

Kingsville PARC  
Community input collected as of June 25, 2012

07 May 2012

Dear Surpintendent Lyons,

Our names are Carrie & Tim Vida, and our son Michael attends Ruthven Public School's third grade. We have each separately attended one of the first two Kingsville Family of Schools PARC community meetings.

As the third community meeting rapidly approaches, we have printed off and read all of the documents on the board's website, including the nineteen accommodation recommendations considered during the last three committee meetings. It appears that this list has been whittled down to three endorsements that will be recommended to the board of trustees. We were especially disappointed to see that those discarded, were done so with little explanation, and not a single recommendation included the ongoing operations at Ruthven Public, notwithstanding the fact that they met the mandate.

Is it possible to obtain a more thorough understanding behind the reasons to disqualify recommendations #5, & #12, as well as greater detail on the April 24th common philosophies? Lastly, what are the specific options that Jack Minor presents, that none of the other schools possess?

Without more information, it appears that the square foot size of Jack Minor trumps its deficient location, smaller average square foot classroom, lack of adequate natural light and its absence of a population to support its existence. As an outsider to the process, with the limited information derived from the website & community meetings, it is easy to conclude, albeit perhaps erroneously so, that there is a pro-Jack Minor, & an anti-Ruthven Public bias.

We cannot help but also wonder about the validity of the forecasted enrolments through 2025. What would lead to the forecasted decline in enrolment at Ruthven Public, while simultaneously predicting increasing enrolment at every other Public School including Pelee Island? As well, if enrollment through the primary grades is on the climb, why is the board anticipating an 18% reduction in attendance at the nearest supporting secondary school?

It seems odd that the established hamlet of Ruthven, which appears to have a stable population base, living in affordable large lot single-family homes that continue to attract first time buyers with young families, would experience school aged child decline any time soon. Rarely do empty nesters, or retirees re-locate to this type of maintenance intensive, large lot, children laden communities. These same young families' appear to enjoy the walk or cycle to school that is so strongly supported by the Kingsville Town Council (motion M4-Dec19/11-Regular Meeting of Council Minutes) versus the busing required by attendants of Jack Minor Public School.

In a time where the province subsidizes green alternative wind & solar energy generation projects, it seems a public policy contradiction, that the school board would pursue an initiative that requires one hundred percent reliance on busing their residents to school. In addition to the increased cost & carbon foot print that accompanies busing, the board should also consider the economic and/or time management hardship forced upon parents during the many days that the buses are removed from the road for safety reasons (fog, snow etc.). There may not be an index for this, but it is a very relevant consideration for us busy parents.

There is also no mention in any of the documents of the benefits derived by Ruthven Public School's close proximity to and resultant use of other public buildings. The children of Ruthven public attend the Leamington Sherk complex for swimming lessons to name one, and venture across the street to the Ruthven Library to identify a second. As the board continues to explore cost savings measures via the reduction in Library staff, the students of Ruthven will experience no shortfall of such measures with the Ruthven Library located so fortuitously close.

As the PARC committee meets again today, we respectfully request that you please have the committee re-visit the merits of Ruthven Public School. Ruthven Public, lies at the outer boundary of the Kingsville family of schools, so it is easy to discount it as a viable alternative. However, it's large acreage, 10% larger square foot classroom size, huge green space, significant population of walker/cycler attendants, and it's close proximity to other amenities enable Ruthven Public to service its students & families in ways no other proposal can.

Without any of the quantitative data, we can only provide these qualitative arguments for the preservation of Ruthven Public School within the Kingsville family of schools, but nonetheless, thank you for considering our thoughts, and for bringing them to Kingsville PARC Committee on our behalf.

Sincerely,

Tim, Carrie & Michael Vida, 519-322-0036, carrievida@sympatico.ca, sales@leamingtonchrysler.com

As a parent of two children at Kingsville Public School (Grade 1 and Grade 4 French Immersion), I would like to provide the following input into the recommendations on the Program and Accommodation Review. I fully support the draft recommendation to build a JK-grades 12 dual track school for all students within the Kingsville family. This creates a long-term solution to problems facing the local schools. This idea also continues to include the downtown, local urban school, while allowing the capacity to bus in the outlining students. Having a school within the core of Kingsville creates a wonderful, neighbourhood, community atmosphere that is essential to the school experience for the students and the community.

