

**From:** Aly Boltman [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 30, 2023 6:29 PM  
**To:** Briana Bloomfield <[bbloomfield@owensound.ca](mailto:bbloomfield@owensound.ca)>  
**Subject:** Please forward to council members re: public meeting Jan. 30th/2023

Dear Owen Sound Council,

Regarding the site planning application for 120 residential units at 2275 16th Street East, it is my understanding that the BWDSB is requesting that the following condition should be included as part of Site Plan approval:

1. "That the owner(s) agree in the Agreement to include in all Offers of Purchase and Sale a statement advising prospective purchasers that accommodation within a public school operated by Bluewater District School Board may be accommodated in temporary facilities; including but not limited to a portable classroom, a "holding school", or directing students to an alternative attendance boundary." As the parent of a child currently attending OSDSS, which is undeniably over capacity, I too have significant concerns that new families who move to Owen Sound will not be able to have their children accommodated at existing schools. It should be noted that I also have a younger son with special needs who will also be faced with trying to flourish in an overcrowded school, now facing even more pressure in light of the demographic shifts that are seeing an increased number of school-age children living in or moving to Owen Sound.

However, the fairly recent amalgamation of OSCVI and West Hill, and the sale of at least four other local elementary schools, was a decision made by the BWDSB in recent years that was demonstrably short-sighted. Although they were using data available to them at the time, it was clearly outdated, and did not speak to the decades-long trend of the urban-shift north out of major cities, particularly Toronto, due to many factors but especially, affordability. The use of outdated data is a problem that plagues many organizations. While no one could have predicted the pandemic and its impacts, particularly not the shift in demographics or the influx of a large number of young families to the area, we are now in a crisis situation that needs to be solved by action, not by caveats included in real estate purchases.

If the BWDSB expects our Council to approve this type of a caveat and a sign-off from a current or prospective parent in order to buy a home in Owen Sound, city residents should expect swift problem-solving measures proposed publicly by the BWDSB to address overcrowding. Holding schools, mini-cities of portables or out of area schools are not reasonable options. Owen Sound **had** the capacity to accommodate students. If a person is willing to invest in Owen Sound and help add to our tax base and contribute to our infrastructure, their children's educational needs should be met in their own city. If we can't adequately educate the children of newcomers to this city within the city, then we can forget about growth. On that note, while I have not read that the Catholic District School Board has made similar demands (they in fact are in the process of planning a new build to accommodate future students). St. Mary's school currently accommodates numerous students from outside Owen Sound. While the school taxes of these children are being allocated to the Catholic Board, those families are not contributing to the tax base of Owen Sound nor helping to address its significant infrastructure deficiencies. Why are these spaces not allocated to Owen Sound residents? While Owen Sound Council cannot dictate the boundaries of the Catholic School Board, it should be noted that this is part of the problem new families to Owen Sound are facing in terms of lack of spaces available to new residents.

I hope that Council will consider these concerns when determining whether or not to grant this condition to the BWDSB. An action plan, public and developed with community input, is needed immediately if the Board is to address and correct past mistakes.

Future citizens of Owen Sound deserve the local education they will pay for with their municipal taxes. Current citizens do not deserve to pay the price for overcrowding that could have been avoided.

Sincerely,

Aly Boltman [REDACTED] Owen Sound, ON [REDACTED]