

**Greater Essex County District School Board**  
**2015 PROGRAM AND ACCOMMODATION REVIEW**  
**Report of the Third Community Meeting**  
**Held on April 13, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.**  
**At Western Secondary School**

---



At the December 9, 2014, regular meeting of the Board, Trustees approved the following recommendation regarding General Amherst HS, Harrow DHS, Harrow PS, Kingsville DHS and Western SS:

**THAT THE SUPERINTENDENT RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCOMMODATIONS FACILITATES AN ACCOMMODATION REVIEW OF GENERAL AMHERST HIGH SCHOOL, KINGSVILLE DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL, WESTERN SECONDARY SCHOOL, HARROW DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL AND HARROW PUBLIC SCHOOL, TO ADDRESS CAPACITY ISSUES.**

**Present:** There were approximately 250 persons in the audience including committee members, Trustees and Board personnel.

**Facilitator:** Todd Awender, Superintendent of Education

**Recorder:** Lynne Hornby, Administrative Assistant.

**1. Call to Order and Welcome**

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by Superintendent Awender welcoming everyone to the meeting. This is the third in a series of four community meetings. He explained that notes were being taken that will be posted on the Board website. The proceedings were being audio and video recorded.

This evening, the PARC committee will present their draft recommendations. At the fourth meeting the committee will share its final recommendations that will be presented to the Director and trustees at a Board meeting in June. The report will be posted on the Board website for 60 days (excluding summer break). The Director and Senior Administration will review this report and make recommendations to trustees at a Board meeting tentatively in September. Trustees will make a final vote in October. He explained how to access information on our website.

**2. Introductions**

Superintendent Awender thanked Principal McIntyre for hosting the meeting. She pointed out the location of the washrooms and the emergency exits. Superintendent Awender introduced the Director of Education Erin Kelly, Superintendents of Education, Clara Howitt and Lynn McLaughlin, Superintendent of Business, Cathy Lynd, Coordinator of Engineering Giuliana Hinchliffe and Trustees, Kim McKinley, Jessica Sartori, Ron LeClair, Julia Burgess, Connie Buckler, and Alan Halberstadt.

**3. Background**

*A PowerPoint presentation used to share information with the community is attached*

Some important points:

In accordance with Ministry of Education mandate, the Board must address empty student spaces and renewal needs. We have to examine our program needs and provide opportunities to our students. Currently the Board has approximately 6,000 empty student spaces with a budget deficit of over \$2,000,000. Boards across the province are facing similar challenges, it's not unique to this area. Ontario's student enrolment is decreasing. Because funding is based on student enrolment, the funding we receive continues to decrease as enrolment declines. We must use our resources as efficiently and effectively as we can.

### **Presentation of Draft Recommendations by Committee Members**

*These are included in Mr. Awender's PowerPoint presentation. They are also on the board website*

#### **Recommendation 1**

Maintain Western SS and expand programming

Implement community hubs in each community/school

A JK-12 facility in Harrow and JK-12 new build in Kingsville

Designate Colchester North and Malden Central schools as feeder schools for Harrow DHS

No school may be reviewed in a PARC more than once every 7 years

#### **Recommendation 2**

Implement community hubs in each community/school

A JK-12 facility in Harrow and JK-12 new build in Kingsville

Designate Colchester North and Malden Central schools as feeder schools for Harrow DHS

Close Western SS and transition to General Amherst as a separate program

#### **Recommendation 3**

Consolidation of Harrow DHS and Kingsville DHS – close Harrow; Kingsville DHS new JK-12 school

Close Western SS and move AB program to General Amherst as a separate program

Current LDC student population from Western SS have option to go to home school or follow Western SS to new location; any future LDC students would attend local high schools

A newly built General Amherst High School in Amherstburg on board/town approved site, possible school within a school

#### **4. Presentations**

Mr. Gord Queen, Changing needs for Education – submission attached

Ms. Erin Roy, OSSTF's position on the PARC: Setting Ourselves Apart – submission attached

Ms. Katie Allen, Why Western SS should stay open – submission attached

Ms. Pria Sivakumer, Special Education and Western SS – submission attached

Ms. Kayla Beneteau, Why Western SS should stay open – submission attached

Mr. Bill Caixero, Town of Essex and Community hubs – submission attached

Each presenter was allowed up to 10 minutes as per the Board's bylaws. At the conclusion of the formal presentations, Superintendent Awender explained how public input will be collected this evening. Each school community will be represented at a table. Committee members will be able to answer questions. Cards were available for questions or comments and answers are appended to the notes of the meeting on the Board website. The Director of Education, members of senior administration, including Mr. Awender, and trustees were available this evening for your questions. Mr. Awender asked that the community be respectful of others and refrain from making derogatory remarks about other schools and students.

He also added that input is collected on an ongoing basis via the parc email box. Be mindful that anything posted to the PARC email box will end up published on the internet.

## 5. Collection of Input

Input was collected in a variety of ways for a period of 35 minutes at tables for individual conversations and then individuals were allowed to speak at the microphone for a further 30 minutes. The Superintendent noted that in an effort to accommodate everyone, during the open mike period, each speaker will have a maximum of 3 minutes. Mr. Scantlebury, our Public Relations Officer, will time the speakers and will stand up one minute before the three minutes expire. Everyone who wanted to speak was given an opportunity to do so.

Prior to commencing this portion of the agenda, the Superintendent confirmed that everyone in this room knows their school is excellent. The Superintendent stated that he will not tolerate derogatory comments toward another school or community and asked that the audience not be offensive in their comments. We know it is impossible to please everyone but we try to do what's best for all.

Input gathered in conversations with Superintendent Awender:

Colchester North Parent Council Chair and members

We had no idea until last Thursday that we would be considered in this study at all.

Our kids were considered in the enrolments as a part of the study for the new build for Essex DHS so now how can they be considered as part of the Harrow DHS study?

At the most recent PARC committee meeting last Wednesday, the parents and community members (the only people on committee who have a vote) developed this proposal. These are initial draft recommendations and we are now looking for input. We believe the rationale was to fill Harrow DHS. It is helping to fill Harrow DHS but the committee members were reminded they would be emptying out other schools.

So it's really sacrificing one school for another. In the event this were to take place. It would sacrifice the success of Essex High to try and save Harrow. I understand it's a draft. I don't understand how if these kids have been counted to determine the success of Essex, how can they now be considered to save Harrow? It's the same children in two different studies. It doesn't make sense.

In the event they have older siblings attending Essex, will they be able to get on the bus to Essex or will they have no choice but to go to Harrow?

The way the recommendation currently reads, it would not allow siblings to go to that school. Current students at those two schools would feed into Harrow based on how it is written.

Have you considered how long they'd be on a bus? A straight run is about 23 k; how long a bus ride is that?

It wasn't looked into at the time but the Transportation Consortium states that there is no direct route. It would be a new route as buses are currently not running in that direction. They don't run half empty buses so would have to devise a new route so travel time could be up to one hour which is the maximum time for a student to be on a bus.

In the farthest north east corner of the catchment area, it's not far from Essex. It would be closer for those students to walk to Essex PS. Is it realistic that they would then take a bus to Harrow for high school?

All your comments are being noted to be brought back to the committee

If Colchester students are sent to Harrow DHS would it fix their issues? There are 17 graduating students. Will 17 students ensure that Harrow DHS doesn't close?

The way that the recommendation reads now it will not address the concerns in the motion approved by trustees back in December. Moving 17 students from one school to another does not alter the Board's capacity issues as a whole. One school's capacity will increase while another's will decrease. Further, program opportunities are not improved with this scenario. At Harrow DHS they have 254 students now so that means there is not the same type of academic programming available as at Essex. In grade 10 they can take the lifeguard course at the pool in Essex. The difference between programming at Essex and Harrow is quite significant. Is there anything listed that would make up for that? It's significant for students who have a particular career path, the programming that would be offered in a school with close to 700 students rather than a school of around 250.

The facts are that in a school with close to 800 students, the program opportunities are much greater than in a small school.

If that's the case then we are giving out students a lot less opportunity to succeed and a lot less available programming. That's highly appalling to all of us. I want it noted.

Colchester North Parent Council member

Can we now come and vote?

Not at this time. Your input is absolutely necessary in order for your concerns to be heard.

We are sorry for the short notice. We got the letter out as soon as possible after the committee meeting.

I was told that some committee members felt that we didn't need to be informed and it was under protest that we were told.

From my point of view, it is necessary to make sure that you are now kept informed. We looked at our guidelines and designating a feeder school does not require a parc. Keeping you informed is necessary as far as the Board is concerned.

So we can't vote on our children's future?

You don't get a vote on the committee. You can provide us input, contact your trustee, attend the next community meeting, provide input via email. These are initial draft recommendations. At the next community meeting, the committee will provide its final recommendations that are going to the Board. Senior Administration then forms its recommendations and those are what the trustees vote on.

If this is in the final recommendations, why won't we get a vote?

Designating feeder schools doesn't require a parc. A board can change boundaries without a parc.

Can we change the policy so we can have a say in the feeder school for our children?

There are new guidelines so there will be a new policy. Again, deeming a feeder school can be done by the Board.

If this goes through, will all the public be notified?

Yes

---

What about those people who move into the area, how will they know things have changed?

They will be advised at the time of registration.

Should we get together? I'm not sending my kids to Harrow, I'm a graduate, there's not enough programming. I moved from Harrow so my kids would have more opportunities.

My grandson is 14 and has been in Resource all his life and in the first month of the semester at Western he has been moved up already. He is doing so well here.

We are from Malden and share a lot of similar concerns that Colchester does. What is the logic in this recommendation?

The committee voted on this. I believe the rationale was to help Harrow out.

It will have a negative impact on Amherst.

I can't comment on if Amherst would close but it doesn't help to take students away when the capacity is already low.

We want to make sure you know that our parents are concerned, we aren't taking a back seat. Long bus rides will be involved. Harrow doesn't have the programming other schools have, it's a major problem for us. Several have noted they will move so they don't have to go to Harrow.

Input collected at focus group tables and comment cards *are attached*.

Open microphone:

Giselle Baillargeon, Western SS parent

*See attached*

Draz Chuk, retired Western SS teacher

This school provides the special education that all students with learning disabilities need. In 2012 a report was written about accessibility. It mentioned that 5 or 6 of our high schools were inaccessible and cannot be made accessible due to costs. How will a student in a wheelchair cope? What kind of education will that student get?

How much support will the board provide for students who need it in a community high school? Probably none. It's inadequate. I've talked to people at West View and I've been told it is a complete disaster. Students aren't achieving, teachers are having a difficult time. The best place for special needs students is in a school like this. It's a school for all students with difficulties.

1. Identifications

As of January, 2015 we have 2,088 student attending our Secondary schools who are identified as exceptional. They include the following exceptionalities (as defined by the Ontario Ministry of Education and explained in our Special Education Plan):

- Behaviour;
- Communication – Autism,  
Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing,  
Language Impairment,  
Speech Impairment,  
Learning Disability;

- Intellectual – Giftedness,  
Mild Intellectual Disability,  
Developmental Disability;
- Physical – Physical Disability,  
Blind and Low Vision;
- Multiple - Multiple Exceptionalities

2. The range of placement options are explained in our Special Education Plan which is posted on the GECDSB website.  
<https://publicboard.ca/Programs/Special-Education/Pages/Special-Education-Plan.aspx>

Kerry Coulson, Malden Central parent

1 and 2 of the draft recommendations look at rerouting two schools and making them a HDHS feeder.

