

Reading the long term accommodation plan presented to the Limestone Board of Education, it is quite astounding the number of recommended school closures for our district, I counted sixteen. According to Ameresco, they advise over the next fifteen years, closing Selby, Tamworth, Enterprise, Newburgh, Centerville, Collins Bay PS, Yarker, Amherst Island, R.G. Sinclair, W.J. Holsgrove, Truedell, J.G. Simcoe, Glenburnie, Prince Charles (Verona I assume), Land O'Lakes and Ernestown Secondary.

Greater Napanee and Stone Mills would see the closure of all of our rural elementary schools which have a combined total of 711 students. (2016/17 enrolment figures) Ameresco is recommending constructing a "new 374 pupil school" on the current Centerville PS site, but what would become of the other 377 students? Ameresco suggests sending some of these students into The Prince Charles in Napanee, and taking grade seven and eight students, for the entire area of Greater Napanee, and sending them into NDSS.

The Ameresco LTAP has serious flaws, it is recommending school closures, boundary changes and the building of new schools, but they are not taking into account any increase in population for our area. I, along with other parents I know, have specifically moved into the rural area, so our children could attend a smaller school. What if school enrolment does not decline, but increases? With the closure of our five rural schools, this will leave Greater Napanee and Stone Mills with three schools for 2,090 students., and this is not a (2016/17 enrolment figures)

According to Ameresco, in their LTAP report, these five schools are or will be facing decreasing enrolment, underutilized space and will reach their maximum facility condition over the course of fifteen years. As well as school closures, they recommend consolidation of schools and grade levels, in order to maintain maximum usage.

The LTAP report states that NDSS is underutilized and will have a declining enrolment for the next fifteen years which is, in my opinion, why Ameresco is recommending filling it with grade 7 and 8 students from all Greater Napanee

schools. Interestingly, Ontario high schools are facing declining enrolment now, due to the discontinuation of OAC level for students. (Ontario Small Schools).

If the LDSB leaves the grade seven and eight students in the public schools, the proposed new school on the Centerville site would not be able to accommodate all the students from Enterprise, Tamworth, Newburgh, Selby and Centerville. In order for this school to remain somewhat on the smaller side, the grade 7 and 8's need to be sent into NDSS.

Instead of closing schools that have been defined as underutilized, or filling space at NDSS with grade seven and eight children, why not create community hubs? The Ontario government is moving forward to foster the development of community hubs in schools. Community hubs will help unlock the value of schools as public assets and support communities with improved services.

In public schools that have a projected decrease in enrollment, introduce child care, a preschool. "Access to child care within schools provides family with accessible care and an easier transition when children go onto Full-Day Kindergarten. Child care and early learning are an integral part of serving the needs of families and children. Having child care in schools successfully demonstrates how partnerships can be adapted in schools across the province." (Community hubs in Ontario)

To fill underutilized space in NDSS, perhaps the Limestone District School Board should consider partnering with childcare centres in the community, to offer childcare for students (if needed), begin adult education classes and provide childcare for those adults seeking continuing education courses. Partner with senior citizen's groups and offer exercise classes, art classes, computer classes, offer cooking classes using the home economic classrooms. Consider moving Gateway Learning Centre, which is part of the Limestone District School Board, into NDSS instead of having it in its own separate building.

I understand, that as of this moment, the LTAP report is only for "information purposes", that nothing has been decided yet. However, H.H. Langford PS, Sandhurst PS, Westdale PS, First Avenue PS, J.E. Horton PS, Lundy's Lane PS,

Hinchinbrook PS, Sharbot Lake PS, KCVI and QECVI parents and students and community members, were also told this exact same thing, and now all of these schools are closed, or will be closed shortly.