

Rachel.Grantham



From: Janet Clarke 25(1) e-mail address
Sent: Tuesday, June 28, 2016 8:29 AM
To: Doug.Graham; Judy.Arnold
Cc: Bruce.Thomson; Christine.KlaassenStPierre; Darren Hays; Michael.Toews; sohail.mags25(1) e-mail Amin; Andrea FH; Erik Hoenisch; Erik Hoenisch; Jessie Dawson; Muhommad; Robin; Roxanne Vallevand; Sandra Henderson; Tracy mcPhee
Subject: FH School Council letter re. Francophone High School at FH Collins site

Tuesday, June 28, 2016

Dear Minister Graham,

Thank you for meeting with some of the members of the F.H. Collins School Council and Administration on June 9, 2016. As requested, we are taking this opportunity to provide, in writing, the concerns that were raised with you, and previously with Deputy Minister Judy Arnold regarding the possible placement of another high school for francophone primary language students, next to F.H. Collins Secondary School in Riverdale. As you are well aware, there is a long history regarding the building and placement of a francophone high school, which we will not review here. Suffice it to say that the FH Collins School Council has serious concerns about having another high school placed next door.

Firstly, the final phases of building and grounds construction at F.H. Collins has yet to be completed. Our school community, students and administration have been tolerating a construction zone for several years now. There are still building deficiencies that need to be addressed as well as the fact that the Tech Building is and will continue to be under construction for months to come. Areas such as landscaping, signs, walkways, parking lots, sports field and basketball courts at the new F.H Collins have not been completed and plans to do so are slow. The F.H. school community deserves a school building project that is fully completed before another phase of construction is undertaken.

The information we have been provided by Marc Champagne, executive director of the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon, and confirmed by you, is that the first choice for a new francophone high school is on the site of the old F.H. Collins. Mr. Champagne also advised us that the plan is to build a school for 250 students despite the fact that there are currently only 42 students in grades 7-12 at École Emily Tremblay and no grade 12 students at all this year. He also advised that there are plans to include a 250 person flexible community theatre space for use by the school and the public. Finally he indicated that they would want to be able to take advantage and share the F.H. Collins Tech wing to be able to provide courses to their students in French. The francophone high school would also be built to house the offices of the Commission scolaire francophone du Yukon. With respect, even if the school only has a low enrolment (40-70 students), the teachers, administration, staff and staff of this new institution will provide an influx of people and vehicles into the Riverdale area that will be significant and not likely supported by current school and residential communities.

We appreciate that, in pursuing this location, the francophone school community is attempting to retain their high school students and keep them from leaving francophone primary schooling, at the high school level, by having them be close to F.H. Collins and the variety of opportunities that it provides our students (sports, programs, course options, clubs and the social life of a larger school). The aspect of this rationale that we take issue with is that there is no evidence that locating the school next to F.H. Collins will achieve their goal. Francophone students may

well still choose to go to another high school in order to access more and broader opportunities that can be provided by a larger school community. Being next door to F.H. Collins will not necessarily allow their students to partake in the F.H. Collins opportunities. School teams will of course be reserved for F.H. students, programs and courses will need to be available to our students first and with the current high enrolment at F.H., there may be little room for additional students. The idea about using the F.H. Tech wing to teach their own classes will be problematic as there is currently no time available in the school day schedule, save teacher prep times, when the Tech wing is not being used by FH students.

We appreciate your review and consideration of the above-noted concerns. We would ask that the FH School Council be kept abreast of continuing developments on this issue.

Sincerely,

Janet Clarke & Tracy McPhee

Co-chairs, FH School Council