

Overpopulation letters from École Sage Creek School PAC Facebook page [originally posted 1-Feb-2018](#).

## Original post:

### OVERPOPULATION:

We have been sharing the message with parents of children in ÉSCS and have been reaching out to Sage Creek residents that have pre-school aged children who may still not be aware of the risk of students not being able to attend ÉSCS this Fall. We will be working with the Sage Creek Residents' Association to share the message to the whole community and the School and LRSD continue to share the message through emails, website updates and social media.

We need to keep talking to our friends and neighbours so everyone is aware of the situation and how it affects us all, as Sage Creek residents, homeowners and parents!

We need to receive the funding to put portables on the schoolgrounds this Fall so all Sage Creek residents can attend our community school.

We've heard from many of you that you don't know what to write, or how to write it. We do not want to create 'form letters' that you just change your name on and forward in for them to be filed.

The message needs to be personal - who you are and how the lack of funding for portables (and a second school) will affect you and your family.

Attached is a letter that a resident sent to MB Premier Honourable Brian Pallister, MB Minister of Education Honourable Ian Wishart, Andrew Smith MLA. The XXX's replace personal information that they didn't want shared.

We are sharing this letter to give you an idea of some of the things you could write about.

We encourage you to share your own letters with us so we can post them, with or without your personal information.

We need to continue to write our MLA, the Minister of Education, and the Premier to voice all of our concerns, individually and as a community.

Our hope is to have a string of comments under this post of the letters/emails sent by individuals.

If you would prefer to remain anonymous we can remove personal comments and post as a comment for you, just send us a PM (private message).

This is not just a Sage Creek issue, this also effects the students and families in the other community's schools where Sage Creek students will be bussed if we do not get portables and a second school; please continue to spread the word and write in.

Email addresses:

[premier@leg.gov.mb.ca](mailto:premier@leg.gov.mb.ca)

minedu@leg.gov.mb.ca

andrew@andrewsmithmla.ca

\*edited to add: Deputy Minister of Education and Training James Wilson

dmedu@leg.gov.mb.ca

Here is the resident's letter for you to get some ideas, please be sure to write your own personalized letter, with your personal story and how you feel this issue affects you, your family, and the community:

"To: MB Premier Honourable Brian Pallister, MB Minister of Education Honourable Ian Wishart, Andrew Smith MLA,

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XXX

I am writing to express my extreme concern about the dire situation regarding school spaces in Sage Creek. I implore you to please give the LRSD funding for portables for this September, and start building a second school in Sage Creek as soon as possible. The LRSD has all the projections - the numbers are clear. Sage Creek needs a second school and it needs it now. The school opened over capacity, and we are already looking at children having to be bused out of the neighbourhood as early as September 2018. LRSD has been requesting relocatable classrooms/portables to try to keep Sage Creek children in Sage Creek in the meantime until a second school can be built. We know how long it takes to build a school, it took over 4 years for École Sage Creek School to be built. A second school needs to be started as soon as possible. In 4 years the number of school age kids in Sage Creek will be approximately 1000. The capacity of the current school is only 600. And even with a second school, portables will still be required to handle the number of students over the next 10 years as the community continues to grow.

Even with 2 schools, portables will still be required for at least 10 years - knowing this, I simply cannot understand how the request for portables is currently being denied. Busing out children to other schools has so many negative consequences. It puts a strain on those schools. There is the cost of busing - both the financial cost of bus routes (drivers, maintenance, gas) as well as the environmental cost of the emissions that will be generated having to drive children 8.5km and 11km twice a day. And the toll on the children: that is resigning them to a 45-60 minute bus ride, twice a day. They won't get to walk to school. They won't get to go to school in their own neighbourhood, with their friends and neighbours. You will have children all living on the same street and going to several different schools. That shatters the sense of community and is a detriment to relationships. Sage Creek doesn't have a community centre; our community is centred around this school. The residents of Sage Creek are outraged about this possibility. So many people have moved to this community specifically because they were told their children would be able to attend school here. I know many people who moved here from Royalwood just for that reason. It's about more than just 'where there is space', it's about being a part of the community you live in, walking to school, and knowing your neighbours. If I wanted my child to

be bused to school 1 hour each way every day, I would move to the country. We are citizens of Winnipeg, and paying a premium to build and live in Sage Creek.

