

# Survey Comments - Proposed Whitecourt Grade Re-Configuration

Comments were collected over the course of December and January to provide decision makers with opinions from stakeholders about the possibility of realigning Whitecourt schools to a K-5 model.

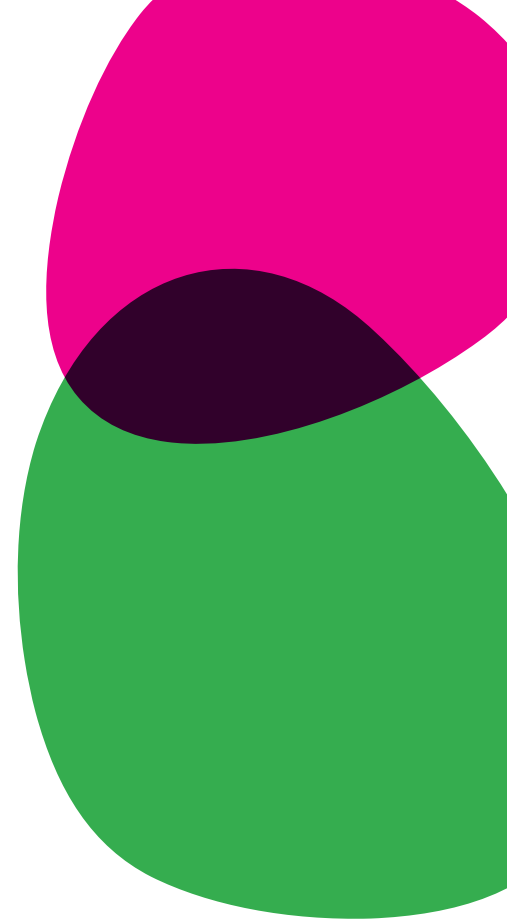
All comments are included below verbatim with the following exceptions:

- As the purpose of the survey was to collect cost/benefit data, repetitive answers have been noted but are not all included in the document as it would be unwieldy. Preference has been given to ensuring the bulk of comments against change are included even if there is some repetition.
- Comments which are not relevant to the current discussion because they cover other topics have been noted but are not included in the release document. Thank you to all those who took the opportunity to thank our staff for their contributions to our community.
- Comments have been edited to remove any specific identifying information of the contributor.

## **What advantages do you see in changing from a primary and elementary model to a K-5 model?**

- Consistency for children, less scary, more familiarity.
- Less transferring allowing for more comfortability.
- I think it's helpful for both students and staff to have older kids to help with the k-2 ages. Whether it be reading, activities, concerts, etc. especially for the older kids gr3-5 to show a positive example for the k-2's. kids would be able to attend school in their area vs having to go do unnecessary bussing and would belong to the same school for 6 year which I think would give them a good sense of belonging and community. I also think it would make a positive impact for the teachers and staff as the grade 4-5's would be able to help out with some responsibilities around The school line cross walk, chairs during assembly, etc.
- Comfort levels of children who do not like changes, more structure, more stability
- My children will be able to be together in one place for the first 5 years of their schooling
- Ease of pick up and drop off for families with multiple children. Children will retain comfort in their time at one building rather than being tossed around school to school. Builds familiarity with staff and fellow students.
- A reduction in bussing and traffic will occur because more students can walk to school or parents who drive their children to school could only have to drive to 1 school. Parent volunteerism will increase. Parents who previously didn't choose one school/child over the other can volunteer at one school on a regular basis. Relationships between older students and younger students (buddy programs) can be encouraged. Older students can mentor younger students. Students can experience continuity in knowing teachers/staff and the school. Not changing schools every 3 years can allow students stability especially for students who have a difficult time adapting to change.

