

Dear Trustee:

*On behalf of the students – past, present and future – of Wanup Public School, please be advised that the supporters of Wanup Public School DO NOT want you to CLOSE our school! The enclosed signed petitions (including the online petition at [www.savewanup.com](http://www.savewanup.com)) represent the “grass roots” community support for this motion. We are appealing to you as elected representatives of our Board because the Accommodation Review process of the Sudbury South schools failed our school! The process failed to identify the true value of our school to the students, the communities, the Board and the Economy. Students already exceed the Consortium policy on travel times, and sending them into Sudbury will only negatively affect their education experience. Give us a moment of your time, and we’ll show you how we were steered away from consideration and we’ll confirm the education value of Wanup PS!*



## **RURAL COMMUNITY**

- Wanup, Ontario is a community. It has its own place on the map. Wanup has a General Store, a Community Hall, a Church, and a School. The community is what defines its people. Wanup's attraction is Rural country living close to the Southend of Sudbury, and a school where our kids can live and grow up in a rural setting. It's a lifestyle choice.

- The Wanup PS was built by the community for the community many years ago, and was not part of the Rainbow District School Board, nor did we want to be.

- The city of Greater Sudbury was expanded and swallowed up Wanup, this included the board 'inheriting' our school ten years ago. Within the first five years of oversight, the board had already had designs to close our school or downsize it (see Board's capitol report from 2005).

- Why after inheriting a school that another community built, does the board get to close the school, against the wishes of the community?



**PUBLIC SMUBLIC** - The public was invited to present options at one of the ARC public meetings. Several members of the public did so. The very next night, ARC convened to discuss those options. – I attended that meeting, so I and the ARC members present can vouch for what was said that night.

- One public option brought forward was 'status quo', leaving things alone as per the Sudbury Catholic School Board trustees voted to do. Ada Della Penta instructed the ARC members that one person, Jean Hanson had vetoed that option, and that it was not on the table for discussion. How is that a fair and open process, where one person can veto an option brought forward for discussion by the ARC. How can the ARC function if it is clearly being steered by one person. That option was viable for another school board, why not this one? We won't know, because the ARC was not allowed to discuss that option.

- Another option brought forward was that recognizing overcrowding in some schools and underutilization in others and with the goal of reducing surplus space, 'catchment zone boundary adjustments' was presented as an option. Not just a vague notion, but specific ideas were presented to ARC. Again Ada Della Penta instructed the ARC that **boundary zone adjustments were like 'robbing Peter to pay Paul, it's not a very good idea'**, she then instructed Michelle to strike that from the meeting minutes. We would like to disagree with Ada Della Penta's statement. Boundary adjustment would move students from over utilized space to underutilized space resolving both schools problems without the need to rely on funding from the Ministry to build a new school., but that would go against the Board's agenda of presenting overcrowded schools in the South End as a case for funding a new school. Some discussion was brought forward about taking some areas back from Monettville that they gained in a previous ARC process. An ARC community member' banged her fists on the table, and exclaimed, 'NO! we got Alban, and Noellville!, we're keeping them! Wanup can't have them!'. And that ended the serious discussion of boundary adjustment. 10minutes was spent discussing boundary adjustments, and not even the specific ones presented by the public. Again we can demonstrate that one staff Board member clearly directed the ARC away from alternate viable options and towards the Boards agenda. Instructing the ARC that the public option of School Catchment boundary zones was like robbing Peter to pay Paul, and it's not a very good idea, is a gross indication of a deeply flawed process and clearly shows the Boards attempt to steer and direct the ARC toward their own agenda. – Again, this stuff is not made up! I attended the meeting as did another member of the public, and the Arc members who were present can vouch for the validity of this statement.

- The public who attended that meeting also had made public presentations the night before and had presented some options. At one point in the meeting, a member of the ARC had questions about the option being presented. As the presenter was at the meeting, she asked the presenter a question for clarification. Ada Della Penta stood up and exclaimed, "No! They are members of the public, and are not allowed to speak here tonight!" thus the question went unanswered even though the presenter was available to provide clarification. So what we can take away is that there was no avenue for the ARC to request clarification or ask questions about the public options, even though the presenter was available and willing to provide clarification that night.

