

I attended a meeting a few days ago at Elgin Avenue Public. The meeting contained many concerned parents that were passionate about keeping Elgin not only open for education, but also for the integration of all children west of highway 24.

I left this meeting Pro Elgin but like any good decision should be made; I decided to investigate the options and the opinions that were supporting the WestLynn School.

I saw the same enthusiasm and passion that was alive and well in West Lynn as I did in Elgin.

I had to call this argument a draw. We were the same people, with the same concerns.

I dug a little deeper, to try and resolve my struggle and pick a side in this debate. I then remembered a lesson I had learned in the Industrial Arts Program that was taught by a great and fair man Mr. Milne. His lesson was one that I carry with me still today. He would say “Boys the first thing you need before you start any project is a well thought out plan.”

I remember in the eighties Elgin hosted the Industrial Arts Program and the Home Economics Program for the surrounding schools that could not offer them. At the same time they were offering integration to the mentally and physically challenged and also to the refugees of Vietnam. These were tough times for Howard Clark and the faculty of Elgin. But all along they were learning to persevere.

Now back to my lesson about Planning.

There is no one who will stand up and estimate the true costs that could haunt the West Lynn consideration. “Until you have a Plan you cannot and should not be considered.” Thank you Mr. Milne.

I see historic boundary lines have never changed, even after the closures of North and South Schools. Elgin seems to be at the mercy of the lines of the expansion of Simcoe itself.

We know demographics in the name of affordable properties have aligned themselves with Elgin's catchment therefore a good number of students come from a financially struggling families. The rhythm of these families and students are the most vulnerable to this kind of resettlement. Their lives are structured around a neighborhood school that meets the Hierarchy of needs. This kind of development is essential to break the stereotype reputation people have placed on the families and students of Elgin for years.

Integration people.

Elgin has been doing it for decades. South end families are the same as us, come on in, and you'll be welcomed.

I could only hope if the tables are turned our Elgin families would experience the same kind of hospitality they've been extended.

We have equal opinions and loyalties to the things we appreciate. Our schools are subjective.

All I ask from here is that a choice not be framed by the one who can write the best inspirational paragraph , but by the ones who provide a good plan and the hospitality to carry it out.

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