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August 13, 2014

Hon. Liz Sandals
Minister of Education
22nd Floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1L2

Dear Minister,

RE: Request for an Administrative Review of Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) decision to close Cardinal Heights, Eastmount Park and Linden Park

We are writing in response to the request received on July 14, 2014, for an Administrative Review of the Central Mountain accommodation review process undertaken by HWDSB which resulted in the Board approved closures of Cardinal Heights, Eastmount Park and Linden Park schools. HWDSB staff were able to verify that 116 of 137 supporters who signed the petition are parents of students from Cardinal Heights or participated in the accommodation review process. This represents approximately 38% of the October 31, 2013 headcount (307).

HWDSB Trustees voted to conduct an accommodation review of four planning areas consisting of 23 Elementary Schools throughout Hamilton. In the Central Mountain planning area, eight schools were reviewed including Cardinal Heights, Eastmount Park, Franklin Road, G.L. Armstrong, Linden Park, Pauline Johnson, Queensdale and Ridgemount. The accommodation review began on October 1, 2013 and final reports by staff and committee members were presented to Trustees on March 24, 2014 at Special Board. On June 16, 2014 Trustees ratified a motion regarding the Central Mountain accommodation review to closure Cardinal Heights, Eastmount Park and Linden Park in June 2015.

While petitioners believe that HWDSB did not follow the Pupil Accommodation Review Policy, it is our opinion that the policy was followed throughout the Central Mountain accommodation review process.

Please find our response to the petitioners below. The response is titled and ordered in alignment with the request for an administrative review:

Cover Page Section

- 1) We found after the process that the government outlines in regards to School Information Profiles being incorrect, Community Consultation and Public Meetings not being followed thoroughly as Cardinal Heights School did not have a “walk-through” which also resulted in a low score on its FCI not being questioned by members***

School Information Profiles (SIPs) are a tool created in order for both ARC members and stakeholders to understand how well schools meet the objectives and the reference criteria outlined in the Terms of Reference. The SIPs were delivered to the ARC in draft format during the first working group meeting as part of their accommodation review binders. The SIPs were discussed, reviewed and approved at working group meeting #3 (see working group meeting #3 minutes, section 7

<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Central-Mtn-WG-Mtg-3-Oct-29-2013-Minutes-Final-Approved.pdf>)

The SIPs were then presented to the public in an open forum during public meeting #2 on November 5, 2013. Staff and committee members were present to review any questions from the public (see public meeting #2 minutes, section 4 <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Central-Mtn-PM-Mtg-2-Nov-05-Minutes-Final.pdf>). The information was also available to Trustees, ARC members and stakeholders online at <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Central-Mountain-School-Information-Profile-Final11.pdf>

The first public meeting held on October 8, 2013 was conducted using “World Café” methodology. The purpose of this methodology is to effectively host large group dialogue by breaking large numbers of people into small groups of 8-12 individuals. A facilitator provides discussion questions to the group and a scribe records the conversations. Each group’s notes were compiled and provided to the accommodation review committee for information and analysis. Subsequent public meeting formats were discussed and set by the accommodation review committee. Each meeting format was determined by the working group prior to the public meetings as outlined in the minutes.

Working Group Meeting #3 (Prior to Public Meeting #2) –See section 10

<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Central-Mtn-WG-Mtg-3-Oct-29-2013-Minutes-Final-Approved.pdf>

Working Group Meeting #6 (Prior to Public Meeting #3) – See section 6

<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Central-Mtn-WG-Mtg-6-Minutes-Final.pdf>

Working Group Meeting #9 (Prior to Public Meeting #4) – See section 6

<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/CMtn-WG-Mtg-9-Jan-28-Minutes-Final.pdf>

Walkthroughs are an opportunity for accommodation review committee members to tour the schools under review. Walkthroughs are not a part of HWDSB's accommodation review policy but are offered to help committee members gain a better understanding of the facilities and what each of these facilities has to offer students and the community.

The request for school tours occurred during the first working group meeting on Tuesday, October 1, 2013 (see working group meeting #1 minutes section 2: <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Minutes-WG-Mtg-1-Oct-01-2013-Central-Mtn-Approved.pdf>) and staff created a schedule to accommodate the request (See working group meeting #2 minutes, section 5: <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Central-Mtn-WG-Mtg-2-Oct-15-2013-Minutes-Final2.pdf>).