- Greater stability for the families across grades—keep kids together at the same school—less onerous for parents. As a former psychologist, I strongly feel that the intensive age clustered model is not wise - complex needs are too heavily clustered; and there is a serious loss of the cross-pollination of diverse age groups that a K-5 model offers. (The modern literature is very clear on this issue that diverse age ranges offer yields you simply cannot gain from a narrow age group) Even the developmentally typical needs of K-2 are too much when you cluster 350 same aged kids in one place. I also believe there could be efficiencies for bus transport. In the world of complex needs, each new school is a tremendous stressor for a child. In the current model, a significant amount of developmental time is going to be spent by a child with complex needs adjusting to their new site in gr 3. In the new model, a school could leverage existing relationships to hasten to transition between grades in the same building. On that same theme, learning teams (child, parent, educator, IEF) are generally more effective the longer they work together - switching schools every few years leads to significant rapport disruption - wastes a ton of time as people have to get to know each other over again. I believe a K-5 model leads to a more vibrant culture and offers leadership opportunities to older grades. It also needs to be noted that variety is protective against professional burnout. The more diverse and interesting your student population, the more protection there is against the doldrums of « same old same old.
- Role models- pairing younger and older students.
- May solve bussing issues Potential leadership roles for kids
- Less anxiety on children if they stay in 1 school longer.
- Not so many young kids in one building, less school transitions for students and my kids will actually be able to go to the same school. In the current configuration my oldest 2 will never be in the same building until high school.
- Residents both up and down the hill can access both primary and elementary for their children in close proximity to their home
- Comfort for the students. They really get to know the school over 6 years vs 3
- Less stress on students for transferring to a new school, Stronger friendships/relationships as they are together longer if friends are in other grades.
- I would be able to have both kids in the same school as well as having the best education. All the **teachers and staff are amazing.**



- As a parent of a special needs child where change can be difficult, being able to stay at the same school and not have to go through the challenges of having him get used to a new school would be beneficial and being around the same staff that is familiar would help with his learning
- Less traveling amongst schools for parents with multiple young children.
- Lower anxiety for students, relationship between teachers and students develop on a stronger level for educational benefits. Less commuting for parents Siblings can remain in school longer together, especially if a sibling relies on having their sibling close by, example, ADHD students, high anxiety students.
- Building stronger relationships/trust between student/teacher and parent/teacher. •More opportunity for mentor/mentee between the students. •Possibly more understanding at which the level and speed of learning the children are at as they progress.
- My three younger children will be at the same school.
- I see that the students will greatly enjoy learning in a single school environment that can and will improve school staff and parents to feel as if they can build a solid foundation. The kids will feel less anxiety from having to learn a whole lot more unknown staff. The students will be able to stay with their siblings in the same class which improves strength and connection.
- Less chaotic bussing system, kids don't have to change schools means more stability for those that rely on routine and familiarity.
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- Less chaotic bussing system, kids don't have to change schools means more stability for those that rely on routine and familiarity.
- I like the leadership opportunities for the older kids.
- The advantages I see are parents that live either up the hill or down the hill who do not drive can easily get their to kids to school everyday with having both schools being a K-5.
- to support various learning levels and needs, with a collection of resources designed to support K-5 within the building.

- greater opportunity for leadership and peer modeling. Master of ceremonies for assemblies, daily announcements, establishing rules and expectations for exemplary behaviour. - greater opportunity for older "buddies" to help with reading, lunch time support, older mentor to play games etc. - relieve some pressure from the staff within a school full of 3-7 year old children. Grade 5 students can help with crosswalk, which must be done by staff members in a primary school. Grade 5s can help with lunch time supervision to help open containers, zip up coats etc which is done entirely by staff members in a primary school. Grade 3-5s can help with tasks such as emptying recycling bins, picking up hot lunch bins, delivering Community Lunchbox snacks/lunches etc. which is done by staff members in a primary school. Grade 5s can set up chairs for assemblies and performances which must be done by staff at a primary school. - split up and spread out the numbers of children who need constant supervision and support (3-7 year olds). - students will only need to endure the stress of switching to a new school 3 times within their k-12 education instead of 4 times. - students will experience a stable and long term sense of belonging to a school community for 6 years - schools would have greater access to resources They are suitable ages to blend together.
- Younger students have the older students for role models. Potential for an even distribution of pre-k to grade 2 children with special needs.
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- They are suitable ages to blend together.
- Younger students have the older students for role models. Potential for an even distribution of pre-k to grade 2 children with special needs.
- Less transition for kids. Consistency of administration and staff better for kids with anxiety at least in the early years.
- Students are able to attend their school for a longer period of time and develop relationships with staff and fellow students. It would also reduce the stress and anxiety associated with moving schools. The present model requires families to attend too many schools within our system. Building parental relationships and involvement in the school would be better served in a k-5 model. The Preschool to grade 2 model at Pat Hardy has become too large. Children of this age require more support and the "heavy lifting" is placed on the staff and school resources whereas it could be logically split between two schools. Children gain opportunities to provide leadership and mentor younger students in a multi graded school. The changed demographics of Whitecourt would support a better distribution of students in two schools and reduce student bus ride times as well as reduce traffic around Pat Hardy. Central School would benefit from having younger students as well.
- I see less changes for kids, and this is an advantage especially for kids with higher needs etc. I see modelling of behaviors from older kids for the younger kids which would be a good thing. Could be good for teachers to have different supports around them (IE older kids)

