

As a citizen of this community for most of my life, as a PCVS graduate and now the parent of two PCVS students I must comment in regards to what I view to be negative comments made by Adrienne Abrahamse in her letter to the ARC listed on tonight's agenda .

PCVS students eat lunch in a variety of places, they hang out and I am quite certain that they even indulge in junk food eating and yes, as was brought up at the last meeting, there may even be the odd child having a game at the local pool hall. Surely, no one here is naïve enough to believe that PCVS students are the only students in town taking part in such activities. These are hardly reasons to consider closing a school. All of the schools involved in this review have pros and cons in regard to their location, which deals with geography, nothing more nothing less. Many students from all high schools have access to vehicles and can be spotted all over town during lunch time or spares.

Ms. Abrahamse also suggests that moving a program such as the integrated arts program is no big deal, it can be moved anywhere. I suppose the same could be said then of the wonderful music program she speaks of that TAS has to offer. I do not know the motivation behind comments such as this but it seems to be a clear attack on other schools music programs which I take offense to.

I don't really expect those of you who have not had the privilege of spending some time at PCVS to understand what it is that makes it so special that generations have fought to keep it open. The sense of beauty and history that the students and staff respect so much, wonderful but alone perhaps not reason enough to keep it open. Certainly they have consistently strong academics. From my standpoint as a parent though one of the most important qualities of PCVS cannot be moved or recreated - inclusion and acceptance. There are many students at PCVS who are or feel they are different. In many schools these kids are judged because of the way they look, their dress or perhaps their sexual orientation. Students at PCVS are encouraged to be themselves, individuality is nurtured and encouraged. I believe that the overwhelming majority of children at PCVS who came to the school with a history of being bullied have not had the same experience in high school,

I know this to be true in our household. While classes, programs staff and students can be moved, you can't recreate or manufacture that inclusive environment that inadvertently teaches our children about acceptance.

I feel badly that this accommodation review is bringing cause for parents to speak out about what is wrong with schools other than the ones their children attend or that they have a vested interest in. At some point a decision will be made. Perhaps a school will close and staff and students will be displaced, already uncomfortable for everyone involved without creating bad feelings throughout the process. It would be great instead to see parents setting a positive example for our children. Instead of getting into mud slinging, let's talk about the great qualities and opportunities at your school of choice.