

Request to Delegate at a Public Pupil Accommodation Review Meeting

Forest Area Pupil Accommodation Review – Public Meeting #1

Applicant's Name: Andrea Walden
Contact Information:
Organization/Affiliation: Resident of Lambton Shores,
Parent of Bosanquet Central School Students
Names of those making delegation: Andrea Walden

Topic of Delegation and Outline:

Topic of Delegation:

1. Why a viable and sustainable secondary school is needed in North Lambton; and
2. The Focus of the Proposed JK – Grade 12 school – STEM (science, technology, engineering and math)

1. Why a Secondary School is needed in North Lambton:

- The *Initial Staff Report for the Consolidation of Aberarder Central School, Bosanquet Central School, Kinnwood Central School and North Lambton Secondary School into a Kindergarten to Grade 12 School on the Kinnwood Central School Site* (Dated October 4, 2016) (the “Report”) states that the LKDSB “will apply to the Ministry of Education for funds to construct a Grade 7 to 12 addition...” (page 17, para 1).
- It is therefore my understanding that the LKDSB does not currently have funding from the Ministry of Education in order to build the proposed JK – Grade 12 school on the Kinnwood site.
- The issue of why the most northerly part of the County of Lambton should have a viable and sustainable secondary school should therefore be addressed.
- The following are my submissions as to why a public secondary school should continue to operate in the Town of Forest:
 - a. **Geography:** In the event that a secondary school was not located in the Town of Forest, students would have to travel to either Sarnia or Petrolia for secondary school education in the Lambton Kent District School Board (“LKDSB”). However, in some instances depending upon where they live, students might chose to attend secondary school in the Town of Strathroy (Strathroy District Collegiate Institute, and Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School) or the Town of Exeter (South Huron District High School).
 - i. **Distance from Thedford to Next Closest Secondary Schools:**
 1. Thedford to Strathroy: approx. **37.3 km**
 2. Thedford to LCCVI, Petrolia – approximately **54.5 km**
 3. Thedford to Great Lakes Secondary School, Sarnia – approx. **66.96 km**
 4. Thedford to Northern Collegiate Institute & Vocational School – approx. **63.46 km**

- ii. **Distance from Grand Bend to Next Closest Secondary Schools:**
 1. Grand Bend to **Exeter:** approx. **25 km**
 2. Grand Bend to Lambton Central Collegiate & Vocational Institute (“LCCVI”), **Petrolia** – approximately **66km**
 3. Grand Bend to Great Lakes Secondary School, **Sarnia** – approx. **74 km**
(distances calculated using <http://distancecalculator.globefeed.com>)

- b. **Potential Impact on Student Achievement:** Increase travel times would require students to spend more time commuting to school which would potentially impact their lives as follows:
 - i. **Decreased Likelihood of being involved in extra-curricular activities at school;**
 - ii. **Decreased likelihood that they could have a part-time job** after school, which could impact their ability to afford college or university.
 - iii. **Health and Academic Impact:** Lengthy commute times decrease the physical activity of the students which can have negative impacts on their health and less time to study.

- c. **Impact on the Community:**
 - i. **Current Economy: Impact on Current Businesses:** By having a secondary school in the Town of Forest it has a positive impact on the economy of the town as students and staff frequent the business (e.g. restaurants, stores etc.) in the community.
 - ii. **Future Economy: Rural secondary school education should reflect the Education Needs of the Community:**
 - North Lambton is primarily a rural area and part of the economy is based upon agri-business.
 - North Lambton Secondary School “NLSS” currently offers “specialist high skills majors” in agriculture, construction and Health and Wellness. It also offers co-op placements with local businesses. Through these programs students gain experience and knowledge regarding the job opportunities in their own community.
 - **Shortage of Skilled workforce for Ontario agriculture:** “According to recent research from the University of Guelph there are **three jobs** waiting for every agriculture degree graduate and **two jobs for every diploma graduate**”. (<http://www.ofa.on.ca/media/news/wanted-bigger-skilled-workshorce-for-Ontario-agriculture>)
 - **Careers in Agriculture Today Require a Post-Secondary Education:** Farmers of today do not require employees to scrape the alleyways of livestock barns, we have robots that do that job. We need people who can fix the robot that scrapes the alleyways. Similarly, we do not need large groups of people to hoe the fields by hand. We need agrologists.
 - **Part of the roll of a school system is to educate students for employment. Only a secondary school located in a rural community will provide**

students with the opportunity and exposure to career opportunities in agriculture. Which leads to the second topic.

2. **Focus of Proposed JK – Grade 12 School: STEM (science, technology, engineering and math)**

- a. **Academic Focus:** Arguably, in order to encourage students to attend the proposed JK – Grade 12 school, this school must offer them educational opportunities which are not available to them elsewhere.
 - The proposed new school should develop programs which reflect the education priorities of the communities in which the students live. In the most recent Parent Survey conducted by Bosanquet Central School Council (Fall 2016), the majority of Parents’ surveyed identified enhanced science education opportunities (e.g. Discovery Western LEGO Robotics field trip to U.W.O.) as the educational opportunity, which would improve their child’s academic achievement. (A music program and a drama program ranking second and third in this survey).
 - **The proposed school should focus on science, technology, engineering and math.**
 - As outlined above, two of these educational opportunities are the “specialist high skills majors” and local co-operative education.
 - The focus on STEM also supports students’ **preparation for the trades** (e.g. electrician, mechanic etc.)
 - However, in order to achieve these advanced educational goals, **additional assistance must be given to students at the elementary school level particularly in relation to basic literacy and math skills.** The failure of the current system being evidenced in part by Bosanquet Central School’s most recent EQAO test results, particularly in relation to math skills. Without renewed effort to establish basic literacy and math skills at the elementary school level, student academic achievement will never reach its full potential which will have a long-term economic impact on the students’ personally and on the community, as a whole.
- b. **Community Focus:** The proposed school should be a “Community Hub”. It should therefore be designed in such a manner that it can be used by the community for a number of functions for all community members when it is not in use as a school (e.g. recreation, fitness and other adult educational programs).

Conclusion:

- The quality of a student’s education in Ontario public schools should not be dictated by their geographical location in the Province or the wealth of the community in which they live.
- The proposed new school should develop programs which reflect the education priorities of the communities in which the students live. These priorities include but are not limited to science, technology, engineering and math, which in this community are critical to our economy which is based in part on small businesses in agriculture, construction, Green Industries, transportation, and manufacturing.
- Ultimately, the proposed school needs to be a “Community Hub” and incorporate the culture and priorities of all members of the community who will be educated in this building.