
THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OF WHITEHORSE

CIRCLE OF CARING II

Report prepared by Patrick Maguire Consulting Services
2004

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THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS of WHITEHORSE

MISSION STATEMENT (1993)

The Mission of the Whitehorse Catholic Schools is to educate children in a Catholic learning environment. Through the sharing of knowledge and Christian values, and by celebrating our Catholic faith, students are assisted in developing a personal faith and an understanding and appreciation of self and others. Each child has the opportunity to strive for academic excellence and to reach his or her potential as a life-long learner.

STATEMENT OF VALUES AND BELIEFS (1993)

We believe that parents/guardians, students, teachers, staffs, administrators, and the Catholic community are the key contributors to Catholic education. All work together for the emotional intellectual, moral, physical, social and spiritual development of the whole child. Values taught by example empower and support children for a lifetime of learning and participation in their own community and in the global community. These values include:

- a strong personal relationship with God;
- love, respect and forgiveness for oneself and others;
- a sense of self-worth;
- critical and creative thinking skills;
- interpersonal skills, and
- witnessing to our faith in the world.

SCHOOLS

Christ the King Elementary School, Grades K through 7

Holy Family Elementary School, Grades K through 7

Vanier Catholic Secondary School, Grades 8 through 12

INTRODUCTION

The Catholic Schools of Whitehorse have been providing education in a Catholic environment based on Gospel values and the tradition of the Catholic Church to students in the City of Whitehorse since the early 1950s. The schools have seen significant growth in enrollment and there are now three schools. Students in Whitehorse can now receive a Catholic education from Kindergarten through Grade 12 graduation.

Education stakeholders in the Catholic community wanted to ensure that quality Catholic education was available to future generations of students in Whitehorse. In the spring of 2004, a process was initiated to develop a strategic plan for the ten-year period through 2014. A similar process was undertaken in 1993, entitled A Circle of Caring. As a result, the current planning process is called Circle of Caring II. This report describes the work and the outcomes of that process.

HISTORY

The first Catholic school in Whitehorse opened in 1902, during the gold rush days. As the gold rush ended and the population declined, the school was forced to close in 1904. From then until 1946, Catholic students attended public schools.

The Sisters of Providence built a convent/boarding school in Whitehorse in 1946, providing Catholic education for Yukon children until 1956. By that time, the city had grown and the school had enrolled 340 students. At that point, the Christ the King Elementary School, now the Wood Street Centre, was built by the Sisters of Providence and instruction was provided from grades 1 – 10. In 1962, to accommodate the growing enrolment, the Sisters built a high school, Christ the King High, the building currently occupied by Christ the King Elementary School.

In 1962, discussions took place between the Yukon government and the Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Whitehorse. This resulted in an agreement that transferred the two Catholic schools to the Yukon Government, in trust. The agreement established the responsibilities of both parties for operations and policies regarding access, financial support and the rights and responsibilities of Catholic schools.

In 1982, stakeholders in Catholic education developed the Statement of Philosophy for the Catholic Schools of Whitehorse. From this philosophy, an Admission Policy outlining the conditions for admission for Catholic and non-Catholic students into Catholic schools was developed. The Episcopal Corporation and the Department of Education accepted the policy for implementation in the Catholic schools.

In the early 1990s, the demographics of the city spurred the Catholic community to press for construction of a new elementary school in the Porter Creek subdivision. This school became a reality in 1993. Holy Family Elementary School is now an integral part of Catholic education in Whitehorse.

CIRCLE OF CARING, 1993

The first strategic plan for the Catholic Schools of Whitehorse was undertaken in 1992/1993 and published in July 1993. A committee comprised of stakeholders in Catholic education undertook the project: teachers, parents, former students, clergy, parishioners and school administrators, with the assistance of external consultants. Through a consultation process, the committee examined the issues facing the Catholic school in four areas, namely:

- teaching and learning
- governance
- resources (human and financial)
- public relations and communications.

In the course of this deliberation a development plan was prepared. It contained a vision for Catholic education, a Mission Statement and the Statement of Values and Beliefs. These statements are provided in the opening page of this document. The plan proposed a number of goals to be addressed during the remainder of the decade. These goals have continued to provide direction and focus for the Catholic Schools of Whitehorse.

The goals of Circle of Caring, 1993 were:

Teaching and Learning

1. To provide a Christian learning environment and develop students' understanding and love of Christ, self and others throughout a lifetime journey of faith.
2. To create opportunities for each student to develop to his or her potential as a life-long learner.
3. To provide each child with opportunities to strive for academic excellence.
4. To provide a Christian learning environment which promotes healthy emotional development.
5. To provide a Christ-centred environment, based on the principles of the Gospels, to enable the formation of conscience.
6. To assist each child in developing personal relationships and the ability to appreciate diverse views, approaches and cultures.
7. To provide students with opportunities for and an understanding of the need for physical well-being.
8. To strive to provide each student with an understanding of as well as opportunities and means of expressing aesthetic creativity.

Organization

1. To provide a responsive and effective structure for governing the Catholic education system.
2. To deliver high school education as part of Catholic education in Whitehorse Catholic schools.
3. To deliver education in appropriate facilities.
4. To obtain the human and financial resources to adequately meet the changing needs of the Catholic school system.
5. To strengthen relations and communicate more frequently and effectively with other participants in education and with the public.

CIRCLE OF CARING II

During 2003/2004, it was felt that a further strategic plan should be developed to guide the Catholic schools into the future. A committee of stakeholders (the Steering Committee) was established to undertake the process.

The process was designed to accomplish the following objectives:

- Review progress towards the accomplishment of the goals and objectives outlined in the 1993 Development Plan.
- Establish goals and objectives for the future, using a stakeholder participation process.
- Communicate the plan and its outcomes to the Steering Committee, Catholic stakeholders, the Joint Councils and to the school and parish communities.

The services of an external consultant were acquired in order to bring a 'fresh perspective' to the process.

PROGRESS TOWARDS 1993 GOALS - SURVEY

Input was sought from the entire Catholic community by means of an on-line survey. The text of the survey is included as Appendix I to this document.

The survey was conducted to evaluate the two major goals of the Circle of Caring process, to alert the Catholic community to the process being undertaken and to gain insight into the level of stakeholder satisfaction with the current operation of the Catholic schools.

The survey contains three major sections. Section One asks about satisfaction with the overall mission and vision of the Catholic schools. Section Two seeks satisfaction feedback regarding progress towards the goals in the Organization section of the 1993 Development Plan. Section Three seeks input from respondents regarding the strengths, concerns, challenges and opportunities for Catholic education in Whitehorse in the years to come.

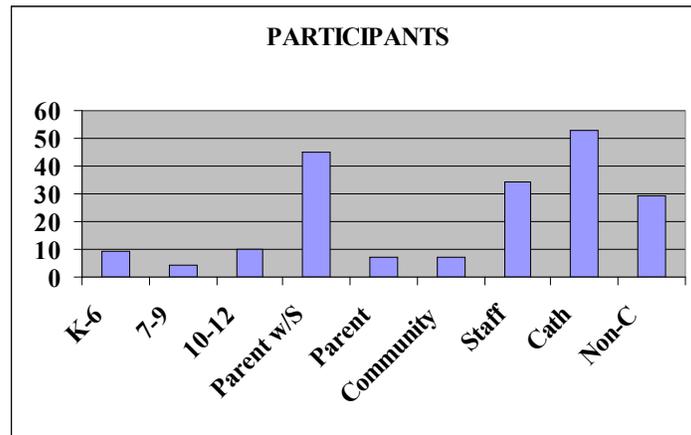
The survey was available on-line and in print for response during March and April 2004. The link to the survey was provided through the schools to parents, students and staff, and in the parish bulletins to the Catholic community at large.

