

SUPPORT FOR ALTERNATIVE 4 – TWO REFURBISHED SCHOOLS

Hello, my name is Rebecca Geauvreau. Thank you to the ARC Committee for preparing alternatives for the community's consideration. I appreciate the opportunity to provide my comments and thoughts on the alternative options.

I'm a parent, taxpayer and small business owner in the City of North Bay. I do not support the single super-school option proposed by the Board. It's not what is best for our kids and it's not what is best for our community.

For all of the compelling reasons stated at the first public meeting in February of this year including safety, traffic congestion, appropriately-sized schools and most importantly the physical and mental well-being of our kids; I support Alternative 4, the refurbishment of two high schools. Based on the numbers provided by the Board and the authors of Alternative 4, it would appear that this alternative provides the 'best of both worlds'.

The Ministry of Education issued a memorandum to Directors of Education on December 1, 2016 (https://efis.fma.csc.gov.on.ca/faab/Memos/B2016/B19_EN_AODA.pdf). The memo is titled 'Request for School Consolidation Capital Funding Submissions'. According to Gay Smylie, Acting Executive Officer (pers. comm. April 4, 2017), this memo is the guiding document for the Board's current capital planning process and by extension this ARC process.

The memo highlights that SCC funding is available for Boards to 'effectively and efficiently manage their excess capacity', and to do this will in some cases 'need to adjust their capital footprint'. It goes on to state that funding will be 'allocated on a business case basis for new schools, **retrofits** and **additions** that support consolidation'.

Lately, the '3 schools for 1 school' phrase has been repeated by Board staff and Trustees. However, the Min of Ed memo, the guiding document for the funding that will presumably support the outcome of this ARC is very clear that eligible projects include the following:

- Consolidating **two** (or more) schools into one new facility
- **...undertaking a major renovation** to an existing school to accommodate enrollment from other schools that the Board has made a decision to close

The physical location of regular and specialized programming including the French Immersion program **does not matter** to me. As a taxpayer, I support the operation of the Near North District School Board - a team of qualified and competent individuals who should be able to deliver balanced programming and student numbers at two high schools. I would further suggest that teachers, our experts on the ground, are best qualified to work out the details of who, how and where specific programs are delivered.

In closing, Alternative 4 is fiscally responsible, and promotes the use of existing infrastructure. This is consistent with a strong business case that the Ministry expects from Boards in their

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requests for funds. Two refurbished schools, including West Ferris SS and either of Chippewa or Widdifield SS is the best option for our community and our children.

Thank you,
Rebecca Geauvreau

Note to the Reader: Memo 2016: B19

There are several key dates listed in the 2016: B19 memo, all of which have passed. Did the Near North District School Board submit a request for this funding – if so, the deadline to submit was March 24, 2017.

From the Memo:

“We expect that school boards will be submitting projects for SCC funding that are linked to accommodation reviews decisions. Please note, projects related to accommodation reviews must have a final trustee decision by March 24, 2017 to be considered for SCC funding approval.”