BRANDON SCHOOL DIVISION

"Accepting the Challenge"

BRANDON SCHOOL DIVISION

April 7, 2010

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

TO BE HELD MONDAY, APRIL 12, 2010 AT 7:00 P.M.

J. L. MILNE BOARDROOM, ADMINISTRATION OFFICE

1031 - 6TH STREET, BRANDON, MANITOBA

Secretary-Treasurer

AGENDA

1.00 AGENDA/MINUTES:

1.01 Reference to Statement of Board Operations

1.02 Approval of Agenda

1.03 Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meetings

a) Regular Board Meeting, March 22, 2010.
Adopt.

b) Special Board Meeting, March 25, 2010
Adopt.

c) Special Board Meeting, April 5, 2010.
Adopt.

2.00 GOVERNANCE MATTERS:

2.01 Presentations For Information

2.02 Reports of Committees

a)	Joint Task Force Committee Meeting	(White)	R. Coey
b)	Workplace Safety and Health Committee Meeting	(White)	D. Karnes
c)	Other		

2.03 Delegations and Petitions

1. Mr. Gerald Rempel, regarding the implementation of single track French Immersion at Harrison School.

2. Travis Koch-Gensiorek, student, regarding a student's perspective on the single track French Immersion process.

3. Sandra Koch-Gensiorek, parent, regarding the physical education options provided to the Board at the April 5, 2010 meeting.

4. Curtis Bergman, regarding the single track French Immersion issue.

5. Amy Buehler, teacher, Harrison Middle School, regarding the implementation of the single track French Immersion program.

6. Michael Barrett, parent/taxpayer, regarding the physical education options provided to the Board at the April 5, 2010 meeting.

7. Marla Galatiuk, parent, regarding the physical education options provided to the Board at the April 5, 2010 meeting.

8. Tracey Hanson, parent, regarding the impact the single track French Immersion decisions have on her children and family.

9. Nancy Wallace, parent, regarding the single track French Immersion issue.

10. Vanessa Hamilton, parent, expressing her concerns regarding the implementation of the single track French Immersion school.

11. Jan Bright, parent, taxpayer, concerned citizen, regarding the implementation of single track French Immersion at Harrison School.

2.04 Communications for Action

a) Vanessa and Patrick Hamilton, parents of children attending school in the Brandon School Division and payers of school taxes, April 5, 2010, noting the decisions being made and the subsequent plans being implemented regarding the movement of children amongst various schools in Brandon are in direct contradiction to the BSD's mission and vision statements. They believe the planned movement will prevent each student from achieving their maximum intellectual, emotional, social and physical growth and is likely to result in many falling short of their potential. They feel a lack of transparency in the development of the plans resulted in a lack of faith in the Board's ability to investigate and implement a plan that is truly reflective of the mission and vision statements of the Board. They have numerous concerns in regards to the implementation of the single track French Immersion School as follows:

1) If students in Grades 7 and 8 have to be bused to different schools for activities such as physical education, this will further decrease their connection with their home school and community resulting in increases in absenteeism, smoking rates, substance use etc.;
2) If recesses and lunch are spent on the school bus, who will students be provided the opportunity to foster relationships with peers etc.?
3) With increased time spent sitting on a bus during recess and lunch, young people's sedentary activities will not be kept to a reasonable level. Working adults receive "free time" at breaks and lunch and have an opportunity to stretch or go for a walk. Do children not deserve that as well?
4) How much time and at what frequency will actually be allotted for gym?
5) Once the grades 7 and 8 students move from Harrison to George Fitton, does the 3-4-5 Nursery School have a new home?
6) When will the bathrooms be upgraded at George Fitton School?

They feel that the Board did not view the health of all children as a priority when planning the single track French Immersion School at Harrison and consequently will have lasting negative effects at the community level therefore they ask the Brandon School Board to postpone the implementation of the single track French Immersion School until:

a) There is a detailed plan in place that will benefit all children;
b) Provincial funding is secured to implement this new plan.

