

## MARDI McLAUGHLIN

Good Evening

My name is Mardi McLaughlin and I'm the new chair for the Monsignor Lee Parent Council. I also have a daughter in Grade one at Monsignor Lee and another daughter that will be starting J.K. next year.

I am here tonight to talk to you about our parents concerns for the future of our school.

We believe that Option one which is to combine Monsignor Lee and Guardian Angels and build a new school on a new site makes the most sense.

There should be equality with all the schools in this area.

As it stands right now at monsignor Lee we have no sports field, a very unsafe bus and drop off zone, limited parking a dangerous fencing issue with Patrick Fogarty and a school that needs lots of updating.

As a parent and parent councilor I feel that we deserve to have many of these issues addressed.

At one point in time Monsignor Lee had a sports field for our children to get involved with school sports. My husband was a graduate of Monsignor Lee and he has many memories of playing on school teams. I believe that it is very important for children to be able to be apart of a team. A lot of children don't have the opportunity to belong to any teams outside of school. This is something that builds school spirit and teaches life long lessons. This year Monsignor Lee almost had to cancel all school sports due to the lack of field at our school. It is wonderful that we have now been given time on Patrick Fogarty's field but we should not have to share a field with a high school and they really shouldn't have to share their field with us.

Monsignor Lee's green space is very minimal; if we are going to amalgamate the two schools then we need more land. It is the lowest average per student in our area at 20 M2 per student. To put this in perspective St. Bernard's is 66 m2 per student and Notre Dame is 155m2 per student. We have students trying to play soccer, football and many other sports at lunch and recess on green space that is very limited. In the winter we have no

place to pile our snow so our space is decreased and the snow piles block the view of the play area.

We have a very dangerous bus and drop off zone. With the amount of bus and car traffic it takes 2 adults to safely get our students off the buses and out of cars and 5 adults to load the buses and cars at night. In the winter months it is even more dangerous with the snow banks. This is a safety issue that must be addressed before there is a serious incident. There is also minimal parking at the school for staff and parents. We need an entrance that is safe for parking, drop offs walkers and buses.

In conclusion this is why we believe that option 1 to build a new school on a new site is in the best interest of our school, teachers and most importantly our students. This decision will not only affect my children but most likely my grandchildren. Moving forward into the future we need to build a school that will accommodate changes in population over the next fifty years. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you tonight regarding the future of Monsignor Lee. I know that the Pupil Accommodation Committee has done a lot of ground work and investigating and we are appreciative that we have made it to this point. Thank you again.

## FIOR TUCCI

### **I Remember When...**

Thank you for this opportunity to address you on behalf of our Monsignor Lee School parents, students and faculty.

We have all heard or used the phrase, "I remember when I went to school..."

Well in my house it has greater meaning, I not only stand here before you as a parent but as a graduate of Monsignor Lee School, the year is irrelevant but my graduating class picture, posted in the hallway, is in colour!

I have had the benefit of sharing in my children's education experience and the additional BONUS of having my children, Michael currently in grade 8 and Courtney in grade 7,

Attending Monsignor Lee School. We have shared great conversations and memories that start with something like this, "Dad when you went to MLS did you have this teacher? or were you in this portable or classroom?, or did you play on the school baseball team?"

And my response would be, well we didn't have portables, all our classrooms were in the main building and come to think of it the kindergarten classroom you both used was our library, and the library today was our old gym and as for baseball you know how you can't play baseball at recess or host any outdoor team sports at your school due to lack of space well we had two baseball diamonds and a soccer field all on our school property.

This special experience of reminiscing and sharing with my children does give me a great sense of pride and satisfaction but at the same time demonstrates that the current physical site, building and configuration has out lived it's purpose and function.

As a representative of MLS school parents and community we support Option A as outlined in the PAC Recommendations, which states:

- Closure of GAN school building
- Closure of MLE school building
- Replacement of school on alternate site
- Replacement school to accommodate approximately the same combined pupil places of existing MLE and GAN (300-350 pupils places)  
Replacement school to take into consideration history, culture and identity of both school communities

Alternate Site to take into consideration:

- 5-acre standard size, within walking distance of either MLE or GAN
- Usual site fit components for the replacement facility including:
- Parking and access
- Green space/activity area
- Efficient traffic flow
- Kiss-n-ride
- Bus loop
- Student safety/access to school

I would like to close with one thought, that when Michael or Courtney bring their children, in 20 to 25 years, for their first day of school their comment may sound something like, " I remember when I went to school they were just making plans for this great school and they got it right!"

## The Critical Future Of Monsignor Lee Catholic Elementary School

Jeff Waite

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To the members of the board, I would like to say thank you for the opportunity to address you this evening.

I am speaking to you as a father of a Grade One student at Monsignor Lee, as the father of a child who will begin her education at Monsignor Lee next fall, and as a representative of the Parents of Monsignor Lee students, present and future.

I would like to begin by saying Thank You for the fact that we are here discussing the future of our school. The Pupil Accommodation Committee has done a great deal of work and investigation leading up to today and it is our belief that we are headed in the right direction.