- I see many advantages. Kids in a K-5 school are at the same place for longer. They should have more confidence and school pride. They should feel safe, secure, and more comfortable because they know their surroundings. They should have less anxiety because of all the factors mentioned above. Also if they have a sibling they feel they have a safety net knowing they have a family member at school. Growing up is hard enough. Consistently in where they go to school is not something they should have to worry about. It is very stressful and worrisome for them having to change school every 3 years.
- Leadership/mentoring opportunities for students in higher grades (including things such as buddy classes and student leadership with school based activities such as assemblies, announcements, special events, crosswalk, lunch time support etc.) in our current situation, K-2 staff are responsible for these things to happen - More equitable work conditions for K-2 vs 3-5 schools (staff) when considering things such as supervision responsibilities, initial creation of student supports, difficult conversations with parents in the early years and "training" of student independence - Students will have one less transition between schools (transitions often cause anxiety in our young learners and/or parents) - Younger students have the support of older siblings for day to day actions such as riding the bus or getting to school - Students will attend schools in their own neighborhoods depending on whether they live up or down the hill - Resource sharing for students above or below grade level will be more easily accessible - Increased opportunities for staff to share strategies and learn from one another.
- Better community for children and families.
- It is more consistent for students and will distribute student needs more equitable as Pat Hardy is completely overwhelmed with needs and there is not enough space in the school for all the classrooms.
- I have children in different schools in Whitecourt and it's exhausting as programming and support for students. And deeper, long lasting relationships with parents to the benefit of students. - Parents like having a school close to home. A primary option both up and down the hill (with both uphill next year) would increase enrolment in Northern Gateway. - Teachers have more opportunity and flexibility in moving between grade levels which supports their wellness, engagement and ability to build capacity. - Increased ability to support students vertically - Gr 2's can access gr 4-5 resources and visa versa. - Reduced strain on primary school who need to establish new parent relationships, new ISPs, SES plans, and analysis and identification of learning and behavioural needs and supports for students new to school. - opportunity for older students to mentor new students. - by grade 2, the intensity of needs and supports for students reduces significantly. Having two K-5 schools would spread needs out more evenly and reduce pressure on primary school.
- Help the teachers and EA's balance the needs of the younger children.
- I have children in different schools in Whitecourt and it's exhausting as well as they will never be in a same school as each other:(
- Kids staying in a routine with similar environment for longer. Will still make new friends in new grades as they move up. Less commuting for parents throughout the year specially with parents with more than one child.
- Multiple transitions with school changes increases stress for students and families, the possibility of needs being missed, regression in social emotional and behavioural needs, and other setbacks while new school establishes relationships and trust and gets to know students. - More consistent long term (6 consecutive years)

- More mature role models for younger students. Redistribution of needs of students - lower elementary has a ton of regulation and behavioural needs and having 6 classes of these lower ages together is very difficult. Opportunities for buddy programs and more student leadership for older students. Meeting new friends in older age levels is good for kids. Being with the same kids for your whole education can be great for some kids but not for everyone. For teachers it allows more movement among grade levels while staying within the same school environment. Right now when you need a change to reignite passion it's extremely difficult to relocate to a new school resulting in many staff feeling stuck.