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I beg of you to please review the facts. The numbers don't lie. Sage Creek needs a second school and it needs it to start being built now. In the meantime, Sage Creek needs portables for this September. And those portables will be required for many years to come, even with a second school.

Please don't rip this community apart; please don't shatter our faith in our neighbourhood and our community relationships. This neighbourhood is full of young families with concerned parents who care deeply about this issue, myself included.

I thank you in advance for considering my points on this very pressing issue.

Sincerely,

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX"

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## **Follow-up letters from Sage Creek residents and posted as replies to the original post:**

"Hi, I am a resident of Sage Creek, and I was in attendance at last night's information meeting at École Sage Creek School. I am a parent of two young children who will be entering school in the coming years.

I had a large number of concerns about the information that was shared last night. However, when it comes right down to it they all stem from the refusal to fund the installation of portable classrooms at the school. This refusal has led the LRSD to have to implement a "first come, first serve" approach to school registration in the fall, where unsuccessful applicants will have to have their children bused to various other communities, sometimes more than 10 kilometers away.

I want you and the authorities who are refusing to fund portable classrooms at this site to understand the realities of this decision for the people in our community, and in particular for our children.

By saying "no" to funding portables, you are pitting neighbour against neighbour. You are creating competition among the members of our beautiful community who are only trying to do what is best for their children. Families who built fences together last year and whose children are best friends will be fighting with each other to get to the front of the line.

In March, after everyone has been told if they have "made the cut", families who didn't will have to scramble. New child care arrangements will have to be made. Changes to work schedules, jobs, extra curricular activities, routines Stress on top of stress . And to top it off, 5 year old children will have to be told that they won't be able to go to school with their friends, and they won't understand why.

And in September 2018, a new reality will emerge for our community. A reality of "those who made the cut" and "those who didn't". A reality where there will be resent and anger among friends and awkward conversations among neighbours. Above all, there will be kids growing up in our neighbourhood feeling like outsiders. Kids who won't have the chance to go to their very first day of school with their best friend next door because someone down the line refused to adequately plan for them.

I want you to think about how you would feel if this reality was yours.

Do what is right, for our community and for our children. Fund the portables, and ensure that no child in Sage Creek has to leave our community in order to go to school."

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February 2018

Dear Andrew Smith,

I am sending you, today, my strong concerns about the overpopulation issues surrounding Ecole Sage Creek School. My understanding of the situation is that our community school here is Sage Creek is already overcapacity and the projections in the next 5 years are for over 1000 K-8 students. The Louis Riel School Division has been requesting a second K-8 school in Sage Creek since 2013 and we have been recently denied the request for the installation of portable classrooms on the grounds of our current school.

My question is "WHY?" Why has the government denied the request for portable classrooms? Why have they not yet announced the intent to build another K-8 school for 600 students?

My children will be attending the French Immersion program for their school journey. Does the government understand that the ONLY French Immersion schools with enough space to mitigate overcrowding at Ecole Sage Creek School, at this time, are OVER 11kms away? Does the government truly understand how much stress this puts, not only on the child, but the whole family when the government forces a decision to have LRSD bus all the "additional" children to a school that is not even considered local? Children residing on the same street may not be able to attend the same school. Some children will not be able to attend school with their friends. Children will have extra long bus rides, impacting on family time. Families will need to find daycares outside of Sage Creek for Before/After school care but have no bus service.

Neighbours within the same community will be divided and connections will be strained. Not to mention the impact on other schools where, shortly, there will not be enough room to house all the additional Sage Creek students.

Right now, there is an urgent need for portable classrooms to be approved on our current grounds at Ecole Sage Creek School. There is the need to approve, as soon as possible, the construction of a second K-8 school for an additional 600 students here in Sage Creek.

On a personal note, I have a family of 5 children, ranging from preschool all the way to Grade 8. I have seen the positive impact a Community school has had on my family, where their friends are down the street, they can walk/bike to school and come home for lunch. One of my children xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. With all the challenges xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx, it has been truly a blessing to be able to attend a school so close to home. Unless you raise a child with such difficulties, it might be hard to understand how much community means in the life of a child and how close connections/relations can affect them in a positive way.