I do not support the other two recommendations, as I am not in favour of moving grades 7 and 8 students out of their elementary education experience early and moving them into an environment with older students. The 7 and 8 students would be moved out of a leadership role. The grade 7 and 8 years are two essential years where you want your child to get good programming and instruction that ensures students are ready for the grade 9 curriculum. Moving these students should not interfere with this preparation.

If the 7s and 8s moved over to KDSS, they would need a separate area for them, they would need to have specialty music, science and phys.ed. spaces, separate entrances, separate eating area or timetable so that the intermediates didn't mix with the secondary students, in my opinion.

I thank the Greater Essex County District School Board for this opportunity to comment on the recommendations.  
Susanne Tomkins

Hello Ms. Bailey,

My name is Tim Vida and I have sent 3 emails (Terry Lyons, Trustees, & Parc email) requesting answers to specific questions over the last two weeks, and have yet to receive an answer to these queries.

The questions are:

1. Why were recommendations #5 and #12 dismissed, yet #16, #18 & #19 were accepted

Please refer to the Board website under the PARC icon. Discussions are outlined in the appendices to the minutes ; Appendix 1 to April 24 committee meeting minutes

2. What are the specifics behind the statement "Jack Miner presents more options" than Ruthven Public & Kingsville Public

More potential is offered at the Jack Miner site - larger site, more favourable FCI and renewal needs

3. Why is the Ruthven area expected to decline in enrollment, when all other areas are expected to grow, including Pelee Island- Addendum 1 pg 5 community meeting April 11 (table is attached)

This year, Ruthven had a larger than usual intake of Kindergarten students (based on the past 5 yrs). After this cohort of JKs gets through grade 8, then there is a decline as projections are based on historical data.

4. Why is Kingsville High projected to have a drop in enrollment of 113 students when the feeding schools are predicted to have a 61.5 student net increase over the same period. ? - Addendum 1 pg 5 community meeting April 11 (table is attached)

Number of graduating students is greater than the amount of grade 9 incoming students. The declining enrolment bubble is beginning to hit all secondary schools.

a. What is predicted to happen to these 113 students after grade 8  
irrelevant

5. Why is the PARC not considering the wishes of Kingsville Town Council in their motion that states

"....Town of Kingsville hereby objects to the closure of any Kingsville school that minimizes the opportunity for walking or cycling of students to and from school...." (April 5 email from Sandy Kitchen to Dan Digiovanni- appendix 2 community meeting April 11 (email scan attached).

All input received is considered by the committee when determining recommendations.

Every email has been responded to in a timely, polite and friendly manner, yet no one has answered a single question.

Can someone please answer the questions, and provide the supporting analytical data, via the reports that have been presented by the board's consultants, as well as the detailed recordings from all PARC & Community Meetings?

If this cannot be given to the parent of a student whose school is recommended for closure, then please tell me, and I will stop being a nuisance.

Thank you

Tim Vida

519-325-9052

Dear Trustee of the Greater Essex County District School Board,

My name is Mandy Morris and my son is a Grade One student attending Ruthven Public School. I am writing to express my utmost displeasure with the recommendations put forth by the PARC committee responsible for the Kingsville Family of Schools.

Education has always been near and dear to me. I currently hold my Ontario Teaching Certificate and although I am not a practicing teacher, I am a Pharmacist and local business owner of the Leamington Shoppers DrugMart, I do understand Government funding and the need to embrace change. Two years ago, my profession underwent Ontario Drug Benefit Reform, which has since completely changed our landscape.

The need to reduce the number of empty student spaces and improve the utilization rates within the family of schools is a clear message from our Superintendent. I appreciate that the committee has worked very hard to present three recommendations in this PARC study however I cannot accept any one of these recommendations as solutions.