Doesn't the focus of the PARC aim to keep schools that have ample existing student programs?

The GECDSB not only aims to have ample existing student programs but we continue to strive to enhance student programs.

One fifth of Amherst's population would go to feed Harrow's struggling population. We are stealing from Peter to pay Paul. Why take 25 students from Amherst which is in close proximity to Villanova. If their population falls you could risk losing them to Villanova.

With Essex, the new school was built based on a study, taking some of their feeder school students would put their population at risk too. Explain please, why would we risk taking students from two schools with strong established programs, both academic and athletic in the hopes of bringing up the capacity of a high school that has been under a PARC four times and is technically considered to be in the municipality of Essex where there is a high school that already exists.

The Committee brought this up as a part of the recommendations. I believe individuals from the committee felt it would help fill empty student spaces in Harrow DHS. It was pointed out to the committee by the Superintendent that merely designating different feeder schools to Harrow DHS does not address capacity issues. It simply shifts students and creates empty spaces at two other secondary schools.

Criteria should be to minimize movements. Changing boundaries for Malden Central and Colchester North schools in fact increases the amount of students, teacher and communities involved. We are now bringing in 2 additional communities. I pay taxes to the municipality of Amherstburg not Essex. Was this taken into consideration when this draft was proposed?

The additional community involvement was discussed.

Hannah Schaafsma, WSS student

*See attached*

Charlotte King, 2 students will be attending Western SS next year

My daughter is failing in grade 10 but will excel and do well at Western. She is a hands-on learner which they don't have at a regular high school. Consider meeting the needs of hands on learners. My son will be encouraged to have confidence and self-esteem by coming to Western. Students here are very confident. We need to be realistic. Money isn't everything. Think about the future of my children in this decision.

Paige Walpole, Western SS Student

*See attached*

Gloria Gorick, Harrow resident

I'm not in favour of closing Western SS.

Recommend that Harrow be give consideration for Western SS students to transition to Harrow rather than General Amherst. It's a small school that's central and travel time and expense could be lessened.

Donna Munk, Harrow resident

Little confused by three recommendations. There are aspects of all three that are quite good.

General Amherst doesn't feature into the first recommendations. Harrow is affected in all three recommendations, no one else. In 1 and 2 Kingsville gets a new school. In 3 we close Harrow and Kingsville gets a new school. Where will that school be located? At least General Amherst is on 2 and 3. The website says General Amherst is the new international school, did Harrow or Kingsville get a chance?

The Board determines the placement of its programs

If we read between the lines Harrow is done. There are no opportunities for Harrow, it is an insult to the integrity of the community.

Why is Harrow in all three and no one else?

Again, these are the committee's draft recommendations. The final recommendations will be presented at the fourth community meeting in May. The committee is not a decision making body. Trustees will make final decisions.

Joanne Meyer, Harrow resident

The passive aggressive tactic of keeping Harrow under review for so long to drive students out has worked to send them to the coterminous board. It is extremely sad that people will choose the other board for JK and send them on to Villanova. Let's keep the students we have and not advertise to bring students from other countries to fill the spaces. Harrow stood beside the other communities when you proposed a mega school equidistant from everyone.

Klair Salter, Harrow DHS alumni

*See attached*

Saul Hernandez, 2 daughters in KDHS and son in KPS

When I was in high school, I used to take two buses to attend a school that had the best amenities that I needed. We are competing with the other boards so should all put our minds together to do the best for our kids. They need a school with all the amenities, track and field, swimming pool, new instruments. We should give them the tools to improve and move to the next step. I live 2 blocks from KDHS but I'm willing for my children to get a bus to a school that has all the amenities they need.

Dawn Beneteau, Western SS parent

My daughter is a strong competent person because she was a student here. How do you have the power to guess who will need an IEP in the future? You can guess how many subdivisions there will be but not how many will need an IEP. This school was never meant for that.

Many students will need an IEP. This is a travesty. What if you close the school and you find out it's a mistake in 15 years' time? Simply say you're sorry that you made a mistake?

Over 2,000 students currently in the secondary panel have an IEP.

James Long, Harrow resident

Has the board done its due diligence in finding ways to save money so far as hydro, water and everything else before deciding to close a school to save money? You have so many rooftops where you could be putting solar panels? Use the government to get a grant, everybody else does. What does it cost you to run a school per year, \$100,000? You'd get your money back in 10 years. There are so many other ways to save costs. No one wants to lose anything. Are all the avenues being explored? Are all the lights set to sensors? It's a cost savings. If you aren't exploring these costs savings, why not?

Some of these cost savings are being explored for implementation in the near future while others have already been applied. We are always trying to find cost savings with respect to utilities and other avenues.

Susan Cote, Western SS parent

Last time I asked if there had been any studies done about the success of West View. I believe the answer is not on the website. Do you have that answer? If as you say it's too soon to provide any data, then this is premature. So it's too early to say. Last time I said you should wait to have more data before you put out Western students through this too. Aren't you willing to wait? If West View hasn't worked then you need to wait.

We believe it has been a success but it has only been one semester.

The following data represents the credit accumulation rates for students taking locally developed courses from 2009/10 to present (for all schools in GECD SB):

English grade 9	78.1 – 90.6
English grade 10	82.3 – 90.9
Math grade 9	83.3 – 93.1
Math grade 10	83.8 – 93.8

Westview Freedom Academy's achievement falls within or above these credit accumulation rates following the first semester as a community school.



Students placed in the AB program are not typically on a pathway to a secondary school diploma but to a certificate. Each student has an IEP. Our goal is experiential learning with a goal of paving a pathway to our community. Students continue to achieve a high level of success in this program. There have been a number of eloquent and passionate statements about why this school should stay open. I can't believe that in 2015 when Canada is supposed to be world leaders in respecting the right of those with special needs that we are a complete failure in that department and that the committee has presented two of three recommendations to close the only special education school we have.

Tara Carbowski, Colchester North parent

I'm a former Harrow High graduate but we relocated to an area where our children would go to Colchester North and then on to Essex DHS. I was surprised to receive a letter this past Friday stating that Colchester North and Malden were named in this recommendation being presented tonight. Where did this last minute recommendations come from regarding Colchester North and Malden?

Some members of the committee proposed it at the last meeting.  
Will it fix the problem for Harrow High? No it won't.

It may help increase the school's utilization rates.

I purposely chose Colchester North and Essex High for their academic programs. Can you promise my children the same academic and athletic programs at Harrow that they would get at Essex? By taking this population away from Essex what does it do to their numbers?

Harrow DHS has a smaller population and it is not always possible to provide the same amount of programming for a smaller population as a larger population. Program opportunities with lower enrolment are decreased.

Colchester North and Malden parents are frustrated by this. They don't have a seat or a vote on this committee. It may fix some numbers for Harrow DHS but these two schools should not be brought to the table.

Erica Kelly, Harrow DHS student

I spent 10 years in the catholic system in elementary. I was given the choice to go to Villanova but I chose to go to Harrow DHS, it's my home school and I would feel comfortable in a small school where I could try new things. I'm going to Queen's University. I want my little brother to have the same opportunities I had. Harrow should stay open.

#### **6. Future meeting dates**

Any information related to the PARC process is available on the Board website at [publicboard.ca](http://publicboard.ca). The Student Accommodations icon is a red schoolhouse located in the bottom right of the front page of the website.

All information from this presentation will be available there.

#### **7. Final community meeting date and location**

6:30 p.m. on May 12 at Migration Hall in Kingsville

**8. Board information**


The PARC committee will present its final recommendations to trustees at a regular meeting of the Board on June 2, 2015. Letters will be sent home close to that time.

**9. Closing comments and Adjournment**

There was no further input. In closing, Superintendent Awender thanked everyone for their attendance. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

# PARC Community Meeting #3

GAHS, HDHS, HPS, KDHS and WSS  
April 13, 2015.



At the December 9, 2014, regular meeting of the Board, Trustees approved the following recommendation regarding General Amherst HS, Harrow DHS, Harrow PS, Kingsville DHS and Western SS

**THAT THE SUPERINTENDENT RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCOMMODATIONS FACILITATES AN ACCOMMODATION REVIEW OF GENERAL AMHERST HIGH SCHOOL, KINGSVILLE DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL, WESTERN SECONDARY SCHOOL, HARROW DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL AND HARROW PUBLIC SCHOOL, TO ADDRESS CAPACITY ISSUES.**

1. Call to Order and Welcome
2. Introductions
3. Background
4. Presentations:
  - Mr. Gord Queen, Changing needs for Education
  - Ms. Erin Roy, OSSTF's position on the PARC: Setting Ourselves Apart
  - Ms. Katy Allen, Why Western SS should stay open
  - Ms. Pria Sivakumar, Special Education and Western SS
  - Ms. Kayla Beneteau, Why Western SS should stay open
  - Mr. Bill Calzero, Town of Essex and Community hubs
  - Ms. Dawn Beneteau, Why General Amherst should not be overcrowded
5. Presentation of Draft Recommendations and rationale
6. Final community meeting date and location – 6:30 p.m. on May 12 at Migration Hall in Kingsville
7. Board information – The PARC committee will present its final recommendations to trustees at a regular meeting of the Board on June 2, 2015
8. Questions and Collection of Input
9. Closing comments and Adjournment

## PARC TIMELINES

- Community Meeting #3 – PARC Committee will present initial draft recommendations
- Community Meeting #4 – PARC Committee will present final recommendations
- The PARC Committee will present their final report to trustees at a meeting in May. This report will be posted for 60 days (not counting summer break) on the Board website .
- The Director will present a report with recommendations to trustees at a September/October 2015 Board meeting. They will vote to determine final recommendations at an October Board meeting.

