

Good evening, bonsoir

My name is France G linas and I am the MPP for Nickel Belt.

I would like to thank the members of the board of the Rainbow District School Board for holding this public meeting and for this opportunity to present.

My presentation will be brief. All of the schools in Sudbury West except for Copper Cliff are located in my riding. Furthermore I happen to live in Whitefish, our three kids went to school in Sudbury West, so it will not be a surprise to the people here, that when the people of Sudbury West wanted to be heard they came to talk to me.

Between my constituency office, e-mail, Walden Home Hardware, my hair dresser, Battistelli's Your Independent Grocer, and the meeting in Beaver Lake, I must have heard from most of the parents and grand-parents affected by the changes in Sudbury West Schools.

I will start in the same way they usually approach me. They understand the need for changes and are satisfied with the consultation process that took place via your Accommodation Review Committee. They feel that the four public consultation meetings that were held by the Accommodation Review Committee were helpful. They feel they had an opportunity to express their concerns and that the committee had listened to them. Of course none of them got all that they wanted but they felt that the three options that were finally agreed to, especially Option A represented a compromise that most, if not everyone could accept.

It is important to emphasize that it was a compromise. They were ready to accept certain recommendations included in option A, because of other recommendations also being included; the main one being that R H Murray in Whitefish remains open.

Most of the public consultation meetings took place before or during the election campaign. I had followed it at a distance as people seemed rather satisfied although nervous as the process unfolded.

The phone calls started the day after the Administrative Council made the decision to only accept part of the recommendations; part of the compromise. People are telling me that they understand the administrative council is not required to accept any of the options presented. They realize that keeping the high school in Lively open was a big step, that keeping the junior kinder garden to grade six in a different school was also a big step but still they feel betrayed. They feel the process, the work of the Accommodation Review Committee was all for nothing. That the compromise they had been a part of, was being torn apart, and only bits and pieces of it were selected to fit someone else's agenda. This is what is prompting the calls and the e-mails. Other people here tonight will present arguments for keeping RH Murray open. I wanted to leave no doubts in your mind that there are a lot of concerns out there in the community about closing RH Murray.

I guess I have said enough. You have some big decisions to make. I wanted to share with you the concerns of my constituents who are also your constituents, and the unrest taking place in Sudbury West. I hope you can take some of their concerns into account as you make your final decision.

Merci, Thank you