## **What disadvantages do you see in changing to a K-5 model?**

- Too many kids split up, houses who have split parents how do they get to choose which address they use. All grades being in the same schools makes the most sense, as it is now.
- The disadvantage I see changing to a K-5 is back to a community split.
- I do believe that changing back to a K-5 model would once again create this divide. As a parent now, I do like the primary and elementary split. I think the kids are similar in levels and create friendships between those grades as the age is similar. another disadvantage with going to a K-5 model is the potential of these established school friendships being broken.
- Loss of friendships already made- if they are moved to the other school.
- Even registration between schools.
- Kids who have settled in at WCS will be moved once again.
- More competitiveness Less resources available for each school Less collaborating for teachers as there will be fewer at each school Separating kids from their friends More challenging to have age appropriate activities Potentially more bullying issues More anxiety for younger kids being with older kids Age appropriate Playground structures Added costs - whitecourt just spent a lot of time and money reconfiguring the schools. It feels like this would be a step backwards to undo something that was just done, reallocating teachers, resources, furniture, playground equipment, gym equipment, etc.
- The perception/attitude of a "better" k-5 school could return I think this can be mitigated by assigning a school to each family not allowing parents to choose the school. Parents can then appeal the assigned school with a valid reason. The public perception is that school division has spent a significant amount of money renovating schools to accommodate a particular age (playgrounds, classrooms, toilets, shelving, desks, fountains sinks, hooks etc). This money would have to be reinvested.
- It would be a significant task to split everything up again. There are operational efficiencies from keeping same age groups together. Same levelled reading books- same playground equipment. Splitting teaching staffs is unquestionably a big organizational stressor- however, sometimes change can be an opportunity. Splitting up the robust pre-K specialist team at PH would be a significant loss. This factor needs to be seriously weighed — the gains that group makes for kids with complex needs does untold wonders in those early years that post dividends from that point on. Someone needs to talk to that team about what they think.



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- Less resources specifically designed for each age range.
- The influence that the older children have on the younger children is not always a positive one.
- I love the young primary school bubble that's created. Kindergarten and grade 5 is a potential big gap of different exposures in hallways and playgrounds.
- The disadvantage I see would be one school being potentially overcrowded than the other.
- Might be more difficult to have specialized resources for younger kids with a larger age range? Not sure.
- Parents might not like the school their child is sent to (teachers, facility, friends live across boundary) and may wish to be sent to the other school.
- Adjustments for staff teaching higher grades and vice versa.
- I'm very concerned about relationships my kids have made with other students and how this may cause a divide in friend groups. How is this even going work? Downtown kids attend central and uptown kids attend Pat Hardy? What was the reason of changing it in the first place years ago? Also is this really going to fix the problem of not having enough support, there will just be less support throughout both schools....
- Changing the structure of the schools. For example I think central school is wonderful as is and great at supporting the ages of the children that attend there.
- spreading out learning resources between 2 schools rather than the obvious advantage of being able to specialize in resources that support a smaller range of learners. -ensuring playground equipment is suitable for all ages K-5.
- Right now, all the grade level teachers are in the same building so lots of opportunity for collaboration. Also, each school can tailor its programs and activities to a specific age group. (ie. k-2 or 3-5). There is a big developmental difference between kindergarten and grade 5.
- Short-term disruption for current students while they adapt to a new school setting.
- Hard to understand how to comment when you don't know what the plan is in Whitecourt. If you are going back to splitting the town then i have concerns. By splitting down town and uptown you create an economic separation. The model prior in Whitecourt showed this. If the school boards only concern is to save on bussing, they need to come up with a better way.
- Less specialized school environment, small children mixed with older ones, so exposed to more adverse behaviour. Cost of splitting schools again. Disagreements over which school children get to go to.

- The specialty and specific educational needs for a small age range will be lost. Staff are versed in working with kids within a small age range and we can serve this population best when our skills and abilities are tailored to a target population. Currently children are among peers near their age and abilities; I think it should stay this way.
- I like that the kids all know each other entering Middle school. I have found it makes the transition easier. As a teacher it would mean we would have less people to plan with as a grade level.
- The disadvantage I see would be if we were to revert back to how things used to be, where K-5 exists both up the hill and down the hill. It puts the two schools in competition with one another as well as the Catholic schools. It creates a have/have not situation as budgets are based on student enrolment: one school gets more support because they can afford it because they have more students. It spreads grade level supports across two buildings (which may lead to travel between the two schools for some staff). It would reduce collaboration between teachers of the same grade levels which would then reduce consistency across classrooms thus feeding into the competition between schools. Other disadvantages may include increased exposure to "mature" playground talk for primary students and increased opportunity for older students to attempt to assert superiority over younger students.
- Nothing. As long as each classroom is equipped for the grades it consists of.
- Children all merge together at a pre teen age in middle school. As a student who experienced this model previously in this town, it is a hard transition. Children are more comfortable and form stronger bonds with peers while attending school with the same faces throughout their entire school life. Not to mention the age groups are more similar one another, rather than having younger kids watching older kid's behaviours and picking up on bad habits or seeing things more mature for their age, especially in the pre teen / teenage years.
- It would be a significant task to split everything up again. There are operational efficiencies from keeping same age groups together. Same levelled reading books- same playground equipment. Splitting teaching staffs is unquestionably a big organizational stressor- however, sometimes change can be an opportunity. Splitting up the robust pre-K specialist team at PH would be a significant loss. This factor needs to be seriously weighed — the gains that group makes for kids with complex needs does untold wonders in those early years that post dividends from that point on. Someone needs to talk to that team about what they think.
- We have seen this before . It created a have and a have not schools . It was not good and created competition between schools in the same division. And if you move to district area attendance for schools most of younger families live down the hill- which out a lot of pressure on central school infrastructure. By moving back to this model it will do what it did last time and drive families to the Catholic schools (this was exactly what happened- check the stats) Not a good move.
- I really loved when my kids where in primary school and middle that the focus was age appropriate. I personally like the idea of the school being divided into primary and middle. I feel like the atmosphere at each school is able to narrow the focus on the smaller age gap at each school. I would not support a K-5 elementary school.



