

# Ecole J. H. Sissons School

## Yellowknife

### Education Report



January 2013



*References in italics refers to the following Department of Education, Culture and Employment documents which were used in the preparation of this instructional plan:*

- *Our Students Our Future: An Educational Framework*
- *Educating All Our Children: Department Directive on Inclusive Schooling*
- *NWT Schools Capital Standards and Criteria – Note: Criteria are used to assess and determine needs; Standards describe the space characteristics adequate to meet those needs. Renovations will generally be planned and constructed in accordance with these standards, however modification may be made to take existing building characteristics into consideration.*
- *Ten Year Education Facility Plan Yellowknife Updated (2005-2015)*

This document has been developed by Don Kindt of D K Consulting.

## Table of Contents

Background /Terms of Reference .....	7
Consultation Process .....	8
Philosophical Framework .....	10
Mission Statement.....	10
Ecole J. H. Sissons School Information.....	11
Enrolments .....	12
Staffing Allocations .....	13
Summary of Comments from a Student Perspective .....	14
Summary of Comments from a Parent Perspective .....	15
Summary of Comments from a Board Perspective.....	17
Summary of Comments From the French Steering Committee.....	17
Existing and Potential Partnerships .....	19
Existing School Spaces .....	20
EJHS Second Floor .....	21
Room Utilization Rates.....	23
Ecole J. H. Sissons School and the Capital Standards.....	25
Instructional Areas .....	25
Current Programming and Future Needs .....	25
Critique and Analysis of Instructional Area Allowances .....	34
School Within a School Concept .....	34
K - 1 .....	34
Grade 2-5 Classrooms.....	34
Technology in Classrooms for Students and Staff.....	35
Computer Lab .....	35
Multi-Purpose Room (i.e. Music Room) .....	35
Art and Science Activity Space .....	35
Literacy Room .....	35
Second Language Classroom.....	36
Math and Science Storage Rooms .....	36
Foods Area/Home Economics .....	36
After School Programs.....	36
Resource Areas .....	37
Current Programming and Future Needs .....	37
Critique and Analysis of Resource Areas .....	39
Standards.....	39
Use of Technology .....	39
Focus on French Collection .....	39
Circulation Desk, Library Office and Storage Room .....	39
Display Space.....	39
Technology .....	39
Security .....	39

Recreation and Leisure Areas .....	41
Current Programming and Future Needs .....	41
Critique and Analysis of Recreation and Leisure Areas .....	43
Standards .....	43
Storage Areas .....	43
Gym Office .....	44
Technology Requirements .....	44
Acoustics .....	44
Stage and/or Performance Area .....	44
Flush Mount Fixtures/Playing Obstacles .....	44
Fitness Room .....	44
Learning Support Areas .....	45
Current Programming and Future Needs .....	45
Critique and Analysis of Learning Support Areas .....	47
Standards .....	47
Inclusionary Suite .....	47
Meeting Room(s) .....	47
Specialized Spaces - Handicap Washroom/Sensory Room .....	47
Literacy Room .....	47
Administration .....	49
Current Programming and Future Needs .....	49
Critique and Analysis of Administration Areas .....	51
Standards .....	51
Office Location .....	51
Admin Offices and Meeting Room .....	51
Security .....	52
Main Reception/General Office .....	52
Counselor Relocation .....	52
Enhanced Medical Alcove .....	52
Staff Workroom .....	52
School and Office Storage .....	52
Main Server Room .....	53
Staff Room .....	53
Circulation and Gathering .....	55
Current Programming and Future Needs .....	55
Critique and Analysis of Circulation and Gathering Spaces .....	57
Standards .....	57
Student Washrooms .....	57
Gym Change Rooms .....	57
Front Entry and Back Exit (Playground) Stairs .....	57
Classrooms Access (Stairs) .....	58
Gathering Space (with gym viewing) .....	58
Playground Improvements .....	58

Building Services Areas.....	59
What Currently Exists and Future Needs.....	59
Critique and Analysis of Building Services Spaces.....	60
Standards.....	60
Public Washrooms .....	60
Janitor Closets/Housekeeping Office.....	60
Parking Lot.....	60
Technology Considerations .....	60
General Overall Comments on Ecole J. H. Sisson School Capacity .....	61
School Capacity .....	61
Scenarios .....	62
Lack of Policy For Second Language Classrooms .....	62
General Overall Comments on Grade Extensions .....	63
Instructional Spaces .....	64
Resource Areas .....	64
Recreation and Leisure Areas .....	64
Learning Support Areas .....	65
Administration .....	65
Circulation and Gathering.....	65
Grade Extensions and Good Pedagogy.....	65
K-5 French Immersion.....	65
Grade 6-8 Dual Track Middle School.....	65
K-8 French Immersion.....	65
Commentary on Enrolments and Grade Configurations at YK#1 .....	66
Educational Programming, School Capacity, and School Numbers.....	66
Wm. McDonald Site Visit.....	67
Options.....	67
Impact of a K-8 Decision.....	68
Initial Thoughts on District Re-Alignment.....	69
The Ten Year Education Plan Yellowknife 2005-2015 Update .....	70
Background Information.....	71
Essential Elements of Learning .....	71
Culture-Based and Student Centred.....	71
Process Oriented .....	71
Interactive .....	72
Integrated .....	72
Balanced.....	73
Intellectual.....	73
Social.....	73
Emotional .....	74
Physical.....	74

Spiritual.....	75
Organizing Teaching and Learning .....	76
Some Guiding Principles .....	76
What Do We Believe About Schooling? .....	76
Skills For the Future.....	77
What staff think! .....	77
What are the non-technical skills that employers are looking for?.....	77
Appendices.....	78
What Did Students Have To Say .....	80
What Did Parents Have To Say? .....	86

## **Background /Terms of Reference**

Ecole J.H. Sissons School was constructed in 1975. The school currently offers a Kindergarten to grade five French Immersion Program as well as a Pre-Kindergarten Program. There were 216 K-5 students enrolled at the school on September 30, 2011<sup>1</sup>.

The initial stage in planning for a school construction project is the preparation of an Education Plan. The Education Plan report describes existing programs and use of the current facility, as well as the educational desires of the stakeholders – students, parents, district education authority, school staff and administration. The Education Plan must also be realistic, taking into consideration the NWT School Capital Standards, sound educational pedagogy and fiscal considerations.

The Education Plan<sup>2</sup> will examine:

- existing spaces and how they are used,
- current and future programming in the renovated facility,
- delivery issues with the goal of identifying ways to improve educational programming to students in Ecole J. H Sissons, and
- potential partnerships with early education providers, and community groups.

In looking at options for renovating the school, the Education Plan will also reference and take into consideration:

- Ten Year Education Facility Plan (Yellowknife) 2005-2015 Update, and
- Overall district educational programming and enrolment projections.

The consultation will include student and parent surveys, student and parent focus groups, workshops and meetings with staff, administration, and a Board/Trustees focus session. When completed, the educational plan will be used to develop detailed facility plans for the school project.

---

<sup>1</sup> Based on ECE enrolment data

<sup>2</sup> An Education Plan normally describes existing programs and use of the current facility, as well as the educational desires of the stakeholders – students, parents, DEA, school staff and administration. The Education Plan must also be realistic, taking into consideration the NWT Capital Standards, sound educational pedagogy and fiscal considerations. The consultation required for development of an Education Plan provides critical information needed for the development of a Project Brief (by ECE and PWS) which is the final determination of what changes will be made in terms of potential alterations, renovations or new facilities. The Education Plan is not the final determinant of what will occur – rather it informs the developers of the Project Brief as to the consultation that has taken place and the desires of stakeholders at the community level.

### Consultation Process

This plan has evolved from discussions with school administration, school staff, students, Board of Trustee Members, parents, and members of the community as well as YK#1 District personnel.

In early November of 2012, the Consultant (through the school) conducted surveys of both students and parents and gathered school related documentation such as enrollment data, staff timetables, room schedules, specialty timetables, etc. as well as enrollment and statistical information from Education, Culture and Employment and YK#1 related to Ecole J. H. Sissons school.

In late November of 2012, the Consultant conducted focus groups with Board Trustees, students and parents, held a parent information evening; a PAC focus group, as well as school level and District administration sessions, including a workshop with school staff.

Focus sessions were held with Grade 6,7,8 students at Wm McDonald who had attended Sissons as well as parents of students at the middle school whose children had attended Sissons. The Consultant toured the Wm McDonald facility while on-site.

The Consultant also met with the Supervisor of Instruction for French Program, the IT Coordinator for the District, and the Steering Committee for French.

The Consultant was on-site at Sissons school from November 19 to 30<sup>th</sup>.

The Consultant met with Education, Culture and Employment as necessary.





<b>School:</b>	Ecole J. H. Sissons School
<b>Grade Range:</b>	Kindergarten to Grade 5
<b>School Staff:</b>	Approximately 30 (includes secretarial, janitorial, and Pre-Kindergarten programs)
<b>Student Population:</b>	216 <sup>3</sup> plus 16 <sup>4</sup> Pre-K (September 2011); for a total of 232 218 plus 34 Pre-K (September 2012) for a total of 252 <sup>5</sup>
<b>School Capacity:</b>	341 (Source ECE, based on official capacity at time of construction)
<b># of Students at 85%</b>	289
<b>School Year:</b>	September – June
<b>School Principal:</b>	Paul Bennett
<b>Superintendent:</b>	Metro Huculuk
<b>Board Chair:</b>	Allan Shortt

There were 216 students enrolled in the school in September 2011 and 218 students in September 2012 in grades ranging from kindergarten through grade 5, plus 34 pre-K as outlined in the following table:

Grade	Number of Students Sept. 2011	Number of Students Sept. 2012	Grade Configurations Nov. 2012
Kindergarten	49	46	K (16) K (17) K (15)
1	40	46	1(23) 1 (22)
2	33	38	2 (19) 2 (18)
3	35	26	3 (13) 3 (13)
4	31	34	4 (23) 4/5 (17)
5	28	28	5 (21)
Total	216	218	
Pre-K	16 (one class)	34 (two classes)	Pre-K (16) Pre-K (17)

<sup>3</sup> Source ECE Statistical Data

<sup>4</sup> Source Sissons School

<sup>5</sup> Source Sissons School

### Philosophical Framework

Ecole J. H. Sissons School embraces the philosophical premises put forth in the Department of Education's Educational Framework: Our Students Our Future.

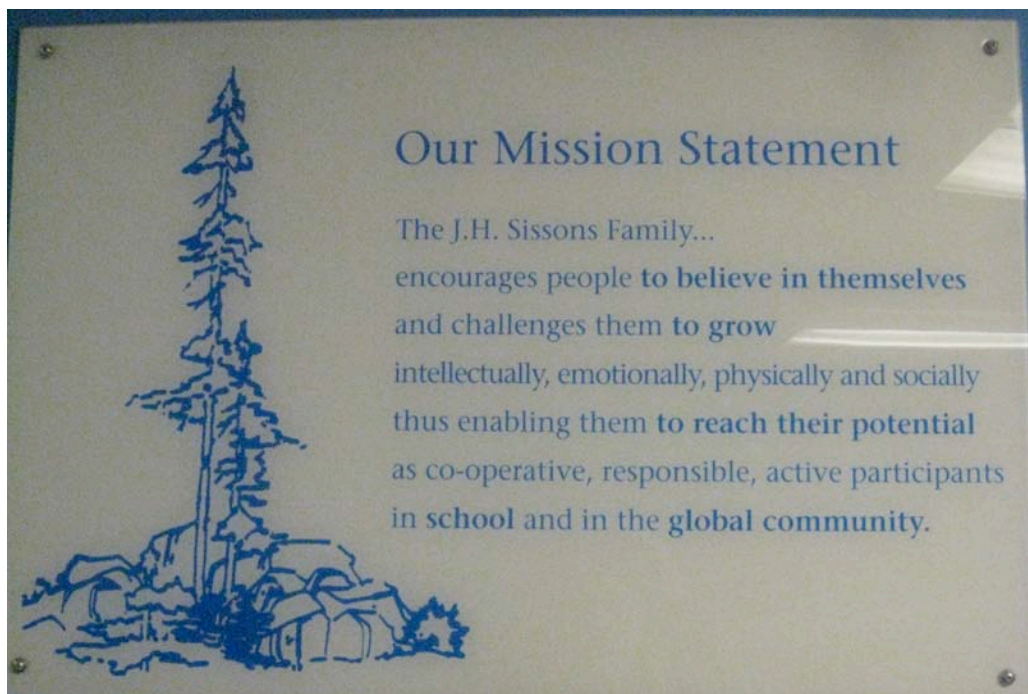
We recognize the importance of developing the entire child – intellectually, socially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually – by providing an educational setting which is culture based, student centred, process oriented, interactive, balanced and integrated.

The staff and administration of Ecole J. H. Sissons School have spent time discussing what each of the essential elements of learning and dimensions of the child specifically mean to them as educators, and to the overall school in general. Their thoughts are outlined in this document.

In order for schooling to be relevant for our students, it should recognize the experiences and strengths which our students bring with them.

The cultures of our students should not only be reflected in the physical nature of the building but should also be an integral part of their program of studies.

### Mission Statement



### **Ecole J. H. Sissons School Information**

**School Mailing Address:**

5700, 51 Avenue  
Yellowknife, NT

**For General School Information**

Call: (867) 873-3477  
Fax: (867) 873-4535

Ecole J. H. Sissons School is self-described as a K-5 single track 100% French Immersion Learning Environment open to students whose first language is not French, designed to help students develop a functional level of bilingualism by the end of Grade 12<sup>6</sup>. The District/school has two school level brochures for the public. One is unique to Ecole J. H. Sissons School, and the other includes all schools in the District.

Ecole J. H. Sissons School is advertised as:

- Unique learning environment 100% French Immersion
- Academic focus: literacy and numeracy
- Student leadership opportunities
- Music and fine arts
- “Connected Schools” approach to self-discipline. Self-discipline programs that foster caring, achievement and safety. Behavioural support focuses on awareness and building strategies for success: making good choices, developing self-discipline and establishing meaningful connections
- Aboriginal Language and Culture-based education (ALC); classroom integration and culture camps
- French culture camps
- School wide reading and writing
- Early literacy program
- Student leadership groups
- Physical Education, extra-curricular activities
- Speed Skating Academy
- Student led assemblies, and whole-school celebrations
- User pay French Immersion Pre-School program for ages 4+
- Actively supported by a Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)

---

<sup>6</sup> Source: YK#1 Ecole J.H. Sissons School pamphlet.

Educational Consultation Ecole J. H. Sissons School

Enrolments<sup>7</sup>

YELLOWKNIFE 1  
J.H. SISSONS

J.H. SISSONS

GRADE	Total Students													
	89/90	90/91	91/92	92/93	93/94	94/95	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/2000	2000/1	2001/2	2002/3
K	18	22	22	22	23	19	24.5	25	24	14	15	20	16	12.5
1	42	47	50	48	52	53	44	51	48.5	46.5	32	42	48	36.5
2	44	44	51	49	45	55	50	43	47.5	43	42	40	42	50.5
3	49	48	47	50	51	40	53	51	44.5	49.5	46	42	28	35
4	66	71	66	66	52	76	53	66	65	63	59	78	71	55
5	78	66	72	75	59	52	72	47	65	60.5	51	55	70	60
6	64	77	70	66	67	56	47	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>														
Grand	361	375	378	376	349	351	343.5	283	294.5	276.5	245	277	275	249.5
K	18	22	22	22	23	19	24.5	25	24	14	15	20	16	12.5
K-3	153	161	170	169	171	167	171.5	170	164.5	153	135	144	134	134.5
4-6	208	214	208	207	178	184	172	113	130	123.5	110	133	141	115
7-9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10-12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

GRADE	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
K	12	15.5	16.5	39	46	41	32	40	49
1	30	28	33.5	34	40.5	37	39.5	32	40
2	35.5	27	22	28.5	39	29	35	35	33
3	43	41.5	27	22.5	24.5	26	29	29.5	35
4	57	65	56	34	48.5	20	28	29	31
5	45	53	63	47.5	25	40	17	25	28
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>									
Grand	222.5	230	218	205.5	223.5	193	180.5	190.5	216
K	12	15.5	16.5	39	46	41	32	40	49
K-3	120.5	112	99	124	150	133	135.5	136.5	157
4-6	102	118	119	81.5	73.5	60	45	54	59
7-9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10-12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

2012/2013 (SEPT 30)	
Pre-K	34
K	46
1	46
2	38
3	26
4	34
5	28
<b>TOTALS</b>	
GRAND	218 + pre-K
Pre-K	34
K	46
K-3	156
4-6	62

K-5 French Immersion started at Ecole J. H. Sissons School in the 2007/2008 school year. The initial enrolment was 223.5. Enrolment numbers since then have ranged from a low of 180.5 students (2009/2010) to a high of 216 students in 2011/2012, primarily due to a high Kindergarten enrolment that year. Current enrolment as of September 2012 was reported to be 218 plus 34 pre-K students.

The Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) five-year enrollment projection for Sissons is 230 students, and the ECE ten year enrolment projection is 228. ECE projections basically portray a stabilized student population K-5 over the next 10 years. Information on French Immersion enrolment projections is presented later in this document on a section entitled “Data Related to Grade Extensions”.

<sup>7</sup> Source ECE

### Staffing Allocations

Administrators - Paul Bennett (1.0)  
Admin Assistant & Finances - Nataly Depot (1.0)

#### Teachers

##### Pre-Kindergarten

Laurence Rivet-Gareau (1.0)  
Manon Radford (1.0)  
Erika Bernard Savoie (1.0)

##### Kindergarten

Jacqueline Beland (1.0)  
Diane Bourdeau (1.0)

##### Elementary

Cloe Tanguay-Deblois (1.0) Grade 1  
Vanessa Anstin (1.0) Grade 1  
Jennifer Boudreau (1.0) Grade 2  
Carole-Anne Brodeur (1.0) Grade 2  
Sophie Bourgon (1.0) Grade 3  
Laurence Turcotte (1.0) Grade 3  
Catherine Siegbahn (1.0) Grade 4  
Yolande Allain (1.0) Grade 4/5  
Danika Jobin (1.0) Grade 5

##### Specialty Teachers

Music (.6) Danielle Mallet-Hachey/Susan Shantora  
P. Ed (.8) Stephane Sevigny/Melissa McCrackin  
Librarian (1.0) - Lynn Taylor

#### Student Support

Counselor (1.0) – Archie Johnton/Andrea Laurence  
Literacy Coach (1.0) – Caroline Roux  
Literacy (1.0) – Lucy Pelletier  
PST (1.0) – Heidi Broudeau  
Educational Assistants

Caroline Sauvageau (1.0)  
Annick Lessard/Cynthia Clark (1.0)  
Pascal-Helene Belanger (1.0)  
Amelie Jalbert (Pre-K) (1.0)  
Chantal Mallette (Pre-K) (1.0)

French Monitor (1.0) - Emilie Turcotte

#### Custodians

Head Janitor - Veronica Huber (1.0)  
Janitor - Roselon Gesmundo (1.0)

### Summary of Comments from a Student Perspective

The following synthesis of comments is based on responses to written surveys<sup>8</sup>, and responses during classroom focus group sessions, as well as feedback received in general conversations with students during the Consultant's two-week on-site visit to the school and community.



the

It should come as no surprise that the students favourite parts of the building include the gymnasium, and the large open library (and library books). The computer room and the music room were next most mentioned features of the facility.

Honourable mention goes to the big classrooms, the playground, the teepee (in the library), and the open hallways.

Students had no difficulty in identifying what aspects of the building they would change. Top responses included lockers for the older students, a bigger (and updated) computer room, doors on the classrooms, and bathrooms on the upper floor. Honourable mention goes to a medical room (a place to go when you are sick), a school mascot, different colour walls, no carpets, and a place to do science experiments. One of the more interesting responses was a treehouse in every classroom (The consultant interpreted this to mean that students would like to have interesting nooks and crannies in their classrooms).

In terms of programs that students would like to see (in addition to what they are already doing), top responses included learning to cook and bake, more art type activities, more drama type activities, more science type activities, and first aid. More art and some foods basics were overwhelming favourites. Honourable mention goes to learning about animals, learning how to swim, self-defense, gymnastics, and more math.

Students were asked what skills they thought were important for them to learn to prepare them for life. Top responses included math skills, biology or science skills, cooking skills, writing, reading, communication skills, working well with others, listening and paying attention to the rules, first aid, health, arts, and taking care of animals.

When asked what could be or what is the "Heart & Soul" of their building, student's top responses included the library, the gym, an area to hang out in (gathering space), classrooms, a statue of J.H. Sissons, and a school mascot. Other interesting responses included a wolf, an animal shelter or zoo, and automatic doors.

A focus group of Middle School students who had attended Sissons echoed many of the above comments, including the following suggestions – scheduling times for art in the class timetables, more tournaments for the older students, more use of instruments in the music program, more stalls in the washrooms, more seats in the library, doors on classrooms, drama activities, and more non-traditional gym activities {i.e. less sports and more gymnastics and track and field e.g. cross country running}. They also commented on the icy main entrance/stairs on site.

---

<sup>8</sup> In some cases, teachers at the younger grade levels worked with the entire class to flipchart responses to survey questions. Older students worked in small groups or individually.

### Summary of Comments from a Parent Perspective

The following synthesis of comments is based on responses to written surveys (42) as well as responses during a general parent focus group session, a session with the Parent Advisory Committee, discussions with some Middle School parents (5) whose children had attended Sissons school, and feedback received in general conversations with parents during the Consultant's two week on-site visit to the school and community.

Parents indicated that the areas of the existing building that they like the most included the open concept and centralized library, the openness and design of the classrooms, the gymnasium, the large playground, and the connected school philosophy at Sissons. Honourable mention goes to small class sizes, the "turtles"<sup>9</sup>, the windows, and natural light.

When asked what features of the existing school they would change, top responses included the front entrance (slippery nature, chain link fence, expand entrance way, more inviting, larger entrance, less smelly), move the office closer to the front entrance, no carpets, crowded hallways, and some flat surfaces in the playground. Honourable mention goes to having a sick room, and adding doors to the classrooms.

In terms of programs they would like to see taught or added to the existing programs, top responses included cooking classes, enhanced technology, an expanded music program, more art activities, and some volunteer activities for students in the community.

Parents identified the top skills they hoped their son or daughter would learn at school to prepare them for life – reading, writing, spelling, basic math, science/reasoning skills, social skills (positive interactions with others, working with others, collaboration, flexibility), communication skills, life skills, critical thinking, working hard (and learning hard work is rewarded), being community minded (citizenship skills), problem solving, compassion (kindness, respect, honesty, tolerance, perseverance, empathy) and money management/financial literacy skills.

With regards to the "heart and soul" of a renovated facility, top responses related to the central library, a central meeting or gathering place, the gymnasium, the use of art representative of the northern and French cultures. Actual imagery included an eagle (represents freedom and strength), a circle (representing unity and equity), a tree (representing connection and growth), a canoe (reminiscent of a French Voyageur), and a wall of plants.

Several opportunities for partnership were identified by parents – bringing in instructors for musical instruments; swimming; using high school students to work with students; bring professional artists to work with students and staff; volunteering in the community with the YWCA; and partnering with NACC for drama for students.

---

<sup>9</sup> The "turtles" refers to a fish tank with several turtles, which is located in the library next to the staff room entrance.

In discussions with the PAC, issues were identified related to location of the office, concern with the location and number of washrooms, the desire for an art room or more art related activities, and a preference for K-5.

The Consultant spoke with several parents who used to have children at Sissons. Their comments paralleled the survey comments. They liked the open concept library but preferred doors on the classrooms; they liked the gym and stage areas; the natural vegetation on the playground, and the neighbourhood feel to the school. They identified changes to the facility such as adding a lunchroom, fixing playground equipment, and creating more and better placed windows in the classroom. They would have liked to see more art related activities (i.e. art space); a better entrance to the school, and some aboriginal programming. They commented on whether they thought the grade levels should be expanded – the majority of them were in favour of a K-8 grouping of French Immersion students. One telling comment came from a parent who indicated that she would rather have had her grade 6 child stay at Sissons school (in the nurturing environment) than allowing Pre-K to take up that space.





### Summary of Comments from a Board Perspective

The following synthesis of comments received is based on a preliminary teleconference with trustees before the on-site visit, and discussions during two sessions/meetings with the Board of Trustees during the Consultant's two-week on-site visit to the school and community. As well as general discussions on the planning process, the Trustees identified several issues:

- Handicap access to the school
- Location and number of washrooms
- Importance of after school programs to school success
- Importance of pre-K programs to schools success
- Need for breakout spaces
- Need for a sensory room for special needs children
- Entry/access to school needs to be safer, and more welcoming
- Impact of low ceilings in gym
- Landscaping issues – natural vegetation
- Implications of expanding grades at school re number of classrooms, CTS implications, gym implications, science room and other subject area implications
- Concern with original open concept area that school was designed for; lack of doors in classrooms
- Lack of foods or kitchen facility to teach kids about cooking
- Location of general office – should be closer to main entrance

### Summary of Comments From the French Steering Committee

The Consultant met with the District's French Steering Committee. The Committee is comprised of 2 trustees, 2 school administrators, 3 teachers, 2 parents, the Supervisor of Instruction for French Programs, and the Assistant Superintendent for the District. Their role is to make recommendations to the Superintendent.

In July of 2010, the Steering Committee made the following observations and recommendations related to consolidating the current Early French Immersion program into a Pre-K to Grade 8 School (i.e. amalgamating EJHS and EWMS French Immersion programs):

1. *Lots of room for expansion at Ecole Wm, McDonald School (EWMS); space requirements currently not sufficient at Ecole J H Sissons School (EJHS), so potential renovations need to allow for expansion*
2. *Specialty rooms are in existence at EWMS; currently no specialty rooms (i.e. Industrial Arts, Home Economics, Science lab, etc) at EJHS unless these areas are factored into renovations*
3. *Having the location at EWMS would mean a single move. Having the location at EJHS would mean moving twice to do the renovations*
4. *Attractive and spacious grounds (sports, cultural, etc) at EWMS are conducive to K-8 school; the grounds at EJHS are minimal and may not be conducive to a K-8 school*
5. *EWMS is in close proximity to the major city facilities (i.e. pool, multiplex, field house, etc)*
6. *EWMS is in close proximity to Ecole Allain St, Cyr which makes the area a centre for French Education in YK*
  - a) *sharing human and material resources*

**French Immersion Enrolment Stats (Source: French Steering Committee)**

Yellowknife Educa District No.1  
French Immersion Enrolment Confirmed on October, 2012

**French Immersion Student Enrolment 2009-2013 (COMPARISON, 2011-12/2012-13)**

School	Pre-K	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
<b>Ecole J.H.Sissons 12-13</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>28</b>								<b>251</b>
<b>Ecole W.McDonald Sch.12-13</b>									<b>24</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>17</b>				<b>67</b>
<b>Ecole Sir John Franklin H.S.12-13</b>										<b>23</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>20</b>		<b>71</b>
<b>Totals 2009-10:</b>	14	30	40	34	29	27	17	34	11	29	34	25	24	28	376
<b>Totals 2010-11:</b>	15	40	33	35	29	29	25	19	26	10	25	29	25	21	361
<b>Totals 2011-12:</b>	17	49	39	29	35	30	27	27	20	26	14	24	25	25	387
<b>Totals 2012-13:</b>	33	46	46	38	26	34	28	24	26	17	23	13	15	20	389
<b>Difference with last year</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>-9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>-9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>-11</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>9</b>
<b># of Classes PreK to Gr.8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>					<b>17</b>
<b># of Students PreK to Gr.8</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>17</b>					<b>318</b>
<b>Proj.# PreK to Gr.8 in 2013-14</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>24</b>					<b>339</b>
<b>Proj.# of Classes PreK to Gr.8 in 2013-14</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>					<b>18</b>

French Immersion Pre-K to Gr.8 Projections 2013-14: 330/350 students  
Minimum # of Classes required: 18

### Existing and Potential Partnerships

There are currently several partnerships at J. H. Sissons School:

**Snack Program** – vegetables and fruit for breakfast, lunch or during the day are available; Students also receive soup from Explorer Hotel which is frozen and used as needed.

#### **After School Activity Program**

1. Pre-K daycare afterschool program which is run by the District Office. Two staff work with students from 3:15 pm to 5:00 pm. They currently use the classroom near the main entrance during this time.
2. Sisson's after-school program (K-5) is run by the local YWCA – 5 nights a week after school (including School Improvement Days); often 2 to 3 different activities offered at same time.
3. After School Program run by P.Ed teacher - often includes Wii games, archery, yoga, zumba, dance, and sports run by students from Sir John Franklin or substitute teachers. They use the gym, the main foyer area in front of the gym, and the outside play area during this time.

**Canadian Parents For French** – parents do presentations during open houses; support cultural activities in the school

**Yellowknife French Association** – provides films, special events for students

**NWT Literacy Council** – provides activities on weekends, books for young parents, cooking sessions, etc.

**Canadian Association of French Immersion Teachers** – staff are members; Literacy Coach works with association to bring in authors, and provide professional development

**Aurora Fiddle Cats** – in the past, a fiddle teacher has provided lessons for students after school

**Hockey Academy** – District Program - joint use agreement with City of Yellowknife where school can use the multiplex during the day (usually in the morning)

#### **Other Suggested Partnerships**

Several opportunities for partnership were identified by parents:

- bringing in instructors for musical instruments
- swimming
- using high school students to work with students
- bring professional artists to work with students and staff
- volunteering in the community with the YWCA
- partnering with NACC for drama for students

The school expressed interest in working with the Arctic Energy Alliance.

## Existing School Spaces

### Main Floor

- General Office, reception, staff workroom, admin office (2), storage room
- Network (server) room
- Gym, gym storage areas, change rooms, stage
- Music room, music office
- General storage room (1)
- Staffroom
- Library, library office, teacher resource room
- Computer room
- Spare classroom (1)
- Mechanical room, janitor storage, janitor office, electrical

