

EXIT SURVEY

SUMMARY OF INPUT
from outgoing
SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS
(completing their terms of office
October 2004, 2006 & 2008 & 2010)

Researched and compiled by
Association of Yukon School Councils,
Boards & Committees
(AYSCBC)

November 2010

SUMMARY OF INPUT
from
'EXIT SURVEY' FOR SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS
(completing their terms of office October 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2010)

BACKGROUND

Since the Yukon Education Act was proclaimed in 1990, the number of people running for seats on their local School Councils has fluctuated considerably over the years. Elections are held every two years and nominations are open to every person who:

- ▶ is a Canadian citizen;
- ▶ is 18 years of age; and is either
 - ▶ a resident in the attendance area for the School Council for at least three months,
 - or
 - ▶ a parent of a child in attendance at a school in the attendance area.

The criteria for eligibility also preclude a person from holding a seat on a Council for a school in which they are employed.

While the ebb and flow in the number of candidates as well as voters has been a topic of discussion for several years, no real investigation had ever been conducted into this situation. In order to determine some of the reasons for the changes, particularly any decrease in candidates, the first 'exit survey' was developed and circulated by the Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards & Committees (AYSCBC) to those outgoing members who were not seeking re-election in October 2004. This transition time seemed to provide a prime learning opportunity. The feedback that the Association received indicated that respondents appreciated having the opportunity to provide some comments and suggestions. With this in mind, the exit survey was once again circulated to outgoing members not seeking re-election for the 2006-08 or 2008-10 or 2010-12 terms of office.

In the interests of increasing parent and community involvement in education, and specifically in the role of School Councilors, information about the motivators and detractors that some members experience during their time as School Councilors has been gathered for analysis and future planning.

METHODOLOGY

In order to gather input, the brief survey originally developed and circulated in 2004, was updated and circulated by post and email to all outgoing School Council members who had not put their names forward to run again in the elections that took place in 2006, 2008 and 2010. The cover letter explained that their input would assist in establishing a better understanding of the reasons why people do not run again for Council seats, with the added purpose of ensuring that energy could be focused on addressing any situations and issues that were identified.

The purpose of the survey was identified as:

- Providing an opportunity for School Council members to raise important issues*
- Providing an avenue for School Council members to have a voice for frustrations, provide constructive suggestions and comment on things that did work.*
- Identifying areas needing support and change for School Council members*

Those surveyed were assured anonymity and advised that a summary of the input would be generated and shared with respondents, School Councils and others involved in education and local governance. During each survey period, the return rate of completed and returned surveys was generally less than 20%

Great appreciation is extended to all for their contribution of time, attention and information.

SUMMARY OF SURVEY INPUT

On the survey, respondents had the choice of several options provided as possible reasons one might not run again, as well a category marked 'other'. Comments could be entered in response to any or all categories.

SOME OF THE REASONS PEOPLE DID NOT CHOOSE TO RUN AGAIN FOR A SEAT ON A SCHOOL COUNCIL---

Time commitments



Comments:

Fall 2010

- ☞ Too many meetings and additional 'working groups' a member is wanted to help with.
- ☞ I showed up for meetings and still no quorum. This happened often, at least 4-5 times. That wastes my time.
- ☞ I'm building a house, running a business and raising a 10 yr old daughter.
- ☞ This is not the reason I did not run, however I was Chair of Council past 2 years and the amount of time as Chair was FAR more than as a member.

Fall 2008

- ☞ I needed to cut back on after work commitments—already have work-related meetings 2 or 3x per month, band practice, kids with homework, etc!
- ☞ Timewise it was what I expected
- ☞ I don't have computer/internet at home, difficult to be in constant contact for Council issues.
- ☞ Time commitments are high but I feel the education of our students is worth it. I knew that in order to be effective, there is always a time commitment.
- ☞ No problem
- ☞ Commitment varied depending on initiatives undertaken by Council. My new job requires more than 40 hours week and travel out of town so can't provide time Council needs and should get.
- ☞ Usually its not a huge time commitment and is quite doable but I had spent a lot of time over the past 2 years getting a program in our school up and running and all that was involved in that, so basically I'm burnt out.

