

### **Facilitator Report Back - Central Mountain Public Meeting #1 - October 08, 2013**

Facilitators reported on the top three priorities raised in group discussion as noted below. Information will be provided to Committee Members for information and consideration as an alternate recommendation is developed.

#### **Community**

- understanding the importance of a school community to the students and parents - many parents were raised in this area and have children attending the same schools - must not lose sense of historical significance
- closures will create a sense of loss of community, friendships, partnerships - community values must be recognized
- Linden Park provides a community hub - closure would create a concern for the senior centre

#### **Costs**

- Is it cost effective to amalgamate if busing costs increase and renovation costs are incurred
- What is the annual savings overtime by following the staff option

#### **Data**

- Data - discomfort with demographic data - need to ensure data is not misleading - any consideration of statistics or plans beyond 2022
- Current programming and enrolment projections do not reflect opening of full day kindergarten
- Need current data on facility conditions - transparency is a concern
- Research indicates that smaller schools good too, which are preferred

#### **Daycare**

- Will our own facilities be available for students who require daycare

#### **Enrolment**

- Has a survey been considered to determine how many families will stay with HWDSB
- Students should perhaps be shifted from schools with portables to increase enrolment in schools with high vacancies
- 

#### **Funding**

- Where is the funding coming from
- How do we know funding received will be directed to items identified

#### **Reference Criteria**

- Proposed option does not appear to consider all reference criteria equally
- How was enrolment and school utilization criteria rated

- Does not account for special needs, special programs, safety aspect to be considered - students need safe places and opportunities to be involved in organized activities
- Grading of schools seems to be inaccurate in terms of air conditioning and accessibility
- Queensdale was not fairly assessed - moving to another school that has similar rating seems illogical
- A new school for north central mountain should be considered

### **School Closures**

- School closures may create a decline in real estate values
- When schools close, if these properties turn into housing developments the population may increase enrolment numbers
- Long term effects on green space and on the environment should be considered
- School closures may create enrolment loss - some families may refuse to change schools

### **Student Impact**

- The social and emotional needs of our children must be considered - students will feel different levels of loss both socially and emotionally
- Won't move kids from one straw house to another - what makes it better learning environment
- Is closing schools/putting more students into one school really better - it needs to be what is best for the students - human impact on students does not compare with any cost savings
- Increased walking distances will create a concern for student safety - greater walking distances means more students will have to cross major traffic arteries - reducing the number of students who can walk to school is in contrast with healthy living
- There appears to be disrespect for transition - has a transition plan for students been considered - what will this look like
- Will there be building capacity for students during construction
- During renovations asbestos may be a concern if students are in the school
- For those schools that remain open, accessibility will need to be considered

### **Timelines**

- Process appears to be too fast - timelines very tight considering extent of work to be completed
- Reality must be considered
- Timelines appear to be unrealistic

### **Transportation**

- Moving students to a central school will create busing concerns
- Fewer buses creates a healthier community

