

My name is Susanne Austin and I am the Community Rep for Grandview School. I have lived in the Grandview School Community for 50 years and have been associated with Grandview School since 1969. I was a Primary Teacher from 1969-2000 and am now a Volunteer. I have been on the Parent Council since its inception in the mid 90's. This is the 4th ARC Committee trying to close Grandview School. The 1st being in 1988. Grandview is a Community School with 2 types of families. We have the core families of farmers, and families who have chosen to live in this Community because of Grandview School. These new families are here because they have already experienced the large school atmosphere and were not happy. There is presently a 4th generation student attending Grandview school. I taught her Grandmother and her Father. The Community supported us in 2000 when one of our teachers died at the age of 35 from Breast Cancer. We raised the money together to build a playground and memorial garden and also a reserve for their maintenance. We have a Partnership with Byng Park for our outdoor activities and annual clean-ups which promotes responsibility for our environment with the students. It's a 15 min walk from the school. We are

within walking distance of Dunnville for "Knowing your Community Activities". Our students have visited Grandview Lodge and presented various programs to the residents. Until his death in the spring we had a Therapy Dog named Duncan. He could be found in the Library laying on the Chesterfield, wagging his tail and listening to children read. Our local Fire Hall supported us with Fire Prevention projects, visits and fund raising activities. In emergencies it use to be our gathering point. Our Volunteers are family and Community members. The Volunteers are always met with a smile and a friendly Hello. They don't need nametags because the students and teachers know who they are and why they're at the school. The Volunteers present the 10 wk Strong Start Program designed to help primary students with sounds, letters and words. The Rocking Reading program is a 1 hr / week program where Volunteers listen to children read. As part of our Remembrance Day program the students send Christmas cards to Canadian Soldiers overseas and to local vets. This is the 20th year for this program. Special food days on Fri are run by Volunteers. There is a rotation of food lunches with hot dogs once a month requiring volunteers to

cook them. We have a wide variety of fundraising activities ranging from pie making requiring approx 30 volunteers to selling plants requiring 2-3 volunteers. Many volunteers help with more than 1 activity and have been there for the students for numerous years. The money raised from these fundraisers is used directly to support programs for the students. The students are given the opportunity to suggest what they would like so they have an input in the process. Grandview is a family oriented Community School. The emphasis is family and community providing a solid, safe and friendly educational base for the students to build their future. There has been talk of a Super School with no real opportunity for discussion. You can't build a super school, you build a super building. It's the students, families and community that make it a Super School. Dunnville already has super schools they just don't have super buildings. What's more important keeping students in their community school or a super building? This committee doesn't want to re-visit school closures but will have to as long as there are no jobs paying reasonable wages to attract young families with children to this area. The Grand Erie District

School Board and Haldimand County need to work together to promote this area. The house building in Dunnville will run out of properties and the logical location is the Grandview School area. The tax payers are paying for these schools and they are concerned about school closures and the affects on this community, not the amount of ed. tax on their property taxes. The Board is dealing with the lives of students, their families and community. They are not inanimate objects to be put in places so the results look good on paper. If schools close the students will be removed from their chosen school and Community, not the best solution for the students who are the most valuable part of the process. You have clearly stated that you want what's best for the students. You need to find a way to keep these schools open and prove to the Board / Ministry that this is the best solution for the students. Anything less than keeping our schools open is a failure of the ARC committee. If the Board / Ministry does not accept your recommendation to keep our schools open they are the ones who do not have the best interest

of the students as their priority. They're more concerned with having their paperwork look good. They need to put as much thought, time and effort to justify keeping our schools open and also make it look good on paper. Everything looks good on paper it's the real world that changes the plan. I had a principal who told me you always do what's right for the student and if this is in conflict you need to beg for mercy and prove your decision was right for the student. I'm asking you to make the right decision and keep our schools open so that our students can attend their community schools. Do what's best for the students and beg for mercy later.

This is an appendix to my original presentation because this information was given to me on the weekend. A local farmer has been told they can no longer farm the property across from Grandview School. They have been told by the quarry owner that Grandview School is closing and the quarry is expanding with an entrance to the expansion across from the school. This farmer has also had a conversation with another resident stating that a Board Member has told them that Grandview School is closing. This information being correct, this AHC committee has not been honest with this community and has given them the illusion that their input really matters. When in reality the decision has already been made and this is an exercise in futility for the concerned Dunnville Community and Grandview School.

Susanne Austin



Community vs. Corporation

Since moving to Dunnville, my children have attended both a large school and a small school in the area, spending the same amount of time at each. I would like to take this opportunity to provide you with my personal comparison of the two.

Grandview operates more like a community rather than a corporation. The relationships built between parents, teachers, administrators and students are intense and enduring, making it possible for teachers to make an impact beyond their classroom doors. People can't connect in the same ways in a large school because intimacy is impossible and students are anonymous. At Grandview, everyone is familiar with one another, making it a more intimate, personalized environment. Education is more productive when parents, students, administrators and teachers are bonded in their educational roles. Parental involvement tends to be greater at smaller schools, which comes from everyone knowing each other personally. As a result, there is a greater sense of unity. All of the members of the Grandview community have a clear sense of a communal mission and are able to band together when necessary.

