

Boundary change causes upset

By Melanie Cummings
SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

About 78 students in a swath of neighbourhoods east of Guardian Angels School will be bused to a new school being built north of Derry Road come September.

The boundary lines for the two schools were confirmed by trustees at last Tuesday night's board meeting after a close 5-4 vote.

The new school, which is temporarily named Milton #3, will alleviate overcrowding at Guardian Angels School. Currently there are 931 students and 18 portables on the Bennett Boulevard school.

The capacity of Milton #3 is similar to Guardian Angels with space for 546 students in the main building and land to house 12 portables for a total of 816 students.

The decision to alter the boundary affects residents who live south of Derry Road, east of Trudeau Drive, north of the gas pipeline corridor and west of James Snow Parkway.

Busing that's currently available to these elementary school students will continue to be offered when they're moved to Milton #3, confirmed Superintendent of Facility Management Services Giacomo Corbacio.

The new catchment areas are expected to remain in place for the next five or six years, he added.

Trustees Ed Viana, Anthony Danko, Alice Anne Lemay, Al Bailey and Bob Van de Vrande all voted in favour of the new catchments. Trustees Rosanna Palmieri, Pauline Houlahan, Joanne Matters and Rev. David Wilhelm all voted against this solution.

Parents make plea

The decision also didn't sit well with Auger Road resident and mother of two Renata Sedlak, who pleaded with trustees before the vote to keep her children at Guardian Angels. Sedlak has lived there for the past six years.

"I truly feel like me and my two children, Daniel and Nicole, are being kicked out of their home and school."

"We have made good friends through the school and donated money to the library. We feel used, as if the board doesn't care about taxpayers of the Catholic church," said Sedlak.

Another delegation by Guardian Angels parents John Delanty and Renee Kelly urged trustees to consider the damage the move would have on the home-school-parish partnership.

A new Catholic church south

of Derry Road is slated for construction in three to five years.

In their report Delanty and Kelly stated that the new boundary will "jeopardize" Catholic identities of families attending Milton #3 because they will be divided between attending existing Holy Rosary Parish and the new church.

In response to these concerns, and others around child-care, busing and difficulty adapting to the change for students, Superintendent Corbacio said that he doesn't believe the home-school-parish relationships will suffer and become an insurmountable problem. Milton #3 will also have a before and after school program similar to the one at Guardian Angels, he said.

The transition for students in the next school year will be two-sided, said Corbacio — for the kids who will move to the new school and those remaining, whose friends will be leaving.

Guardian Angels parent Susana Medeiros said the new approved boundary allows the best balance and equality of education for both schools because it will ease up room on the playground at Guardian Angels that's currently eaten up by the 18 portables, and provide more access for gym and library time and extracurricular activities.

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