

May 4, 2021

Dr. Terry Sullivan  
Superintendent of Schools –  
SD73  
1383 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Kamloops, BC V2C 3X7

Via email:  
[superintendent@sd73.bc.ca](mailto:superintendent@sd73.bc.ca)

Trish Smillie  
Assistant Superintendent –  
SD73  
1383 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Kamloops, BC V2C 3X7

Via email:  
[tsmillie@sd73.bc.ca](mailto:tsmillie@sd73.bc.ca)

Rhonda Kershaw  
Chair of the Board – SD73  
1383 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Kamloops, BC V2C 3X7

Via email:  
[rkershaw@exc.sd73.bc.ca](mailto:rkershaw@exc.sd73.bc.ca)

Honourable Todd Stone  
MLA Kamloops-South  
Thompson  
446 Victoria Street  
Kamloops, BC V2C 2A7

Via email:  
[todd.stone@bcliberals.com](mailto:todd.stone@bcliberals.com)

Honourable Jennifer Whiteside  
Minister of Education  
Room 306 Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Via email:  
[EDUC.minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:EDUC.minister@gov.bc.ca)

Kamloops Mayor and  
Council  
7 Victoria Street West  
Kamloops, BC V2C 1A2

Via email:  
[cgelineau@kamloops.ca](mailto:cgelineau@kamloops.ca)

Re: Proposed Changes to the Juniper Ridge and Marion Schilling Elementary School Catchment Areas

To whom it may concern:

As a tax payer and resident of Juniper Ridge, I am writing to express my deep concerns and opposition to the proposed changes in catchment area for Juniper Ridge Elementary School.

This letter outlines my firm opposition and concerns, which are shared by many in the Juniper Ridge community.

1. The proposed changes would impose a huge divide in our close-knit neighborhood. The reason people buy and pay a premium in this area is to be a part of this great community. This change would have major impacts on our children's well-being, social development, and health.
2. Any benefit of reopening Ralph Bell is overshadowed by the impact and complete absence of benefits to affected families in Juniper Ridge. How is it an acceptable solution to be sending our children to an already overcapacity school (Ralph Bell will be overcapacity at opening)? How

does reducing overcapacity at Juniper by reopening Ralph bell school, which would be at overcapacity solve the overcrowding issue? How is this within the best interest of our children and how will this benefit them?

3. This city is already in a childcare crisis. This proposed change will worsen this crisis. As it currently stands, no before and after school care is available for Ralph bell school. One provider will be displaced with the reopening and the other will not be able to provide care due to logistics of providing care for more than one school. What has the school board discussed to ensure parents can continue working and ensure that their children have safe and secure access to before and after school care. In addition, how will the school board address additional concerns in the community with respect to compensation for the other daycares that will be displaced?
4. Many parents have real safety concerns about our younger children attending school in the proposed location of Ralph Bell. This is an area with significantly higher crime levels, open drug use and elevated use by transient people along the Trans-Canada Highway corridor. In addition to its close proximity to a major highway, this could leave our young children vulnerable to child luring and kidnapping. What has the school board discussed to ensure additional safety measures are in place?
5. Many families made decisions to purchase homes in juniper west and payed a premium price for their homes to ensure that their children were a part of the juniper ridge elementary catchment. The prices of these homes were based on being a part of the close-knit juniper ridge community. This proposed decision could possibly cause financial losses for those affected. If a class action lawsuit were to be filed, would the school board be prepared to compensate these families?
6. How exactly was the new geographical catchment decided? I have had my home for 5 years, but the person on coldwater (new development) that has yet to build their home is guaranteed to be a part of the juniper ridge catchment, even though my child has already been attending? This does not seem to be a fair division at all.

There are more effective and more respectful options to address the overcrowding challenges that recognize the importance of our children's wellbeing, the value of attending community schools and the precious interdependencies and relationships within our communities.

### Solutions to Consider

1. Increase capacity for portables at Juniper Ridge Elementary.
  - a. Create a new teachers parking lot (e.g. in the southwest corner of the property with a one-way entrance off Nechako and an exit onto Qu'Appelle). Use the current parking lot as space to add more portables when needed after 2022 and then convert to blacktop play space when a new elementary school on the west side of Juniper Ridge is built.
2. Make Ralph Bell a temporary middle school for grades 6 and 7.
  - b. This would allow all children from across the neighborhoods to remain together with their established peer groups and eliminate the need to transport very young children to Ralph Bell.

- c. This would eliminate the need for children in Juniper West to change schools a second time if a second community school is constructed in Juniper Ridge. It is incredibly unfair and disruptive to split friendships once much less a second time.
  - d. A middle school may be a temporary solution but would also alleviate some of the capacity challenges at JRES and Marion Schilling and keep existing friendships intact.
  - e. Assuming not all classrooms in Ralph Bell would be required for grade 6 and 7 students this could also allow much needed childcare facilities to continue operating in their current location. This would be a secure source of revenue for SD73 and avoid the potential loss of all 264 daycare spaces in the area.
3. Recognize established relationships and interdependencies of the current Juniper Ridge Community by diverting new areas of development (e.g. developments underway on upper Coldwater Drive and west of Qu'Appelle Blvd) to Ralph Bell. Residents in these areas would be notified of the catchment changes, which would allow them to make an informed decision before purchasing a newly built home.
4. Perform an audit of addresses of students registered at the school to find out how many no longer live in Juniper Ridge. There are families who have used friends' or relatives' addresses to register their children at JRES and others who have moved away since registering but continue to attend JRES. While we understand and empathize with the negative impacts that sending students out of the catchment would have, it could alleviate some of the capacity pressure.
5. Assign a bus to transport juniper west children to juniper ridge. This would help address potential traffic issues near JRES if portables were used to address overcapacity issues.

Please sincerely consider my firm opposition to this proposal and work with our communities to implement solutions that are more beneficial to the health of our neighborhood and the children and families within it.

Sincerely,

Raj and Preet Dhaliwal