Large size and fragmented human contact complicate the management of large schools, which increases the importance of formal rules to regulate behaviour. At smaller schools, administrators and teachers are more able to identify problems, respond innovatively and effectively and adapt to change. My son has just recently been diagnosed as having autism and obsessive compulsive disorder. He doesn't know how to function as a number in your system. At the larger school, his behaviour was handled the same way as any other number in your system. At Grandview, he has never been disciplined for his inability to function like everyone else. It was quickly recognized that my son is unable to communicate his needs effectively and that his behaviour is really just his form of communication. As a result, administrators and teachers were immediately able to address his needs, thereby, decreasing his behavioural problems. And, not once have they ever expected my son to be just like everyone else.

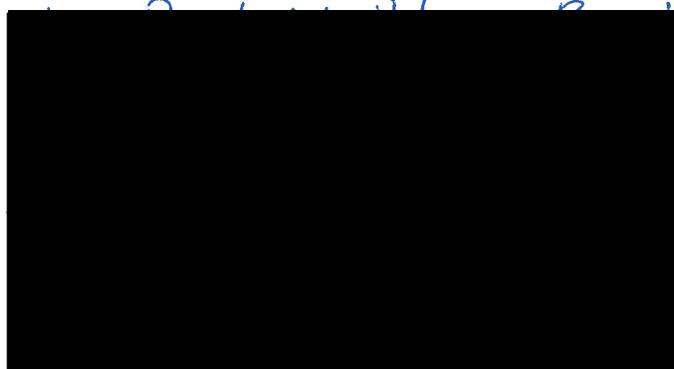
Also, athletic teams are limited to a certain number of players and excess players are cut from the team. My daughter isn't the best athlete. In a larger school, she would always be reduced to a spectator role. At Grandview, she has had the opportunity to play on every team that she wanted to, giving her a heightened sense of belonging.

My children were cogs in a large, impersonal bureaucratic system and now that they are part of a community they are able to use their unique gifts and talents to truly shine as individuals.

In making this decision, I encourage you to truly consider the impact that this is going to have on our children. It's not about you, it's about our children because our children are our future!

Submitted by:

Allison Blake



Grandview Central
Public School.

Amalgamation of Fairview, Anna Melick and Grandview into One School

Hello, my name is Beth Blake and I was born and raised in Dunnville and am now a Grandview parent of two boys.

The Accommodation Review Committee was established to ensure viable school organizations are consistent with available funding, efficient use of school buildings and appropriate accommodation for students in this area. In essence, we are here to try to cut costs. How is building a new school consistent with saving money? In order to understand how a new school fulfills cost cutting one needs to understand the concepts of capital costs and operation costs. Capital costs are mostly one time costs, similar to when you purchase a house. You only have to get the money together once. In contrast, operational costs are costs incurred on a regular basis. If you can't carry a house and pay the electricity and cable and taxes each month, you lose the house. So with a new school, Mr. Doyle has told us that the government now has an "appetite" for building new schools. Why would they do this? Because they can make up for the capital costs by the savings they have in operational costs. We all get how closing 2 properties and schools and only having one property can save a pile of money. But let's look at the staffing issues involved in combining three schools. Three principals will likely become one principal and one vice principal. Having more students can maximize class sizes to capacity, cutting back further on teachers. Diamond Trail Public School in Welland, a new school opened in 2013 combined three school communities and now only has one French teacher and one teacher librarian. Again you can see the cuts that can potentially happen when you combine learning resource teachers, educational assistants, special education teachers, school secretaries, custodians, lunch helpers and recess supervisors. You simply can cut the total number of staff at one school than what you had at three schools. These potential cost cutting measures on wages and salaries can add up to huge savings on operational costs. We have to ask ourselves: "what is the cost of these savings on our children?" How well will a principal know your child if they are 1/550 versus 1/142 which is the case now at Grandview, or 1/279 at Fairview? As well, having 550 students on a property that currently houses 279 children will be a huge change to recesses. Will they have to stagger recesses? What are the safety issues to watching that many children? An additional 250 extra children will have to be bused which will mean 6 extra buses converging on the property in the morning and afternoon. How with the neighbors feel about this significant increase in traffic? Where will the extra parking for staff be? Will that encroach on the already compromised playground space? Someone mentioned at the last meeting how great and strong our sports teams will be. However, less kids will be able to be part of the teams as three separate school teams will now become one. And we will only have one other school in Dunnville to play against. How will the teacher's operate under these circumstances and how will their extra stress affect our students?

As parents, we choose where we live and therefore what school our children will attend. I disagree with Mr. Doyle's opening comments that our children will be fine wherever they are, just like his children were. I want my kids to be more than just fine in a school that I chose for them to attend. In our school my two boys know kids from JK to grade 8 and speak to them by name. The big kids look out for the little kids and they are part of a community that is just the right size for them. Dunnville is a rural community and doesn't need city-sized schools.

