

Regarding the attendance boundaries for St. Gregory and Nativity of Our Lord, I support Director Gauthier's recommendation that the boundaries remain status quo, and that a new school be built to address the excess enrollment in the area.

I am a father of two children who are currently enrolled in St. Gregory. Even though my children would not be directly affected by a boundary change, I believe that I have to contribute my voice to those opposing a boundary change. As a parent, a Catholic, and a citizen, I am shocked that making children cross a highway to get to school would even be considered by the Catholic Board. Previous scenarios to change the St Gregory boundary all had children commuting over the extremely dangerous Rathburn bridge over Highway 427. As you've already heard, the bridge is dangerous because it is a major access to and from the highway, with uncontrolled on and off ramps, no curbs to speak of and no separation between the live traffic lanes and the sidewalk. Accident statistics included in the Directors' report support the conclusion that traversing the bridge is hazardous, and we all know that busing is not a fail-proof method of transporting children. Further, previous scenarios all redirected children living in apartment buildings and Toronto Community Housing on The East Mall into danger, over the bridge

The effect of these previously proposed scenarios is two-fold.

First, the Board has a policy of embracing diversity, in terms of race and socio-economic status. Based on Statistics Canada's National Household Survey, under the current boundaries, in both St Gregory and Nativity, approximately 2 in 10 elementary school age children live in Low Income Measurement households, or below the poverty line. If any of the previously proposed scenarios are implemented, the effect would be that at St Gregory, less than 1 in 10 children would live in Low Income households, while at Nativity, depending on the scenario implemented, the proportion would increase to 3, or more, in 10 children living in low income households. This analysis, based on publicly available information, was provided to the Boundary Review Committee, and can be provided to all the Trustees if you would like to see the details. So, any of the previously proposed scenarios would create a huge disparity in income levels of the children attending the neighbouring Nativity and St Gregory schools.

Second, you have heard from parents in the St Gregory community urging you to change the boundary and redirect students to Nativity. These parents' motivations

are to reduce the number of students in St Gregory so that their children will have a better school experience, while "other people's kids" will be discriminated against in that they will have a greatly reduced elementary school experience. If the previously proposed scenarios were to be pushed through, kids currently attending St Gregory would benefit by not having as many students attending the school, may not need to attend class in portables, and be more likely to "make the school team". In contrast, "other people's kids" would now be forced to be bused over a very dangerous bridge, risking their lives to get to school should they miss the bus or the bus not show up at all, not be able to participate in after school activities, attend classes in portables, and have only one set of bathrooms for the entire school. As previously pointed out, these "other people's kids" include the predominantly poorer, racially diverse kids living in the apartments on The East Mall. The comparatively rich parents are attempting to bully the disadvantaged kids of The East Mall to remove them from St Gregory and let them be the ones who can get hit by traffic in their attempt to get to school on the other side of the highway. This hardly seems like the inclusive and Christian thing to do. If these parents feel that St Gregory is overcrowded, would they bus their children to Nativity? I surmise that none would.

I ask you, what would Jesus do? I believe Jesus would ensure that no children, especially not underprivileged children, be forced to risk their lives getting to school to provide nice-to-have benefits to another group of children. The Director has correctly recommended that the boundary stay status quo and a new school be built to accommodate excess enrollment in the area.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my input.

Robert De Abreu