

Letter received from a member of the public re: possible closure of Sophiasburgh Central School:

Hello,

March 18, 2017

I am writing tonight to urge the Board to reconsider its plan to close Sophiasburgh Central School within the next year or two. Our family has had a long and rewarding association with this school and would very much miss the key role that it still plays in our community. My father-in-law, Donald Thompson, was on the school board when the school opened in 1967 and his daughter, Gwen, was among the first students at the school. Fifteen years later, our daughter began kindergarten there and graduated 8 years later as the valedictorian. Her Sophiasburgh years were some of the best of her life. As a January baby she had to wait an extra year to start, but a kind and caring principal and teachers soon gave her the opportunity to move ahead a year into a wonderful class of bright, talented students. While she loved the regular classroom work, she was especially fortunate to be part of the extra-curricular musical productions directed by Susan Broadbridge, giving her the first taste of the career she now pursues in music education. Never considering herself to be an athlete, she still remembers the day her soccer coach, Bob Webb, encouraged her to kick the penalty shot which won that tournament for her school. Her French teacher there also provided many enrichment opportunities and remains a dear family friend. Our son joined Tanya there two years later eager to start having heard all his sister's enthusiastic reports of her school days. He, too, thrived in the family atmosphere of this wonderful rural school.

While our children attended Sophiasburgh I was always welcomed as a parent volunteer, helping with the musicals, chaperoning class trips and assisting with the introduction of computers to the school. After hours I helped with the Brownie pack that met there at the time. When our children had graduated I continued to use the school facilities for 4-H meetings. Later, I returned to the school as a supply teacher including a long term position in a grade two class another very positive experience.

When our grandson was born two years ago I anticipated with joy and confidence the day that he would start to Sophiasburgh. Now that may never happen. Instead he may enter Prince Edward Collegiate as a kindergarten student not a prospect that I relish at all. While there may be some positive aspects to a K to 12 school, it is still my hope that with creative community use of the school space as being pursued by the ARC committee it will not be necessary to close the school and we will see our grandson be the third generation of our family to attend this wonderful school along with all the other children from ward 10..

I trust that you will do everything in your power to make this dream a reality.