Total Responses:

Chart 1

GROUP	# OF RESPONSES	% OF TOTAL
Total Responses	98	100
Students K – 6	9	9.2
Students 7 - 9	4	4.1
Students 10 - 12	10	10.2
Parents	45	45.9
Parents w/o students in school	7	7.1
Community at large	7	7.1
School staff	34	34.7
Catholic	53	54.1
Not Catholic	29	29.6

Graph 1

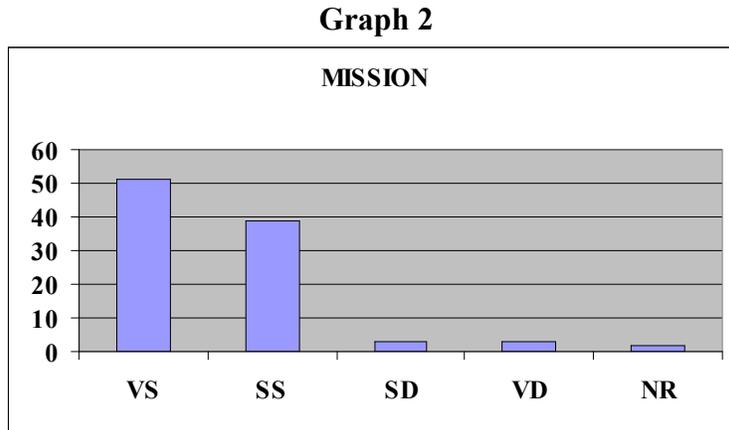


Commentary

- The total response of 98 was considered to be acceptable for this type of survey.
- All major stakeholder groups responded to the survey. While it would have been preferable if there had been a larger representation from some groups, it is felt that the results can be interpreted as relatively valid across stakeholder groups.
- There is a good balance in responses from students overall, parents overall and staff overall.
- It was gratifying to see that such a high percentage of non-Catholic participants chose to respond to the survey. It is important to understand the views of both Catholic and non-Catholic members of the school community.

MISSION STATEMENT

Participants were asked to comment on their satisfaction with the ability of the current Mission Statement to properly serve the Catholic schools for the next ten years. Satisfaction responses are shown in Graph 2.



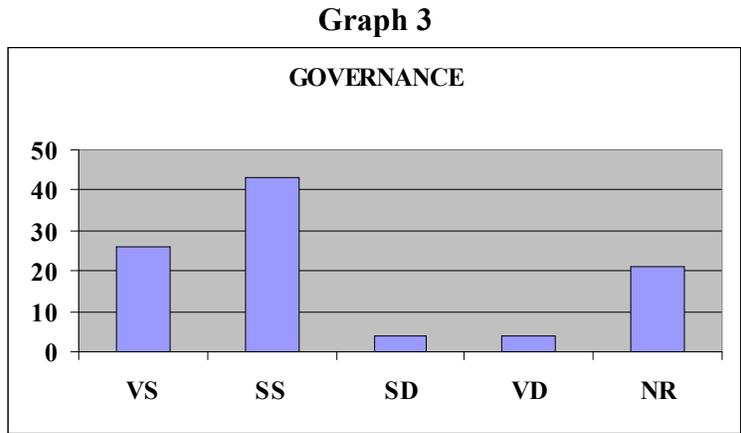
Commentary

Of the 98 respondents, fifty-one respondents gave the question the highest satisfaction rating of 'Very Satisfied'. Six indicated any degree of dissatisfaction. Respondents also had the opportunity to make a comment in support of their response. Most respondents felt that the Statement covered the essential aspects of effective Catholic schools in its emphasis on Faith values, academic excellence and the uniqueness of each child. There were a number of suggestions for expansion into other areas of student achievement, social justice and stakeholder roles.

ACHIEVEMENT OF ORGANIZATION GOAL

Governance

In this question respondents were asked to comment on the achievement of the goal statement: "To provide a responsive and effective structure for governing the Catholic education system." Responses are provided in Graph 3.



Commentary

Of the 77 participants who responded to this question, a large majority (69/77) provided a ‘Somewhat Satisfied’ or ‘Very Satisfied’ response. However, the number of participants who did not respond to this question is the highest in the entire survey. This and the nature of many of the written comments associated with this question indicate that there is a great deal of uncertainty and misunderstanding in the community regarding the issue of governance. While many of the comments are supportive of the schools, there is outspoken concern about the ability of school councils to be effective, the perceived disinterest of the Government of the Yukon in Catholic issues, and the implications of implementing a school board.

High School

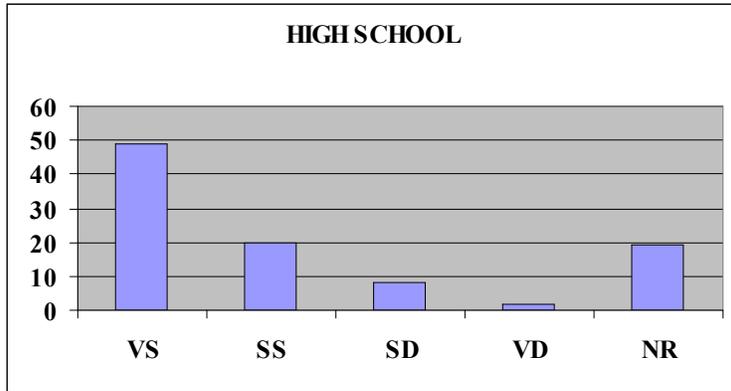
In this question respondents were asked to comment on the achievement of the goal statement: “To deliver a high school education as part of Catholic education in Whitehorse Catholic schools”. Responses are provided in Graph 4.

Commentary

Clearly, the provision of Catholic high school education with the implementation of grade ten at Christ the King Junior Secondary School in 1995 and the establishment of Vanier Catholic Secondary School in 1997 indicates achievement of this goal. This was supported by the majority of responses in the ‘Very Satisfied’ category and most of the comments relating to this question. Respondents also used the opportunity to express

support and concern for both the current program and future opportunities and challenges for the high school.

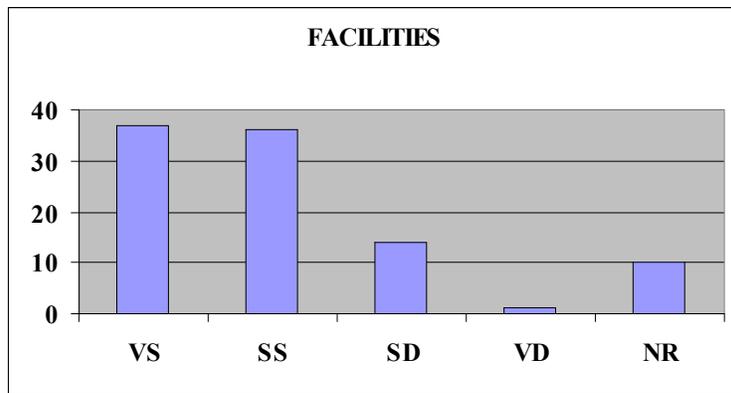
Graph 4



Facilities

In this question respondents were asked to comment on the achievement of the goal statement: "To deliver education in appropriate facilities". Responses are provided in Graph 5.

