

# APPENDIX ‘E’

## ARC FEEDBACK AND COMMENTS

St. Gabriel Lalemant serves as a good example of the TCDSB’s commitment to provide;

*“...an environment in all of its facilities that fosters independence, dignity, respect and to [provide] services that are free of barriers and biases to our students, parents/guardians, the public and our staff.”*

A quote taken from the TCDSB’s *Accessibility Standard’s Policy Statement*.

St. Gabriel Lalemant is the heart of this community and a strong Catholic presence. The closest Catholic institution is St. Barnabas Catholic Church located at the corner of Sheppard Avenue East and Washburn Way, outside of this neighborhood. Closing this school will remove a lot of families’ connection to the Catholic Religion.

The ARC did not feel that St. Gabriel Lalemant should be identified for closure based on the fact that their enrolment is higher than St. Bede and also that their school, although small, was at or near its’ Ministry rated capacity. In fact in terms of utilization rate, St. Gabriel Lalemant has the highest of all four (4) schools based on the fact that they are the smallest.

The ARC also felt that the FCI of 19% at St. Gabriel Lalemant was low in comparison to other schools and by Ministry of Education standards. The ARC indicated that St. Gabriel Lalemant can offer all current standard and special needs programming.

The ARC recommends that the provincial funding formula be amended to support small schools that are fully functioning.

- *“Recent changes to [the provincial funding formula](#), including cuts to declining enrolment grants and “top-up” funding for school operations, have also had a significant impact on funding, particularly for those boards with a high number of small and/or under-enrolled schools.” –People for Education*

The ARC recommends an improved consultation process occurs prior to the construction of a new school (ex. Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati) including research to identify the impact, if any, on neighboring schools. Both St. Gabriel Lalemant and St. Bede experienced a significant decrease attributable to the opening of the new Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati.

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Based on the recommendations set forth in the Initiation of Pupil Accommodation Reviews (Ward 7, 8, 9) document, there are three factors that justify consolidation:

- Low enrollment/surplus capacity
- Low utilization rates and
- Declining enrollment in the foreseeable future

St. Gabriel Lalemant does not satisfy any of these factors. Furthermore, there are schools that do meet this criteria that are not up for closure based on the hope enrolment will improve in the years to come, e.g. St. Bede and St. Rene Goupil.

The Government of Ontario passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act in 2005. The goal of this act is to make Ontario accessible for persons with disabilities by 2025, by creating and enforcing accessibility standards.

- SGL is a one-story building with ramps located at the main entrance and at the west entry doors
- There has been a recent installation of hand-railings along the main entrance to the building
- Each doorway is large enough to allow for wheelchair or scooter accessibility

Parents will choose to transfer their children to the neighboring public school, Tom Longboat because of convenience and childcare needs. This will result in the loss of students in the Catholic education system.

St. Gabriel Lalemant issues the most community permits with organizations such as Beaver Scouts and therefore already shares its facility with community partners in accordance with the Ministry of Education’s desire for schools to be used as community hubs. This also generates income for the Board. Our projected enrollment remains around 80% for the next 12 years. This is high in comparison to the other schools whose projected enrollment steadily declines over this same time frame.

Finally, the ARC would like the Board to consider the negative effects of the displacement and consolidation of students into an existing school community. This should be studied and taken seriously in decision making processes.