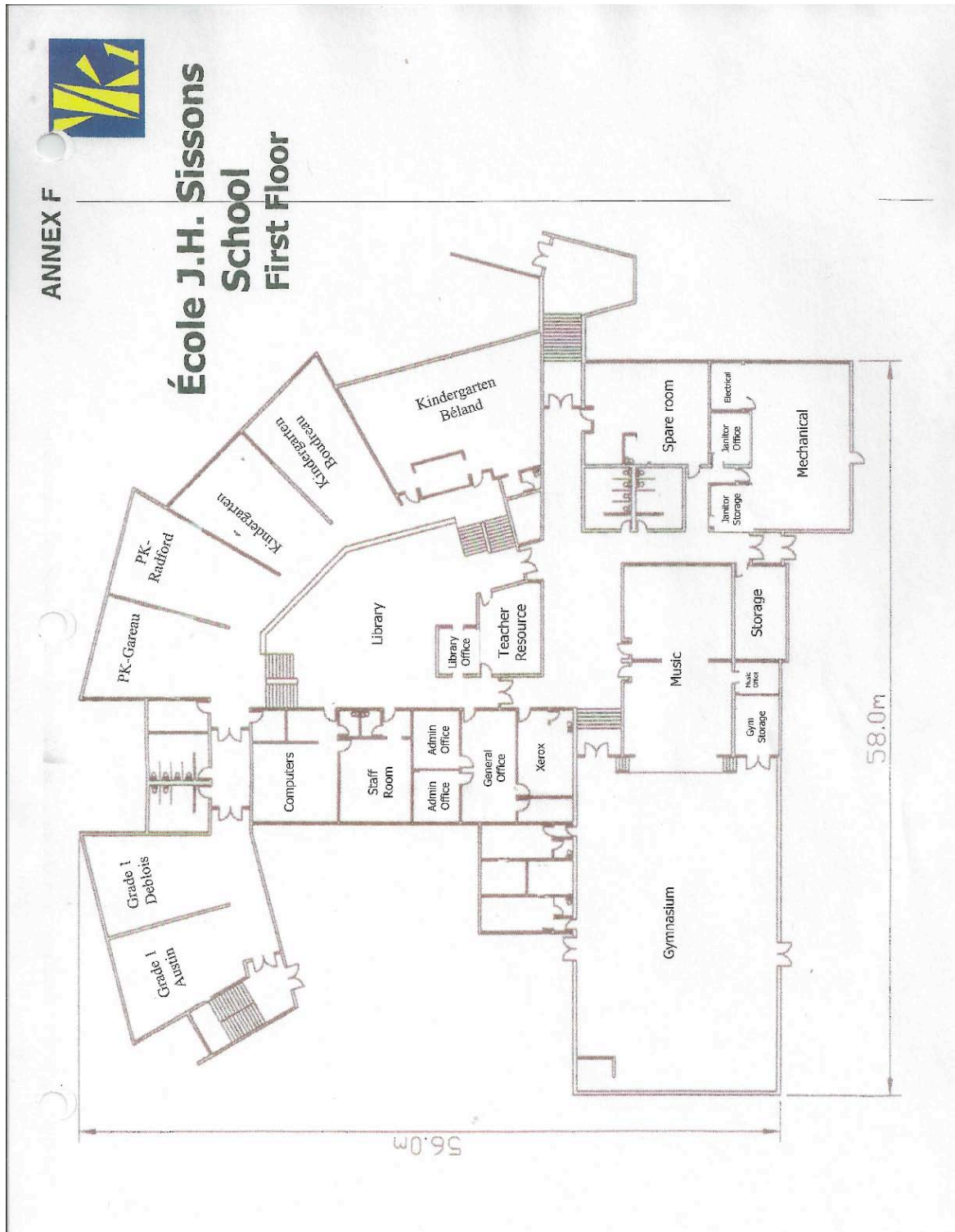
### Lower Level

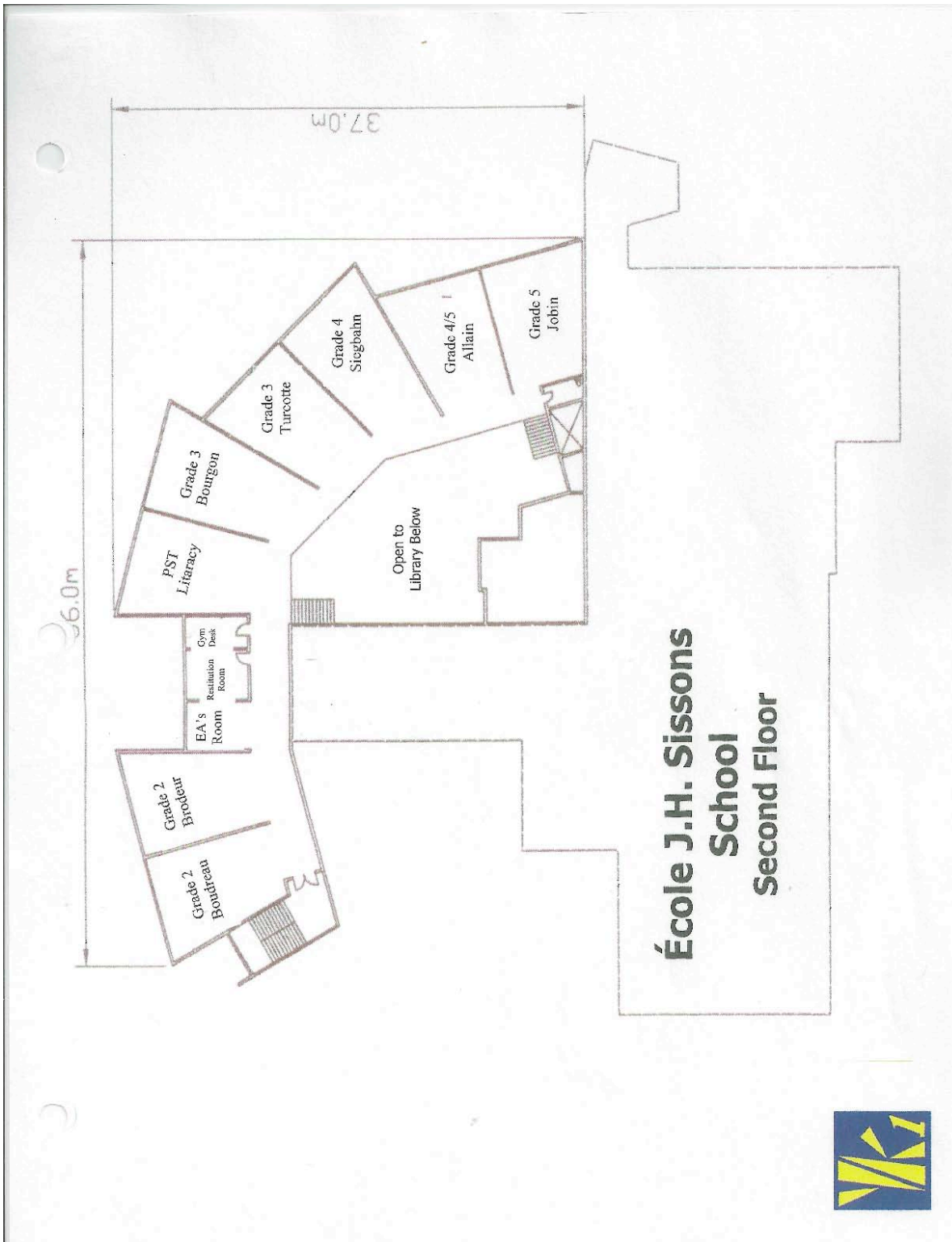
- Kindergarten (3)
- Pre-K (2)
- Grade 1 (2)
- Art storage room

### Second Floor

- Grade 2 (2)
- Grade 3 (2)
- Grade 4
- Grade 4/5
- Grade 5
- Science storage room
- General storage room (P. Ed teacher office)
- EA room/work space
- Literacy Room
- Restitution room

**EJHS First Floor**  
**EJHS Second Floor**





**Room Utilization Rates**

Pre-School – full day programs	100%
K-5 classrooms – teachers teach in their classroom full time except for 6 periods per week (50 periods) when their students have physical education and music. Teachers often teach 2 or 3 of those physical education classes. This is consistent with other schools in the NWT.	88%
Gym – gym teacher is a .8 position. Including physical education classes taught by homeroom teachers, the gym is utilized 50/50 periods or 100% of the time	100%
Music – the music teacher is a .6 position. The music room is utilized approximately 50% of the time for music classes.	50%
Computer lab – classes are scheduled for the older students from grades 3 to 5 for approximately 50% of the week. Remaining times are on a “sign up” basis for all remaining grades. This is consistent with other schools in the NWT.	50% +
Library – classes are scheduled for the older students at grades 3 to 5 for approximately 50% of the week. Remaining times are on a “ad hoc” basis for all remaining grades. This is consistent with other schools in the NWT.	50% +
Spare Classroom – there is one spare classroom near the front entrance of the school that is unassigned. Current uses include a place for physical education teacher to teach health, an overflow room for use by OT or speech, a breakout room for program support, and a drama room. It is used after school for the Pre-K afterschool program.	minimal use
Restitution Office – small office located on the upper level between classrooms. This small office space is basically being used to store resources related to this school program (which could be stored in another location).	used for storage







## Ecole J. H. Sissons School and the Capital Standards

### Instructional Areas

#### Instructional Area Allowance

*This category is subdivided into two types of space, but generally includes all areas that will be used for directed learning activities including classrooms, learning centres, activity stations, seminar rooms, break-out spaces, laboratories, shops and studios. Also included in this category is space for lesson planning/preparation, teaching team meetings, student project supplies, general storage for monthly supplies (for bulk storage see Administration), and frequently used teaching resource materials.*

#### *General instructional areas*

*Instructional areas for large and small group learning activities not requiring any specialized finishes, equipment, electrical or mechanical services.*

*Space allowance: 3.5 m<sup>2</sup>/ student*

#### *Specialized instruction areas*

*Instructional areas for large and small group learning activities where water, equipment, or materials are used that can be “messy” or create noise, dust or fumes such as: arts and crafts, music, drama, home economics, industrial arts. Specialized features may include: finishes, equipment, electrical/mechanical services (such as multiple sinks, fume hoods, appliances, or power tools), and storage areas for supplies, equipment or student projects.*

*Space allowance: 0.5 m<sup>2</sup>/students in all grades  
plus 1.0 m<sup>2</sup>/student grades 7 to 12*

### Current Programming and Future Needs

#### **Kindergarten and Grade 1**

There are 3 Kindergarten classrooms. One is larger than the other by a factor of two. It has a separate small storage room, a small student washroom, a stove with oven, and a small refrigerator.

The Kindergarten program is an experiential, active learning through play classroom.



Furnishings are extensive and can include variations of the following (which can be found in some or all of the three K rooms):

- Teacher desk and chair
- Round student tables with chairs
- Counter with sink and cupboards below
- Extensive bulletin boards
- Book display case(s)
- Tall file cabinets
- Wooden (tall) bookcases and low bookcases with kits or tubs of student resources
- Wooden cupboard storage wall unit(s)
- Pocket charts
- Whiteboards
- Smartboard with ceiling mounted proxima projector
- Mobile cart with TV and DVD
- Specialty tables/boxes e.g. sand table, water table, lego table
- Specialty nooks or corners e.g. canvas tent reading area, soft cushion reading area
- Circle time/storytelling time reading circle area rug/mat
- Kitchen play area
- Art exploratory area, including a paper drying rack for artwork
- Appliances (e.g. stove, microwave, refrigerator, breadmaker, mixer, blender, kettle)

There are two classrooms<sup>10</sup> between the Kindergarten classrooms and the Grade 1 classrooms which are used for pre-school programs.

---

<sup>10</sup> Two rooms at Sissons are licensed as an NWT day care pre-school facility. It is licensed for 18 spaces per rooms. In 2011/2012, there was one Pre-K classroom. In 2012/2013, there are currently two Pre-K classrooms, each with approximately 16 to 17 students. Each class has two personnel – a teacher and an assistant. The classroom is designed as an active learning and exploratory environment complete with a combination of play tables (e.g. sand table, water table), play centres (e.g. small wooden fort), and play stations (e.g. simulated kitchen). Students often gather on a large floor mat for circle time. This is a cozy area where various activities occur. There is normally a large bulletin board and access to a whiteboard associated with the learning circle. The classroom also includes a counter with sink, and cupboards below, a refrigerator (for lunches and snacks), a microwave, file cabinets, storage bins and storage carts (usually with storage tubs), and a small admin desk (with chair) area. There are stackable sleeping cots for nap time(s), which are kept in one corner of the room. Access to washrooms is an issue as the children have to use the student washrooms at the end of the hall. The floor surface in this room is lino which is preferred. Soft areas are created by using large and small area rugs. The Pre-K runs a user-pay after school program everyday from 3:30 to 5:00 pm. It uses the classroom nearest the school entrance for this purpose.

The two Grade 1 classrooms are very similar – each with large perimeter counter with sink, and storage cupboards below (includes large paper sheet storage); round tables for students with chairs, teacher desk and chair, audio visual cart with TV and DVD, whiteboards (2), extensive bulletin boards, Smartboard, 2 tall wooden bookcases, a 4-drawer file cabinet, book display racks, pocket charts/displays, a kidney shaped group work table, and a large circle or storytime area rug. Extensive teacher and student resources are stored under the perimeter counter in bins and tubs.



### Grade 2-5 Classrooms

The Grade 2 – 5 classrooms are on the second floor of the school overlooking the library. The rooms are quite similar and of a good size. Each of these rooms has:

- A teacher desk and chair
- A long perimeter counter with a sink and counter top, cupboards below for paper storage and/or tub storage, with lino near the sink area
- A lockable wooden storage unit
- A minimum of 4 to 5 large wooden bookcases
- Whiteboards (2)
- A perimeter wall bulletin board
- A Smartboard with ceiling mounted proxima
- Book display or magazine display rack
- Teacher file cabinet (4-drawer)



The student furniture varies based on grade levels. The grade 5 students have trapezoid tables and chairs; the grade 4, 4/5 and some grade 3 students have mainly rectangular tables and chairs; and the grade 2 and some of the grade 3 students have round tables and chairs. The younger students also tend to have listening centres and circle time area rugs. Most of the classrooms have large maps which are displayed (e.g. world map, map of Canada). Most of the classrooms have created small reading nooks or corners in their rooms.

## Other Subject Areas and Space Implications

### Languages

#### French Language Arts

Teachers teach their own French Language Arts classes. They have created a literature rich environment in each classroom. Typically, this involves a reading nook, sentence wall charts, pocket charts, sentence strip wall charts/display charts, book displays, guided reading kits, novel study kits, dictionaries, etc.



#### English Language Arts

English Language Arts is currently being taught in each classroom. The school would like to have a separate room for second language (i.e. English) as there are many resources required to create a literature rich environment. As well, as numbers increase, it is quite likely that there may be a position for an English Language Arts teacher. Teacher resources generally include books for general reading and interest, novel studies, dictionaries, etc.



#### Literacy Room

The school has allocated one of its classrooms as a Literacy Room. A part-time Program Support Teacher (English/French) and a Literacy Coach (French) work out of this room. The Literacy Coach offers support and training to staff regarding literacy needs. The room is home to several resources (see photo at right) related to reading and literacy. Staff can work and plan together in this room.



Furniture in this room includes:

- Large table @ 8 chairs
- Round table @ 4 chairs
- Long perimeter counter with sink and cupboards for storage below
- 3 tall bookshelves



- 3 file cabinets
- Large wooden lockable storage cupboard
- 2 teacher desks and 2 teacher chairs
- Circle mat/area rug
- TV (for hookup to computer for presentations)
- Bulletin board
- Multiple storage units with bins for resources

There are guided reading carts with resources for each classroom which are currently stored in the classrooms. The Literacy room is used for teacher planning (see photo below), for assessments of students, and for professional development of staff. Meetings tend to take place in this space as well as it is one of the few places in the school with a large table able to accommodate 8-10 persons.



## Fine Arts

### Music

The Music room is located near the gym. The gym stage is actually in the music room, separated from the gym by divider wall. Based on discussions with the teacher (and others), there is nothing “magical” about this location from their perspective, and the music room could be relocated to another area the renovated facility.

Noise issues have been raised by both the occupants of the gym and the music room. Gym noise easily transfers into the music room and vice-versa.

The music room is fairly large and has a 3-tiered platform at one end allowing for tiered choral presentations (photo top right). There is a small counter with sink and cupboards below in one corner of the room (photo top right). A sink is required to clean mouthpieces and recorders.

Teacher resources include 2 teacher desks, chair, 3 tall bookcases, 4 small bookcases (with plastic tubs), a mobile metal cart with TV and DVD, a mobile white board, a flip chart stand, an overhead projector, and a small file cabinet (see middle photo). A metal stage platform (choral risers) is stored in another corner of the room and is used for assemblies, concerts and festivals (approximately 4- 6 times a year). The chairs are arranged in a semi-circle at the other end of the room (not the end with the rising tiered platform). There is also a small-wheeled cart that has a small sound system/CD player on it.

Musical instruments (see bottom photo) include 2 pianos, tambourines, 6 drums, 2 dozen xylophones, 20 music stands, and a variety of smaller hand instruments in plastic tubs/bins.



a  
in



A small music office can be accessed from room. The office is used to store instruments teacher resources. There is a file cabinet (4-drawer) and 4 tall adjustable bookcases in room as well as excess instruments (e.g. drums) and musical stands.



this  
and  
this

The room is used for choir several times a week at lunchtimes and accommodates 65 students for this activity. If the new music room does not accommodate this many students, a suitable discrete location for choir will be required in the renovated facility.

Consideration should be given to providing two small practice booths for students to play musical instruments as well as access to a Smartboard.

### **Art/Drama**

There is no art room in the school. Teachers teach their own art to students in the classroom, sometimes as a discrete subject, and often times integrated into another subject area e.g. science, social studies, language arts.

In a small primary school, drama is often determined on the interests and talents of the teaching staff. Students enjoy drama activities and teachers often incorporate them into their lesson planning.

### **Math**

Math methodology requires the extensive use of math manipulatives, practical hands-on activities, group work, computer drill and skills, and calculators. These materials are stored mainly in a storage room currently associated with the library. Some resources are stored in the classroom (see photo at right) when being used short-term, and teachers like the idea of being able to share the manipulatives in a central location (closer to the classrooms).



### **Science**

Science methodology requires hands-on experiential learning and inquiry. The school has created numerous kits for the various units and modules. The kits are stored in a small storage room at the end of the upper hall, nearest the grade 5 classroom (see photo at right).