Graph 5



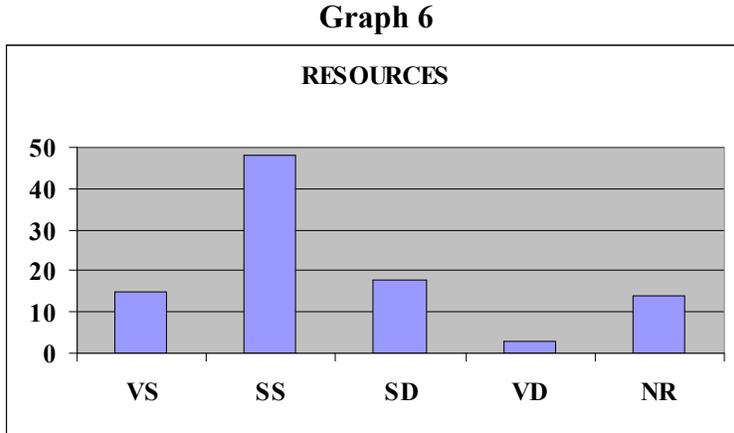
Commentary

Here again, the level of satisfaction is quite high, with 73 respondents in the two 'Satisfied' categories. Specific building concerns are identified including air quality, gymnasium space, the need for spiritual reflection areas and areas to accommodate specialist programs.

Resources

In this question respondents were asked to comment on the achievement of the goal statement: "To obtain the human and financial resources required to adequately meet the changing needs of the Catholic school system".

Responses are provided in Graph 6.

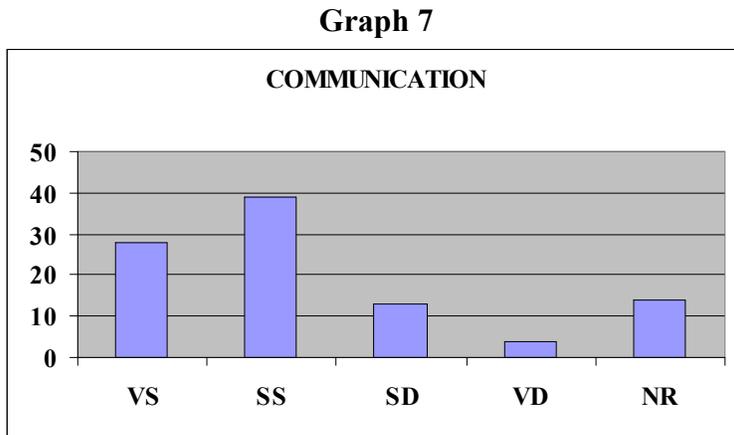


Commentary

While the majority of respondents fall in the ‘Satisfied’ categories, the larger number responded in the ‘Somewhat Satisfied’ category. In addition, a significant 18 respondents responded in the ‘Somewhat Dissatisfied’ category. Respondent comments focus on the quality of the present staff and the specialist support that is available. Concerns include the perception that Catholic schools have been short-changed by the Government of the Yukon, lack of support for Religious Education, criticism of the quality of staff and concern for future staff shortages and more support for special education programs.

Communication

In this question respondents were asked to comment on the achievement of the goal statement: "To strengthen relations and communicate more frequently and effectively with other participants in education and with the public". Responses are provided in Graph 7.



Commentary

While there is a high degree of satisfaction in the ratings, the majority of respondents are somewhat guarded in their support. The work that schools do is recognized and specific community-based activities and programs are mentioned. There appears to be a general perception that schools and parishes work in isolation from one another. An improvement in communication and interaction between these two important aspects of the Whitehorse Catholic community would have very positive results for students and parishioners alike.

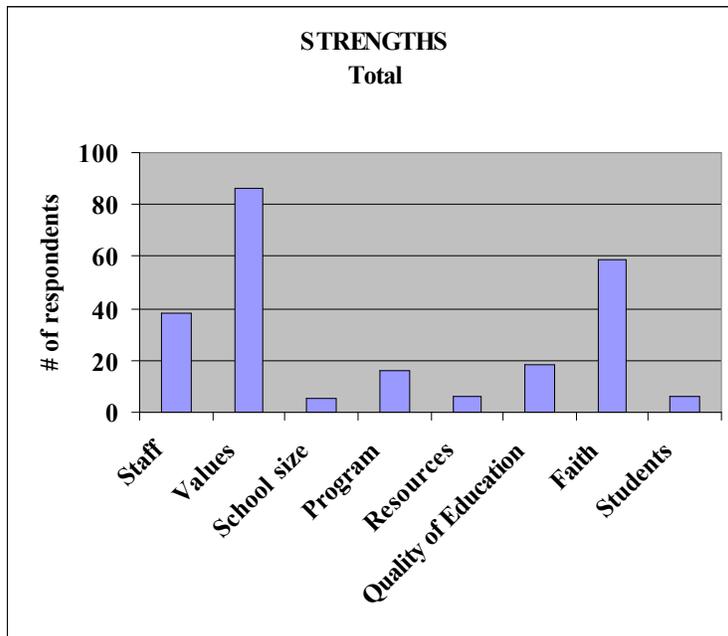
VISIONING EXERCISE - STRENGTHS, CONCERNS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

In this section, respondents were asked to provide an opinion from the best of their knowledge regarding factors that would affect the future of the Whitehorse Catholic schools. Questions requested input regarding strengths, concerns, opportunities and challenges for the future.

Strengths

Participants were asked to identify the three most important strengths of the Catholic schools. The items most often mentioned and the number of respondents who mentioned the item are identified in Graph 8.

Graph 8



Commentary

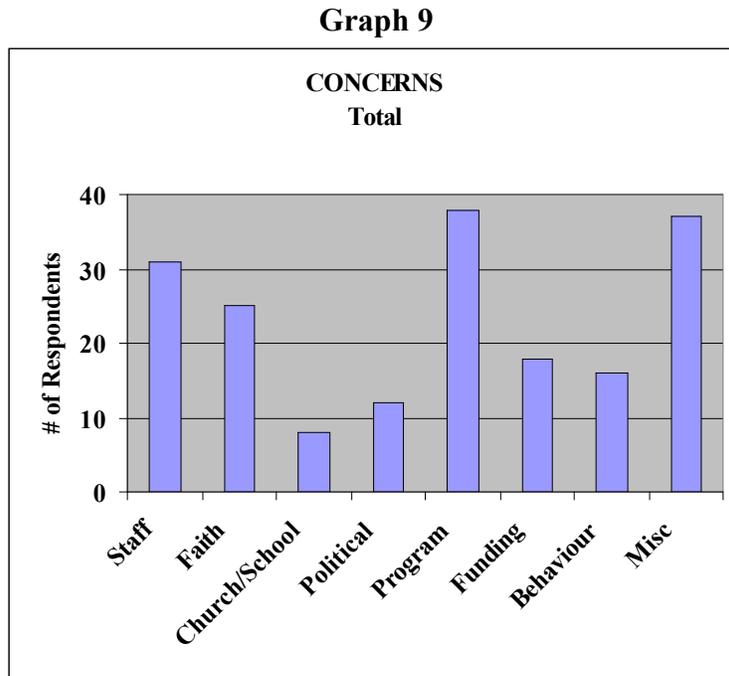
Almost all of the 98 respondents to this question identified the Catholic values as the most important strength and valued feature of the schools. The Catholic values present in the school environment, in the programs offered, in the behaviour of students and in the modelling of staff were frequently mentioned.

There was a high level of support for the Catholic faith dimension of the schools, including prayer, liturgies and the Religious Education program. The quality and commitment of staff were identified as strengths by almost half of the respondents.

Other aspects identified by fewer respondents included the quality of the education provided, the programs and resources and aspects of school size and student behaviour.

Concerns

Respondents were asked to identify aspects of the Catholic schools that presented concerns to them. The items most often mentioned and the number of respondents who mentioned the item are identified in Graph 9.