(Appendix "A")

<u>Refer Business Arising.</u>

b) James Chamber, March 31, 2010, addressed to the Honourable Nancy Allan, Minister of Education, responding to some communications regarding the programming changes in the Brandon School Division. He applauds the School Division for their commitment to making French Immersion Programming available to all students, as well as their efforts to expand and improve the program here in Brandon. He commends the steering committee and the commitment of the administration and staff of the schools to maximize the potential of all programs under this period of change. Under tight fiscal limitations they are making the best choices possible for the long-term programming in the community. He appreciates the concerns of parents who will no longer have the luxury of their children remaining in the same school every day but feels they have exaggerated the implications of the programming

changes. The comments around students "attending 5 different schools during the week" do not mention that trips will be combined to minimize transportation requirements, or that band is an elective, or that students in almost every school in Brandon must find their own transportation to Shop and Home Economics. Intramural and extracurricular sports require the students in question to walk across a field to the "other school" and not cross a single road. Locker and washroom renovations will be completed this summer. Though there will be some delay in the expansion projects for the gyms, the longer-term view suggests that students at those schools will be privy to some of the best facilities in the city when complete. No violations of basic human rights have taken place as has been suggested. The Division spends money efficiently and contributes high scoring students to post-secondary education. (Appendix "B")

Refer Business Arising.

c) Doug Carmichael, Dave Lewis, Darren Duncalfe, teachers, Harrison School, April 6, 2010, writing to correct some statements and information presented at the emergency Board Meeting held at the Division office on April 5, 2010. It seems the information presented was only that extra-curricular activities would be the major concern of the Physical Education teachers but in fact, the major issue is the safety of the students in both regular gym classes as well as extra-curricular sports. At no time did they express the fact that any of the gym spaces presented as options were safe or viable for either the presentation of curriculum during the day or for the extra-curricular after school. They have attached a copy of their "Letter to the Editor" which had expressed that neither school could address the demands of the middle years curriculum that is based on the development of "Team Sports". With reference to the doubling up of classes, they are only aware of New Era School using a doubling up of classes. As Physical Education teachers at Harrison any more than 30 students in the current space is a safety concern, to suggest an increase in this number to 50 plus students is a major safety concern. Safety and acceptability are two very different words and safety first must be the focus. Neither the gym spaces at George Fitton or Green Acres are acceptable for this age group of students, be it for regular gym classes or extra-curricular sports. (Appendix "C").

Refer Business Arising.

2.05 BUSINESS ARISING

- From Previous Delegation

- From Board Agenda

1. Correspondence from Vanessa and Patrick Hamilton, parents of children attending school in the Brandon School Division and payers of school taxes, from Communications for Action 2.04a), noting the decisions being made and the subsequent plans being implemented regarding the movement of children amongst various schools in Brandon are in direct contradiction to the BSD's mission and vision statements and expressing numerous concerns in regards to the implementation of the single track French Immersion School. They are asking the Brandon School Board to postpone the implementation of the single track French Immersion School until:

a) There is a detailed plan in place that will benefit all children;

b) Provincial funding is secured to implement this new plan.

2. Correspondence from James Chamber, from Communication for Action 3.04b), addressed to the Honourable Nancy Allan, Minister of Education, responding to some communications regarding the programming changes in the Brandon School Division. He appreciates the concerns of parents who will no longer have the luxury of their children remaining in the same school every day but feels they have exaggerated the implications of the programming changes. No violations of basic human rights have taken place as has been suggested. The Division spends money efficiently and contributes high scoring students to post-secondary education

3. Correspondence from Doug Carmichael, Dave Lewis, Darren Duncalfe, teachers, Harrison School, from Communications for Action 3.04c), writing to correct some statements and information presented at the emergency Board Meeting held at the Division office on April 5, 2010 and noting that Safety and acceptability are two very different words and safety first must be the focus. Neither the gym spaces at George Fitton or Green Acres are acceptable for this age group of students, be it for regular gym classes or extra-curricular sports.