All classrooms require access to water for experiments.



### **Social Studies**

Social Studies has its own unique set of resources from globes, to posters, to audio-visual resources, and large screen maps. Classrooms need clips (or tracks with clips) to be able to accommodate the use of large pull down maps.



### **Use of Computers**

The computer room is of standard size but irregular shape making it difficult to have an efficient design. The room has 26 Acer computers on 13 computer tables.

There is also a teacher desk and chair, a whiteboard, a printer (Lazerjet 4050TN), a pull down screen, and 3 tall bookcases (for old computers, parts and supplies).



There are few computers in the classrooms.

It was reported that this is mainly due to connectivity issues (hardwire and wireless) throughout the school.

### **Foods/Home Economics**

Currently there is no area in the school where a teacher could take 6 to 8 students and do some basic cooking or food studies. There may have been at one time a small kitchen associated with the classroom at the main entrance. All that remains is a small (and dated) counter with a sink and a relatively old stove (see photo at right). The staff room does not lend itself to this type of activity. A washer/dryer should be located somewhere in the school – this may be a logical location.



The school holds events/feasts/festivals as well as tournaments in the gymnasium. Access to foods for these events should be considered.

### **After-School Programs**

There are three after school programs:

A Pre-K daycare afterschool program is run by the District Office. Two staff work with students from 3:15 pm to 5:00 pm. They currently use the classroom near the main entrance during this time.





Sisson's after-school program (K-5) is run by the local YWCA – 5 nights a week after school (including School Improvement Days).

There is also a second Sissons afterschool program run by the P.Ed teacher - often 2 to 3 different activities offered at same time; includes Wii games, archery, yoga, and sports run by students from Sir John Franklin or substitute teachers. They use the gym, the main foyer area in front of the gym, and the outside play area during this time.

### **Bookrooms**

There are three small bookrooms in the school - two on the upper level and one on the lower level. One of the upper level bookrooms is used for common science supplies and science teaching units/kits while the other is used for some general storage but mainly acts as a small office for the gym teacher who has nowhere else to go. The lower level bookroom is used for common art supplies.

There is also a storage/bookroom in the back of the library. This resource room measures approximately 20 ft \* 16 feet and includes 234 linear feet of perimeter shelving (13 metal 5-shelf bookshelf units), and 192 linear feet of interior shelving (assorted metal and wooden bookshelves), 6 stackable 3 drawer video/DVD metal storage units (measuring 38"\*20"\*20"), one round table @ 4 chairs, 2 mobile storage carts, one fixed storage cart, 9 containers with class sets of student calculators, and numerous plastic bins and cardboard boxes. All shelving also has storage on top shelves as well. Map storage is required – currently they are simply stored in the corner of the room up against a bookshelf.

There is a storage room near the back of the music room directly behind the gym storage area. It is used for some general storage and as a gym storage overflow space.



## **Critique and Analysis of Instructional Area Allowances**

### **School Within a School Concept**

Generally, the school has functioned well with a Pre-K to Gr. 1 zone<sup>11</sup>, and a Gr. 2-5 zone.

#### **K - 1**

The Kindergarten classrooms should be renovated to make them each more similar in size according to the standards. A small washroom in each room is recommended. Storage solutions such as storage walls (with sliding whiteboard and bulletin boards) should be considered. The current coats and boots hallway solution is unsuitable and only serves to clutter the hallways.

There is an attempt in the school to create a wonderful (and seamless) Pre-K to Grade 1 zone – consideration should be given to include the grade one classrooms in the design process so they feel and look the same as the Kindergarten rooms (e.g. same storage solutions, single washrooms). Each of the Kindergarten and Grade 1 classrooms would typically have a dedicated learning space or learning circle (with area rug, and surrounding whiteboard and bulletin board built into the design). Access to water is required. Access to a track system for installing pull down maps and charts is desired. Electrical circuits need to be able to handle several microwaves (as students eat their lunches in the classrooms). The flooring preference for this zone is lino. Soft areas will be created using area rugs. Consideration should be given for in-floor heating considering the nature of primary students (always on the floor).

There should also be a breakout space created either inside or adjacent to the classrooms for supervised group work, as well as use by educational assistants.

#### **Grade 2-5 Classrooms**

The Grade 2 -5 classrooms should be renovated to make them each more similar in size. There should be adequate washrooms in the Grade 2 – 5 zone. Storage solutions such as storage walls (with sliding whiteboard and bulletin boards) should be considered. The current coats and boots hallway solution is unsuitable and only serves to clutter the hallways. Lockers should be considered for this zone (Grade 4 and 5 at a minimum). The furniture layout in this room typically is different style tables and chairs, not individual student desks. There would also be breakout spaces created either inside or adjacent to the classrooms for supervised group work, and also for use by educational assistants. As with the other classrooms in the school, access to a track system for installing pull down maps and charts (e.g. Social Studies) is desired. Electrical circuits need to be able to handle several microwaves (as students eat their lunches in the classrooms). Students in this level (or zone) should have washrooms in their zone.

---

<sup>11</sup> This Consultant will not make commentary on presence of Pre-K. That is a policy decision. If the two Pre-K rooms were to remain, special considerations would need to be made for the layout and design of these two spaces as they are licensed NWT daycare spaces. There would be special requirements for the renovated spaces related to staff ratios (1-9), maximum group size (18), primary and secondary spaces in group rooms, bathrooms/ handicap access, storage and laundry, etc.

### **Technology in Classrooms for Students and Staff**

The desired outcome (according to District IT support staff) would be to have a computer pod in each classroom consisting of one CPU, and 5 monitors each with a keyboard and a mouse, along with an interactive touch LCD screen (e.g. Smartboard) with the ability to transmit from a tablet or laptop.

There could be monitors in the hallways and select locations to be used for announcements and advertising of school events. Each classroom would have some hardwire connections as well as access to a wireless system. Several staff use an FM wireless system in the classrooms which is portable. No wiring is required in the classrooms for this system. The phone system in the classrooms, as well as throughout the school would be IP based.

Staff would use laptop computers to perform admin functions in the classroom and from home, work on report cards and record attendance. The report card system and the enrolment data are done directly on an ECE network, while all other functions are done on a District network where data is stored on the network, not the computer.

### **Computer Lab**

The computer lab would have 30 computer stations, and the District IT personnel have requested a minimum of 45 hardwired connections for this area.

### **Multi-Purpose Room (i.e. Music Room)**

According to the capital standards, each elementary school is entitled to a multi-purpose room. Schools normally have to decide what that will look like – music, art or drama. At Sissons, this is a music room. The current room has a 3-tiered platform at one end that can accommodate 75 students (for choir) or combined classes for music activities. Acoustical treatment should be considered as noise issues are reported between the music room and the adjacent gymnasium. The location of the music room should be visited. It does not necessarily need to be adjacent to the gymnasium. Consideration should be given for two small practice booths for students to play musical instruments. Storage needs are extensive and have been identified in this section of the report. The room requires access to water (i.e. sink), as well as similar technology to the classrooms.

### **Art and Science Activity Space**

Students and parents have expressed a strong desire to have more art related activities as well as more hands-on science activities. While a small elementary school does not qualify for an additional art room or science room, the design could include a feature where a gathering space for students includes two sets of storage cupboards between a counter with sink(s). One set of cupboards could house art related supplies while the other set of cupboards has science related resources. It can be difficult to spread out a large art or science activity in the regular classroom. Teachers could bring their class to this activity space for an art or a science related activity.

### **Literacy Room**

In recent years, jurisdictions in the NWT have taken on huge literacy initiatives. The result has been a dedicated Literacy room and a dedicated full time Literacy Coach in many schools.

The Literacy Coach works with staff to assist them in planning to meet the diverse student needs in their classrooms. The Literacy room is often 2/3 the size of a regular classroom. It houses extensive literacy resources including classroom guided reading resources. It is a place where staff plan and also receive extensive professional development. It is also a good location for meetings related to students. The literacy room should be close to student support and the classrooms but does not necessarily need to be amongst the classrooms. As mentioned, it could also be smaller than the current room. Several of the recent new school projects in the Sahtu and the Beaufort Delta have included a Literacy room in their designs.

### **Second Language Classroom**

Typically, NWT schools allocate one of their classrooms as a second language classroom. In most cases, this is an aboriginal language classroom. In a Francophone or a French Immersion school, this allocation is normally used for English Language Arts or an Aboriginal language. The allocation of a separate room for this purpose allows the school to create a literature rich environment for the students in the chosen second language.

### **Math and Science Storage Rooms**

Math manipulatives and science resources can either be stored in the classrooms (if appropriate storage is allocated) or in a separate storage room in each wing. At Sissons, staff prefer to share the resources and use a centralized storage room for these materials. Each wing would require a math and a science (or a large combined) storage room. This function should not be combined with the general storage needs of a school – supplies, bookrooms, decorations, etc. Typically, school basis supplies are separated from school art supplies. If we use the premise mentioned earlier about a science and art storage area (with access to water) servicing a gathering space, the need for a separate art/science storage space is reduced.

### **Foods Area/Home Economics**

Typically a primary school does not teach home economics per se, but there is still a need for a space that is multi-purpose – able to handle a teacher and 6 to 8 students at a time, while also being able to act as a canteen type space, or be used for events in the gymnasium or gathering space(s) {e.g. feast, festival, tournament, assembly}. Both students and parents overwhelmingly supported the idea of a space where students could learn some food basics – it was amongst the top survey and focus group responses. This may also be the best location for washer/dryer, and a freezer.

### **After School Programs**

The school has after school programs for Pre-K children and for K-5 students. The programs need a space where students can play and work on projects or fun activities. Security and access to the rest of the school has been an issue. These spaces need to be able to be discretely segregated (sealed off) from the rest of the school.

## Resource Areas

### Resource Area Allowance

*Space is provided under this category to accommodate centralized resources such as books, videos and computers and work areas for students using these resources and engaged in self directed learning activities. Generally for small group or individual use on an ad hoc basis and may be available outside of regularly scheduled school hours. Also included in this category are any spaces required for staff offices and workrooms, and any central computer servers or other related equipment.*

*Space allowance:     **0.5m<sup>2</sup>** /student*

*Modifications:        In communities where no other public library facility exists an additional **50m<sup>2</sup>** is allowed when needed to provide at least one library in the community.*

### Current Programming and Future Needs

The library is the central focus point of the school. It consists of the main library area, a room that has become a teacher resource room, and a small library office.

The library currently holds approximately 25,000 recorded records but there are reported to be more items that have not been recorded.

The main library has approximately:

- 700 linear feet of used shelving (student books) – some shelving has display tops
- 30 linear feet of magazine racks
- 32 linear feet of book display
- 2 three-drawer file cabinets
- 1 four-drawer file cabinet
- 2 linear L-shaped work stations (measuring 30 ft) with front displays and counter top for working (includes one computer and one large printer)
- a teepee
- large circle rug
- 3 couches (each holding 3 students)
- 5 mobile book storage carts
- 1 round table @ 4 chairs
- a large glassed display case measuring approximately 9 ft \* 8 ft





The library office measures approximately 12ft \* 10 ft and includes a 12 ft wide counter (22" deep) with sink, microwave, small coffee machine, cupboards below and cupboards above, a second wall to wall (12 ft wide and 8 feet high) storage cabinet, a 4-drawer file cabinet, a six shelf metal bookcase, and 2 mobile storage carts.



The teacher resource room measures approximately 20 ft \* 16 feet and includes 234 linear feet of perimeter shelving (13 metal 5-shelf bookshelf units), and 192 linear feet of interior shelving (assorted metal and wooden bookshelves), 6 stackable 3 drawer video/DVD metal storage units (measuring 38"\*20"\*20"), one round table @ 4 chairs, 2 mobile storage carts, one fixed storage cart, 9 containers with class sets of student calculators, and numerous plastic bins and cardboard boxes. All shelving also has storage on top shelves as well. Map storage is required – currently they are simply stored in the corner of the room up against a bookshelf.



The seating in the library includes a mix of couches, area rug, one round table and a teepee (which is one of the student's favourite spots).

Books are bar coded and everyone in the school (students and staff) have had bar codes created for them and entered into the system, allowing for easy tracking of books and resources. A great deal of time and effort has been spent creating and maintaining the system – a credit to the librarian and the library volunteer.



## **Critique and Analysis of Resource Areas**

### **Standards**

The current library is approximately 199 m<sup>2</sup>. ECE standards are .5 m<sup>2</sup> per student. The library is a healthy size for the original student capacity of the building, keeping in mind that there is also some circulation space that makes up the perimeter of the library.

### **Use of Technology**

Books are bar coded, and students and staff have been entered into the system. The library is in the process of going on-line (making resources more accessible), and hope to be completed sometime in 2013. Creating and using a technological searching tool and tracking system requires consistent human resources (staffing) to maintain the systems.

### **Focus on French Collection**

Recent purchases (physical resources) have increased the French collection as well as French literacy resources. Resources will need annual culling to make room for new resources.

### **Circulation Desk, Library Office and Storage Room**

The circulation desk and library office could be relocated to the perimeter of the library space if more space is allowed. Many of the resources in the storage room would need to remain as they are catalogued for tracking (when teachers take them out). Some of the resources related to math manipulatives and science kits could be moved to math and science storage rooms within the instructional levels.

### **Display Space**

There is a need for more display space and/or wall space for posters, pictures, etc.

### **Technology**

In terms of technology in the facility and related building services, there could be:

- A network room (either here or in general office area) - with appropriate ventilation and cooling, and a preference has been stated for cat 6 (not 5E) wiring. All switching equipment and patch panels would terminate in the network room.
- Access to the IP phone system
- Two hardwire computer connections for library staff, with internet access
- Two computers for library staff (with related bar coding set-up)
- Access to wireless system for other computers in library area
- The ability to use a pull down screen for projection and a small group presentation area could be considered. This function may be able to be dealt with through a gathering space function elsewhere in the school.

### **Security**

The library should have the ability to be sealed off (or closed) after school or on weekends.





## Recreation and Leisure Areas

### Recreation and Leisure Areas Allowance

Space is provided under this category to accommodate both **school** and **community** sports, recreation and leisure activities in spaces such as recreation rooms, gymnasias, fitness studios, game rooms, performance stages and seating areas, change rooms, as well as spaces used for the storage of equipment directly associated with activities, and spaces used for the preparation or sales of snacks and refreshments. Also included in this category are any spaces required for staff offices or workroom needed to operate recreation or leisure programs.

Space Allowance:	target enrolment 50 – 150	<b>70 m<sup>2</sup></b>
	target enrolment 150 – 300	<b>550 m<sup>2</sup></b>
	target enrolment 300 – 600	<b>850 m<sup>2</sup></b>

*Modifications:* In communities where there is more than one school, and total target enrolment is greater than 200, an additional **300m<sup>2</sup>** is allowed if needed to provide at least one **full size gym** in the community.

*In communities with schools enrolments under 150 the Department will work with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs and the community so that a gymnasium is available in the community for school use.*

### Current Programming and Future Needs

The current gym is of normal size for an elementary school in the NWT. It has a girl's and a boy's change room with showers, a small school storage room, and storage under the stage area.

Floor lines include full court basketball, full and 2 half-court volleyball, 3 badminton and 1 full court indoor soccer lines. There is a very small scoreboard (4 ft \* 1.5 ft).



Several concerns were raised about existing conditions:

1. Scoreboard is small, old and in need of replacement.
2. There is no community storage room – the community (gymnastics, yoga) uses part of the under stage storage, which means that chairs have to be stored somewhere else – i.e. girl's shower room.
3. The school gym storage room is small (16 ft \* 11 ft) and the following equipment is stored there – archery, exercise bike, badminton, basketballs, small trampoline, scooters, volleyballs, skipping ropes, mats, carts, etc. (see photo at right).
4. The girl's shower room is used for approximately 180 school chairs.
5. The boy's shower room is used for equipment related to archery, hockey, judo, track and field, gymnastics, first aid, badminton and tennis.
6. The school also uses under stage storage as well for balls, mats, and related gym equipment.
7. A separate storage room near back of music room hallway has become a school overflow storage room – school supplies and smartboards, plus skis, ping-pong tables (2), folding tables (dozen), ski boots, snowshoes.
8. It would be nice if there were some small gym storage equipment areas near exterior exits to facilitate better access to specific equipment e.g. skating and hockey equipment near ice rink location; sliders near front entrance for use on the sliding hill; and skis, boots and snowshoes near an exterior exit.
9. All door frames within the gym should be flush mounted with interior wall to allow for safer indoor soccer and floor hockey usage.
10. Several pieces of large equipment are stored on gym floor surface due to lack of storage space – e.g. floor mats (39" by 80"), 2 soccer nets (12.5 ft \* 3 ft), pommel horse, 2 floor hockey nets, volleyball standards, and a large floor mat (154" \* 54" \* 20").
11. A set of climbing ropes and climbing ladders do not retract up into the ceiling. Instead, they are raised by being tied to a rope, and as a result, they hang down quite low into the space and interfere with badminton and soccer play.
12. Stage stairs are in a bad location – cutting off front edge of gym and creating dangerous indoor soccer corner areas. The school has created makeshift fake wall inserts for several doors and for the front corners to the gym where the stage stairs are located.



