

| Edmonton Catholic Schools |

What We Heard

| Monsignor Fee Otterson Space for Students Engagement |

1. Background

Monsignor Fee Otterson (MFO) Catholic Elementary/Junior High School is dealing with exceptional enrolment and the current number of students is greater than what the school was built for. Edmonton Catholic Schools is looking for alternative options to continue to allow the students of MFO to have access to a quality learning environment.

On Monday, November 20, 2023, ECSD had an in-person engagement regarding student space options at Monsignor Fee Otterson. Approximately 45 people attended from the school community.

There was a presentation on the three options being considered and details of the next steps, which included an online survey. Following the presentation, officials from Transportation and Educational Planning answered questions and listened to feedback from the community in a “town hall” format. The in-person engagement lasted approximately 75 minutes.

The online survey was open from November 20, 2023, to the end of day November 30, 2023.

2. Engagement Objectives

ECSD is committed to successful public participation, which includes sharing information and letting stakeholder voices be heard, with the commitment that stakeholder feedback will be considered before a final decision is made. Each opinion, idea, and voice is valued through this process.

The objective of the public participation process at Monsignor Fee Otterson Catholic Elementary/Junior High School was to provide information to families and present the three options that are being considered as a solution to the space constraints the school is currently facing. Additionally, following the public participation session, families were invited to complete an online survey to provide their feedback on the options presented.

The feedback gathered by the public participation process will be used by Educational Planning in deciding on how best to accommodate students at Monsignor Fee Otterson Catholic Elementary/Junior High School and the surrounding communities. The Educational Planning Superintendent and school administration will use the feedback from the in-person session and the survey to make the final decision on how to accommodate students at the school.

3. Engagement Process

The Monsignor Fee Otterson Catholic Elementary/Junior High School programming engagement process utilized two engagement techniques in the public participation process. They were:

1. an information session including a presentation and informal question and answer session in a “town hall” format with subject matter experts on November 20, 2023, and
2. a survey, which was open from November 20, 2023, to November 30, 2023.

In-Person Information Session with Families

ECSD invited the families of Monsignor Fee Otterson to register to attend the in-person information evening on November 20, 2023, from 6:00 PM-7:00 PM. The objective of the meeting was to provide further information and options on what ECSD was proposing to address the space constraints MFO is currently facing.

The presentation provided background on what ECSD has done to date to accommodate the growing enrolment numbers, and the growth pressures not just at MFO, but at other nearby ECSD schools. The presentation also included an overview of the three options the Division has developed to affect change on the school enrolment starting in the 2024-2025 school year. It was explained to the families attending that MFO is at full capacity for modular classrooms and the site cannot accommodate any additional modulars. The approval of the Cavanagh school will help with the overcrowding problem in the longer term, however the opening of Father Michael McCaffrey High School also presents opportunities to help relieve some of the growth pressures of the area.

The three options presented to families were:

1. MFO becomes Kindergarten to Grade 8. Grade nine students are redesignated to Father Michael McCaffery High School which is opening in September 2024.
2. MFO remains a Grade 1 to 9. Kindergarten students go to St. Augustine Catholic Elementary School.
3. MFO becomes a Grade 1 to 8 school with both the Kindergarten students and the Grade 9 students redesignated. Kindergarten would go to St. Augustine and the Grade 9 students would go to Father Michael McCaffery High School.

At the end of the presentation, attendees were asked to write to their MLA and the Minister of Education to share the impact that the exceptional enrolment at MFO has had on their families and to request the provincial government approve the new school in Cavanaugh.

Following the presentation, attendees participated in an informal session where they had the opportunity to ask questions of Division Planners, the Transportation Manager, and the Educational Planning Superintendent. At the end of the engagement, attendees were asked to complete an online survey. The survey remained open until November 30, 2021.

Additionally, information and the presentation were posted to the ECSD and school's websites so that anyone not able to attend in person on November 20, 2023, would be able to understand the background before completing the survey.

Survey

The online survey was sent out to all Monsignor Fee Otterson Catholic Elementary/Junior High School families and was open for ten (10) days. The survey was distributed by the school principal using Swift. Additionally, the survey was posted on the ECSD website and pushed to the front page of Monsignor Fee Otterson Catholic Elementary/Junior High School's webpage.