Fall 2006

- ☞ *Only part of the reason, but many volunteer activities, esp Canada Games*
- ☞ *Not main reason but unfortunately I do find it difficult to participate in Whse conferences*
- ☞ *Work purposes out of town, trapping on land*

☞ *After 14 years it was just time to move on to other things, and getting harder to fit in with coaching 10 hours a week*

☞ *I have two teaching jobs that can be exhausting. I live about ten miles from the school and that distance is too much. If I lived in vicinity of school it might be different.*

☞ *In order for people to run, not enough time was given for people to really think about running, nor were they reminded*

☞ *In early 2006, I chose to volunteer for the 2007 Canada Winter Games. I knew that this and my current volunteer activity with RCMP Victim Assistance Volunteer program would take up all of my volunteer time and energy.*

☞ *I am hoping to be gone for part of next year.*

Fall 2004

☞ The only time we could meet to accommodate all members was weekends and this was not ideal for me as it took a significant part of the weekend, often twice a month. I would have preferred weeknights. I also was traveling a fair bit with work and other commitments and felt I was away for too many meetings to stay on council for another term. The more time you spend, the more you can accomplish but the downside is the encroachment on family time for people who want to spend time with their children. If you care enough to want to be on council, you usually want time with your children – so council work comes at the expense of that time.

☞ The time commitment was part of my not running again.

☞ I could commit time if that effort resulted in tangible outcomes. However, several major initiatives in school/education seemed to be endless processes with no substantive outcome—developing school plan, calendar review...

☞ I want to use the volunteer time for activities with the children

☞ It does seem in the last couple of years, there have been far more meetings and conferences beside the regular monthly meeting. Hard to meet the demands being a single parent of 3 school-age children.

☞ It's difficult to spend time on SC when one has a full-time job, other meetings, a family and doing a university correspondence course.

☞ To some extent this was a consideration. I found we had to postpone trips occasionally because of School Council priorities.

☞ There is no lack of points of engagement in this community. I spend several months away from the Yukon each year as well which makes honoring a sustained commitment to School Council difficult.

☞ It definitely took more time than I had anticipated, not to mention conferences, committees, etc.

☞ When my kids don't see the value of me being on Council, I have to question why I spent so much time doing Council work. I want to contribute to something else where it is more visible to them, such as the sports they are involved in.

Uncomfortable with roles and responsibilities

Comments:

Fall 2010

- ☞ Uncomfortable with inability to fulfill roles and responsibilities. While the Education Act spells out responsibilities, those are manipulated by school Administrators and are limited by the receipt of information by School Council and by information being transferred back through Administrators.
- ☞ The Dept of Education and the local First Nation should not be punting the school around. Someone needs to have a backbone here. Our kids and their education is not a political football!
- ☞ I don't care to be involved in approving or disapproving school field trips. Parents should work with the school on this.
- ☞ In May/June last year, our School Council had to hire a new principal. I have lived here for almost 20 years and have really loved living here. The fallout from the School Councils' principal decision made for the worst time I have experienced living here. I don't think that the School Council should have such a large responsibility. I would like to see the teachers have some representation and final say in principal hire. I would like to see the final decision based on 1/3 Superintendent, 1/3 teachers, 1/3 School Council.
- ☞ Not uncomfortable, just never got a good grasp on what exactly they were. I guess I had hoped for more involvement in student/council activities, both positive and negative.