A big concern with an amalgamated school is that if we choose this option there is no guarantee that it will happen. Even if the government agrees to fund this option the town might say that the

infrastructure like roads, sewage and the property itself does not support a school of this size. And honestly, when we are here to cut costs, what do you think the chances are of funding a pool or recreational centre or any extras. WE ARE HERE AT THE ARC BECAUSE WE NEED TO CUT COSTS, and a pool and recreation centre will only add to the operational costs.

Also, with this option of building a new school, if it is rejected, there must be a plan b option. Currently, by default, Grandview and Anna Melick would close and they would still have to add on to the existing schools to accommodate for us not having portables.

Amalgamating Grandview, Anna Melick and Fairview schools into a new school called the "Superschool" was announced at the last ARC meeting. I say it is a big new building. If you think that bricks and mortar are more important than adequate staff to educate our children then you should stick with this option. But keep in mind...we currently have super schools – the schools that our children are in now. Let's preserve as many of these as we can. I urge you to vote for Option 10b, our most viable option from a funding perspective that also preserves our already super schools – Grandview, Fairview and Thompson Creek.

Thank-you.

Ladies and gentleman of the ARC committee,

I'm going to keep this short and sweet. I believe if you take away the emotion and look at the hard facts using the numbers given by the board you will agree with me that the best solution here for everyone from the students to the board is the idea of a new school built on Fairview property.

There is more than enough room to accommodate a larger school and still have a good deal of green space for the students. The combined 5 year projected "facilities upgrades" of the three schools that would be combined (Anna Melick, Grandview, and Fairview) is equal to about 80% of the cost of building a new school. The projected upgrade cost for the three schools is approx. 8.75 million dollars and the projected cost of a new school is approx. 11 million.

All the students that enroll at the new school would benefit from the latest and newest technology and design that can be offered.

The school is in the most central location to service a large number of walking students and in the boards presentation it was projected that the bussing needs would not change very much (so it is not a real inconvenience for the new students). It would also give this town something new, exciting and beautiful. Something to be proud of.

I also feel this would be the best way to keep people who are threatening to leave the Granderie school board and could also help bring some "lost" students back. Who wouldn't want their children in the best available facility?

Please do not be drawn in by emotion and do what is best for everyone and recommend the option of a new school in Dunnville.

I realise this leaves the Cayuga area as status quo and I feel the only way that can change is if the boundary for JL is moved in a way that will bring some of Rainhams students (who are bussed anyways) into the town school.

I also want to add that Fairview should never be looked at as an option for closure. It is a desperate attempt to keep smaller underutilized schools a float, but removes the one school that the majority of the students in town can walk to, and busses them to outlying/rural schools. That sure doesn't make much sense to me!

I hope we learned from the lesson last time we went through this process and make the hard decision, the right decision, the best decision, a new school for everyone!

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Tim Boyer

October 20, 2015

Submission from Glen and Stephane Dale, Lowbanks

To Whom It May Concern:

Regarding the possible closing of Anna Melick Memorial School.

I would love to come to the meetings in support of Anna Melick Memorial School, but have 4 little children and can't seem to get away.

But I do support Anna Melick, and wish for it to continue to stay open. I drive my children every day to school and prefer that over sending them into town to a school. I prefer the fresh air in the country for the children/students and a small friendly school setting. If Anna Melick should close, my other options are to Home School, or send them to Winger, another small country school. I am sad to see the small country schools disappearing, and hope more people would continue to support them. With Bus Routes accommodating them as well. This would be much more helpful in attendance for the smaller schools.

I am not in support of a SUPER SCHOOL at all, in fact I very much Dislike the very thought of it, and will not support anything about it at all. Ever.

It will be a VERY SAD day when Anna Melick is forced to close its doors for the last time.

Thank-You for listening to my thoughts and concerns,

Sincerely,

Glen and Stephanie Dale

in Lowbanks

Delegation_Haldimand East Elementary Arc Review

Spokesperson: Jessica Davidson

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

My name is Jessica Davidson, and I am hopeful that my kids will attend Grandview Central Public School. I want to start out by thanking everyone that's here, because we are all trying to do the same thing, which is to preserve the quality of our kids education. And even though some of us might have different perspectives about how to do that, I respect each and every one of you for taking an interest in this very important matter.

The communities of Byng and Port Maitland want and need our school. I have a petition with 668 signatures of people who agree with me. When you drive around our catchment area you can see the numerous Save Grandview signs on many people's front lawns showing their support. Our facebook page, titled "Save Grandview School 2015" has 331 members. The showing of support from our community at the rally in June was evident to everyone. Since the time of the last meeting I have talked to many parents and posed the question on our facebook page of whether the Grandview Central community would prefer a new state of the art facility, or if they would choose to keep Grandview open. The overwhelming majority of those who have responded said that they would prefer Grandview stay open as opposed to a new "super school". Why? Because Grandview is a GREAT school, and we need a school on the South side of the river.

With the Grand River and Byng Provincial Park located a walking distance from the school, Grandview has a superior outdoor education program that allows children to get exposure to the nature of Byng park and experience fieldtrips with Grand River Kayak. Our kids have the privilege of seeing the direct natural environment surrounding them, meeting their neighbours, and taking part in adventures and outings that won't be available to them elsewhere. Partnerships see students learning how to kayak, use a map and compass, participate in park wide clean-ups, cross country trail running, and much more.

