

Size and Enrolment

Good evening. My name is Sema Chaudhry and I'm a parent of three children who attend Alliance French Immersion Public School. If they continue in the French immersion program, they will attend Chippewa SS in 2019, 2021 and 2023 respectively. I'm speaking on behalf of myself and a group of concerned parents whose children currently attend school at either Alliance or Vincent Massey.

Issue

We have concerns related to the large size for the preferred option to amalgamate the 3 English Public High Schools (Chippewa, Widdifield and West Ferris) into a single school located on the Chippewa SS property.

The Facts – Size of Proposed School

According to the Near North District School Board Initial Staff Report, dated December 13, 2016 and revised January 9, 2017, page 17, this **super school** will house 2,247 grade 7 to grade 12 students. As per the graph shown, there is no high school in the entire province of Ontario of any of the 4 school boards that has that many students within one building. In fact, there are only 6 high schools in the province with over 2,000 students and they are all located in or around the Greater Toronto Area, an area with a population of 6,417,516 (this number taken from the 2016 census). In addition, none of these 6 schools have grades 7 and 8 students, they are secondary schools only.

QUESTION #1: Why would the Near North District School Board and the Province of Ontario propose that an experiment of this magnitude be carried out in a city of just over 50,000 people?

The Facts – Size of Other Schools in North Bay

According to the North Bay Nugget article dated Saturday December 10, 2016, secondary schools in North Bay currently vary in whether they include grades 7 & 8 and in size. The smallest secondary school, Odyssee has 118 students (44 intermediate and 74 secondary students). The largest secondary school, St. Joseph Scollard Hall has 845 students (all secondary students).

The percentage of Near North District School Board secondary students is **over 50%** of the total secondary student population in the city of North Bay.

As per the graph shown, the average secondary school size in Ontario is 701 students. The average secondary school size in North Bay is 532 students.

QUESTION #2: Why would the Near North District School Board propose that one school would be both sufficient and appropriate to accommodate over half of the total intermediate and secondary student population in the city of North Bay?

Proposed Alternative

The following is a proposed alternative to the preferred option presented in the Initial Staff Report.

A single new JK- Grade 6 school and **two (2) Grade 7 – 12 schools**, (one new build, one existing), which would **share** the **2247** intermediate and secondary **students**.

Benefits of two secondary schools:

- Allows parents and students an **English public choice** within their community since **57%** of all secondary school **students are enrolled in the Near North District School Board** schools, while the **other 43%** of secondary students are **spread between the three other school boards** (NPSCDSB – St. Joseph Scollard Hall; CSCFN – Ecole secondaire catholique Algonquin; CSPNE – Odyssee)
- **West Ferris** Secondary School will **remain open**, a critical resource for families in the Ferris area of North Bay
 - The recent **significant investment** in an **elevator** which **meets accessibility needs** of students and staff

It is our hope that the committee and Trustees will consider the issues raised this evening. Further, we look forward to the members giving serious attention to the alternative suggested above.

Thank you.