. Zero per cent would like a school that features large open spaces, while 78 per cent said they hold a negative or very negative view of open concept models.



	Very negative	Somewhat negative	Neutral	Somewhat positive	Very positive	Undecided	Total
Open concept model	50% 18	27.78% 10	8.33% 3	5.56% 2	0% 0	8.33% 3	36

8. Parents are considering a variety of options in the event of a relocation. Only a small percentage (11.1 per cent) said they are likely to follow the school board’s choice. This raises the question of whether a rebuild will sustain the community or lead to an enrolment drop and school closure. A less dramatic phased-in renovation option, with partial, short-term or onsite portable relocations, may be a greater guarantee of the school continuing into the future. In this light, such an option deserves deeper discussion and research.

PARENTS / CAREGIVERS



Answer Choices	Responses	
Go with school board choice.	11.11%	4
Switch to Holy Rosary.	0%	0
Switch to Davin.	11.11%	4
Switch to Lakeview.	0%	0
Switch to Massey.	2.78%	1
Switch to Prairie Sky.	8.33%	3
Home school.	5.56%	2
Whatever my child chooses.	2.78%	1
Help create an alternative school.	0%	0
Move to another neighbourhood.	0%	0
Don't know	27.78%	10
Not applicable	2.78%	1
Other (please specify)	27.78%	10

#	Other (please specify)
1	Montessori
2	Many of the options listed are not viable because other schools are full. We have few viable options if Connaught is closed.
3	Switch to Catholic French immersion
4	I will have to divide my children and send one to Massey as it is her last year and it seems extremely disappointing to miss the french highschool option for one missed year. My youngest will have to forgo the benefits of french and go to David as I do not intend to put my kid on a bus for 2 hours a day.
5	I am in a unique situation. If I don't like the boards choice I will temporarily bring my kids to the school where I work my kids to the school where I work. If the school couldn't be repaired or replaced at all, I would likely choose Laval as a permanent school for my kids.
6	Waiting for school boards decision to make our decision.
7	We have considered St. Pius as our other child is already in the catholic system.
8	Switch to St. Pius (french program)
9	whatever my child/children chooses, but also keeping them together so probably going with what the board choses if they are kept together.
10	move my family out of regina. Connaught closure would be the last straw in a long line of bad decisions by our leaders (cost of rent, private water, unecessary stadium, lack of affordable housing etc). this city is under very poor leadership across the board at all levels who make it increasingly difficult for families to survive here.

Conclusion

Despite its limitations, this survey reveals important concepts. First and foremost, the answers revealed that what members of the Ecole Connaught community want and value diverges sharply from what the Regina Board of Education wants and values.

Community members would like to see their school repaired and remain open for now and possibly into the future. Caregivers and community members alike value the school's place in their neighbourhood, including its contribution to history and heritage. Of note, they do not see a new school as important, and indeed in the written comments some aversion was expressed toward new architecture and synthetic construction materials. This should not be surprising, given the age of the surrounding neighbourhood, and property owners' familiarity and comfort level with the ongoing maintenance and renovation of older buildings, as was noted by several participants in the Feb. 25 public meeting.

If there must be a relocation, caregivers prefer creative use of available local facilities rather than transportation to schools elsewhere. These are ideas should not be discounted as unrealistic. The surrounding community is cohesive and networked to an unusually high degree, as evidenced in the Stage One Submission's long list of community partners that intersect with the school community. Options that a school official might deem impossible may in the end be quite straightforward if the community is allowed to develop these options.

The community would like greater say in decision-making and a wider range of options to explore. In particular, there was a very strong preference expressed for further research into the structural condition of the building and potential renovation options.

Finally, the responses regarding parental choices in the event of relocation should raise alarm bells concerning the potential impact major construction and relocation may have on future sustainability of the Ecole Connaught school community. The 'gift' of a new school may well be the school's demise. At various points, community members have inquired about phased-in renovations, similar to the phased-in underpinning and restoration work undertaken at the Legislative Building and other major structures in the city. While the quick answer from school officials has been that this is impossible, neither has there been a thorough exploration of the concept.