The Cardinal Heights walkthrough was scheduled to follow working group meeting #2 on October 15, 2013. Due to a fire alarm at the facility, the walkthrough was postponed until a later date. The tour was rescheduled prior to working group meeting #6 on December 3, 2013 (See working group meeting #6 minutes, section 1: <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Central-Mtn-WG-Mtg-6-Minutes-Final.pdf>).

It was also stated on October 29, 2013 that school walkthroughs would be available at any time during the school week and committee members could contact principals directly to set up a scheduled walkthrough. (See working group meeting #3 minutes, section 4.1 <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Central-Mtn-WG-Mtg-3-Oct-29-2013-Minutes-Final-Approved.pdf>).

The walkthroughs have no relation to a school's Facility Condition Index (FCI). FCI is a ratio used to measure the relative condition of a building that takes into account all building systems. It is calculated by dividing the cost of repairs for the building by the replacement value. These values are not affected by the accommodation review walkthroughs.

2) ARC members felt they did not have adequate time to make such large decisions such as closing entire schools and were not given the amount of time needed and guidelines were set by the Board to accommodate their agenda

The Central Mountain accommodation review timelines are consistent with those outlined in the Ministry of Education's guidelines as well as the Board's [Pupil Accommodation Review Policy \(No. 3.8\)](#).

Action	Timeline	Date
First Public Meeting	As scheduled by HWDSB Senior Administration	October 8, 2013
Second Public Meeting	As scheduled by the ARC	November 5, 2013
Third Public Meeting	As scheduled by the ARC	December 10, 2013
Fourth Public Meeting	As scheduled by the ARC	February 4, 2014
Delivery of the final ARC report	Not earlier than ninety (90) days and not later than one hundred and twenty (120) days after the ARC's first Public Meeting	February 13, 2014
Presentation of the Director's Report and the ARC Accommodation Report	Not less than thirty (30) days after the final ARC report was delivered to the Director of Education*	March 24, 2014
Committee of the Whole Meeting (regular or special) for Public Input	As scheduled by Trustees within sixty (60) days prior to making their final decision	May 6, 2014
Committee of the Whole Meeting (regular or special) to decide on School Accommodation Review	As scheduled by Trustees no earlier than sixty (60) days from when the Director's Report is officially received by Trustees	June 9, 2014

The committee held 11 working group meetings between October 1, 2013 and February 11, 2014. The original approved schedule was modified to accommodate discussion surrounding the accommodation review options (see section 7.1 of minutes from working group meeting #7

<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Central-Mtn-WG-Mtg-7-Jan-14-Minutes-Final.pdf>). The final schedule was posted on January 21, 2014 (see

<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Central-Mountain-Schedule-and-Timelines-Updt-Jan-21.pdf>).

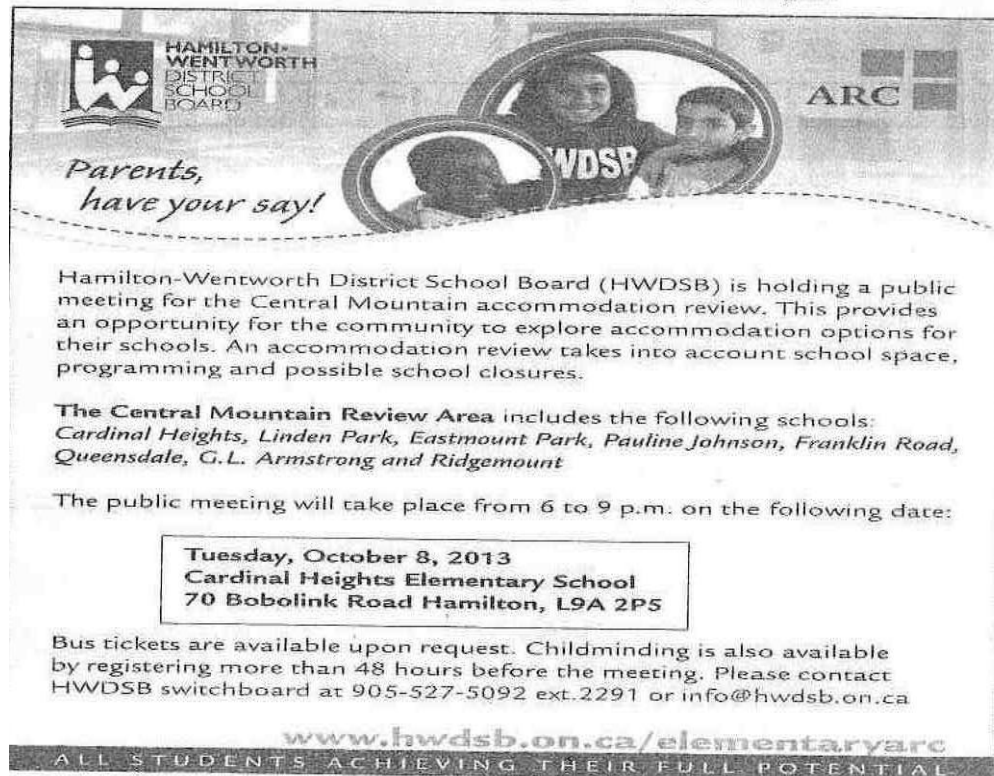
3) Non-English speaking parents and guardians were unable to attend due to language barriers or even acknowledged the scope of what is happening due to cultural differences