## COMMITTEE

### • General Amherst High School

- Hazel Keefner – Principal
- Amy Soucie - Staff member
- Mary Lippert – Parent
- Kim Laframboise – Parent

### • Harrow Public School

- Michelle Sprague-Keane – Principal
- Teri Gorick - Staff member
- Trudy Richards – Parent
- Rebecca Robinson – Parent

### • Western Secondary School

- Melissa MacIntyre – Principal
- Alison Oldfield - Staff member
- Robin Trepanier – Parent
- Valerie Cormier – Parent

### Harrow District High School

- Mary Edwards - Principal
- John Konopaski – Staff Mem
- Bill Parr - Parent
- Sheri Dzodovich - Parent

### Kingsville District High School

- Dina Salinitre - Principal
- Teri Gorick – Staff Member
- Michelle Hedge - Parent
- Bill Orawski – Parent

### Community Members

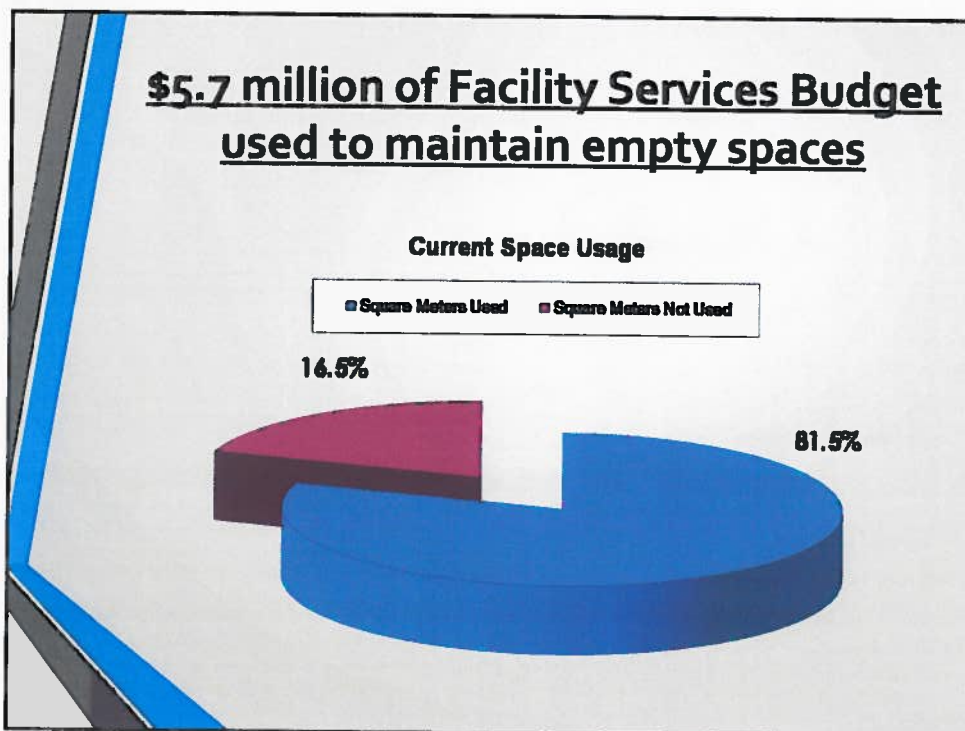
- Elaine Mailloux
- Pat Catton
- Mary MacLauchlan
- Barry Mannell

## **OUR CHALLENGES**

- Address empty spaces, renewal needs, FCI, aging infrastructure, and program needs and opportunities.
- GECD SB has 6000 empty spaces and a deficit of over 2 million dollars.
- Boards across the province are experiencing the same challenges.
- Funding is based on student enrolment. In Ontario, enrolment continues to decline, thus, funding continues to decrease.
- We must use our resources in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

## **Elementary and Secondary Spaces**

<u>Capacity FTE</u>	<u>Elementary</u>	<u>Capacity FTE</u>	<u>Secondary</u>
OTG Capacity	27,043	OTG Capacity	14,635
Students	23,962	Students	11,717
Portables	1,269	Portables	189
Portapak	667	Portapak	0
Total Capacity	28,979	Total Capacity	14,824
Utilization rate	88%	Utilization rate	80%
Empty spaces	3,081	Empty spaces	2,918



<b><u>Individual Schools</u></b>						
School	Capacity	Students	Spaces	Renewal \$	Projection 2024	Util. Rates
Harrow (7/8)	484	254 (110)	230 (120)	\$7.9	175	52% (75%)
GAHS	1146	678.5	467.5	\$5.7	588	59%
KDHS	906	568	338	\$18.3	606	63%
WSS	627	311	316	\$3.9	330?	49%
HPS	467	368	99	\$4.6	325	79%



## Overall Secondary Perspective

Capacity	Students	Spaces	Renewal \$	Projection 2024	Util. Rate
3163	1811	1352	35,667,453	1699	57%

## WHY THESE FIVE SCHOOLS?

As a whole, significant renewal needs and increasing FCI

**The 4 Secondary Schools account for nearly 25% of the empty space of the 71 buildings acting as schools**

Some of the lowest utilization rates in the Board

Enrolment projections continue to remain low for the next twenty years

The current situation is not sustainable

Efficiencies and opportunities in program are limiting

New Top Up funding model change this year

## **Proposed Guiding Considerations**

- Consolidations (Ministry favours for new build funding)
- Must improve Utilization Rates / Empty Spaces
- Community School
- Renewal Needs / Aging Infrastructure
- Try to Minimize the # of student changes
- Student Programs
- Secondary Size Schools (800-1200)
- Transportation
- Coterminous Board – Strategic places

## **DRAFT RECOMMENDATION**

- Maintain WSS and expand programming
- Implement community hubs in each community/school
- JK-12 facility in Harrow and JK-12 new build in Kingsville
- Designate Colchester North and Malden Central schools as feeder schools for Harrow DHS
- No school may be reviewed in a PARC more than once every 7 years



### **DRAFT RECOMMENDATION**

- Implement community hubs in each community/school
- JK-12 facility in Harrow and JK-12 new build in Kingsville
- Designate Colchester North and Malden Central schools as feeder schools for Harrow DHS
- Close WSS and transition to General Amherst as a separate program

### **DRAFT RECOMMENDATION**

- Consolidation of HDHS and KDHS – close Harrow; KDHS new JK-12 school
- Close WSS and move AB program to General Amherst as a separate program
- Current LDCC student population from WSS have option to go to home school or follow WSS to new location; any future LDC students would attend local high schools
- A newly built high school in Amherstburg on board/town approved site, possible school within a school

## **Important Dates**

### **Future Community Meeting Date**

**Tuesday, May 12 at Kingsville DHS –  
Migration Hall**

**Time : 6:30pm**

**To follow the PARC please refer to the GECD SB website  
where the most accurate and updated information will be  
posted throughout the process.**

- GOTO <http://publicboard.ca>

- Click on



which is located on the  
bottom right corner.

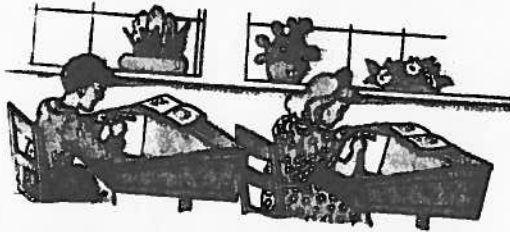
- Inquiries can be submitted through the following  
address : [parc@publicboard.ca](mailto:parc@publicboard.ca)



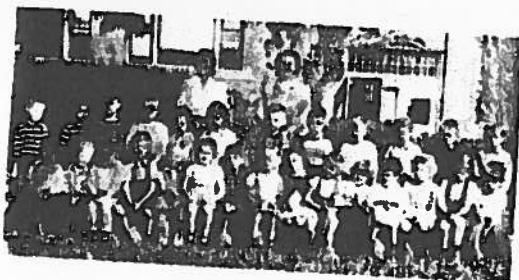
Gord Queen



CHANGING TIMES FOR EDUCATION  
Let us Work Together  
With Vision for  
The Future



Let Us  
Listen !  
We may hear  
New Ideas  
to overcome  
Trouble.



Presentation to The  
Greater Essex County District School  
Board PRAC Committee  
By Gord Queen  
April 2015  
Re:Kingsville Family of Schools

## Changing needs for Education

**Ladies and Gentlemen: Boys and Girls we have trouble  
Yes we have trouble,  
And I do not mean River City.  
In the Music Man  
Professor Harold Hill, spoke of Trouble  
Trouble with a Pool Table in Town**

**A Former Principal Tom Bain, Warden of Essex County  
Talks about Trouble with the Horse Racing industry**

**But tonight I speak about Trouble  
With the very threat to our youth,  
Trouble with our schools and each of our communities.  
Trouble Caused by a group of people called Politician's**

**Trouble caused by Politicians sitting in Toronto when they  
Passed bill 30, years ago, then had the audacity to take away the local school board's right  
To raise local taxes, for local school needs**

**Yes Ladies and Gentlemen  
I am a Politician  
I am Gord Queen, Deputy Mayor of the Town of Kingsville  
But Long before I was on Council, I was School trustee**

**One Superintendent of Education for the Province  
Back In 1807 when The "Upper Canada Grammar School Act" was passed**

**My How Things have changed!  
The slate has been replaced by the smart board.  
Latin is no longer taught.**

**WE all want healthy educated Kids.**

**The 8 to 80 Cities concept for Health and Fitness suggests we should design  
Our Communities for All Ages 8 to 80  
We need sidewalks and safe bike trails to our schools, not unnecessary busing  
With CWATS, The Town of Kingsville and County have been working in that direction  
Paved trails, increased sidewalks, and growing parks and recreation facilities.  
We even installed a traffic light at KDHS to permit safe walking to the School**

**Let's we consider what we have been blessed:  
An Agricultural Community that can and does benefit  
Greenhouses and food handling part of secondary education.  
Attractions as the Fantasy of Lights and home construction due to Technology at KDHS**

**Each Community could prepare a business case telling the Board How important Schools are to each  
Community. It appears The Ministry of Education does not care.**

**Western Secondary was the first of two such schools that were once planned to be built in the County.  
Why should the students travel so far? Why Bus? Should they not be taught with respect and dignity  
closer to home?**

**How many in this room have experienced the talents and skills taught in this school?**

**The Food. The Many Talents.**

**Not all students learn the same.**

**Some students excel at Math and Science**

**Some with athletics track and field**

**Not all schools can or should offer all programs.**

**As a Trustee I was present when we voted to start a new programs:**

**Design 2000 at Essex High,**

**My how the parents were concerned, with an elementary student going to a high school  
&**

**The Addition of French immersion at Kingsville Public**

**One Room Schools such as Salem have been closed.**

**Readers with Dick and Jane have been retired.**

**Our Local High School**

**Is not in the two story house my Dad attended**

**KDHS offers Technical and Academic**

**But also has the potential to become**

**The One Centre for Creative Arts in the County**

**Kingsville recently welcomed a new A Level hockey team, a  
Lacrosse team, and we have over 600 youth registered for Soccer.  
Ice time costs at the arena, reduced for all school groups.**

**I agree the rifle range in the basement at KDHS is not needed.**

**The Migration Community Hall was built in partnership with the Communities of Kingsville, Gosfield  
South, and Essex County School Board.  
A great example of Co-Operation.**

**Let us build on the Last Committee Report**

**That Closed Ruthven Public,**

**Eliminated Some Surplus Student Spaces and called for a K12 school.**

**Now the Government says it is interested in Consolidation**

**Let us work together**

**Collectively to retain quality education in Kingsville**

**Let us seek government support for the Funding  
Necessary for that New School.**

**Be Creative:**  
**Jack Miner was Creative when he was teaching.**  
**Jack taught the Good Word by attaching a small band on the leg of Geese.**  
One such message  
"Where there is no vision the people perish" Proverbs 29:18

The Town of Kingsville is a creation of the Province,  
Or gains its' rights thereby.  
District School Board Number nine, or Greater Essex  
School Board as it is now called, is also a creation of the Province,

**We are not here as adversaries,**  
**We are not lawyers fighting in court**

**But rather like cousins, each seeking what we perceive to be right,**  
**Or just and fair for our mutual communities and families.**  
**This is not a family feud**

Marion the Librarian in the Music Man.  
She sought to enlighten others

**We need a variety of tools to teach our youth.**  
**Music, Drama, and Technical are all such tools.**

Andrew Carnegie (who provided money for many of our early Libraries) once said  
"Teamwork is the ability to work together towards a common vision.  
May our collective vision be:  
to continue primary and secondary education within the Town Kingsville

Or As Luca "Lazylegz" Patuelli from a recent accessibility Workshop  
Might say  
**"NO EXCUSES, NO LIMITS"**



**Gord Queen**  
28 Pulford Street, Kingsville, Ontario N9Y 1B4  
Email: [pgordonqueen@msn.com](mailto:pgordonqueen@msn.com)



My name is Erin Roy– Vice President of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation – District 9. OSSTF represents support staff and secondary teachers in Greater-Essex schools.

