

November 13, 2019

Chair  
Board of Trustees  
Ottawa Carleton District School Board  
133 Greenbank Road  
Ottawa, ON  
K2H 6L3

To the Chair:

I am writing on behalf of the Gloucester High School Council concerning the motion recently tabled by Trustee Blackburn to reduce the number of annual monitoring reports that are meant to keep the community informed of the achievement and well-being of students within the historic boundaries of both Rideau High School and Gloucester High School.

Trustee Blackburn's motion appears to be based on a desire to conserve or reassign resources at the Board. The Board's decision to amalgamate the two high schools in Ottawa's east end was not taken lightly and took almost 12 years of, at times, rancorous debate.

The nature of the original motion was to ensure that the impact of the Board's decision on students, including those who require specialized educational support (special education; English Language learners) and those from low-income backgrounds, was clearly, transparently, and publicly presented. Thus far, two reports out of four reports have been published<sup>1</sup>.

The first report describes the baseline year for monitoring (2017-2018) and the three years preceding amalgamation. The second report hints at some positive trends in "outputs" of the monitoring exercise (e.g., enrolment appears to have stabilized; student attrition rates appear to be decreasing; rates of cross-boundary transfers appear to be declining; and there are greater and more varied course offerings). On the other hand, it also outlines some areas of concern, which we feel should be monitored and addressed, namely, the decline in student achievement in the Grade 10 OSSLT and a decline in Grade 10 credit accumulation. These are troubling because they relate directly to academic outcomes and, ultimately, student success and the reputation of our school.

We acknowledge that any transition will result in a dip in performance until adjustments are made to course correct and achieve a successful end state. This concern is at the foundation of the spirit and intent of the March 2017 motion. In

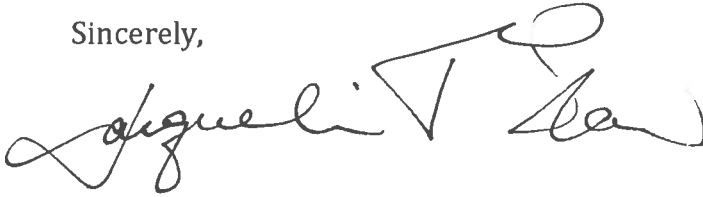
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<sup>1</sup> *"Staff will prepare a report for February 2018, and every year thereafter for three years, to keep the community informed."* Page 2 of Report No. 19-065, 28 May 2019.

any statistical analysis, two data sets are not enough to validate positive or negative trends. A third and fourth snapshot will more completely describe the full impact of amalgamation. We feel that the Board owes it to our students and our community to continue to produce and report (for two more reporting cycles) on the impact of amalgamation as outlined in the original March 2017 motion. We strongly urge the Board to continue to report on what it said it would.

We would also like to take this opportunity to ask a few more questions of the Board related to the amalgamation of Rideau High School and Gloucester High School (see Annex A, attached).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jacqueline Shaw'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Jacqueline Shaw, B.A., M.A.  
Chair, Gloucester High School Council

## ANNEX A

1. On page 9 of report #19-065, it reads that of the 399 students enrolled at Rideau HS at the end of June 2017, 60 students were not enrolled at Gloucester High School, ***however a majority*** of these indicated transfer to another educational institution. What specific number of students out of the 60 did not indicate they were transferring to another educational institution and what became of them?
2. It has been two full school years since amalgamation and there remain several outstanding renovations that are yet to be completed. Could the Board provide a clear and specific time frame for the remaining renovations to be completed including:
  - Updating of food labs
  - Accessible kitchen for students in wheelchairs
  - Newly renovated greenhouse
  - Picnic tables
  - Building of an outdoor garden
  - Completion of a second auto shop
  - Updating of music room and drama studio
3. With regard to the kit car that is currently languishing in the auto shop, could the Board please explain why the car cannot be sold and what steps have been taken to try to sell it? Surely, its sale could bring some additional funding in that would benefit the school and our students.