

Name: Amy Thomas

Brief summary of issue or topic of discussion:

I am reaching out to express community concerns related to the financial transparency related to the proposed changes.

I would highlight that these are community concerns as this piece was collective effort, led by another parent, and developed through a collaborative consultation with concerned parents across the Knoxdale PS community.

We believe the EPR is meant to balance the budget, by cutting special education programs, and adding more French immersion (which gets a higher per capita funding, never mind that there's already a shortage of French teachers). That school boundaries were intentionally gerrymandered, and forced grandparenting in selected schools was designed to avoid triggering mandatory Pupil Accommodation Reviews.

We as a community stand in awe of the work done by all of the advocates opposing this review. After their day jobs (and often our second shifts as parents), community members have been reading reports, planning protests, and writing letters into the wee hours of the morning. The OCDSB had a chance to engage these brilliant, committed people and ask for true meaningful consultation, to see if there were options that you hadn't considered. We know from your April 2024 letter to Stephen Lecce that community feedback was never intended to make a difference, and that the outcome was indeed predetermined, no matter how many times the word 'equity' was invoked.

We urge you to consider innovative approaches and working with the other 50 school boards facing deficits to demand better education funding. Community members are full of alternatives that merit consideration - Advocate for merging the Ontario public and Catholic school boards, as most other provinces have already done, or compare funding models. Freeze OCDSB executive salaries instead of granting 20-40% raises or scale them accordingly with the budget progress? Repurpose underutilized schools into daycare spaces? Revisit the school closure moratorium?

Parents understand how hard it is to balance a budget, but we also are looking to the future. If you go ahead with this plan to slash Alternative schools and SPCs, force siblings apart, and blow up



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communities, what is your plan the next time the province cuts the education budget? If even a fraction of the parents who said they would enroll their child in another board actually do so, and you lose that funding per student, what will you cut then?

Quote:

As elected officials, trustees must balance the demands of the community with the duties required by the Ministry of Education. By law, they are required to consult with parents, students and supporters of the board on the board's multi-year plan and bring the concerns of these groups to the attention of the board. This can be challenging and takes dedicated leadership, coupled with a willingness to seek innovative ideas and the courage to implement them.

End quote.

Meaningful consultation with stakeholders is your job. That is what we expect of you, and we will hold you accountable for your vote on April 29th.

Thank you.