Fall 2008

- ☞ It took me a full year to get comfortable with the role.
- ☞ Going on Council for the first time is a very steep learning curve. A course/workshop to make clear what roles/responsibilities are would have been helpful.
- ☞ During my many, many years as a School Council member I held all positions (except Treasurer) at one time or another. The responsibilities are high but in order to affect change you need to take these positions and be responsible in doing what is necessary in each position.
- ☞ Not totally uncomfortable, however it was challenging dealing with parent/principal conflicts that were based on 'he said, she said' situations—Council could use some training to deal with these types of situations

Fall 2006

- ☞ *I chose to avoid committee work due to busy schedule*
- ☞ *A lot of us felt that we did not have authority. It seemed like we just met with the principal and that was it.*

Fall 2004

☞ As a member of the governing body (SC), I did not feel the principal understood or was willing to support the Council in this role, eg. did not support strategic planning for school which is losing its place in the community.

☞ No, I was not uncomfortable but I definitely think that most councils are not equipped to do a proper job on appeals of discipline imposed on students. There should be good training and orientation to this part of the job, with provision of legal advice if needed. We dealt with a few personnel issues and I would say most council members are not equipped to do this (basically employment law and collective agreement issues and human resources work) – many people dislike this work and don't expect it. I think we lost at least one member (resigned) because she did not want to be involved in this part of the work.

☞ I found the process for hiring a new principal to be sadly lacking. Would like to see clear procedures developed.

☞ It wouldn't have been quite so stressful if I was just a 'regular' council member.

☞ Our School Council spent a lot of time fundraising. I was not comfortable with this, however had to 'grin and bear it'. Also found, at times, a lot of time was spent discussing issues that I felt were not really important.

My personal hopes and expectations of working with the Council and other key players in education were not met ☹☹

Comments:

Fall 2010

☞ I found it very difficult to find common ground with most of Council on many issues. As a Council, we made few decisions and mainly tabled or dismissed a lot of issues.

☞ School Councils are only as effective as a School Administrator will allow them to be and as allowed by YTA contract protections however opportunities at the Department level may actually result in bringing about positive changes.

☞ I was really disappointed with the way a principal was hired. We were told that the School Council was responsible for hiring the principal, in the end it was the superintendent. Then when it was time to fix the situation, we had to push the Dept of Education on the matter. Our kids are the ones who paid.

☞ I did not appreciate hidden agendas. Also people not showing up for meetings and then complaining they weren't represented.

☞ There was so much emphasis on legislation, laws, rule of education that any student issues seemed afterthoughts. It was all fundraising and legislation.

☞ I wanted to join School Council to try and make some positive changes to the current education in our town. I believe it is failing our students. Once on Council, I found our voices/requests were not listened to, no clear answers were given on certain issues, principals were not bringing forth information requested and items were being approved without first being seen by Council. I found that the Council had really no say and thought it a waste of time and a 'joke' to even be there.

Fall 2008

☞ The Principal at the school was obstructive—but in a very passive-aggressive way. I believe he/she misrepresented Council to the staff, leading to an uneasy relationship at times. I do not believe this principal is doing everything he/she could to make the school the best—rather he is doing the minimum necessary to do his job. It was frustrating going to meetings with him/her. I think he/she is just waiting til retirement. As Council, we initiated a Principal review—things only got worse. He/she is abusive and was a primary reason I chose not to send my children to that school.

☞ For the most part I feel that my time on Council was not a waste of time, but it is very difficult trying to make changes when all the players cannot come together and respect each other's views to benefit the individual needs of all students.

☞ I had a great Council to work with and we operated well together as a cohesive unit. Was very satisfying, lots of support, etc. However the Dept of Ed. was not always approachable, supportive, etc. Was often frustrating.

Fall 2006

☞ *Frustrating sometimes dealing with Dept of Ed in Whse, but again not my reason for not running*

☞ *Needs young energetic traditional principal who will work with SC*

☞ *I would have liked to have been more informed about the Native Language programs; however, the School Council and principal offered nothing for improving the lot of First Nations' kids.*

☞ *A lot of things were hidden from School Council. If an incident occurred, it would be dealt with and forgotten. A lot of it was no talk, no action.*