Students benefit from a large group of volunteers that provide many programs unique to Grandview Central, further connecting the school to the community. There's the Freedom Runners program, that runs in partnership with HNHU. The Mighty Machines event, which drew in over 350 people last year. Volunteers run seasonal craft and wood working projects, reading programs, a food and nutrition program, and the annual community pie making event which the school has become known for.

Built in 1950, Grandview has a long history in our community. Several families in Byng and Port Maitland have generations of people attending this school, it's a beautiful thing. Some of the many volunteers participating in programs like rockin readers once attended Grandview themselves. There's a special legacy here and it needs to be protected.

I moved to Port Maitland 9 years ago. My husband attended Grandview as a child and still lives here. I always thought it was so cool that he still knew the people he went to public school with. I never had this experience myself because I moved around a lot growing up and actually attended 6 elementary schools by the time I was in grade 8. I can tell you from this experience that bigger isn't always better. When my husband and I had our kids, we became excited about them attending Grandview: a small country school with the other kids on this side of the river. Getting to know their neighbours. I love how close the school is and how easy it will be for me to get involved in school activities and meet other like minded parents and community members. I can volunteer my time there, and my kids can even come home for lunch if they want to. Grandview was a huge attraction for me to this community, and it is for other families as well. In fact most new families in our catchment who have responded to surveys cite attendance at a rural school, and Grandview specifically, as a deciding factor for buying and living in our community.

Based on current projections, the decline in enrollment that Grandview has been experiencing is expected to level off by next year and remain constant, or increase into 2024. Current and projected student populations will sustain a K-8 model. I think that our enrollment WILL increase. Young people are moving to Byng and Port Maitland, and new is development happening. It's very difficult to predict future enrollment. This is possibly best demonstrated by the fact that in 2011 the ARC review predicted Grandview Central would have 95% enrollment in 2015. That's a big gap from what we're at now and it demonstrates a significant margin of error. I see a lot of new families moving to Byng and new homes being built in my area. We are a growing community and we have more capacity to continue this growth into the future. But we will need our school.

A school presence is needed on the south side of the Grand River, not only because it encourages new families to move here, and plays a vital role in our community, but also because students could be affected by having to cross the bridge to attend school. There have been many instances of construction and closures on the Grand River bridge in the past. This could mean a major inconvenience for students who have to travel across it to attend school. If the bridge were to close, students would have to drive all the way to Cayuga just to cross the river to get to school. Also, our community has already been impacted recently by the decision to close our fire hall. We can't afford to lose our school too.

At a previous ARC meeting everyone agreed that you don't like closing schools. Option 10 (B) is a viable option that makes a lot of sense and results in the closure of only one school. I hope the committee will make the choice to keep more schools open. JL Mitchener and Rainham Central should never have been included as part of this review process. They weren't part of the previous ARC reviews for Dunnville. Neither school is going to be closed, nor do I think anyone is willing to send our kids to a public school so far away from home with kids that will attend a different high school. The only result of including JL Mitchener and Rainham Central in this review is that our overall enrollment numbers look worse. And Dunnville pays the price.

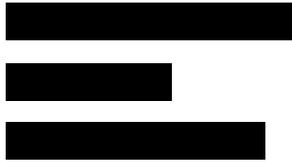
I get that the super school might sound enticing, but there are major downfalls associated with this option. 550 students is a lot to manage in one building. The playground will be an intimidating environment for the younger kids. The individual responsibilities for the staff in a school this size could

be very difficult, and I'm concerned that there would be less support per child and overall less staff working for our kids in our community.

At the end of the day I want the ARC committee to ask yourselves if a super school is really what our communities need right now. And are you willing take a beloved school away from a community that needs it in order to build this new facility? You would be choosing to tear down a building with a rich history. An excellent school that is beloved by the students that attend there and supported by a caring volunteer base. Please. Don't tear down 3 schools to build one. Close less schools, not more.

Thank you very much for your time.

2015 ARC Delegation – Renee Hamilton



Accommodation review or better known as ARC.

A for adjustments, ability to adapt.

R for resolutions, restructuring

C for compromise, common sense

All of these should be taken into consideration when making new decisions, forming new options, and ultimately coming to a final agreement through the work of the committee.

A for adjustments and ability to adapt takes us directly to how the options are compiled in the beginning of the process. Some of the options are put forth by the board and some take shape as the committee goes over information and decides if new options should be considered. In every option the adjustments proposed are in direct coordination with the ability to adapt. All of the options will be forcing everyone to adapt through the direct closure of facilities. The closure of facilities is a necessary option however more thought should be put into the decision besides just a number or lack of numbers. Some other vital statistics that should be included are how this will impact the future generations and the ultimate numbers we will end up with. Without taking the accommodation review into consideration our board loses students to separate school boards each year. Our goal should be to keep as many as possible so that our numbers are not in a state of decline. The closure of schools makes families reevaluate the area they live in or choose to move to, rural or urban. This brings me directly back to ability to adapt or the willingness to. We all make decisions in life that fit our needs.