- MSBA issues (last meeting of the month)

- From Report of Senior Administration

a) School Reports - NIL

b) Learning Support Services Presentation – NIL

c) Items from Senior Administration Report:
   - 2010 Trustee Elections – Refer Motions.

2.06 Motions

46/2010 That the order of candidates' names listed on the ballot for the 2010 Trustee Election be determined by random lot.

47/2010 That a .50 Vice Principal position for George Fitton School be approved for the 2010/2011 school year to be funded from the discretionary staff allocation; and further that it be considered during the 2011/2012 Budget deliberations for permanent placement.

2.07 Bylaws

By-law No. 1/2010 being a bylaw for the purpose of authorizing the borrowing of the sum of $500,000 upon the credit of the Division by the issue of a capital loan to meet partial costs for acquiring fibre optic communication services between schools and administration buildings in the Division; with repayment to be made from the annual operating budget for a maximum of ten (10) years

2nd READING
3rd READING

By-law No. 2/2010 being a bylaw for the purpose of authorizing the borrowing of the sum of $1,559,600.00 upon the credit of the Division by the issue of debentures to meet partial costs for construction of Meadows School Grooming Room, Crocus Plains Regional Secondary High School Roof Replacement and Replacement of Air Cooled Condensing Unit.

1st READING

2.08 Giving of Notice

2.09 Inquiries

2.09a) Public Inquiries (last meeting of each month – max. 15 minutes)

2.09b) Trustee Inquiries

3.00 ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION:

3.01 Report of Senior Administration

Receive and File.

3.02 Communications for Information

a) Email from S. Alexander, March 18, 2010, wishing to notify the Board about the condition she found J.R. Reid School Playground to be in following a visit with her granddaughter to play there. She states she picked up 2 glass beer bottles on the playground and another approximately 20 feet from the play structure. She thought the bottles had been there for some time given the dust and dirt on them. She asks if anyone checks the school grounds for such hazards? She further noted the various mitts, gloves, a Frisbee and garbage all over the grounds. She also found a school soccer ball left out for someone to take and believes school taxes would not have to keep going up if what the taxpayers have already paid for was taken care of better.

Receive and File.

b) Darryl Gervais, Acting Director, Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment Branch, Manitoba Education, March 2010, enclosing the document *Engaging Middle Years Students in Learning: Transforming Middle Years Education in Manitoba* to support the transformation of Middle Years education through improved student engagement.

Refer to Education Committee.

c) Joanna Blais, Director, Program and Student Services Branch, Manitoba Education, February, 2010, enclosing the document *Student-Specific Planning: A Handbook of Developing and Implementing Individual Education Plans (IEPs)* which is a revision of the support document entitled Individual Education Planning: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing IEPs, Early to Senior Years (1998). The revised document is to provide student support teams with a foundational student-specific planning process to address the wide range of exceptional learning needs of students throughout their school careers.

Refer to Education Committee.

d) Darryl Gervais, Acting Director, Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment Branch, Manitoba Education, April 2010, enclosing the document *Working Together: Supporting Students in Transition: Sharing Student Information between First Nations and Provincial Schools* which provides information to assist school administrators in supporting students who make a transition between First Nations and provincial schools.

Refer to Education Committee.

e) Garry Draper, Board Chair, Fort La Bosse School Division, March 8, 2010, addressed to the President and Chief Executive Office of Manitoba Public Insurance noting that it has come to the attention of the school division that driver testing for classifications 1 through 3 will not be available in Virden and that both the written and practical testing must be taken elsewhere. Their concern is that the upcoming change will not serve the rural areas of Manitoba. Their focus is on the class 3 school bus driver who must take additional time to travel to take their required testing resulting in additional costs, organization time and effort for the

school division and the individual involved. To the best of their knowledge there was no consultation or input from those in the rural settings and no mention of an appeal process. The Board is asking MPI to initiate a review of the proposed testing changes as it is important to hear the voices of Rural Manitobans.