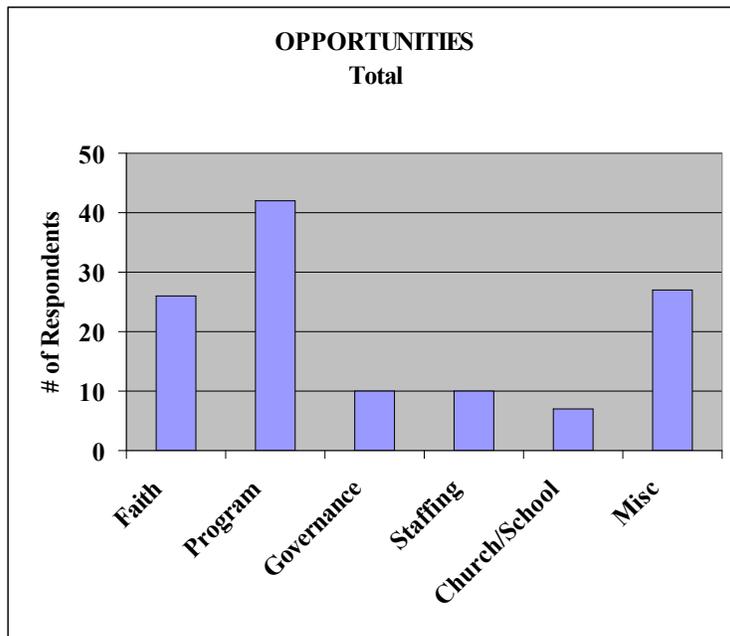
Commentary

Significantly fewer participants chose to respond to this question. The largest single category at 38 responses expressed concern about the breadth of program provided, especially at the high school level. Issues regarding staffing practices and future availability and concerns about the ability of the school to maintain a faith-filled environment were mentioned frequently. The Miscellaneous category consists of single-issue comments from individuals.

Opportunities

Participants were asked to indicate the three areas that provide the greatest opportunities for the Catholic schools of Whitehorse over the next ten years. Again, the items most often mentioned and the number of respondents who mentioned the item are identified in Graph 10.

Graph 10



Commentary

Program and faith development were mentioned most often. Respondents felt that schools could be more successful in developing a broader range of programs and focusing more on all aspects of faith development.

Other issues where progress could be made were in areas of governance – working towards the development of a school board, staffing, ensuring a supply of well-qualified staff and building a better relationship between the parishes and the schools. A number of single-issue items are compiled in the Miscellaneous column.

Challenges

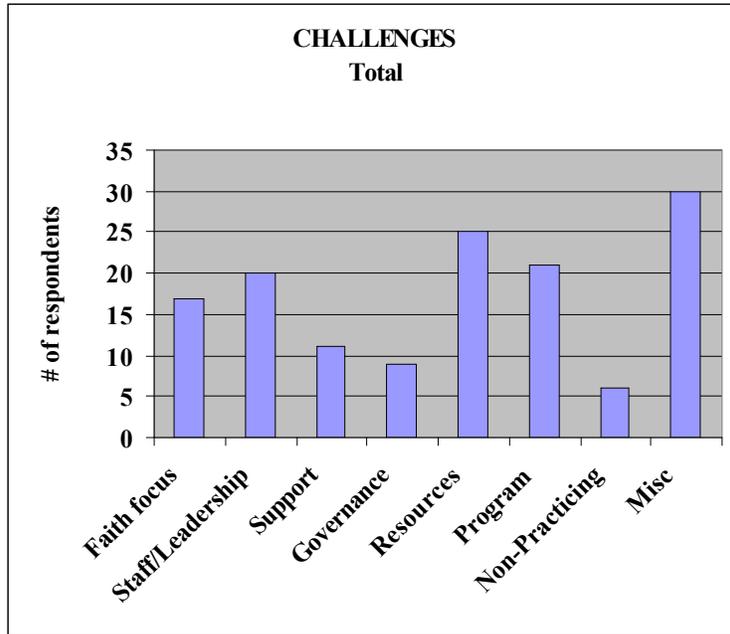
In this section, participants were asked to indicate the three areas that create the greatest challenge to the future of the Whitehorse Catholic schools over the next ten years. The items most often mentioned and the number of respondents who mentioned the item are identified in Graph 11.

Commentary

There is a general concern that the schools will not have the resources to be able to meet student needs in the future. Participants see a growing list of student needs and program demands from the community. They fear that the Government of the Yukon may not be prepared to provide the necessary resources for these needs and demands. Participants also see challenges in maintaining the quality of staff and school leadership as current

staff members retire or leave the system and in maintaining the Catholic faith focus of the schools in a secular society.

Graph 11



GOAL IDENTIFICATION AND PRIORITIZATION

The next phase in the process involved work by groups of stakeholders to consider the results of the survey and collaboratively develop goals for the future of the Catholic Schools of Whitehorse. This process involved two facilitated workshops. The first was open to all members of the Catholic community. The second involved representatives of the three schools and school councils as well as the Department of Education.

Stakeholder Workshop

The results of the survey were presented to a meeting of stakeholders on April 17, 2004 at Vanier Catholic Secondary School. Over 30 representatives of the Government of the Yukon, the Catholic Episcopal Corporation, school councils, school administration, staff, parents and community members attended this workshop. After much consideration and prioritizing, the following were proposed as issues that should be addressed over the next ten years.

- **Schools are served by a highly trained staff committed to Catholic education and the School Mission Statement.**
All staff members in Catholic schools are committed to an authentic personal faith life, fully support the mission, vision and values of the Catholic schools, and demonstrate leadership and example both in the schools and in the community.
- **Faith formation is available for all participants.**
All members of the Catholic school community have access to a variety of opportunities for ongoing, comprehensive programs of faith development. Minimum standards of academic preparation in Religious Education are in place for all teachers.
- **A Chapel in each school**
All Catholic schools contain spaces set aside for spiritual reflection and liturgical celebration.
- **Schools are governed by a well established, functional and successful school board**
The Catholic schools of Whitehorse are governed by an elected Board of Trustees. The Board provides leadership in Catholic education through responsible governance, advocacy for Catholic education, effective communication in support of Catholic values, efficient management of resources and careful monitoring of educational outcomes.
- **The Yukon curriculum recognizes Catholic education.**
*The Yukon curriculum framework recognizes the goals of Catholic education in its general statements, and specific curricula for Catholic schools reflect Catholic values and content.
The Yukon Graduation Certificate requirements encompass the mandate of Catholic schools to teach Religious Education.*

- **Family supports are in place**

School Councils are an essential aspect of school operations and leadership. All members of the Catholic school community are conscious of the need to support the three pillars of Catholic education – the home, the school and the parish.

- **World view/inclusion/tolerance is the basis of the Religious Education Program**

The Religious Education program offered in the Catholic schools is approved by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, and is sensitive to the needs of the Whitehorse Catholic community.

- **Involvement of the larger Catholic community**

The Catholic community of Whitehorse actively supports its Catholic schools by providing positive communication, consistent advocacy and confidence, and financial and human resource assistance when necessary.

Goal Clarification

On May 15, 2004 a committee consisting of the Director of Learning, school administrators, staff and school council representatives met to review and clarify the priorities from the stakeholder workshop. Each of the priorities was analyzed and discussed at length and the following goals for the future were determined:

- Goal 1: Conduct further research with a view to the formation of a Catholic School Board.**
- Goal 2: Establish faith formation programs and opportunities for all members of the Catholic school community.**
- Goal 3: Seek opportunities to include chapel space in all schools.**
- Goal 4: Ensure that schools are served by a highly trained staff committed to Catholic education and the School Mission Statement.**
- Goal 5: Build support and commitment to Catholic education in the Whitehorse community.**
- Goal 6: Work with the Yukon Territorial Government to enhance recognition of the curriculum and program needs of Catholic schools.**

COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND COMMUNICATION

On September 15, 2004, a meeting of the three school councils is scheduled. At that meeting the Circle of Caring process and the above-mentioned goals will be communicated to participants. It is expected that the issue that will generate the most interest will be the research regarding the implications of forming a Catholic school board for the Whitehorse schools. A report outlining the various implications will be prepared in advance of that meeting.