- In a process that prides itself on spending over 400 man hours on coming up with options for you, the trustees, to consider, only 45minutes was spent discussing options brought forward by the public with no avenue for questioning or clarification. Do you see the pattern emerging? We call it railroading.

- Wait a minute. Why can one person steer the ARC process? How is that a fair and open and transparent process? The Board, via Ada Della Penta is clearly directing the ARC toward its own goals and agenda, and not letting ARC explore any other options, all the while attempting to provide an air of being open and transparent so that they can tell the Ministry, 'Oh yes, we had public consultation'.

- The ARC process was a pawn in the board's game. You don't have to be either.

## TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

- As per the Transportation Consortium guidelines, students in grade 1-6 are not to have a bus ride exceeding 60 minutes each way. Please see appendice 1.

- Today, due to the large Rural catchment zone that Wanup PS serves, we have students from French River and Killarny that are on the bus starting at 7:10am, they get off the bus at 8:45am, with an average daily bus ride of 3 hours. These students are already exceeding the time limit in the guidelines as provided by Sudbury Transportation consortium.

- Transporting Wanup PS students to Algonquin PS would add 17kms and 15mins each way driving the speed limit and using the shortest route.

- Transporting Wanup PS students to McLoed PS would add 21kms and 20mins each way driving the speed limit and traveling the shortest route.

- Moving them to a school in the South end (in the event of your decision to close Wanup PS), would mandate that these students be subjected to a daily bus ride of almost four hours bringing those students further into non-compliance with the guidelines.

- These students would be subjected to a 10hour day. Do you work a 10 hour day? Would you like **your** kids to be subjected to a 10hour school day?

- If this is value to the students, please explain that to their parents.



## POSSIBLE REASONS WHY THE BOARD WANTS TO CLOSE OUR SCHOOL

- Why does the board desire to close our school after 'inheriting' it?

- It's not about high maintenance costs or capital requirements. Wanup PS requires no major capitol expense. The Wanup PS annual maintenance costs are only \$153k. (please see the School Information Profile) A very small amount, when compared to the funding required to build a new school. Let's take Princess Anne as an example. There the trustees voted to close other schools and build onto Princess Anne PS. Now that construction has started, the board is two million dollars over budget. They are blasting, when they promised to not blast. And the site can't be built as originally planed due to unstable soil. If that can happen with the board's other plans, what's going to happen at MacLeod PS? Almost certainly, not what the board is telling you.

- So if the reason is not money, what else could it be?

- If the Board can get away with closing two underutilized schools and add pressure to the existing overcrowded schools, then they can make a case for funding to the Ministry of Education to build a new school at MacLeod PS. But to do this they would have to ignore public input, manipulate the ARC process, put enrolment pressure on MacLeod PS, and ...Oh wait.. they have already done this. All that's left for the Board is to wait for your vote...

- Make no mistake, this is not about 'value to the students', this is about making the case for funding to get MacLeod PS a new school.

Moving the boundaries to adjust enrolment levels at all of the schools was not allowed to be discussed in any great fashion by Ada Della Penta. Why not make some boundary adjustments to ease overcrowding and underutilization? Because that wouldn't help to make their case for overcrowding at MacLeod PS with the Ministry. Now do you see the pattern yet? We still call it railroading.

## THOUGHTS TO PONDER WHEN CASTING YOUR VOTE

- Ten years after your board 'inheriting' our school, Here we stand today fighting to keep a school open that is in the best shape, the most 'green' school, out of all of the other schools in this review process.

- Why are you, the current generation of trustees so willing to be the board's pawns in a process that is ongoing?

- Do you realize how the board has tightly controlled this process, including access to information, only releasing information to help their position?

- Why are you so willing to close the last remaining rural school, and deprive these students of a rural education that their parents chose for them?

- Why have you not asked more questions to the local populace to get a feeling of what is happening, and why we are fighting so hard to save our school?

- Why do we have to fight so hard to keep our school that we, the community built to serve our communities needs, after the board 'inherited' it?

Please visit [www.SAVEWANUP.com](http://www.SAVEWANUP.com) for more information.

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