

Reddy

This is no longer about a sustainability study for the Burton School. It is starting to feel like a very familiar event, being the third sustainability study since 2011. It is obvious that the Burton School has many deficiencies that do not meet District standards for a community school. Maintaining status quo has left Burton in a very vulnerable position due to the amendment to Policy 409 in March 2015 which added an enrolment requirement of a minimum of 100 students. The fairness of this policy adjustment was previously challenged due to the incapacity of the current school structure to meet this requirement. The maximum student capacity with the current structure is 63, which would always leave Burton susceptible to a sustainability study. Maintaining status quo at this time would be a naïve approach to take. There were other school challenges highlighted in the District report including:

- Insufficient parking
- No professional areas for visiting specialists to work privately.
- No dedicated school counsellor or Behavior Intervention Mentor to support proactive social and emotional learning.
- No breakout areas in the classroom

- Limited washrooms for staff and students; and
- Limited childcare in the area.

Many of these challenges could be met, including limited childcare if Burton were to have a proper K-5 or K-8 school instead of a K-2 with the Burton catchment area being restricted with the exclusion of a large portion of the Burton area. The catchment area is a major factor in not only the preservation of a community school, but also for the conservation of this community.

Burton is a very high transient area due to the influx of military. This type of demographic is a plus for the continued sustainability of a community school.

When the Burton School was originally built in 1961, Burton was mostly farmland with a very sparse population. Since then, Burton had a massive increase in population, resulting in Burton becoming the second largest District in the province for many years. Originally, Burton was part of a geographical division that included Burton, Oromocto and Geary. When the Town of Oromocto incorporated in 1956, Geary and Burton remained politically together. In 2013, the Geary community was able to acquire a new K-5 school. The 2016 census showed Burton as having a population of

2815 and Geary 2304, which meant Burton had over 500 more residents than Geary.

Bottom line, maintaining the status quo of the current structure would only prolong the inevitable closure of the only school in Burton. Even though the Burton population had increased significantly, the school remained the same. Instead of improving the school to meet the needs of a growing community, the catchment areas were modified, and the Burton K-5 children were redirected to 6 different elementary schools. Having a proper community school would enhance the growth of a younger demographic moving and staying in the Burton area.

I know the importance of instilling a sense of community in our younger generation. I moved to Burton over 60 years ago and I can only hope that future generations will get to love my community as much as I have. When schools, families and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer and cherish their communities more.

Thank you!