☞ *My experiences with our DoL and SC Liaison were very positive. My experience with the fellow members of the Council were also positive. My experience and treatment I received from my community was not positive at all. Community politics/nepotism resulted in the whole experience leaving me feeling extremely frustrated, disenchanted and generally as if there is/was no point in even having a School Council in my community. I hesitate to raise issues without providing options to better these situations but in this case, I really do not know what can be done to remedy such situations. Perils of small town life I expect.*

Fall 2004

☞ I felt it was difficult to accomplish a great deal because most change occurs slowly in the education system. I could see problems but felt limited in my ability to deal with them. Also, it can be difficult to have everyone on the same page and if that is the case, then it is difficult to tackle a problem. In other words, those who become members don't do so for the same reasons and may have quite different views on many issues. Takes a long time to work to consensus or even majority on issues sometimes. I probably could have done more, but it would have meant a major expenditure of time and with other commitments like work and other volunteer involvement, I was unwilling to encroach on family time

☞ Concerns with our principal's lack of vision and leadership skills, and losing good teachers. Some of the things I had hoped to achieve are simply not possible.

☞ Council was too small and felt we did not accomplish enough.

☞ It is important that all members, elected, acclaimed and appointed get sworn in and come to meetings. Don't get hung up on personal 'agendas' and confrontation

☞ Going into my time on Council, I really didn't know what to expect. I enjoyed the first year however the second seemed to drag on.

☞ I was on School Council for close to eight years. While I feel council (ours) made a difference, I found dealing with the Dept every frustrating. There has been a change in the past few years, but not nearly enough.

Other reasons

Comments:

Fall 2010

☞ I asked and was on the School Planning Team however after the first meeting I was never informed as to when the next meetings occurred. When I brought this to Council, it did not seem to concern some of the members and nothing was done.

☞ When School Council cannot get information regarding the number of substitutes hired during a school year, our ability to bring about needed change or even dialogue is severely limited. While I'm willing to give of my time, I'm not willing to waste it on things that cannot be changed or improved.

☞ I moved.

☞ It seems School Council is dealing with many administration and education topics that should be the role of the Department.

☞ We were not given timely information by schools and our views were NOT HEARD at all by supervisors. We were being held accountable for lack of decisions by those above us. Training not really available for rural areas.

☞ My daughter has moved on to high school—elementary and high schools are very different in this town. I didn't want to confuse myself juggling elementary responsibilities with what would be different for us now.

☞ Did three terms. Decided to take a break and let others bring their ideas to Council.

☞ I felt the Council was being run by one person and although I was told my input was important, I never felt like I was heard. I never felt part of the group—when I went to meetings it was more this one person reporting what they did since last meeting without discussion or consensus of the group. By the time I heard about an issue it had already been dealt with.

☞ I found the communication between all Council members was not there at all. I was rarely kept informed of anything that was going on and was usually informed as parents approached me.

☞ My son no longer attends school there.

☞ My child graduated.

Fall 2008

☞ I felt that some sort of official structure should be in place to address the issues of Council members behaving inappropriately (i.e., speaking for Council when not authorized, reporting confidential items, even embellishing facts to public or undermining staff). Basically it seems that there is no real process to deal with a breach of a Councilor's oath, other than the rest of the Council agreeing to ask the offending Councilor to step down. What if more than one are doing the same? It seems that since councilors are required to take an oath, that something (outside the Council's realm of responsibility) should be available to deal with any breaches. I feel very strongly about this one!

☞ I wish that there was an orientation for new/prospective members; it would have been very helpful to understand more about the Council's role, purpose, relationship with Department of Ed, and things that are currently happening in education. I feel that we were left to figure it all out on our own.

☞ I was willing to run again but I was not willing to nominate myself. As it turns out 5 people with excellent mix were nominated and subsequently appointed.

☞ I chose not to send my child to the school I was a Council member for and felt that it was no longer the best use of my time.

☞ 1. Mainstreaming does not work.

2. Parents need to be involved in their children's education.

3. First Nations and non First Nations need to work together for **all** students.

4. Administrators need to work with their staff to deliver education that meets the individual needs of all students.

☞ My kids no longer attend the school so I found I did not have the same connection to school. Also I had accomplished my personal goals at Council so felt it best to let others have a go.

