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MARCH 13, 2009

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# LDH Grade 10 program deferred until 2010

BY KIMBERLY LOCHHEAD  
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The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) has recently decided that the new Longfields-Davidson Heights school will not include a Grade 10 program when the facility opens in September.

At a board meeting on Feb. 24, trustees opted to initially open the school with Grades 7 to 9.

"The bottom line is that we didn't get enough of the number of students to provide a viable and sustainable program," said Patsy Agard, principal of the new school. "The issue is really around what we can offer to students when they are at the senior level and could not have offered Grade 10."

She added that the decision was made while considering the staff and class options the school would be able to offer with low enrolment numbers.

"We want to offer the elective [classes] that the students are interested in but we need that critical mass," said Ms. Agard. "If there are not enough students, we can't offer all the electives that they want and the students end up having to choose their second or third choices for electives and are not happy."

According to the OCDSB, 90 students had registered for the Grade 10 program for the 2009-2010 school year. These students were informed quickly of the decision, as were their current high schools, to prevent them from being disadvantaged during the course selection process.

"We called each home to let them know that the program would not be offered," said Ms. Agard. "A majority came from Merivale High School and John McCrae Secondary School and we informed them as well so

they know to collect the option sheets from those students."

Trustees were informed of the possibility that there would not be enough students for the Grade 10 program at the Jan. 29 board meeting last year.

**The bottom line is that we didn't get enough of the number of students to provide a viable and sustainable program.**

Patsy Agard  
Principal, Longfields-Davidson Heights School

"I think for many people, they become attached to high school and I do hope they form attachment," Ms. Agard said. "I suspect the students might have joined clubs, made friends, participated in extra curricular activities, and had an attachment to their current school. They're not going to want to leave."

She added that the board's decision will not have a significant affect on the community or the school, which will build up its programming as the younger students progress towards the senior levels.

"It's a very exciting time for the students and the OCDSB staff interested in coming to the new school," said Ms. Agard.

"The community has also been excited as they've watched the construction of the new building and we hope to open it up in August for everyone to take a look inside."

The Longfields-Davidson Heights school is set to open its doors for students this September.



KIMBERLY LOCHHEAD

David and Jonathan MacDonald stand next to a painting presented to them by local artist Jill Alexander during a recent game of the Ottawa West Golden Knights, a team their brother Matthew plays for. The home opener of the second round playoff series on March 5 was dedicated to breast cancer awareness, which David, Jonathan, and Matthew's mother, Lori, recently succumbed to. Please see page 2 for the full story.

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