Every school board is faced with the budgetary consequences of declining enrolment, shifting demographics, changing education philosophies and competing school systems. This creates impossible choices for local decision makers.

Funding for education is a provincial responsibility. According to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, the current formula supports a 1950's definition of education with the 3R's and fails to recognize that schools offer a range of programs. It does not support the entire cost of new programs such as adult education.

Prior to 1998, municipalities had the ability to levy school taxes; that power of taxation was taken away by the PC Harris government and all funding for public education now comes directly from the province. This funding formula is complicated and there are different pockets of money for specific areas in addition to the general funding that is given on a per pupil ratio. Areas of funding that are important for our schools include grants for school operations as well as declining enrolment. However, the most recent announcement for the 2015-16 Grants for Student Needs sees a 61.2 million dollar decrease in these types of grants.

The current provincial funding formula fails to look at the needs of students and emphasizes 'utilized space.' It is not enough to look at hallways and square footage to determine what is the best educational model for students.

There is no argument, that the school board and elected trustees have some difficult budgetary decisions to make; however it is my hope that



those decisions are not at the expense of small communities or unique programming for our most at-risk students.

Western Secondary School serves all of Essex County. All students that attend Western Secondary have an Individual Education Plan and have worked through the Individual Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process. This process recommends programming and placement for students in the Greater Essex Board.

All students at Western Secondary benefit from smaller class sizes and unique programming to suit their individual educational needs. It is unfair to compare the 'utilization rate' that the province uses for funding secondary schools because of the large hallways and greater than average technical shops at this particular location.

Some of the arguments you will hear for closing under-populated schools is that programming suffers because there aren't enough students to run full classes or introduce new programs.

If Western Secondary closes, special needs students will be dispersed to their local community schools. They will not be afforded these same career pathways or enriched opportunity because other schools are not equipped with technical shops or the variety of programming that Western offers.

The recent expansion of locally developed classes throughout the GECDSD has resulted in split locally developed classes where individual educational needs are more difficult to meet. It has created limited pathways and options in the senior grades as community schools can only offer the options that suit their demographics. This may help with the bottom line; but it is not what is best for students...in particular our most at risk students.

The quality of education for individuals is not always easily measured. Students that attend Western Secondary are afforded and gain opportunities that likely would not be available to them in their community schools: student parliament, sports participation, club participation etc. I don't mean that the local community schools don't offer such things, but the students themselves may not feel as comfortable participating in them or competing for spots that are limited. Remember, the students that attend Western Secondary have spent much of their educational careers with challenges.

Western Secondary is a magnet school for students that are seeking a pathway to the world of work. In recent years, Specialist High Skills Major programs and Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programs have expanded at Western Secondary.

The GECD SB has other magnet programs such as Walkerville Centre for Creative Arts, enrichment and advanced placement programs; this coming school year International Students will become part of the complement, and there is further consideration to offering an International Baccalaureate Program. These offerings make the GECD SB unique in its programming and effectively attract students to our board. Capitalizing on the uniqueness of Western Secondary and building on its history sets the GECD SB apart from the other competing school systems.

It seems that almost daily, we read or hear in the news, cuts to services and funding that affect our most vulnerable in society, especially in the area of special needs. Just last week it was announced that the much valued and needed pre-school program for special needs children at the John McGivney Centre will close due to government funding being cut. Parents and caregivers for special needs children are faced with lengthy wait lists for assistance or have to travel far distances from their homes

for access to services. There is a slow degradation of equitable accessibility for our vulnerable populations and more and more pressure is being put on the education sector to provide these services without increased funding to back it up.

This can also be said for the Special Education funding that the board receives. This envelope of money has not kept up with the cost of evolving technology and fails to assess the true cost of education for some of the higher needs learners. The fact is there are increased numbers of special needs students in our school board and fewer dollars to provide services. Cuts have to be made on the backs of those that can least afford it and the entire system suffers.

I urge you to bring this conversation to your neighbours, family and friends.

It is our hope that this conversation will make it to local MPPs, the Premier, Kathleen Wynne, and the Education Minister, Liz Sandals. It is time for our government to have this conversation and it is time to hold our elected officials accountable to community voice and the electorate they represent.

OSSTF District 9 has developed a campaign entitled: Community Schools Matter. The message being delivered is twofold – fix the funding formula, and consider finding savings in fewer school systems. You may have seen some signs in your communities with this phrase and there is also a Facebook page we encourage you to 'like'. We need to pressure the government to invest in the futures of all students and at the same time decrease the expenses that result from competition between school boards.

We have postcards available to be sent to your MPPs. These postcards can be mailed individually with a standard stamp, or we will hand

deliver them on your behalf. If there is anyone here willing to volunteer to collect these post cards from your community and school, please get in touch with one of us at the OSSTF office and we can make arrangements.

Our community schools matter and the specialized programming available to the youth of Essex County--matters. As a community we cannot become ostriches and put our heads into the sand and pretend that these changes aren't happening or that they won't have a negative effect. Please join us in supporting community schools and effective programming for our special needs learners. Community Schools Matter.

Thank you for your time.

Katie Allen

Good Evening, Board Directors, trustees, community board members, town council members, teachers and parents. My name is Katie Allen, before I begin I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak before you in regards to the process of the boards' quest to reduce the excess capacity of Western Secondary School.

Western was never meant to be a large school. Students accommodation needs require smaller classes to ensure one on one time with faculty; which results in each student being able to get the assistance that they need but also make that personal connection with teacher's and feel confident to ask for help. Western also encourages all students to embrace what learning strategy works best for them, and use it to succeed. Another point that sets Western apart from other high schools is their hands on Trade Courses that they offer, for example woodworking, auto body and Horticulture. Most students learn better by working hands on and often show more of an interest in the subjects by this method of teaching. These successes cannot be measured just by dollars and cents. They need to be measured by the education that these kids are getting.

I am aware that accommodation reviews are still in progress, but something that we all need to keep in mind is the number one priority of Western and that is has an Adapted program. Did you know that studies have shown, people affected by Autism can easily get overwhelmed and over stimulated in large groups of people? Academic High Schools such as Kingsville, and General Amherst are high traffic schools. Meaning in between classes, hallways are very congested, regardless if there are still spaces yet to be filled. Handicapped students are also another point to be addressed. First of all, this particular group of students will not have accessibility to all areas of these larger schools. How are these students supposed to travel comfortably through these hallways SAFELY without the possibility of being pushed or injured? If a handicapped student has a class on second floor how are they supposed to get up there when none of the larger schools besides Harrow have any ramps or elevators? (Look and pause) A student cannot have limited choices of classes because of they require alternate accessibility options.

Although Century's programs were not the same as Western's I strongly believe that we should wait a few years for those kids to fill the empty seats. Western already busses kids from all over the county as it is, why not give it a chance? The next closest school like Western is Alexander Mackenzie. Are students then expected to travel from Essex County all the way to Sarnia to go to get the accommodation that they need? Not only is it unrealistic, but it is unfair. Even if a student were to bus to Sarnia it would take away from time with families and give them little time to complete homework. (Look and Pause)

All of these kids need extra assistance with studies. Some students won't be able to handle the workload that Kingsville and Amherst will put out, which can result in frustration and lack of confidence and will lead to drop outs. Some of these students are below basic learning levels and Specialized Learning classes will not do justice. The specialized learning classes won't give the students enough support like Western does. One period a day won't help the student succeed to the best of their ability.

Western's repair cost is the lowest amount of all school mentioned. If closing a school or moving students around is solely based upon money, why not through fundraiser events to try to make up these costs? Western has so many outlets available that could bring in that money, for example Fashion Show Pumpkin Fest. Why not get the community involved or form a community group to offset the funding for the repairs.

Harrow has the lowest number of student body as well as the second highest repair cost. That being said, if one of the schools were to close, why not amalgamate Western into Harrow? Students are already bussed from various towns and because of short distance between the two schools, Harrow students could easily be transported to Western. Also, if Harrow is put into Western, they would be given so many opportunities that include the OYAP Program! Hairdressing, cooking, baking, welding, Autobody, Horticulture, just to name a few examples.

The last point I would like to make this evening, is on a more personal matter (pause and look). Western is considered a safe haven. Most students there have had a history of being bullied before walking into Western, I being one (pause). When you walk

into those doors every morning, you don't feel unwelcomed, you don't feel like you don't belong. The teacher's care more than just about your academics, and are there for you when you might need a pep – talk no matter the subject, When I was in grade 9 I connected with Mrs. Moscardelli and she helped me get myself on track and she also helped me with some advice when I needed it. She always left me feeling like I could succeed. Another teacher that also helped me get through High school was Mrs Rodi when my Nana got diagnosed with cancer in my grade 12 year she helped me think positive things about it and helped me get through it and made me feel that I could get through the rest of my grade 12 year. They always leave you feeling like you can do anything, no one is ever judged because we are all different and we respect that. My biggest fear, is that if these students are to going to get bullied if they are moved or have that Haven taken away from them. You can say schools have zero tolerance for bullying, but it still happens everyday and they will be bullied because they are different. I was bullied when I was in elementary school, I disliked going to school because of that. When I came to western in grade 9 I met my true friend who four years later are still my best friends because they accepted me for who I am.

I would have never gotten to where I am today if it wasn't for Western Secondary School, I am not sure if I would have even graduated college if it wasn't for Western. Some days I still wish I was still in high school because I enjoyed being there and I felt like belonged. I had good friends to hangout with and I also had amazing teachers I know I am not there but I am still a warrior at heart.

Thank-you.

# Lakshmipriya Sivakumer

## Presentation for PARC 2015 public meeting on April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015– Western Secondary School

Superintendent Awender, PARC Committee, Teachers, Students and Families,

My name is Lakshmipriya Sivakumar. I am a parent of a son with autism who goes to Western. I want to start by thanking you for the opportunity to share my thoughts and concerns about the PARC and some of the recommendations that have come up. I have watched some of the committee meetings and participated in community meetings. I have to apologize as I do not have concrete solutions to offer at this juncture, however I am here to share my perspective as a parent who has a son with special needs. I hope this can shed some light as you make your recommendations.