☞ Any committee hopes to have equal 'follow through' commitments from its members. As in many cases when this does not happen, one or two members become overloaded. Time should be shared and commitments by individuals need to be followed through. This is a #1 reason for a functional and successful Council for the well-being of its school body.

☞ The talk didn't always match the walk regarding the concept that Councils are important in the role of education for our students, in respect to treatment by the Dept. Also it seemed there was always a high turnover rate of superintendents. Council starts forming a relationship and then he/she is transferred, reassigned or retires—lack of continuity.

Fall 2006

☞ *My children have reached the end of their time at Golden Horn School. I am very busy with other community organizations, coaching hockey, Canada Games, etc.*

☞ *Personal commitments*

☞ *Have been on Council for at least 5 terms. Most of my children have graduated from high school—only one left in grade 12. Probably better for parents who have children in the school to participate*

☞ *Honorarium of \$50.00 per meeting which sometimes run over 2 hours has been the same amount for quite a few years. There needs to be an increase in honorarium cause some members pay for babysitters and evening hours*

☞ *It was just time—I think I did my part and felt that others need to step up to the plate*

☞ *When my three children were safely through the education system and wanted to volunteer my time to different efforts. I thoroughly enjoyed my time with School Council-it was another avenue of involvement with my children's lives*

☞ *I am pleased that upon my constant complaint about the appearance and condition of the driveway at the school it was repaired by YTG. I am more interested in improving policy benefiting students than dealing with administrivia*

☞ *I felt that because there was only one person running from the old council and that that person was hard to work with my time would be very frustrating.*

Fall 2004

☞ After serving two complete terms on Council, I was satisfied with my contribution & feel that it's always healthy to have new people & ideas bringing forth the school community's concerns on Council.

☞ School plan development process might be more effective if it was a legislated requirement.

☞ We have a situation at our school of a parent who has made life miserable for the school personnel and Council since kindergarten. Having to deal with this person has kept many people from seeking a seat on Council. This person's child will exit the school at the end of the year so that will help.

☞ I had been on this Council for seven years. I felt it was time to let others expressing interest to have their turn.

☞ I no longer have children in the schools in the Yukon and feel strongly that a member should be at least a parent or reside in the school's attendance area.

☞ I don't regret the huge amount of emotional energy this role took from me but I could not do it for a second consecutive term. Community and school staff made it abundantly clear how grateful they were to me for my efforts. This makes it worthwhile.

☞ There was a fairly large slate of acceptable candidates (many of them parents of school children) running in the election in my community. I felt it unnecessary for me to run.

☞ I had been asked to assist in a particular project as my contribution to School Council. It has been more or less accomplished so I was off the hook.

Can you mention some things that worked well for you as a School Council member and for your Council as a group? 

Comments:

Fall 2010

 Having the ability to stand up when opposition from the community from the Dept of Education and from the First Nation government was at its worst. Deciding as a group the standards we would like at the school—it's all for the kids' sake.

 Make sure to advertise meetings and agenda and let the community know who and how to get ahold of the Chair to bring issues if necessary

☺☺☺ We had some good caring people who were stonewalled.

☺☺☺ Small group, very First Nation inclusive, good listening skills on behalf of Administration of the school. Good collaboration

☺☺☺ Excellent fit between Council and school Administration

☺☺☺ Mutual respect amongst Council members, good working relationship with principal and vice-principal.

☺☺☺ Education Department posting minutes on web page

☺☺☺ I found at the beginning, the superintendent was quite good at informing/finding out answers for us, but seemed to not be as frequent towards the end. (...I think that person was frustrated as well—quite a few members resigned and had to be reassigned.)

☺☺☺ We made a good team. Effective partnerships

☺☺☺ I was glad to be a part of choosing the new principal but that was the only thing I ever felt everyone worked as a team on. That was a good experience.

