St Edmund Governing Board  
St. Edmund Elementary School  
115 Beaconsfield Blvd  
Beaconsfield, QC  
H9W 3Z8

November 14, 2019

Mᵉ Geneviève Dugré  
Secretary General, Assistant Director of Legal Services  
Lester B. Pearson School Board  
1925 Brookdale  
Dorval, QC  
H9P 2Y7

Subject: Major School Change Consultation Process 2019-2020  
Response from St Edmund Elementary School Governing Board

Dear Mᵉ. Dugré,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the Major School Change implications and potential outcomes.

We have taken the time to consult with our parent community via a recent survey and would like to share key learnings with you. You may also wish to consult see Appendix 1 for an overview of questions and answers.

Our parents made it clear that their most important concern, above all others, is that their children continue to access specialty programs, such as St Thomas’ IB program.

Other important priorities included:

- Ability to join siblings at their current high schools;
- Maintaining an open border policy despite upcoming changes;
- Maintaining school staff and school culture of current schools and their specialty programs (i.e. Do not merge staff/cultures if possible);
- Having continued access to buses; and
- Living close to their school.
In the feedback section of our parent survey, a few constructive parent suggestions emerged which we would like to share with you:

- Consider creating *Francais Plus high schools* to allow for truly bilingual graduates;
- Create more spots in the *IB program* to increase access.

We would also like to urge you to communicate any changes in advance of implementation in order to allow parents and students to prepare for changes.

We ask that you kindly keep in mind that parents and students have selected their school/program based on their current curriculum, culture, staff and class sizes.

We join you in wishing and planning for positive, constructive change in our schools.

Best regards,

Kim L. Hogan

Governing Board Chair
respectfully submitted on behalf of the St. Edmund Governing Board

cc: St. Edmund Governing Board
Melissa Hunter, Principal
Eric Bender, Commissioner
APPENDIX - ST EDMUND PARENT SURVEY

Do you currently have one or more children attending St. Edmund Elementary School?
90 responses

- Yes: 98.9%
- No: 1.1%

Do you have one or more children attending one of the high schools affected by the Major School Change consultation?
90 responses

- Yes: 85.6%
- No: 14.4%
Given the implications of the current MSC initiative, students at St. Edmund may be impacted upon graduation. Please check your priorities in order of importance. 1 is the highest. 5 is the lowest.

Transportation (Right to Busing)

Ability to join siblings

Proximity to local high school

Access to special programs

Maintain “open border policy”

Maintain status quo

Maintain staffing and school culture
Please list any other concerns or comments you have regarding MSC and the impact it may have on St. Edmund students.

- A big concern would be for my kids to attend different campuses/schools
- Consider Français Plus high schools, not just immersion. We all want our children to be fluently bilingual. May help increase enrolment
- I think that the school board should allow more vacancies for students to be eligible for the specialized programs. It’s unfair that only 150 spots are granted to students for IB. We will have no choice but to look at private school high schools. The selection process for these programmes are terrible and there is zero transparency to parents. Not impressed with having a student’s fate based on one exam.
- Poor schools with old ideas underpaid gender biased teachers (due for-rementionioned) lacklustre programs made for sit around kids with a dose of old technology and dated ideas and programs with poor hours and transport issues long stm rides and poor dated leaders with dated ideas and built on a bully structure top on down, in my educated opinion, thank you to all who don’t fit the current political climate
- While I am primarily against the change, if buildings remain largely underused they could face losing the school completely like Riverdale. If that is the case St Edmunds graduates would have fewer options in the future.
- I have no issue with St. Thomas relocating to the Lindsay Place building; however, this would be contingent on the following conditions being met:
  1. We live in Kirkland and we are currently zoned for St. Thomas along with transportation. I would not want the move to the Lindsay Place building to affect my zoning or my possibility for transportation and
  2. I would not want a merger of St. Thomas with Lindsay Place. That is, I’d want St. Thomas to be moved “as is” - same name, staff and programs. Our family already lived through one school merger when St. Paul and Sherwood Forest elementary schools merged into Sherbrooke Academy. This was a massive failure as the 2 schools had very different teaching ideologies and pedagogy as well as staff teaching methods and priorities. The students and parents also had very different ideas of what they wanted out of a school. 

Looking at the numbers today, at Sherbrooke Academy, their combined enrolment at both the junior and senior campuses is lower than it was at St. Paul Elementary alone prior to the merger. They took a great school (St. Paul) and merged it with a very low enrolment school Sherwood Forest) and everyone paid the price in the end - students, parents, staff and the school board who has to somehow justify maintaining a junior and a senior campus operating at ridiculously low numbers.
• Understanding that MSC can adversely affect school communities, a redistribution may be what's needed to ensure the long term viability of the school network for the English community. It might also be an opportunity for St. Thomas to move to a newer, better building whether in 2020 or 2022.

That said, it's important to me and my children to:

a) Maintain the integrity of the IB program and minimize the staff changes that occur with mergers and/or closures; and

b) Ensure that if St. Thomas were to move to a new building, the school and program would still be as accessible to graduating students from St. Edmund as it is now in terms of acceptance and transportation arrangements.

• St. Thomas should move to Lindsay place July 2020. Fresh start. Great move. Change is good and positive and people need to grow.

• Keep the best high school St. Thomas in the West Island open.....

• St Thomas school has a long and rich history on the West Island. I believe moving the school to another location will result in a loss of this identity. I believe that we should be focused on trying to save the English schools instead of trying to force students to relocate so that the French school boards can take over English schools.

• No matter what the decision is, it should be done in the best interest of the kids. We should have quality education in the West Island for years to come. Thank you for including us.

• I had selected St-Thomas for my son next year (I graduated from St-Thomas), however due to the upcoming changes I decided to go visit BHS as we are closest to that school and I’m now very happy with that option, my only concern is that my other two younger children will also be able to attend BHS as we live in Baie D’Urfe and I don’t wish to separate them. I’m concerned about how many students can fit at BHS, as with all these changes the population will soar, thanks for your consideration, I realize these decisions should be made now rather than have them made for our community by the government later.

• Access to a Français Plus program is a major priority for us.