HWDSB received no requests for translation services during the accommodation review process from the public directly or through an accommodation review committee member. Translation services have been provided in previous HWDSB meetings. A scribe was provided upon request from a member of the public who is hearing impaired (see public meeting #4 minutes, section 4:

<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Central-Mtn-PM-Mtg-4-Feb-04-Minutes-Final.pdf>.

- 4) ***There happens to be also other demographics such as low income and other at risk/vulnerable members of the community who may have not understood the process until the end as well and due to transportation and child care needs may not have been able to attend or understood the importance of the meetings***

Child care and bus tickets were available upon request by stakeholders at each of the four public meetings. This information was communicated through local newspaper ads (see example advertisement below) and was also sent directly to families through individual school communities.



**HAMILTON-
WENTWORTH**
DISTRICT
SCHOOL
BOARD

ARC

*Parents,
have your say!*

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) is holding a public meeting for the Central Mountain accommodation review. This provides an opportunity for the community to explore accommodation options for their schools. An accommodation review takes into account school space, programming and possible school closures.

The Central Mountain Review Area includes the following schools:
Cardinal Heights, Linden Park, Eastmount Park, Pauline Johnson, Franklin Road, Queensdale, G.L. Armstrong and Ridgemount

The public meeting will take place from 6 to 9 p.m. on the following date:

**Tuesday, October 8, 2013
Cardinal Heights Elementary School
70 Bobolink Road Hamilton, L9A 2P5**

Bus tickets are available upon request. Childminding is also available by registering more than 48 hours before the meeting. Please contact HWDSB switchboard at 905-527-5092 ext.2291 or info@hwdsb.on.ca

www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc

ALL STUDENTS ACHIEVING THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

- 5) *Even when child care was available at meetings parents may not have understood this and due to the late hours of the meetings sometimes going into 10 o'clock at night people did not wish to participate***

Accommodation reviews are a time consuming commitment for committee volunteers and staff strived to ensure meetings remained on schedule during the accommodation review process. From October until February, all but three meetings were adjourned by 9:00 p.m. Adjournment times are posted below:

Meeting	Time of Adjournment
Working Group Meeting #1	8:54 pm
Working Group Meeting #2	8:40 pm
Working Group Meeting #3	8:57 pm
Working Group Meeting #4	9:00 pm
Working Group Meeting #5	9:20 pm
Working Group Meeting #6	9:20 pm
Working Group Meeting #7	8:50 pm
Working Group Meeting #8	9:00 pm
Working Group Meeting #9	9:00 pm
Working Group Meeting #10	9:10 pm
Working Group Meeting #11	8:00 pm
Public Meeting #1	8:53 pm
Public Meeting #2	8:30 pm
Public Meeting #3	9:00 pm
Public Meeting #4	7:45 pm

- 6) *Schools which only sent home notes in backpacks that may have never reached parents and people within the community who may have school aged children but wished to attend meetings could not. Also peoples without internet access or an understanding of how to use the internet could not keep up with notes on the board's website***

Information was sent home directly to families through individual school communities (see <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/central-mountain/letters-to-parentsguardians/>). HWDSB also used automated phone messages to notify parents/guardians about the date, time and location of the upcoming public meetings. Articles in local media were also effective in reaching members of the public about meeting dates and times. All documents were published on the Board's website the day following the meeting (see <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/central-mountain/>) and print copies were made available upon request. All public meetings were advertised in local newspapers for all stakeholders to ensure those stakeholders without school-aged children could participate in the process

(See advertisement above) as well as posted on school signs to ensure local community members were made aware of upcoming public meetings.

