



COMMISSION SCOLAIRE SIR-WILFRID-LAURIER
SIR WILFRID LAURIER SCHOOL BOARD

December 14th 2012

An Open Letter to the Laval High School Communities- amended version December 15, 2012

During the last few days, after the Council of Commissioners meeting on Wednesday December 12th there have been a large number of e-mails, postings on social media sites, and rumours regarding the Council meeting and more specifically the presentations and discussions involving the future of the Accelerated Learning Program at Mother Teresa Junior High School.

After a period of reflection, we are saddened by the fact that the situation as explained at Council that night, was either not heard or disregarded. The search for blame and the need for retribution have taken on a life of its own and have created increased stress levels for all staff, students, and community members in our four Laval high schools. It is our responsibility to stop these rumours and present the facts in this case.

In that spirit, this is the time line of events.

Over the last few months, Commissioners and School Board administrators have been discussing the Laval High School over-crowding situation and different scenarios, whether long term or short term, to alleviate the situation.

On December 5th members of the Terry Fox community and their Governing Board met. At the conclusion of the meeting, Commissioners, Directorate and senior executive met with different groups of parents to answer concerns regarding over-crowding issues in our elementary and high schools in Laval .

On December 6th the Parents Committee was presented with the proposed Enrollment Criteria for the up-coming school year and the Accelerated Learning Program at Mother Teresa was brought up. Concerns were raised with regard to which students would have priority in that program and MTJHS, based on proximity to the school within the Laval zone. As a result of this discussion the Parents Committee decided to reject the proposed Enrollment Criteria.

On December 6th Mother Teresa Junior High School had its annual Open House. During this event concerns were voiced by prospective parents as to the priority of attendance for students at Mother Teresa Junior High School.

On December 10th Mother Teresa held its Governing Board meeting. Questions were brought by the Governing Board members in response to the information regarding the 2013-2014 Enrolment Criteria discussed at Parents Committee meeting on December 6th.

On December 10th the School Organization's Standing Committee was held and the topics of the Laval High Schools and Enrollment Criteria were discussion items on its agenda.

On December 11th The Director General discussed the over-crowding issue and the Accelerated Learning Program with the Principal of Mother Teresa Junior High School.

On December 11th Executive Committee was held. Both Laval High Schools and the Enrollment Criteria were on the Agenda for this meeting.

On December 12th the Council of Commissioners held its meeting at Rosemere High School.

At this meeting, the Council of Commissioners adopted the following Resolution:

Use of Laval High Schools

WHEREAS the Council of Commissioners approved resolution # CC-120627-CA-0197, mandating the Director General to look at the registration imbalance between all of the Laval high schools;

WHEREAS the Director General deposited his report on the Laval high schools at the 2012-11-28 meeting of the Council of Commissioners;

WHEREAS following the consultation on the 2013-2014 Enrollment Criteria, the Parents Committee asked to reconsider reinstating a Task Force with Governing Board members, Commissioners and the school board Directorate ;

WHEREAS the Council of Commissioners believes it needs to see the results of the 2013-2014 registration before deciding on short term solutions;

WHEREAS the Council of Commissioners also believes that a Task Force involving members of the community should be established;

WHEREAS concern has been expressed with respect to specialized projects and programs;

WHEREAS short term solutions, if necessary, need to be decided prior to 2013-03-01; Parent Commissioner Angelo Grasso MOVED THAT the Council of Commissioners of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board establish a Committee on the Future of Laval High Schools composed of the following:

- *Laval High School Governing Board Chairs & Vice-Chairs;*
- *Elementary & Secondary Parent Commissioners;*
- *Chairman of the School Board;*
- *All Commissioners who wish to participate;*
- *4 Laval High School Principals;*
- *Assistant Director General;*
- *Director of School Organization and*
- *One teacher from each Laval High School*

AND THAT the report deposited by the Director General to the Council of Commissioners on 2012-11-28 be a starting point for the discussions.

AND THAT the mandate of the Committee on the Future of Laval High Schools be to:

- *study the options listed in the report;*
- *take into consideration the special projects and programs in the Laval high schools;*
- *provide a recommendation on the most viable solution taking into consideration the optimization of the success of students ensuring that the resources of the school board namely the human, material and financial resources are used in the most effective manner.*

AND THAT the committee, provide a preliminary report, more specifically for short term solutions, to the School Organization & Transportation Committee for its 2013-02-13 meeting and a final report by 2013-02-25.

FURTHER THAT the committee provide a report on long term solutions addressing the registration imbalance in the Laval high schools to the School Organization & Transportation Committee for its March meeting.

Carried unanimously

During this meeting it was repeated on numerous occasions that no decision on the placement of students in the Accelerated Learning Program, or any other program in our high schools, had been taken.

It must be understood and accepted that the functional capacity of the Daniel Johnson building has been exceeded over the past several years and, that, for the next school year, we will in all likelihood, be faced with an over-crowding situation at Mother Teresa Junior High School and Laurier Senior High School. As a School Board and a Council of Commissioners it is our obligation to foresee this situation and plan for possible solutions. Proposed alternatives would be developed and analyzed, and final recommendations would be made, based on the effects to our students, staff, and our school communities.

At this point, every possible solution must be explored, and that is as it should be. Creative problem-solving requires the freedom to think in different ways, and to test both our assumptions and our beliefs. Discussion is part of this important process, and not everything is retained as part of the final solution. It will be up to the Committee formed at the Council meeting on December 12th to explore all possibilities and to investigate all options so that ultimately the Council of Commissioners receive a thorough recommendation on which to base their resolution to address the over-crowding of these schools.

We would like to re-iterate that rumours rarely start from one point. In this case the possibility of moving the Accelerated Learning Program was discussed both in depth and in a cursory fashion at different times and at different places. To try to pinpoint one source of the dissemination of this information is both foolhardy and regrettable.

It is hoped that this information will help bring clarity to the situation and halt the rumours and speculation that only serve to fuel anxiety and mistrust.

It is our intention to find a solution that is in the least disruptive for all students, staff and school community.

Nick Milas
Chairperson

Robert Vallerand
Director General