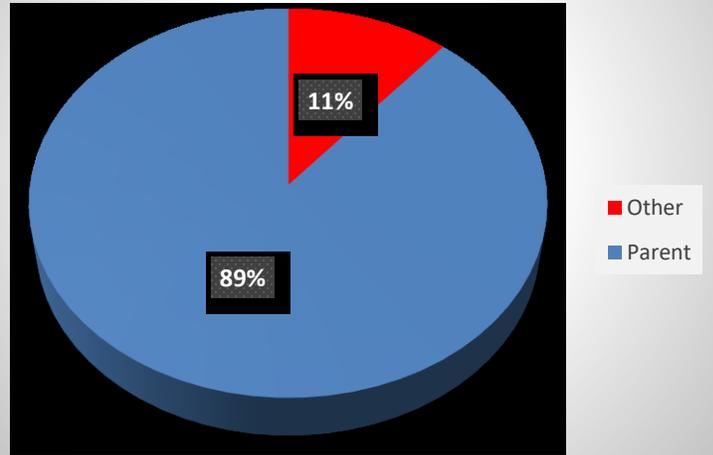


# Parent Survey 2018

## a) Who is filling out this survey?

**Summary:**  
89% Parent  
11% Other

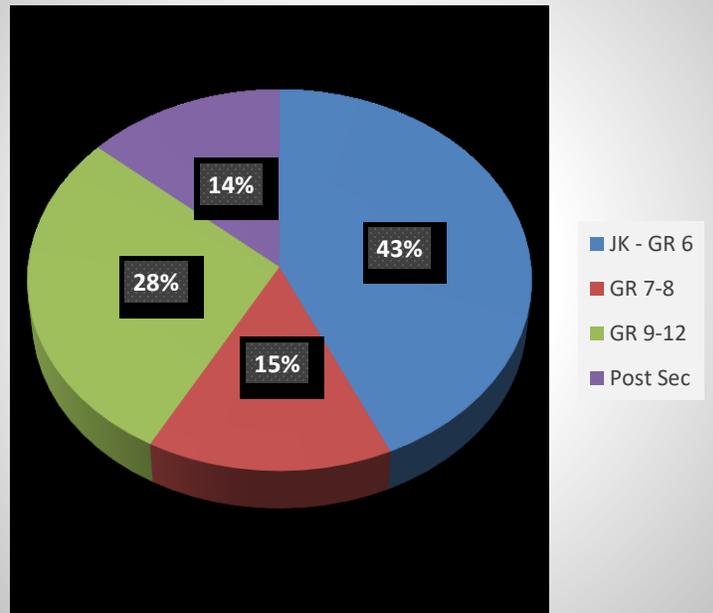
## Who is filling out this survey?



## b) Age of Student

**Summary:**  
43% represented parent/guardians of K-6 students  
15% represented grade 7-12 students  
28% represented grade 9-12 students  
14% represented students who have since graduated

## Age of Student



### Question 1: How well has or have your child/ children adjusted to the move?

#### Summary:

Parental comments (63%) were more negative than positive; remarks focused on issues of over-crowding in the school, depression and anxiety of students.

One school community was divided amongst four different schools, with students from the community dispersed into different towns. Some parents moved their children out of the consolidated school and into a school in the Separate School System or into a different jurisdiction. Many complained that children suffered psychological issues pertaining to alienation, depression, fear and an inability to fit in.

