

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. I am Kathleen Henderson a proud Dundasian. For the past 5 years, I have had the privilege of working in Student Services at Highland Secondary. I am also very familiar with Parkside as my three children are recent Parkside graduates. Being closely associated with both schools, I have experienced first hand excellence in Public Education in this community. With declining enrolment, we are now at a crossroads and must seize the opportunity to build a facility which will allow our dedicated teachers to continue to deliver top notch educational programs for future generations. Our current programs are excellent with arguably marginal facilities. I have a vision of what we could offer secondary students of Dundas with thoughtful construction.

I have a vision of presenting our Dundas graduates with their diplomas on the stage of our own air conditioned auditorium. Currently Parkside and Highland and Osler rent Redeemer College at considerable cost for graduation ceremonies. As we speak, our very talented musicians are performing their final spring concert, again at Redeemer. At Highland, we have an ARTS and Culture SHSM with award winning instrumental performers so our final music concert is at Redeemer for our musicians to play in a venue commensurate with their talents. Parkside and Highland have strong arts programs and Dundas is recognized as a vibrant arts community. I have a vision of providing our talented musicians and drama students with a local stage to be used by students during the school day and the community evenings and weekends.

I have a vision of hosting our Awards Assembly, recognition assembly, guest speakers, coffee houses, drama presentations, Holiday concerts and art fair without having to bump the Phys. Ed classes out of the gym and students out of the library. You may think, it's one gym period what's the big deal but setting up and taking down the chairs takes away gym time as well. When the gym is set up the day before, team practices and community rentals have to be cancelled. During the school day when our gyms and/or libraries are used as auditoriums, student learning is impacted as classes are bumped to accommodate these assemblies and guest speakers. This year Highland's gym and library have been used for university and college liason visits, speakers against drunk driving,

homophobia, partner violence, drug abuse to name a few. I have a vision of hosting these valuable presentations without scheduling consequences.

While we are on the topic of gymnasiums, I have a vision that we have enough gym space for our classes and extra-curricular programs. Our future local high school must have two gyms. By the way, Parkside and Highland are the only 2 secondary schools in the HWDSB with only one gym each. In spite of this, our athletics programs are excellent. I remember marvelling at the dedication of Parkside coaches as I regularly drove my own children to basketball practises at 7:30 P.m., 4 1/2 hours after the school day ended! At Highland we have early after school practises and late after school practises which means many students and coaches wait an hour and a half to have their turn in the gym. Scheduling equal practise times for the 4 teams running simultaneously is a nightmare. My vision for the new secondary school configuration in Dundas includes a facility with 2 full sized gymnasiums.

Highland is a magnet for track and field athletes due to the winning reputation of our program. I can tell you it is not because the track is in good shape. My vision includes a safe track that could be well used by the community.

Our cafeteria can house half the student body so at Highland we have two lunches. With a larger cafeteria, we could have a common lunch which would mean clubs could meet at noon and we could run an intramural program in one of our two gyms. Considering many of our students are bussed in, many more would be able to participate as the meetings would take place within the school day.

Many of Highland's specialty classrooms were retrofitted when the school was converted from a vocational school to a comprehensive community school. My vision includes an adequate number of well designed science labs, and classrooms designed for drama and music and learning resource from the get go. In our tech, department we have had many community donations of specialized equipment but don't have the proper facilities to use this equipment to its full potential.

For our students to be familiar with 21st century fluencies, we need computers housed in air-conditioned spaces, increased power, power outlets and wiring and asbestos free walls and ceilings to be able to add modern teaching technologies such as smartboards and computer labs.

At Parkside and Highland we already have great students and dynamic and energetic staff involved in many wonderful educational activities. I have given you my vision, now it is your turn to envision the possibilities. We need to capitalize on this opportunity to bring our Dundas secondary school into the 21st century.