Fior and Mardi spoke briefly about the history of Monsignor Lee, as well as some of the challenges that we face. I would like to briefly address some of these challenges and express the needs that we have as a school community moving forward.

As has been noted in the PAC review so far, there are 2 options for the future of Monsignor Lee and Guardian Angels.

Option 1 is to combine the 2 schools and build one new school on a new site.

Option 2 is to combine the 2 schools and build one new school on the current MSL site.

Though we have grown accustomed to our current geographic location, there are many issues surrounding the current site, and thus we strongly support Option 1.

### **Traffic and Transportation Challenges**

We believe that a new school at a new location would address many of the transportation challenges that we currently face.

Right now, we have buses and parents dropping students off - and picking students up - at the same location, at the same time. The children who are driven must then walk across the bus lane to reach the sidewalk. Everyday, there are multiple teachers -- even a committed principal -- acting as traffic controllers to ensure student safety.

Both the parents and the buses must then re-enter traffic on Fittons Road, which is one of the busiest streets in Orillia at that time of day. Added to that is a crossing guard who must guide the pedestrians across Fittons Road at a "T" intersection - with cars turning Left across the crosswalk from both Peter Street and the Monsignor Lee exit. I have personally witnessed one (and heard the concerns of numerous) "close-calls".

Finally, parking is a challenge for both staff and parents at Monsignor Lee. There is currently insufficient space for both staff and visitors. This issue becomes critical during the winter months, when the parking is even more limited by the lack of space available for snow removal. Both driving and walking become treacherous as mountains of snow dominate both the parking lot and walking paths. This creates an additional safety concern for students coming and going from school.

A new location would allow the planning committee to investigate and implement a safer and more efficient system of traffic flow.

### Recreational Challenges

As parents with many kids who are very active in both sports and play, we believe that a new school at a new location would address many of the recreational challenges that we currently face.

At this point, I would like to acknowledge the recent agreement to allow some access to the Patrick Fogarty field. This agreement provides access to safe and functional facilities for our many sports teams and for this we are very appreciative.

In general, however, our students are very limited in their access to both sports fields and safe general play areas. Our current "sports field" consists of a short, thin, strip of grass that is fenced on three sides. With numerous sports teams sharing this space with other students simply looking for a place to play, this fence has been a significant source of frustration and of many an injury.

The asphalt surface is home to much activity, including numerous road hockey and basketball games. As well, this area is filled with many 4, 5 and 6 year olds who must run the gauntlet through the middle of these activities just to get to their safe play area.

A new site would allow the addition of a proper sports field that could double as recreation space. It would also ensure that the logistics of student safety in the school yard be a primary objective – whether it be the location of structures in relation to the play areas or the safe division of smaller children from the activities of older students.

Not only are we a school that faces challenges, but Patrick Fogarty is one of the few High Schools (if any others) who must share their field with another school. A new school on a new site would serve to address both the recreational challenges of Monsignor Lee, as well as to enhance the facilities of Patrick Fogarty in the future. Patrick Fogarty would no longer have to share a field with MSL and would potentially have access to that additional space.

We believe that that a new school on a new site could address the majority of our recreational needs.

### School Layout and Staff Challenges

We discussed the issues regarding the outside of the school, but we believe that a new school would improve the indoor teaching and learning environment as well.

Monsignor Lee was built close to 40 years ago and a lot has changed since then. It is interesting looking at the modern schools compared to many of the older schools. Even something as simple as the view from the Principal's office needs significant improvement. The ability to see who is coming and going, in and out of the school, is very important, yet is not currently a luxury that our Principal enjoys.

We have a group of dedicated, loyal and talented teachers at Monsignor Lee. Though it might sound silly, after a discussion with some of our teachers, we have learned that the entire staff – male and female - must share one washroom facility. This means that on a regular basis there is more than one person waiting in line to use the washroom, or not getting a chance to use the facilities at all due to time restrictions. Believe it or not, this has the potential to be a point of both frustration and strife and could be a distraction for the people who are teaching our children.

These are examples of simple things that would be addressed by building a new school, but not simple things to fix in the current school. We believe that the new Monsignor Lee will meet the modern needs of both our staff and students.

**Conclusion:**

Knowing that there is an Option 2, it must be stated that our needs as a Monsignor Lee community come down to a few simple, but absolutely imperative improvements:

Safety,  
Athletics & Recreation,  
and School Logistics.

We believe that these needs are best met on a new site. However, in the event that the new Monsignor Lee is constructed on the current site, we feel that it is imperative that these challenges are met – however that can be done.

I am aware that I did not mention education as a point of improvement. This is because our teachers are fantastic. We believe that with the improvements that we will see in the new Monsignor Lee, Education will take care of itself.

We know that every school faces challenges and that the board has all of our best interests in mind. That said, the conclusions that are reached will result in 50 year decisions and must be made with consideration of both the short and long term interest of all of our children. As a Monsignor Lee community, we need to be sure that the decisions that are made take into consideration the needs of all of the schools and that equity is ensured when planning for the future. We need to be sure that our children have all of the opportunities available to others as they move forward through their educational careers. We believe that the decisions made by the board will provide Monsignor Lee students with these opportunities and we look forward to being a part of it.

Thank you very much for your time.