

March 2011

To the Members of the Accommodation Review Committee,

I am writing to you to detail the reasons why PCVS should not be closed. I have been a citizen of Peterborough for almost 26 years now. Our family has always lived in the old west end. Our children have all attended PCVS, two are graduates and one is still in attendance at this fine institution. We love where we live in that it has always allowed our children to walk to school and we are able to walk downtown ourselves for shopping, theatre, restaurants and visits to the library. Downtown Peterborough is currently a lively, vibrant place. Our family would likely not be directly affected should PCVS close as our third child is in grade 10, however indirectly the effects would be huge as the city would be adversely affected by the loss of 1000 people in the downtown core each day. I would not like to see any of the four city schools closed however I have detailed below why this school in particular needs to remain. Peterborough Needs PCVS!

Value to the Community

There are currently 869 students and 76 staff members at PCVS. The majority of these people leave the building at noon hour and purchase their lunches in downtown restaurants. Many also purchase dinners and other items as students and staff often remain at the school well into the evening hours for concerts, shows, coffee houses and many other after school events. In addition to this, parents come into the downtown to collect their children and attend many of these after school events and they too make purchases from our downtown businesses. Having 1000 people in the downtown core on a daily basis brings life and vibrancy to the streets. Our downtown neighbourhoods are safer for having these people on the streets walking to school, heading to the restaurants to purchase food, and working as coop students in downtown businesses.

Value to the Student

PCVS is a school that has an incredibly welcoming and tolerant atmosphere. All are embraced at this school. There is a wide range of persons from the highly gifted, to the struggling student, as well as the athletic and the creative, yet all are valued. The fact that 129 students come to this school from out of district and without transportation provided is a testament to the fact that they feel safe and welcomed at PCVS. This school should be held up as a model for the entire board. Our character attributes are visible each and every day. The courses offered to students allow enough opportunity and choice to ensure all can graduate with the desired skills and experience. Physical education classes and sports teams use the city maintained fields at Bonnerworth, Nichol's Oval and King Edward Park, surfaces that are kept to a high standard. The connection for students to the real world is immense in terms of the visits by veterans and the attendance of students at Remembrance Day ceremonies metres from the front door. The continuing connection to the family of one of our fallen soldiers, a PCVS grad, is real and has a lasting impact when his family attends commencement ceremonies each year to present an award in memory of their father (The Roy Trantor Memorial Award). This powerful connection to our war veterans is reinforced through the inscription of the names of the students who died in the two world wars on the walls of PCVS as well as in the research papers written

each year by the grade 10 Canadian History classes. Students choose the name of war vets to research by walking out their classroom door to the cenotaph, choosing a name and then researching that person's life. Most of these fallen men walked the same hallways as PCVS students; our own students will never forget "their soldier".

Value to the Board

The costs associated with keeping PCVS open are relatively small and the benefits great. Given the fact that the school has a brand new roof, furnace and lockers, the maintenance costs are low compared to many other schools. The only foreseeable expense in the near future would be for accessibility, and that cost has been generously offered to be covered by the PCVS Foundation. There are no fields to maintain, a very small lawn to cut and very low transportation costs. It would not make sense to bus 869 students to another location when currently 70 % of these walk. One hidden cost to the board that your statistician did not take into account should PCVS close is the huge loss of revenue from the board to the separate system. I have had three children all graduate from grade 8 in the last 9 years. The talk among grade 8 parents every year at Queen Mary and Westmount is always this: do we send little Johnny/Jane to PCVS or St. Peter's? Both are easily accessible from these two neighbourhoods. You can be sure that if PCVS is not an option a huge number of these students will be lost to the separate board, each taking their grant money with them. There is a smaller, but not insignificant number of students who currently choose PCVS for its culture and reputation over Lakefield College School, but will be lost to our system also if the PCVS option does not remain.

I hope that the committee is fully appreciative of the valuable role that PCVS plays within our board and our city. One further point that needs to be made but may not fit into any of the above categories is the moral imperative to keep open a fully functioning downtown school. We all know that the most disadvantaged students in our system tend to live in the downtown core of any city. The students that are currently well served at PCVS include the disadvantaged, the discouraged and the disengaged. To put one more barrier up in terms of distance to school may be the last straw for many in terms of attendance. Without a downtown school our board attendance rates and hence graduation rates will surely suffer.

Bev Friesen