

I am a proud parent of Elgin Public School and I'm deeply concerned with the proposal to close Elgin.

There are many reasons I feel keeping Elgin open is not only the best choice, but the only choice.

- 99% of the student body walk to school and a large number of these students come from the Queen Street housing complex and the down town area. A lot of these families are single parent families that don't have a vehicle. They are families under financial hardship who have to now walk 50 minutes one way from Queen Street to West Lynn to pick up their child if they are sick, for meet the teacher night etc. Not to mention the extracurricular sporting activities that takes place after school. Without transportation home for these after school activities, these children will not be able to participate. These families do not have the finances for taxis to pick up their children and already struggle financially on a daily basis without adding the stress of closing Elgin Public School.
- Out of the 99% of students that walk, that leaves only 3 students that are bussed to school (outside of the autism and enrichment students). That means that there will be a significant increase in the bus costs to transport all these students to West Lynn. Have you completed a cost projection for the next 5 or even 10 years for these added bus costs, hiring of extra drivers, insurance costs etc. If you did, you would realize these costs will be substantial. Whereas, if Elgin School were to stay open, there would be NO added bussing costs as you have already previously noted. As the busses already used at West Lynn will just be rerouted to Elgin saving the Board a great deal of money. That being said, about 55 students that already attend West Lynn are actually supposed to be attending Elgin Public School. These 55 students won't need bussing, which is yet another huge savings.
- There was an article in the Simcoe Reformer recently that stated in the proposal to close Elgin and transfer students to West Lynn, that, and I quote "repurposing the Elgin property would present more revenue-generating possibilities". After reading that, I have to ask the Board . . . is the mighty dollar more important than the students??? If it is money you are concerned about, look at the thousands of dollars already invested into the original recommendation, which was to renovate Elgin Public. This money that has already been spent will have been wasted, not to mention the time that has been invested. There are so many "unknowns" with the West Lynn expansion. For example, the Board will have to start all over with the purchase of land, getting a severance, rezoning from residential etc.
- The "green" space is another concern I have. Due to the fact that Elgin School is multi-level, even if we expand to accommodate other students from the other schools in the area, we still have more "green" space for the students. Not to mention that if Elgin School needs to expand in the future, we will have the extra land to do so. Whereas, with your West Lynn proposal, will there be room to expand in the future? Again, this is another "unknown" regarding the West Lynn proposal.

In closing, I ask that the Board go back to your original recommendation that was to keep Elgin Public School open and complete the needed renovations. Because at the end of the day, the **students are what's important**. Yes money is a factor, but these students are our future and we need to supply them with every opportunity at grow as we can. Keeping Elgin Public School open gives all students, including the students whose families struggle financially the opportunities that they will not have if you decide to close Elgin Public School.

Keeping Elgin Public School open is not the best choice, but the only choice.

Thank you.

Kerri Swick