#### Parent Comments:

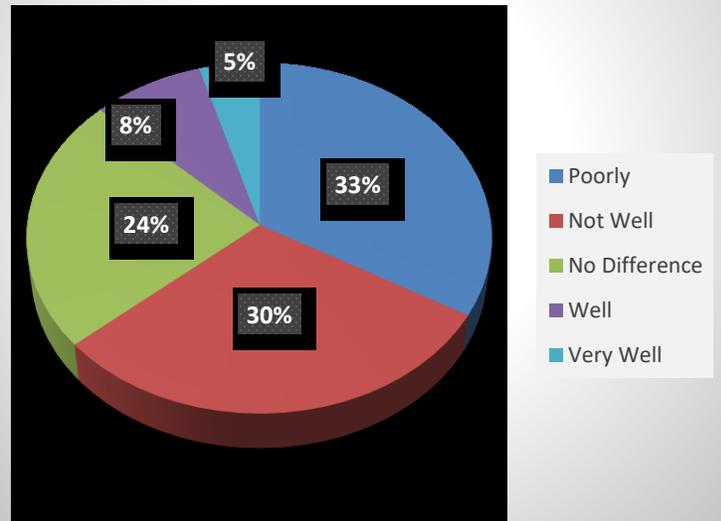
"Move was really hard on their self-esteem and willpower."

"Mental health issues, has changed schools twice since June 2017 closure."

"In the end we needed to move our daughter to a different school outside the Bluewater region."

"My elementary school children have been unable to make teams, feel comfortable with new school procedures and now are very apt to try to stay home or feel sick or anxious about going to school."

### How well has or have your child/ children adjusted to the move?



### Question 2: Has the move to a new school affected travel time to and from school?

#### Summary:

Seventy-five percent of respondents report a "longer to much longer" travel time for their children. Many students who previously walked to school now are bus riders. The most common complaint is that bus rides have increased in length, with bus rides of one hour to 90 minutes common. Problems created by long bus ride were also note: need for washroom facilities, inability to participate in after school activities, inefficient bus schedule, over-crowded buses, long days.

#### Parent Comments:

"Five minute walk is now a 40 minute bus ride"

"My kids are on the bus for more than two hours a day"

"on bus at 7:25 and home at 4:55"

"bus ride is 80 minutes twice a day"

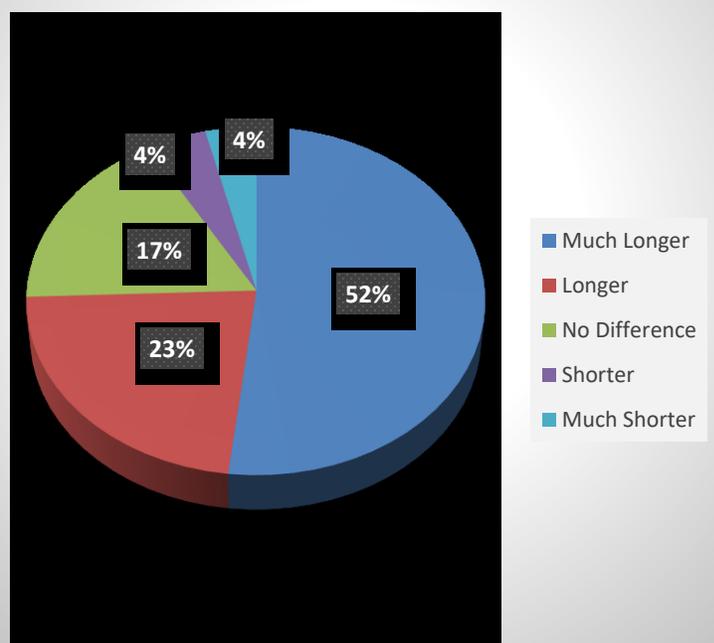
"The early mornings are difficult to get farm chores done, and the afternoon ride makes for a rush to get to extra-curricular sports, causing anxiety and stress in the house"

" constant parent driving time for extra-curriculars",

"three students to a seat",

"he tried the school bus but it was too loud for him so a couple of us parents took turns driving".