Receive and File.

f) Claudia Sarbit, Chair of the Board, Seven Oaks School Division, March 16, 2010, addressed to the Honourable Nancy Allan, Minister of Education, supporting the position taken by the Pembina Trails and Brandon School Divisions in favour of adjusting the portioning rates for various property classifications to protect residential property owners from significant tax increases. A chart outlining the change by class of property and a chart illustrating the effect on specific properties in Seven Oaks have been included in the letter.

Receive and File.

g) Randy Stankewich, Schools' Finance Branch, March 17, 2010, enclosing copies of the 2009 Enrolment Report for all schools in Manitoba as reported on September 30, 2009. The report is available in both PDF and Excel formats at: http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/finance/sch_enrol/index.html.

Receive and File.

h) Craig Wallis, Labour Relations Consultant, Manitoba School Boards Association, March 17, 2010, advising School Boards participating in the Non-Teaching Pension Plan through MSBA who contribute 1.2% of pensionable payroll to fund the Administration Account, that at a meeting of pension trustees on March 16, 2010, a motion was passed as follows:

"That a contribution holiday from the 1.2% of pensionable payroll contribution by school boards to fund the Administration Account commencing July 1, 2010 and ending August 31, 2011 be approved."

He notes that School Boards will not be required to remit the 1.2% administration account contributions for the period July 1, 2010 to August 31, 2011 but School Boards matching of regular pension contributions made by employees will continue unchanged and resumption of the 1.2% Administration Account contributions will occur effective September 1, 2011.

Receive and File.

i) Rick Dedi, Executive Director, The Public Schools Finance Board, March 18, 2010, enclosing a copy of the Annual Report of The Public Schools Finance Board for the period ending June 30, 2009.

Receive and File.

j) Gerald Rempel, March 26, 2010, addressed to the Minister of Education, regarding the implementation of the single track French Immersion program at Harrison school noting it is appalling that many recess and lunch periods will be spent on the bus. As a concerned citizen he cannot support this and feels free time will be lost and basic human rights taken away. He notes he will not support a government party that would allow such a disruption to occur and implores the Minister of Education to investigate and act swiftly to prevent this great disservice to the Division's children.

Receive and File.

3.03 Announcements

a) Nutrition Ad-Hoc Committee Meeting – 9:30 a.m., Tuesday, April 13, 2010, Board Room.

b) Education Committee Meeting – 2:00 p.m., Tuesday, April 13, 2010, Board Room.

c) Finance Committee Meeting – 10:00 a.m., Monday, April 19, 2010, Board Room.

d) MSBA Regional Collective Bargaining Seminar – 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, April 20, 2010, Victoria Inn, Brandon.

e) School Division/Parent Liaison Committee meeting – 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, April 21, 2010, Conference Room.

f) Joint Job Evaluation Committee Meeting – 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, April 21, 2010, Conference Room.

g) Joint Job Evaluation Committee Meeting – 9:30 a.m., Thursday, April 22, 2010, Conference Room.

h) Division/City Joint Task Force Committee Meeting – 9:30 a.m., Monday, April 26, 2010, Brandon City Hall.

i) NEXT REGULAR BOARD MEETING – 7:00 p.m., Monday, April 26, 2010, Board Room.

4.00 IN CAMERA DISCUSSION:

4.01 Student Issues

- Reports

- Trustee Inquiries

4.02 Personnel Matters

- Reports

a) Confidential #1 – Personnel Report.
b) Confidential #3 – Teacher Arbitration Award.
c) Confidential #4 – Report of the Administrator Selection Committee

- Trustee Inquiries

4.03 Property Matters/Tenders

- Reports

- Trustee Inquiries

4.04 Board Operations

- Reports

a) Confidential #2 – Legal Matter.