### **Vacancies**

- Why can we not shift boundaries to bring in new students to fill our vacancies

**Question 1: How does the staff recommendation follow the reference criteria?**

- What constitutes facility utilization: does that include gym, music rooms, etc – would those programs/classes be compromised with increased enrolment
- Concern that students would be overcrowded right away and would the space be ready – what does accommodation readiness mean?
- If the board wants k-8, why would they leave PJ as a k-3
- 
- Programming and enrolment numbers would change if 3 schools closing does not include the full day kindergarten
- No portables at any of the schools none issue
- Program offering – queensdale school have 30 years deaf , fully accessible, before and after school .
- Based on research, larger school are not beneficial to younger students and their learning.
- Transportation: number of students who need transportation will increase (provincial funding?)
- Walkable schools, board is choosing to bus instead.
- Buses need to be policed and no where to drop off at Armstrong except side streets with lots of cars parked.
- We expect art, music and specialized programs be supported.
- Bigger schools are not socially focused (more number than name) that any child may have especially special needs children.
- 
- Partnership opportunities???? What does this mean
- Program offerings not a part of the decision making process....bricks and mortar, capacity, but not the quality of programs offered at each school
- Quality of teaching not taken into consideration, quality learning environments, community around the schools . Were these things taken into consideration. Crossing of major roads, no accessibility, playground condition etc...
- Too many repairs needed at Armstrong....not so much in other schools. Don't understand why this would be recommended. Who is doing the reviews of the structural integrity of the schools? Is it HWDSB or is it contracted to an outside source? Results may vary depending on who conducts the assessments. Community wants an independent assessment to ensure valid results. Avoid a hidden agenda by HWDSB.
- Don't understand the board's assessment. Feel that kids would be downgraded by moving school.
- Equity??? What does this mean and how does it factor into this decision. Needs clarification. Don't understand the language in the reference criteria.
- What are the students going to get from new facilities that they don't currently get.
- What are the criteria to ensure that students will be getting improved programming and improved environment? Staff recommendations don't match what the reality is for most students.
- Transportation....concerns that there will be longer commutes. Time sitting on bus is wasted time. Could be doing family things and after school activities. Too far for primary students. Too costly to transport all these students...who is going to pay for this???
- Child Care???? Was this a consideration? Wait times for daycare are long. Does the new school have this capacity to accommodate all of these new students? Would there be bus transportation for daycare kids?? Another issue is daycare in the community (not in school), what are parents to do? How do they arrange the pick up and drop off of all their kids?

### Question 1: How does the staff recommendation follow the reference criteria?

- No census taken of the community. Questions based on where the community decline and projected numbers are coming from. Don't agree with this. Are government census reports taken into consideration? Many communities are on the verge of a flip. Huge transitions going on in neighbourhoods. Younger families moving into areas with small children....creating a situation where these children don't have a close home school. All of this doesn't match projected enrolment numbers. Data is hypothetical.
- Facility utilization....schools might be at capacity if full day kdg was added or gr 7 and 8 was added
- 
- Availability of full day JK/SK in locations that decisions are being made about prior to implementation.
- Parents like the small school feel in the community, not necessarily being evolved into a larger group of community.
- Community partnerships are generated from the people not the business in the area. More community involvement cannot be generated through the numbers that the board has brought forth. The numbers do not represent the community that some schools encompass.
- 
- How are the reference criteria weighted? It seems that enrolment and utilization were the most important (weighted more heavily).
- Are the criteria applicable in the same way for primary/junior schools as middle schools? For example a science lab is only use by the grade 7 and 8s.
- How much will the savings by closing facilities (plant maintenance) be offset by increased transportations costs, more crossing guards? Has that been considered in the Staff option?
- How is it determined that a school of 500 students is ideal? Is there research?
- Staff Option does not appear to have explored Partnership Opportunities at all? Again, how are the reference criteria weighted?
- 
- Quality teaching and learning environments- unique to use when closing the school
- What's the criteria for coming up with the impact of condition rating school. What makes Queensdale average? Some Good rated schools have been closed in the last year due to facility issues and Queensdale hasn't been. What was the criteria and how did you make the assessments based on the criteria
- Issue with the ratings-disciplining, staff turnover and concern with student and staff morale. When staffs surveyed they indicate the opposite. These stats don't add up. How did you come up with these ratings. Greater transparency is required
- Ridgemount has had money put into it. Without the renovations Ridgemount should have been closed. FDK was also added to it
- Hill Park being closed affected Linden Park
- The land the HP is on is deemed as only for education and/or recreation, what is the land being used for?
- Sending children to Catholic school board
- What rational is there from the Board that consolidation supports student learning
- Jk students taking a school bus.
- Will the infrastructure been considered with respect to all the extra bussing. Additional traffic of parents

