

March 29, 2017

To the TCDSB Director and Board of Trustees:

Re: Interim Report - Attendance Boundary Review - St. Gregory, Nativity of Our Lord, Mother Cabrini, St. Marcellus and Our Lady of Sorrows

I am sending this letter to express my opposition to the recommendations made in above Interim Report. Specifically, I am opposed to keeping the St. Gregory Boundary Status Quo. I have been following the Boundary Review process and continue to be supportive of a change in boundary as many others are. Specifically, I support the scenario referred to as Committee Discussion Scenario 1.

While I am very sensitive to those who are opposing a change in boundary, I am at odds with some of the information I have read and has been discussed. I have lived in my community for over 15 years and currently have two children attending St. Gregory. On my particular street, my children have friends, some of which attend St. Gregory and others who do not. We have neighbours, some of which attend St. Gregory Parish and some of which do not. These facts do not diminish the neighbourhood relationships and community that we have. In fact, these differences bring us closer together.

Safety of our children is of utmost importance. Based on the data presented in the report, there have been no incidents involving bussing of children. This is very reassuring as a parent. However, we have experienced an increase in traffic on Rathburn near St. Gregory. We are close enough to the school that we do not qualify for transportation but far enough that walking along Rathburn at peak times can be concerning, necessitating the children to be dropped off. My concern is with an increase in school population, there will be an increase in traffic. Again, we do not qualify for busing as those that could be impacted by the boundary change would have. There also is busing already over the 427 for students. I do not understand why the report states that busing is now unacceptable. Why has it been acceptable for those currently being bused and not now?

I accept that St. Gregory will need to have two portables this coming September given the current student population at the school. However, I am opposed to the potential further increased use of portables when there is another school close by that can accommodate them. According to the Report, Nativity of Our Lord School is at 80% capacity. Portables are never

ideal, costly and come with a whole host of issues. The Board has recognized this and have focused on reducing portable use over the years.

There is a significant knock on effect as a school population grows. Most concerning to me is ensuring there is no compromise to implementation of the curriculum when there will be greater distractions, more students to manage and less administration on a per student basis. EQAO scores have been steadily declining at St Gregory as the school population has been steadily increasing. Of note, EQAO scores at Nativity of Our Lord are some of the highest in the area. I am also concerned that programming will be removed to accommodate more students. The Extended French program has been at the school for many years and am concerned at comments raised that this program could be removed from the school. I encourage the trustees to support more of these programs at our schools.

Re-aligning the boundaries and right sizing all of the schools in this neighbourhood is the most rational way to move forward. I hope the Trustees take this into consideration as they deliberate the facts. I support a change in boundary not “status quo” and support Committee Discussion, Scenario 1.

Sincerely,

Lori Tenuta