- Trustee Inquiries

5.00 ADJOURNMENT

Vanessa and Patrick Hamilton
1022 Frederick Street
Brandon, MB
R7A 5L9

Appendix A

April 5, 2010

To Chairperson George Buri,

We, the parents of children attending school in the Brandon School Division and payers of school taxes, feel that the decisions being made and the subsequent plans to be implemented regarding the movement of children amongst various schools in the Brandon are in direct contradiction to the Brandon School Division's mission and vision statements.

We believe that the planned movement will prevent each student from achieving their maximum intellectual, emotional, social and physical growth and is likely to result in many falling short of their potential. We also believe that the Board has fallen short in regards to being a centre of educational excellence, built on community partnerships, effective leadership and exemplary practices.

We feel a lack of transparency in the development of the plans has resulted in a lack of faith in the Board's ability to investigate and implement a plan that is truly reflective of the mission and vision statements set forth by the Board.

However, having said that, we still trust and believe that the majority of Board members strive for equality among all children in Brandon and have all children's wellbeing at heart. Decisions are not based solely on personal gain.

There are numerous concerns in regards to the implementation of the single track French immersion school. We have highlighted a few of our concerns and questions:

A 2008 report from the Public Health Agency of Canada, *Healthy Settings for Young People in Canada* states that:

- "Young people spend a substantial portion of their lives at school. Research has shown that their experiences in school settings have a significant influence (both positive and negative) on their global development and health, including health behaviours."
- "Students who feel connected to the school or believe their school is a positive place are less likely to engage in health-compromising activities."

Smoking rates and substance use increases in middle school years. Students already have to go to different schools for band, shop and home ec. If students in grades 7 and 8 have to be bussed to different schools for activities such as physical

2.03 a)

education, this will further decrease their connection with their home school and community. It stands to reason that this will result in increases in absenteeism, smoking rates, substance use, and other high risk behaviours such as unprotected sex.

- "Relationships with peers of the same or opposite sex are essential to the healthy psychological and social development of children and adolescents and for fostering their self-esteem and sense of well-being. The skills gained through these friendships are also essential to the development of romantic relationships."

If recesses and lunch are spent on the school bus, how will students be provided the opportunity to foster these important life skills during school time?

- "Sedentary behaviours are different from physical activity and consist of activities in which there is little movement or energy expenditure. These activities include watching television, playing video games, using the computer, doing homework, and reading."
- "It is impossible for anyone to be physically active during all waking hours. The goal is not to eliminate sedentary behaviours, but to keep young people's sedentary activities to a reasonable level."

With increased time spent sitting on a bus during recess and lunch, we feel that young people's sedentary activities will not be kept to a reasonable level. Working adults receive "free time" at breaks and lunch and have an opportunity to stretch or go for a walk. Do children not deserve that as well?

- "Over the past few years, obesity among young people has become a leading public health issue in Canada. Overweight and obesity are associated with numerous health consequences in Canadian students."
- "These include elevated risk factors associated with heart disease and type 2 diabetes (e.g., increased blood cholesterol, blood pressure, and blood sugar levels), problems with the bones and joints, poor emotional health and well-being, and a reduced overall quality of life."

How much time and at what frequency will actually be allotted for gym? *Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Youth* recommends at least 60 minutes of moderate activity and at least 30 minutes of vigorous activity every day. Low physical activity is a contributing factor to the obesity epidemic.

Furthermore, it has been estimated that one out three Canadians will have a mental health problem sometime in their life. The most common chronic mental health problems are anxiety disorders and depression. It is recognized that being

overweight in childhood may lead to a negative self image and anxiety or depression. This may result in high risk behavior later in life.