### Has the move to a new school affected travel time to and from school?



**Question 3: Has the move to a new school affected your child(ren)'s ability to take part in after school activities, job or co-op opportunities?**

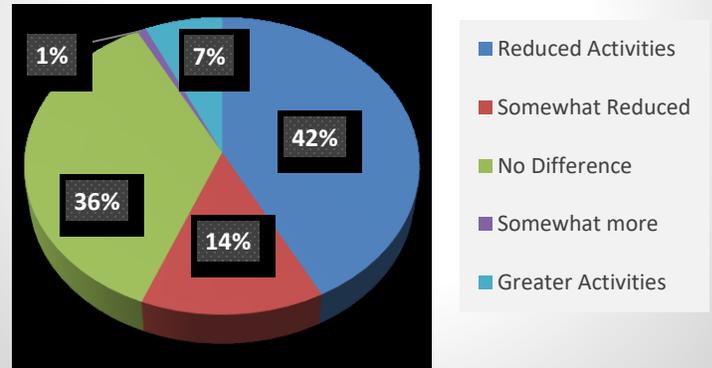
**Summary:**

Fifty-six percent of respondents said their student has become less active and less engaged in after school activities. Eight percent of respondents indicated an increase in participation. Most noteworthy in the decline appears to be the difficulty in after-school travel. Parents commented on the need to make difficult transportation arrangements for their student, the stressful pace of the day noting the lack of "down time", and feelings of alienation, loneliness and worries about discrimination.

**Parent Comments:**

"Double the amount of children trying out for school activity spots"  
 "Gets in the door and we are leaving. No down time."  
 "Main side of city where most students had part-time jobs is now opposite side of city."  
 "More options available but difficult to attend due to distance."  
 "She was involved in student council and on every sports team until the change in high schools and she did nothing since."  
 "any after school time is now spent travelling."  
 "If hockey practice is early, I have to get off work an hour earlier to pick him up at school and drive him."  
 "the inability to walk to school has caused scheduling issues."  
 "staff deliberately discriminate against kids from our school."

**Has the move to a new school affected your child(ren)'s ability to take part in after school activities, jobs or co-op opportunities?**



**Question 4: Has the move affected your child(ren)'s friendships and social interactions?**

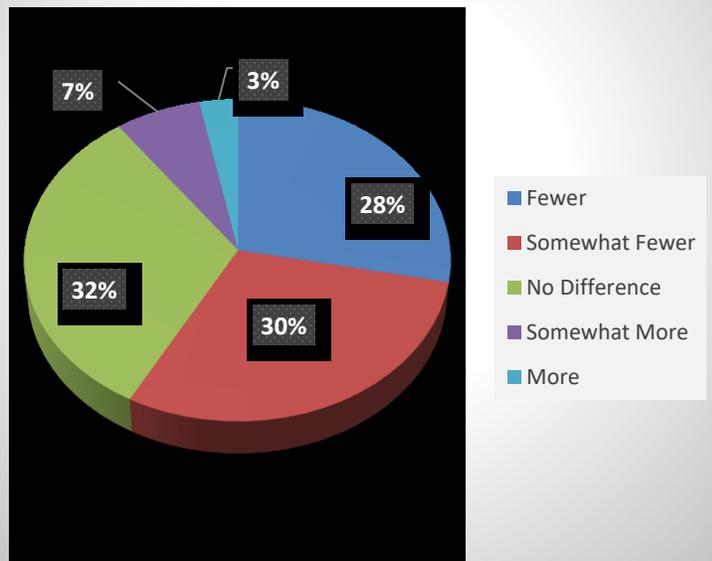
**Summary:**

Fifty-eight percent of parents indicated that their students experienced a decline in social interactions/friendships. Experiences of alienation and bullying dominate the responses. Many parents reveal a concern regarding the adjustment to the new environment citing depression, loneliness, inability to fit in as serious problems.

**Parent Comments:**

"Don't feel like he and his friends fit in."  
 "all of my child's friends went to a different high school"  
 "because of the bullying, now she stays to herself"  
 "...this is the first time I have had to deal with bullying"  
 "most of the same friends, some new ones increase in negative social interactions"  
 "her friend group at the old school was broken up"