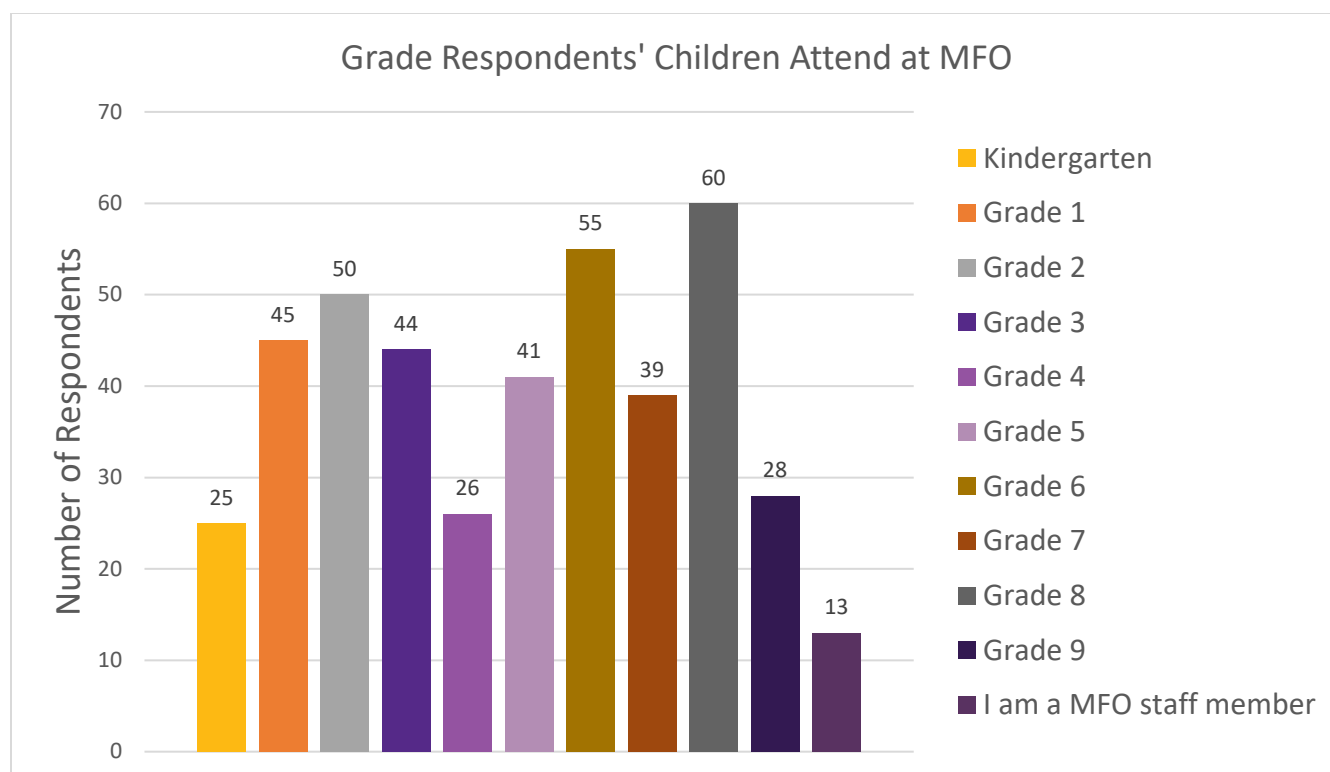
4. Engagement Results

Survey

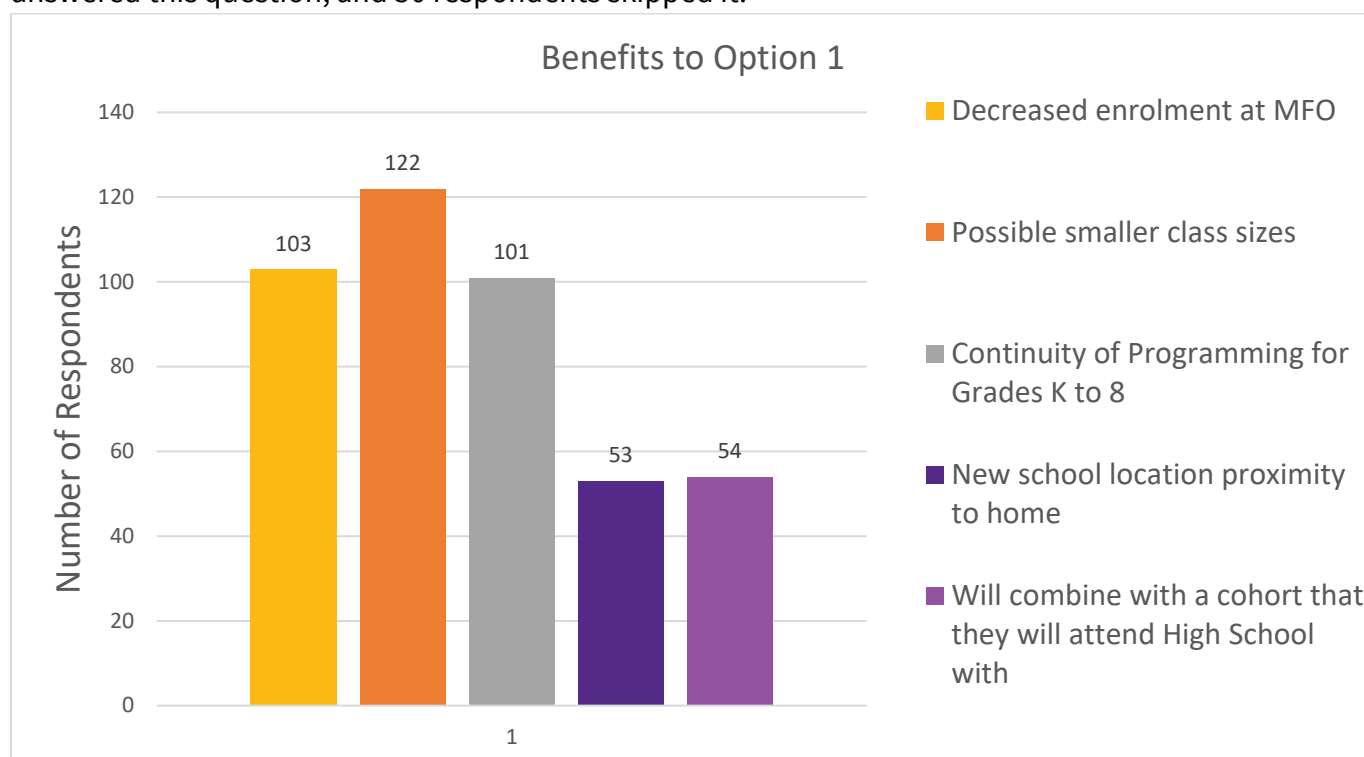
On November 20, 2023, ECSD launched an online survey for the purpose of collecting feedback on three options presented to address the space constraints at Monsignor Fee Otterson Catholic Elementary/Junior High School. The survey was hosted on Survey Monkey and was open to families to respond until the end of day November 30, 2023.

In total, there were 267 surveys completed.

In the first question, survey respondents were asked to identify which grade their child(ren) was currently in, or if they were a staff member. Many respondents had children in more than one grade at MFO.