***Investing in Early Childhood Development: The Health Sector Contribution* prepared by the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Advisory Committee On Population Health 1999 states that:**

- "Research clearly demonstrates the strong links between an adult's health status and his or her coping skills, sense of identity, competence and person effectiveness".
- "There is strong evidence to support the fact that the development of these important coping skills along with resistance to health problems and overall health and well being are profoundly influenced by early childhood experiences."
- "Parents and caregivers require the necessary knowledge, skills and supportive conditions in order to be able to effectively provide the underpinnings of lifelong health and wellbeing for their children."
- "High risk children often face cumulative effects of multiple and complex problems. Communities and society-at-large have critical roles in ensuring that expectant parents, parents, caregivers and children have the necessary conditions that foster early childhood development within safe and supportive environments."

Once the grades 7 and 8 students move from Harrison to George Fitton, does the 3-4-5 Nursery School have a new home? This nursery school has up to 18 subsidized spots for low income families per day. As a community and a society-at-large, do we not need to ensure that this is not taken away from them? These preschool children will be school aged children in the Brandon School Division in the very near future.

We attended an information meeting at Harrison School in the fall of 2009 in regards to the implementation of the single track French immersion school. We listened to one father's concern with the lack of bathroom facilities at George Fitton. He stated that children are soiling themselves waiting in line to go to the washroom. The principal of George Fitton was present at the meeting and confirmed that this was occurring. We can imagine the devastating effects on these children's self-esteem and confidence. If the grades 7 and 8 are transferred to George Fitton, when will the bathrooms be upgraded?

The majority of the provincial budget is spent on healthcare. Health is a provincial and federal priority. If more Manitobans/Canadians become ill, money will be shifted from other departments such as education to healthcare. A partnership between health departments and education department with common goals is essential for the education sector to thrive and grow.

The Government of Manitoba website states, "The Healthy Schools initiative in Manitoba promotes the health and wellness of students, their families, school staff

and school communities. This initiative is a partnership between Manitoba Healthy Living, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth and Healthy Child Manitoba (which is a partnership all departments connected to children). We believe that good health is important for learning. We know that schools are in a unique position to influence healthy child, youth, and family development."

We feel that the Brandon School Board did not view the health of all children as a priority when planning the single track French immersion school at Harrison and consequently will have lasting negative effects at the community level.

For the above reasons, we respectfully ask for the Brandon School Board to postpone the implementation of the single track French immersion school until:

1. There is a detailed plan in place that will benefit all children.
2. Provincial funding is secured to implement this new plan.

Sincerely,

Vanessa and Patrick Hamilton

From: James Chambers 05/04/2010 2:29:40 PM

Subject: Fwd: Programming Changes in Brandon School Division

To: George Buri **Ramona Coey** **Donna Michaels** Marty Snelling Linda Ross Doug Karnes Jim Murray Brian Mayes Bea Jolly Peter Bartlette **Greg Malazdrewicz**

Attachments: Attach0.html 7K

Dear Trustees and Senior Administration,

Please find below the message I have sent to the Minister of Education and the Office of the Premiere in regards to programming changes next year.

Best regards,
James Chambers

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **James Chambers**
Date: Wed, Mar 31, 2010 at 10:17 AM
Subject: Programming Changes in Brandon School Division
To:
Cc:

Dear Ms. Allen:

I am writing in response to some communication that has been floating around regarding the programming changes in BSD.

While there is a lot of commotion right now in the Brandon School Division in regards to the implementation of the French Single-Track school - Ecole Harrison - I want to send along my voice of support for the direction the board is taking.

I applaud the School Division for their commitment to making French Immersion Programming available to all students, as well as their efforts to expand and improve the program here in Brandon. I commend the steering committee and the commitment of the administration and staff of the schools to maximize the potential of all programs under this period of change. Under tight fiscal limitations I believe they are making the best choices possible for the long-term programming in our community.

I do appreciate the concerns of the parents who will no longer have the luxury of allowing their children to remain in the same school every day, almost every week. Unfortunately, they have exaggerated the implications of the programming change and the measures that the school division have put in place.