I believe we all share the same goal for our children. We wish the best for them. Family. Community. Environment. As a teacher myself, I know how all the research studies out there support the fact that all these things play an important role in each child's life. Healthy Children, healthy families will create a bright future for Canada.

How long can we expect an announcement regarding a second school that will confirm a capacity for 600 students?

Can we expect 2 portables for September 2018 and 2 more for September 2019?

Looking forward to hearing from you,  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

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"From: A Sage Creek Resident  
Sent: February 4, 2018 10:58 PM  
To: premier@leg.gov.mb.ca; minedu@leg.gov.mb.ca; dmedu@leg.gov.mb.ca;  
andrew@andrewsmithmla.ca  
Subject: For our little girl, and all the others.

Dear Elected Officials,

I am a parent of a 2 ½ year old daughter who will be entering the school system in a couple of years. My wife and I attended the information meeting on overcrowding at École Sage Creek School. In this meeting we learned that to continue to accommodate the needs of the community, the Louis Riel School Division with projections in hand, had requested and was

denied the use of 4 portable classrooms. We were also informed that the division had also submitted a request in 2013 for a new K-8 school in the community. We were informed that without the use of portable classrooms or the construction of a new school, the existing School would no-longer be able to accommodate the growing community as of the 2018-2019 school year.

My daughter currently attends the Rainbow Day Nursery daycare at École Sage Creek School and has been there since it opened in September 2017. I have many concerns about the fact that my child may not be able to attend school at École Sage Creek School when she reaches Kindergarten. It is not only unfair to her but simply not right that she may have to attend another school when she is old enough. This means that when she enters Kindergarten she will still be going to the daycare at École Sage Creek School for half the day but might have to be transported up to 11km away to another school for the other half. Rather than simply walk down the hallway with her friends, my then 5-year old may have to get on a bus or be transported by some other means to another school, and she won't understand why.

The other unfortunate reality is that if children in Sage Creek are unable to attend the school within their community, they will end up filling other spots in other schools in the catchment area of other families. By refusing to fund the resources that the Louis Riel School Division requires to accommodate this growing community, the Manitoba government will be creating a problem for families all over the division. The assertion by government officials that children can simply be shipped off to empty spaces around the division like cattle, with no regard for their personal and social well-being, is simply callous, reprehensible and shows a disturbing lack of foresight.

We were informed that due to the lack of space, to register our child for Kindergarten the School Division will be forced to implement an "in-person first come first serve" registration process. This means that families, who are only trying to do the best for their children, will be forced into fighting each other to get to the front the line. Akin to Best Buy on boxing day, I'm sure many people will be camping out in front of the school the night before just to afford their child the right to walk to school and be part of their community.

These are the formative years of their lives where a sense of community, lasting relationships and personal identities are built. However thanks to this nearsightedness by our elected government, friends next door to each other won't be able walk to school together, or be on the same teams, play in the same band, or work on the same projects. The children who aren't lucky enough to "get in" to the same school will end up feeling like outsiders in their own community. What a disaster!

I want you to consider how this would affect your children. How would their lives be changed? What opportunities would they have missed, or lasting impacts would have been affected?

The answer should be apparent, do the right thing and fund the portable classrooms. Have a meaningful consultation with the Louis Riel School Division. Review their work, review their

projections and approve the second school. It is within your power to ensure that no child in Sage Creek will have to leave their friends, family and community behind simply to go to school.

With heavy hearts,  
Sage Creek Residents”

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Another letter from a resident:

“I am writing to express how extremely disappointed and concerned my family is regarding the overpopulation issue at Ecole Sage Creek School. My husband and I moved to Sage Creek in 2011. We put great thought into what community we would move to and where we would start our family. We saw this neighborhood as a great community to grow our future family and we were told that there were plans for possibly 2 schools to be built. Even though at the time we did not have any children, the new schools were a huge selling point for this neighborhood. When we heard how wonderful the new school was from our neighbors we were very glad with our decision to move here. We just welcomed our first child a year ago and we are very upset at the thought that we have lived here for 7 years, paid the high taxes and really made this our home just to find out that our little one will most likely end up being bused out to another school over 11kms away.

