

Nipissing Board of Education,  
North Bay, ON  
Feb.20,2017

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**To Whom It May Concern”**

It seems appropriate that I have chosen Family Day to put my thoughts down on paper. I will deliver this to Louise Sargent ,who is a member of your board and who lives just down the street from me. I have lived at this location for going on 60 years. We moved into our home right after it was built. It is a little older than West Ferris High School and believe me when I say, it is far from falling down. First of all I really believe that North Bay seems too anxious to tear things down and build brand new, when with some minor repairs ,these buildings would last for some years to come. A good example of that is the West Ferris Arena that was all but torn down because the roof was a concern and now they feel it will last for several years to come. The North Bay Mall is now suffering but it is not dead. Tweedsmuir and Marshall Park Public Schools are now closed ,and it seems you now have your eyes on our High School as well. All of these buildings had a great deal to do with our three sons upbringing ,and their history here is disappearing . Soon there will be no memories left for them in West Ferris.. How sad is that! We even had to fight really hard to keep the city from taking Tweedsmuir Park where our sons learned to play ball. The public schools mentioned are the ones they attended- now gone. We had such a great association with West Ferris High School where our sons received an excellent education, played football and hockey, acted in plays, made friends who are still very important in their lives- just a wonderful time in their lives. Garth Goodhew was their principal and is now a treasured friend of our family. I cannot tell you the games I attended, drove them and team-mates to Mattawa, Sturgeon Falls etc., revelled in their East-West competitions. I could go on and on . I am especially upset about our High School because it was originally slated to be built out near Circle Lake, until with some digging, my late husband, Ken, discovered that West Ferris had the lot where the school was later built. This was the only sensible place for it ,because we had nothing out in this end ,while the other end had Widdifield and Chippewa.

I am adamantly against the super school you are proposing for several reasons. Surely what is going on at the new public school in Pinewood where students were brought in from three different areas, with absolutely nothing in common, leaving their friends behind to mix with a lot of strangers, a playground, that in my mind ,was poorly planned and is lacking in space should tell you something. It may be lovely and new ,but when pupils are biting the teachers, throwing chairs at the windows as has been reported in the press, it is not the panacea that was envisioned when it was planned. Pretty well every student would have to be bussed, while our sons walked to their high school for five years and were healthier for it. The traffic congestion in the planned area would be horrendous. The pollution from all those buses will certainly harm the environment ,which needs all the help it can get. West Ferris holds a very important day each year when they parade to the waterfront and raise money to fight cancer. What really saddens me is the loss of High School Teams in football ,hockey and other sports. Being the member of a team which ever they choose is a very, very important part

of their schooling and I don't even want to think about what West Ferris would have meant to our sons had sports not been a part of it. For goodness sake, start thinking logically and sensibly about what should be done. If you need someone to parade to fight for keeping our school, I'm in!!! I believe that West Ferris and Widdifield should be kept one at each end of the city, repaired as is necessary and Chippewa, being the oldest of the three and close to Widdifield, should be the one to go.

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Feb. 21/17

The Nugget today says that West Ferris is one of the fastest improving schools across the province. Of the fastest improving secondary schools in Ontario, none are in the Toronto or even the Greater Toronto Area.

Yours truly,  
(Mrs.) Betty Thomson