I have seen comments around students "attending 5 different schools during the week." The people citing this don't mention that trips will be combined to minimize transportation requirements. They also don't note that band is elective (though encouraged) and that students from almost every school in Brandon must find their own transportation for Shop and Home Economics. The maximum distance any student will be transported as a result of this change is approximately 12 city blocks; less than 10 minutes.

Intramural and extracurricular sports are a privilege to larger centres and we are fortunate to have an abundance of programming in our division. The students in question for these programs must walk across a 100 yard field to get to the "other school" and do not need to cross a single road.

Locker and washroom renovations will be completed this summer by the first week of August; some of these renovations have already begun. Roof repairs to one school in question will also be at a point where school can resume in the building.

Though George Fitton and Green Acres are currently used as Elementary schools, both schools in the past have seen much higher attendance and a variety of programming, including Middle Years programming at Green Acres.

Though there will be some delay in the expansion projects for the gymnasiums, the longer-term view suggests that students at those schools will be privy to some of the best facilities in the city when complete. In the interim, if parents are concerned about 20 minutes on the bus 3 times a week they should encourage outdoor play at home (and perhaps get involved themselves).

There are no violations of basic human rights, as some people have suggested. We have a fabulous School Division that spends money efficiently and contributes high-scoring students to post-secondary education.

I thank you in advance for your time in this matter.

Appendix C

RECEIVED
APR 0 6 2010

April 6th, 2010

Mr George Buri and Board Members,

We are just writing to correct some statements and information presented at the emergency board meeting held at the Division office last evening. It seems that yourself, the other board members and parents were presented with the information that it was only the extra-curricular activities that would be our major concern as PE teachers but in fact, the major issue is the SAFETY of the students in both regular gym classes as well as extra-curricular sports.

In our letter to the board and as a letter to the editor this past July to the Brandon Sun, at no time did we express the fact that any of the gym spaces presented as options were safe or viable for either the presentation of curriculum during the day or for the extra-curricular after school. As per the letter (see attached) we expressed that neither school could address the demands of the middle years curriculum that is strongly based on the development of "Team Sports". Again, the skills of these team sports are required by Manitoba Curriculum to be taught with the end result being the students becoming involved in extra-curricular's as a result. We explained the close proximity to the walls at George Fitton and Green Acres as well as the size of the students as well as the space as a MAJOR SAFETY ISSUE.
We have stated as PE teachers that neither George Fitton nor Green Acres were acceptable gymnasium spaces for these students to either learn or compete in.

AS far as doubling up of Physical Education classes, we are only aware of New Era using a doubling up of classes. During construction, JR Reid utilized both outside as much as possible as well as their old facility as per normal and travelled to Vincent Massey for after school practices with no doubling up of classes occurring. At Linden Lanes, the same approach was utilized with a majority of classes being held outside with the remainder of classes being held in their smaller gym as per normal. In fact, at Linden Lanes when the PE time was increased, the staff had one year of doubled classes but this ¼ time PE was dropped by the division on request of the school and the P.E. teacher and this time was dropped based on the PE teacher's concern over SAFETY.

As PE teachers at Harrison for many years, we can say without any doubt that any more than 30 students in our current physical space is definitely a safety concern for all involved. To suggest to increase this number to 50 plus is a MAJOR SAFETY CONCERN. When these doubled gym classes were presented at New Era, they were able to SAFELY conduct the classes due to the physical space they had to work with. Also, this doubling up of large gym classes was one of the original reasons that the New Era population problem was being addressed. Presently at Green Acres, the grade 6 students are instructed, with approximately 20 students in the class, to throw dodge balls with their opposite hands underhanded so as to not hit each other too hard. This is a present safely concern right now.

