

Hello,

I oppose changing the boundary for st gregory school and I agree with Director Gauthier's recommendation to keep the status quo.

You have already heard from many other people who emphasize safety as a concern. The Rathburn bridge is dangerous because it has uncontrolled on and off ramps to and from the highway, no curbs and no separation between the live traffic lanes and the sidewalk. I know you have heard from people that said the solution for this is a school bus. But a school bus is not going to be a solution for my children when they are involved in after school activities and therefore will not be able to take the bus but instead ride their bike or walk across a dangerous bridge. You have also heard from many people who emphasized that changing the boundary would further divide the socio-economic status of the students which goes against the Board's policy of embracing diversity.

In addition to those reasons, I'd like to tell you how this would affect my children because after all, Trustee Andrachuk said last week "in the end, this is all about the children".

My family and I live on a street that is full of children already a part of the St gregory community. We bought our house in 2015 excited to meet other families on the street who attend St Gregory's church with us and some children who already attend St Gregory's school. My children attend play dates with the other children on the street and it is amazing to see that they have already started forming friendships. Although my children do not attend the school yet, there are other children who are the same age but will attend St Gregory's because they have older siblings who are current students. Changing the boundary will greatly affect my children because they will not be able to walk to school together with their friends on my street, they will not get to play after school activities together, they will not be able to study together and we as parents will not be able to car pool or share baby sitting during the week due to two different school schedules. I feel that this will only divide the children on my street instead of bringing them closer together. It will divide my community.

It has come to my attention that a number of children attend St Gregory's that are located outside of the catchment area. If overcrowding at the school is a concern, I think it would be far more fair and practical to first pursue overcrowding solutions that ensure children located within the boundary are not displaced by out-of-boundary parents breaking the rules. Why not introduce stricter requirements for proof of residence at the point of registration?

I urge you, please don't disrupt our children's futures. We are all here because we are passionate about the well being of our children. I want my children to have school masses held at St Gregory's church which is the parish we belong to and where they were baptized and will have their first communion and confirmation. I want my children to have their friends that live on the same street to go to the same school together. I had that experience growing up, and it was very special. I formed friendships that I have to this day. Please don't take that experience away from the children.

Sincerely,
Joanna and Derek Whittaker