

I am a parent of children who attend Alliance French Immersion Public School. I am also an employee of the board and as such, do not feel comfortable attaching my name to this document. Since my family comes first and I have some strong opinions on the matter of closing schools, I am hopeful that somehow these thoughts will be shared, despite them being anonymous. This submission also comes as a response to the online submission to the board from another Alliance parent, Alissa Mitchell, dated April 6, 2017.

In my opening sentence, I included the full name of my children's school with purpose. I chose to enroll my children in a public school because I believe in public education. If we really wanted to save money and do the right thing here, instead of just closing schools, we would be combining boards. I know that this is not what is on the table so I will simply say that creating one super school would be eliminating choice for families in our city, something I feel is a foundation of our public education system.

To continue with the purpose of my opening sentence, I am also pointing out the fact that I chose to enroll my children in a French Immersion PROGRAM. I did not select this program based on its location, just as location did not matter to my parents when they chose the same program for me back in the 1970s. My children take a bus to and from school every day because we live much too far from Alliance for them to walk, just as I rode the bus, from deep in the West Ferris area, every day, to Dr. Carruthers, Pinewood, and Chippewa Schools, from the age of 5 to my graduation at 19. This is just as French Immersion students do today, as do a multitude of others to access the many magnet and SHSM programs that are offered in our city schools. There are many students who travel great distances from out of zone to attend our public high schools for the PROGRAMS that are offered in each.

I would like to thank the ARC committee for their commitment to this process. The new proposals that have been offered are evidence of their desire to truly make a decision that is in the best interest of the students of our city. I would now like to address some of the concerns arising from the proposals that include moving French Immersion students to West Ferris for grade 7 to 12.

While moving French Immersion to West Ferris is not ideal for some families, mine included, I did not choose to send my children to a BUILDING, because goodness knows, if I had I would not have chosen Alliance. I would have certainly chosen a BUILDING where I would not have to deal with the traffic and parking congestion and chaos at Alliance, nor five classes and a library housed in portables, because of overcrowding that the board was warned would happen even before the creation of the school. I have chosen to deal with all of this because I chose a PROGRAM that I believe in for my children. If that program happens to move for them in their grade 7 to 12 years, so be it. If that move happens to be across town and may inconvenience my family for a few years, so be it. If my children have to learn to take a city bus, like I did growing up, and not have me drive them all over town to after school activities, so be it. Parents of students in the French Immersion program have been bussing their children to various schools across town for 40 years. Students in the north end of the city have always had

a French Immersion school in their end of town. Maybe it is time that parents at Sunset Park have the luxury of having their children move on to a 7 to 12 school that is in their end of town?

In response to Ms. Mitchell's submission, she provided evidence of the board's history of moving the French Immersion program. Obviously, the precedent has been set, many times over, that the board will do what it wants with the program and this should be accepted as fact. Whether you like this fact or not is for you to decide on your own and with it what you wish. If that means, as she suggests, that people will pull their children from the program if it moves to West Ferris, then I can tell you that many will do the same if the board goes ahead with its super school option, my children included. As an employee of the board for over 15 years, it pains me greatly that I even have to consider this.

As I grew up in the West Ferris area, and have lived in North Bay my entire life, I am well aware of the changes to that end of the city. Growth has continually drawn businesses and people to the north end of the city. Removing West Ferris Secondary School from its community would be devastating to its population. That is a major cause of concern in and of itself. I believe the bigger issue would be that the board would be doing that in order to build a super school on the Chippewa site. There are so many issues that I, and most of the people I know, have with the board's preferred option. You have heard them all from increased traffic congestion along High and Chippewa Streets to a reduction of competitive sports teams in the board to increased student mental health issues to more students falling through the cracks in a super school.

It has been made clear, from retired teachers, concerned parents, and the mayor himself, that the community's preferred option is two schools, allowing West Ferris to remain open. For me and my family, and for many others, if it means that French Immersion must be moved in order for this to occur, then this is the option we will choose, as will many other families from Alliance that I have spoken to. Ultimately, the board needs to keep two high schools open. This is the decision that they need to come to and they, hopefully in consultation with teachers, can decide what programs to include at each school. A super school is NOT the option that is best for the students of North Bay and its surrounding communities. It is most definitely not the best option for my children and that is what concerns me the most.