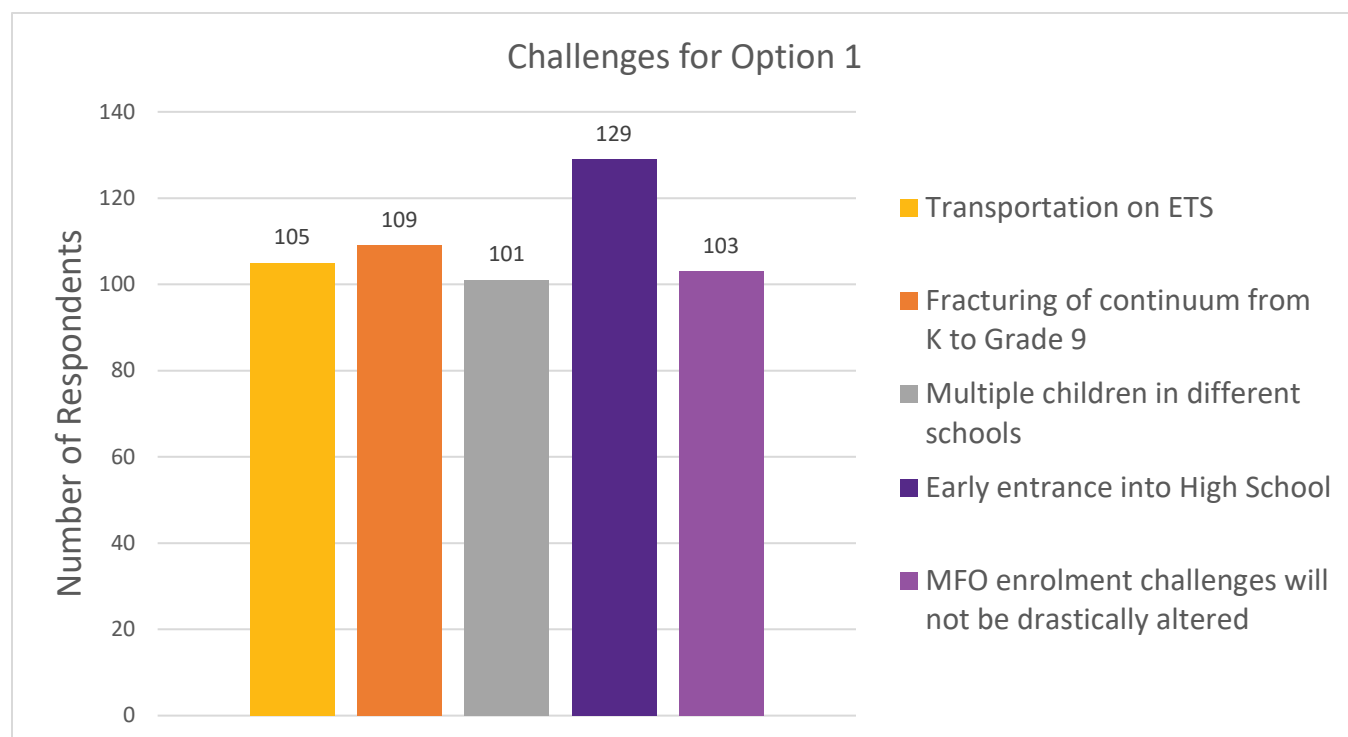
The second question asked respondents, “What are the benefits for your family with Option 1? (Please select all that apply)”. Of the 259 respondents to the survey, 217 respondents answered this question, and 50 respondents skipped it.



Of the 51 respondents who provided a comment for "other" for the benefits of Option 1, 9 thought this option would work as it left the kindergarten students at MFO. 1 respondent felt students remaining in the school would have better access to school amenities and the gym while another indicated this option worked best for their family. The remaining 40 comments were focused on the negatives and challenges this option would create for their family, instead of the benefits. To ensure we capture these comments, the following are the themes:

