

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing today to advise that I am opposed to the Juniper Ridge/Marion Schilling elementary school catchment change for the following reasons:

- 1) Mental Health in children has been an ongoing concern pre & post pandemic. Currently there is minimal information, if any, available to determine what type of long term affects the pandemic will have on children. It is very concerning that the school district is not taking the poor timing of the catchment change into consideration and tabling this issue until the pandemic is over and normal life has resumed. Parents have also had to manage an upheaval in normal day-day life/routines and shouldn't be put in a position of adding more stress at this time.
- 2) Principal change - we were notified very recently of the change in administration at Juniper Ridge. Carol DeFehr has been with JRES for 4 years and has made it her mission to ensure all children feel welcome by creating an open door policy for all students. She has been such an asset and has advocated for the school and ultimately the children attending JRES. This will without a doubt, be a huge void for the children and yet another shake up that shouldn't have happened at this point in time.
- 3) Walkability - currently many Juniper West kids walk to/from school. This will no longer be an option if the catchment change moves forward. As active members of the Juniper Ridge community this is incredibly disheartening. This will directly affect their feeling of 'belonging' to a community, reduce their options to become more responsible, and create issues for working parents.
- 4) Primary/intermediate students bussing together - Currently primary and intermediate students do not interact during a typical school day at the guidance of the school district. They are strategically separated during recess & lunch, as well as any other extracurricular activities including Christmas/year-end plays, etc. How will the school district address this with respect to bussing? I assume there is good reason for this separation and feel it is important to be addressed.
- 5) Community access - this has been brought up several times over the years but has not been addressed and/or resolved; Juniper Ridge has one way in/out. What will happen with students if Highland Road gets shut down again? This happened twice last year and once the year before (among other times). With more and more parents working from home now, is there a plan in place if the road access is closed during school hours?
- 6) RBES grounds - I understand the school will receive upgrades, however in the past 5-10 years the area around Ralph Bell has become less and less appealing with more transients, theft and drugs becoming more prominent. How can we as parents feel comfortable sending our children to a school out of our community and subjecting them to things they will never experience in our local community school?

At this time, I recognize something needs to change. The juniper ridge area continues to grow and it's apparent the school is overpopulated. I do not think the timing for this catchment change is ideal and feel that the school district is not taking anything other than logistics into play. No children and or parents are being considered in this process. Juniper is a unique community,

unlike most other sub areas in Kamloops. This uniqueness is what brought us to the area and the community/school is what has kept us here. Removing children from their peers and community during a pandemic will do more harm than good.

Please consider a 6/7 middle school as it would be an excellent stepping stone for students that are just shy of high school. There will be more opportunities for students to meet children in their own age group prior to moving into high school and offer a great opportunity for them to go on to high school with that many more formed relationships.

Another option to consider; moving staff parking at JRES closer toward Qu'Appelle as there is so much wasted space, then add on to the front of the school. This would avoid the issue of reducing the size of the school fields. Or how about the option of going up and adding a second floor to JRES?

I appreciate you taking time to read my letter and trust that you will take all parents questions/suggestions into consideration when making your decision. This is not an easy thing to navigate, however it must not be at the expense of our children and their mental health, especially at this moment in time.

Thank you again,

Lisa Farough