### Question 1: How does the staff recommendation follow the reference criteria?

- Has day care been considered. Will families have the opportunity to continue with day care that they are currently accessing within their current school.
- Young children will need to cross major streets
- 
- How is Queensdale the only school that gets cheaper to build in 10 years where the remaining schools cost of construction increases.
- What's the FCI on a brand new school in 5 years?
- The recommendation does not consider that two of the schools being closed are fully accessible – Armstrong is not.
- What is the cost of maintaining an empty class room vs. building a new room / addition etc.
- Does this meet the optimal % capacity – will our education levels drop if school #'s go up?
- Does this plan accommodate the student teacher ratio?
- Environmental impact from buses.
- Narrow streets in the area, extra buses creates additional congestion on side streets, have we analyzed the impact on local businesses
- Confirm if the park at the Armstrong property is City or Board of Ed property
- Air conditioning in Queensdale vs no air in Armstrong – what's the cost?
- Teachers union has student ratio – this may violate that agreement
- FCI rating is ministry dictated
- Who rated the buildings, can we be provided this information? Has a physical inspection been carried out or are these software projections?
- Long-term facility master plan is being taken into consideration, but our group feels that “short-term” consideration should be taken. Today's parents and kids are the ones dealing with this.
- 

#### Queensdale

- C) Program Offerings Concern(Concerns about HOH program)
- Acoustics of building assist with this program
- K-5 Schools have historically served their students well in terms of educational programming
- E) Transportation – No buses at Queensdale
- Concern over best usage of time (time spent on bus vs. other activities)
- Traffic Patterns – buses congesting streets at larger schools (Armstrong)
- A) Facility Utilization – concern with authenticity of statistics (accuracy)
- Population is cyclical and might not follow the trends that may happen
- Hard to predict the future/demographics over the next 10 years
- Mohawk, education sectors (university) changing city economy might result in additional growth
- Would support a K-8 model at Queensdale to support the existing school.

### Question 1: How does the staff recommendation follow the reference criteria?

- Queensdale parents took a poll, 101/120 parents have said they would not send their students to Armstrong (Catholic/out-of-catchment)
- Would result in skewed numbers
- Tax dollars allocated to Catholic Board –
- What happens to closed school properties, how does that affect the community in terms of new development

#### Pauline Johnson

- C) Program Offerings – Changing to K-3 results in loss of French, changes program for Physical Education, extra curricular opportunities
- Affects community partnerships with YMCA, Mohawk Nursing, Co-op students from Secondary School, Rotary Club
- 
- Sooner or later we are going to sell off assets and we will have no assets to sell.
- HWCDSB manages finances better than us
- Community skills helps diversity, kids would walk to school and still be able to walk to still
- What difference in the management at the HWCDSB
- Staff recommendation is to send students to a school with low Fraser ratings
- 
- Note- I could not find the question mark on this computer ....it only comes up as É . Please make changes in the notes.
- Wants to question data.
- How can you can up with enrolment numbers for 2022 when these children are not born yet? Answered by Ian from Board – take current trends
- Does numbers in data reflect the closure of Hill Park?

Big leap- between what we have now, and we will have in 2017. Wants to question data.

Visit transportation data- current transportation policy doesn't line up with transportation criteria

What is the additional reference criteria?

- Facility utilization - does it take into account if parents decide to send their kids not to the designed schools, but maybe change to a separate school. schools with special programme, schools with day care.
- Survey taken at Queensdale- 70% of parents will not send their children to Armstrong. ,
- Does not agree with condition of schools... when was data collected. Eg. Queensdale has had many improvements that are not shown in data.
  - Have you concerned full usage of all facilities in the schools.

