

From: Charys Martin

Sent: Sunday, September 26, 2021 10:20 PM

To: PEC <pec@london.ca>

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Subject: Urgent Need for Action for Sir Arthur Currie Public School

Dear City Council Planning and Environment Committee Members and Thames Valley District School Board Trustees,

I am mother to a student who attends Sir Arthur Currie Public School (SAC) and I have another child who attends Sir Arthur Currie Daycare Centre on the same premises. The current situation at SAC is not sustainable. The school is unbelievably over-crowded and it is affecting our childrens' education, in addition to affecting the day-to-day life of the families the school services. How are our children safe when a school for 533 students is currently accommodating 1000 students? Our children have lost space to play and explore. Our children do not have the same facilities available to them within the school because shared spaces had to be turned into classrooms and they have to share other shared spaces (like the gym) with 2x the amount of students for which the spaces were built. Our children are missing out on community building opportunities, due to the fact that the school cannot have school wide gatherings, events, or assemblies due to capacity issues. Not to mention that the students in the portables are having to use porta-potties for personal hygiene. I don't know how this can be considered an appropriate learning environment for any student, especially considering how that is going to work when they are unheated during our cold winters. These temporary measures are unacceptable and need to be resolved immediately.

The over-capacity issues have also affected our family directly. Due to the fact that we have one younger child in daycare at Sir Arthur Currie, we must drive our children to school. Prior to this academic year, we drove our two children to school for the 9am school start time. We would park in the parking lot, drop off our youngest in childcare and then walk our oldest to her door for the school bell. The fact that 1/3 of the parking lot is now educational space with portables and porta-potties and that they must close off the drop-off lane in the parking lot to cars at 8:45am to keep students walking to and from the parking lot education space safe, we are unable to drop off our children for the 9am bell. My options were struggle to fight for parking with the parents of 1000 students in the morning a fair distance away from the school, and across roads, with my toddler and my young school age child or pay more in childcare fees and put my school age child in before-school programming. Unfortunately, the time and frustration of the former was not possible for our family and our tight work schedules, so as a result this over-capacity issue has also become a financial burden for our family.

I have included TVDSB trustees and the Minister of Education on this email because I feel like this current situation is a failure on so many levels. The fact that the school was originally planned with an addition to accommodate more students, but that it wouldn't be considered to be built until the school was already over-capacity is short-sighted, fiscally irresponsible, and would end careers if this project was in any other industry – especially considering the school was over-capacity within 1 year of opening. That being said, those failures have already occurred and action needs to be taken now to prevent any

further gross miscalculations. I support the proposal that Ward 7 Councillor, Josh Morgan, has put forward. While this does not solve the urgent matters at hand, the Fox Hollow neighbourhood is only growing, not getting smaller and we needed another school in the neighbourhood 3 years ago. This plan starts that process of getting shovels in the ground faster. However, we still need immediate action that will relieve the stress on SAC.

In regard to this urgent need, and in addition to supporting Councillor Morgan's proposal, we need the TVDSB to rezone in our region. It is absolutely unconscionable to me that the TVDSB has not re-zoned for SAC. Currently, students are bused from outside Fox Hollow (south of Fanshawe, East of Wonderland, and West of Hyde Park). How can one justify that Sir Arthur Currie is currently zoned to accept students who are bused from areas that are much closer to lower capacity schools (Emily Carr, Wilfred Jury, and Masonville). While a new school in Fox Hollow is absolutely required, we cannot wait 4 years for a solution to this problem. Students outside the region and even within Fox Hollow should be rezoned to ensure that schools in the area have more even numbers to ensure our students are all getting a great learning experience. I completely understand that this will make many families frustrated, but something needs to be done now and our children's education is at stake.

I ask that my email is included on the agenda for the Monday September 27th meeting and at the next meeting for TVDSB Trustees.

Sincerely,

Charys M. Martin, PhD