

Request to Delegate at a Meeting of the Trustees of LKDSB February 7, 2017

RE: Forest Area -ARC

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. **Need for a Viable Secondary School in North Lambton:** Why a viable and sustainable secondary school is needed in North Lambton;
2. **Cooperation Between LKDSB and the Municipality of Lambton Shores:** The school should be located near the Shores Recreation Centre (the arena) in Forest and the LKDSB and Municipality of Lambton Shores should work together to utilize the existing sports facilities in the community; and
3. **STEM SUBJECTS:** 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. **The Proposed School Should be located near the Shores Recreation Centre (the arena) in Forest;** The location of the New School which *will afford the students the greatest educational opportunities* and which *is arguably the most fiscally responsible choice* would be to locate the New School either near or adjacent to the existing Shores Recreation Centre (the “Recreation Centre”).

The following are **my reasons for believing that the NEW School should be located near or adjacent to the Shores Recreation Centre:**

- a. Shared Use of Community Resources-Collaboration with the Municipality of Lambton Shores;
- b. Proximity of EMS and Police Services;
- c. Traffic Flow Issues at Kinnwood Elementary School Site; and
- d. Community Support for the Shores Recreation Centre Site.

(a.)Shared Use of Community Resources – Collaboration with the Municipality of Lambton Shores:

- The LKDSB’s proposal regarding the New School presents the LKDSB with an exciting opportunity to “partner” with the Municipality of Lambton Shores and increase the usage of the Shores Recreation Centre during school hours.
- The Shores Recreation Centre, is owned and operated by the Municipality, is a fantastic recreation centre. However, it is my understanding that it is currently arguably underutilized during the “school day” (approx. 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.).
- By locating the New School near the Recreation Centre, and assuming that the LKDSB and the Municipality can reach an agreement relating to terms of usage of the Recreation Centre, the students at the NEW School could access the Recreation Centre during school hours and the **LKDSB would potentially not have to DUPLICATE some resources which already exist in the community.**
- The Shores Recreation Centre currently has the following amenities:
 - i. **One (1) NHL size rink**, seating capacity of 700, standing room for several hundred more, an in-door walking track,
 - ii. **A gymnasium** which consists of one full size basketball, volleyball and badminton court or can be split into two smaller gyms with a curtain wall

- iii. The Suncor Wellness Centre (**an exercise/weight room**)(currently operated by the YMCA of Sarnia-Lambton); and
- iv. **Two (2) meeting rooms** (upper room with a capacity of 8 and lower room has a capacity of 30)

(b.)Close Proximity to EMS and Police Services: Other community services such as the EMS and Police Services are located near the Shores Recreation Centre (on Highway 21/King St. N.). If the NEW School is located near these existing services; in the unfortunate event a student requires medical assistance or police services are required, the **reduced response time of EMS or Police Services could save lives.**

(c.)Traffic Flow Issues and PARKING at the Kinnwood Site: If the New School is located in close proximity to the Shores Recreation Centre, there are arguably fewer traffic flow issues than if an addition was made to the existing Kinnwood Elementary School in the Town of Forest. The Kinnwood Elementary School is located in a residential neighborhood and is adjacent to the Seniors Home and Apartments and this area already has traffic related to the use of these facilities. The Shores Recreation Centre is located just off of Highway 21/King St. N. on Amtelecom Parkway and the access to the Recreation Centre does not require vehicles driving through residential streets and already has a large arguably underutilized parking lot.

(d.)Community Support for the Shores Recreation Centre Site: As the Bosanquet Central School parent representative of the LKDSB – Accommodation Review Committee- Forest without exception *none of the parents and community members who have spoken to me are in favour of the Kinnwood Central site location for the NEW School.* Community members have advised (some of whom have also sent letters to the trustees and the LKDSB outlining their positions) me that they are disappointed that the LKDSB is proposing to close the existing schools however, **they believe that the Shores Recreation Center area is the correct location in the community for the New School.** Their reasons as communicated to me are as follows:

- i. **SHARED USE OF EXISTING FACILITIES:** Many community members have advised me that they would like to see the Municipality of Lambton Shores and the Lambton Kent District School Board **work together for the benefit of the students and the community by sharing the use of the existing facilities,** the Shores Recreation Centre.
- ii. **Fewer Concerns Regarding Traffic Flow and Parking** in relation to the Shores Recreation Centre Site (see above). They are concerned that the Kinnwood Site will cause parking and traffic problems.
- iii. **Student Access to Arena, Gym and In-door Track – Increasing Student Physical Activity and Wellness:** Many people have advised me verbally that they are concerned that children today are NOT very physically active and placing the New School in close proximity

to the Shores Recreation Centre, will presumably afford students better access to physical education opportunities as it will only necessitate walking a few meters (as opposed to being bused) to the Shores Recreation Centre.

- iv. **Access to EMS and Police Services:** A number of parents have advised me that given their own child's medical condition, they are in favour of the Shores Recreation Centre location for the New School as it would reduce response times for EMS if in the unfortunate event their child suffered a medical emergency; and
- v. **Possible Alternative Uses for the Kinnwood Site which would benefit the community.** As stated above, there are potentially other uses for the Kinnwood Elementary School site which could benefit the community (e.g. expanded seniors' center, seniors housing or residential housing in general).

In conclusion, the primary concern of both myself and the parents and community members I have spoken to is the safety and educational success of the students. However, in addition, many of the members of the community I have spoken to believe that the LKDSB and the Municipality should **make every effort to make the financially responsible choice of using the facilities which already exist** (the Shores Recreation Centre) for the benefit of the students and the community.

Of the two proposed site locations for the New School **the choice which is in the best interest of the students, and community and is the arguably the economically prudent choice is to locate the New School near or adjacent to the Shores Recreation Centre.**

- 3. **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:
 - (a.) using the recreational facilities which the community already has (the arena);
and
 - (b.) 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.