7) This means Ridgemount and Pauline Johnson will both be well over 140% utilization and the only additions being made is two classrooms to Pauline Johnson

On June 16, 2014, Trustees ratified a decision to close Cardinal Heights, Eastmount Park and Linden Park in June 2015. The decision is outlined as follows (see <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/>):

- Close Eastmount Park in June 2015. All students to attend G.L. Armstrong for JK-8. G.L. Armstrong will receive a full-day kindergarten renovation.
- Close Linden Park in June of 2015. Students, depending on address will attend Queensdale or Franklin Road for JK-8. Franklin Road receives full day kindergarten addition.
- Close Cardinal Heights in June of 2015. Students, depending on address attend Pauline Johnson or Ridgemount for JK-8. Pauline Johnson receives two full day kindergarten and two classroom addition to accommodate JK-8 students.
- Ridgemount receives a four room addition to accommodate JK-8 students.
- Queensdale grade organization becomes JK-8. Full day kindergarten addition required.

In the approved accommodation strategy there is no school proposed to remain open with a utilization of 140 percent. The complete breakdown of utilization can be found on page 10 of the director's report here: <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2014/03/Central-Mountain-Accommodation-Review-Directors-Report-Website.pdf>

Hamilton Central Mountain ARC, Cardinal Heights School

8) Cardinal Heights...is also wheel chair accessible through out and has no barriers to washrooms and there are several entrances and exits that are boundary free as well including automatic door opening buttons within the school.

HWDSB's practice is to educate all students, wherever possible, in their home school. The vision is to provide students with independent barrier-free access to all aspects of a school's program. The Board has an ongoing strategic plan to ensure new construction and capital renovation projects include barrier-free accommodation (see <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Accessibility-Barrier-Free-Pathways.pdf>).

- 9) *The school is able to gain more community partnerships if it were to implement a before and after school programming for the students and it also has amenities which can be used by the public and potential partnerships with business and community members (utilizing the gym, the kitchen room, the studio etc.)***

All schools are open to community use and potential facility partnerships. These relationships are based on the Community Use of Board Facilities Policy and Facilities Partnership Policy found on the Board's policy web page at <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/board/policies/>. To date the Board has not received any viable requests from potential partners for any schools located in this review area.

Issues surrounding the ARC Process

- 10) *During the early process parents weren't allowed to have an open forum where they could voice their questions to the ARC members or the superintendent in charge***

The first public meeting held on October 8, 2013 was conducted using "World Café" methodology. The purpose of this methodology is to effectively host large group dialogue by breaking large numbers of people into small groups of 8-12 individuals. A facilitator provides discussion questions to the group and a scribe records the conversations. Each group's notes were compiled and provided to the accommodation review committee for information and analysis.

Subsequent public meeting formats were discussed and set by the accommodation review committee. Each meeting format was determined by the working group prior to the public meetings as outlined in the minutes.

Working Group Meeting #3 (Prior to Public Meeting #2) – See section 10

<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Central-Mtn-WG-Mtg-3-Oct-29-2013-Minutes-Final-Approved.pdf>

Working Group Meeting #6 (Prior to Public Meeting #3) – See section 6

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Working Group Meeting #9 (Prior to Public Meeting #4) – See section 6

<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/CMtn-WG-Mtg-9-Jan-28-Minutes-Final.pdf>

11) The ARC members had asked for additional meetings as they felt they did not have enough time to make such large decisions in such short time frame but they were told they would only have X amount of meetings

The timelines set out for completion of the Central Mountain ARC are consistent with those outlined in the Ministry of Education's guidelines as well as the Board's *Pupil Accommodation Review Policy* (No. 3.8). The Central Mountain committee held 11 working group meetings between the first working group meeting on October 1, 2013 and the final working group meeting on February 11, 2014. The original approved schedule was modified to ensure that accommodation review members had sufficient time to complete their mandate. In working group meeting #7 on January 21, 2014 members were provided with a proposed revised schedule with additional working group meetings. The schedule was approved unanimously to complete the accommodation review process with additional meetings but within the policy's timelines. (See section 7.1 of minutes from working group meeting #7: <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Central-Mtn-WG-Mtg-7-Jan-14-Minutes-Final.pdf>.) The modified and approved schedule was updated on January 21, 2014 (see <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/central-mountain/meetings/>)

12) There seemed to be options the Board was just not willing to explore or consider even though the public highly favoured them