In my view, the recommendation to close Ruthven Public School should never have happened. This school not only provides value to the student but also to the community. I am more than satisfied with the education my son receives at his small school. Over the past 3 years, the trend of the Ruthven Public School EQAO test scores has been greater than Board's average in both grade 3 and 6 reading and mathematics. These statistics have assured me that my son is receiving a solid foundation. Furthermore, when my son was in Kindergarten I was able to volunteer my time and help out in the classroom. Fortunately, considering the close proximity of the Ruthven School to my place of practice, I was able to leave work for a short period of time and return to work soon after without taking away too much time out of my day. Geographically speaking, if my son's school is further away, my time spent volunteering now presents a challenge. I am also concerned about other volunteers in our close knit school being able to resume their same acts of kindness if they have to travel a greater distance. For example, my son is fortunate enough to be visited by "Grandma Hostine" on a weekly basis. For those of you that don't know "Grandma", she is my son's Grade one teacher's Mother, who graciously volunteers her time to read with the students. You don't get that kind of attention at every school! Ruthven Public School is an extension of our family. I am always amazed when my son is greeted by the Grade 8 teacher that addresses him on a first-name basis.

When I speak to local families about Ruthven Public School, they beam with pride when they talk about its unique partnerships and the camaraderie amongst students and their families. Ruthven Public School is the **only school** within the **immediate community**. Our school is partners with the Ruthven Essex County Library and the Ruthven Montessori for an after-school (latch key) program, both of which have proven invaluable to me. Ruthven Public School is used regularly by community groups such as Mad Science, Moms for Tots, and Curiosity Club. I am concerned about the viability of these programs with school closure. In addition, our school site provides parking for the Ruthven Apple Festival and opens its doors to members of our community as a destination to cast ballots during voting season.

When I speak to local business owners, they express concern that school closures affect the viability of their businesses. Our school is the anchor of our neighbourhoods and a vital piece of the local economy. Our town has plans approved and underway to create bike paths and new developments for family living. These developments will most certainly attract and retain young families. Our community is growing! I believe it is critical to be mindful of the fact that **27%** of the student population is currently within **walking distance** to the school and **15%** are **out of district**. When you combine these numbers, nearly half of our school does not make use of board transportation. I have a great concern regarding the out of district students at Ruthven Public that does not align with the committee's philosophy to "keep school communities intact in the event of a school closure". Travel to Jack Miner would present a greater distance and make this move unfavourable among our out of district students resulting in decline in enrolment for our Kingsville Family of Schools. Also, I need to express my concern around the busing situation should Ruthven students need 100% bus transportation to Jack Miner. Lengthy bus rides take away from family values and extra-curricular activities due to early morning departures and late afternoon arrivals. In addition, students experience unhealthy consequences from long bus rides such as boredom and fatigue. My son's current bus ride is approximately 10 minutes and well within acceptable parameters.

Two years ago when I embarked on my son's educational journey in search of the perfect school, I discovered Ruthven Public and this school truly is the "best kept secret!" My husband and I (both of which are Catholic and attended the separate board) were fortunate to have many choices for our son's education. We could have sent

him to a Catholic School or French Immersion or even a private school. But we found comfort in our local community public school. Ruthven Public School gave us the “wow factor” and we have yet to regret our decision! In closing, I would like to re-visit “[Appendix 1 to April 24 Committee Meeting Minutes](#)” discussion point 5 and consider this recommendation as the framework to a more plausible solution.

**5. Close KPS, English students split between Ruthven and Jack Miner;  
French to KDHS**

Meets the mandate

Advantages

Alignment match with KDHS

Elementary school culture is maintained

Challenges

Capital investment

Boundary adjustment – standard

Transportation – standard

**April 24 – determined to eliminate**

I will follow-up in a separate attachment why I believe this recommendation needs to be put forth.

Best Regards,

Mandy Morris

519-712-9479

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**Recommendations for the Kingsville Family of Schools PARC Study**

In a previous email, I expressed my reasons and beliefs as to why I feel it necessary that Ruthven Public School remain open. I would like to build upon discussion point 5 from “[Appendix 1 to April 24 Committee Meeting Minutes](#)”.