**Has the move affected your child(ren)'s friendships and social interactions?**



**Question 5: Has your child(ren)'s academic results been affected?**

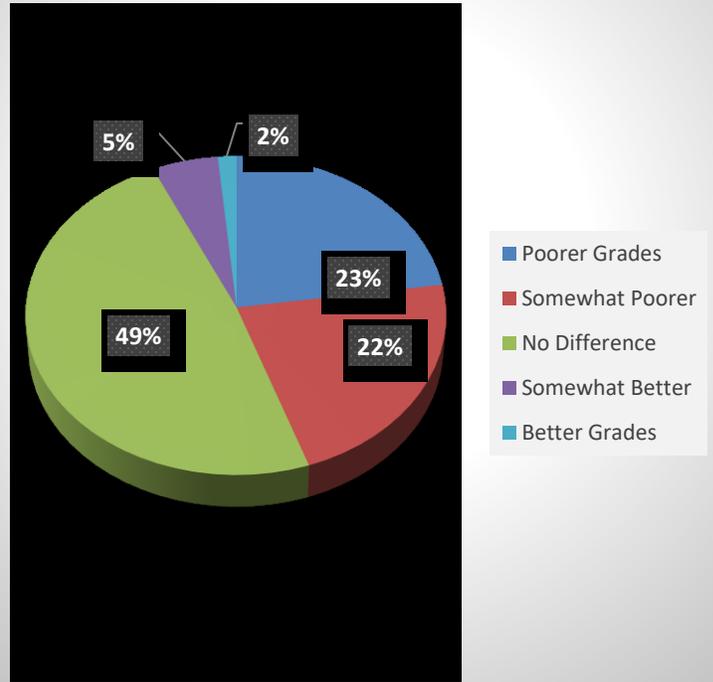
**Summary:**

Forty-nine percent of respondents reported "no change"; however, a significant 45% claimed their students experienced "poorer or somewhat poorer" results. Many of the comments draw a causal correlation between the reduced academic success and the effects of the school consolidation, much of the explanation for the decline was placed on the increased size of the student population in class and in the school and in the lack of available extra help or in class support.

**Parent Comments:**

"Their marks are fine: their emotional well being is not as good"; "no change"  
 "Does not seem to have affected grades."  
 "Her depression has made it difficult for her to do well in school."  
 "Teachers are not as available as they were in our old small school."  
 "More kids meant less time with those who struggled, my child was one of them."  
 "EA support is needed ASAP.",  
 "Too many kids with special situations and needs in the classroom."

**Has your child(ren)'s academic results been affected?**



**Question 6: Has your child(ren)'s attitude toward school changed?**

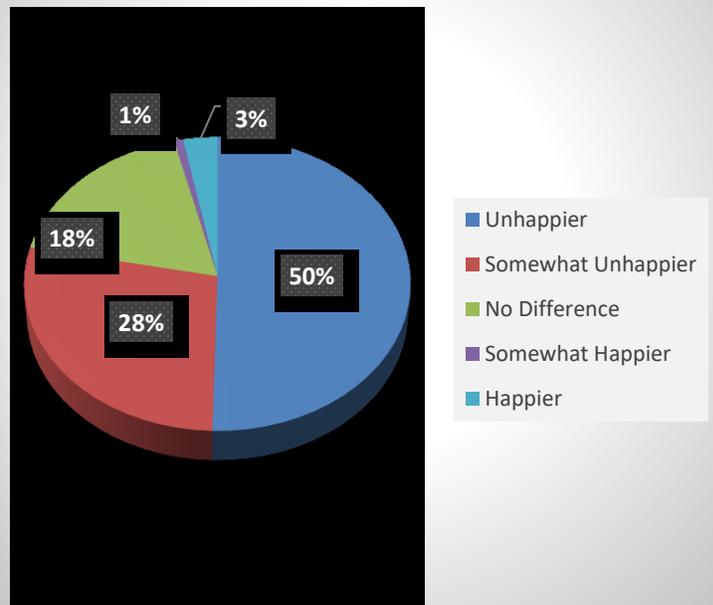
**Summary:**

Seventy-eight percent of respondents reported a "somewhat unhappier/unhappier" attitude of their children. Four percent declared a "happier/somewhat happier" attitude. Many mention dread of going to school, increased absenteeism, much of the negative feeling a result of bullying experiences on the bus rides. It was a surprise to see how often the word "hate" was used to describe the student attitude towards the new school.