Safety and acceptability are two very different words and we must focus on the SAFETY first of our students. Neither the gym spaces at George Fitton or Green Acres are acceptable for this age group of students, be it for regular gym classes or extra-curricular sports. The gym spaces at George Fitton and Green Acres are not viable as they are physically not prepared spaces (ie 10 foot baskets, Floor holes and space for volleyball nets, etc) and Harrison is a Safety concern based on the number of students if doubled classes were implemented. Once again, our major concern as PE teachers is the safe implementation of both regular Physical Education classes as well as the extra-curricular sports teams. Please feel free to contact us for any further information/questions that you may have.

Yours in Physical Education,

Doug Carmichael
Dave Lewis
Darren Duncalfe

Letter to the Editor.

Upon reading and reviewing Mr. Auriat's *Brandon Sun* article on the French milieu issue, we were struck by this statement: " While the decision [to make Harrison a French milieu school]appears to be appropriate for the New Era French immersion kids, it doesn't look like too many others, especially Harrison students, will benefit." We, as a Physical Education staff at Harrison, believe that the current students will most definitely not benefit; they will face major SAFETY issues as a result of the potential moves to schools where the gymnasium space is not adequate for middle years students due to the age and size of the students.

Currently, the gymnasium space at Harrsion allows for both safe instruction of daily physical education classes as well as provides a safe venue for a very busy after school interscholastic program of which the staff, but more importantly, the students are very proud. The facilities at both Green Acres and George Fitton were designed with an early years student in mind. They are suited to what a primary curriculum demands but are inadequate for a middle years curriculum that is heavy in the development of team sports. Safe instruction for a middle years program demands a space that fits the physical size of the students who can be larger than a lot of the staff. Adequate space for students this size is something the small gyms at George Fitton and Green Acres do not provide. Proper development of the skills necessary in a particular sport will definitely be hindered due to the low ceilings, close proximity to the walls, etc. If students run hard, hit hard and shoot hard they will put themselves and others at risk. What kind of athletics program encourages students not to try hard or do their best?!

Students also benefit both socially and emotionally from the strong PE and interscholastic program we provide currently. The present program encourages sportsmanship, fair play and assists in the development of pride, self discipline, self respect, sense of worth and belonging. We believe that a move to the smaller facilities at George Fitton and Green Acres will negatively impact this involvement and interrupt the development of these students. To interrupt this important social and physical development in an age where it can be a struggle to get these kids away from the video game systems and actively participating would be a serious disservice to our students.

The gym at Harrison is positioned in the centre of the building and is in many ways the heart of the school. Performances, assemblies, presentations, dances as well as all athletic activities take place there. The gym also becomes a social centre for the community through the after school interscholastic program. Games are well attended by students and parents with the stands in our gym are regularly full to capacity showing the strong community involvement and support for these programs. The gyms at George Fitton and Green Acres do not provide a safe space for team sports and there is no room for spectators. This rich Harrison tradition of community involvement will be lost if the proposed moves occur.

The projected time frame for completing new gyms at George Fitton and Green Acres is five years but that is only if the necessary funding can be obtained from the province. Since there is no guarantee that the provincial funds will be forthcoming, there is no guarantee that adequate gym space will ever be built.

In the July 12th *Brandon Sun* Letter to the Editor by Rod and Tracy Hanson they really emphasized the need for proper facilities for all current students. "We understand that the gyms at Green Acres and George Fitton are sadly inadequate for anything more than an elementary setting. With the current crisis in childhood obesity, can middle year aged students afford not to have adequate gym facilities and the opportunities to participate in programs such as volleyball, basketball, etc.? "

We believe that the answer to Rod and Tracy's question is: No! Middle years students cannot afford to be without proper gym space!

With the emphasis on healthy living and being active in order to develop life long active participants, we believe that these potential moves will only hinder the future development of these students and as a result, negatively affect the rest of their lives.

Respectfully,
HMS Physical Education Staff
Doug Carmichael, Dave Lewis and Darren Duncalfe