

Good evening Trustees,

This ARC process is both a contentious and discussion worthy topic within our community. I have been involved as a parent and community member from the beginning, attending the capital plan meeting in the fall of 2016 at Woodlands and voicing some concerns publically at that meeting. Since then, I have banded together with likeminded community members, parents and associations to oppose the initial staff recommendation of closing all three local high schools in favour of building one on the Chippewa site. I was very pleased with the outcome of the ARC process, and the recommendation put forth by the volunteer ARC committee; their commitment is integral to the process. As a result of the recommendation the staff report has been revised to reflect the overwhelming support of a 3:2 option and the staff recommendation has been altered to closely follow that of the ARC committee. The staff report further acknowledges "Clearly, the ARC Committee, and participating local community members were overwhelmingly and collectively opposed to the proposed 3:1 option." As you can see, the community, parents, and stakeholders have spoken. Now we are here to beg of you, the Trustees, to uphold the process and vote in favour of the ARC recommendation.

A multitude of well researched and fact based evidence has been presented and submitted to the ARC and Board, also available on the public website, supporting the learning objectives and optimal school size in a community such as North Bay. Our wonderful colleague Dr. Kurt Claussen has penned and submitted a written research paper to Trustees. North Bay is identified as a "have not" community, and research supports and indicates a school with the total population equaling that of the township of Mattawa is detrimental to the education of the students that it houses.

It is apparent the price tag of a new build for a "super school" continues to rise exponentially as costs associated with environmental studies, architectural/design fees, engineering fees, traffic studies and permits are not covered by the Ministry. Further costs that are not covered include furnishings such as desks, chairs, smart boards, etc.. The NNDSB would be funded only for the bricks and mortar of the facility.

The Ministry is also using a flawed system, commissioned by a third party, to determine the repair or refurbishment cost of an existing facility. The flaw lies in the fact that numbers used to represent a repair to a facility are derived from the cost to repair a building and bring up to the standard of a new build – ie instead of replacing only a boiler as outlined as a required need/repair in the SIP, the Ministry is citing the cost to replace the entire heating system. How is it fair when comparing the cost of a new build to the cost of refurbishment when the Ministry has grossly inflated the cost of the repair?? It's akin to comparing apples to oranges.

There are much broader issues as well to tackle, such as student mental health, special education and the needs of students requiring access to these services, and other support for student success.

I speak to you now as a parent. I have two children enrolled with NNDSB. One of which requires extra assistance in the classroom. The assistance for him has been tough to obtain. We had been on the OT wait list since JK and finally received services this past December. That's 4.5 years on the wait list. He requires scribing assistance, of which he just received this year because there aren't enough EAs in his

school to allow for him to obtain this service. He's been discharged from his SLP not because he has overcome his oral motor issues, but because he has reached his maximum funding. The allotment in his school for a Special Education teacher is 1.5 for a student population of 575. My child suffers from hearing loss, and speech issues, as well as gross and fine motor issues. Needless to say, it's been challenging and frustrating working with this board. I am, however, very grateful for the assistance we have received to date, the teachers and specialists have been outstanding. We are able to obtain private services for our child, but imagine if our family couldn't afford it? There are many families that fall into that category as this community is described as a "have not" city. Where do families turn to for assistance? It certainly isn't available in the classroom. My child would be lost if I didn't advocate as fiercely as I do. Imagine navigating all the avenues of Special Education in a super school? It's already a daunting task at the elementary level. If resources aren't available today in a smaller environment, what is the guarantee they will be available in a larger school? Studies indicate this vulnerable student population can easily become lost, spiraling into time away from school or other detrimental activities which increase the risk of drop out. We need to weigh the needs of the entire student population, not just the top 10% who will thrive in a "super school" environment. I cannot stress enough the need for support and resources for students without mentioning the lack of resources to provide such support.

In conclusion, I fully support the ARC recommendation for a 3:2 high school ratio. Maintaining a school in the south of the city is vital to its residents. It's used as a community hub by Dream Coat Fantasy Theatre which Trustee Beam is highly involved with, by sports associations for junior, senior and adult dodge ball, it houses a daycare creating jobs in the area, and is used in the evenings by the residents. I ask you to take a peek in the back of WFSS any evening, you'll see the track being used to train, the parking lot being used to teach children to ride their bikes, residents walking, biking, throwing ball, playing tag. Please, take a look. To remove this from the residents creates a void too deep in this community and one I fear would be detrimental to its residents both from a monetary and recreational perspective.

The decision you make will have future consequences for this entire city, and I urge you to consider all of the information tonight.

Thank you for your time.

Christine Brown