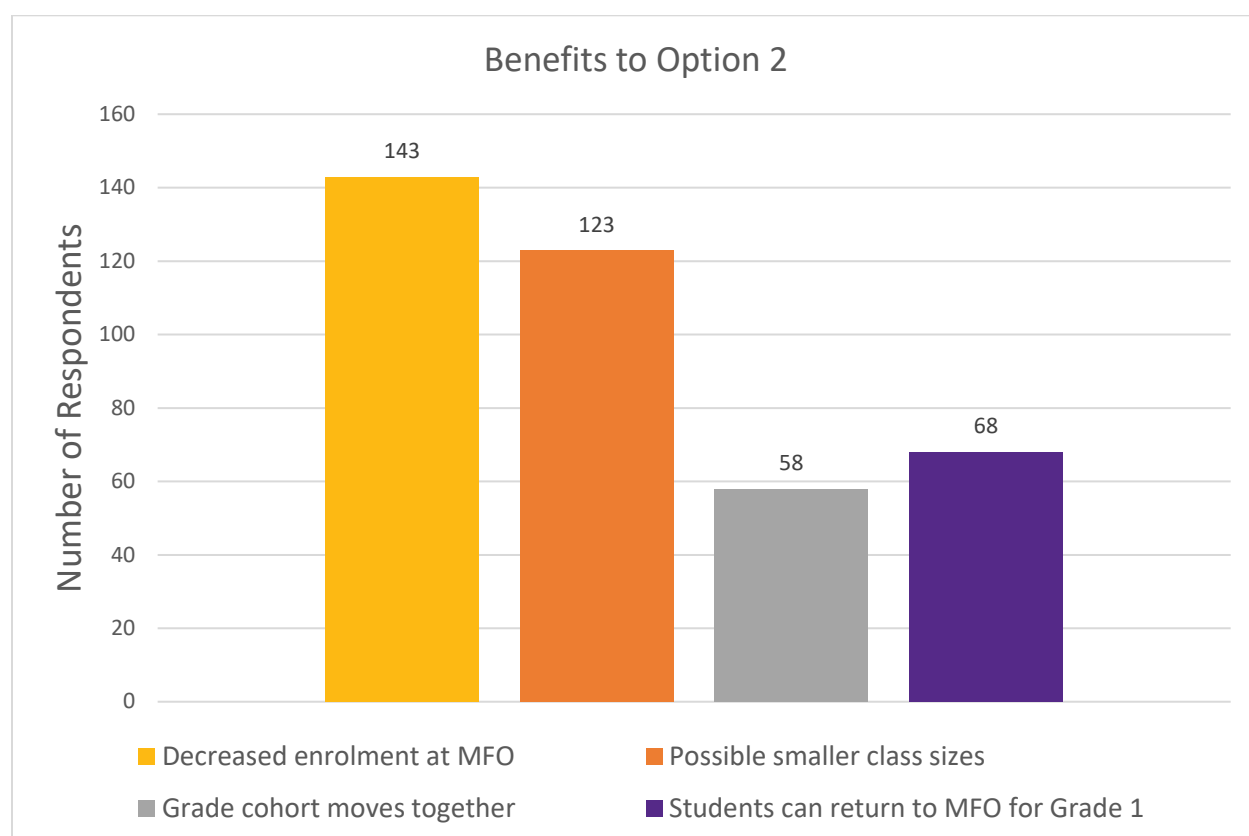
- Will reduce course offerings at MFO due to fewer teachers.
- Will not have a large enough effect on class sizes.
- This is not a permanent solution to the overcrowding at MFO.
- This is an inconvenience to our MFO families to move either grade.
- This is a detriment to our Grade 9 students.
- Creates transportation challenges for grade 9 students.
- There are no benefits for our family with this option.

Question three asked respondents to identify all the perceived challenges to their family for Option 1. 240 respondents answered this question, and 27 respondents skipped it.



Of the 51 respondents who provided a comment for "other", 8 respondents indicated that Grade 9 was too young to be entering High School. There were 28 respondents made comments that centred around the changes for the Grade 9 students: No senior sports, disruption to plans and strain on mental health, loss of opportunity to graduate from Grade 9, and general disagreement with moving the Grade 9 students. 5 respondents felt this option would not do enough to affect enrolment and space at MFO. 4 comments were around the transportation to the new school and using the ETS. Finally, 9 respondents indicated that this option presented no challenges for their family.