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**April 24 – determined to eliminate**

I believe this recommendation is better suited to reaching our goals of reducing the number of empty student spaces and improving the utilization rates within the Kingsville Family of schools. If we are examining the viability of buildings, then Jack Miner Public School and Ruthven Public School have similar potential that Kingsville Public does not. Therefore, Kingsville Public should close and student groups will move as separate independent groups in keeping with the PARC committee philosophy to keep school communities intact. All of the students belonging to the French Immersion community K-8 will transition to KDHS and all of the students belonging to the English community K-8 will transition to Jack Miner. As the distance travelled from KPS to Jack Miner is only 3.00km we are keeping KPS students within their community. With slight boundary adjustments between Ruthven and Jack Miner, both sites could be maintained. I even find it alarming that Ruthven’s closest adjoining school i.e.: MD Bennie (6.21km) vs. Jack Miner (6.25km) brings us outside of the Kingsville Family of Schools into Leamington. Yet again all the reason to keep Ruthven open as this school is the only school within our immediate community! In comparison, RPS has a slightly higher utilization rate 60% than JM 58%. Both of these schools would only have to raise utilization rate by approximately 20% to avoid PARC. This rate increase can easily be achieved by re-

visiting the boundaries between JM and RPS. Since 95% of JM students are already accustomed to being bused to school (as opposed to 66% RPS) then with a slight boundary change, some JM families will now attend RPS to increase utilization at RPS and JM will benefit from an increase in utilization by the KPS students. This proposal is still in line with the PARC philosophy because I feel that keeping families together is a much wiser approach than to split families by segregating the grades 7 and 8 students to KDHS from earlier grades (as was currently put forth in a recent recommendation). For example: consider the grade 7 student that watches over his younger sibling in grade 5. Imagine how difficult that scenario would be if the students attended different schools for childcare purposes. Many households have 2 working parents and parents rely on the eldest to look after the younger child before or after school.

Ruthven Public School should most certainly be considered to house more students because there are more viable options. For example, lots of green space, room to add on and 90% of its windows have been replaced. (Jack Miner, in comparison has only had 40% of its windows replaced and some classrooms don't even have windows at JM!)

In conclusion, I feel that the committee has overlooked pertinent information in bringing forth their recommendations. Their philosophy to keep communities intact is flawed when you consider removing the grade 7 and 8 students from the formal K-8 and having no consideration on the high percentage of out of district students that currently attend Ruthven Public that would have to travel great lengths to remain close to their school family. I also feel that the committee is basing their recommendations on assumptions, assuming that all of the Ruthven Public students will easily transition to Jack Miner. Nobody on the PARC committee approached me and asked if I would continue to send my son to Jack Miner if these changes saw approval. As I stated earlier, my husband and I are fortunate that several choices are available for our son's education i.e.: separate board, French school. I have also learned that necessary funding is only made available for the public board every time a student fills a seat. I don't believe that the K-12 school at approximately \$26 million is a realistic option. In the past, Dalton McGuinty has made reference to school closures, if a "community loses a school, it's not the same as shutting one down in downtown Toronto where there's another one six blocks away. What you're doing is robbing the community of an important component. It's the heart and soul of a community. If you don't have a school, it's really tough to attract and to hold on to young families." I can't express enough that our school, Ruthven Public, is the backbone of our community and geographically speaking it makes no sense to bus 100% of the students to Jack Miner when we have a perfectly suited school in our own backyard.

Sincerely,

Mandy Morris

519-712-9479

[r3m@cogeco.ca](mailto:r3m@cogeco.ca)

In one of the three options facing Kingsville P.S., the old primary building will be torn down. It is suspected that asbestos is in the building. Can Health and Safety make sure that if this option is selected by the trustees, the school board times the demolition for the summer months? We assume that this would be a given, but sometimes decision makers do miss what seems obvious. We know that we would be extremely reluctant to work on a site where asbestos was being removed, in what will likely be large quantities, even if there were assurances that the area was sealed off and the rest of the school was deemed safe for use.

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Mario Spagnuolo

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w/o May 22

Hello PARC Committee for the Kingsville Family of Schools.

As a concerned Ruthven citizen and future parent of the Kingsville public school system. I really want to ask for your reconsideration in keeping Ruthven open. As evident from the last community meeting, there is a very large **STRONG** opposition with your recommendations, specifically with the closure of Ruthven Public. At the last community meeting, there weren't any parents from the other two schools who were concerned about where their kids went to school, however there were A LOT of parents from Ruthven speaking up. That should count for something!