A couple of the recommendations made so far have involved:

1. Consolidating programs from Western with another school (or)
2. Closing Western and moving students to neighborhood high schools

1. A solution that involves consolidating Western with another school has to take into consideration that it is more than a program or set of course offerings. Western is an environment and philosophy. What has made it successful is the people here. The teaching staff who pour their heart and soul into their work and believe that every student has the ability to succeed and succeed in their unique way. The support staff who provide the right scaffolding for students to grow to their full potential. Together with the Guidance team and Learning support staff they help students with academic, social, emotional and behavioral challenges. The administration uses a strong sense of discretion in every situation. There are no barriers for our students here. The people are what makes Western what it is. ***Western is not just a building. It is not just the programs either. To maintain the integrity of the school and continue its successes it has to be moved as a whole.***

2. With regards to closing Western and transitioning students to neighborhood schools, I have concerns and reservations that I'd like to share with you. There is this assumption out there that every neighborhood school offering Locally developed courses and STEPS classrooms solves the needs of students identified with special needs. That is not true. I would like to share a little bit of my son's story to illustrate why I say this.

When the IPRC process started for our son to transition to high school, we wanted him to be in a neighborhood high school with options for him to work toward a diploma.

This is what happened. We were told that he will not be able to attend a neighborhood school unless we chose a STEPS program.

These were the reasons given.

- Our son will not get the support due to lack of enough LST support and CYW's.
- There are not enough numbers to run Locally developed courses. and limited options are available in terms of core courses english, math and especially science.
- That Locally developed courses are run with Applied courses in split classrooms when numbers are low and it may be hard for the students with special needs.
- There are safety concerns as there is not enough supervision.
- Open courses have large enrollment and it would be hard for students with special needs to handle.

We knew going in to the process that our son had challenges that were also social and emotional but we also knew that he could learn. We declined the placement options and went for two IPRC meetings and ended up appealing to the Director of Education. We had asked for placement in a neighborhood school but we were offered Western. We are so thankful to the board for that. We were told that this is the



place our son would have most success and have the chance to work towards a diploma. They were right. Today he is on a college bound pathway. Will he get there? We don't know but he is on his way. He is in Grade 11 now. He is going to try dual credits at St. Clair college in his Grade 12 year. Will he get a high school diploma? Most likely. The fact is, with the right approach, students with special needs can reach great heights. Western has shown this time and time again with examples like my son. The truth is, before you even consider a move to integrating students with special needs to their neighborhood high school, there needs to be more groundwork done. The board has to be more accepting when it comes to IPRC's. They need to Open doors for all students. Not place limits on who gets a pathway to the diploma and who does not. Families should not have to go to hell and back for their children to have an opportunity to have the high school experience and the chance to reach their fullest potential.

We cannot have an educational system that just **accommodates** students with special needs we need one that **educates** them as well. We need to continue to offer flexible course options, meaningful co-op placements, apprenticeship and OYAP options for students with special needs.

If I may offer some input in this process I have a few things to say: Since we are so data driven in this process,

- Why don't we get data from families by means of a short survey on how their son's/daughters have handled the changes that happened at Century especially if they have had to transition to their neighborhood schools. Has It changed their trajectory /pathway?
- Why don't we get data on students in Western and students in other high schools who have been formally identified as having a disability. What is the difference in high school graduation rates, numbers participating in OYAP and Specialist high skills majors and number of students going to college.
- Why don't we look beyond the numbers and gather the success stories from Western and Century?

With the changes that have happened at Century in the city, Western is the only place left where students with special needs have a range of pathways available for them in high school. It was stated in the first public meeting that Century continues to offer Modified programming for students in the city. But families have been told otherwise, that Century can only take new students who are out of their boundary if they are in the Adaptive Basic programs and students who are in the modified stream have been grandfathered. Students with special needs have a range of abilities and they don't always take all Adaptive courses or all Modified/LD courses. So just offering the Adaptive Basic program in one high school may not meet their needs.

Finally, Western has a culture that is worth preserving. That is the reason I am standing here. Before we make any drastic changes, let us be sure that this culture is well established in every high school. Or else we will be doing a disservice to our students who are most in need. After all what is the whole point of 'Public Education', if it is not accessible to all.

# Kayla Beneteau

## *What is a Warrior?*

*Well a warrior is someone who is strong, someone who fights for what they believe in no matter the cost, and because of his knowledge he has the at most confidence to conquer any battle he sets his mind to. But no warrior starts off at his strongest. He has his mentor's guidance to help lead him to victory.*

Good Evening, Parents, Teachers, Board Members, Town Councilmen, and past and present students alike. My name is Kayla Beneteau, and I am here to speak on behalf of Western Secondary.

I think sometimes we forget the vastness of this decision. It can be easy to judge things in statistics and numbers especially when money is involved, and not to mention a huge change in our community. Through this process there has been so much talk about money, statistics, repair costs, and costs of students. I strongly feel we have lost sight on what is really important here.

So just for a moment, let's put aside all the dollar signs, statistics, blueprints and repair costs. And look at this in a different light.

A learning Disability is a lifelong challenge, it is not a choice. Unlike the other four High Schools that are also a part of this decision, Western is entirely made up of students with who need extra time and assistance in learning. It was never meant to be as large as the schools as classes are smaller to ensure that teachers are allotted one-on-one time with students, so students are given every chance at succeeding. To these students, the extra learning support that Western offers is not a Luxury, it is a need.

As someone who personally struggled with certain areas of learning, I know what its like to be different.

When I was younger I had epilepsy, a brain disorder that can also be referred to as a Staring Spell. So I can tell you going through grade school was no cake walk when you're getting called names like "Seizure Girl" and getting left out of things because you are labelled different. Every day I had to go into school and be ridiculed because of not only my disorder, but because I was in a "Special Class". Some days it would be so bad that my mom would keep me home from school. My grades sank with my confidence and I gave up. What's the point when your teachers don't even believe in you?

Than the transition from grade school to high school rolled around. I have to admit, walking up to those doors on the first day, I was nervous that history would just be repeated. But it wasn't like that at all.

Western welcomed me with open arms, and I welcome it. It was a new start, for what seemed to be a brighter future. Teachers believed in me, gave me hope that I could do anything regardless of something that had held me back once before. My peers welcomed me with open arms, there was no reason for judgement because we were all the same. My grades started picking up. I woke up excited every morning for school!

I had started in reading lab, and within the year I had been moved to an applied English class! I continued to flourish with my English so much so that I was put into College bound course that were grades above me and passing them with 80s or more. But my successes didn't stop there,

for my grade 11 year I had improved so much that I was able to transfer to Amherst High. Although to my surprise, it was a totally different world. My whole experience there was cold. Teachers were unsympathetic, students were cruel to one another. It wasn't my school, so I returned to Western to finish off my last 2 years, where I lead my graduating class as valedictorian.

My point is that Western is not just a building that can be based on numbers and price tags. Western is a place where futures are made! In this very room, lives are being moulded everyday – students who severely struggle in various areas of learning, walk out of this building not just with a diploma but a success story about how they overcame all of the problems they once faced and they are proud of all their accomplishments! Even to this day past students, presents, and family members have all pulled together in signing a petition to keep our home alive!

Western is where Warriors are made!

The sad truth is that almost all of us were bullied because of our disabilities prior to coming to Western. Although my disorder wasn't physical, but could you imagine how hard it could be for someone who has one?

It absolutely crushes my heart to think that current students could possibly have these experiences ripped out from under them, and be moved into another high school that doesn't give them all the opportunities that Western offers for them. Students will get overwhelmed with workloads, and because teachers are not as understanding they won't care. Even if students were put into an enriched class, they still would not be given all the accommodation that Western offers. Will they then be given extra support such as EAs or CYWs?

Not to mention Kingsville and Amherst are much larger schools which results in congested hallways, but they also do not have any ramps or elevators how are students with crutches, walkers and wheel-chairs supposed to get to class safely, let alone get to class at all?

If our students are taken out of what has become a home to them, to be moved to a larger school that could have up to 1000 students, my biggest fear is that they will be forgotten. Will they still have the opportunity to join sports teams? To join student council? To be top in their class? To become valedictorian? Or even to be treated as an equal by staff or students? The answer is no.

My last point I would like to make this evening is the GECDSB's mission statement and beliefs.

The GECDSB's Mission Statement reads as follows:

*In partnership with the community, provides learning opportunities which support challenge, and inspire all students to achieve their full potential and enable them to participate meaningfully in their communities.*

The Beliefs of the GECDSB reflect the shared vision and values of everyone within the organization are as listed:

- *A safe, stimulating, caring and welcoming environment, which accommodates individual learning styles and needs, promotes and facilitates the learning process.*
- *Skilled, caring and motivated employees make a positive difference in the lives of our students and are essential to our success and our future.*

- *We are accountable for our decisions.*

With this being said, I strongly feel that Western meets all of these ideals that the school board has set out perfectly. Students could not be getting a better education anywhere else, and if these beliefs truly reflect the shared vision the school Board has, THAT YOU HAVE for everyone in the organization, than why is Western even an option for closure?



Bill Caxeiro

April 8, 2015

**Greater Essex County District School Board**  
451 Park Street West, P.O. Box 210  
Windsor, Ontario N9A 6K1

Dear Board Members,

The Council for the Town of Essex continues to be gravely concerned by the process and anticipated outcomes of the accommodation review involving Harrow District High School. In response to the tremendous anxiety voiced in our community, Council has recently met with members of the Board's Program and Accommodation Review Committee (PARC) and with MPP Taras Natyshak and MPP Lisa Gretzky to discuss these growing concerns.

Essex Council passed a resolution at a Special Meeting of Council on March 31 of this year which states:

*"In Premier Wynn's recent mandate letters, the Premier tasked selected ministers to participate in the development of a policy on community hubs, including the ministers of Education, Health and Long-Term Care, Municipal Affairs and Housing, Community and Social Services and the Minister Responsible for Seniors. A community hub can be a school, a neighbourhood centre or another public space that offers coordinated services such as education, health care and social services. According to the Premier's Office, a Community Hub can foster partnerships among community organizations and other groups to ensure that the framework addresses local needs.*

*In light of this initiative, the Council of the Town of Essex requests the Province to direct that all proceedings relative to closing the Harrow High School be ceased until further discussions can occur with involved parties on the creation of a Community Hub.*

*And further, we direct our administration along with Essex Council to continue discussions with PARC, Essex MPP Taras Natyshak to put into place a meeting with the Provincial Education Minister so that we can request the Minister to consider the impact that the decision of closure would have on the community of Harrow, to better understand our position as a municipality and*

*most critically, to focus on the opportunity to utilize the Harrow High School as a "Community Hub".*

Council is extremely apprehensive that the steps being contemplated do not take fully into account the social and economic best interests of the community. In light of this we are requesting that the Trustees cease further discussions relative to the closure of Harrow District High School until such time as we can explore and discuss the potential of a community hub in Harrow, one that involves the high school, youth and education.