13. Acoustics is an issue and well as the need for an adequate sound system, a motorized screen (to replace the rope pulled one that currently exists), access to a whiteboard and/or Smartboard with proxima.
14. Access to a gym office with toilet, shower, and phone.
15. Some of the gym floor flush mounted standard holes do not remain flush with the floor.
16. Often, the lights make a distinct and distracting buzzing noise.



### **Critique and Analysis of Recreation and Leisure Areas Standards**

The gym is very close to the standard size for a school of 150 to 300 students according to NWT standards. Sissons gym and surrounding areas are approximately 460 m<sup>2</sup> (according to ECE documentation). The capital standards identify 550 m<sup>2</sup> for a school where target enrolment is 150-300 students, and a gym of 850 m<sup>2</sup> where the target enrolment is from 300 to 600 students.

### **Storage Areas**

The accompanying storage and other gym related spaces are inadequate. The biggest need is for adequate storage for both school and community usage. The community uses under-stage storage which is normally reserved for tables and chairs, which results in the chairs (180) taking up space elsewhere in the building. The school's gym equipment is everywhere – in the small gym storage room, in the change rooms, under the stage, large pieces of equipment around the gym floor, and in a separate multi-purpose storage area near the back of the music room. More school storage and separate community storage is required. One suggestion has been made to have some small storage areas near the exits to allow for gym equipment related to the outdoor

rink, the sliding hill and outdoor recreation (skis, boots, snowshoes) needs. The key point is that much of the outdoor equipment needs to be stored where it is easily accessible as you go outdoors, not having it buried in the back of some other room or space that is nowhere near an exit.

The school has extensive sports equipment. One area where new equipment should be considered is the basketball backboards and hoops.

### **Gym Office**

A small gym office with sink, toilet, shower and phone should be provided.

### **Technology Requirements**

Technology requirements include a new sound system (with remote microphone), a new scoreboard, and a motorized screen as well as access to a Smartboard and whiteboard for use in or adjacent to the gym.

### **Acoustics**

It was reported that there has been “tension” between users of the gym and the adjacent music room in terms of transfer of noise in both directions. While there is a temporary wall between the two (via the stage), there is inadequate acoustical treatment between these two spaces, as well as in the gym itself.

### **Stage and/or Performance Area**

The gym stage is adjacent to the Music classroom. There is a retractable wall between the music room and the gym which allows the music room to utilize the stage floor space when the wall is closed. The gym, on the other hand, utilizes the under stage storage trolleys during music classes.

### **Flush Mount Fixtures/Playing Obstacles**

Consideration should be given to ensure that nothing sticks out into the playing areas (e.g. flush mounted door and hardware, including floor surface standard holes for volleyball standards or any other flush mount surfaces in the gym.). Consideration should be given to determine if there is a better way to store climbing ropes and climbing ladders when not in use so that they do not interfere with the playing of other sports.

### **Fitness Room**

A request has been made for a small fitness room to be associated with the gymnasium. A fitness room is not an unreasonable request as several of the newer NWT schools have had them included in their new construction, including a primary school.



## Learning Support Areas

### Learning Support Area Allowance

*Space is provided under this category to accommodate student counseling, community program assistants, medical or dental facilities, and storage for personal belongings during the school day such as school supplies, coats and boots.*

*Space allowance:     **0.4 m<sup>2</sup>**/students in all grades  
                                  plus **0.1 m<sup>2</sup>**/ student grades 7 to 12*

### Current Programming and Future Needs

The Program Support Teacher currently works in the same room as the Literacy Coach in the literacy room (see below left). There are 3 full-time Educational Assistants (EA) who spend their time in either the classrooms, hallways (small tables have been set up in the hallways), or in a small EA room on the second level. The PST has a desk, a chair, a lockable file cabinet, a bookshelf and several support resources in the Literacy Room.



The school counselor uses an administration office in the general office (see photo on right), as there is no other space in the building for her to use as an office. The counselor's office includes a teacher desk and chair, a desk phone, a small freezer, the equivalent of 5 horizontal lateral files (for files), a small floor mounted storage unit, a rocking chair, a soft leather couch, and a large square table (38" square and 17" high).



There is a small restitution office on the second floor for the person who use to oversee this program. Furnishings include a teacher desk and 2 chairs, 2 tall file cabinets, 2 small file cabinets, 2 TVs, 3 tall bookshelves, and a whiteboard.

The school has allocated one of its classrooms as a Literacy Room. The Literacy Coach (French) works out of this room. The Literacy Coach offers support and training to staff regarding literacy needs. The room is home to several resources related to reading and literacy. Staff can work and plan together in this room. Furniture in this room includes:

- Large table @ 8 chairs
- Round table @ 4 chairs
- Long perimeter counter with sink and cupboards for storage below
- 3 tall bookshelves
- 3 file cabinets
- Large wooden lockable storage cupboard
- 2 teacher desks and 2 teacher chairs
- Circle mat/area rug
- TV (for hookup to computer for presentations)
- Bulletin board
- Multiple storage units with bins for resources

There are guided reading carts with resources for each classroom which are currently stored in the classrooms.

There are other professionals who work from time to time at the school – social worker, OT, Speech, nurse, psychologist. They often sign out any available space at the school when they work at the school – usually the spare classroom as you enter the building’s main entrance or the small EA room (photo at right).



The Support Staff have identified the need for a sensory room – which can be a Quiet Room or a space for special needs students to rest/relax when they need a break or a space for relaxation and sensory experiences (dim lighting, natural light). It could also act as a Snoezelen Room

- a multi-sensory room for special needs students (e.g. autistic; requires floor space and some storage space)

A snoozlin room is different from a sensory room. They could both be in the same area, however they would not be used at the same time. A Snoozlin Room could be a tent located in a room - quiet, calm, music softly playing (nature, waves etc.), lava lamps, fiber optic lights in a dim-lit area. The inside of the tent would have cozy, fuzzy or weighted blankets and pillows.

A sensory room would have mats where the students could roll, bounce, lay-on; weighted balls to help with calming hyperactive students such as doing heavy lifting etc; a table to help with formation of letters and numbers; sand, play dough, rice, etc; an area to work fine motor skills; an area with computers to work on typing skills, dictation programs.



### **Critique and Analysis of Learning Support Areas Standards**

The capital standards allow for .4 m<sup>2</sup> per student for learning support space. Currently the counselor is using a space that should be designated for something else in the general office. There is a very small Educational Assistant room on the upper level, and the Program Support Teacher works out of the Literacy Room.

### **Inclusionary Suite**

An inclusionary suite should be considered in a location close to but not necessarily interspersed among the classrooms. The suite would include:

- A small PST office
- A small counselor office
- A workspace for a minimum of 3 Educational Assistants
- 1 or 2 small meeting rooms or seminar rooms (one of which should have a sink)
- A resource room for student support resources
- Access to breakout spaces either in the classrooms or adjacent (shared) between classrooms

### **Meeting Room(s)**

The small meeting or seminar rooms are spaces where the PST, counselor or EA could work with students or have meetings. It is also a place for outside specialists such as OT, Speech, psychologists, social worker, RCMP, and nurse could work out of when they come to the school and meet with staff or work with students.

### **Specialized Spaces - Handicap Washroom/Sensory Room**

Other considerations include a specialized handicap washroom (with shower), and a sensory room – which can be a Quiet Room or a space for special needs students to rest/relax when they need a break or a space for relaxation and sensory experiences (dim lighting, natural light). It could also act as a Snoezelen Room- a multi-sensory room for special needs students (e.g. autistic; requires floor space and some storage space); also a space to focus and get rid of high energies e.g. exercise machine. Both of these would be located in the classroom zones.

### **Literacy Room**

As mentioned in the Instructional section of this document, use of a Literacy room has become “best practice” in many NWT schools. A Literacy room does not, however, need to be the same size as a regular classroom, nor does it have to be interspersed among the actual classrooms.



## Administration

### *Administration Area Allowance*

*Space is provided under this category to accommodate administrative functions and semi-private spaces for teachers and school staff to work or relax including: General office, principal and vice-principal offices, staff lounge, lockers for personal effects and closets for coats and boots, staff washrooms as well as any internal circulation where rooms are grouped in a suite. Also included in this category is general storage for bulk office and instructional supplies.*

<i>Space allowance:</i>	<i>School capacity &lt; 50</i>	<b><i>15 m<sup>2</sup></i></b>
	<i>School capacity 50 - 100</i>	<b><i>45 m<sup>2</sup></i></b>
	<i>School capacity 100 - 200</i>	<b><i>70 m<sup>2</sup></i></b>
	<i>School capacity 200 - 400</i>	<b><i>120 m<sup>2</sup></i></b>
	<i>School capacity 400 - 600</i>	<b><i>180 m<sup>2</sup></i></b>

*Modifications: Space allowance may be increased by 10% for schools in communities not accessible by all-weather road to increase space allocated to storage*

### **Current Programming and Future Needs**

The general office is located in the middle of the school. It includes a small reception area with two workstations, two small administration offices, a staff work room, a small storage room, and a nearby staff room.

The principal uses one of the administration offices. The principal office (see two photos below) includes a desk and chair, a desk phone, a pea pod workstation/desk with overhead storage bin and seating for 2 visitors, and two 4-shelf bookcases.



The school counselor uses the other office, as there is no other space in the building for her to use as an office. The counselor's office includes a teacher desk and chair, a desk phone, a small freezer, the equivalent of 5 horizontal lateral files (for files), a small floor mounted storage unit, a rocking chair, a soft leather couch, and a large square table (38" square and 17" high). More information on the Counselor is provided in the "Learning Support Areas" section of this report.

The reception desk (see two photos below) includes two workstations fashioned from 3 small work desks; one 4-drawer file cabinet (for cum files), one 2-drawer horizontal file cabinet (for admin files), 5 wall cupboards for office general storage, and 2 floor mounted 2-drawer storage units. Technology includes one computer, printer/photocopier/fax, 2 desk phones, and public address system. There are two small student work desks associated with this area – for students who are being detained in the office to do their work. A small wheeled cart is used for incoming mail which can be as little as a few letters to as much as 4-6 boxes of books and/or school supplies or teacher resources at one time.

The office has three small chairs for people waiting to see the principal, as well as a soft couch which is often used as a place for sick students to lay down. There is no infirmary.



The small storage room (photo above at right) would appear to be what might have been a medical room in past years – it has a countertop, a small medicine cabinet on the wall, and is just big enough for a small medical cot. It currently is used for storage overflow - for staff coats, a printer, and general office storage (envelopes, folders, booklets, office decorations, as well as the school safe). There is also an outdoor storage shed near the back of the gym.



The work room (see two photos at right) has 2 paper cutters, staplers, photocopier paper storage, large Xerox (Workcentre 7775), a refrigerator, a laminator, recycle bins for paper and cardboard, a large counter work surface (3 ft \* 12 ft) with large bin paper storage underneath, and some wall shelving for paper storage. The workroom also has two shelves that house part of the school network server system. The main server room is in a small lock room off the adjacent storage room (old medical alcove). There is a small washroom in the back corner of the workroom.





The staff room (see 3 photos below) includes a table and chairs for 10 persons, a soft seating area of couches and soft chairs for 9 persons, a fridge, a small bar fridge, a freezer, a coffee machine, 2 microwaves, 2 toasters, a water cooler, a xerox machine (Workcentre 5755), a wall mounted TV and /DVD player, two washrooms, mailboxes, countertop with sink and overhead cupboards. There is also a bulletin board and a whiteboard. The staff room is in a prime location, just off the centre of the library, and the computer room is on one side of the staffroom and the general office is on the other side. There is nowhere in the staff room to hang up staff coats or to put boots/shoes.



It should be noted that current cumulative files are stored in the general office while older files are stored centrally in the District.

As well, the school operates a simple breakfast and snack program out of the office – vegetables, fruit, and sometimes hot soup. Requirements include a fridge (with freezer compartment), a sink, and a microwave.

### **Critique and Analysis of Administration Areas**

#### **Standards**

The Capital Standards provide for 120 m<sup>2</sup> of space for administrative functions. The school has a approximately 150 m<sup>2</sup> of current space (according to ECE) for offices, staff room, storage, staff washrooms). The counselor is in one admin office due to lack of student support space, and what used to be a small medical alcove is being used for staff coats and general storage as those functions are not adequately dealt with in the facility.

#### **Office Location**

By most people's accounts, the general office is in the wrong location and consideration should be given to moving it near the main entrance of the school.

#### **Admin Offices and Meeting Room**

There is still a need for two administration offices – one for the principal, and the other for a future VP or to be used as a general meeting room. The principal's office should include adequate bookshelves (2 four shelf units), file cabinet (1 four-drawer unit) and work station (for computer and desk phone), with room for 2-3 visitors to sit either around a small table or around the work station.

### **Security**

The main door should have the ability to be unlocked via a buzzer system into admin offices. There should be a camera to see who is outside with screen into the admin offices. There should be lights in the parking lot and possibly security spotlights all around the school for darkness and nighttime. The public address system should have outside speakers.

### **Main Reception/General Office**

The main reception desk should have adequate workspace for two people – the admin assistant and a helper/volunteer or second part-time assistant, as well as general seating for 3-4 students and/or parents. The reception work area requires 2 four-drawer file cabinets, and the equivalent of 4 two-drawer lockable storage cabinets. Technology includes one computer, a combination printer/photocopier/fax machine, 2 desk phones and space for the public address system. A small mail drop area should be provided within the new layout.

### **Counselor Relocation**

The counselor office should be moved and included within a student support suite of small offices and meeting rooms (discussed in Learning Support Areas section of this document).

### **Enhanced Medical Alcove**

Most new and renovated schools in the NWT have continued to provide a small medical alcove for students who may fall ill during the day and are waiting for parents to come and pick them up. The medical alcove also includes two small (folding) medical cots, and a counter with sink, and storage cupboards. Based on this consultant's observations, students falling ill are a fairly regular occurrence, on average, a minimum of 1 or 2 per day. Not all students end up going home, they simply need to lie down for a while.

This may be the best location (in or near the office) for the equipment needed to operate their breakfast and snack program (vegetables, fruit, hot soup) which is operated out of the office. Requirements include a fridge (with freezer compartment), a sink, and a microwave.

### **Staff Workroom**

The staff workroom could be but does not necessarily need to be adjacent to the main office. It has several large items that need to be accommodated – laminator, Xerox machines, paper cutters, refrigerator, and recycle bins for paper and cardboard. Photocopier paper is stored in this room as well large Bristol board and sheets of paper which require deep shelving. A large table with chairs or a large work counter is required for staff use.

There should be a second location in the school for a second (but smaller) copy room.

### **School and Office Storage**

A storage space for basic school and office supplies could be but does not necessarily need to be adjacent to the main office.

It has been suggested that the outside storage shed (desks, furniture, etc.) be moved closer to the school and/or be linked to the school for easier access.



**Main Server Room**

The main server room (with air conditioner) could be but does not necessarily need to be adjacent to the main office.

**Staff Room**

The staff room seems small for a staff of approximately 28 persons and requires a combination of soft and hard seating (table with chairs) to accommodate a minimum of 20 persons. The following items are recommended – refrigerator (with ice machine), dishwasher, stove (with oven), coffee machine, microwaves (2), water cooler, wall mounted TV with DVD player, whiteboard, and two bulletin boards. The preferred location for staff mailboxes is in this staffroom. The photocopier machine that currently is in the staff room should be accommodated elsewhere – i.e staff workroom. A place for coats and boots/shoes should be located in this area, as well as suitable washrooms.



