

Name: Emily Burnett

Brief summary of issue or topic of discussion:

The Castor Valley/Greely Elementary program review boundary and lack of strategic transition despite the recent approved boundary changes and gradual transition plans for the Woodroffe, Kars and Alta Vista community areas.

To the OCDSB Trustees and Planning Committee,
Greely is built of rural neighbourhoods separated by busy country roads, sand quarries, and farm fields, which creates more challenges than in urban areas. The OCDSB's program changes cite "community-based education" as a Guiding Principle. Stagecoach Rd. is a country road on the West side of Greely, running North/South, lined with neighbourhoods on either side easily accessible to one another. On the East side of Greely, between Old Prescott Rd. and Bank St., is a second group of neighbourhoods. Between these two residential areas, exists primarily industrial areas and sand quarries.

The proposed boundaries use Stagecoach Rd. as the dividing line to determine the new Castor Valley and Greely Elementary School districts, proposing students living in the three subdivisions on the West side of Stagecoach Rd. attend Castor Valley, and the remaining neighbourhoods on the East side of Stagecoach Rd attend Greely ES. Using Stagecoach Rd as the dividing line prohibits students living in the neighbourhoods connecting to Stagecoach Rd from having safe, walkable relations with their classmates. The proposal eliminates the possibility for maintaining a school-based community for both sections of Greely despite guiding principles. I am hoping the planning committee will keep the East group of Greely community neighbourhoods together, and the West group of Greely community neighbourhoods together to foster community for these children safely.

Greely ES has been a small rural English school for over 30 years. It would take incredible funding, planning, staffing and other logistical effort to overhaul this school and implement an entirely new program at once. Current Castor Valley students moving to Greely Elementary would return back to Castor Valley for their grade 7 and 8 years, creating more change, transitions and instability for these students.

Castor Valley sits at 132% capacity. Greely Elementary would move from 60% capacity to a massive dual-track stream at 120% capacity at once. Our neighbours at nearby Osgoode and Metcalfe PS sit at 85% and 62% capacity. How does it serve the students of Greely to carry the majority of the Rural South Ottawa community when other schools are below capacity? How does it serve our students to implement such a massive change at once?

Schools like Vincent Massey Public School, Riverview Alternative, Woodroffe PS and nearby Kars at the Rideau have been granted grandfathering, new boundaries or slow phase outs based on the development or elimination of new programming. It is integral these same options are addressed for the students of the Greely Community.

The OCDSB review committee must address the needs of the rural Greely Community by developing a better approach including more community-focused boundaries, dispersing the population across Greely, Metcalfe and Osgoode, or by implementing a slow roll out or grandfathering clause similar to that of the Alta Vista and Woodroffe communities.

Yours Truly, Emily Burnett