All options submitted by the public to HWDSB staff or to accommodation review committee members were reviewed by the accommodation review committee. Committee members discussed and analyzed the options during working group meetings. In total, 35 options were developed or submitted and all options were considered by the accommodation review committee. The 35 options are available on the HWDSB's website at the following links:

Accommodation Options 1-15: <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Central-Mountain-Accommodation-Option-1-15-Working-Group-Meeting-5.pdf>

Accommodation Options 16-20: <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Accommodation-Options-16-20-Cnt-Mtn.pdf>

Accommodation Options 21-30: <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Accommodation-Options-21-301.pdf>

Accommodation Options 31-33: <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Accommodation-Options-31-331.pdf>

Accommodation Options 34 & 35: <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Committee-Options-22-32-34-35-Enrolment-and-Boundaries.pdf>

13) During meetings parents from other schools had pointed out some of the “mistakes” made in the board’s Facility Condition Index . . . It appeared at times that there was negligence and omissions to make some schools appear worse than they are

The accommodation review committee members were made aware of any errors found in presentations or data requests and were reissued corrected documents. The information was also updated on the website and a revision date was indicated on the document.

The current measure of a facility’s condition is the FCI, which is a ratio between repair (maintenance) costs and replacement costs. It is a standard used by the Ministry of Education to provide a similar benchmark for all school buildings across the province. The FCI is calculated by taking into account all building systems and the cost of their repairs (including deferred maintenance) for the entire school, *divided by* the replacement cost of the school. The final calculation is shown as a percentage. For example, a high percentage represents a school with a large amount of renewal needs and a low percentage indicates a school with low renewal requirements. Renewal needs are the calculated total of all the repairs and upgrades required to bring a school back up to brand new condition.

The Ministry of Education currently has two data sets that capture assessed replacement values. The first was completed in 2003 and second began in 2011. The Ministry is currently updating all data sets for schools across Ontario.

14) They had missed the walk through due to an incident and the walk through was never rescheduled and conducted

As indicated in an earlier section, walkthroughs are an opportunity for accommodation review committee members to tour the schools under review. Walkthroughs are not a part of HWDSB’s accommodation review policy but are offered to help committee members gain a better understanding of the facilities and what each of these facilities has to offer students and the community.

The request for school tours occurred during the first working group meeting on Tuesday, October 1, 2013 (see working group meeting #1 minutes section 2: <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Minutes-WG-Mtg-1-Oct-01-2013-Central-Mtn-Approved.pdf>) and staff created a schedule to accommodate the request (See working group meeting #2 minutes, section 5: <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Central-Mtn-WG-Mtg-2-Oct-15-2013-Minutes-Final2.pdf>).

The Cardinal Heights walkthrough was scheduled to follow working group meeting #2 on October 15, 2013. Due to a fire alarm at the facility, the walkthrough was postponed until a later date. The tour was rescheduled prior to working group meeting #6 on December 3, 2013 (See working group meeting #6

minutes, section 1: <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Central-Mtn-WG-Mtg-6-Minutes-Final.pdf>).

It was also stated on October 29, 2013 that school walkthroughs would be available at any time during the school week and committee members could contact principals directly to set up a scheduled walkthrough. (See working group meeting #3 minutes, section 4.1 <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Central-Mtn-WG-Mtg-3-Oct-29-2013-Minutes-Final-Approved.pdf>).

The walkthroughs have no relation to a school's Facility Condition Index (FCI). FCI is a ratio used to measure the relative condition of a building that takes into account all building systems. It is calculated by dividing the cost of repairs for the building by the replacement value. These values are not affected by the accommodation review walkthroughs.

School Programming, Specialized Teachers, Equipment in regards to the learning environment, Partnerships, and Grants and community funding

In the above listed sections from the request for administrative review document the author describes how Cardinal Heights meets the needs of students through programming, specialized teachers, equipment, partnerships and community funding and does not indicate how HWDSB was in violation of its accommodation review policy.

HWDSB's goal is to ensure all students reach their full potential within its schools. All school support provided by HWDSB will continue at remaining schools within the system.

In order to ensure a smooth transition for students and their families, a post-ARC committee will be created with membership from school council, parents, staff, students, Special Education Advisory Committee and Superintendents. The committee helps oversee the transition of students from a closing school to their new location and makes sure programming, equipment, community funding and partnerships is equitably reallocated within the system.

