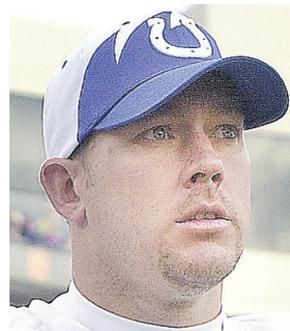


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GRAHAM PAINE / OAKVILLE BEAVER

TWO LITTLE ANGELS: Jessie Smith, 3, left, and friend Annabel Brenninkmeyer, 4, took advantage of the light dusting of snow over the weekend to make snow angels between sledding runs. The two Oakville kids were out enjoying the day with their families at Gairloch Gardens along the lake. This week's milder temperatures could spell the end of the white stuff — at least for now.

Parents express concern over possible school boundary changes

By Nathan Howes
SPECIAL TO THE BEAVER

When all the Ward 4 parents stood up at the end of Monday's public consultation meeting on boundary changes, it wasn't to give Halton District School Board (HDSB) officials a round of applause. Many of the parents were upset that potential boundary changes will negatively impact their children.

The two-hour session at Abbey Park High School provided parents the opportunity to review and give feedback on proposed school

boundary changes.

Eight schools are included in the review — Abbey Lane, Pilgrim Wood, Heritage Glen, Emily Carr, Forest Trail, Palermo, West Oak and Captain R. Wilson.

The purpose of the review is to examine various scenarios in order to recommend a plan for September 2012 to re-direct students in some of the aforementioned schools to better balance enrolment.

"There's a huge problem in northwest Oakville because some of the schools are over-utilized, specifically Palermo and Forest Trail,

and then there are also schools under-utilized such as Abbey Lane," said Oakville Wards 5 and 6 Trustee Kelly Amos. "It's about looking at all eight schools in the community (to) try to make sure that we can try to create a balance.

"If you're starting a new program with Grade 1s, you need to have at least two classes of 40 kids. You've got to make sure there are enough classes and kids to make sure programs are viable."

Karena Bowman has two children attending Palermo and was one of many upset parents at Monday's meeting. One of her concerns,

which was echoed by those in attendance, was the affect a school transfer could have on her children's friendships.

She said it's "irresponsible" of the board to make a decision that would affect the community, not just the students.

"It's a little presumptuous to make such a big decision affecting so many families at this time. In certain scenarios, the children are split up," said Bowman.

A Boundary Review Committee (BRC) has been established with representatives from the

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