

MVSD Community Forums

- Roblin - Tuesday, November 3, 2015, Goose Lake High, commencing at 7:00 p.m.
- Dauphin – Thursday, November 12, 2015, DRCSS Multi-purpose Rm., commencing at 7:00 p.m.
- Winnipegosis – Tuesday, November 24, 2015, Winnipegosis Collegiate, commencing at 7:00 p.m.

Conducting the Focus Group

The introduction

1. Explain the purpose of the discussion, why you are recording it, and that participants' comments are confidential.

“Thank you for agreeing to be part of MVSD strategic planning process. My name is _____ and the purpose of the focus group is to gather parent and community member input into the strategic planning process. The outcome of the planning process will result in an updated division strategic plan that will articulate the priorities of the Board and will be used to guide the division’s planning process.

The questions are designed to gather information on what you perceive are necessary components of effective educational programming to meet the needs of all students well into the future. The information gathered will be used to assist the Board of Trustees in setting direction for the division.

We’re recording the discussion, so the information can be collated and aggregated in such a way as to assist the Board of Trustees in setting the strategic direction for Mountain View School Division.

The Questions

1. *What characteristics should a MVSD student/graduate have?*
 - *What skills, knowledge, and qualities do our students/children need in order to be successful in the future?*
2. *What is your definition of success?*
3. *We are all responsible for the education of our children.*
 - a. *What is the role of the school?*
 - b. *What is the role of the student?*
 - c. *What is the role of the teacher?*
 - d. *What is the role of the parent?*
 - e. *What is the role of the community?*

4. a. *What do you believe are the greatest challenges that our schools face today?*
 - b. *Do you have any suggestions for overcoming these challenges?*
5. *What would the ideal school be like?*
6. *Is there something you came prepared to talk about today that we didn't ask you?*

Role in Facilitating the Discussion:

1. Do not react to participants' answers. Appear interested, but neutral, so as not to influence them to answer in a certain way. Acknowledge responses with a simple "okay," "alright," a slight nod, and so on.
2. You may need to "probe," or dig a little deeper, if a participant's answer is not specific enough or too vague.
3. You may need to repeat a question as you go around the table, especially questions that require more thought. Repeating questions also help the discussion stay on track, but be careful not to alter the question. Give people time to think and reflect, even if it causes some uncomfortable silence.
4. Don't become part of the discussion yourself. You are an impartial listener and observer. If someone asks you a question, let them know you'll try to answer it after the focus group.
5. What if someone dominates the discussion or someone does not participate? Re-state the division's interest in hearing from everyone, and do your best to keep the discussion moving forward.
6. Be encouraging, and use eye contact to help ensure that everyone participates. If someone seems reluctant to answer, remind them that the division is very interested in everyone's opinions.

The conclusion

Thank you very much for participating! Your ideas and comments will be summarized in a report to the Board of Trustees, and will help the Board of Trustees make decisions about future educational programming in Mountain View School Division.

Each participant will receive a copy of the focus group notes and a copy of the report.

Thank you once again for your input into our strategic planning process.

Source: Focus Groups: A tool for Evaluating Visitor Services
(<http://www.psu.uidaho.edu/focusgroup/moderator/00.html>).