

Laurie Belsey <lauriebelsey@gmail.com> writes:

To All Concerned in this process

Please help keep at least one of the Honey Harbour schools open..... The school boards are proposing to bus the public school kids up to Glen Orchard and maybe further, if it ever closes, this would be more than 40 minutes straight run, not allowing for the many stops to pick up students along the way. If the schools were to be amalgamated there would be lots of kids in Honey Harbour, this may not be the best choice or the one some parents would prefer but certainly better than busing for an hour or so, all the way to Glen Orchard. Busing to Victoria Harbour, same as the separate school kids could even be an acceptable alternative. There MUST be a way to either keep one school open or bus all the students to the closer school in Simcoe..... surely there are people out there who agree that it would best for the students..... the tax dollars are there let's just move the money around and make it work

The following letter tells it the way it is and explains how we all feel.....we all concur with Peter Koetsier completely.

Please help

Laurie Belsey

The Honey Harbour Association (HHA) has supported the development of Honey Harbour since its founding in 1908. Our Association has demonstrated the need and spearheaded the implementation of regional schooling, postal and telephone services, hydro, roads, policing, fire protection, environmental stewardship, and better government. It was the Association, led by Colonel Duff, which saw the creation of the Public School on North Bay that served our community for some twenty years before moving 'downtown'. Of course, that site later became our 'Schoolhouse'.

There are over 12,000 residents and transient boaters that annually use Honey Harbour to access their water-based residences and moorings. Closing both our schools, rather than looking at local co-location, will not only destroy the social fabric of the Honey Harbour community, but also the economic engine and well-being of the service providers such as marinas, contractors, grocery stores, lodgings, restaurants, outfitters, fishing guides, Libraries, boutiques, Beausoleil Island National Park, and our Church. Try to imagine Honey Harbour after many of the local families move closer to other schools.

The Honey Harbour and Port Severn area is slated for residential development of over 400 various types of housing units over the next few years. What attracts families to settle in a community is access to local education, employment

opportunities and diverse recreational activities. What attracts retirees and seasonal residents, as well as visitors, is not only the wonderful geography, but also the services provided by the local businesses.

The HHA believes that the current School Boards' Accommodation Review process is not reflective of the reality of our rural school and community life. They do not take into account all the educational, social and economic aspects of school closings on small rural communities. Further, our Association requests that the Minister of Education initiate an immediate moratorium on the Accommodation Review Process until such time as a review of the above-mentioned impacts on the community be studied, completed and the results and recommendations be considered.

The residents of the Township of Georgian Bay contribute over 5.2 million dollars for the education of their children, and yet the Ministry wants to close both of our Honey Harbour schools! Greater consideration and due diligence needs to be given to provide local schooling in exchange for the funding provided, rather than bussing the students many hours away daily and dismantling the social and economic fabric of the Honey Harbour Community.

We strongly encourage you to contact the individuals noted below, as well as your 'away' MPP, letting them know how strongly you oppose the closing of the Honey Harbour schools. Please feel free to use any portion of the above in your correspondence, and add your personal remarks. For example, do you believe that the 'better' education offered by bigger schools is worth spending two or three hours a day in a school bus? How will you be effected if the schools are closed?

Please help Save Our Schools.

Thank you.

Peter Koetsier,
President, Honey Harbour Association