Pupil Accommodation review Policy which should have been acknowledged

All of the information presented in this section was acknowledged and approved by the accommodation review committee. The data presented was available via the School information Profiles (SIPs) and the terms of reference. The following indicates how the terms of reference and the SIPs were presented to accommodation review members.

HWDSB's Pupil Accommodation Review Terms of Reference (<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/central-mountain/terms-of-reference/>) outlines seven reference criteria, which includes facility utilization, permanent and non-permanent accommodation,

program offerings, quality teaching and learning environments, transportation, partnership opportunities and equity. The reference criteria related to individual schools was available to Trustees, ARC members and stakeholders through the School Information Profiles.

School Information Profiles (SIPs) are a tool created in order for both ARC members and stakeholders to understand how well schools meet the objectives and the reference criteria outlined in the Terms of Reference. The SIPs were delivered to the ARC in draft format during the first working group meeting as part of their accommodation review binders. The SIPs were discussed, reviewed and approved at working group meeting #3 (see working group meeting #3 minutes, section 7 <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Central-Mtn-WG-Mtg-3-Oct-29-2013-Minutes-Final-Approved.pdf>)

The SIPs were then presented to the public in an open forum during public meeting #2 on November 5, 2013. Staff and committee members were present to review any questions from the public (see public meeting #2 minutes, section 4 <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Central-Mtn-PM-Mtg-2-Nov-05-Minutes-Final.pdf>). The information was also available to Trustees, ARC members and stakeholders online at Central Mountain SIP <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Central-Mountain-School-Information-Profile-Final11.pdf>

All ARC members also received Individual School Profiles. These documents are an important part of the accommodation review process. The Individual School Profiles provide ARC members with information about individual schools such as boundary maps, current enrolments, grade organization, site plans, walking distances, student distribution maps and school EQAO results. The Individual School Profiles provide information above and beyond the SIP for a more in-depth understanding of the school facility as well as the community it serves. The Individual School Profiles can be found at the following link <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/central-mountain/school-profiles/>

Accommodation Review Committee Report

15) Upon school closure it is unknown whether the same programming will be available at equal or better quality at the newly designed schools upon entry date for student being moved to neighbouring schools and what will become of the things purchased with grants and fundraiser money from parents and community members

As mentioned in a previous response, a post-ARC committee has been created with membership from school council, parents, staff, students, Special Education Advisory Committee and Superintendents to

ensure a smooth transition for students and their families. The committee helps oversee the transition of students from a closing school to their new location and makes sure programming, equipment, community funding and partnerships is equitably reallocated within the system. All items within a closing school will, if needed, follow the students to their new location. All items deemed surplus will be shared with all other schools within HWDSB.

The current physical condition of the school in regards to Facility Condition Index

16) When a walkthrough was not conducted and ARC members were not shown or told of updates. This made the school look as it costs more to keep up and that it will be a liability in the future to fund therefore the decision was based on incorrect information which resulted in over exaggerated costs which will not be required in some cases and waste of money which had already been spent to perform finished upgrades and purchases.

Cardinal Heights was deemed to be in “fair” condition based on the ranking applied by HWDSB to schools with FCI percentages between 41 to 64 percent. Facility rankings are outlined in HWDSB’s Long Term Facility Master Plan at <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/board/facilities-master-plan/>

The FCI is calculated by taking into account all building systems and the cost of their repairs (including deferred maintenance) for the entire school, *divided by* the replacement cost of the school. The final calculation is shown as a percentage. As older components are replaced within a building, other building systems are nearing the end of their lifecycle. Although capital improvements do help in lowering a building’s FCI, many building components deteriorate faster than they can be fixed. This results in a higher FCI value.

The 10-year history of capital improvements at all schools included in the Central Mountain accommodation review process were shared with the committee members and stakeholders. (See <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/10-Year-Capital-History-Central-Mountain.pdf>)

Value to the Student, School Board, Community and Local Economy

In the above listed sections from the request for administrative review document the author describes how Cardinal Heights meets the needs of students, the Board and the local economy and does not indicate how HWDSB was in violation of its accommodation review policy.

Elementary Long Term Facilities Master Plan Guiding Principles

In order to ensure that Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) provides equitable, affordable and sustainable learning facilities, the following LTFMP Guiding Principles have been created (see <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/board/facilities-master-plan/>). These principles guide and assist in creating the framework for determining the viability of our schools, which is a key component in the development and implementation of the Long Term Facilities Master Plan.