Conclusion:

We pray that the Holy Spirit will guide us as we continue the work of building Catholic education for the families and children of Whitehorse.

APPENDIX 1

COMMUNITY SURVEY

This is the text of the survey conducted in March/April, 2004, in preparation for Circle of Caring 2004.

Circle of Caring II Spring 2004

1. Introduction

Welcome to this survey in support of the Circle of Caring II process. We are seeking your opinions and ideas about issues that are important to the Whitehorse Catholic Schools. Your support will help us greatly in moving forward into the future of Catholic education in Whitehorse.

2. Mission Statement

The Mission of Whitehorse Catholic Schools is to educate children in a Catholic learning environment.

Through the sharing of knowledge and Christian values, and by celebrating our Catholic faith, students are assisted in developing a personal faith and an appreciation of self and others. Each child has the opportunity to strive for academic excellence and to reach his or her potential as a life-long learner.

The uniqueness of each child is celebrated.
June, 1993

1). Are you satisfied that the Mission Statement above provides a good guide for the Whitehorse Catholic schools over the next ten years? Please give reasons for your reply.

Very Satisfied
Somewhat Satisfied
Somewhat Dissatisfied
Very Dissatisfied

3. Organizational Goals

The following section seeks your opinion regarding the success of the Whitehorse Catholic Schools in achieving the organizational goals that were set out in 1993.

2). How satisfied are you that the following goal has been achieved?
“To provide a responsive and effective structure for governing the Catholic education system.”

Very Satisfied
Somewhat Satisfied
Somewhat Dissatisfied
Very Dissatisfied
Please share with us the main reason for your response

3). How satisfied are you that the following goal has been achieved?
“To deliver a high school education as part of Catholic education in Whitehorse Catholic schools.”

Very Satisfied
Somewhat Satisfied
Somewhat Dissatisfied
Very Dissatisfied
Please share with us the main reason for your response

4). How satisfied are you that the following goal has been achieved?
“To deliver education in appropriate facilities.”

Very Satisfied
Somewhat Satisfied
Somewhat Dissatisfied
Very Dissatisfied
Please share with us the main reason for your response

5). How satisfied are you that the following goal has been achieved?
“To obtain the human and financial resources required to adequately meet the changing needs of the Catholic school system.”

Very Satisfied
Somewhat Satisfied
Somewhat Dissatisfied
Very Dissatisfied
Please share with us the main reason for your response

6). How satisfied are you that the following goal has been achieved?
“To strengthen relations and communicate more frequently and effectively with other participants in education and with the public.”

Very Satisfied
Somewhat Satisfied
Somewhat Dissatisfied
Very Dissatisfied
Please share with us the main reason for your response

4. Visioning

Your comments in this section will help us in our planning for the future.

- 7). What are the three most important strengths of the Whitehorse Catholic Schools?
- 8). What are the three areas of most concern for you regarding the Whitehorse Catholic Schools?
- 9). What do you see as the three most advantageous opportunities for the Whitehorse Catholic Schools in the next five to ten years?
- 10). What do you see as the three most pressing challenges that face the Whitehorse Catholic Schools in the next five to ten years?

5. Some demographic information

Are you a: (Check all that apply)

- Parent of a student presently attending Whitehorse Catholic Schools
- Parent of a student not presently attending WCS
- Student K – 6 at WCS
- Student 7 – 9 at WCS
- Student 10 – 12 at WCS
- Student Post Secondary
- Teacher with WCS
- Non-teaching staff of WCS
- None of the Above
- Male
- Female
- Catholic
- Not Catholic

APPENDIX 2
VISIONING AND PLANNING
FOR
CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN WHITEHORSE
PROPOSED OUTLINE FOR A PROCESS

1. **DEVELOP THE PROFILE:** This exercise does a couple of things. It brings all of the pertinent data about Catholic education in Whitehorse together in one place. It reminds people of the history of the community, and it makes some projections and predictions for the future.
2. **CLARIFY THE VISION, MISSION AND GOALS:** This activity is important in that it brings the various constituents together to talk about Catholic education in general terms and hopefully develop a sense of unity about the 'big picture'.
3. **PLAN:** The previous exercises will provide the community with the context and a sense of the potential future of Catholic education in Whitehorse. From this will come a need to address certain large-scale topics such as curriculum, staffing, facilities, governance, Catholicity, resources, technology and so on. This step in the process involves establishing priorities within and among these areas of concern and developing strategies to accomplish these priorities. The strategies will include the details of action steps, responsibility, timeline, resources, etc.
4. **CONTINUOUS REVIEW:** There should be provision for regular review and monitoring of the action steps, collection of evidence of progress and a process for future redirection and refocusing should that be necessary.

APPENDIX 3

JOINT SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETINGS

SEPTEMBER 15, 2004

The Joint Councils of the Catholic Schools of Whitehorse met with the Steering Committee of the Circle of Caring II and Patrick Maguire, facilitator. The purpose of this meeting was the formal acceptance of the proposed Action Plan, complete with the background information from the Strategic Planning discussions at the Visioning Workshop on May 15, 2004.

ACTION PLAN:

GOAL 1: Conduct further research with a view to the formation of a Catholic School Board.

Group Submissions:

- Presentations to school councils and public about pros and cons of school boards or school councils.
- Visits and dialogue with existing Catholic School Councils in Alberta and/or B.C..
- Determine powers that councils wish and explore other options of maximizing powers.
- Develop a clear process to examine the pros and cons in the context of the Yukon system.
- Organize a public forum to discuss the implications.

GOAL 2: Establish faith formation programs and opportunities for all members of the Catholic school community.

Group Submissions:

- Department of Education to research parameters and strategies to incorporate faith formation as a condition of employment.
- Administration provide leadership and supervision of staff in the development of professional and personal growth plans of staff.
- Define and expand the role of the clergy and Religious Education coordinators in faith formation of staff, students, parents and community.
- Assess needs – where are the staff at with formation and preparation?
- What are the materials and resources available for faith formation?
- Examine a process for staff accreditation in Religious education.
- Look at the possibilities of a faith formation program that would be available to the larger community.

GOAL 3: Seek opportunities to include chapel space in schools.

Group Submissions:

- Talk about it!
- Raise awareness.
- Examine possibilities.
- Create a chapel environment with the current spaces.
- Investigate what a chapel requires.
- The existing situation may have to be maintained due to probable difficulties with public funding allocated to religious/chapel space - could be politically unpalatable.
- Chapel needs to be multi-purpose.
- Religious education fees, SIR budget could facilitate creation of a chapel space.
- Budgeting religious Education fees and allocation of fees over a multi-year basis could be explored.

GOAL 4: Ensure that schools are served by a highly trained staff committed to Catholic education and the school Mission Statement.

Group Submissions:

- Continue to hire highest qualified Catholic educators.
- Communicate possibilities of employment with key Catholic educational institutions, e.g. St. F.X., Campion College, etc.
- Encourage further Religious education and faith formation.
- New teachers have three years to get needed Catholic education credits.

GOAL 5: Build support and commitment for Catholic education in the Whitehorse community.

Group Submissions:

- Journalists that report Catholic issues and themes in a healthy manner (Faith page in Calgary Herald).
- Communicate achievements and challenges orally.
- Organize joint parish/school events or offer educational opportunities to the whole community.
- Encourage more parent-school events.

GOAL 6: Work with the Territorial Government of Yukon Department of Education, to enhance recognition of the curriculum and program needs of Catholic schools.

Group Submissions:

- Make Religious Education a credit under the umbrella of B.C. education graduation requirements.
- Should be a Bishop's representative at discussions at the Department of Education level.
- Develop understanding among parents and students of the issues involved.

