

# OPINION



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## SATURDAY FORUM

# Anxiety's normal when school's out forever, kids

As a child, I remember belting out the lyrics from Alice Cooper's *School's Out Forever* - "no more pencils, no more books, no more teachers' dirty looks" - on the last day of each school year.

Those words come to mind now as I gaze nostalgically at the graduation pictures of both of our daughters - one who has just completed four years of university and the other who is days away from completing Grade 8.

And while there's some excitement about having completed one more chapter of their lives and moving towards the next, I believe that for Chloe especially, the loss of what she's leaving behind overshadows the excitement of what's to come.

Her apprehension about her segue into high school along with sadness to leave a familiar and safe school environment behind are reflected in her words: "Mom, after 10 years at the same school, I feel like I'm leaving home and all my siblings behind."

Her words reminded me that transitions such as from elementary to high school - or high school to post-secondary - can be challenging, difficult, frightening and sad.

For Chloe, there's worry about her very closely knit group of friends becoming unravelled as they integrate into a much larger school environment with students from many other schools.

She knows it's going to be different going from one new class to another, uncertain about which familiar faces she will see.

In part she looks forward to increased independence, but another part of her wants to hold on to the familiarity of old friends and teachers who have become like extended family.

Along with thousands of other elementary graduates, she is engaged in lots of closing rituals and preparations, such as tours of the new school and meeting new teachers to help bridge the gap.

Graduation ceremonies and parties, signing year books, taking pictures of one another are



Sara Dimerman

all ways of saying goodbye and accepting what is just around the corner.

The leap from elementary into high school is perhaps one of the most dramatic transitions. Perhaps because of the number of years that the children - now teenagers - have been in the same place and the relationships that they have developed.

Graduating from senior kindergarten, while not as dramatic, may still be anxiety provoking for many children. For some, it means going from a half to a full-day program, less play time and more structured work activities.

Transitioning from high school to college or university requires great adjustment, too.

It's not just about one's group of friends being diluted, but dealing with the loss of friendships as many journey to different cities and towns to pursue higher education.

Suddenly, friends your children may have spent their entire growing up years with, are scattered. This again can certainly create feelings of loss, sadness and uncertainty.

So, if your child is a senior kindergarten, in Grade 8, 12 or about to complete college or university, don't be surprised to see changes in his or her behaviour or an emotional tone at this time.

Normalize his or her mixed emotions and recognize that even during transitional celebrations, there are pangs of longing for what one has held so close and dear for so many years.

York Region's Sara Dimerman has been an individual, couple and family psychologist for more than 20 years. She is the author of three books.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Teacher made tough school year best yet

I am a Grade 6 student at Oscar Peterson Public School and feel that it is important for me to write a letter to the public this year more than any other.

The 2012-13 school year has seen a lot of upset because the teachers had to work to rule and everyone was upset with them, but as a student, I think it is important that everyone realizes how amazing some of our teachers are.

Just like any other kid my age, I am looking forward to summer.

No more school, no homework, no routine, but this year it is a bittersweet feeling because this year I had a totally awesome teacher. Mr. Prieur took the time to get to know me and what I am capable of, rather than what a piece of paper told him about me.

This resulted in me having an incredible academic year with marks that outdid any previous year. The most important asset that Mr. P has is that he recognizes that boys and girls learn differently, and

he takes the time to make sure everyone in his class understands the material being taught.

Mr. P is of a lot fun, a great teacher and he made my Grade 6 year an unforgettable one, for this I am grateful.

Thanks, Mr. P.

LUCAS FASULLO  
STOUFFVILLE

### Letter writers don't live in neighbourhood

I am writing in response to the letters I have read in The Sun-Tribune regarding the proposed condominium building at Lloyd and Main streets.

Most of the letter writers do not live on Lloyd Street and do not know how devastating this proposed condo building at the end of our street will be.

Who do you think wants to live in the shadow of this high building?

Have you ever tried to get in and out on Main from Lloyd? When a vehicle is waiting to get out, the one coming in either has to stop and hold traffic up or drive over the curb to get down the street.

There are to be stores on the first floors of the building. Where are the cars going to park that belong to the shoppers?

There is not enough room to park on Main now with the stores we do have. Lloyd is too narrow. They will not be parking on the building's lot.

Yes those living in the condominiums would be able to walk downtown. They could not drive and park.

Have you ever driven between Church Street and Mill Street on any given day and wondered what are all the cars doing parked end to end on each side of the street? Where are the owners shopping?

I am a resident on Lloyd, near Main, and my neighbors and I do not want our street to become a parking lot with cars lined on both sides of the street in front of our homes.

We have enough of that with the mail box now.

As a friend of mine says, "Give your head a shake."

DOROTHY WAGG  
STOUFFVILLE

I'M MAKING A CAKE FOR DADDY... TOMORROW'S FATHER'S DAY BUT WE'RE OUT OF FLOUR... I'M USING PANCAKE MIX, CAN'T FIND SUGAR, SO I'LL USE CORN SYRUP!

WHY NOT JUST MAKE HIM PANCAKES?

'CAUSE I FOUND SOME ICING!



PAT WHEELER'S SUN-TRIBUNE