R for resolutions and restructuring is the reason we do this process at all. The resolutions are the options that the board and the committee form through the review of information and data. Some of the information seems to be redundant and not really of any importance. The reviews of what each school offers or how it is structured should have no relevance on the goal of learning and the environment in which to do so. In all options there will be a degree of restructuring of the boundaries in which to accommodate the ultimate decision. In option seven the closure of Fairview Avenue offers the least amount of restructuring in boundary changes and offers resolution to moving the school community within the urban catchments.

C for compromise and common sense or the lack of. In each and every option there will be a definite need to compromise. Each person or family involved in this process feels the impact of the willingness to compromise. It is always difficult to change something you have been used to for years sometimes decades. The closure of Anna Melick and Grandview has a lot to do with compromise but nothing to do with common sense. These are the only two remaining rural school environments left in this area. We have heard with very strong convictions that people radiate to the country for the rural environment. They also choose this for their children by being able to attend the rural schools. The distance between Anna Melick and Grandview provides the ability to cover the areas on either side of the urban boundaries. I truly believe that you should never put all your eggs in one basket which brings me to my reasoning on the common sense aspect of the closure of both. If Fairview Avenue closes this would now allow rural students to resume and would also allow urban students to resume as usual. The space at Thompson Creek to accommodate buses also seems to make more sense, it's location is less confined by neighbouring homes. Having two schools within walking distance of one another peaks my common sense in not making much sense at all. My only other issue in respect to common sense with the new option of the super school is if numbers fluctuate and increase a little or decrease a lot what in 10 years time to we do with a super school not functioning to meet the capacity numbers that the board strives for? Would it not make more sense to keep rural and urban options open and available at least?

Thankyou to all, trustees, members of the ARC and all here in attendance this evening.

Good evening,

I'm not here tonight speaking to you as an ARC member but as the Fairview Avenue parent council chair and voice of our parent council community. Since this isn't the first time I've been through this process I know that it is an emotional time for all involved. I am emotional about the whole process myself. I went to Fairview, my mom went to Fairview, and so do my children, but we can't base this decision on emotions. This decision needs to be based on what is best for the children, the community and the board.

From a review of the boards initial options I feel that is quite clear what is best for everyone involved. The only option that I think would be more beneficial to everyone would be the new option to close Anna Melick, Grandview and Fairview and build a new school on the Fairview property. I feel that if this option was originally available it would have been one of the board's options as well. To explain my reasoning as to why I think Fairview school should remain open or have a new school built on his property are the following:

1. You cannot close the only true in town school and expect the community to thrive or to attract new families.
2. Why would you close a school where 75% of the population walks and then add the added expense of now bussing all of the students?
3. Fairview offers 8.55 acres of land, which is more than enough room for all of the kids to play.
4. Fairview school is within walking distance of the arena, lion's pool and the town in general.
5. Fairview is adjacent to Kinsman Park which has a playground and baseball fields which are frequently used by the school.
6. They are the only school to have a designated drop off loop for added safety for the students and the community members.

I would just like to say that I am sure everyone loves their school and no one wants to see their school close but something needs to be done and I would preferred to see the least impact on the students. For example I don't want to see schools split up. JL Mitchener and Thompson Creek were taken off as options for the same reasons. If Fairview closes (and the new school wasn't built) the kids would have to be split up 3 ways in order to accommodate them. It is also my understanding that if this happened, portables may be necessary to fit the children into the remaining schools and it has been made very clear that NO ONE wants their children in portables.

If a new school was built all of the students would stay together and all attend a new school. Yes there would be an impact on every school and every student including Fairview students, but the impact would be minimal. Everyone would have to learn that layout of a new school and where their classrooms are and the bathrooms are. Yes, bussing times would increase, but only slightly for the majority of students involved but they would have the benefit of a new state-of-the-art facility to learn in. It could have specialized rooms to accommodate children with special needs, air conditioning for those hot summer days and would be much more energy efficient than the 3 schools in question.

In close, I think that that is what should be most important to students, parents, trustees and the board. How can we make the best funding decisions for these children with the least impact and stress? To me that is leaving Fairview school open and hopefully building a new "super school" on the property to house Fairview, Grandview and Anna Melick students and our community partners, the Ontario Early Years Centre as well as our licensed child care program.

Thank you for your time.

Danielle Lipson

Hello, good evening Accommodation Review Committee ,

My Name is Lianne Park

'thank you for this opportunity to come & speak on such a matter that is close to all of our hearts. When I first heard of the opportunity to come and speak I had many ideas in my head on how to sell you on the importance of my hometown school of Rainham Central. Please don't misunderstand Rainham is an amazing school in a supportive rural community. I attended Rainham Central, my children attend there now and who knows maybe one day I will have grandchildren attend this school. But when I reviewed the flyer on what the ARC wanted to hear from delegates it was not about how wonderful my school was, it was they wished to hear feedback from parents, staff and community members on the best way to accommodate elementary students in the Haldimand East area.