APPENDIX 4

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Steering Committee Meeting for Strategic Planning Part II 05 February 2004

In attendance:

1. Chris Gonnet, Director of Learning for the Catholic Schools
2. Marj Hlady and Cecilia Fraser, Administrator and Council member for Christ the King Elementary
3. Ted Hupe and Dianne Tait, Administrator and Council member for Holy Family Elementary
4. Katie Shewfelt, Catholic Schools of Whitehorse, Senior Religious Education Co-ordinator
5. Rosemary Burns, Michael Dougherty and Lori Choquette, Administrator and two Council members for Vanier Catholic Secondary.
6. Father Jim Bleackley, Vicar General and pastor of Sacred Heart Cathedral

1.0 Opening Prayer

2.0 Overview by Michael Dougherty of process thus far

- 2.1 Three councils are in agreement that we proceed, as discussed at council meetings, with the Strategic Planning Part II
- 2.2 Department of Education prepared to provide funding support with contribution agreement through VCSS Council

3.0 How will we proceed? Discussion focused on the following questions:

- 3.1 Role and responsibilities of school councils
- 3.2 School board question
- 3.3 Vision of Catholic Education in Whitehorse
- 3.4 We need a 'fresh perspective' – What are people saying/thinking/believing about Catholic education – our vision and Mission Statement, our curriculum, our facilities, governance, Catholicity, staffing
- 3.5 We need to involve the stakeholders, have questions asked, responses developed and presented back to Steering Committee
 - 3.5.1 We're clarifying the vision
 - 3.5.2 What's working well?
 - 3.5.3 What needs to be addressed/changed?
 - 3.5.4 What are the constants – the role of the family[except it is changing drastically] – the role of the church [but what of Catholic commitment?]
- 3.6 Our system is unique – not the same as Yellowknife School Board, not the same base as Ontario, Alberta and Saskatchewan, not at all like BC.
- 3.7 Stakeholders will include current students of all three schools, graduates of Vanier Catholic, staff, administrators, parents, parish/diocese, and Department.

4.0 Tentative timeline

4.1 Developed in email from Michael D., attached.

Steering Committee Meetings, following the completion of the Circle of Caring survey and initial documents:

1. April 17, 2004 Presentation of preliminary survey result and group discussions on the priorities for 2004-2005.
2. May 15, 2004 Visioning Workshop, with expanded Steering Committee.
3. June 16, 2004 Meeting with Bishop Denis Croteau and Father Jim Bleackley OMI to inform Bishop of the progress to date.
4. September 15, 2004 Joint Council Meeting with the Steering Committee and Patrick Maguire. Objective of the meeting was to present the information to the Joint Councils for approval to continue with the identified Action Goals.
5. September 29, 2004 Joint Annual General Meeting of the Catholic Schools of Whitehorse. Main item on the agenda was the presentation and discussion of the Action Plans.
6. October 5, 2004 Steering Committee to continue discussion/work on the Action Plans and the formation of the Action Plan committees.
7. November 17, 2004 Teleconference meeting for progress reports by Action Plan committees.
8. December 01, 2004 Teleconference meeting with discussion to focus on school board research, contact with Yellowknife Catholic School Board and consider of interaction with ACSTA.
9. January 19, 2005 Steering Committee meeting to prepare for Joint Council Meeting on February 8, 2005.
10. February 08, 2005 Joint Council meeting with Steering Committee at Holy Family Elementary at 7:00 pm; co-chairs are Ted Hupe and Dianne Tait.

**Steering Committee Meeting for Circle of Caring II
08 February 2005**

In attendance:

1. Chris Gonnet, Director of Learning for the Catholic Schools
2. Marj Hlady, Rob McDonnell and Cecilia Fraser, Administrators and Council member for Christ the King Elementary
3. Ted Hupe and Dianne Tait, Administrator and Council member for Holy Family Elementary
4. Kathryn Johnson, Religious Education Co-ordinator for Christ the King and Holy Family Elementary
5. Katie Shewfelt, Catholic Schools of Whitehorse, Senior Religious Education Co-ordinator
6. Rosemary Burns and Lori Choquette, Administrator and Council member for Vanier Catholic Secondary.
7. Mark Connell, staff representative of the Catholic Schools of Whitehorse
8. Michael Dougherty, former Council member for Vanier Catholic Secondary and Chair of the Steering Committee when Patrick Maguire in not in attendance.
9. Father Jim Bleackley, Vicar General and pastor of Sacred Heart Cathedral
10. Patrick Maguire, Maguire Consulting Services, contracted to lead the Catholic Schools of Whitehorse through the strategic planning process.

Action Goal Committee Members for 2005 - 2006

Action Goal 1: Ted Hupe, Marj Hlady, Dianne Tait, Cecilia Fraser

Action Goal 2: Katie Shewfelt, Rob MacDonnell, Kathryn Johnson, Ryan Sikkes, Jacqueline Carew

Action Goal 3: Rosemary Burns, Ted Hupe, Marj Hlady

Action Goal 4: Katie Shewfelt, Rob MacDonnell, Kathryn Johnson, Ryan Sikkes, Jacqueline Carew

Action Goal 5: Rosemary Burns, Mark Connell, Betty Burns, Pamela Hall, Joe Kanary, Penny Ferbey, Helena Shewen

Action Goal 6: Rosemary Burns, Mark Connell, Chris Gonnet

APPENDIX 5

STAKEHOLDER INFORMATION ANALYSIS

**A COMPARISON OF POWERS AND DUTIES BETWEEN
A SCHOOL COUNCIL AND A SCHOOL BOARD
YUKON EDUCATION ACT – R.S.Y. 2002**

AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY	SCHOOL COUNCIL	SCHOOL BOARD
Required by the Act – ‘Shall’ undertake		
School plans and policies	Review, modify, approve	Review, modify, approve
Allocation of Resources	Recommend to superintendent	Makes allocation decisions through a budget process
Staff selection	Participate in selection of principal Select for appointment	Employ a director (CEO) Select all staff, dismiss, transfer, discipline
Dispute resolution	Establish procedure	Establish procedure
Minutes, Reports	Keep and provide copy to Minister	Keep and provide copy to Minister
Banking and finance	Make arrangements and make payments	Make arrangements and make payments
Attendance policy	Establish	Establish all policies
Any other duties	As required	As required
Educational programs		Provide
Grants		Receive as approved by Minister
Property		Maintain, repair, furnish and keep in good order
Equipment and supplies		Provide for schools
Conduct schools		Ensure in accordance with the Act
Evaluate schools		Once every five years and report to the Minister
Parent Advisory Group		Establish as requested by parents
Student progress Student discipline System of Instruction School Records Condition of buildings		Arrange for examination and investigation of

AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY	SCHOOL COUNCIL	SCHOOL BOARD
Discretionary in the Act – ‘May’ undertake		
Locally developed courses	Propose and offer	Included as Required Duty
Funds	Receive and spend	Included as Required Duty
School year	Advise the Minister	Included as Required Duty
School day	Advise the Minister	Included as Required Duty
Teaching and support staff requirements	Advise the Minister	Included as Required Duty
Transportation services	Advise the Minister	Advise the Minister
School renovation and capital budget	Advise the Minister	
School programs	Advise the Minister	Included as Required Duty
Committees	Establish	Establish
Discretionary funds	Approve allocation and expenditure	Approve allocation and expenditure
Evaluate teachers	Direct principal	Direct the director
Dismiss, transfer and discipline staff	Recommend to the superintendent	Included as Required Duty
Field trips	Approve more than one day	Approve more than one day
Allocation of school days for extra curricular activities	Approve	Approve
School closure		Advise the Minister
School premises		Purchase or rent
Property		Acquire
Professional development		Provide

SUMMARY

Range of Responsibility

A School Council deals with one school. The Minister is ultimately responsible for the operation and management of the school. A School Board has responsibility for a number of schools. It operates under a contract with the Government of the Yukon.