- a. HWDSB is committed to providing and maintaining quality learning and teaching environments that support student achievement (*HWDSB Strategic Directions, Annual Operating Plan 2011-12*)

17) The school in question does not have any issues with learning or environment and is ready for 21st Century Learning Models to be introduced without the need of upgrades except tangible items like IPADs. This means that the school is also able to keep up in regards to the plan to use less printed materials and more online resources.

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) is committed to promoting 21st century learning skills. HWDSB believes all students and staff should have equitable access to learning experiences that are engaging, authentic, and that leverage local and global connections to help develop critical and creative thinking, problem solving, collaboration and communication skills. HWDSB supports this learning through ethical, competent, and acceptable use of technology, tools and social media (see <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/21st-Century-Learning-and-Technology.pdf>).

- b. Optimal utilization rates of school facilities is in the range of 90- 110%

18) The school I snow operating at above 100 percent and will continue to. This should have made it invalid as a choice of closure and not been included in the group of closures especially when one school which should have by this guidelines been closed as well but hadn't. If the surrounding schools cannot handle the children they will require portables and parents will as that their children be bused to other schools.

This guiding principle suggests “optimal” utilization rates of 90-110 percent. As of 2012, the overall utilization for this planning area was 71 percent. Trustees approved the Revised Staff Recommendation which projects an overall utilization in the 90 percentile range.

(<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2014/03/Central-Mountain-Accommodation-Review-Directors-Report-Website.pdf>)

- c. Facilities reflect the program strategy that all students need personalized learning, pathways, schools with specialization and cluster and community support (*Learning for All: HWDSB Program Strategy*)

19) The school already has in fact some programming that relates to the “learning for all” with the Character Network Transitions” the school is fully able to accommodate anything within board directives or policy.

Our Program Strategy is rethinking the way we offer programs and facilities, so that we can best meet the needs of each of our students in the 21st century. We want students to have choice, support and direction as they benefit from the knowledge and skills acquired from their educational program. We are restructuring what we offer, where we offer it and how we can help all students achieve their full potential.

- d. Transportation to school locations will not normally exceed 60 minutes one way (*Transportation Policy, 2011*)

Transportation is not estimated to exceed more than 30 minutes (see <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Transportation.pdf>)

- e. School facilities meet the needs of each of our students in the 21st century (*Education in HWDSB, 2011*)

As noted above, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) is committed to promoting 21st century learning skills. HWDSB believes all students and staff should have equitable access to learning experiences that are engaging, authentic, and that leverage local and global connections to help develop critical and creative thinking, problem solving, collaboration and communication skills. HWDSB supports this learning through ethical, competent, and acceptable use of technology, tools and social media (see <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/21st-Century-Learning-and-Technology.pdf>).

- f. Accessibility will be considered in facility planning and accommodation (*Accessibility (Barrier-Free) “Pathways” Policy, 1999*)

20) The school is all one level and has many doors to enter and exit throughout the building and has many upgrades to wheel chair accessible washrooms in regards to physical needs. The school is one of a few that has a Support E.A. and designated room in which student are able to access and utilize.

HWDSB’s practice is to educate all students, wherever possible, in their home school. The vision is to provide students with independent barrier-free access to all aspects of a school’s program. The Board has an ongoing strategic plan to ensure new construction and capital renovation projects include barrier-free accommodation (see <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Accessibility-Barrier-Free-Pathways.pdf>).

- g. School facilities provide neighbourhood and community access that supports the well-being of students and their families (*A Guide to Educational Partnerships, 2009*)

21) The community is unhappy with the decision and feels "duped" as they did not expect the school to be considered for closure due to the above 100% utilization rate and condition of the school. The schools nutrition programs that feeds all students but also provides for a demographic of "at risk youth" as well and the social emotional needs as well with caring and trained staff.

As previously mentioned, the guiding principle suggests an "optimal" utilization rated of 90-110 percent. As of 2012, the overall utilization for this planning area was 71 percent. Trustees approve the Revised Staff recommendation which projects overall utilizations in the 90 percentile range (see <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2014/03/Central-Mountain-Accommodation-Review-Directors-Report-Website.pdf>). All schools included in an accommodation review can be considered for closure. Accommodation review committees are tasked with providing solutions for a group of schools to ensure long-term sustainable use of space while maintaining quality learning and teaching environments.