There is a few key points I want to make very clear. All 6 schools in this review process are amazing! They are filled with spectacular and caring staff. Teachers, EA's, ECE's, secretaries, custodial staff, volunteers and principals. It takes a true labour of dedication to provide our children with education, life lessons and many childhood memories. We are all unique. We all have our own ways in which we celebrate success, educate and stand out. We all feel our school is the best possible place for our children to be and to remain. In a perfect world our schools would all be left alone and no one would be put through this process. Unfortunately we are living in a time where this is not possible. Financial responsibility, demographics and empty student seats are the issues on the table. I do not want to see your school close down anymore than I want my school to close down. My empathy is pouring out. At this time I do not know what the final outcome of this review will be. I am certain it will not be the impossible vision of everything remaining the same.

- As I look back on what the ARC has asked me here for tonight, they wish to hear feedback from parents, staff and community members on the best way to accommodate elementary students in the Haldimand East area I am reminded who this is all about. The students. What is the best way to accommodate the elementary students in Haldimand East. I have read through the meeting minutes and see how many ideas have been put forward to this

committee. I look for a solution that has the best interest of all students involved, not only my children but your children. I hope that we are all thinking of everyone's children now and for future generations to come. When I reviewed all of the options I am drawn to one.

• **Option 11: Close Anna Melick, Close Grandview and assign all students to a new school to be built at the Fairview site**

- Although this options would see 2 schools closing their doors I am able to see new doors and opportunities opening
- I am able to recognize that this option would benefit ½ of the schools involved in the review

When is the last time we have seen a new school built within our area ?

The opportunity of having a new school would see a new start for all students attending. Existing buildings and properties can be sold and may potentially attract new business in the area. People looking to move into the area would be pleased to see the continually new growth Dunnville has to offer. Arena, lifespan centre, hospital upgrades and a new school

The features a new school can offer are endless

Take a moment and consider the positives to this option

Do the positives out weigh the other options put before you?

At the end of this review we know that we will see school closures. That is beyond our control. Lets all put our own personal agendas aside and look for the option that has positive benefits to the children in the Haldimand East area.

Thank you & good night

Grand Erie Haldimand East Accommodation Review

Delegation Submission October 29, 2015

Adam Roesch

Closing existing schools and replacing that space with portable classrooms is a step in the wrong direction. Any option that involves the implementation of portable classrooms is unacceptable for the following reasons:

1. School security: Grand Erie District School board (GEDSB) policy S013 states: *“Entry to schools will comply with the Safe Welcome program. Specifically, elementary schools will be locked at all times during the school day; secondary schools will be locked as necessary”*.

Locking and monitoring a main school building is doable; however, locking and monitoring access to a portable will be difficult at best. Children needing to use bathroom facilities, children being sent to the Principal’s office etc. and teachers needing assistance or supplies present procedural security obstacles (e.g. how will a child be supervised going to and from the portable to the main school building?). These extra challenges are not present with a permanent stand-alone school structure.

Deciding to use portables would unnecessarily create a potentially unsafe environment and therefore contradict the GEDSB’s policy on school security.

2. Healthy Classrooms – GEDSB Policy FT10 Green School Construction and Renovation states: *“The Grand Erie District School Board is committed to the development of green and healthy education facilities that contribute to a sustainable future.”*

The problem is that portables are notorious for not being healthy environments.

- a) There are recent examples in the Toronto school Board of health problems associated with portable classrooms to the point that some parents have removed their children from school. (See news item on Global News Oct 20, 2014 - Secord Elementary School) Part of this feature included the commentary from a frustrated school board trustee stating that there was no money available to repair these portables. We should keep this in mind as we make decisions that will affect the future well-being of our teachers and children. Will we also be lacking money to fix leaky portables in the future?

An internet search will quickly reveal there are many more examples of portable classrooms with mould/air quality issues – too numerous to catalog here.

- b) The Region of Peel Public Health issued an environmental health statement regarding school portables stating: *“School portables tend to be sources of mould because they are susceptible to water leaks and they often have poor ventilation or humidity control.”*

- c) The Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation (OSSTF) Health and Safety Handbook states in Section 5: *“Members who work in portable classroom settings are particularly at risk for indoor air quality problems as portable classrooms often have inadequate ventilation and high relative humidity that encourages mould and mildew growth. This growth may not be outwardly visible and may hide behind walls or ceiling tiles.”*
- d) Ontario 36:3 Bill 4, Education Amendment Act (Mould Contamination in Portable Classrooms), 1999 is a law that deals with monitoring portable classrooms for the mould *Stachybotrys atra* and the procedures for cleaning portable classrooms affected with this mould. Evidently, this is enough of a problem that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario is compelled to deal with it by statute.

Deciding to use portables would create a potentially unhealthy environment and therefore contradict GEDSB’s own policy on green and healthy facilities.

- 3. Viability: Have the following questions been considered?
 - 1) Have the schools been assessed as to their capacity to have portables i.e. Are there enough bathroom facilities/fixtures to accommodate extra classrooms?
 - 2) Has the Haldimand County Building Department been consulted on these tentative options regarding issues such as the above mentioned bathroom facilities as well as storm sewer and sanitary sewer considerations?
 - 3) Have you considered that children changing classrooms during inclement weather are subject to the elements in a way they would not be if they remain in a stand-alone building?
 - 4) How are accessibility issues regarding handicapped people being addressed?