Leaving things as they are at the moment will not affect this community in a positive way. It will divide the neighborhood and create tension among neighbors. Children, especially during the elementary formative school years, should be going to school in their own neighborhood alongside their friends and neighbors. It's less than ideal to have children all living on the same street and going to several different schools.

I also don't see how fair it is to have to stand in line to get my child into a school located a few blocks away from my home, yet another neighbor could have moved to the neighborhood a month ago and end up with their child going to Ecole Sage Creek but mine will have to commute for 40 to 60 minutes a day to get to their school. Having a first come first serve approach is only going to lead to fighting and tension among neighbors. This is not a Black Friday sale, this is the education of our children! Why can't a registration list be started and have people placed based on the length of time they have lived within the community. I don't see why I can't register my son now on a list that could be updated every year. Should people move, at renewal time; they would indicate they moved outside of the community and they are removed from this list. This would bump the next person on the list up a spot. If the province can manage an online daycare registration list that I must log in and update every few months, I do not see why something similar could not be put in place. I would gladly provide documentation with an application to prove that I have resided in the community as long as I have. I have spoken to other residents about this and they have agreed that they would gladly do so as well.

I strongly urge to move forward with the development of a second school in Sage Creek as soon as possible. In the meantime I believe it is dire that portables be approved to accommodate the growing number of children. If children in the meantime need to be bused out to other schools, I believe it would be best to make Ecole Sage Creek a K-6 school and have the older kids go to a different school. The older children will have formed friendships and having them all take a bus together would make a lot more sense. Junior high kids would fare better with the traveling and change than the little ones.

If we had been ok with the idea of our children having to be bused around for over an hour each day, we would have built a home in the country. We have paid a premium to live in Sage Creek and right now, I'm having a very difficult time seeing the benefit in staying here in the long term. Please don't tear our community apart and make our children's education a priority."

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Another share from a Resident:

"Hello,

I am writing to express my thorough disappointment and frustration in the current schooling situation occurring in my community of Sage Creek. Days after the school had its grand opening, it was announced that the school is currently over capacity and would result in future students potentially not being able to attend school within their own community. As a father of an infant girl, my family's plan was to send our daughter to ESCS in Kindergarten. This was one of our key considerations when moving to the community of Sage Creek in XXXX. We were excited at the prospect of sending our children to a brand new school in a brand new community and helping build that sense of community as Sage Creek continued its development. It's bad enough that the pre-school situation in this province has resulted in a waiting list exceeding 15,000 children, it now appears that this problem is extending to Kindergarten and school age children.

Unless a second school is built in Sage Creek, as has been communicated to the Province since 2013, many families will be forced to send their children to schools outside the community upwards of 11km away. The effects that this will have not only on these children but on the community itself are irreparable and very harmful to the development of our children and their sense of community all together. Children will potentially not be able to attend the same school as their neighbors. A rift will be created in the community through no fault of our own. This will form cliques for students attending school in Sage Creek and those not, as opposed to all those children being schooled within the community that they live in. This is not what is best for our community, our city, our province or, most notably, our children. As high tax paying citizens of this city and province, we deserve better. I don't want to have to put my 5 year old girl on a bus for an hour per day in order for her to attend Kindergarten. No parent wants that. If you are receiving this e-mail, you have to opportunity to change that and improve the lives of children and future students in this Province.

The projections for the Sage Creek community have been known for over a decade. It was known well ahead of now that this overcrowding problem was going to exist immediately upon opening. The LRSD division has requested 4 portable classrooms and has been denied. Why is that the case? This is a cheap, temporary solution to a growing problem that will at least buy our community some time to plan next steps while keeping our children together. The request for two schools within the community was put forward in 2013 and has been denied. On what grounds was it denied? I understand these decisions are difficult to make under tight budgetary constraints, but matters such as these are of critical importance and can be delayed no longer.

Under a P3 construction delivery model, costs of construction are delayed until a pre-determined future date thereby allowing the Province to avoid the up front capital costs associated with building new schools. This should help alleviate some of the short term and immediate financing issues typically faced when building. I would hope that this should help boost the number of schools built in the near future, specifically a second 600-student school for the community of Sage Creek that is desperately needed. Delaying this project would not be without not only qualitative consequence, but also quantitative consequence. The cost of bussing students to schools 11km away twice per day is very costly. The added strain on the schools they would be attending is also costly. Furthermore, there are limited spaces available in those schools. It is only a matter of time until that 11km distance between home and school grows. The status quo is unsustainable and unacceptable.