Governance

The School Council is responsible to advise the school administration. It may advise the superintendent in a number of areas of school operation. It may participate in establishing mission, vision and values statements for the school. A School Board is responsible to make policy governing many schools in many areas of operation. It may establish consistent foundational statements for all schools under its attendance area.

Staff

A School Council may participate in the procedures for the selection and appointment of a principal. It may also advise the superintendent regarding appointment, transfer and dismissal of staff. A School Board appoints a director and establishes procedures for selection, appointment, transfer and dismissal of all staff.

Program

A School Council may advise the school administration regarding school programs and may propose locally developed courses for the approval of the Minister. A School Board is responsible to provide all educational programs for its students as required by the Act.

Finance

A School Council may make recommendations to the superintendent regarding the allocation of the school budget. A School Board receives funding through government allocations and is responsible and accountable for the expenditure and accounting for these funds.

OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS

The School Council

The School Council has a limited role in relation to its own school. It can advise the principal, the superintendent and the Minister on issues relating to that school and may only represent the views and needs of that school. Any collaboration with School Councils for other schools is purely voluntary. It is generally comprised of parents of students attending that school, and although members may be elected by a vote of all eligible voters in the community, for the most part, the vast majority of voters are the parents of that school.

A School Council is dependent on the goodwill of the Minister in appointing a superintendent who is supportive of the mission and values of Catholic education to oversee the management of the school.

The School Board

A School Board has a direct governance role for a number of schools. As such it can make rules and policies that are consistent across a number of schools. It provides a consistency and an economy of scale in operations and programs that an individual school cannot.

It can ensure that its policies and practices are guided by Catholic values and focused on spiritual development

It is comprised of electors from the community who are elected by a vote of all eligible voters in the community. Trustees may or may not be parents.

A board may represent the views of an entire community when speaking to government. In this regard, it is particularly well suited to advocate for Catholic education and to promote and communicate the importance and the challenges of Catholic education at both territorial and national levels.

It is responsible to appoint its own director, and can ensure that that individual is a person who fully supports its mission, beliefs and values.

It receives funds by means of government grants and plans the distribution of these funds through the development of an annual plan and budget. It is accountable to the Minister and to the electors for its responsibilities.

**PROCEDURES TO CHANGE FROM A SCHOOL COUNCIL
TO A SCHOOL BOARD**

This process is described in Section 73 of the Yukon Education Act.

Where a number of School Councils are involved, a resolution to change from a council to a school Board passed by all of the participating School Councils and presented to the Minister, begins the process.

Alternatively, a petition signed by 20% of the electors of the Catholic community and presented to the Minister will also begin the process.

Within 90 days of receiving the resolution or the petition, the Minister will conduct a vote on whether a board should be formed. All eligible Catholic electors may vote in this election. A majority of 50% plus one will determine the outcome of the election.

For the purpose of conducting elections for Catholic school councils and a Catholic school board, the Act defines an elector as a person who is a Canadian citizen, is 18 years of age or older, is a resident of the attendance area for the school board, and is Catholic. The Act defines 'Catholic' as a person 'recognized by the Catholic Episcopal Corporation'.

If the formation of a Board is approved, the Minister will establish the Board effective the first of the next school year following the vote.

The Minister will determine the number of school board members. The Act specifies a minimum of three members and a maximum of seven. An election would be held to select the trustees for the new board.

The Minister may make provision for representation of Yukon First Nations on a school board. First Nations representatives would be in addition to the number of trustees established by the Minister.

QUESTIONS

1. Section 83(2) provides the opportunity for parents attending a school to vote in elections of the school board or council representing that school. Section 83(3) indicates that only those recognized by the Catholic Episcopal Corporation (Catholics) may vote in an election in a board or council established on the basis of religion (Catholic schools). The ability or lack thereof of parents who are not Catholic, but whose children attend Catholic schools to vote in elections should be clarified.
2. How would the funds directed to the three Catholic schools at the moment be affected by the formation of a School Board? Where would the cost of the administrative structure come from?
3. What assurances are there that schools under a Catholic school board would receive the same funding support as other schools in the future?
4. What would be the respective roles of the board and the Minister with respect to facilities and transportation?
5. What would be the responsibility of an elected Board of Trustees to the Catholic Bishop of Whitehorse?

Goal 1: Conduct further research with a view to the formation of the Catholic School Board

1. Who can vote in a Catholic school board election?

Response: Section 83(2) provides the opportunity for parents attending a school to vote in elections of the school board or council representing that school. Section 83(3) indicates that only those recognized by the Catholic Episcopal Corporation (Catholics) may vote in an election in a board or council established on the basis of religion (Catholic schools).

Action: The ability or lack thereof of parents who are not Catholic, but whose children attend Catholic schools to vote in elections should be clarified in discussions with the Catholic Episcopal Corporation and YTG.

2. How would the funds directed to the three Catholic schools at the moment be affected by the formation of a School Board? Where would the cost of the administrative structure come from?

Response/Action: There has been no reason to believe that YTG funding for education of students would be reduced with a board in place. The funding model would one of the issues to be confirmed by YTG.

3. What assurances are there that schools under a Catholic school board would receive the same funding support as other schools in the future?

Response/Action: This could be an issue of interpretation of the agreement with the Catholic Episcopal Corporation. It would be a clear case of discrimination if it could be demonstrated that Catholic schools were treated in any manner that would be less beneficial than other schools. This is an item for negotiation and confirmation with YTG.

4. What would be the respective roles of the board and the Minister with respect to facilities and transportation?

Response/Action: For negotiation and confirmation with YTG.

5. What would be the responsibility of an elected Board of Trustees to the Catholic Bishop of Whitehorse?

Response: In the same way that any Catholic institution is responsible to the Bishop for issues of faith and morals in its operation and policies, it is expected that the Board would be responsible to the Bishop in the same way as the individual schools now are.

Action: This needs to be confirmed with the Catholic Episcopal Corporation.

6. *Who would negotiate with the Dept of Education?*

Response: The language of the Act seems to make an assumption that the board would be in place to conduct these negotiations. If this is not the correct assumption, then there is no provision in the Act that specifies who would do this. Whoever or whatever group is selected for this task should have a mandate from the three school councils and clear terms of reference. The department could be asked to write regulations to deal with this issue, and that would make the work of the committee more legal.

Action: The Steering Committee should discuss possible courses of action for this question, and consult with the Department on options.

7. *Would only Catholics be eligible to sit on a Catholic School Board?*

Response: Please see the response and action to Question #1 above.

8. *What guarantees are there that funding would continue at the rate of the other schools?*

Response: Please see response/action to questions 2 and 3 above.

9. *How would the maintenance of the buildings be taken care of? Does YTG retain ownership of the buildings and provide the same level of care.*

Response: Please see response/action to question 4 above.

10. *Who covers or pays for the fuel, electricity, water and sewer etc...?*

Response: Please see response/action to question 4 above.

11. *Do we want to become a glorified school council like EET?*

Response: The Education Act is clear in the responsibilities and duties of a school board as compared to a school council. A school board has a much greater degree of responsibility and authority for decisions than a school council. Chris has consistently said that the Francophone governance model is different from that proposed in the act as a school board. I am not aware of the details of that model, so I can't comment. The Francophone authority has only one school, so the perception of a 'glorified school council' is easy to suggest. A Catholic school board would have 3 schools to administer rather than just one.

12. *How much power do we want the Catholic school board to have?*

Response: The Education Act determines the powers and duties of a school board. It also limits what a school board can do or can get involved in. Any changes to the list of powers and duties would have to be determined by YTG by means of changes to the Act.