## **Circulation and Gathering**

### **Circulation and Gathering**

*This category includes space to provide public access to all instructional, recreation and leisure, resource, and student support areas, general administration area entrance, as well as washrooms, and required exits. This category also includes gathering areas where students interact socially, current activity information can be posted, and artwork and awards can be displayed. Typical spaces would be corridors, lobbies, lounges, and sports viewing areas.*

*Space allowance: Calculated as a percentage of total area allowances for Instructional, resource, recreation and leisure, administration, learning support areas and any space modifications as follows:*

*Schools with target enrolments under 300 FTE, 30%*

*Schools with target enrolments over 300 FTE, 25%*

### **Current Programming and Future Needs**

There are main washrooms on the first floor of this building. One set is near the front entry (at top of stairs), and the other set is with the classrooms on the lower level. The male washrooms have 3 urinals and 1 stall and the female washrooms have 3 stalls. One of the Kindergarten rooms has its own washroom. There are no washrooms on the upper level of classrooms (Grade 2 -5). Many of these students, as well as the Pre-K, K and Grade 1 students on the lower level basically use the same set of washrooms which causes congestion as the set of washrooms nearest the front entry is not in a convenient location for classroom use. Some of the Grade 4 and 4/5 and 5 students use the washrooms in the public area. There are single washrooms in three other locations (staff workroom, staff room, and classroom nearest front entry). The gym change rooms have one washroom stall each in them. Students have requested more stalls in the gym washrooms. They do not use the showers.

There are two sets of stairs to the main entrance of the school. Students and staff take off their boots in the main foyer (see photos below) and walk up a long set of stairs to an open area which acts as a passageway to the library, main office or gym/music areas of the building. The hallways and stairs are wide and consideration should be given for a handrail down the centre of the stairs. Most people have described the front entrance as uninspiring, bleak and uninviting.



The open circulation area at the top of the stairs (see photo at right) is used as a small gathering space. There are 4 large mobile tables with built in bench style seats in this space. The after school program uses this space for its activities from 3:15 to 5:00 pm each day. The library is immediately adjacent to this space, and washrooms are accessible. Students on the upper level of the building often use the stairs and come to this area to access the washroom. There is a side entrance to the school off this area. It is used for handicap access as there is no stairs at this entrance.



Unless you use a back entrance, the only way to access the classrooms is to come through the hallway entrance past the office and staffroom and through the library, or to go through the main library entrance and use the stair just inside the library to get to the two levels of classrooms.



Both levels of classrooms have a set of stairs at either end of the hallways for access up and down to each level. There is a second entrance nearest the grade 1 classrooms with a small foyer for removing boots. This entrance is actually warmer (in temperature) than the front entrance (which can be quite cold when it is -20 outside).

The playground is considered by most as suitable for a school this size. There is a mix of ball field (no grass), hard surface (basketball court, baseball diamond), play structures (swings, climbing apparatus), and natural vegetation. Playground equipment can always be updated and some is in need of repair (e.g. basketball backboards and hoops). There is a small sliding hill near the front of the school. Common complaints seem to center around the chain link fence, the front stairs and the back steel stairs.





The parking areas, car drop off, and bus drop off lanes seem to work well even though they are not very aesthetic. There is no lighting in the parking areas. Numerous negative comments have been made during the consultation on the chain link fences.



### **Critique and Analysis of Circulation and Gathering Spaces Standards**

According to ECE calculations, there are 1061 m<sup>2</sup> of circulation space in the current Sissons school (stairwells, vestibules, main entrance, stairways, corridors). The capital standards allow for 30% for a school of this size (when it was built). The school is approximately 3351 m<sup>2</sup>. Thirty percent of this for circulation would amount to 1005 m<sup>2</sup>. The current school is approximately 31.6% circulation space which is not uncommon for an open concept school.

#### **Student Washrooms**

The current washroom scenarios in the school need to be revisited. There should be a small washroom in each of the Pre-K and K (and perhaps even Grade 1 classrooms in the lower primary zone). There should also be washrooms in the Grade 2-5 zone that are easily accessible. The number of stalls in these washrooms should be reconsidered, as very small children do not like to use urinals and there are line-ups for the single stalls.

There should be at a minimum one full handicap washroom with a shower.

#### **Gym Change Rooms**

Gym change rooms have a single stall and a large shower room. Some have suggested replacing the shower area and putting in an additional washroom stall. As is typical in all schools, suitable staff and public washrooms should be strategically placed.

#### **Front Entry and Back Exit (Playground) Stairs**

A great deal of dissatisfaction has been reported related to the main set of concrete stairs to the front entry of the school, and the back set of metal stairs leading to the playground areas (including handicap access concerns). The main school entry has been described as frigid (cold), uninspired and uninviting. Anyone who enters the building removes their boots or shoes and carries them to their respective areas. Crowding, as well as “unpleasant odours” have been identified in this space.

**Classrooms Access (Stairs)**

Both levels of classrooms have stairs at either end of their hallways for access up and down to each level. One set is inside the library (rather than outside from the hallway) and comments have been made with regards to circulation patterns.

**Gathering Space (with gym viewing)**

There is an open circulation space at the top of the stairs adjacent to the music room and in front of the gymnasium. This could be a wonderful gathering space for the school (with gym access) if the space could be enhanced (and made bigger). It could serve as a space for assemblies, gatherings and both in-school and after school programming. Gym viewing could be incorporated into this space.

**Playground Improvements**

Consideration should be given to upgrading the playground to include more hard surfaces and an improved baseball diamond, and repairing/replacing any outdated equipment while maintaining the interesting mix of natural vegetation play areas.





## Building Services Areas

### Building Services

*Space is provided under this category to accommodate public washrooms (not staff washrooms in administration), mechanical and electrical service rooms, janitorial/maintenance supplies and any internal circulation required.*

*Space allowance: 9% of total area allowances for instructional, resource, recreation and leisure, administration and learning support areas.*

### What Currently Exists and Future Needs

Public washrooms are likely the set of washrooms nearest the front entry (at top of stairs), which are in proximity to the gymnasium. The male washrooms have 3 urinals and 1 stall and the female washrooms have 3 stalls.

There are two small janitorial water closets in the building – one on each of the levels with classrooms. There is a small caretaker supply room which is shared with the after school program. There is no need to store a long-term supply of janitorial products, just what might be used in upcoming weeks. There is also a small caretaker office located next to the boiler room. The room has a coat rack, a tall bookshelf, a desk and 2 chairs, and a file cabinet.



### **Critique and Analysis of Building Services Spaces Standards**

The current school has approximately 96 m<sup>2</sup> allocated to building services (according to ECE). The capital standards provide for 9% allocated to building services which would have been 301 m<sup>2</sup>. The ECE calculation does not include the mechanical and electrical spaces, only washrooms and janitorial spaces.

#### **Public Washrooms**

The public washrooms (which are also used by students) are a fair distance away from the gymnasium which is where the public would predominately be. The washrooms in the gym change rooms might be used during public events and consideration should be given to enhance them.

#### **Janitor Closets/Housekeeping Office**

Janitor closets should be placed in each wing or level of the classrooms, as well as in the more public areas. There is still a requirement for a small janitorial office and a small janitorial closet (as supplies are only stored for a short period of time, not for the whole school year).

#### **Parking Lot**

There should be lighting in the parking areas. One suggestion was made to move the staff parking to where the sheds are now on the site (nearest the gym). Another suggestion was to put a break in the fence so students are dropped off about 10 feet from the walkway – as the busses tend to get very close to the walkway when dropping off students.

#### **Technology Considerations**

In terms of technology in the facility and related building services, there could be a wiring infrastructure allowing for monitors in the hallways at select locations to be used for announcements and advertising of school events. Each classroom would have some hardwire connections as well as access to a wireless system. The computer lab would have a minimum of 45 connections. The staff uses an FM wireless system in the classrooms which is portable. No wiring is required in the classrooms for this system. The phone system would be IP based as well in the renovated school. A new public address system would be incorporated into the phone system. There would be a network room with appropriate ventilation and cooling (see photo on right), and a preference has been stated for cat 6 (not 5E) wiring. All switching equipment and patch panels would terminate in the network room.



## General Overall Comments on Ecole J. H. Sisson School Capacity

### School Capacity

According to ECE, the school capacity<sup>12</sup> at time of construction based on capital standards was 341 and the recommended enrolment at 85% was 290 FTE. This calculation presupposes that there are no Pre-K programs, specialty areas or special situations in the general instructional space of the K-5 school which do not (or should not) count towards the capacity calculation of a building. It also presupposes that that many children will actually fit into the building (which they do), but that is not how a primary school functions – there is no regular class stationed in the computer lab or music room or literacy room or second language classroom at the start of the day. If this were a high school, that would be different – as specialty rooms often double as home rooms for high school students who are on rotary system for their classes. That is not the case for a primary school.

The original school had 14 classrooms, a K room, a CTS room, a music room, a gymnasium, administration and support areas.

The current school has 18 classrooms, a gymnasium, administration and support areas.

According to the standards, the school is entitled to a multi-purpose room (e.g. music). Using a room as a Literacy room is a use consistent with what has been done in other schools in the NWT. It could be argued that the computer lab should count towards the capacity calculations as computers could be more integrated into the classrooms or library (e.g. computers in each room, or a bank of 30 computers on a mobile cart for each wing). Computer labs often spring up in new schools only when there is sufficient (i.e. extra) classroom space. They are often the first classrooms get re-mobilized when number are high.

Of the 18 classrooms, two are used for Pre-K, one for a Literacy room, one for a CTS Computer room, and one for a music room. It needs to be determined if the Literacy room and the Second Language classroom would (or should) count within the capacity calculations.

*Consideration should be given to reviewing the capacity of the current school to be in the range consistent with 12 instructional classroom spaces plus 2 rooms for Pre-K programs (i.e. a total of 14 classrooms) plus adequate administration, learning support, recreation and leisure, and resource areas.*

---

<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that the capital standards were revised in 2005. Based on the new capital standards, the school capacity would be slightly lower.

Four scenarios are described below based on which instructional spaces are actually included in the capacity calculations.

### **Scenarios**

#### **Scenario 1**

With Pre-K in the school, the number of K-5 students equates to 12 classes plus 2 classes of Pre-K. In this scenario, a literacy room, a second language classroom, a multi-purpose room and a computer lab have not been included towards student numbers (i.e. are zero rated for students).

#### **Scenario 2**

If there was no Pre-K in Sissons school, the number of K-5 students could increase by a factor of 2 classrooms (i.e. to 14 classes). In this scenario, a literacy room, a second language classroom, a multi-purpose room and a computer lab have not been included towards student numbers (i.e. are zero rated for students).

#### **Scenario 3**

With Pre-K in the school, and the Literacy Room and Second Language Classroom counting towards student capacity, the revised school capacity would equate to 14 K-5 classes plus 2 classes of Pre-K

#### **Scenario 4**

With no Pre-K in the school, and the Literacy Room and Second Language Classroom counting towards student capacity, the revised school capacity would equal 16 classes of K-5 students.

*This consultant is aware, that in the past, some rooms have been pro-rated at 50% capacity (such as a science lab or computer room), while other rooms have been pro-rated at 0% (e.g. home economics room).*

#### **Lack of Policy For Second Language Classrooms**

It can be argued that in a French Immersion situation the number of students in each classroom should be slightly less to allow for the second language situation. In some jurisdictions such as Alberta, the lower grade levels in second language situations have a lower PTR per classroom by policy (i.e. 17 students). There is no such policy in the NWT. The teaching of primary grades in an aboriginal language may be a comparable situation. In these circumstances, attempts at the school level are often made to keep the numbers low, but it is common to see from 15 to 20 students in these classrooms.

## General Overall Comments on Grade Extensions

### What People Said About Grade Extensions

*Sisson's Students* – Many of the older students (almost all of the Grade 5 students) said they would like to see additional grades at Sissons school.

*Wm. McDonald Students Focus Group* of Grade 6 to 8 students who had actually attended Sissons were quite split on whether to keep Sissons K-5 or add additional grades. Some spoke of the benefits of being together, while others sited amenities that they have grown accustomed to – larger gym, lunchroom, larger playfield (some of which would be accommodated in a K-8 setting).

*Parent Advisory Group* – the majority of the PAC (at the meeting which the Consultant attended) indicated that they would like to see Sissons remain as a K-5 school – they liked the small intimate atmosphere.

*Sisson's Parent Survey Respondents*<sup>13</sup> did not make many comments on grade expansions when asked what changes they would make at Sissons school – a few responses indicated that they would like to see a K-8 school.

*The majority of Wm. McDonald Parents of Grade 6 to 8 students (randomly selected focus group*<sup>14</sup>) who had actually attended Sissons were in general support of an expanded school option. Having their children in the same school can be convenient for parents and provides a continuous experience from K-8.

*Many of the staff at Sissons school* feel quite strongly that pedagogically, it would be better to have a K-8 school in terms of providing a comprehensive French Immersion Program with less duplication and more efficient delivery of services (human resources) and use of resources.

*The French Steering Committee* would like to see a K-8 French Immersion school in the District. They stated that it would be better pedagogically, as well as more efficient from a human and physical resources perspective.

---

<sup>13</sup> There were 42 respondents to the parent surveys.

<sup>14</sup> It should be noted that the Wm. McDonald parent group (whose children attended Sissons) was a very small group. A dozen parents were contacted at random and only 5 were available for interviews with the Consultant. The parents did collectively have over 54 years experience with their children at Sissons (e.g. 1 child for entire K-5 program = 6 years).

**Data Related to Grade Extensions**

There are currently 67 Grade 6 to 8 French Immersion students in YK#1 at William McDonald School. Assuming no loss of students, one could expect the following number of Grade 6 to 8 students within the district for the following seven years:

Year	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Total
2013/2014	28	24	26	78
2014/2015	34	28	24	86
2015/2016	26	34	28	88
2016/2017	38	26	34	98
2017/2018	46	38	26	110
2018/2019	46	46	38	130
2019/2020	33	46	46	125

The number of Grade 6 to 8 students will range from a low of 78 to a high of 130 (assuming no loss of students). This equates to a need for 6 or 7 additional classrooms to handle the projected numbers.

If the school were to become a Grade K-8 school, Sissons would require an expansion. Specifically, the following instructional areas and spaces would need to be considered:

**Instructional Spaces**

- Minimum of 6 or 7 generic classrooms based on enrolment projections (assuming no loss of students from year to year)
- Science lab
- Home Economics room
- Multi-purpose room e.g. Art (school already has a music room)
- Math and Science Storage Rooms within instructional zone
- Possible second computer lab (could be dealt with through use of trolleys with 30 laptops as well)
- Additional breakout spaces/seminar rooms
- Access to CTS (e.g. shop, foods)

**Resource Areas**

- Expanded library area for books and resources
- Expanded library space for a class to sit and work (research) in the library
- Expanded teacher resource area

**Recreation and Leisure Areas**

- Qualify for 850 m<sup>2</sup> gymnasium<sup>15</sup> – currently have 460 m<sup>2</sup> of gymnasium areas (could be dealt with through gym expansion, second gymnasium, fitness area, or physical activity area for younger students (other than the gym))
- Would require additional gym storage capability
- Would keep showers in the gym change rooms (for school and tournaments use)

<sup>15</sup> There may not be adequate space on the site for this to occur.



### **Learning Support Areas**

- Additional educational assistants space
- Access to breakout spaces inside classrooms or adjacent to classrooms to work with students

### **Administration**

- Would require 2 offices for principal and vice-principal, as well as a meeting room
- Enhanced staffroom
- Enhanced staff workroom
- Increased school and general storage

### **Circulation and Gathering**

- Would require a separate classroom zone for Grade 6 to 8
- Possible separate entrance for Grade 6 to 8 students
- Separate small gathering space
- Lockers for student belongings
- Enhanced playground (actual space on playground may be limited for a K-8 population)

### **Grade Extensions and Good Pedagogy**

#### **K-5 French Immersion**

Having a small, intimate K-5 French Immersion School can work really well from the perspective of creating a wonderful, warm and inviting small school atmosphere.