All schools included in the Central Mountain accommodation review have a nutrition program, with the exception of Queensdale. All items or programs within a closing school will, if needed, follow the students to their new locations. (See <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Central-Mountain-School-Information-Profile-Final11.pdf>)

4. School's Physical Space to Support Student Learning and Child Care Services	Cardinal Heights	Eastmount Park	Franklin Road	G.L. Armstrong	Linden Park	Pauline Johnson	Queensdale	Ridgemount	Total
# Data to be Provided to the ARC									
1 Does the School have a Library/Resource Centre?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
2 Does the School have at least one dedicated Science Room?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	
3 Number of Science Rooms in School	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	
4 Does the School have a Gymnasium/ General Purpose Room?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (2)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
5 Is there a stage in the Gymnasium	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
6 Does the school have a Computer Lab?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	
7 Does the school have a dedicated Learning Resource Room?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes-not a full classroom	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
8 Is there a childcare centre located on site	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
9 Is there a Before & After school program	No	Yes	No	After	Yes	After	Yes	Yes	
10 Is there a Breakfast / Nutrition program available for students at the school?	Yes (nutrition)	Yes (breakfast)	Yes (nutrition)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	

h. School facilities have flexible learning environments including adaptive and flexible use of spaces; student voice is reflected in where, when and how learning occurs (*Education in HWDSB, 2012*)

22) Again all classes are utilized as course specific and are utilized as such. Also again the School Support E.A. has a room in which students having problems in class can also go sit and work quietly with permission from their teacher or principal.

Student supports move with students as determined by the student's need.

Closing Statement

23) Cardinal Heights sits beside its sister school a k-5 elementary Pauline Johnson. The two schools are good condition and house students at above 100% utilization. It makes more sense to keep the two running as is instead of inserting another 30 to 40% of students into Pauline Johnson with the addition of only two more rooms.

Optimal utilization rates of school facilities are in the range of 90 – 110 percent. Pauline Johnson's utilization is projected to be 110 per cent by 2022. (See <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2014/03/Central-Mountain-Accommodation-Review-Directors-Report-Website.pdf>).

The recommendation is outlined as follows and includes four additional rooms – two classroom and two kindergarten rooms:

- Close Eastmount Park in June 2015. All students to attend G.L. Armstrong for JK-8. G.L. Armstrong will receive a full-day kindergarten renovation.
- Close Linden Park in June of 2015. Students, depending on address will attend Queensdale or Franklin Road for JK-8. Franklin Road receives full day kindergarten addition.
- Close Cardinal Heights in June of 2015. Students, depending on address attend Pauline Johnson or Ridgemount for JK-8. Pauline Johnson receives two full day kindergarten and two classroom addition to accommodate JK-8 students.
- Ridgemount receives a four room addition to accommodate JK-8 students.
- Queensdale grade organization becomes JK-8. Full day kindergarten addition required.

In the approved accommodation strategy there is no school proposed to remain open with a utilization of 140 percent. The complete breakdown of utilization can be found on page 10 of the director's report here: <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2014/03/Central-Mountain-Accommodation-Review-Directors-Report-Website.pdf>

24) There is a French Immersion school within the boundary in Ward 7 Central Mountain and it was never in the "ARC" review due to the French programming and with.

Norwood Park is a single-track French Immersion (FI) school that was not included in the Central Mountain review; therefore it is outside the scope of the Central Mountain Accommodation Review. In 2012, HWDSB expanded the FI program to ensure that over utilized FI schools would get accommodation relief from the growing enrolment of FI students. Included in that plan was the expansion of grade 6-8 FI at Ancaster Senior as well as opening a new single tack FI school, Ecole Elementaire Michaelle Jean Elementary School, in Binbrook. Since opening those two programs, the enrolment pressure has eased at Norwood Park and HWDSB has removed six portable classrooms.

25) The process set by the board doesn't reflect on the policy guidelines set by Ministry and the process is not being carried out properly, things are being omitted or not properly disclosed and people are being misled. Members are not being given enough time or information to make proper decisions and the board itself should be at fault for schools which are not kept up and maintained instead of closing them. The costs for something's are highly exaggerated and the formula and programing they use to determine costs are incorrect.

While the petitioners believe that HWDSB did not follow the Pupil Accommodation Review Policy, it is the opinion of HWDSB that the policy was followed and the committee was provided with ample time, data and information in order to develop and compile its recommendations.

All the information for the Central Mountain accommodation review can be found online at <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/central-mountain/> and is available in hard copy format. We understand that an administrative review is an important part of the democratic process and we welcome the opportunity to further clarify any of the information noted above.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



John Malloy