**Parent Comments:**

"Hated her graduation year. I can't stress this enough. HATED IT"  
 "After two school closures, (attitude changed) definitely",  
 " He dreads the thought of going and wants to be home-schooled, which is not an option."  
 "Every day he tells me that he wants to change schools",  
 " Hates the bus...bullying", " She hates school, she used to love it; it's a challenge to get her to go to school since she's so unhappy.",  
 " The words 'I hate school' are said on a regular basis.",  
 "They are more depressed",  
 "They hate it. It totally ruined their high school experience."

**Has your child(ren)'s attitude toward school changed?**



**Question 7: Did you have any concerns prior to the move?**

**Summary:**

The comments suggested a wide range of concerns, but all focused on the stress and uncertainty the move created. Many commented on the worries they had about their child's adjustment; bussing concerns, size of new school, loss of identity with school and community, concern about the loss of heritage and history; there was a frequent recognition that some children are fragile and need a safe and familiar environment and parents worried that their children would not adapt well.

**Parent Comments:**

"This was done too fast...no one listened to the students and teachers",  
" bussing, after school activities",  
"lost opportunities because of the distance from our home to the school",  
"courses were much harder to get into and your child is once again a nobody who has to put out great emotional energy to find their place again.",  
" too many kids and not enough space",  
" closing the high school negatively affects local businesses and future growth of town"

**Question 8: If you had concerns, have they been alleviated?**

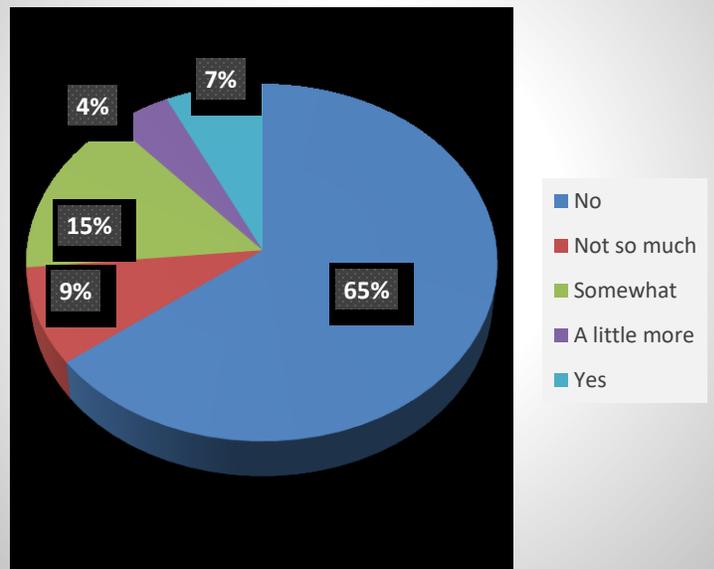
**Summary:**

Serious concerns were raised. The dominant mood of comments is one of despondence and depression. Several comments regarding the threat of suicide; some changed to a different board in response to the consolidation, and a feeling of helplessness and powerlessness was expressed by some with reference to teachers from closed school on sick leave, students unable to adjust and a mistrust of the school board.

**Parent Comments:**

"Each day was worse than the day before until we left."  
"it is super painful, it actually brings on PTSD-type responses and behaviour -shutting down, uncaring, exhausted"  
"last year I asked for counselling to be in place for my child who talked about suicide; nothing was done"  
"no choice given, board acted unilaterally"  
"school board has not listened to the public at all"  
"it was a nightmare; it should never happen this way again"  
"...we ended up switching systems."  
"with three suicides in less than a year concerns not alleviated"  
"the only alleviation to my concerns is that the high school staff are amazing..."

