

## **School Programming and Student Resources**

Good evening. My name is Deanna Pigozzo and I'm a parent of one child who attends Alliance French Immersion Public School and one who will also start this coming fall. If they continue in the French immersion program, both will attend Chippewa SS. 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**

My concerns are that school programming and student resources may be lost 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.

### **School Programming**

The proposed new high school of 2247 students immediately puts fear in me that I will need to look at registering my children with another school board.

Having a school with 2200 plus students is basically taking away my choice to send my children to a public high school for many reasons.

I chose to send my children to the Near North District School Board based on all of the wonderful opportunities I had while growing up and attending public schools in the city.

There are currently many programs available to the students at each high school. I fear that if all high schools are merged that the opportunities for all of these students will be lost as the competing population will be so large. Whether it is on a sports teams, dance team, drama club etc.

More competition to make the team or make the cut will result in more stress and anxiety on the students. Not having the same opportunity as kids from neighboring school boards could have negative effects on Near North students. They will have less opportunity to play on teams, join clubs and groups as the sheer number of kids wanting to participate may be more than the activity can manage. Furthermore, this may affect them once they move to post-secondary in terms of scholarships and bursaries available. In addition, it will affect the other local high schools in terms of competitive play. There will be less teams for them to compete against, also negatively affecting their opportunity to advance and improve their performance.

If students are not able to participate in school programming of their choice, they may choose to receive their education through another board. Alternatively, other families may not feel comfortable moving their child due to their own religious affiliations, which would rob them of choice for their child's education.

*Question 1: Is there a plan in place to expand these programs so that they will be available to more students?*

### **Student Resources**

Many of our youth today suffer from learning disabilities, mental illness, physical and cognitive disabilities. With the school population so large these students will quickly fall through the cracks if the proper resources are not in place.

We see this currently on a smaller scale at the over populated Alliance. This problem will be magnified with the super schools large population resulting in many students not being assessed, identified or able to receive the help they deserve.

*Question 2: Would more resource teachers be hired to support the needs of these students and families?*

### **Proposed Alternative**

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

I also support the proposal of 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.