I look forward to a response detailing why the portables have been denied, why the second school has been denied, and when we can expect announcements that these requests will be met.

I thank you for your time and your hard work thus far. Please help remedy this situation and make things better for our city, our province and, most importantly, our children.

Sincerely,

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Another letter shared by a resident:

“Good Morning Mr. Smith,

Thank you for attending the École Sage Creek School overcrowding gathering last night. As instructed I am writing to you to advocate on behalf of the residents of Sage Creek to lobby for 4 portables (at least 2 to satisfy 2018 enrollment) as well as the much needed Second school within the neighbourhood for the already growing population of children within the area.

Residents of Sage Creek decided to call this place home because it was sold as a living in the country feel within the city limits. A family community full of people getting outside, walking on the trails and thriving as a village, supporting one another. Unfortunately the (always) slow movement of the government to fund proper education for today's youth will start to destroy what this community was built for, it will split the young families in half causing silos, division, isolation from each other.

Developments are planned with school sites in mind to satisfy what ever requirements the city puts on the developers however instead of pretending to promise a school to be built it should actually be delivered. Waiting for kids to arrive then build puts many of the Sage Creek residents in flux for at least 10 years if not more, to the point that some kids are out of the system by the time the school is built. I understand the other schools suggested to take in Sage Creek kids are at least 11 km away. If I wanted to live that far from a school I would have actually built in the country. The schools suggested by the division are further than the schools the kids attended prior to them transferring to Sage Creek.

I have been a resident of Sage Creek since 2009, have owned two homes within the community and have watched it grow consistently for the last 8 years. This overcrowding as the LRSD stated is not a surprise yet the government sat by knowing this would eventually happen. It is unfortunate that the only way to get the government to MOVE is to cause an uproar with the residents and as it always appears to be, deliver on election years...

I hope Mr. Smith that you fight, fight, fight hard for this community and advocate for us like you never have before. Show us that we voted for you for a reason.

Thank you for all your hard work and dedication to this community, I am excited to see what you can do next.

Sincerely,

XXXXXXX (long time Sage Creek resident and mother of two amazing kids)"

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I am posting my letter as well.To: Premier Brian Pallister, Deputy Minister of Education and Training James Wilson, Minister Ian Wishart, MLA Andrew Smith, Minister Rochelle Squires, MLA Colleen Mayer, MLA James Teitsma, MLA Greg Selinger and MLA Janice Morley-Lecomte:

I am writing today to express my disappointment in the lack of providing for the community of Sage Creek. Our community is in immediate need for classroom portables and the approval to build a new school for our children. I am a resident of the wonderful community of Sage Creek

in Winnipeg. My family built our dream house 7 years ago. We have two school aged girls, one in 7th grade, and the other in 4th grade. This is their first year attending Ecole Sage Creek School. As a mother, I was worried about how a change in school might affect my children. I was pleasantly surprised to see how my girls have developed new friendships with other children attending their school that live in our neighbourhood. For years before this school was open, I didn't feel very included in the Sage Creek community because we didn't know many other families other than our direct neighbours. We were tied to another community for our children's schooling as well as sporting teams. But, after only 5 months of attending Ecole Sage Creek School, I have never felt more attached to a community.

People have moved to this community for various reasons. When we were building our house, the builders' sales agents would use the three planned school sites set aside by Qualico on the future projected neighbourhood blueprints as a selling feature. This had an impact on house sales for certain. The idea of having a school so close that your children could walk is enticing. This community's signage reads "Naturally Appealing" emphasizing the natural grasses and walking paths established by Qualico planners to promote healthy living. This community is not finished expanding. There are another 2 phases of building to be added in the future, which means more families to occupy those houses. With more families comes more children who need places in schools. Ecole Sage Creek School opened its doors in September 2017 overcapacity at 627 students. In five years it is expected that over 1000 children will be between the ages of 5 and 14, and wanting to attend school in our neighbourhood. What is the plan for all of these extra students if not another school in Sage Creek? How will other schools be affected by this?