- As I parent I am strongly against changing from k-2 and 3-5. Disadvantages would be segregation in town between hill and valley. Have to pull my kids from one school and put them in another, away from their current friend structures because of home location. Too many needs in one place and more chaos with so many grade levels. Staff having to go out of their preferred comforts zones for grade levels they work at. If reconfiguration were to happen, grade 5 students from each school wouldn't come together till grade 6 at Percy and would not be idle. Students would have their own groups of friends, lots of division between groups and clicks.
- Changes would disrupt friendships and relationships with teachers.
- The kids get separated from each and their friends until grade 6 I am worried the schools will have to be nut aware for longer.
- Having to adjust schools to accommodate age range and supports. Playground interactions of different age ranges would need to be monitored. Potential for higher density areas to have more students than lower density areas located near schools.
- The kids like to "graduate" to the next school. And I like how all the grades are together instead of having so many kids of the same age group separated throughout the schools. It also teaches them that change is ok.
- Splitting the town in half. Have and have not is the perception of uptown vs downtown. Limiting who the children can be friends with based on where they live. They will miss out on interacting with half a many children their age. Central is too far to walk for our child in the cold months.
- I don't think JK students need to be with older kids. Don't fix what's not broken is my opinion.
- By grade 5 kids have created their "Clicks" and trying to get all of these "Clicks" to meld together in Grade 6 will be a huge failure. Plus kids that have crated friendships will be separated from each other until grade 6. Shy and introverted children will suffer the most in this system.
- Disruptive to the current students.
- The whole point of changes was so it wasn't biased on where you lived.



- Adequate time will need to be provided for staff that are changing locations to pack and move items and re-establish new classrooms (\*especially important for Kindergarten and Junior Kindergarten) - Updates to schools such as suitable sized washrooms, fountains, playgrounds, etc. may be costly - Access to activities such as swimming, skating, fieldtrips (especially for Kindergarten), may be inequitable due to the added costs of busing either up or down the hill depending on the activity - It will be important that access to supports and resources remains equitable between schools (this was not the case in the past when Central had far more students of low socio-economic status and greater needs than Pat Hardy resulting in a "have" and "have not" environment in these schools) -How will current resources such as kindergarten play materials, PE equipment, library books, speech and OT resources etc be divided? - How will this impact the Junior Kindergarten programs? Will parents of 3-5 year olds be comfortable with students in the same school environment as Gr. 5 students?
- 1. Separation of students - it has been wonderful with all students for one grade in one school. Grow up together 2. I feel like there would be some awkwardness meeting at Percy Baxter. Just another reason for someone to be better than others.
- There is a big range of ages of students. I would prefer to have less of an age gap in students.
- A major bonus to the current set up that is very clear, is that kids can be kids at an age appropriate level. The little kids in Pat hardy can freely grow to be their own creative and unique selves with very little peer judgements or bullying. Less pressures are present that come from older kids being around. Mentally I feel they can learn and feel more comfortable in their setting when they don't have 'big kids' pressures on them. The pressures of dressing and maturing, along with inappropriateness that presented once going to grades at Central School, really shapes the children. Gossip is passed quickly through this school group. In class, halls, playground, and bus lines, bus rides. This age group typically has mobile devices and access to internet. Many fellow parents note that this age group presented with more pressures of not being a little kid, bullying, inappropriate sexual and behavior exposure (gossip and internet pictures/video's). Keeping the children in one school for grades 3-5 also helps shelter them from further escalated exposure and pressures that present with moving on to Percy Baxter. I feel children would apply themselves to their academics and play time in a more easy flowing manner, than they would with preteens/teens in their presence. I have heard from fellow parents and past/present students that actual sexual incidents begin and gossip is stronger with students in this age group. Having grown up with a k-6, 7-9, 10-12 school system, I did find it hard for many kids my age to transition into junior high from elementary. Not so much for the academic part, but from the mental wellness standpoint of the pressures placed by older/more exposed peers. The easier transition into higher grades that Whitecourt now has makes it easier and protects children so that they can be 'children' longer. I really like that, typically, Pat Hardy allows the rainbows and imaginations flow freely. And that Central seems to be a transition phase to prepare children for what's to come. There are pro's and con's to either set up the schools have, especially from a constructive and organization view. My view is how the school set up will support our children of the community spiritually and emotionally.

