Subject: A Concerned Parent OPPOSED to the OCDSB changes proposed for Woodroffe Avenue Public School

Dear OCDSB School Board Trustees (Suzanne Nash and colleagues),

I am writing as a very concerned parent OPPOSED to (and frankly appalled by) the proposed boundary changes and grade configurations outlined in the OCDSB's Elementary Program Review for Woodroffe Avenue Public School (WAPS), which are completely misaligned with the stated [Objectives of the Program Review published on the OCDSB website to create "Community Schools"](https://engage.ocdsb.ca/elementary-program-review). The proposal for Woodroffe, our amazing local community school which currently serves our K-8 French Immersion students, is to move the youngest and most vulnerable of our kids (K-grade 3 - ages 3-8) to a school in another community completely cut off from ours by several major roadways. My daughter is set to start JK at Woodroffe in September 2025 and my son in 2027. We live one block from Woodroffe Ave. P.S. and chose this location when buying our home specifically so our kids would be within a short walking distance of our school and live and play in the neighbourhood with all of their classmates and friends. Now, with these proposed changes, the Board would have me send my two young children to Regina Street in Lincoln Heights  - approximately 3km away from our home - an over 30 minute walk one way, outside of our community, across multiple busy intersections (7 lights in total to get there) along a dangerous main artery of the city and through LRT construction. This completely removes the possibility of walking or biking to school, as it would be dangerous and not feasible with two parent work schedules. This is unacceptable. We chose to live in this location primarily due to its proximity to Woodroffe Avenue Public School. Walkability and active commuting was an important part of that decision and bussing our children to another community for schooling is unacceptable, is not aligned with your Objectives, let alone the [Ottawa City Plan of creating 15 minute neighbourhoods.](https://engage.ottawa.ca/the-new-official-plan/news_feed/15-minute-neighbourhoods) We chose to live in this neighbourhood because of walkable access to this amazing school and paid higher housing prices and property taxes to do so.

With all the "consultations" the Board purported to have with communities, nowhere did I ever see any communication that young kids who live right next to their community school would now be forced to make this long/dangerous commute and leave their communities.  In fact, it was the complete opposite being promoted/explained. The entire thing feels like a bait and switch, with motives that have not been made transparent to the Ottawa community at large. This proposal is essentially tearing apart our tight knit community. Not to mention all the families where siblings will now also be separated - a logistical nightmare for working parents. So many families in our community in response to this have already started to look at other Board options who have schools WITHIN our community rather than send our kids outside of our community. None of these families want this. It's heart wrenching what the Board is looking at doing to Woodroffe Avenue Public School, a *beloved* institution in our community and it makes no sense.

Woodroffe Avenue P. S. is currently a prime example of a community school DONE RIGHT in your Board. It is already set up with a relatively new Kinder-specific-wing and yard for young childhood education. The K-8 model allows for amazing mentoring and learning opportunities for kids big and small. There is a fantastic reading buddies program where older kids spend time each week reading to the Kinders. It creates special community bonds between kids. The big kids learn what it means to look out for and care for younger friends and neighbours, and the littles find mentors they can learn from and look up to. It's something even I, as someone whose kids don't yet attend the school, have heard so much about and looked forward to participating in. What a special school and program creating bonds through OUR community. Getting rid of the K-8 would eliminate these mixed age benefits.

The proposed changes will also have my young children changing schools at least 3 times before they hit grade 4. That is also completely unacceptable and goes against the stated Objective of this review to have "fewer transitions to new schools for students.”

The entire Woodroffe Ave. Public School community is gobsmacked. Never did we consider this a possibility given we all live so close to our school, and our school is such a strong and amazing school in the Board. The new proposed change sending our kids to Regina St. almost seems as though it is a mistake, given there are 4 other OCDSB schools (Woodroffe, Broadview, D. Roy  and Churchill) in closer proximity to our neighbourhood than Regina St.  Any one of these schools would be a much more reasonable and safer option (Broadview being the closest and most logical choice). However what we want is to keep our school the amazing special place that it is and leave it as a K-8. It's as though Woodroffe drew the short straw, and we will not accept our kids being dealt that hand because it was easiest for your Review Committee. We are a strong tight knit community and we are EXTREMELY opposed to this proposal for our school and will fight it.

Every one of the stated Objectives of this Program Review are FAILED when it comes to the changes proposed to be introduced at Woodroffe Avenue Public School and the impacts on my children.

Please DO BETTER by our children. They deserve so much better than this.

I look forward to your response and hope that you take these concerns to heart and demand to see changes when you are voting for this proposal.

A concerned parent from the Carlingwood/Woodpark Community of Woodroffe Avenue Public School,

Your Name