This is not really a question that we have much control over.

13. How much control will the Catholic school board have over the personal ethics of its teachers?

Response: Any 'control' over the personal ethics of teachers, or indeed any other staff members, is directed by the policies of the board and the way in which Catholic school rights are enshrined in the Canadian Constitution. This is an issue that has a great deal of legal precedence over many years of court cases in many provinces and all the way to the Supreme Court. It is very likely that a school board would take the advice of legal experts on any issue of this nature.

14. Can a Catholic school board in the Yukon fire a staff member for living in a common law relationship like they can in Saskatchewan, Alberta and Ontario?

Response: This question would require a response from a constitutional lawyer with experience in interpreting Catholic school rights. The guiding precedents would undoubtedly be the cases that have already been decided in other provinces. Any new precedents that might be established by a Yukon school board from those already in the case law would create a problem for Catholic school boards in other provinces. At the present time, as the employer, and respecting the agreement with the Episcopal Corporation, the YTG through the department is undoubtedly held responsible to uphold the Catholic school rights that have been established in the constitution and in case law, including the requirement for teachers to live in a manner that is consistent with the tenets of the Catholic faith.

Action: Seek legal opinion from at least two different legal firms with a strong history in Catholic education rights on these two matters.

15. Who is the employer? YTG or the School board?

Response: The Education Act makes school boards responsible for all of the practical aspects of employment, such as selection, appointment and dismissal. Although the Act does not specify this, one could assume that the Board would also be responsible for payroll matters as well. If the Board becomes the actual employer, a number of personnel issues would need to be clarified in YTG regulations.

Action: Seek clarification of this issue from the Department.

16. Right now we are in position where each Catholic school is on the same playing field as all of the other public schools in the Territory. If we are funded on a "per student" basis in a negotiated deal with the Dept of Ed. What happens if our enrolment should drop? Is a guaranteed level of funding of funding possible?

Response: I guess I'm not sure what's prompting this question. There are as many funding models across Canada as there are education authorities. The key issue would be that YTG is committed to being equitable in its responsibilities for the education of its

students. I'm very sure that its constituents would be very watchful that it did not discriminate against Catholic schools or students, or indeed any other minority group for that matter. I am not aware of any government that makes any level of guaranteed funding available for schools or school boards.

17. Do the current negotiations with two First Nations in the Territory have an impact on the creation of a Catholic school board?

Response: It is difficult to see how this could be the case. The sections of the Act regarding the establishment of a school board are very clear. The negotiations might take a bit longer due to the added workload for people in the department, especially in the legal services area. If the negotiations with the First Nations were to cause the YTG to alter the Act in any way, there could be an impact, but this is really speculating.

18. If the Dept of Education divests itself of direct control of its community schools will we be forced to create a Catholic school board?

Response: I am not aware of the background to this question. If such a change were contemplated, the Catholic schools would have to respond to any plan in the same way any other school would. I want to repeat, one more time, that there is no evidence that I am aware of that the YTG has any agenda to discriminate against Catholic schools.

19. What would the role of a Catholic Superintendent in the Dept of Ed.? An equal partner with other superintendents or a lesser player in the scope of dept. dealings as in the case of the EET Director General?

Response: In other provinces and in the NWT, the board superintendents are only involved in the department to the extent that the department wishes to arrange that involvement. In these jurisdictions, however, there are no department superintendents. One would hope that a Catholic board superintendent would have similar access to department decision-making as would any other superintendent with equivalent duties and responsibilities.

APPENDIX 6

CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMITTEE

In October 2005 the Steering Committee of the Circle of Caring II strategic plan for the Catholic Schools of Whitehorse recommended the establishment of a Catholic education committee. The mandate of this committee is to address the following objectives:

- Provide a forum where the Catholic schools come together to share the mission, vision, beliefs and values of Catholic education in Whitehorse as contained in Circle of Caring II.
- Lead and manage the implementation of the goals of Circle of Caring II.
- Coordinate common activities, practices and policies among the three Catholic schools.
- Coordinate communication and interaction among the Catholic Schools of Whitehorse, the Episcopal Corporation and the Department of Education.

In January 2006 the School Councils unanimously agreed to form the Catholic Education Committee. The first meeting was held on January 31, 2006. This committee is made up of the following members:

- Principals of the three Catholic schools
- Senior Religious Education Coordinator
- Representative of the Catholic Episcopal Corporation
- Superintendent, Department of Education
- Two council members elected from each school council.

The Department of Education will support this committee in its efforts to join a national Catholic trustees association and assist with operating costs.

In February 2008, the Catholic Education Association of Yukon became the official title of the Catholic Education Committee. This met the legal and financial requirements of the Government of Yukon.

With the formation of this association, we embark on a new and very exciting journey that will, with your prayers and support, assure the realisation of the goals set out in Circle of Caring II.

APPENDIX 7

CATHOLIC EDUCATION ASSOCIATION of YUKON

TERMS OF REFERENCE

MANDATE

The Catholic Education Association of Yukon is established to address the following objectives:

- Provide a forum where all three Catholic schools can come together to share the mission, vision, beliefs and values of Catholic education in Whitehorse as contained in the Circle of Caring materials.
- Lead and manage the implementation of Goals 1 through 6 of Circle of Caring II.
- Coordinate common activities, practices and policies among the three Catholic schools.
- Coordinate communication and interaction between the Catholic schools and both the Episcopal Corporation and the Director of Learning.

MEMBERSHIP

The Association shall consist of the following representatives:

- Two members elected by the School Councils of each of the three Catholic schools.
- The principals of the three Catholic schools
- The senior Religious Education Coordinator
- A representative of the Episcopal Corporation
- The Superintendent, Department of Education

TERM OF OFFICE – SCHOOL COUNCILS

In order to provide a smooth transition from year to year, the terms of office for School Council members shall be as follows:

For the first year of operation of the Association – one representative will be elected for a one-year term and one representative for a two-year term. Thereafter, the term for all representatives would be two years. Representatives may seek re-election.

MEETINGS

Meetings of the Association will be held at least three times a year. More frequent meetings may be called as deemed necessary by the Association. All meetings of the Association shall be open to any member of the Catholic community of Whitehorse to attend as an observer. A quorum will require that the following persons be in attendance:

- At least one School Council representative from each school;
- All three principals;
- The representatives of the Episcopal Corporation and the Department of Education

In order to ensure continuity of understanding and intent, attendance by designates is not encouraged.

OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

The Association will, at the first meeting of each school year, elect a chairperson from its membership. The chairperson may seek to be reelected from year to year. The Association may also appoint a Secretary from its membership.

COMMUNICATION

The Association will circulate an agenda to all Association members, all schools, School Council chairs, parish priests, the Episcopal Corporation representative and the Superintendent at least one full week prior to the date of each meeting. Within two weeks following each meeting, a written summary of the business of the meeting will be circulated to all of the above parties. Prior to the Joint AGM of the School Councils, the Association will prepare and circulate an annual report of business conducted to all parties represented.

DECISION-MAKING

The Association has no initial authority to act unilaterally. The outcomes of Association deliberation will be made in the form of recommendations for consideration by resolution to the three schools and School Councils.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Specific duties and responsibilities may be devolved to the Association by means of an enabling resolution adopted by all three School Councils at duly constituted meetings. In these specific areas, decisions of the Association will be by simple majority of members present at a duly constituted meeting of the Association that meets the quorum requirements above. In these areas of responsibility the Association will represent the Catholic Schools of Whitehorse, and decisions of the Association will be binding on all three schools and School Councils.

ESTABLISHMENT AND CESSATION

The Association will be established and may be disbanded by means of resolutions proposed and adopted at a Joint AGM of the three School Councils. Such resolution will require a 67% majority of those in attendance for adoption.