- Costs: I know there would be significant financial cost to re-configuring (again) IE Moving costs, renovations, time spent by admin/teachers/support staff etc. I would want this decision to be based on evidence. IE: we have seen grades decrease since it was changed (back a few years ago), we have seen teachers absenteeism rise, we have seen evidence from around the world to support this. This cant be based on “feel” or anecdote. I also believe the real costs need to be publicly available and part of the discussion.
- Separating kids from friends and teachers they have connected with.
- Huge waste of money to correct something that should never have happened in the first place.
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- Huge waste of money to correct something that should never have happened in the first place.
- I believe the system that is in place works better than the proposed plan. It was changed for a reason why change it back to the way it used to be. Waste of time and funds.
- Too big of an age difference.
- Children have had to learn to adjust on the fly through out the pandemic, this will be their first full year without the stress of the “unknown” they can be children again. Making changes could be very difficult for some and parents who have made life arrangements for where their children will attend school. Babysitters close to the school.
- The age gap from kindergarten to grade 5. Possible more bullying issues and should increase supervision while outside etc:
- Concentration of expertise in small grade level clusters in schools. We are K-2 and 3-5 experts. - We have worked intentionally and proactively to establish a strong, cohesive highly functioning team which could be upset if staff changes. - change is scary for many people - grade level cohorts of 5-6 teachers allows for awesome collaboration and building instructional capacity. -there would likely be costs to ensuring both schools had adequate resources to support both configurations.
- Some have relied heavily on ride sharing to and from school with friends and grouping dayhome kids together so they could walk or ride the bus together. If we couldn't have my child in the same school as friends or dayhome groups then I would likely change schools so that we could continue doing those things.
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**Northern Gateway**  
Public Schools

- Could see some division in the community but no matter what students come together at Percy Baxter.
- Kids the same age group will be at different schools (it's nice having all the kids the same age together in one school learning and socializing). I worry about loss of specific programming geared to certain age groups when they are at two different schools.
- Hassle of making k-5 available and functional.
- such a vast age group. Mixing of big kids and little kids on the playground. Academically wide spread, requiring a tremendous amount of resources.
- The kids shouldn't be mixed with that many grades in one school.
- targeted projects, presentations are a little more difficult to plan - the division of the community again (good school vs bad school) There will always be an exception to the dividing line which will end the good school again happening. -busing issues still will not be solved as the Catholic system is adding a school to the bus route.
- Kids all going 6 years before meeting other kids that they will need to go to school with
- Potential dividing of the community.
- I believe the system that is in place works better than the proposed plan. It was changed for a reason why change it back to the way it used to be. Waste of time and funds.
- Too big of an age difference.
- Separating the town into "classes". Sad to have same grades/students separated.
- Cost to move teachers and classrooms, furniture, alter school facilities (ie toilet and sink heights). Competition between student enrolment. In previous years, Pat Hardy was viewed as the "rich school" and Central as the "inner city" school. Pat Hardy was bursting and Central had empty classrooms because of a false perception.
- Parent prespective - The only disadvantage I see is my children not being in the same school as their friends, however I know there are plenty of other children they can make friends with.
- If we don't get to choose which school we would like our children to attend.