My children are already school aged, so there is no direct impact to my family regarding the overpopulation of Ecole Sage Creek School. However, there are many families within houses of my own that have children not yet enrolled in school and find themselves in a panic over the situation that the government has long ago known was coming. I can tell you that parents all over the neighbourhood are talking about nothing else these days. And I wonder when my neighbours' children are being bussed to another school, if there might not be a little bit of resentment because I am not in their same situation and access to this school is easier for my children. Since the news has become public, the parents that need to enroll their children are talking about camping out to register for kindergarten. There is a net influx of 81 students next year. That is what we know of at the moment. There could be more. As it is, next year, the school will be losing the art room and a music room to make two more classes. There will also have to be larger class sizes next year. Less attention per child is not a step in the right direction when providing for the education of our children, and the future of our province.

To accommodate the influx of eager children, the Louis Riel School Division has requested that portable classrooms be built on the school property, only to be denied by the Government. The reason for the denial is due to the fact that there is space available in older schools in the division. The solution that the government has proposed is to add at least an hour to the school day in order to bus students to open schools. Many students in the neighbourhood are currently

walking to school, getting exercise and fresh air as they do so. As a government, we haven't been able to move to full day kindergarten, but it seems we have no problems adding an hour to a school day for these children. The impact of this decision is far reaching. Working parents need to find before and after school programs for their children, or daycare that will now be able to accommodate taking their children to a bus stop. As you must be aware, finding suitable care for children is another issue facing your government.

A sense of community and belonging is a wonderful feeling. Resentment amongst neighbours is not a great feeling. A strong community helps the city in many ways. A strong community helps keep the neighbourhood safe. It helps keep its residents talking. It helps support local businesses.

I demand that you reconsider your stance on the immediate need for portable classrooms for Ecole Sage Creek School for the 2018-2019 school year as well as a second school for Sage Creek. We know how long it takes to build a new school. We have been waiting along time for Ecole Sage Creek School to open. These are both necessary developments to accommodate the number of school aged children in the neighbourhood. This is the right thing to do for our children, our future.

Sincerely disappointed,  
Stacey Borowski  
Resident of Sage Creek

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Here's what I sent in:

Premier Brian Pallister, Minister Ian Wishart, MLA Andrew Smith, Minister Rochelle Squires, MLA Colleen Mayer, MLA James Teitsma, MLA Greg Selinger, and MLA Janice Morley-Lecomte:

I am writing, as I hope many other community members do, to request provincial funding for two portable classrooms at École Sage Creek School for September 2018. This is a short term solution that is required as a first step in completing the plan for two schools in the Sage Creek community.

I have lived in Sage Creek for 10 years and have been a part of the development of the area and its culture through volunteering and community programs from the start. When my family first moved here we knew there was land set aside for two elementary schools and potentially one high school in the area. We were hopeful that plans would move along quickly, and that our son who was 10 months-old at the time, would be able to attend a school in the area when he started kindergarten. I understand that it wouldn't have been fiscally responsible to build a school until there was enough students in the area to use it, and have learned a lot about the

plans for the area and the steps that have to be taken to achieve those plans over the past 10 years. As it turns out, it was our third child that would attend his first day of kindergarten in École Sage Creek School, while that once 10 month-old new resident, started Grade 5 this past September. I grew up in rural Portage la Prairie and was bused to school every day – Premier Pallister’s mother was my third grade teacher. This past September was the first time in my life that I was able to experience being able to walk to school. It was refreshing and enlightening. The short 12 minute walk for our family has shown health benefits, a stronger community connection and an increased focus from our children in school.

While I understand that the decision as to which students from a school that is over capacity will be bused to another school, lays with the School Division, not the provincial government, the refusal of funding portable classrooms at École Sage Creek School is forcing that decision to be made and resulting in a separation within our community. Those that are fortunate to have children currently attending the school will be guaranteed spots for their currently enrolled children as well as their younger siblings. There isn’t a simple solution, or equation, that works when you try to divide a community. While I’m happy our children will remain at École Sage Creek School, I’m also concerned about what they may miss out on because of it and how it will affect those in our community that may not get to attend a school within walking distance; how it will affect my neighbours, who although have lived here just as long as my family, didn’t chose to, or couldn’t, start their families as early as we did; and what it will do to our community connections and friendships.