☺☺☺ Setting time guidelines for meetings so they did not drag on and on and on.

Fall 2008

☺☺☺ We did seem to get along well enough when dealing with issues—everyone listened and no one was rude at meetings (at least with the last Council I was on!)

☺☺☺ 1. Emails from Department

2. Discussion via email and phone between meetings

3. Communications from principal between meetings

☺☺☺ 1. Initiated Principal Review

2. School policy—change about after school supervision, although took 2 years and met with resistance the whole way

3. Parent Survey—about their wants and needs for the school

4. Barbecues—all the principal seemed to want us to do

☺☺☺ Some Councils over the years, worked better than others. I find that in the past 4 years we have some members with personal agendas, this never makes for a cohesive Council. I wish the new Council all the best, they have a big job ahead of them.

☺☺☺ Close relationship with school Administration and Dept of Education

☺☺☺ Strong dynamic group committed to improving the school's learning environment for the children however felt the Dept of Ed provided a lot of lip service but no tangible support in many areas.

☺☺☺ Communication is the key—email, phone and extra meetings as required. It has also been extremely helpful to have either principal or VP attend each meeting, and a key—is a very strong involvement and working knowledge on the part of the Chair (we had most of these in the past eight years that I have been a member)

☺☺☺ Lots of support from our Admin staff and from AYSCBC. Liked the conferences, great for networking and learning, etc

Fall 2006

☺☺☺ *Having strong leadership and good administration*

☺☺☺ *Worked as a group for the whole of the school*

☺☺☺ *In camera session. Updates at local Chief and Council public meetings*

☺☺☺ *We are a true partnership between the Council and school and school admin; we had several sub-committees to divide the work up and people's interest*

☺☺☺ *Being part of the Catholic School Council and an active Catholic and involved community member made the experience even more meaningful. Being a School Council member wasn't a compartmentalized activity—rather very holistic.*

☺☺☺ *Awards functions are great for everybody who attend*

☺☺☺ *Meeting with members on regular basis; Involve Chief & Council (other) to make better relationship; School drop-ins—asking kids how they were; follow up with concerns right away; give undivided attention to all the kids*

☺☺☺ *As long as we worked as a team, much could be done.*

☺☺☺ *As a group we had a common vision for not only the school but also as for the school's role in the community. We were cohesive and all of us felt as if we could positively influence the school—(however) we were given a brick wall at every turn by the school and community and were left feeling as if we had no influence at all or that our intentions were misplaced.*

Fall 2004

☺☺☺ What worked well for me was always prefacing any thoughts or discussions with “what's best for the students”, something which the Association has always emphasized. I found it always kept me focused & grounded on the real reason why we were all there!

☺☺☺ Being involved in the spring & fall school council conferences was very valuable to me. I felt that, for one thing, that it was my obligation as a council member to learn more about my roles, etc., but also to stay connected to the broader community & territorial education issues. Attending council conferences was the venue for that. I think most councils are quite ‘insular’ & only have the time (or energy) to deal with their own local issues. That's a reality, I suppose, but is sad that more participation at conferences, especially in the Whitehorse area, is lacking.

- ☞ I do think that our council worked well as a group. There was respect for each other's ideas & opinions.
- ☞ Council dynamics between councilors was positive. On minor matters, relationship with principal was positive. It is fulfilling to be involved in my child's education by having some say in operation of school and content of curriculum. Visits of Minister were appreciated and gave some sense that we had a 'say'.
- ☞ I felt that the principal was responsive to us and good at giving background and useful information /options when we dealt with issues. Took almost a year to get up to speed though.
- ☞ Our Council went through the process of hiring a new principal. I found this to be very interesting and worthwhile.
- ☞ Our past superintendent was supportive and understood the situation. Council members got along and worked with consensus.
- ☞ (It's) a good way for a working parent to know what is happening in the school. We made some effective changes together, like our school parking lot.
- ☞ A spirit of cooperation and non-confrontation was present in the group. Also, a willingness to tackle and solve problems without fanfare. Our goal was to work towards the advancement of local children's education (& although unstated, this was a factor) in all decisions.
- ☞ (I) believe participation at a national conference will open the door for fruitful collaboration. Accepting a challenge facilitated group focus and solidarity.
- ☞ Having respectful administration to work with makes all the difference. When all members of the council take on an equal share of the work.