- This will result in less services as a whole for the students as now you need twice the amount of k-5 supplies. This would be needed to supply both Pat Hardy and Central with the needed stuff to accommodate all the students. This will result in competing for teachers between the schools and aides will be less available or under utilized in some cases.
- Less resources specifically designed for each age range.
- The influence that the older children have on the younger children is not always a positive one.
- I love the young primary school bubble that's created. Kindergarten and grade 5 is a potential big gap of different exposures in hallways and playgrounds.
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- The specialty and specific educational needs for a small age range will be lost. Staff are versed in working with kids within a small age range and we can serve this population best when our skills and abilities are tailored to a target population. Currently children are among peers near their age and abilities; I think it should stay this way.
- I like that the kids all know each other entering Middle school. I have found it makes the transition easier. As a teacher it would mean we would have less people to plan with as a grade level.
- The disadvantage I see would be if we were to revert back to how things used to be, where K-5 exists both up the hill and down the hill. It puts the two schools in competition with one another as well as the Catholic schools. It creates a have/have not situation as budgets are based on student enrolment: one school gets more support because they can afford it because they have more students. It spreads grade level supports across two buildings (which may lead to travel between the two schools for some staff). It would reduce collaboration between teachers of the same grade levels which would then reduce consistency across classrooms thus feeding into the competition between schools. Other disadvantages may include increased exposure to "mature" playground talk for primary students and increased opportunity for older students to attempt to assert superiority over younger students.
- Currently children are among peers near their age and abilities; I think it should stay this way.
- I like that the kids all know each other entering Middle school. I have found it makes the transition easier. As a teacher it would mean we would have less people to plan with as a grade level.
- Nothing. As long as each classroom is equipped for the grades it consists of.
- Children all merge together at a pre teen age in middle school. As a student who experienced this model previously in this town, it is a hard transition. Children are more comfortable and form stronger bonds with peers while attending school with the same faces throughout their entire school life. Not to mention the age groups are more similar one another, rather than having younger kids watching older kid's behaviours and picking up on bad habits or seeing things more mature for their age, especially in the pre teen / teenage years.



- We have seen this before . It created a have and a have not schools . It was not good and created completion between schools in the same division. And if you move to district area attendance for schools most of younger families live down the hill- which out a lot of pressure on central school infrastructure. By moving back to this model it will do what it did last time and drive families to the Catholic schools (this was exactly what happened- check the stats) Not a good move.
- I really loved when my kids where in primary school and middle that the focus was age appropriate. I personally like the idea of the school being divided into primary and middle. I feel like the atmosphere at each school is able to narrow the focus on the smaller age gap at each school. I would not support a K-5 elementary school.
- As I parent I am strongly against changing from k-2 and 3-5. Disadvantages would be segregation in town between hill and valley. Have to pull my kids from one school and put them in another, away from their current friend structures because of home location.
- Too many needs in one place and more chaos with so many grade levels. Staff having to go out of their preferred comforts zones for grade levels they work at. If reconfiguration were to happen, grade 5 students from each school wouldn't come together till grade 6 at Percy and would not be idle. Students would have their own groups of friends, lots of division between groups and clicks.
- Changes would disrupt friendships and relationships with teachers.
- The kids get separated from each and their friends until grade 6 I am worried the schools will have to be nut aware for longer.
- Having to adjust schools to accommodate age range and supports. Playground interactions of different age ranges would need to be monitored. Potential for higher density areas to have more students than lower density areas located near schools.
- The kids like to "graduate" to the next school. And I like how all the grades are together instead of having so many kids of the same age group separated throughout the schools. It also teaches them that change is ok.
- Splitting the town in half. Have and have not is the perception of uptown vs downtown.
- Limiting who the children can be friends with based on where they live. They will miss out on interacting with half a many children their age. Central is too far to walk for our child in the cold months.
- I don't think JK students need to be with older kids. Don't fix what is not broken is my opinion.
- By grade 5 kids have created their cliques and trying to get all of these cliques to meld together in Grade 6 will be a huge failure. Plus kids that have crated friendships will be separated from each other until grade 6. Shy and introverted children will suffer the most in this system.
- Disruptive to the current students.
- The whole point of changes was so it wasn't biased on where you lived.

