

My Name is Jill Cornell and I am a parent of 2 very proud Elgin Eagles.

You are aware of the compensatory status of our school, Elgin Ave. PS. You know or have access to information to know how many, many of our families struggle financially and socially. You know where the greatest need is in the town of Simcoe – and you know where these children go to school.

Many families in the Elgin community, do not own a vehicle to drive their children to school – they rely on walking. To these families, Elgin school is a safe haven, a place of acceptance and a place that they can walk to in less than 15 minutes.

By recommending to close Elgin Ave School, you are taking away that safe haven and you are sending the message to our families that you are okay with sending their children to a school that is close to an hour walk away, through busy streets – many with no sidewalks to the south most part of town. Imagine what the reversal of the original recommendation to renovate and refresh Elgin Ave PS is doing to these families? What do the children do for after school activities and sports? What does a parent without a car do when their child is sick or needs immediate assistance ... and your school is an hour walk away – one way? Pay for a cab, rely on the kindness of other ... or most likely walk because there is no other choice.

Right now there is one important choice you can make – keep Elgin Ave PS open – save our school ... with that, you save our families and give them the chances that they so desperately need.

Closing Elgin Ave PS will leave 2 schools in the town of Simcoe – Lynndale Heights to the east of town and West Lynn to the southernmost part of town. Ask yourself – who are you servicing with this decision? Why are you not choosing a centrally located school for our future?

In deciding to close Elgin Ave PS – you are closing the most central school in the town of Simcoe that can provide the most opportunity to grow in the future – especially to children who are faced with financial and social challenges. Please think about the children you are elected to protect and serve, please remember that families located in the north and west ends of the town of Simcoe matter. Please show our community that the short term revenue of the sale of our school is NOT more important than providing a logistically safe and sound location for the future of education in the town of Simcoe. Think of the families on Queensway West, Queen St. North and those located in the immediate downtown core – imagine their day to day struggle. Are you really okay with removing the comfort and closeness that a school within reasonable walking distance can provide?

Please also consider any environment risks with the land that is recommended to purchase behind West Lynn. Please research and study the land drainage of the area, specifically the land east of Norfolk St. where the subdivision, Dream Villa was supposed to be developed – and now will not. Part of the drain system is located on the Demeyere property and is in need of critical repair. The drain continues under Norfolk Street to the west onto the agricultural land beside the land that is recommended for purchase. Please research and question the repairs required

for this drain system before making the decision to buy land that was more than 50% identified as part of “drainage area, Branch B” under the Decou Road Drain.

It has been mentioned many times that that Norfolk General Hospital has a need to expand and use the Elgin property. NGH is midway through a \$13 Million dollar to upgrade the operating rooms and obstetrics department. On the current property owned by NGH; there is residential land on Bellevue and the old Health unit building available. As a taxpayer, one would hope NGH would use their current underutilized assets first before purchasing any additional land. With the surplus of vacant land on Queen St., Robinson St, Stanley Street and Queensway/Cedar Street, there is ample land to develop within the town of Simcoe. The former North School which was torn down ~ 2012 is finally just commencing a townhouse development with more vacant land advertising for sale. No one knows the future of what would become of the Elgin PS property if it were to be closed.

Don't view our school's perceived silence as complacency or indifference. Elgin did not host any of the ARC meetings, despite being a huge part of final decision. You did not see a presence partly because many families could not walk to the other schools, afford babysitters or take time off work. Our school families supported the original recommendation and were not expecting this very unfair recommendation reversal. The original recommendation made sense. We thought you believed in us, that you believed in the community of Elgin. In the first delegation, we only wanted to show you who we are and why our school is worth the investment. We did that, without tearing down or demeaning any other school in the meeting and delegation process ... our school was not so lucky, we accepted the criticism and not so kind comments because we were of the understanding you believed in Elgin's potential ... that you could see us through all the noise. The reversal by the senior Admin at GEDSB now says otherwise – the recommendation that is now on the table, has no tangible data to consider and review. Did something behind the scenes significantly change that we don't know about – what is that and why?

Our world is becoming a very scary place ... those with the largest bank accounts, largest homes, loudest voices should not have the largest influence. Look for those who feel they don't have a voice, a chance or a hope. Look for the cipher in the snow. Don't leave anyone behind. This is what we elected you to do – put the children first.

Our hearts are broken because the only value now GEDSB sees in our school is for the unknown revenue in our school's sale. Dollar Signs ... is this what the decision comes down to?

Look at a map of Simcoe – Lynndale Heights to the east, Simcoe Composite in the centre and Elgin Ave PS to the west – all three schools centrally in a line – to service the whole of our community.

Do not close Elgin Ave PS – see us, hear us, help us ... our future is in your hands.

