

November 22, 2015

To whom it may concern,

In the past I have written a letter indicating that the closure of the Burton School would be to the disadvantage of the students, their families and the community. Although I have now moved out of province, I still feel strongly after my recent introduction to a much larger school that these points are still very viable. My children now attend a school with over 450 students from Kindergarten to Grade 4. Although there are some positives to a larger school, I still feel that the smaller school had a lot more to offer.

The class sizes of their new schools are quite large and with more children there seems to be less time for a teacher to individualize some program aspects for students. This leads to a disconnect between children's abilities and the material that they have available to them. With so many classes often teachers do not have any background knowledge of the students prior to their enrollment. This translates into a period of discovery which in some cases may take several months. Whereas in the Burton School the teachers know all the students regardless of grade and communication among the staff help to set children along the appropriate learning paths earlier in the school year, making for an easier transition for students and their families.

Although I am active in my children's new school, I still feel there are a number of staff members whom I do not know that have regular contact with my children. The small size of Burton allowed for parents to have a closer relationship with staff and a greater sense of familiarity and comfort, especially when students are starting Kindergarten. As part of a family that has moved several times, we definitely look to the proximity of a school in the local community when we are relocating. Long bus rides, particularly for younger students, is not an ideal situation. I loved that the Burton School was close to my home and should I ever move back to the area, I would be looking for a stable school environment as a key point before I purchased a home, with an emphasis on reasonable bus travel times.

The small Burton community is very close knit and as you know does not offer many stores or services. The loss of the local school would undoubtedly start a trend where incoming families would look to other areas, such as Lincoln and Geary, as they have schools directly within their communities, as places to settle down. I feel that losing the school in a small hamlet like Burton would make it significantly less desirable as a place for families to reside.

There are of course positives to the larger school, they have a bigger gym, a well-stocked library and access to things like a greater variety and number of musical instruments. Regardless, the Burton School is still the stick I use to measure all other schools against. I feel strongly that the number of positive programs and experiences from such a small school simply cannot be replicated in a larger educational environment. I hope that you will reconsider the closure of the Burton Elementary School as it truly is an amazing and vital place for the students, their families and the community.

Kind Regards,

Lorna Knight