Deciding to use portables could potentially create other viability problems not yet considered.

We acknowledge that there are situations that require the use of portables – many municipalities in the greater Toronto area are growing at a rate faster than the current schools can accommodate and therefore portables are a viable short term option. This is not the situation in the GEDSB. We have good, safe, healthy buildings that will accommodate all of our children and teachers without having to utilize temporary portables. An additional consideration is that portables here are not being viewed as a short-term solution – many of the options in the Haldimand East Accommodation Review plan use portables for the foreseeable future.

In conclusion, moving students and teachers from safe, dry, comfortable, accessible facilities to portable temporary structures that have a documented history of problems, to the extent that professional associations have policies regarding the dangers of them, is not an acceptable option. This is not progress. We are asking the Accommodation Review Committee to reject any option that includes the use of portables in order that the convenience, security and safety that our children and their teachers are entitled to are safeguarded.

ARC DELEGATION LETTER

- Good evening, my name is Gary Smith and I am a parent in the Grandview School community.
- It was stated early on in this process that we all agree we do not want to close schools. This is a funding issue; it's not about how *many* schools we have, this is about right sizing our schools to maximize the effectiveness of our budget.
- We also all agreed that portables are not an acceptable alternative when choosing to close schools.
- We had several options presented by the board that did not address capacity at Rainham Central or J.L. Mitchener. The Board's Accommodation Review Policy clearly states that "ARC recommendations shall address every school in the designated review area".
- We have heard that Rainham Central is protected by the "10 kilometer rule", which tops up its funding regardless of enrolment and effectively removes it from this process. Rainham currently has 89% enrolment, not including portables.
- We have not been able to come up with a recommendation that addresses J.L. Mitchener's capacity issues without splitting catchment areas between elementary and secondary schools in Cayuga and Dunnville. So essentially we have not come up with a solution that involves J.L. Mitchener that would be acceptable to either community. We believe it is too far removed geographically to be considered part of the Dunnville school boundary.
- The *Ministry* ARC Guidelines state that heightened consideration must be given to a school "if it is the only school within their community". Grandview is the only school in the Hamlet of Byng, and the only school on the south side of the Grand River in the Dunnville area.
- We have also heard a proposal for a new "Superschool" to be built on the current Fairview site, but this begs the question; is this a wise use of our taxpayer money? This is, after all, about being fiscally responsible, and it seems like a wasteful expenditure when we can accommodate our students in schools that we already have and are happy with.
- Therefore we propose that the only viable option is the last one presented at the previous meeting, which is to close Anna Melick, reassign the Yaremy to Sutor Road area to Dunnville and remove Rainham Central and J.L Mitchener from this Accommodation Review. This would leave us with greater than 88% utilization in 5 years' time with room to accommodate future growth if necessary. It addresses

the capacity concerns as well as maintaining most of our current facilities and most importantly, does not split communities. Thank you for your time,

Sincerely,

Gary Smith

In this world there are city folk and country folk. People live in these regions for a reason. City people like being close to things - close to neighbours, close to shops, close to schools - they enjoy the bustle of life in the city. Country people choose to live in the country. They like land around their homes, they don't mind having to make trips "into town" to go shopping and most importantly they want their children to go to a country school. Country schools are usually smaller than city ones, the class sizes are smaller and all of the teachers are sure to know all of the students in the school by name. Anna Melick is our small country school with a huge heart. Families live in the area and send their children to Anna Melick because they want them to attend a rural school.

We sent a survey out to our parents providing two main options. A - If Anna Melick were to close, would you send your children to Thompson Creek? or other options including 1) sending them to Winger or another country school 2) sending them to a Catholic or Christian School or 3) home schooling. Also, Option B If Anna Melick were to close and a new super school was built - would you send your children to the new school? with the same options.

We were very surprised by the response. We received 83% of the surveys back. We took into account the number of grade 8 families who would not be effected by the closure of Anna Melick.

Here are the results.

Option A - Only 8 families would send their children to Thompson Creek, 17 would send their children to Winger or another country school, 6 would sent their children to a catholic or Christian school, 6 would home school their children and 6 were undecided.

There are 68 families with 120 students so we calculated an average of 2 children per family. Then we bumped it up a bit to compensate for the undecided and concluded that only 20 students from Anna Melick would transfer to Thompson Creek. In all of the options presented to ARC the projected enrolments are based on 120 students. This figure is more likely to be 20 students.

Option B - 13 families would choose to send their children to a new "super" school. This would result in about 30 students transferring with the projections now being short by 90 students.

Now let us look at how these more accurate figures effect the options.

Option 3 - Close Anna Melick and Grandview. Instead of the 120 enrolment shift there would only be 20. The 5 year projection would now be 84.9% utilization down from 91.6% excluding portables and 77.7% including portables. With surplus pupil spaces of 365.

Option 7 - Close Fairview and keep Anna Melick and Grandview open. The projections would remain the same with 89.4% utilization excluding portables and 84.3% utilization including portables.

