

Early Adolescent Students – Protecting their Rights Meeting their Needs

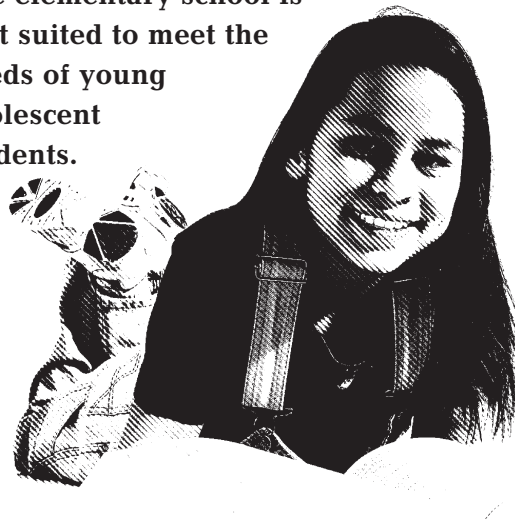


Here's a checklist* that identifies needs of young adolescent students. Only elementary schools pass the test:

- ✓ *Small communities for learning, possibly within the larger school building.*
- ✓ *A core academic program for all learners.*
- ✓ *Success experiences for all students.*
- ✓ *Empowerment of teachers and administrators in decision making.*
- ✓ *Teachers who are expert at teaching young adolescents.*
- ✓ *Improved academic performance fostered through health and fitness.*
- ✓ *Families with meaningful roles in the school.*
- ✓ *Schools that are connected with their communities.*

** The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development*

The elementary school is best suited to meet the needs of young adolescent students.



THE government's funding formula has closed schools, cut programs and put special education at risk.

Now, there's more trouble ahead.

Some Ontario school boards are planning to move grades 7 and 8 into high schools – to keep them open. As a result, elementary schools may close and elementary students will suffer.

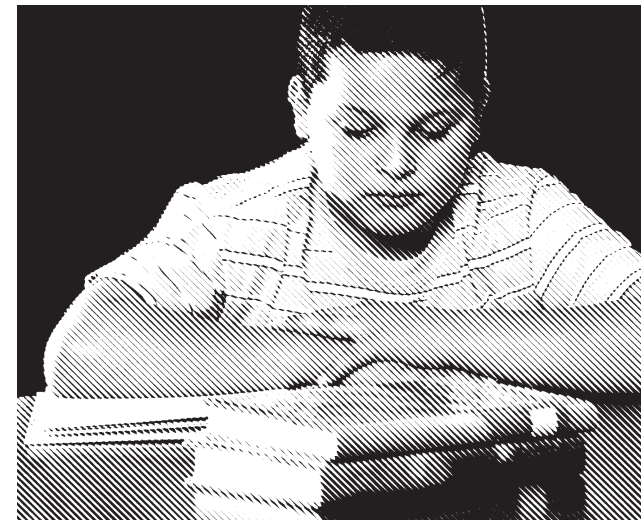
Well, that might be efficient for the school boards. But it's too high a price for the education, health and social well-being of young adolescent students.

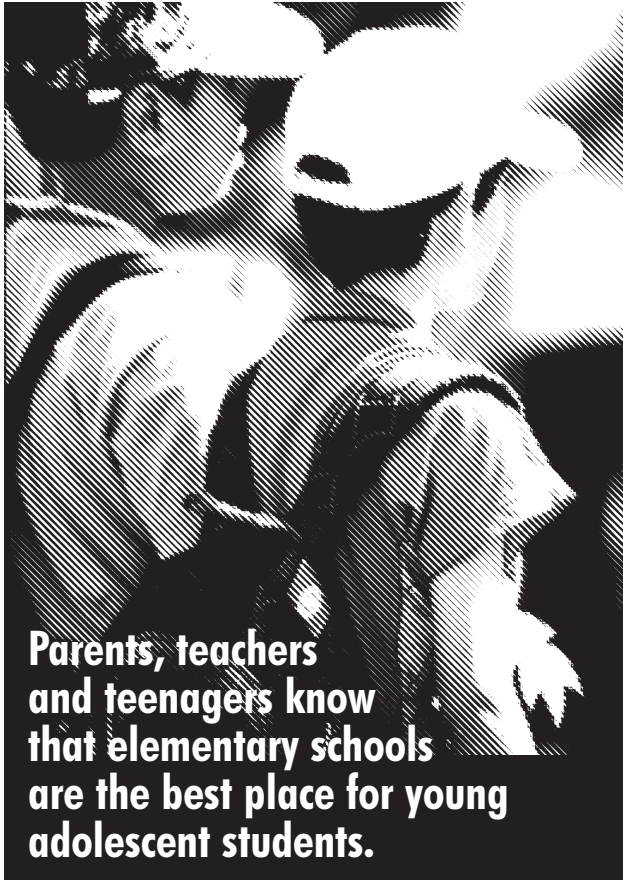
“Adolescence is a border between childhood and adulthood. Like life on all borders, it's teeming with energy and fraught with danger. Growth requires courage and hard work on the part of the individual, and it requires the protection and nurturing of the environment.”

GAIL CAISSY,

Early Adolescence

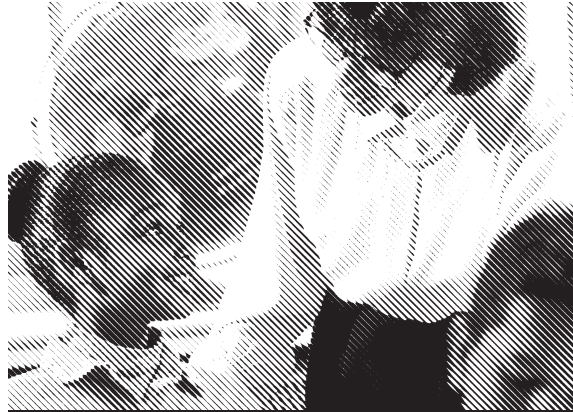
–Understanding the 10-15 year old





Parents, teachers and teenagers know that elementary schools are the best place for young adolescent students.

- **Elementary schools** are smaller and safer – a better environment in which to develop close, trusting relationships.
- **Elementary schools** protect and nurture their students – reducing the possibility of high risk behaviour.
- **Elementary schools** encourage young adolescents to be leaders and role models.
- **Elementary schools** are a vital link to their students' families and communities.
- **Elementary schools** focus on the development of the child as a whole.



Think back when you were 11, 12, 13 years of age – self conscious, awkward, tired, moody, sensitive.

It's a difficult time for students and a critical time for their development.

That's why young adolescents require:

- the experience, special attention and expertise of elementary school teachers;
- programs that promote self esteem, develop a sense of belonging and create a connection to the school;
- teachers who encourage parent involvement to ensure academic success
- a social environment that is safe for emotional growth and development.

“ The jury is in, elementary schools are the best learning and developmental environment for young adolescents.”

PHYLLIS BENEDICT
President
Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario

Make sure your elementary school keeps grades 7 and 8 ... because that's the best place for the best results.

- Keep in touch with your local school. That way you'll know whether there's a plan to move grades 7 and 8 into high schools.
- Contact your school board trustees. Tell them you want grades 7 and 8 to stay in your elementary school.
- Attend school board meetings when the issue is on the agenda.
- Connect with other parents, community groups and your school council to develop a plan of action.



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