Choosing to bus students and potentially overpopulate more schools in LRSD will not solve the issue. Our family spent 5 years being bused to another school before École Sage Creek School was built. Do you evaluate the cost on the fostering schools when they take in students from other areas? When they have their schools overrun, classroom sizes increased, specialized learning spaces taken away, to accommodate students from another community? Or does this all fall back on the School Division to take care of, with unchanging funds the province gives each year? I spent countless hours volunteering on a Parent Council with a school that took in students from Sage Creek before we had a school to house our own students. I saw firsthand how classrooms got smaller in space but would have to take in more students; how art, science, computer and sensory rooms were replaced with overcrowded classrooms. There are some schools in LRSD that currently have space for additional students - where they still have art rooms, and can accommodate the best class sizes for their students. The province is denying funding for portable classrooms to École Sage Creek School because of the spaces available in these schools, saying that there is room to bus students to another school within the Division that has room. This isn’t just one school it will affect, and I question whether the families in these schools with “available” space are aware of the impact their government’s decision to not fund the portable classrooms and the building of a second K-8 school in Sage Creek will have on them? The parents who have chosen an area and a school for their family - to see it changed so quickly, where is their say? The students, especially those with anxiety, when moving them into new and less controlled environments – where is their say? The students that have been through this before, with friendships tested and sometimes lost, they’re still trying to find their

place – where is their say? The ripple effect this decision has is overwhelming – it changes things emotionally, physically, psychologically, and financially for too many. It must be a priority.

I understand that there has always been a plan in place from LRSD to have two schools built in Sage Creek to accommodate the families in the area. Part of that plan has always been to have portable classrooms to use as the population in the area increased, until it was fiscally responsible to build the second school, and the portables will also be required for the initial growth phase of the community even with two schools. It makes sense: the projections are there, the scope was Division-wide, not a narrow perspective of one area. What I don't understand is what value the provincial government puts on separating a community? And in turn, how much pressure you're willing to put on another community? If you aren't willing to accept and fund the longstanding plan from LRSD, then what is your plan? Show us, tell us, explain to us how our tax dollars are being used.

I am asking you to reconsider your decision to fund portable classrooms at École Sage Creek School this Fall, and show your commitment to families and students throughout LRSD in making a second school in Sage Creek a priority of your administration.

Sincerely,

Sandra-Dee Beer

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Good Day Brian,

You and I have been acquaintances for many years through the tight knit curling community here in Manitoba, and actually curled together in the MCA bonspiel as you may recall– back when we were guaranteed 8 games!

I'd like to share my thoughts with you on the overpopulation facing Ecole Sage Creek School, now, and in the coming years.

I'll begin by noting that I have a daughter, Callie, already attending Ecole Sage Creek. I also have a son, James, who is 3 years old. Because we already have a daughter attending, my son will get priority when he becomes Kindergarten age, so in essence, my family is 'safe'. Both of my children will be able to attend the school.

The initial announcement that this school would be built was a major deciding factor for our family to purchase new home in Sage Creek; a 3 minute walk from what would be a brand new, top of the line, technologically advanced school – filled with what was sure to be motivated and passionate staff who wanted the challenge of opening brand new School!

I write to implore you to reconsider the recently denied request for 2ea portables for September 2018 and 2ea portables for September 2019, which would be a short term solution for many residents that are already living in the community, or have builds in progress that they can not walk away from. This would allow the majority of current community members with smaller children to get their children into the school, as well as those who have 'already signed on the dotted line' to build houses.

I fully understand that much, if not all, of this is a business decision – based on money. I also understand that most likely an actuary, much smarter than me, has run the capital costs of portables, the many costs associated with bussing students, costs of unfilled spaces at other schools within the LRSB, etc. I'm sure the cost-benefit analysis was extensive – at least I hope so. Obviously it has been deemed, based on money, that bussing students 10+ km, each way, is currently more financially feasible than approving 4 portables over the next 2 years.

I need to make tough business decisions everyday based on the facts and the numbers – so I do understand. However, 'doing the right thing' based on the facts also needs to be a key guiding factor whenever possible.

