



**Name: Kirsten Appleyard**

**Brief summary of issue or topic of discussion:**

While the desire to achieve greater equity across the Board--specifically with regard to access to French--is a valid one, I vehemently oppose your proposed method of accomplishing that goal for a number of reasons:

1) Psychological impact on students:

Students have just emerged from a period of great upheaval. Myriad studies have shown how profoundly detrimental the Covid years were to their mental and physical well being. You are now proposing uprooting a large number of these students from their schools and friends. Children in our region born in 2015, for example, will be forced to change schools THREE times in FOUR years. For students who suffer from anxiety (and that number is ever growing), this amount and frequency of change will be severely harmful to their learning and mental health. Even for non-anxious children, removing them from their friends, teachers and a familiar and safe environment will be traumatic. For those students who are not being uprooted, they will be losing many, if not all of their friends, which directly contradicts your rhetoric surrounding building a community.

Many parents make decisions on where they move and IF they move based on their children's schools. I, for one, have not considered moving precisely because I wish to provide my anxious child with the stability she needs and did not wish to remove her from her school and friends. Your proposed plan strips parents of all choice, not only negating our efforts but creating a situation exponentially worse by uprooting students multiple times throughout their elementary school careers.

2) Logistical challenges for parents:

Under your proposed model, parents with multiple children will have siblings straddled across schools. There are cases where families with four children will be attending three different schools. This is not realistic or feasible for the average family, especially if both parents work full-time. Moreover, having children in multiple schools will spread parents' efforts very thin in terms of their involvement with school activities and parent council. This will result in reduced parental engagement overall.



3) Impact on support for students with special learning profiles, which will in turn negatively affect the quality of education for other students:

Eliminating important special needs programs and forcing children who require extra support into the regular stream will not only negatively impact those students requiring that support, but also their classroom peers and teachers. How will OCDSB ensure that schools have the staffing, training and resources needed to support students with disabilities effectively? How will teachers/staff be supported to manage diverse learning needs in already crowded classrooms?

4) Impact on French learning:

With these proposed changes, the amount of French in our school, Castor Valley, will decrease. We specifically moved to this area to have access to a full French immersion school. Again, these changes negate our efforts and will negatively impact our child's learning.

Please be transparent. Couching this review in terms of "community" and "inclusion" is misleading and insulting--it will accomplish the exact opposite in our region. Please consider our feedback and please return to the drawing board to devise a plan that actually makes sense, whether that involves a gradual rollout of changes or exempting certain schools (such as those in our rural community) from the boundary review.