

Melissa Cosco

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank all of the board members and anyone who has taken the time to be involved in this arc process. The process has been a stressful and consuming one for many.

I wanted to take a minute to reflect how this started. Lots of emotion, many rumours and so much division of a community. This started with a behind the scenes, our school is better than yours, our language based school deserves more than the other language based school, outraged parents claiming many things that just doesn't work for them.

Selfishly, myself included couldn't look past that in order to support our kids in the best way we need to focus on this as a whole. A whole body of students, teachers, families, friends and community as one. What option suits us as one in the best way. The most supportive, caring easiest, logical and cost effective.

I attended my first ever parents council meeting when it was planned to have the meeting in regards to the arc just after it. I walked in looking to yell and shout about how this can't happen. I can't let this happen to MY kids. I walked out completely changed. I walked out now part of a team that was committed to finding the best solution for an entire community. People banded together to prove why keeping West Lynn open was the only choice that met the needs of all of us. Not just MY kids. All of US.

I could go through and list all of the reasons to keep West Lynn open and either splitting the French Immersion from JK to grade 3 at Walsh and 4-8 at Dover Public or two separate programs split between the two schools ; accesibility and cost associated with the upkeep and challenges of repairs to an elevator, the lack of use for West Lynn property for anything but a

school vs. a property that allows the community to continue to grow and will allow growth for the future of the hospital and nursing home, how financially the cost involved is far less and has less disruption to the students lives, how having the french immersion split or having two seperate programs at two locations keeps a school open instead of it inevitably closing yet another school, but that's been stated so many times that I know it can't be ignored and has been understood.

I will add to that by saying how when researching schools and options for a child who doesn't fit into any typical student checklists needs that, above any other school West Lynn was always suggested as the best option when it came to supportive teams. Even though, it's the only school without a designated special education class.

I want to touch on how this can bring us together because it has already started. I never really thought about how I mattered in my kids school or that I could be of any use. I took for granted all of the behind the scenes people. I have witnessed something pretty great and that alone is worth saving. I witnessed and was welcomed with open arms to become part of that change. Many little pieces became one and worked magic. Each person added something in one way or another. Together not only was an option to keep our school opened created but options for our community and the other schools in the community. Banded together our tiny community changed the arc proposal from closing to keeping it open. How? By proving with facts, plans, written letters, delegations, meetings and speaking to each other hearing all the voices. Hearing out what our community has to say and being the voice and advocating for all, not just West Lynn. We stood proud and created floor plans, physically showed how [the kids will spend less total time on a bus which in return is more cost effective also](#). Asked the people who it could directly involve to also voice how they support this and can benefit or help makes this happen. It was looked at from all angles. This shows what kind of school we are. We are putting forth the

best option for everyone. I'm not only happy about the decision to put forth a new suggestion to the board but I'm beyond thrilled to actually feel like I'm part of my community. I mattered. My family will continue to matter and so will everyone else's when choosing to keep West Lynn open.

In closing, I want to say thank you for providing an opportunity to teach me that I mattered and I belong and taught me that if I feel strongly enough that change needs to happen my voice can help. Thank you for hearing out and looking at the options as a possibility. I fully support this option and appreciate the chance to tell how this is important to me.