When it comes to this particular situation, these are some of the key factors that I keep coming back to:

- I've heard some say that it was 'common knowledge' that the school was going to be at capacity and students as of next year would be bussed and that people 'should have known'. I assure you, that the builders and real estate agents were (and continue) to use the school as a selling feature. They are NOT telling buyers: 'you should build this \$600k home, and by the way, your kids won't be able to attend the school'.

- It seems to be a foregone conclusion that portables WILL be required as part of the plan per the government and LSRD until the second school is built. The issue seems to be that the government doesn't want to spend the money 'now'. This falls into the 'doing the right thing' category. This money WILL be spent eventually in the short to medium term. It's inevitable. It should be spent 'now' to take care of the people who have moved to the community already, are contributing to our wonderful community, and those who are currently in the middle of building in our community.

- After THAT – it can be 'buyer beware'. The government should put 'school full' billboards up, and make real estate agents and all of the builders disclose the facts. New people thinking about Sage Creek should KNOW that there is a high possibility that their children will not be able to attend the school. This is valuable decision making information that NEEDS to be shared.

- The idea of bussing 6 year olds, up to 1.5 hours per day, and over 20km per day, is simply not acceptable when they live a 5 minute walk away from the school. Pulling them away from their community, support systems, and friends, is just not right. I'd be curious to know the governments cost-benefit analysis of the social/emotional impact of this. Can you share this? I can only assume a 'value' has been placed on this aspect as part of the decision making process.

- None of the numbers should be a surprise to anyone. The LRSD and government forecasts of student population have been quite accurate for many years, apparently. How was this not planned better?

Brian – as I noted above, my family is ‘safe’ – so this is not about me. This is about doing the right thing for our community and our current residents who, frankly, were probably not given all of the information.

I know there is a solution to this, and the solution is approval for spending the money now on portables.

Please - Let’s take care of the people who are already here. Once they are good – I, personally, could live with the fact that ‘future’ parents of Sage Creek may have to bus their children, as long as they are given accurate information.

At the very least, the approval of portables gives us 2 years to find a more permanent solution to the problem.

I ask that you, along with your partners at the LRSD, and our MLA, band together to come up with a viable solution to better serve our current community members.

I just can’t accept that yanking our small children out of our community is the ONLY or BEST answer.

Thank-you for taking your valuable time read this and consider my opinion.

Brad Haight

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Hi Brian,

After attending last night’s meeting at the school, saying we are very disappointed in our education system and government would be a huge understatement. Nobody seems to be taking charge or responsibility for resolving the overpopulated Sage Creek School situation. Having a ‘first come first serve system’ where parents camp out on the street is not only not a resolution it’s a ridiculous notion. In my opinion, a new school needs to be built and in the government needs to step in immediately to purchase the pods needed to compensate for the extra number of students who at this point will be excluded from the September 2018 school year at Sage Creek. It’s ridiculous to bus children out of Sage Creek to other schools when there’s a school in our own ‘backyard’. Many of the children in this area, including ours, are close friends with all their neighbours and separating them amongst the different schools does not make sense.

We moved to Sage Creek almost 4 years ago with our six month old baby as we heard of the plans of the new school and wanted our daughter (Ella) to attend. The biggest selling point our realtor shared with us was in fact the “brand new ‘state of the art’ elementary school” that was going to be built. At that point, and up until just recently, we had heard no indication that the school would be overpopulated. If we had known of this we would never have moved to Sage Creek (we would have moved to a school that is closer). Like many other young families in this area, we’ve invested a lot our money and time into this community, so if we’re unable to send our daughters (we now have a 4 year old and 2 year old) to this school it would be beyond frustrating. The school taxes we’ve been paying for the past 4 years are much higher than in other areas, but we’ve never complained as we’ve been anticipating sending our girls to this new state of the art school. Now that there’s a good possibility of our girls not going to this school, the fact that we’ve been paying these higher fees (and will forced to continue to do so even if our girls aren’t accepted into this school) is unfair.

Busing our children out of Sage Creek to a school outside of the area should not be an option and although building an additional school is a good idea (and needed), it would take years to do so, therefore something needs to be done immediately to accommodate our girls and the others in this community that were left in the dark over this situation until just recently. The pods seem to be the only thing that makes sense.

Please do what you can to help resolve this issue.

Warm Regards,

David Bastable