#### **Grade 6-8 Dual Track Middle School**

Having a very small Grade 6-8 French Immersion school within a dual track (and very small Middle School) can also work but can be difficult to maintain for the French Immersion students. There is a duplication of potential resources and sometimes an inefficient use of human resources, not to mention the difficulty of creating a unique French environment in the dual track Middle school. The French atmosphere and environment can be both reduced and not served as well by the dual track nature of the school.

#### **K-8 French Immersion**

The consultation determined that many stakeholders – parents, students and the French Steering Committee desired a K-8 combined environment rather than a separate K-5 and separate Gr. 6-8 French environment. This would dramatically change the character and ambiance of the K-5 school, but respondents felt that all of the French Immersion students from K-8 (and not just the K-5 population), would be better (and more efficiently) served under one roof. The best student centred decision, from their perspective, was to consider the needs of all French Immersion students and put them together in a K-8 French Immersion environment.

**Commentary on Enrolments and Grade Configurations at YK#1**

The terms of reference for this report included a quick look at the overall district educational programming and enrolments.

**Educational Programming, School Capacity, and School Numbers**

School	Programs	Pre-K or Daycare (user pay)	ECE School Capacity	ECE Capacity at 85%	School Enrolment (Sept 2012) No pre-K	School Enrolment (Sept 2012) with pre-K
J.H. Sissons	K-5 French Immersion	2	341 <sup>16</sup>	290	216	249 <sup>17</sup>
N. J. McPherson	K-5 English Pre-K to 6 Montessori	0 2	374	318	195 + 73= 268	300 <sup>18</sup>
Mildred Hall	K-8 English	1	473	402	224	243 <sup>19</sup>
Range Lake North	K-8 English Gr. 6 Intensive French Gr. 7-8 Enhanced French	1	440	374	324	341 <sup>20</sup>
Wm. McDonald	6-8 French Immersion 6-8 English Enhanced French		484	484	144	144
Ecole Sir John Franklin	9-12 English 9-12 French Immersion Trades & Technical Centre		750	638	741	741
Total		6	2862	2506	1917	2018

It is evident that:

1. There should be numerous empty classrooms at both Mildred Hall and Wm. McDonald Schools. Both schools have significant space available.
2. There is modest ability to handle more students at the other schools, except for Sir John Franklin.
3. There are a total of 6 pre-K/daycares in YK#1 schools at this point in time.
4. There is a pre-K to Grade 6 Montessori school operating out of N. J. McPherson school with approximately 73 students.

<sup>16</sup> The capacity of Sissons at time of construction was 341 students. In 2005, changes were made to the Capital Standards which will slightly lower the capacity.

<sup>17</sup> There are 33 Pre-K children at Sissons in 2 classrooms.

<sup>18</sup> There are 32 Pre-K Montessori children at N.J. McPherson ranging from 2.5 to 5 years old, full time in 2 classrooms.

<sup>19</sup> There are 19 Pre-K children at Mildred Hall in one classroom.

<sup>20</sup> There are 17 Pre-K children at Range Lake in one classroom. Range Lake started the year with 2 Pre-K and later combined them to form 1 Pre-K as numbers were lost due to movement of students.

It was reported that:

1. Range Lake North School is experiencing crowding at this point in time. It should be noted that there is currently 1 Pre-K/daycare classrooms at this school (the school started with 2 at the beginning of the school year). Range Lake school has 351 students (includes pre-K) in 16 classrooms. According to ECE documents, Range Lake North has 16 classrooms, a Kindergarten, a science room, a tech room, a computer room, a gymnasium, administration and support spaces.
2. N. J. McPherson is getting close to capacity (based on their small class sizes, not on ECE school capacity calculations). It should again be noted that this school has at least one pre-K/daycare classroom. N.J. McPherson has 259 students in K-5 in 13 classrooms. The Regular program uses 9 classrooms and the Montessori program uses 4 classrooms. According to ECE documents N.J. McPherson school has 17 classrooms, a kindergarten room, a resource centre, a computer room, a gymnasium, administration and support spaces.
3. Mildred Hall has 236 students in 11 classrooms and 1 pre-K classroom. Capacity at MH is 473 students. Number of students at 85% is 402 students. The school was recently renovated to include 25 classrooms<sup>21</sup>, a music room, a computer room, a gymnasium, a library, administration and support spaces.

### **Wm. McDonald Site Visit**

The Consultant did an on-site visit to Wm. McDonald school, which (according to ECE documentation) has 20 classrooms, a drama room, a CTS room, a gymnasium, a library, administration and support spaces.

At the time of this consultant's visit, there were only 8 general classrooms in use at the school – 3 for Grade 6-8 French Immersion (67 students), 1 Gr. 6 Intensive French (15 students), 1 Gr. 7 Enhanced French (11 students), and 3 for Grade 6-8 English classes (55 students) for a total of 148 students at Wm. McDonald (according to YK#1 stats). There were 9 classrooms that were being used by a variety of other groups – Allain St Cyr is using 5 rooms (4 classrooms and a classroom for primary gym space), the district office is using one room for storage, and the Cadets are using 3 rooms (2 classrooms and an office space). A second computer lab is being created, solely for Immersion use on the second floor.

### **Options**

#### **K-5 Option**

If a decision is made to keep Sissons at K-5, then the earlier sections of this report apply with regards to renovated instruction and support spaces.

#### **K-6 Option**

A decision to request a K-6 option would be made only if it strategically fit in with potential district re-alignment plans. If such a decision was made, it would necessitate an additional 1 or 2 classrooms to the existing facility.

---

<sup>21</sup> YK#1 would differ in opinion and state that there are 22 classrooms – they do not view open areas as classroom space (as part of capacity calculations).

### **K-8 Options**

If a decision is made to create a combined K-8 French Immersion school, then the following information should be considered. The 3 French Immersion Grade 6 to 8 classes (which could expand to 6 or 7 classrooms over time given enrolment projections for French Immersion) would combined with the Sisson K-5 population to form a K-8 French Immersion school. There are only three options that would create the appropriate space:

1. Expand Sissons by 6 or 7 classrooms plus appropriate additional support spaces as described earlier in this document. This option is problematic from a site perspective – the site may be too small and lacks a suitable playground if the footprint of the Sissons facility is expanded to this extent.
2. Build a new K-8 French Immersion school. This option is not viable as there is ample facility space and/or student seats within the District overall.
3. Put the combined 19 classrooms plus appropriate support spaces into another renovated structure where they would fit (i.e. a renovated Wm. McDonald facility). ***This is the better option (if a K-8 decision is made) under this scenario as there would be a suitable facility infrastructure within a renovated Wm. MacDonald school to handle the demands of a K-8 French Immersion school.***

### **Impact of a K-8 Decision**

If a decision was made to create a K-8 French Immersion School, there are students at Wm. McDonald School that would have to be accommodated elsewhere in the District. Currently there are 55 Grade 6 to 8 English students, 11 Enhanced French Students and 15 Intensive French students at Wm. McDonald school.

Options that might be considered include:

- Re-absorbing Wm McDonald English students back into the feeder schools
- Creating a small Middle School at a school within the district where there is ample space e.g. Mildred Hall
- The Intensive French and Enhanced French classrooms would be in the feeder schools.

It should be noted that pre-K programs within the schools, while feeding the school population with ready students, also detracts from the school's ability to retain additional grades - i.e. they take up valuable classroom space and limit the school's flexibility to handle increased grades and/or students within the school age population.

### **Initial Thoughts on District Re-Alignment**

While the Consultant was asked to consider district enrolments and the ten-year plan when working on the Sissons report, the task of recommending a district re-alignment is outside the terms of reference. I will mention two rather interesting ideas that were shared with the Consultant since what eventually will happen at Sissons depends on how the District is re-aligned for the future.

In one scenario, it is proposed that consideration be given to keeping all schools K-6 (with the exception of Mildred Hall), adding classrooms to Sissons to create a K-6 French Immersion school, and also placing all 7-9 students in the district (including French Immersion students) at a Junior High school. This would alleviate pressures at some of the elementary schools as well as the high school. It may however cause retention problems for the high school. Students may decide to attend high school elsewhere rather than be kept behind. It also does not solve the pedagogical and efficiency issues that a K-8 French Immersion school would hope to address.

Another scenario that the Consultant heard repeatedly was to create a sustainable K-8 French Immersion school under one roof at a renovated Wm. McDonald, and turn the old Sissons school into a pre-K/early childhood centre. This would remove the pre-K/daycares from all the schools in the district, freeing up some classroom space, and allowing for the re-absorption of Grade 6 to 8 English students (as well as the EF and IF classes) back into the feeder schools.

The issue of how to decide the proper course of action is fraught with pitfalls – Do you make the best decision in terms of solely French Immersion students from a pedagogical perspective? To what degree do you consider the best use of all YK#1 facilities? Does solving one situation create other dilemmas that have to be dealt with? Can you make a decision that solves multiple situations in both the short and the long terms?

*Where the terms of reference with regards to district enrolments and the ten-year plan are relevant to this report is that a decision must be made by the Board as to direction of Sissons. Once this education report has been completed, will the Board's preference be to work with ECE and ask for a Sissons K-5 renovation (on-site), a Sissons K-6 renovation (with addition of 1 or 2 classrooms on-site), or a K-8 renovation (for Sissons at another location ( i.e. Wm. McDonald). There is no right or wrong decision – only different ones. Whatever the decision, the renovated Sissons configuration will impact on and be impacted by the grade alignments in the other schools in the district.*



### **The Ten Year Education Plan Yellowknife 2005-2015 Update**

This report was completed May 5, 2010 by Dillon Consulting Limited. It was an update to the 2005 Ten Year Facility Plan for Yellowknife.

The report concluded:

*“Overall there have been no significant changes to the population trends described in the 2005 report. The Yellowknife population is expected to grow slowly until 2015, and the school aged population is still expected to remain fairly stable over the same time period. However, two important changes have occurred since the 2005 report was completed:*

- 1. Actual enrolments in YK#1 and YCS have turned out to be lower than the lowest projected growth scenario presented in the 2005 report.*
- 2. Current populations now indicate that YCS schools should have enough capacity to accommodate projected enrolments to 2015.*

*Although the disposal of any existing educational facilities is probably still not advisable in the next 5 years, other opportunities for making use of surplus space in YK#1 schools should be pursued”.*

In both the 2005 Report and the 2010 Updated Report, J. H. Sissons School has been identified as “*a high priority for renovations to address technical shortcomings*”.

In 2005, J. H. Sissons Schools was rated as the second top priority for renovations. In the 2010 Updated Report, it moved to the top rated (#1) priority, while additional or new space for Aurora College moved from fourth to second place in the priority rating.

The 2010 Updated Report refers to one option of exploring surplus space in YK#1 as a development option for Aurora College Future Needs (Option 7, page 14)

The 2010 Updated Report indicated that “*William McDonald school will not be in need of renovations or upgrades in the next ten years should the facility maintain its current use*”.

Given the last statement, Wm. McDonald would require renovations and/or upgrades if it were slated for a different use such as a K-8 French Immersion School.

## Background Information

### Essential Elements of Learning

This section addresses the essential elements of learning – culture-based, process oriented, interactive, integrated and balanced.

#### Culture-Based and Student Centred

What we do should reflect the cultures of our students and be evident in our unique school culture.

*Schooling should recognize and respond to students as individuals recognizing the importance of family, community and larger society. Responding to students as individuals requires student centred learning, that is, learning which is shaped by the needs of the learner.*

This can be accomplished through a variety of means, such as ...

- Hearing, seeing, feeling French in the school
- Brunch with families
- Concerts – music/theatre
- Parent helpers
- Parents/individuals from community coming to present in class
- Field trips/open houses
- Concerts by special guests
- Trips to the swimming pool
- Meeting special needs
- Inviting resource people from the community for DeneKede, social studies, MLAs, government specialists, environmentalists,
- Author visits/workshops
- ACE camps
- Volunteering in the community

### Process Oriented

*Students today must be able to handle unfamiliar situations in this rapidly changing world, with ease. It is difficult to predict what knowledge may be necessary in the future, therefore students need to understand and apply processes which enable them to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes, as needed. In other words, they need to know how to learn. Using a process oriented approach, schooling can engage students in activities which require them to think, communicate, organize, interact, make decisions and solve problems. In this way, students take control of their own learning and can apply a variety of learning processes throughout their lives.*

At Ecole J. H. Sissons School, we can contribute to a process oriented approach by ...

- Using up to date working tools
- Giving opportunities to be creative
- Having more space to do hands on activities (experiments, art projects)
- Encouraging, improvisation
- Interacting with the community
- Putting abstract skills into “real” context
- Exposure to the changes in society/ jobs/demands
- Integrating technology with Internet, Smartboard lessons
- Integrating modern technology as teaching tools in the classroom (ipods, ipads, etc)
- Having a functional computer lab
- ACS (a connected school) process actively practiced throughout school
- Learning how to learn

## **Interactive**

*Learning is a social phenomenon; people of all ages learn from and with each other. Schooling can maximize learning opportunities by encouraging students to work together in pairs, in groups, or as a class; or by implementing programs such as peer tutoring or mentorships.*

*Interactive learning reinforces important processes such as communicating and problem solving. As well, it encourages students to function as co-operating, rather than competing, members of social groups and enables them to take more responsibility for their learning.*

At Ecole J. H. Sissons School, we can promote interactive learning through a variety of means, such as ...

- Creating leadership groups for 4/5
- Differentiating learning by grouping classes
- Having an interactive space that students can use as a learning gallery
- Using projects approach – e.g. Fur trade group projects – learning to teach others
- Problem solving with small groups
- Creating learning centres
- Using a big buddy/little buddy system
- Providing regular fine arts experiences
- Providing exchanges between grades within subject areas
- Allowing exchanges/interactions to take place
- Plays

## **Integrated**

Learning within the real world occurs in context and rarely in isolation.

Similarly, in schools, an effective learning program goes beyond rote learning or the practice of skills in isolation and focuses on integrated learning.

Knowledge, skills and attitudes are taught and learned best in wholistic learning situations, where networks of key concepts and objectives, drawn from a number of subject areas, become integrated around a central, relevant theme. The various subjects interact, and growth in one area promotes and reinforces growth in another.

At Ecole J. H. Sissons School, we believe that integration is something which needs to be effectively planned for. We can nurture integration by having ...

- A place to showcase our integrated projects
- Sometimes with ELA, sometimes with FLA
- Heritage fair
- Science fair
- Involving other classes/grade levels
- Project based learning
- Camp de neige
- Using library and computer for many projects
- Providing space for students to work on projects
- More arts integration

## Balanced

Balanced refers to the five dimensions of the child – intellectual, social, emotional, physical and spiritual.

### Intellectual

*We can assist in the development of students who understand and apply thinking and problem-solving skills to their everyday lives; who communicate effectively from a broad base; and who have a desire to be involved in lifelong learning.*

Things that help us to achieve our goal of intellectual development are ...

- Connected schools – self monitoring, reflection, independence, self-control in learning, behaviours
- Small group teaching
- Presentations
- Distance education
- Discussions
- Guided reading
- Independent research projects
- Students present and explain their strategies
- Using more reflective strategies post lesson
- Vers le Pacifique program
- Creative problem solving programs e.g. Destination Imagination
- Regular fine arts experiences
- Extensions to the community – exploration of topics in a deeper context
- Using common strategies throughout the grades
- Using mental math strategies to computer
- Enrichment projects
- Self-discovery

### Social

*One of our roles as educators is to assist in the development of students who interact positively with others, regardless of differences; and who understand, exercise, and value social rights and responsibilities/*

In order to promote social goals, quite simply, students and staff need to interact. Interactions can be fostered through various means. Things that help us towards this goal are ...

- Interpersonal problem solving
- Choosing partners according to needs, learning, and social
- Teamwork
- Choosing their own centres
- Enough space for “circles”
- Exposure to many multicultural groups
- Round tables vs individual desks
- Clubs
- Open classrooms
- Big buddies/little buddies
- Meeting rooms for partnership groups
- Bigger staff room
- Small meeting spaces
- More space for connected schools activities (ACS)
- Allowing time for interactions
- Providing space and encouraging interactions
- Creating a central meeting space
- Establishing a dedicated time and place to interact as a large group

## **Emotional**

Students need to be assisted in the development of positive self-esteem, based on a strong sense of their own identity and values; students and staff need to understand and deal with their own feelings and face challenges with confidence.

Things that help us towards this goal are ...

