

Holy Spirit Catholic School Division Public Consultation 2014

Executive Summary:

On February 25th, the Board of Trustees invited a wide range of community stakeholders that included staff, parents, students, parish, FNMI, business, industry, agencies, and post-secondary representatives. This initiative is supported in the upcoming Education Act that states:

- 33.1 *A board, as a partner in education, has the responsibility to*
- c) Provide, where appropriate, for the engagement of parents, students, staff and the community, including municipalities and the local business community, in board matters, including the board's plans and the achievement of goals and targets within those plans AND*
 - f) Collaborate with municipalities, other boards and community-based service agencies in order to effectively address the needs of all students and manage the use of public resources AND*
 - g) Collaborate with post-secondary institutions and the community to enable smooth transitions for students from secondary to post-secondary education.*

The process involved small group discussion on two specific questions:

1. When a student graduates from Holy Spirit Catholic Schools, what competencies/skills are required for success in adult life?
2. What are some ways for Holy Spirit Catholic Schools to collaborate with post-secondary, business and industry, and the larger community?

Common Themes

There were a number of common themes that resonated throughout the evening.

1. Literacy & Numeracy Skills
 - Although participants fully understood living in a highly changing and technology based world, there was a clear message of the importance of both literacy and numeracy skills. These skills are considered fundamental and are critical for success in adulthood. They are basic to ensuring future development of problem solving skills and are essential for lifelong learning.

2. Relationships

- Students need to be able to build strong relationships. Interpersonal skills, effective communication both with and without technology and the ability to work with others and collaborate are highly important. Relational or emotional intelligence are vital to building strong bonds with peers and/or employers. Students require opportunities to build confidence to enhance characteristics of self-management, flexibility and resilience. School is just one of the many places within the community where positive relationships can be role modeled for students.

3. Partnerships

- Schools can no longer do it alone. Community understanding, trust, permission and support will only be fully realized through partnerships. Educating an engaged thinker, an ethical citizen with an entrepreneurial spirit requires education to open its doors. Schools must form partnerships that connect students to business and industry. They need links that are seamless and provide students with occasions to engage in practice, to be mentored and to have rich experiences in the vast opportunities available in the community.

4. Values Driven

- There needs to be a premium on graduating competent Catholics/Christians with an understanding of faith with evidence of their actions being rooted in the benefits of the larger community before self. Students must understand the value of community engagement and volunteer service. As a student in preparation for adulthood, they must be willing to become involved in service and social justice projects for the betterment of the community. They must be culturally aware and recognize the importance of diversity, be welcoming, tolerant and respectful to all.

5. 4 C's

- The future requires students, who are able to create, communicate, collaborate and critically think. This requires a shift in how we have previously viewed school and the classroom. Flexibility in programming is essential for engaging students and providing multiple pathways for success. Classrooms must invite creativity and innovation that connect to real life for students. Ultimately students with the four C's will understand how to learn throughout their lifetime.