**If you had concerns, have they been alleviated?**



**Question 9: How would you describe the effect of public input during the ARC process?**

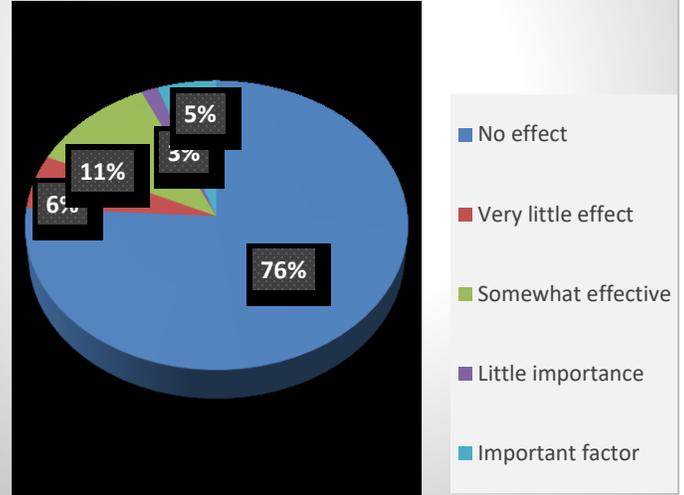
**Summary:**

The sentiment voiced most often was that the school board did not care to hear public opinion and had their minds already made up, a "pre-determined outcome". The ARC process was described as a "sham"; people felt ignored and powerless. The extent of the dissatisfaction with the ARC process suggests that problems exist in making the process transparent and honest. ARC members felt their input was ignored. More than 80% stated that public input had little to no effect on the process.

**Parent Comments:**

"There was a ton of work done by our team and none of the information was taken into consideration.",  
 "Public input was great but was not taken into account."  
 "The board had their mind made up before any input."  
 "I feel the whole process was a big waste of time. The decision was made long before the process started."  
 "As an ARC member, I found our opinion didn't matter at all and wasn't taken into account."  
 "ARC's are clearly for optics only to give the impression that the board is listening. It has no effect on the decision-making."  
 "I was very involved in the ARC. The whole process was an exercise in optics because the school board had already made up their minds before the process started."

**How would you describe the effect of public input during the ARC process?**



**Question 10: How do you feel the school closure has affected your neighbourhood/community?**

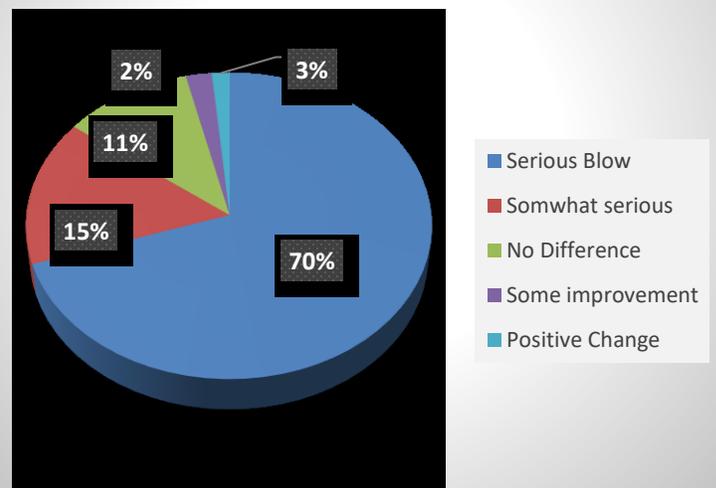
**Summary:**

Eighty-five percent of those who answered replied that the school closure was a "serious/somewhat serious" blow to the community. Frequent comments referred to loss of history and heritage, concerns ignored by decision-makers, signs that town and communities are dying as a result of loss of school, loss of green-space, some moving to the Catholic school in their area.

**Parent Comments:**

"Serious blow to the history of the city with the removal of a historic school.",  
 "Board ignores growing community and new school was too small one year after it was built."  
 "City is a traffic nightmare more so now with all the buses.",  
 "Our town has suffered and will get worse as no one will move to a town with no high school."  
 "this is the only park/green space in our neighbourhood. It isn't plowed in the winter- now kids can't play there."  
 "Our town is a ghost town."  
 "It killed our town and in the next 5-10 years there will be so much more loss."

**How do you feel the school closure has affected your neighbourhood/community?**



"Now there is no school and the community was essentially built around it."