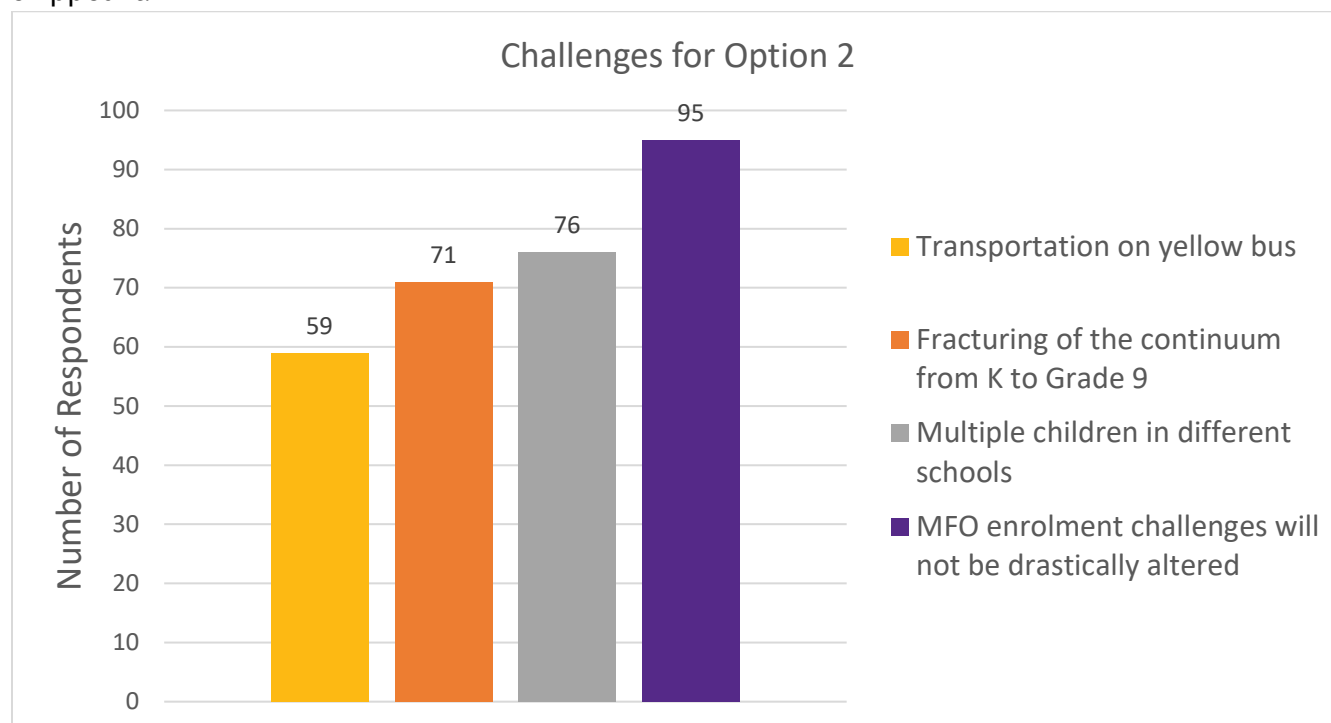
The fourth question asked respondents about the benefits for their family with Option 2, and again asked them to select all that apply. 210 respondents answered this question, and 57 respondents skipped it.



Of the 56 respondents who provided a comment for "other", 24 commented that there was no benefit for their family with this option. 14 respondents agreed with this option. 4 respondents indicated this option was not applicable to their family. 3 respondents commented that this option would enable the school to utilize more of its space for what it was designed. 3 respondents thought that this option did not go far enough to impact