- Adequate time will need to be provided for staff that are changing locations to pack and move items and re-establish new classrooms (\*especially important for Kindergarten and Junior Kindergarten) - Updates to schools such as suitable sized washrooms, fountains, playgrounds, etc. may be costly - Access to activities such as swimming, skating, fieldtrips (especially for Kindergarten), may be inequitable due to the added costs of busing either up or down the hill depending on the activity - It will be important that access to supports and resources remains equitable between schools (this was not the case in the past when Central had far more students of low socio-economic status and greater needs than Pat Hardy resulting in a “have” and “have not” environment in these schools) -How will current resources such as kindergarten play materials, PE equipment, library books, speech and OT resources etc be divided? - How will this impact the Junior Kindergarten programs? Will parents of 3-5 year olds be comfortable with students in the same school environment as Gr. 5 students?
- 1. Separation of students - it has been wonderful with all students for one grade in one school. Grow up together 2. I feel like there would be some awkwardness meeting at Percy Baxter. Just another reason for someone to be better than others.
- There is a big range of ages of students. I would prefer to have less of an age gap in students.
- A major bonus to the current set up that is very clear, is that kids can be kids at an age appropriate level. The little kids in Pat hardy can freely grow to be their own creative and unique selves with very little peer judgements or bullying. Less pressures are present that come from older kids being around. Mentally I feel they can learn and feel more comfortable in their setting when they don't have big kids pressures on them. The pressures of dressing and maturing, along with inappropriateness that presented once going to grades at Central School, really shapes the children. Gossip is passed quickly through this school group. In class, halls, playground, and bus lines, bus rides. This age group typically has mobile devices and access to internet. Many fellow parents note that this age group presented with more pressures of not being a little kid, bullying, manner, than they would with preteens/teens in their presence. I have heard from fellow parents and past/present students that actual sexual incidents begin and gossip is stronger with students in this age group. Having grown up with a k-6, 7-9, 10-12 school system, I did find it hard for many kids my age to transition into junior high from elementary. Not so much for the academic part, but from the mental wellness standpoint of the pressures placed by older/more exposed peers. The easier transition into higher grades that Whitecourt now has makes it easier and protects children so that they can be children longer. I really like that, typically, Pat Hardy allows the rainbows and imaginations flow freely. And that Central seems to be a transition phase to prepare children for what is to come. There are pros and cons to either set up the schools have, especially from a constructive and organization view. My view is how the school set up will support our children of the community spiritually and emotionally.
- Costs: I know there would be significant financial cost to re-configuring (again) IE Moving costs, renovations, time spent by admin/teachers/support staff etc. I would want this decision to be based on evidence. IE: we have seen grades decrease since it was changed (back a few years ago), we have seen teachers absenteeism rise, we have seen evidence from around the world to support this. This cant be based on “feel” or anecdote. I also believe the real costs need to be publicly available and part of the discussion.
- Separating kids from friends and teachers they have connected with.
- Huge waste of money to correct something that should never have happened in the first place.

- Potential dividing of the community.
- I believe the system that is in place works better than the proposed plan. It was changed for a reason why change it back to the way it used to be. Waste of time and funds.
- Too big of an age difference.
- Children have had to learn to adjust on the fly through out the pandemic, this will be their first full year without the stress of the "unknown" they can be children again. Making changes could be very difficult for some and parents who have made life arrangements for where their children will attend school. Babysitters close to the school.
- The age gap from kindergarten to grade 5. Possible more bullying issues and should increase supervision while outside etc:
- Concentration of expertise in small grade level clusters in schools. We are K-2 and 3-5 experts. - We have worked intentionally and proactively to establish a strong, cohesive highly functioning team which could be upset if staff changes. - change is scary for many people - grade level cohorts of 5-6 teachers allows for awesome collaboration and building instructional capacity. -there would likely be costs to ensuring both schools had adequate resources to support both configurations.
- Some have relied heavily on ride sharing to and from school with friends and grouping dayhome kids together so they could walk or ride the bus together. If we couldn't have my child in the same school as friends or dayhome groups then I would likely change schools so that we could continue doing those things.
- Separating the town into "classes". Sad to have same grades/students separated.
- Cost to move teachers and classrooms, furniture, alter school facilities (ie toilet and sink heights). Competition between student enrolment. In previous years, Pat Hardy was viewed as the "rich school" and Central as the "inner city" school. Pat Hardy was bursting and Central had empty classrooms because of a false perception.
- Parent perspective - The only disadvantage I see is my children not being in the same school as their friends, however I know there are plenty of other children they can make friends with.
- If we don't get to choose which school we would like our children to attend.