

Date: June 7, 2017

To: Near North District School Board Trustees & ARC Committee

From: Dr. Glenn Paleczny

Re: Request to Present at Final Public Meeting regarding amalgamation of secondary schools in Near North District School Board

To the Near North District School Board & ARC Committee Members:

As the trustees approach a final decision from moving toward either a 3-2 secondary school model or a 3-1 model, despite the ARC committee's recommendation of a 3-2 model on the Ski Club Road and Marshall Park sites, the trustees ultimately have the option of accepting or rejecting the recommendations of the ARC committee in consultation with the public. I wish to speak at the June 12th meeting in order to address the following concerns with the 3-1 option. The points I will be addressing include:

1. Continued concerns with larger school size that is beyond a recommended size for a lower-incomed community of North Bay's population. (see Leithwood & Jantzi OISE study previously submitted.) A 3-1 model might make sense with current provincial funding but does not put the students' needs at the heart of education. It would be driven by current provincial funding formulas.
2. School Administration with a 3-1 Model has not been addressed. In the last two years, the NNDSB has drastically cut administration in schools. The loss of v.p.'s in the last two years has been noticeable in policing of drugs, support of mental health and academic support of students. V.P's, just as nurses, law enforcement agents and other front-line workers in our province are expected to do more than ever, and double their own workloads in dealing with a greater load of addiction and mental health issues than ever. As marijuana laws change in 2018, how does administration plan to address new drug laws that will still be very much illegal for secondary level students. David Thompson has already spoken publicly about concerns with the rise in Fentanyl and the rampant use of hard drugs. We have yet to be told what kind of administrative support a 3-1 model would include.

3. Transportation continues to be an unsolved issue and presents numerous obstacles with the City of North Bay that the tax-payers will clearly have to shoulder. Widening roads, sidewalks, street-lights, and new transportation routes will pose an enormous burden for the tax-payer. Increasing the number of students bussed to school is economically inefficient, environmentally irresponsible and logistically cumbersome.

4. Economic loss and home value loss will be damaging to our community with a 3-1 model. A number of local professionals in the real estate market and construction industry have speculated that home values in the West Ferris area could drop 20-30% with the closure of West Ferris Secondary School. Local retailers servicing the West Ferris catchment area will also feel another huge hit with the loss of the school. West Ferris Secondary School is an anchor for that area of our city. Eliminating this school could be potentially devastating.

5. A 3-1 "Super school" model would end the NDA loop as we know it. Football, volleyball, hockey, basketball, track & field, baseball, soccer and many other sports would suffer or come to an end. What schools in our area could consistently compete against a super-school of 2,200 students?

In closing, a 3-1 secondary school would have many far-reaching non-beneficial impacts on students, families, tax-payers, businesses, environment and economy.

Sincerely,

Dr. Glenn Paleczny