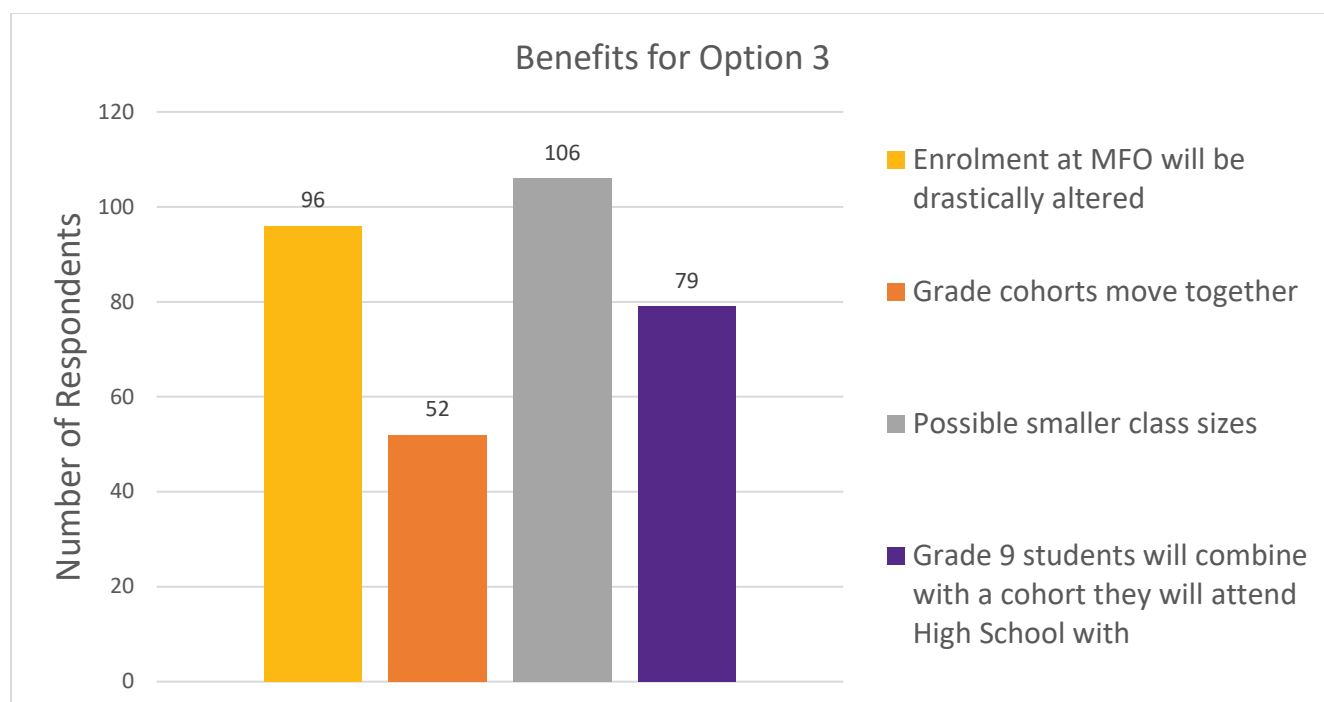
enrolment and the space issues the school was facing. There were a few comments around the challenges this option would create for the Kindergarten students: too far to travel, too hard to transition to two schools in two years. Finally, one respondent commented that the school has been over capacity for so long that they can handle a few more years.

Question five asked respondents to select all that applied for what the challenges were for their family for Option 2. 201 respondents answered the question, and 66 respondents skipped it.



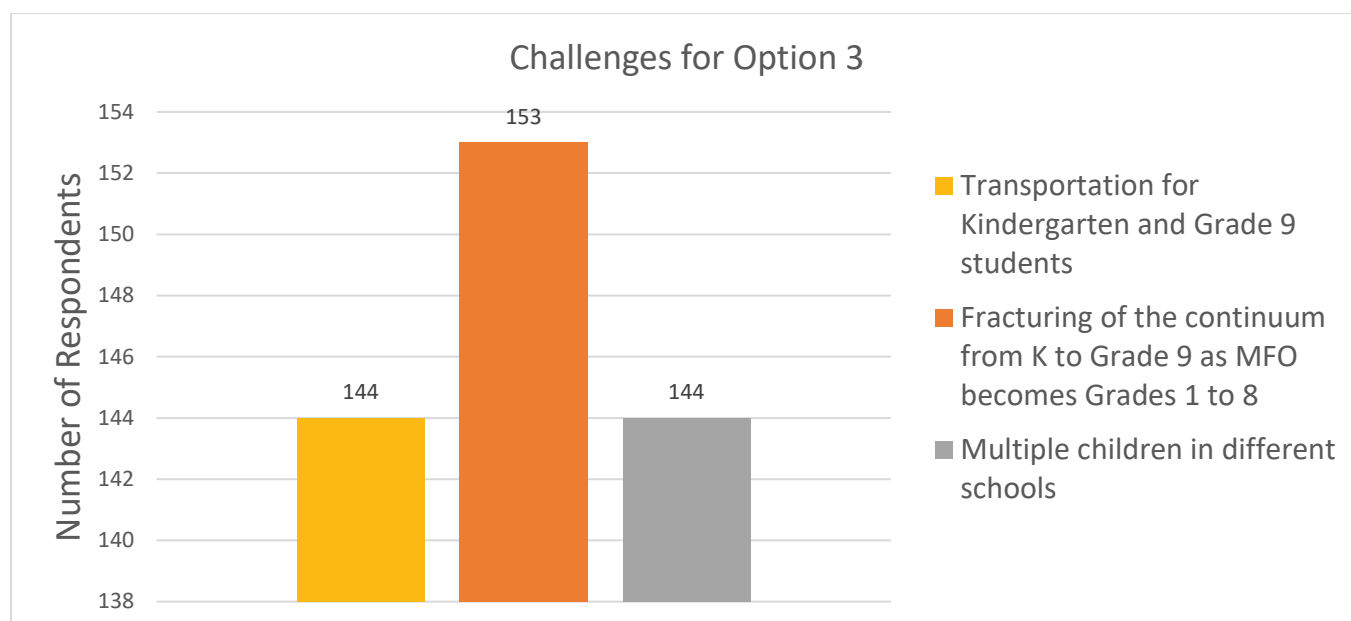
Of the 67 respondents who commented “other” for the challenges associated with Option 2, 32 respondents said that this option presented no challenges for their family. 19 respondents felt that this option was too far for kindergarten students to travel on a bus and that it created too many transitions for them in two years. 7 respondents said this option did not apply to their family. 2 respondents commented that the school has been over capacity for so long that they can handle a few more years. 3 indicated that this option will not do enough to impact enrolment. Finally, 4 respondents indicated that they either didn’t like the option, that it would fracture the school community, that it created the challenge of multiple children at different schools and that MFO would lose students for Grade 1 as students wouldn’t transition back to MFO.