There is a sentiment shared by a vast number of residents that they were given assurances the last time an ARC was implemented in Harrow just three short years ago that a moratorium on any further measures involving an ARC or PARC exercise would be implemented for five years. The community is expressing deep frustration that the moratorium has not been honoured. In light of recent announcements regarding school closure procedures and the development of community hubs, we are asking that due time be allowed, perhaps as much as two years, to explore and cost out alternatives. There is significant interest in exploring the options and Council has committed to work with the local authorities, the ministries and the Province to find a more suitable and effective solution.

In our meeting with MPPs Natyshak and Gretzky, both were supportive of a moratorium on the closure of Harrow District High School. In particular, MPP Gretzky emphasized that there must be a degree of flexibility in the manner in which these decisions are made to ensure rural schools and rural communities are not treated the same as urban schools.

Harrow is a unique community in that it is currently experiencing an industrial renaissance with the potential for more industrial and commercial growth in the future. The statistics shared with members of Council suggest the physical structure of Harrow High School is operating at nearly 80% capacity. The numbers used by the Board suggest a far different operating capacity. This inconsistency leads us to question the logic of closing the school without ensuring that the metrics are correct and the socio-economic implications to the community are fully understood.

The recent announcement of the Community Hub Framework Advisory Group and the appointment of Karen Pitre is expected to bring a renewed focus on the Premier's mandates, which she penned to the various ministers last fall. To summarize, she directed each ministry to focus on a policy surrounding community hubs, which can be a school, a neighbourhood centre or another public space that offers coordinated services such as education, health care and social services. Premier Wynne clearly stated: "This policy will promote efficient use of



public assets and build better ties among schools, municipalities and community organizations."

The newly appointed advisory group will review provincial policies and develop a framework for adapting existing public assets to become community hubs. They will be tasked with fostering partnerships among community organizations and other groups to ensure that the framework addresses local needs. Ultimately, the goal is to deliver coordinated public services through community hubs to ensure these services better meet the needs of children, youth and seniors.

The location of Harrow District High School is unique and well positioned to benefit from the concepts identified in the community hub context. The school is adjacent to the local fair grounds, the community arena, ball diamonds, playgrounds and tennis courts. It is near trails and many community amenities, such as senior's complexes, health care facilities and dental clinics. It is very well positioned to take advantage of the community hub concept.

In closing, Essex Town Council is asking the Board and Trustees to defer any decision regarding closure of the Harrow District High School until such time as the concepts of a community hub and the associated socio-economic outcomes can be explored more fully.

Sincerely,

- Original signed by -

Mayor Ron (Tout) McDermott  
Mayor

REP/



# Taras Natyshak

MPP | député Essex



April 9, 2015

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing today to express my support for the request put forward by the Town of Essex with respect to the potential closure of Harrow High School.

I agree with the Town of Essex that a moratorium on the closure of schools in our small and rural communities should be adopted by the committee. This moratorium should remain in place until such time as the directive given to various Ministers by the Premier in their mandate letters with respect to the community hub concept is fully realized.

It is very important to give consideration to the fact that schools in smaller and rural communities are extremely important from a social and economic perspective. These schools more often than not play a key role in the identity of a community. We must recognize that there are many differences between our large urban centres and smaller towns when developing policy as it relates to schools. The mandate for the development of community hubs is an important step and could provide municipalities with an opportunity to maintain their schools, as well as develop other programming and partnerships in the community.

In closing I would like to reiterate my support for the proposal as put forward by the Town of Essex. I also would urge the committee to allow the time for the Town to see if new proposals under the community hub model can be employed to enhance the utilization of the school in Harrow.

Respectfully,

Taras Natyshak MPP Essex

#### Essex Office

316 Talbot St. North  
Essex, Ontario N8M 2E1  
Tel 519-776-6420  
Fax 519-776-6980  
TNatyshak-CO@ndp.on.ca

#### Queen's Park Office

Room 370, Main Legislative Building, Queen's Park  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A5  
Tel 416-325-0714  
Fax 416-325-0980  
TNatyshak-QP@ndp.on.ca



**hhc****The Harrow Health Centre Inc.****A Family Health Team**1480 Erie Rd S, PO Box 430 Harrow, ON, N0R 1G0 Ph (519) 738-2000 Fax (519) 738-9944

---

April 10, 2015

Re: Potential Closing of Local High School

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing as a new member to the community yet to determine my place of residence. As I have recently accepted the Executive Director position with the Harrow Health Centre, I have rented a home while I await the end of this school year to relocate my family which includes 4 school aged children to the region.

I am greatly concerned in learning in the short period of time I have been here that there may not be a secondary school locally for my children to attend. As a dedicated parent actively involved in the school and community from which I am relocating, I find the impact of the lack of a school or community hub for our youth impacts well beyond just their education. This fact alone will undoubtedly impact my decision of where to reside and locate my family when we settle here permanently in 4 months.

The closing of schools for costs savings should be closely balanced against the costs to the children, their families and the community as a whole. The outdated Ministry approach to funding by enrollment numbers needs to be carefully examined to fully understand the chaos these decisions have particularly in small rural and isolated communities. In addition to the loss the accessible public space and social circles for youth and adults provided by the school, closing a school presents a significant deterrent to families staying in the community or even moving to it. School closures affect businesses, property values, local culture, erodes tax base and community viability overall.

I wholeheartedly believe there are innovative and fiscally feasible solutions that should be considered to collaborate and meet any monetary restraints and still ensure a school stays in the Harrow community. Given the level of local commitment and expertise, the parents of students and local stakeholders have much to offer in finding a solution to this serious community issue. There is a will locally to support an innovative solution to prevent any closure from being necessary and ensure a strong future for our children and the community.

Warm Regards,

Jeff Sampson

Executive Director

# Paige Walpole

My name is Paige. I have a learning disability and I need extra time, and help with school work.

This school has given me what I need to do well in school. It's not only the school building, but the staff, our programs, and the way we are taught.

Everyone is equal, no one judges us, and we are made to feel good about ourselves.

We are given time, tools, and hands on schooling to succeed.

I would be lost without this place. I love this school and the staff that have made it a fun place.

It would be a shame not to have a school exist like Western.

Thankyou

April 13, 2015

PARC Meeting #3@ Western Secondary School

Hello Everyone,

My name is Giselle Baillargeon and my youngest son is a student here at Western Secondary School.

When my husband and I began looking into the right school for our son for his high school years, the focus was simply about which school had the best programming to meet his needs. We visited all of the high schools around us, in both Boards, to investigate the programming available to help meet the needs of a child with special challenges.

We were very well versed with his "needs", having been involved in school IEP's from the start and for services and funding dollars well before he ever reached grade school. As with every parent here, we just wanted what we felt would be the best learning environment for our child to succeed. The only school that could address our son's needs and provide adequate, appropriate programming was Western Secondary.

Recently, I had a long conversation with the first Principal of Western Secondary....as a matter of fact, he was the Principal here for 18 years. His name is John Zangari. His picture is still proudly hanging in the front hall of this school. He stands for something.....not a historical period when students with special challenges had a place to go, but rather a modern vision of how students with special challenges can be provided with an environment suitable for learning and opportunities to be successful. That is what the parents and staff of Western Secondary are trying to help you understand.

Please understand that I am not here to speak for Mr. Zangari, but rather share some insight into what makes this school such a great place. Like all of the other schools under review, this school has its own unique qualities and has a place in this School Board.

Mr. Zangari explained that the school was specifically designed for students with special challenges. The classrooms were designed specifically for either "shops" to learn trades or small in size to purposely accommodate small classes and provide better opportunities for kids to focus and enhance learning strategies. Larger class sizes in any school will not meet the learning needs for students with learning challenges, and small classes in any setting are always costly.

The single floor can accommodate those with physical challenges for both teachers and students. Although the school is not "part of a community" like the other high schools involved under review, it is rather a community in itself. When you're out in the country with neighbours few and far between, you have to rely on each other to help you through. There are no outside distractions like restaurants or stores for the students to wander in their down-time, and there isn't much down-time.

There was a time in the early years, Mr. Zangari told me, that a Superintendent at the Catholic Board would approach him about certain students that were struggling in their high schools and it was felt they would be well served at Western. These students were successful at Western and were able to graduate with their diploma. This arrangement fell to the wayside as funding from the Ministry became all about numbers and dollars, rather than what was best for the student. Perhaps this could be better accommodated if there was a single School Board.

Also, I believe that if the program at Western was better advertised to parents, then those who have children with learning challenges, in either Board, would send their kids to this school and this school would be filled to capacity. There is currently no visible effort to do that. We had to seek out the options available for our son here.

Mr. Zangari said that there has always been this push to integrate student with challenges, but the question is, to integrate into WHAT? A school where they are NOT provided with the best opportunities to be successful? Who wants to send their child there? A school where the very Board that this school belongs to labels my child as a "Spec Ed Student"? At Western, my son has simply been a "student". There is no prejudice for the "Spec Ed Student" at Western, because ALL of the kids are just "Students".

Mr. Zangari further explained that that there were students who were struggling in their community high school and were transferred to Western. After a year or two at Western and having made great gains with opportunities to be successful, they were asked if they wanted to return to their community school and not one of them said "yes". They all chose to stay at Western to complete their high school. This is not because it was "easier" than their first high school, but rather the teaching style and environment provided some of the most vulnerable teenagers with the confidence to know that they could be successful.

As for many parents, the only deterrent for us to send our son to Western was a very long bus ride. He would have required busing to any high school we chose. With this in mind, we always had to return to the focus we had set out with from the beginning...the best programming to meet his learning needs and provide opportunities for him to be a successful member of his community at large. We believe this goal has been achieved.

Thank you!

Klair Salter

- We need to explore new, innovative ways to use our public schools to further enhance and strengthen our community.
- We need to be putting the students best interest first. First and foremost we should be giving the students the best education, attention and opportunities available.
- Closing schools and closing doors is not a solution. Any time a community is closing the only school in the community we aren't benefitting the students or the town. We aren't Windsor. We don't have other high schools around the corner ~~or~~ from us like they do.
- I feel that the closure of any school would be setting <sup>them</sup> up for failure. ~~A positive environment wouldn't be created~~ <sup>we would + or missing creating a</sup> and I feel that we <sup>would</sup> negatively impact student learning and engagement.
- It's time to get <sup>idea of</sup> closure off the table and out of mind. Closure is not a solution its an easy way out. It's time to create community hubs within our communities and maximize our potential.
  - After school programs for kids
  - Athletics programs and activities
  - Therapy groups
  - ~~working~~ clubs
  - health services and <sup>certification</sup> courses
  - <sup>adult education</sup> ~~working~~ clubs for <sup>and</sup> youth, elderly, people with special needs.<sup>or</sup> Create a place to foster growth.
- We need to take existing population into consideration because communities will begin to disperse rapidly.
- A school is integral part of every community.
- It's time to start coming up with fair <sup>solutions</sup> ~~ways~~ and find a way to keep our Community Schools.

Hi my name is Hannah Schaafsma,

I am currently a student at Western Secondary School, and I would like to explain what its like to be a Western student before I ask my question, in order for you to understand my point.

In my experience, and the experience for the majority of my classmates, we felt marginalized and like we didn't belong but all of this changed the moment we stepped into Western.

