

PRESENTATION TO NORTH ARC MEETING,
HAMILTON BOARD OF EDUCATION, May 24, 2011

To: Members of the North ARC
Re: Potential closing of Parkview School

I am impressed with the efforts of the ARC process to give people a chance to raise their concerns and thank you for allowing me to give this presentation.

I am Sister Theresa Nagle. I represent the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

I am the coordinator of the Social Justice Office in Waterdown. I am also representing a Hamilton group, the Campaign for Adequate Welfare and Disability Benefits (CAWDB). The CAWDB is a grass roots group composed of the poor and those who are concerned about them. We work together to make positive change.

We are concerned about the closure of Parkview Secondary School on Balsam Ave.

We realize that many schools have to close because of declining enrolment.

Parkview is a special school.

What makes this school so special is because many of the students are poor and have learning difficulties. For the most part they are very polite, work well together, and are learning life skills, as well as academics.

This is helping them to develop toward a better future.

Because of their poverty and learning disabilities, we do not believe they would do well in another school and they excel at Parkview because of the excellent program and dedicated teachers for their needs.

The teachers want to be there, because they know they are making a difference in lives of the students beyond their academic learning.

The School Sisters of Notre Dame has had a special connection to this school through our Finance and Social Justice departments.

For about six years, we have been donating funds and goods to the school and have attended their Christmas dinner as guests.

I left each time feeling very impressed with the staff and students and the atmosphere of the school.

We have great concern about the welfare of these students if the school were to close, because this environment has had such a positive impact on them. We hope the Board can find a creative way to keep it open

On a personal note, my youngest brother went to regular high school in Brantford.

He had learning disabilities and he was a delight.

I saw great potential in him but he fell through the cracks.

He was constantly beat up and called names. He was frightened all the time.

He could have gone to a vocational school, but my mother didn't want him to because it was a tough school and he would have been worse off.

When I came to Parkview and experienced the staff and students, and saw what they were able to do I thought how much better my brother, Dave would have been and felt would have reached the potential I knew he had

Steve Buist of the Hamilton Spectator has written several articles about this school and this has helped us to appreciate the uniqueness and value of the school. I am including some articles written by Steve Buist.

1. Donors come forward to aid inner city school – June 22, 2010

Principal, Paul Beattie has a simple message for the generous people of Hamilton:
Thank you!

One retired man handed Beattie a cheque for \$20,000 to help fund the school's breakfast and lunch programs next year. One woman walked into the school and gave \$50.

In between, Beattie said he's received dozens of e-mail messages from people offering to donate clothing and toiletries or whatever support is needed.

"It just did great things for the pride of the Parkview community, knowing there are so many people out there who care and want to help in Hamilton."

It just gives the kids so much hope to see that they're important people and people want to help and support them to become even greater people than they are.

One particular boy who is graduating this year read the paper with his mom that morning and she had tears in her eyes reading it.

"I think they're feeling really proud and really positive about being part of Parkview," he added

2. Danny's No Frills helps Parkview students concentrate on learning

September 20, 2010

This is an article had a photo of the students helping to stock the shelves.

The spectator and Danny's No Frills and the staff and students worked together and filled several shopping carts with \$1,000.00 of food for their breakfast and lunch programs and items for their bakery.

The teachers and staff at Parkview run the programs and senior students do the cooking to earn a credit and gain valuable experience.

The article goes on to say that despite what many people may think, these students are good kids.

Sincerely

S. Theresa Nagle, SSND