If there are vacancies, will you consider putting your name forward for appointment to your School Council?

Fall 2010

Of 13 respondents 2 Yes 9 No 2 undecided

Fall 2008

Of 9 respondents 5 Yes 4 No 0 undecided

Fall 2006

Of 10 respondents: 2 Yes 7 No 1 undecided
(1 not marked)

Fall 2004

Of 11 respondents: 2 yes 5 No 4 undecided

What would make you run for a seat on a School Council again?

Fall 2010

- If all members were elected from the public by the public. Having appointed members allows for too much political influence/interference on Council. I believe that the appointed members were not representing the community but rather the organization that appointed them and its agenda.
- If a change of Administrators occurred.
- I am in a different community—I will need time to learn how things work here before getting involved.
- Not likely—I understand now meetings are open and that I can attend and bring issues forward.
- After standing back and taking a break I may have a renewed interest. Will only do it if I am sure I have the time to fully commit to the job.
- Don't think I would, as I found parents seemed to have more influence (not much mind you) than Council itself.
- I've never been turned off so much. I will not consider it ever again. It was frustrating and I loathed going to meetings. I thought I could help make the school a better place and now I know I would probably have more of a voice as a concerned parent than a member of Council.
- Nothing because all students have graduated.

Fall 2008

- I would step up if there was not enough people to do the work.
- Participating with a team of strong, competent, reliable Council members
- My children are at another school now—it would have to be a really dire circumstance where I would run again
- 1 I really feel that a good education is everyone's right. There needs to be some big changes at the Department and Administrative level.
2. When my grandchildren come and need to be educated in our system.
- Yes, in later years

A reasonable amount of time away—as a break.

I think I am done with that. Do not have kids in the school system anymore.

Fall 2006

I will consider putting my name forward for high School Council now that my children are there.

When my personal commitment is complete

Community involvement/parent involvement. Principal needs to listen and take into consideration of SC decision and concerns

Retirement and not coaching

Normally, children attend schools in their neighbourhoods and parents have relatively easy access to their child's school. If I lived near a school attended by my child I would not hesitate to put my name forward for appointment.

The love for children; to help out teachers/parents; learn more about education system

More time

There would need to be a different chair.

Possibly changing communities but even that's very iffy.

Fall 2004

I may try to get on at the high school level, as two of my three children are now in high school.

As my children move on to other schools, I'd possibly consider being involved in those schools.

I would consider it if the school had issues to deal with and there were no personal agendas

If a concrete, defined task were set out for me. During both of my terms, I had clear objectives.

Not sure. I want more than lip service from the Dept. I'd like to see the day when we have a properly funded autonomous association that can provide support to all councils (none of the piecemeal funding)

If no one else would do it. And there was a change of principal.

I am finished with elementary school—child moving to secondary school—will consider running for Council in 2 years.

A shortage of School Council members

Possibly in the NOT too NEAR future!

***If you were to pass on
One piece of advice to School Council members, it would be:***

Fall 2010

~That students and parents need a strong voice in all aspects of education and that their input is of equal value as our 'Department experts'.

~We should be there for the kids in the community—with the student: teacher ratios there is NO excuse for why our kids are failing—we need to provide the groundwork to ensuring we have the best, highest educated kids in the country. Bad politics has no place when we are educating our kids. There shouldn't be power struggles between the First Nations and the Department of Education.

~Post office box (address) should be public. Maybe people would not want to speak in front of a Council. Role on School Council should be made public (via brochures) left with election officer prior to elections.

~It is a political position, don't join if you do not want to be involved in community politics. Join if you are okay with this.

~Better transparency in decisions by superiors.