If a school needs to close, perhaps keeping ONE school in the core of Kingsville and ONE in Ruthven can be considered. I know from attending your last committee meeting that you are not concerned about the kids from Leamington, but this is exactly why Ruthven is so vital. Ruthven has and will always be a border community. Leamington on one side, Kingsville on the other. Perhaps expanding Ruthven's boundaries will open it up to allowing more students in. I would suggest combining KPS and Jack Miner, putting some students at the high school and leaving Ruthven untouched, or at least wait a few years before deciding what to do with it. Allowing the projected growth to happen and re-visit the utilization rate issue at a later date. This way, a small community school is still an option for those who so desperately need it and want it. I grew up in Ruthven and Union Avenue was never as busy as it is now. We used to play on the street after school, we had no concerns about traffic. Now I can't let my kids play in the front yard because of all the traffic. This is a testament to how our community is growing.

All you members have chosen to be a part of this committee and our community members are counting on you to listen to our concerns and come up with a recommendation that keeps our school and our community intact. Closing Ruthven Public School is a huge mistake.

With that being said, I want to sincerely thank you for all your efforts and for taking the time to read this e-mail.

Sincerely,  
Abby Moynahan

Dear PARC Committee:

I am writing with concerns for the proposal of moving all 7 & 8 students to KDHS as soon as September 2013.

In not particular order I have questions that should be thought of before this proposal goes to the Trustees.

1) KDHS second floor has only 4 rooms and a female bathroom so they can't move into that part, so therefore they will be blended in some how with the High School students at a tender age of 11 for some students.

2) With that stated in question one where is the thought as to where the students will be placed with a total of 99 English grade 5 and 20 FI, and 92 English grade 6 and 24 FI from 2011/2012 enrollment. That totaling a minimum of 8 classrooms.

3) Where will the entrance and exit for this senior division school be?

4) How will they have use of gym times?

5) How about Library?

6) How about computers?

7) What start and end time will they follow? Ruthven Public has a different time than KPS.

8) What bus schedule will be used? Will they share with High School Students or the grade school students or their own?

9) Will they do student council?

10) Will they still have a grade 8 trip?

11) How will a valedictorian be chosen when the students have no real connection?

12) How will the teachers be chosen?

13) How will the FI students be integrated with the English students? Will they do rotation?

14) How will administrative staff be handled? Does this senior school have their own principal and secretary?

15) How about naming this school, how will that be handled?

16) What happens in sports is it really fair to only have two teams and not six?

17) How about cross country or Track n Field whom do they compete against for regional's & district?

18) How about band, music, choir, plays?

19) How about food days?

20) How about Fundraisers?

I strongly feel they will lose sportsmanship skills without the six teams and leadership skills being separated from the JK-6 students.

I know this solution worked in Harrow since they started with a junior, senior and a High School. However we have three local schools combining into one. Peer pressure will be magnified when they amalgamate, who will be there to help? In today's society everything is changing can we at least try to keep our children just children.

I thank you for your time but strongly urge you to find a better solution.

Shelley

KPS parent of two FI students

**Paul Cornies writes:**

Hello,

I have a question about the numerical data for this week's final meeting. After looking through the website, I have found no actual specific numbers on which students will be in which buildings under the proposed scenarios. Is it possible for the following information be made available on Thursday?

Specifically:

1) How many grade 7s and 8s would move to KDHS from each building.

In total approximately 236 students for 2013(81@JM, 105@KPS, 50@Ruthven)

2) How many students are left in each building by grade and in the case of KPS, by immersion and english for future trending purposes.

Approx 276 at JM, 422 at KPS and 188 in Ruthven based on 2013 data

3) The amount of students that KPS can hold with the old section torn down.

Approximately 500

I feel this data will allow the stakeholders to be more informed at the meeting.

Thank you.

Paul Cornies

KPS parent

Thank you for your response. Without the opportunity to have the exact figures, I have accumulated approximate numbers using the ministry website and school newsletters. The data I came up with, is as follows:

2011/2012 KPS enrollment

JK/SK. 35 eng. 72 imm.

Gr one 17 eng. 32 imm.

Gr two. 23 eng. 34 imm.

Gr three 20 eng. 38 imm.

Next year there are approximately 11english JK registrations and 33 immersion registrations. This will make the total JK - grade 4 split 106 English and 209 French. This is a 32%/62% split.

Assuming the current 3-1 registration rate that has been fairly constant the last few years, it is reasonable to assume that a K-6 KPS will have 128 English and 275 immersion students.

My question is whether the best future programming needs are being considered for the french and english KPS students under the current scenario of keeping KPS intact as a separate school?

Paul Cornies

KPS parent