- Assemblies
- Celebrations
- Clubs e.g. chess
- Big buddy/little buddy
- Involving students in community
- ACS – A connected school process
- Role playing
- Learning centres
- Listening centres
- School based relationship building PD
- Interpersonal problem solving
- Use of gym for plays, cooperative activities
- Give students more opportunities, vocabulary, and private space to discuss emotions
- Speaking about our emotions (cooperation council)
- Having a space for student plays

## **Physical**

At Ecole J. H. Sissons School, we can assist in the development of students who understand, actively seek and value their own well-being and that of their fellow citizens.

Things that help us work towards this goal are ...

- Dance movement to music
- Dene Kede
- Camp de neige
- Sliding hill
- Skiing/snowshoeing
- Track and field/running
- Indoor recess solutions
- More activity spaces (e.g. gym, running track)
- School sports programs
- “Brain Gym” & “Brain Dance”
- space near exits for outdoor equipment
- safe playground



## **Spiritual**

We can assist in the development of students who seek to understand and express their relationship with those aspects of their lives from which beliefs, values and world view emanate.

Things that help us towards this goal include ...

- citizenship
- stronger presence of aboriginal and French cultures
- stewardship of environment
- appreciation of natural surrounding
- play different cultural music
- social activities
- understanding everyone's differences
- invite families to present on their religious or cultural backgrounds
- create a "northern" atmosphere
- providing more and regular fine arts experiences
- encouraging students to define their own and familial beliefs
- explore beliefs of others
- encouraging cultural exchanges with students in other parts of the country (e.g. pen-pals, skype)

## Organizing Teaching and Learning

### Some Guiding Principles

*(from Education in the NWT)*

*Educational activity should recognize and respect the cultural background, language and learning styles of each student.*

*Educational activity should reflect the valuable learning experiences available to students in the community and the wider environment.*

*Education should provide opportunities for students to experience success and failure and to develop a positive self-concept.*

*Education should be an interactive process involving students, families, communities and the school system.*

*Education should provide opportunities for students to develop thinking, problem solving and communication skills to help them make sound decisions for themselves and the environment.*



## What Do We Believe About Schooling?

- 1. Schooling must provide a secure, nurturing environment that reflects the cultures of the community, enhances self-esteem and promotes learning.*
- 2. Schooling must promote the participation of educational staff, students, families and the community in making decisions about learning.*
- 3. Schooling must promote the balanced growth of individuals.*
- 4. Schooling must recognize and respond to student diversity.*
- 5. Schooling must teach students how to learn.*
- 6. Schooling must extend and enrich student's understanding and use of communication.*



## Skills For the Future

### What staff think!

- Lifelong learners
- Technology skills
- Critical thinking skills
- Problem solving skills
- Team working skills
- Communication skills
- Independence
- Responsibility
- Citizenship
- Respect for self/others
- Oral competency skills

### What parents think!

Parents identified the top skills they hoped their son or daughter would learn at school to prepare them for life – reading

- writing
- spelling
- basic math
- science/reasoning skills
- social skills (positive interactions with others, working with others, collaboration, flexibility)
- communication skills
- life skills
- critical thinking
- working hard (and learning hard work is rewarded)
- being community minded (citizenship skills)
- problem solving
- compassion (kindness, respect, honesty, tolerance, perseverance, empathy)
- money management
- financial literacy skills

### What are the non-technical skills that employers are looking for?

Research says that employers are:

- looking for generic technical skills, not specialized ones.
- supportive of increased communication and cooperation between themselves and the school system
- emphasizing that education in technology and with technology must begin earlier than high school

### Communication Skills

- The ability to listen, understand, act on and transmit information in a practical way

### Problem Solving Skills

- The ability to recognize and analyze problems and then devise reasonable solutions

### Social Skills

- The ability to get along with others
- The ability to contribute as a team member

### Basic Academic Skills

- Computeracy
- Numeracy
- Literacy

### Other attributes employers wants

- A positive attitude
- Self-confidence
- Appropriate deportment
- Ability to be a self-directed learner

## **Appendices**

What Did Students Have To Say?

What Did Parents Have To Say?





### What Did Students Have To Say

Note: answers have been combined where duplicated; repeated comments are noted in brackets as to how many times that comment was made e.g. (6)

#### 1. What features of the existing school do you like?

- Gym (40) and gym class
- Large, open library (30) and library books
- Computer Lab (7)
- Music (8), and music room
- Big classrooms (7)
- Playground (5)
- Technology – Smartboards (3), Computers
- Windows in every classroom (4)
- Open hallways and lots of stairs (3)
- Very open (can see everyone) (2) and social
- Playhouse in class
- Play kitchen in class
- Turtles
- Colour of the school
- Washroom
- Teachers
- Games we play in class
- Numbered classrooms
- The exit
- The vintage feel
- Outside security
- Murals on the walls
- Teepee

2. What features would you change?

- Lockers (22) for older grades and cubbies for smaller kids, more places to put our stuff
- Bigger computer lab with more computers (13) e.g. IMacs (2), laptops (2), tablets
- Add grade six & seven to school (8), to grade twelve (2), and dual track school (2)
- Doors for classrooms (7)
- Put bathrooms on second floor (7), motion sensor taps on faucets
- Cafeteria (7)
- Bigger classrooms (6)
- New books for library (5), noisy library (1)
- Playground (5)
- Medical room or place to go when sick (5)
- Different colours on walls (5), and bright colour for outside of school (2) eg. Blue
- Science room (5) or place to do experiments
- Mascot; person dressed as a mascot (3)
- The carpet on the walls in the boot room (2), and change the carpets (3)
- New and more windows (2)
- More music (2)
- Furniture - More comfortable student chairs (3), student desks (3) , student tables
- Ceilings (2)
- Air conditioner and heating system (2)
- Updated gym
- More afterschool programs
- More crafts, more gym time, more music
- Paint roof orange
- Girls change room
- Pool with water slide
- Exploratories (Grade 4/5)
- Exercise room
- Small kitchen in the classroom
- Doors for bathrooms
- Art room, cooking room, theatre room
- The stairs
- The entrance hall
- More supervision before and after school – kids tend to break the rules
- New benches in the boot room
- Ice rink
- Add more rooms
- Add an aquarium, vending machines in every classroom, lazy boy recliners
- Museum (for our work)
- More games
- Tree house in every classroom

3. Are there programs you would like to see taught or added to the programs you already receive?

- Learn to cook (33), baking
- Art (30) and crafts, pottery (8), painting, drawing, sewing, knitting
- Theatre – love doing plays (2), drama (12)
- More science (7), biology (2), chemistry (3)
- First Aid (5)
- Exploratories (4), workshop, mechanical
- Self defense (3)
- Learn to swim (3)
- Learn about animals (2)
- Gymnastics (3)
- More math (3)
- Technology – Tablets (2), Computers
- After school programs (2), sports (2)
- Archery club
- Speed skating
- Third language – Spanish
- More social studies
- Instruments class
- Yoga
- Cheerleaders
- Zumba, dance
- Cosmetics
- Games room
- More stuff with money
- Sports
- Philosophy
- Gardening
- Religion and culture
- Chess
- How to cut wood
- Mechanical
- Read more
- Free time in gym

4. What skills are important for you to learn at school as you prepare for life?

- Math (17), mental calculating, counting money, telling time
- Biology, science (13)
- Cooking (11)
- Writing (9)
- Visual arts (7), drawing
- Reading (7)
- First Aid (7), health (6)
- Communicating, public speaking (4)
- Track and field (3)
- How to take care of animals (3)
- Gym, sports (2)
- Making presentations
- Work well with others (4), being nice (2), being responsible
- Listening, paying attention (2), following rules
- Learning about life (2)
- Using technology – tablets, computers
- Music
- Self-correcting
- Sharing skills
- Parenting classes
- English
- French
- Swimming
- Problem solving
- Hockey
- Archery

5. Every building should have something which can be described as its “heart and soul”- imagery that speaks to the community and its people. What is it, or could it be in your school?

- Library (18)
- Games area, kids lounge (9), indoor play area
- Gym (6)
- Office (3)
- Classrooms (4)
- School mascot (4)
- Music class (3)
- Colours – light blue and light yellow (3)
- A wolf outside of school (3)
- Bigger playground in front of the school (2)
- Cafeteria (2)
- Animal shelter, animals (2), zoo (3)
- Giant picture with every student on it, or all the student names written on a wall (2)
- Swimming pool (3)
- Flat screen TV in every class
- Amphitheatre similar to NACC for assemblies
- Lunchroom
- Movie theater
- Arena
- Art room
- Statue of Mr. Sissons
- Garden
- Culture
- Big glass globe in the library
- Cool paint on outside of the school
- Automatic doors
- Roller coaster





### **What Did Parents Have To Say?**

1. What features of the existing school do you like?
  - Library (open concept) is in center of school (central point) reinforcing importance of reading, large size, meeting area and heart of school, display areas (18)
  - Classrooms have three walls, openness, open design/open concept of school, circular nature of building, high ceilings on second floor (9)
  - Gym (8)
  - Huge playground with excellent layout/varied landscape of natural and commercial play areas (10)
  - Turtles (3)
  - Music Room (3)
  - Natural light (3)
  - Large classrooms (2)
  - Windows (2)
  - Safe environment, knowing that nothing inappropriate is happening behind closed doors (2)
  - Teepee reading area could be larger for multiple activities, multiple grades (2)
  - K classroom (2)
  - The water fountains (2)
  - Small class sizes
  - Connected school philosophy
  - Xmas tree
  - Classes off the central area
  - Classes have access to outside
  - Like that kids have to take off their shoes in the entryway, shows a homey environment and teaches respect
  - Foyer open and inviting
  - Closeness, small size of school
  - The tents
  - Couches
  - Sense of history
  - Trees
  - Big stage
  - Computer room
  - Games in the classroom
  - Bathroom in K classroom
  - School layout
  - Wide hallways

2. What features would you change?

- Slippery entrance, front stairs, entrance, chain link fence, expand entrance way, neither warm or inviting, larger entrance, larger mud room area, less smelly, more accessible entrance (17)
- Close off classrooms (5), adequate workspace in classrooms
- Move office closer to main entrance, friendlier location (3)
- Modernize/update the music room (3)
- Update taps in sinks (touchless) (3), Separate washroom for pre-K kids
- Crowded hallways with well spaced hooks, cubbies or lockers for personal property, untidy (3)
- No carpet (2)
- Exchange playground equipment for level field -balls, hoops, skipping rope (2)
- Modernize/update the gym (2), gym viewing for spectators
- Add doors and walls to the classrooms (2)
- Central meeting place (2)
- Paint job, colour (2)
- Don't like the windows, more windows (2)
- More seating and space in library
- Use environmental considerations when renovating the school – visual displays
- Soundproof gym and music room
- More microwaves
- Large theatre style stage
- Bleachers in gym for spectators
- Chain link fence is institutional looking
- Update playground equipment, landscaping, remove fencing
- General freshening up
- Change colour of the walls
- Have a sick room
- Break out spaces for kids to work in
- Washroom fixtures sized for students
- Large meeting area other than gym
- Accessibility for washrooms at front door
- More windows in classrooms
- Increased athletic participation in all school sports at younger ages
- Make teepee larger
- Build a science and experimental learning lab
- Music room needs to be away from gym
- Handrail down middle of main stairway
- Student lounge; lockers
- Indoor jungle jim
- Cafeteria
- Better air quality
- If expansions are in the budget, include Ecole students in some activities and provide our students chance to become immersed
- Keep small PTR in K and Grade 1 (same as Pre-K)

3. Are there programs you would like to see added to the programs your son or daughter already takes in school?

- Art class/program (11), fine arts program (2)
- Cooking class (7), kitchen space
- K-8 school (4)
- Enhanced technology (2)
- Volunteer work besides fundraising (2) think about others
- Expanded/enhanced music program (2) choir
- Science and experimental learning lab (more balance between current language focus and sciences) (2)
- Daily physical education (2)
- Focus on academics (2)
- More cultural programming (drumming, hand games)
- More afterschool programming (creates stronger relationship between school/community and citizen)
- Develop social skills through team sports
- Bring back milk program
- Gymnastics
- Outdoor education
- More singing to teach curriculum, vocabulary, language learning, etc.
- First Aid class
- Programs that focus on inclusion (acceptance of differences), awareness/prevention of violence
- Focus on math and science
- Enrichment
- Chess club
- Exposure to industrial arts
- More use of library
- Community building activities and programs including mentoring and school community building activities (foster respect, relationships)
- Cross age group activities
- Aboriginal language (Tlicho) – even one day a week or after school
- Yoga, Zumba
- Sewing
- Drama
- Gathering areas
- More opportunities for group work, team work

4. What skills do you want your children to learn at school to prepare them for life?

- Reading (11), writing (9), spelling (3), and basic math (6), and basic science/science reasoning (3)
- Social skills (positive interactions with others), working with others, working with teams, collaboration, flexibility (12)
- Communication skills (7)
- Compassion (5), kindness, respect, honesty, tolerance, perseverance, empathy
- Life skills (3)
- Critical thinking (4)
- Working hard, and hard work is rewarded (3), working independently
- Arts, music, fitness, and academics (4)
- Problem solving (3), values based decision making
- Money management/financial literacy (4)
- Being community minded/citizenship skills (4)
- Respect for others, for property, for self (3), respect for diversity
- Technology (2), computer skills
- Academic excellence (2)
- Learn about self, others, society, culture (2)
- Love of learning (2)
- Responsibility (2)
- Confidence (2)
- Health
- Resilience
- Making stories
- How to enjoy life
- Independence
- Teamwork
- Public speaking
- Good manners, right conduct
- Taking risks in learning
- Media literacy
- Presentation skills
- First Aid
- Wildlife skills/Camp skills
- Sports
- Dealing with bullies
- Mentoring by big buddies
- Creative expression
- Curiosity
- Character
- Sense of belonging and responsibility for their community

5. Every building should have something that can be described as its heart and soul – imagery that speaks to the community and its people. What could that be in your school?

- Central library (14), more reading books (3), places to sit and read (2), or wait for students, library as a meeting place, place to work (with tables)
- Central atrium/meeting area/community meeting place (10) that is not the gym
- Gym/auditorium where school meets en-masse to celebrate, gatherings, multi-cultural feasts (3)
- Beautiful art of northern diversity, Artwork that expresses French and northern cultures (2)
- Teepee (2)
- Gym with theatre stage
- A place for animals
- Upstairs component to K classrooms (loft)
- Painting a special wall
- Secret passages (hole in wall)
- Bigger reading space
- Balcony
- Eagle – represents strength and freedom
- Circle that represents unity and equity
- A tree that represents connection and growth
- Canoe – reminiscent of French voyageur
- Student body viewed as a family
- Something that speaks to the environment and our children’s future as well as inclusion, acceptance, universality, and compassion
- Multi-cultural banquets
- Upstairs entrance
- An area in the school that highlights kid’s good work in community
- Natural light
- Northern materials
- Northern vegetation on playgrounds
- Partner with Arctic Energy Alliance

6. What are your thoughts about any existing groups or potential partnerships?

- Any partnership that benefits the school financially allowing for better services, excluding religious and/or political affiliations
- Partnerships are good here
- More partnerships with community
- Involvement with sustainability projects and have them create awareness campaigns and public information sessions (e.g. Jane Goodall Institute)
- Music classes in school – bring instructors into school rather than having students travel elsewhere for piano, violin lessons
- Question the need for Dene Spirituality to be part of the Dene Camps. Parents are many religions/cultures in the school. Parents should be aware of any spiritual components to curriculum before children are involved in programs.
- Swimming and life saving skills
- Start an arts smart program – school connect with the arts community to bring professional artists into the school to do programs/workshops with students and teachers
- Continue to build bridges with Sir John Franklin High school – inviting high school students to work with students; high school students gain confidence and empathy, Sisson's students gain knowledge, mentors and inspiration
- Team up with YWCA – kids can volunteer on projects to help community members that are in need
- Team up with French culture groups to help strengthen programs
- Perhaps some sports organizations could sponsor programs such as Skills Canada or other groups
- Great if Fred Penner, Raffi or Robert Munsch could visit
- Don't try to offer everything or get too over-extended with partnerships
- Partner with NACC for drama for kids
- Organized running clubs and after school sports
- Chess Club
- No private corporations or advertising
- PAC
- Student Council
- Sports teams