We were no longer the "special ed" students who were put in the back of the classroom. We were treated just like any other student, though we all had different learning strengths, and some of us were more or less advanced than others, we were treated equally, as students should be treated.

Rather than being someone's problem, we felt like we became someone's solution, because we all help each other, both students and teachers.

I am not saying that Western is perfect, because it's not.

But please understand that, that is the beauty of it.

Western takes all our imperfections, and makes them into something beautiful. Something to be proud of.

Where our confidence had been torn down, it was built back up, stronger and better.

So my question to you is...

If you get rid of my school, my safe place to learn, a place I can honestly call home..

Could you provide that some where else?

Can you give my peers and I the hope for a brighter future?

*Just as*  
~~that~~ the staff and teachers at Western have?

Can you make sure that we are given the same opportunity for success as every student in every other school?

*And Finally*  
Are you going to be able to give us the time and education that Western now currently provides for us?



## P.A.R.C. Public Meeting Comments:

☒ Parent ☐ Teacher  
☐ Community Member

for: Western Secondary School

- As a parent with 2 children with special needs, I have seen how the current system can support or fail our kids.
- My younger son has been at WSS since September, and was previously at EDHS. To me, the difference between mainstream education @ EDHS and supported education at WSS is the dependency on the child's ability to advocate for their needs. My older son @ EDHS has mastered that skill and navigates the system well, but my younger son is still learning how to advocate. Because of this, he floundered @ EDHS despite there being supports available. Both of my sons have the right to meaningful education that supports their individual learning style, and continues to reach out and support



Name:

Paula Beattie

Address:

147 Klundert Cr., Cottam

them even if they are not yet able to ask for<sup>or</sup> express what their needs are. This is the difference at WSS. My son finds himself in a safe, supportive environment that he could not find at EDHS. He no longer skips school, he's getting all of his credits, and he looks forward to going to school. His opportunities to reach his potential are maximized with the small classes, additional supports and variety of marketable programs offered only at WSS.

The student population at WSS is unique and their needs must be protected. If the PARC ~~rec~~ recommendations lead to moving WSS students into other schools, the Board must be prepared to make drastic changes in the way that education is delivered to special needs students, so that the supportive, rich student life at WSS is preserved at all the students of the GECDSEB achieve success.



# P.A.R.C. Public Meeting Comments:

for:

Kingsville Public High



Parent



Teacher



Community Member

I would like a school that will provide all the necessary tools for my children to learn and develop skills necessary for the next step in their education. eg. University or Community College. A new school with track & field facilities / a swimming pool / updated musical instruments and air conditioning rooms. I live two blocks away from the school but I would be the first one to vote to build a new school accessible to all the residents of Kingsville and would not mind if my children would have to take a bus to get to a school with all the amenities.



Name:

Saul Hernandez

Address:

147 Station Crt.



# P.A.R.C. Public Meeting Comments:

for:

Western Secondary



Parent



Teacher



Community Member

- 1) Why not have grade 7 & 8 from other schools
- 2) students who attend special classes in "regular" schools don't do well in working but students who attend Western get jobs after school



Name:

Ruth Wakeley

Address:

11181 Firgroue Dr. Windsor





# P.A.R.C. Public Meeting Comments:

☒ Parent ☐ Teacher  
☐ Community Member

for: HARROW SCHOOLS

Loving the idea of the community hub.  
Please consider supporting the needs of seniors if this option is explored further. Aging baby boomers will be overwhelming our social system very soon.



Name: D-Anne Peters  
Address: Harrow



# P.A.R.C. Public Meeting Comments:

☒ Parent ☐ Teacher  
☐ Community Member

for:

I am writing with great concerns as two Western Secondary closing. My son has a life threatening disease along with a learning disabilities. Now when it came time to choose where to go to high school being in Grade 10 now my son did not wish to attend Cardinal Carter as his grades weren't good enough to go to LDSS. He chose to get up at 6am to take an hour bus ride to WSS where he went from a very low esteem to joining student council to now being accepted to OYAP this school has done my son wonders. This school is one of the most dedicated schools that I have ever seen and is very very IMPORTANT to be remained open. I have many reasons to keep this school open but not enough time to write.



Name: Melanie Reid  
Address: 68 Hodgins St. Leamington, ON N8H 3U5



## P.A.R.C. Public Meeting Comments:

for: KDHS

☐ Parent ☐ Teacher  
☒ Community Member

Closing Western will have a devastating impact on many students who require special programming.

Please consider keeping Western open, closing Harrow, and building a new K-12 on the current KDHS site as one of the recommendations.

Find a way.



Name: .....

Address: .....



## P.A.R.C. Public Meeting Comments:

for: .....

☐ Parent ☐ Teacher  
☐ Community Member

Preface - to this proposal I am not in favour of closing Western Secondary.

However - if it comes to this, I understand that a proposal is being made to transition these students to Amherst.

I highly recommend that Harrow be given consideration as it is more centrally located. Many students come from Kingsville and Leamington areas. Travel time and expense could be lessened.



Name: Gloria Gorick

Address: Box 217 Harrow



# P.A.R.C. Public Meeting Comments:

for:

☒ Parent ☐ Teacher  
☐ Community Member

Western Secondary was instrumental in my own life.  
I am a former student (1979) and now have my own  
business.

Important also my 2 sons attended Western it gave  
them the confidence to pursue careers my youngest graduated  
a year ago but has almost 3/4 of his OAP hours  
& carries a A average in the skating portion  
at St Clair.

There are many students like my sons that without  
Western would be floundering to find employment.



Name: Dave Shuttleworth  
Address: 6335 Taylor Comber Ontario



# P.A.R.C. Public Meeting Comments:

for:

WESTERN

☐ Parent ☐ Teacher  
☐ Community Member

BRING GRADE 7&8 SPECIAL NEED  
STUDENTS TO HERE



Name: JIM PICKER  
Address: ESSEX DNT



# P.A.R.C. Public Meeting Comments:

for: Western Secondary

☐ Parent ☒ <sup>Principal</sup> Teacher  
☐ Community Member

The speakers spoke quite eloquently about the need of such a school. They outlined what Western was able to offer those special need students that other schools would not be able to do so.

The problem with the closing of Western is that those who are making decisions are looking narrowly at how to save money and not the individual students. Start thinking about fragile human beings and not just dollar sign.



Name:

Address:

John Zangari  
49A.9 Riverside Dr. E. Windsor ON N8Y 0A4  
519-974-8932



# P.A.R.C. Public Meeting Comments:

for: Western Secondary

☒ Student  
☐ Parent ☐ Teacher  
☐ Community Member

So as a student at Western I am worried that once the school closes how would I finish my OYAP Program, Plus the highschools in leamington dont offer very good auto classes or barely any. Western is a very hands on school compared to LDSS or CC to where they are more book and thinking and my self is not very good at that stuff and not everybody is good at book work?



Name:

Address:

Matt Coppola  
92 bennie



P.A.R.C. Public Meeting Comments:

☒ Parent ☐ Teacher

for: Recommendation 1

☐ Community Member

These kids are exceelling. getting there confidence boosted. My son is graduating grade 8 and is so looking forward to this unique school. My daughter has failed regular high school and just barely passing her grades. She qualifies and will be going to Western next year. Please do not close Western you will be causing my children to fail. I need this for my kids. There is no other school like Western. It meets the needs of individuals who have learning difficulties.



Name:

Charlotte King

Address:

59 A Sturgeon Meadows  
Leamington Ont. N8H 4H5

and turns the kids who are viewed as misfits in other schools into stars that R amazing



P.A.R.C. Public Meeting Comments:

☒ Parent ☐ Teacher

for:

☐ Community Member

adults who ~~st~~ succeed and do above and beyond what they themselves could ever imagine. This is a need Do Not take it away.

Not everyone is audio learner or visual learner. This school meets the needs of hands on learners.

Think about these individuals who are not like you but need extra help for learning.



Name:

Charlotte King

Address:

59 A Sturgeon Meadows  
Leamington Ont.

N8H 4H5





# P.A.R.C. Public Meeting Comments:

for: W.S.S.

Grand  
☒ Parent ☐ Teacher  
☒ Community Member

should not be considered closing more  
 feelings. Teacher support even support for  
 sp. needs people  
 a promise that support staff & rooms already  
 set up before sp. needs person moves  
 on.

suggesting why not gr. 7 & 8 students in sp. needs  
 area sent to W.S.S. instead of waiting until  
 so frustrated & discouraged. Will our sp. needs  
 teachers be hired.



Name:

Marie Pickel

Address:

257 Beverly Dr Essex



# P.A.R.C. Public Meeting Comments:

for: HARROW

☐ Parent ☐ Teacher  
☐ Community Member

AGING Seniors need a place to live!!!

(Partnerships with Harrowood / Long term Care)

Benefits to Students → volunteer opportunities  
 - co-op opportunities  
 - senior/student mentorship  
 - decreases the "fear of aging"



Name:

D. Peters

Address:



# P.A.R.C. Public Meeting Comments:

☐ Parent ☐ Teacher  
☐ Community Member

for:

Western Secondary

☒ Graduate

I would like to make the suggestion for Western Secondary to use the their gym, Cafeteria and/or Court yard to be rented out as a reception Hall. They can make meals with ~~hitcher~~ their kitchen and restraunt for meals, Bakery for Desserts, Horticulture for floral arrangements, tech Support for Lights & music.  
Western could easily incorporate Students in preparation for such events, and it would also bring Western closer to the Community.



Name:

Hayla Beneteau

Address:

1095 Pelissier, Windsor ONT



# P.A.R.C. Public Meeting Comments:

☒ Parent ☐ Teacher  
☒ Community Member

for:

Western Secondary

ITS a shame, that the possibility of student's with special needs, will be given the back burner experience, if Western closes - my heart breaks for the thousands this will effect



Name:

Dawn Beneteau

Address:

291 Sandwich St. A-Burg

The slides shown during the presentation showed a ~~cap~~ that Harrow High School is at 52% Capacity. I understood that the capacity that you showed for ~~the~~ Harrow High (around 480) takes into account that the building now houses both secondary and elementary students, yet you showed only the secondary students to get the capacity figure of 52%. This is misleading, I find this dishonest to say the least. If the capacity is determined by ~~not~~ having both secondary & elementary students, then ALL the students in the building ~~show~~ should be used to determine its utilization. ~~It~~ ~~do~~ otherwise • To do otherwise makes me think that you are trying to mislead us.



## Save Western Secondary

### About this petition

As some of you may know, Western Secondary School is one of four local High Schools in the Greater Essex County District School Board that is being considered for **termination**. If Western is decided to be closed, many teachers will lose their jobs, many students will lose their school, and probably the best high school experience they could be offered anywhere. We will be presenting this petition to the GECDSB members at **the Western PARC meeting April 13th**, as the final decision will be made **September of 2015**. Although we will be keeping the petition open for signatures well after! :)

Now we ask you for your help, by signing this petition you are demonstrating just how important this school is to our community and to all of our students.

Thank You!

## Signatures

1. Name: Kayla Beneteau on 2015-03-04 17:35:07  
Comments:

---
2. Name: Katie Allen on 2015-03-04 17:45:43  
Comments: SAVE OUR SCHOOL!

