

**CORPORATION OF THE
TOWNSHIP OF CENTRAL FRONTENAC
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Limestone District School Board
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e-mail Transmission

Attention: Board Trustees

Re: Sharbot Lake Family of Schools

The Council of Central Frontenac appreciates the difficult task faced by the LDSB in dealing with the future school facility needs in the “Sharbot Lake Family of Schools” area. The process to address needs has been a lengthy one and has involved discussion around several alternatives including a preferred option by the Program and Accommodation Review Committee (PARC) advanced last fall.

The PARC option has now been followed by a senior staff preferred option (report dated Jan. 20, 2010) that involves the maximum consolidation of our rural schools.

This latest option obviously raises serious concerns with this Council. The option to consolidate all schools to a single large facility in Sharbot Lake (excluding Clarendon P.S.) and to deny alternative busing for children in the Parham area to attend Prince Charles P.S. is not acceptable and we must disagree with the notion that the total school consolidation approach is cheaper and will result in a better teaching and learning environment.

Financial Impacts:

- Financially, the information indicates that the difference in cost between the options is limited. This becomes more apparent when (i) the estimated cost for the PARC recommendation is corrected to read \$13,749,000 (based on gross floor area of 68,745 (page 23 of the report), rather than the indicated \$13,962,000 (page 12 of the report) and (ii) the cost stated for improvements to Prince Charles P.S. are removed (500K) because there is strong likelihood that this school will be replaced.
- In addition, the references made to the “booked” RECAPP costs suggest that long-term savings would result from the sale of the Land O Lakes P.S.; however, in stating this, there is no offsetting ten-year allowance made for RECAPP costs that would begin to accrue against the more expensive facility recommended for Sharbot Lake.
- It may also be noted that the Land O Lakes has the largest enrollment of all public schools in Central/North Frontenac, sits on the largest property of any school, is the newest and is in the best condition....why closure?

Education/Learning/Social Impacts:

- The senior staff option suggests that there may be greater teaching, learning and related social benefits derived from having all school students attend one facility. These benefits would apparently result from the additional public school, younger children (163) being bused as a result of the Hinchinbrook P.S. and Land O' Lakes P.S. being closed and not from the high school population, which is constant in both scenarios.
- Although some enhancements may result from these increased numbers, we believe the benefits are quickly offset by increased busing for these children, especially those six years of age and under. As stated in the report, there is a significant travel time increase for many students (40- to 60-minute travel times, one way). This added time must be measured as a negative impact, NOT an improvement in education.

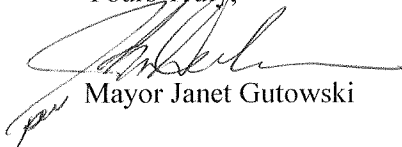
Other Considerations:

I wish to also inform the Board about the many efforts that have been and are being made by the township to improve the community of Mountain Grove and the Land O Lakes P.S.

- Less than two years ago, the County in cooperation with the City of Kingston and the school board were successful in establishing a high-speed internet capability in the hamlet, with the public school being an important (critical) recipient of this service. The loss of the public school would greatly diminish this valuable accomplishment done in large part to benefit the school.
- This winter the municipality initiated a local recreation planning exercise for the hamlet, which is aimed at providing significant recreation improvements for the community on lands immediately adjacent to the school. Although this exercise is in its early stages, proposals for the park will undoubtedly include extensive trail development, a playground(s) and a new ball diamond. This process is being led by the local Community Recreation Committee, and public consultation and collaboration with the school are targeted parts of the planning exercise.
- Also, as a direct benefit to the school, the municipality recently upgraded the overhead lighting and change-room at the outdoor rink (located near the entrance of the school) and is budgeting further improvement to the rink which will take place this summer and fall.
- Lastly, the municipality made major repairs and improvements last year to Long Lake Road (from highway 7 through to Parham), including extensive road re-surfacing, which again benefits the school and its activities.

The senior staff report speaks of the "invaluable function" that a school plays in defining a community. The Council of the Township of Central Frontenac agrees with this statement but must emphasize that the municipality consists of several "communities," not the least of which includes the Hamlet of Mountain Grove. The rural nature and diversity of development that exists in this region is reflected, in part, by the presence of our schools. Further consolidation erodes this character, and in this instance, where financial impacts do not appear to be a major factor, it is hoped that you would instead support adoption of the preferred option presented by PARC. This option still involves a substantial amount of building consolidation but retains the Land O Lake P.S. and respects the choice of those living in the Parham to have their children attend the Prince Charles P.S. This option maintains a degree of diversity within the municipality and helps the township with its ongoing task and responsibility of community building.

Yours Truly,



Mayor Janet Gutowski

cc Honourable Leona Dombrowski, Minister of Education