Option 9 - Close Anna Melick and Rainham 5 year projected utilization would now be 89.36% with 152 surplus spaces. There are no portables involved. But this option involves closing our only two truly rural schools.

Option 10 - Reassign Yarmey to Sutor Rd to Dunnville Schools and Remove Rainham and JL Mitchener from the review. The projections would remain the same as Anna Melick remains open

Option 10 B - which is Options 10 BUT with closing Anna Melick. There would only be a 20 student enrolment shift instead of the 120 in the option. This would result in utilization excluding portables at 78.2% and with portables at 75.3% with 162 surplus pupil spaces.

Option 11 - Close Anna Melick and Grandview and build a new super school at the Fairview Site. The enrolment shift from Anna Melick would be closer to 30 than 120 resulting in utilization excluding portables at 84.9% and including portables at 76.74 with surplus pupil spaces of 387.

These lower enrolments will also filter over to Dunnville Secondary. Losing a grade 8 student intake of approximately 15-20 from Anna Melick now going to other school districts will result in a significant decrease in enrolment over 4 years.

Parents send their children to country schools for a reason. They DO NOT want to send their children to a city school. The overwhelming response to our survey shows this. Anna Melick has a strong tie to Dunnville, it would be a shame to lose it to other school districts.

Good Evening ,

My name is Sheri Styles; I moved to Canada to escape the life that I never felt comfortable in. I grew up in the big city of London, England and always knew that I wanted to move to a rural location, but I never realised how much I would love living in a place like Lowbanks.

Living in Lowbanks is a huge deal to me and my family. We have an amazing community that we are a big part of. With my husband being a firefighter for station 7 and us having 3 kids we feel like we have got to know a lot of people and made some valuable relationships over the last 10 years that we have lived here.

My boys have started school and love to get on the bus each day and meet their friends and teachers every day. They often come home and talk about all the children in their whole school, not just the few friends in their class. Each teacher knows every single child in the whole school as does the principle. Anna Melick not just a place to learn or a place where 2 of my children get babysat. They get an amazing amount of attention that they need and deserve to help them grow and develop.

I love the rural school idea; with having small classes and connections and bonds to each other that you wouldn't find in a big, over populated and busy school.

We live in the country because we like the calmness and the quietness.

Having grown up in a big city and a crazy busy rat race of a life I now appreciate the much simpler things in life, as do my children.

Moving my children into a school that is in town completely defeats my purpose of moving to the county and I am now having to think about making big decisions to change either where we live or changing our routine so my children can go to a rural school in another school district.

I know that I am definitely not the only parent who feels very strongly about our little rural school with a big heart, and I am not the only parent who is willing to make a few sacrifices and changes to keep our children in the rural setting. Winger school have told me that they would be delighted to accept my 3 children into their cozy school, and I am very happy that I can stay in Lowbanks and have this option.

I know that Grand Erie school board have counted the empty seats and that they have accounted that if they merge the schools that they assume all the students from Anna Mellick will just move together. But having seen the results from a survey that was conducted, I know that the numbers that have been predicted are now incorrect, so many of the rural families feel the same as me and will want to send their children to either another school that is out of the district and even home school to avoid sending their children into town.

I do understand that changes have to be made to accommodate the decreasing numbers of students that we have in this area, but I feel that losing a rural school is not the answer. The bus ride into town would be a longer ride than it already is for my young children. I feel that will be hard on the kids as they would be too tired when they get home to do their homework and the longer they are out of the house than it would also take away from our valuable family time and play time.

I do really feel that there are other options to be thought about when closing schools, not just the amount of seats that will need to be filled. It is of course an emotional process for all involved, but I too

feel very strongly about living in the country and keeping my children's education in the rural setting that we have chosen for our lifestyle. Taking this option away is unfair and unreasonable. There are 2 schools in town and merging the both of them together keeps all the children that live and attend school in town together and also keeps the children that attend rural schools in the rural setting that they desire. Instead of causing uproar in 4 schools you are just moving one school to another. I know that this option hasn't even been suggested yet.

I am extremely disappointed and devastated that our wonderful plans of our lives and for our children may be taken away

Please vote to keep Anna Melick Memorial School open for rural students.

Thank you.

To Whom It May Concern,

I am not able to attend the ARC meetings due to my work schedule but I would like to share my views with the committee.

I am a mother of a 3 year old child and have started reviewing potential schools in the Dunnville area of Haldimand County. I am very disappointed with the lack of educational programs, services and extra-curricular activities offered at Haldimand County schools. Driving around looking at the older exteriors, many schools are in need of repair. I have compared curriculum, programs and services to Hamilton and they surpass those in Haldimand. I believe the high ratio of elementary schools vs low student enrollment has great impact on funding for educational services and support, and much needed renovations.

I have reviewed the ARC's proposals and I am in favor of closing elementary schools so that a new school will be constructed.

A new state of the art school can provide a modern facility, educationally innovative features and technological amenities. The money retained from going from three schools to one, may provide additional funding for specialized educational programs and services. Dunnville could provide children an opportunity at having the best educational experience in a new state of the art school.

I believe we need to put the educational future of our children first and not save schools because of convenience and proximity.

Thank you.