---
3. Name: Melina Butters on 2015-03-04 17:47:16  
Comments: keep this school OPEN!

---
4. Name: Jay Cole on 2015-03-04 17:50:18  
Comments:

---
5. Name: Cory Sabourin on 2015-03-04 17:59:53  
Comments:

---
6. Name: Peter Giesbrecht on 2015-03-04 18:07:41  
Comments: This School needs to stay open!

---
7. Name: Kimberly Eyraud on 2015-03-04 18:27:42  
Comments:

---
8. Name: Kelly Allen on 2015-03-04 18:40:04  
Comments:

---
9. Name: dawn beneteau on 2015-03-04 19:38:44  
Comments: you would think the main objective would be education,not dollar bills .

---
10. Name: David lee on 2015-03-04 23:29:43  
Comments: closing western will be GECDSE biggest mistake

---
11. Name: mike allen on 2015-03-05 01:56:30  
Comments:

---
12. Name: Annelies on 2015-03-05 02:29:33  
Comments: Save Western!

---
13. Name: Kristen Catherine on 2015-03-05 02:34:31  
Comments:

---
14. Name: Dianne Dunat on 2015-03-05 02:44:11

Comments:

- 
15. Name: Amber Brown on 2015-03-05 02:49:06  
Comments: This school deserves to continue serving its community. Save Western Secondary!
- 
16. Name: Tammy Dent on 2015-03-05 02:49:50  
Comments:
- 
17. Name: Mikayla Raymond on 2015-03-05 02:53:55  
Comments:
- 
18. Name: Cate on 2015-03-05 09:02:02  
Comments:
- 
19. Name: linda Sanger on 2015-03-05 16:01:18  
Comments: this school is one of the most important schools in Ontario helping those students who cannot learn by normal curriculum methods. The students that go to this school learn hands on skills that help ALL these students with a sense of belonging in society and learning to earn a paycheck through skilled trades. This loss would be detrimental to those students in our county . Without that school my daughter who graduated in 2012 would NOT have the life skills required to carry on as an adult. I am appalled at the thought that the government could forget this kids in our society. Shame on anyone who thinks closing this school could be for the better. This school deserves more financial aid than is given. They struggle ever year to makes ends meet. This would be the worst decision made.
- 
20. Name: jeffrey blackford on 2015-03-09 01:56:41  
Comments: how has this come to be? without a shadow of a doubt Western Secondary School shouldnt be considered. If there is something the Education Board should do with this school is work on upgrading it. Upgrade how people view this school, upgrade the academics. Offer an advanced course. Western changes lives. It changed mine. Thr staff and faciltiy gave me the ability to be successful in life and courage to always strive for greatness. There are a ton of children in my grad class and classes before and after me that feel the same. Closing Western would be a misjustice to many students to come. I understand that no one wants their local "home" school to close but people need to look at the bigger picture. Western isn't a "home" school, it is a County school offering a massive service to children over the entire county. Western offers staff and facility that no other school in the County van
- 
21. Name: Desiree st Pierre on 2015-03-09 02:05:56  
Comments:
- 
22. Name: Jimmy Bondy on 2015-03-09 02:09:23  
Comments:

- 
23. Name: Megan Clayton on 2015-03-09 02:21:24  
Comments:
- 
24. Name: cathy chambers on 2015-03-09 02:35:02  
Comments: This should not happen.
- 
25. Name: Bradley Deslippe on 2015-03-09 02:40:09  
Comments: western secondary is much needed and is required
- 
26. Name: Jared Pszczonak on 2015-03-09 02:45:27  
Comments: please keep Western Secondary School Open it's great high school for students
- 
27. Name: Suzanne Belisle on 2015-03-09 02:59:28  
Comments:
- 
28. Name: MaryLynn Mayrand on 2015-03-09 03:10:51  
Comments:
- 
29. Name: Ryan Wall on 2015-03-09 03:42:43  
Comments:
- 
30. Name: Brandon Schwab on 2015-03-09 04:46:08  
Comments: western is a great school. helps teach students hands on trades, and gives that opportunity to students all over the county. The all deserve a chance to experience what western can offer.
- 
31. Name: Lacey Ives on 2015-03-09 10:14:46  
Comments:
- 
32. Name: Holly Reinhart on 2015-03-09 11:41:12  
Comments:
- 
33. Name: Jennifer Meloche on 2015-03-09 12:18:03  
Comments: if it wasn't for Weatern our son would struggle and become bored with school. Weatern allows Our Son the hands on learning he needs to understand & get further in his life choices. Do Not close this school as it is a perfect and Great learning enviro for our Son & many others just like him! No other school allows these students this kind of opportunity. Thank You!
- 
34. Name: Austin Reid on 2015-03-09 13:03:29  
Comments: I am a student at western for me it was a hard for me to think of what High

School I was going to because of my learning disability. I chose western because it has smaller classes so the students will get that one on one time with the teachers that they need. I live in leamington and im ok with having an hour drive to the school because i know that im going to have a good education. Western offers awesome shop classes like Auto Body, Auto Service, horticulture With a green house on school grounds and welding. Western gives every student a chance to take Co-Op, OYAP and SHSM. Western has a huge committee of support staff Cyw's (Child Youth Workers) and Guidance councilors. I like Western because with my learning disability im a Kinesthetic Learner Which means you like to learn hands on we cant just sit there with a book and paper all day we have to have videos telling us how to do it, Have class discussions, Group activity's. My writing is really messy so the GECDSD and Western Secondary School have provided me and many other students with laptops to help s get through are school years. I would tell anyone who has a learning disability to got to western as I am one of the the grade 10 student representative they would not be disappointed with the school and staff as i cotinue to go to this wonderful throughout my high school years. There is no reason to close this school Thank you Austin Reid a Grade 10 at Western

- 
35. Name: M. Nussio on 2015-03-09 13:11:16  
Comments: I don't understand why a school that gives kids that opportunity to be successful by being hands on rather than a traditional school cannot offer would be up for closure. This is a need for these kids and critical to their success, they are our future tradesman. They learn differently, that doesn't make them less important. They learn from diving in and being hands on rather than from your typical text book teachings. Why would it be considered to throw these kids in a learning environment where they cannot thrive and grow, but rather be set up for failure because they need a different type of teaching. If these kids didn't have Western, they would likely not otherwise learn their potential or trade. Most would fall behind and not continue on to college to learn a trade because they would possibly not be accepted or they would be so exhausted and frustrated with learning that they would be done. They deserve the same opportunity to learn and be successful, the key is Western because they can teach them where they will grasp the teachings like not many other schools can provide them.
- 
36. Name: Austin reid on 2015-03-09 13:14:54  
Comments: A grade 10 student
- 
37. Name: Austin reid on 2015-03-09 13:17:19  
Comments: A grade 10 student
- 
38. Name: Dennis Havinga on 2015-03-09 14:03:30  
Comments: It is a great school me an alot of my family went to western an went on to have great lives
- 
39. Name: kellice liddle on 2015-03-09 14:42:40  
Comments: its a grate school for children to learn hands on working experience and a good school to learn grate live in skills
-

40. Name: ian serle on 2015-03-09 17:57:59  
Comments: i was a student there and my father was a teacher Frank Serlethe school does more good for the students who need it
- 
41. Name: brent allison on 2015-03-09 20:23:43  
Comments: i think it should be saves great hands on experience and i dont know where id be today without the help of this school
- 
42. Name: Lisa Castellano on 2015-03-10 00:46:32  
Comments: My son attends this school and he lives this school!! When he heard that this school could possibly close he was devastated! He said "where. Am
- 
43. Name: Jacklyn Deschamps on 2015-03-10 01:36:37  
Comments:
- 
44. Name: Lora Petro on 2015-03-10 01:44:09  
Comments:
- 
45. Name: Jennie Tremblay on 2015-03-10 02:25:07  
Comments: please don't close Western.. its an amazing school...
- 
46. Name: robeert martin on 2015-03-10 10:23:13  
Comments:
- 
47. Name: Donna Gagne on 2015-03-10 10:42:45  
Comments:
- 
48. Name: Suzanne Souchuk on 2015-03-10 20:54:25  
Comments: We need this school to stay open for our kids with special needs!
- 
49. Name: Tammy Alaers on 2015-03-10 21:32:54  
Comments:
- 
50. Name: Claudia Chamberlain on 2015-03-10 21:39:07  
Comments:
- 
51. Name: darlene Carnegie on 2015-03-10 22:41:34  
Comments: keep westeln open it is special and needef
- 
52. Name: Heather Vickerd on 2015-03-11 00:55:17  
Comments:
-

66. Name: Brianne Taggart on 2015-03-24 02:55:01  
Comments:

---

67. Name: Samantha on 2015-03-29 18:13:33  
Comments:

---

68. Name: Jared Pszczonak on 2015-03-29 20:25:48  
Comments:

---

69. Name: Sandra Beneteau on 2015-03-29 20:31:00  
Comments: This is a great schoolfor every walks of life.

---

70. Name: Elaine Macintyre on 2015-03-30 16:51:33  
Comments: This school is very important to the fabric of the community. Pay attention to the students and quit focusing on the bottom line!

---

71. Name: Rebecca LeMay on 2015-03-30 16:53:54  
Comments:

---

72. Name: Cathy Guilbeault on 2015-03-30 20:58:30  
Comments: schools are imperitive in the area,leave it open

---

73. Name: Taylor Shanahan on 2015-03-30 21:50:46  
Comments:

---

74. Name: isabelle shanahan on 2015-03-31 11:00:56  
Comments: supporting this school stays open.

---

75. Name: Shawntelle on 2015-04-10 17:16:30  
Comments:

---

53. Name: zachary schaaftsma on 2015-03-11 02:29:34  
Comments: we need this school because this is the only school where we are treated like people because we're all the same, stick us in another school and we'll be outcasted again,
- 
54. Name: Carlie vinc on 2015-03-11 03:53:03  
Comments:
- 
55. Name: maria wiebe on 2015-03-11 12:35:35  
Comments:
- 
56. Name: katelynn lee on 2015-03-11 12:56:05  
Comments: the best school.
- 
57. Name: Samantha Donald on 2015-03-11 21:36:23  
Comments:
- 
58. Name: Allison Byerley on 2015-03-11 22:27:59  
Comments:
- 
59. Name: Bartolette Yoder on 2015-03-11 23:11:26  
Comments: Close an entire school? Imagine how crammed all the other schools will get taking in refugee students. It's insane
- 
60. Name: Rachel on 2015-03-12 02:22:38  
Comments:
- 
61. Name: Dana Addams on 2015-03-12 02:28:09  
Comments: Disability support is a basic need for so many kids. Don't take that away.
- 
62. Name: ken Laidlow on 2015-03-12 05:58:43  
Comments:
- 
63. Name: Carl Sack on 2015-03-12 15:34:10  
Comments:
- 
64. Name: Ryan on 2015-03-12 18:12:53  
Comments:
- 
65. Name: cindel on 2015-03-13 00:57:42  
Comments:
-