

Dear Parents,

October 20th, 2004

On Monday, October 4th, a General Assembly was held to address the issue of a Kindergarten class being closed and inform the parents as to what was going on. The 3 existing Kindergarten classes were combined to make 2 classes of approximately 22 students in each class. As you probably well know by now, as a result we have lost Mr. Mark Sankoff, our 4th grade teacher, and Mrs Alexandra is now teaching the 4th grade.

At the meeting several parents strongly voiced their concerns to Mr. Don Reid, Deputy Director General at the EMSB. Although he tried to explain that the EMSB's decision to do this was because of several factors including low registrations, money, collective agreements and so forth, the consensus was that our children and their well being were not being considered. In fact, Mr Reid was asked, "Are our children being treated fairly?" and to this question, we never received a reply.

A petition was presented that night which in summary gave the Governing Board a mandate to fight this policy that allows the EMSB to make these changes so late in the year. I thank you for the support you gave us through the signing of this petition. This petition will be sent to the EMSB, as well as each commissioner on the Council of Commissioners, along with a letter from myself explaining our position.

I know that for some of you we are not moving fast enough and you would like to see more aggressive measures be taken (such as calling the media) but I believe that the proper steps needed to be taken in order for us to have any kind of impact. The media is a great vehicle when used properly but it can also have a detrimental impact on the reputation of our school, as we don't want negative publicity. The administration as well as the teachers in the school cannot back us in any way as they are employees of the EMSB and their jobs would be jeopardized. The Governing Board did try to do everything not to lose Mr Sankoff but unfortunately the time factor worked against us. However, we need to band together to make sure this does not happen in the years to come.

Our work behind the scenes has somewhat paid off but the fight has just begun. At the Council of Commissioners meeting on October 27th (to be held at 7:00pm at EMSB headquarters on Fielding Ave), our Commissioner, Mr Agostino Cannavino, will be presenting a resolution to the effect that the EMSB can not close any classes after the school year has begun. Mr Cannavino needs our support at this meeting. We need to show the commissioners how affected our children are by these class closures 5 weeks into the school year. I urge all of you to attend this meeting and submit your questions and concerns, which will be addressed at question period during this meeting. You must submit your questions in advance, to the EMSB, by faxing them at 483-7324. It is imperative that we show up at this meeting in support of the resolution being presented. The media will be there and this is the time for us to voice our concerns.

The reason you are receiving this letter by mail or email is because Mr Turchyn has been instructed not to circulate, through the children, any letters from me to the parents concerning this issue. He is only doing his job. An email has been established so that we can create a communication line. Please send your email address to -policy_change@hotmail.com. We will keep you abreast of the developments as they happen

Thank you,

Kathy Magi
Chairperson
Governing Board