Question six asked respondents about the benefits to their family of Option 3, and to select all that applied. 185 respondents answered the question and 82 skipped it.



Of the 57 respondents that comment “other”, 49 indicated that there is no benefit for their family with this option. 4 respondents said that this option was not applicable to their family. 2 respondents felt that this option would not impact the space at the school enough. Another respondent said the opposite and that this option would free up the most the space to impact the school. Finally, 1 respondent thought that this option was still too far to travel for both the kindergarten students and the Grade 9 students.

For question seven, respondents were asked, “What are the perceived challenges for your family with Option 3? (please select all that apply)”. 229 respondents answered the question, and 38 respondents skipped the question.



Of the 50 respondents who commented “other” for the challenges with Option 3, 13 respondents felt the biggest challenge with this option would be for the Grade 9 students. They commented that they were too young to be put in a High School environment, would lose out on athletics, options, and undergo mental stress in the environment. 6 respondents said they did not like this option at all. 4 respondents said this was not applicable to their family. 10 respondents said this option posed no challenges to their family. 1 respondent asked that ECSD involve the Grade 8 students this would affect in the engagement process. The remaining respondents commented on:

- The challenge of ETS transportation in their neighbourhood for the Grade 9 students.
- That it was too far for kindergarten students to travel to St. Augustine.
- That this option still created too many transitions for Kindergarten students.
- That the school has been overcrowded for 12 years and they have done just fine. They can wait a few more years until Cavanaugh is built.

The final question asked respondents, “Please provide any other comments you would like to share with ECSD regarding the Student Accommodations Options for Monsignor Fee Otterson Catholic Elementary/Junior High School?”. Here is a summary of the themes of the comments received:

- Keep the school as it is. We have already managed this for a long time.
- Keep Kindergarten as these students are too small to travel on a bus for such a long time; it creates too many disruptions; The school is too far; Some students may leave MFO and not come back.

- Don't move the Grade nine students. It is bad for their mental health, they will miss the Grade 9 farewell, athletics and not being able to graduate from their school. They should be able to graduate from the school they have been at for the last nine years.
- Cap the enrolment, check Catholicity and living in the catchment area for new students, make restrictions, and build portables renovate the school.
- Feel like more information is needed to make an informed commentary. If the Grade 9 students are to move, we would need to know what programming and transportation would look like for them at the new McCaffery High School.
- I liked the options.
- A few comments expressed concern that the engagement process was not robust enough as it didn't engage the families of potential incoming kindergarten students.