~Take the training and don't be afraid to ask questions

~We should have a School Board. Too much authority is held in the hands of the Minister and the Department who must obey Ministerial direction. Education needs to be depoliticized through pursuit of a Board.

~Commitment to the role. Respect for your fellow Council members and school Administration. That will bring success to the work of the Council.

~You need to represent your school and often that means making unpopular decisions. You need to be prepared to do this. Rewards are awesome, get involved!

~Be firm, don't let anything slide. If you request info/answers, make sure you get them.

~Stand up and speak out and don't let others speak for you if you don't agree with them.

~It is frustrating working with the Department

Fall 2008

~ To the present Council: please do not let negatives make you lose site of good things; it is good to celebrate change and achievements, even small.

~The importance of the local FN honouring its commitment to filling its appointed seats on the Council so that quorum can be reliably met each meeting.

~To the new Council—don't let yourselves be sweet-talked, belittled, insulted or put down, do what's best for the school, not the principal.

~Take your role seriously and thank you for being involved in your child's education. Know your rights and responsibilities under the Education Act.

~Our Council found a community member to be a volunteer coordinator for our school and its activities. The coordinator finds parents in the community to volunteer for various events. This reduced the demand on Council members to volunteer for these events as we were constantly asked or felt obligated to participate. Council is already providing a valuable volunteered service to the community.

Our Council conducted a community survey and during this survey most parents stated they would be glad to volunteer for school events/activities but didn't know how to get involved. Our volunteer coordinator now takes care of contacting parents to help it's working great!

~It is very important that you commit to attend all Council meetings and also step up to to the extra yard...it 's not just about a 2 hour meeting once a month.

~Maintain a positive outlook, listen and work toward consensus.

Fall 2006

~ *The learning curve is quite steep during 1st term. Expect that 2 terms are necessary to get into the swing of things. Very rewarding experience.*

~ *Learn your role, be positive and results oriented, work as a team and stand up for your own opinion and ideas*

~ *Learn your role as a member*

~ *Speak on raising honorarium to amount of \$75.00 per meeting for regular members*

~ *Get involved—it's fun and good to know what is happening at your kids' school*

~ *Contribute what you can—small contributions add up*

~ *Expect to get a lot of email and do a lot of reading*

~ *Go in to the Council for positive reasons, not negative; go in with an open mind*

~ *Don't all quit at the same time. Place your energy in a couple of big places and don't get caught up in all the little details.*

~ *Illegitimi non carborendum :) Basically I would recommend that nothing should be taken personally and that if and when school staff, etc. start trying to throw things back, just stay calm, rational and completely neutral. Constantly remind those involved that we're all there for the benefit of the students, not for petty foolishness.*

Fall 2004

~ Get involved in the spring & fall school council conferences – they are most valuable!

Always be creative in how you can keep parents informed & involved in their school & their council (In fact, councils might even appreciate the Association helping them with some creative ideas each year).

~ Defend the role of being a governing Council—do not fall to the level of being a hot dog lunch provider

~ Read the Act, read the Act, read the Act. Need good support administratively – our secretary was inherited and not good at her job. Was not a help but actually a hindrance because of the way she did minutes and dealt with finances. Another personnel issues that we did not resolve, mostly because of time issues

- ~ Keep making suggestions even if it seems they fall on deaf ears.
- ~ No personal agendas
- ~ The most important thing is to keep copies of correspondence and always take that extra step to be above board and notify all members in writing of meetings and the fact that they must be sworn in to be a voting member, for instance. Always keep records, you may need to prove something someday!
- ~ We all have different reasons to be on Council and can only go with what we are comfortable with.
- ~ Set objectives for yourself. Have a vision of what you wish to achieve during your term.
- ~ Learn what your role is—know the Education Act! Make the time commitment—being effective on your School Council means putting more than 2 hours (regular Monthly meeting) in a month.

Other comments:

-Thanks for the opportunity to offer feedback—all the best!

-Thank you for asking