### Question 1: How does the staff recommendation follow the reference criteria?

- Programme offerings. Will day care be accommodated in the merged school. Daycare is wanted before and after school, March break. Today's family (partnerships)
- 
- If Ridgemount is already at 104% capacity, then to 160% how will they accommodate all of those children?
- What is the interim plan for the students and there seems to be a disconnect between numbers and facilities. How can this happen by Sept. 2014.
- Will transportation policy take into account that young children may have to cross major streets. (Linc, Mohawk, Wellington)
- How will specialists be able guaranteed in a school that loses staff? ie music, phys-ed, science, art.
- Concern for hard of hearing classes being pulled for Queensdale.
- Newer schools would make it more accessible to more people.
- 
- - does not follow "equity" as G.I. Armstrong is not wheelchair accessible
- - forces children to be bussed – children should be walking; currently Queensdale has no one bussed except students for the special needs program
  - Linden park currently partners with Sackville, Early Years, Elementary School, Today's Family (before and after school care), rec centre and it is on donated land. There are inter generational experiences that would be lost if Linden Park closes
  - Kids now are able to walk across campus to go to swimming lessons
  - It is truly a community hub
- Linden Park cannot be sold because it is not ethical since it was donated land – could sell the other land to make money
- Linden Park – for transportation reference criteria, would no longer meet it – kids would have to bus a big distance
- Linden Park loses program offerings – in terms of intergenerational learning opportunities
- Linden Park – connection between the Day Care and the school. Also the high school family studies program came into Linden Park
- Queensdale students are not willing to go to Armstrong. There was a survey taken among parents that showed that only 20% of parents would send their kids to Armstrong – this means that Armstrong would not be utilized. This would not meet Reference Criteria.
- Armstrong is older than the existing building in Queensdale. Queensdale was renovated with extensive renovations in the last few years. There is no way Armstrong could be ready in time. There needs to be a lot more renovations in Armstrong.
- Armstrong does not meet accessible standards
- Not sure if the numbers are accurate in regards to the funding – the FCI – currently it says Queensdale the numbers actually goes DOWN in ten years. Isn't this a mistake? How can we trust these numbers?
- There is a strong feeling that Queensdale is in good condition – how can we say it needs this much work
- It seems that the numbers around the FCI seem inaccurate

### Question 1: How does the staff recommendation follow the reference criteria?

- Transportation: if schools are going to be closed, then the transportation boundaries for bussing should change. If there are kids going further, it needs to go further
- We need to have a printed version of the slideshow for future – so that we can follow along. Hard to answer this question without having stuff at our finger tips
- It is a question deliberately designed to take us away from what we are here to discuss what's best for kids and the community
- Hopefully in a bigger school we will have specialized programs, no guarantee
- Partnership opportunities are not there at Eastmount will lose kids club, today family, community centre, softball
- This is a ridiculous timeline. Is June 2014 a ridiculous timeline?
- Why can't Armstrong be torn down and rebuilt? Dr. Davey, Queen Victoria, POW, knocked down and rebuilt, why does the Armstrong community have the new school/high tech?
- Parents at Eastmount not able to afford transportation to take their children to other schools
- Queensdale recently renovated – FCI – 10 years out is better than it is now – no other school
- G.L. Armstrong not renovated
- Are all options being considered if they want JK-8 schools and are gym, library, computer lab being considered classrooms?
- Out of catchment being considered
- Program offerings – deaf hard of hearing – special accommodations? Have they been considered at all?
- Facility and outcomes – parent engagement at Queensdale – good learning environment/sense of community
- Unique culture at Queensdale suspect exclusiveness
- Transportation concerns for 7/8 huge issue
  - What is the cost?
  - Contrary to community school plan
- Day care partnerships improves teaching/learning
  - Partnerships in the community
  - Lockdown
  - Partnerships with the church
  - Tapawingo daycare – walked to school
- Does not seem to follow equity plan
  - From Queensdale that is accessible to Armstrong that is not accessible
  - Goes now into commercial area
  - In the middle of area – easily accessed for people



**Question 1: How does the staff recommendation follow the reference criteria?**

- Staff recommendation does not follow certain criteria:
  - Maximize use of facilities over long-term – it does not consider long-term reinvestment in core of city
  - Does not consider trends based on new/expanded employers in the area (i.e., Mohawk College, HHS, St. Joe's, new mental health hospital)
- Non-permanent accommodation – not an issue
- Program Offerings – Queensdale provides special education for hard of hearing. No plan for these individuals.
- Quality tracking – learning environment – in smaller school students are better supported as they are known to all staff. Especially critical for students with special needs (autistic, etc.)
- Transportation – doesn't account for safety issues and space (lack of space) for drop-offs at Armstrong
- Equity – the plan proposes to move students from a fully accessible school (Queensdale) to a school that is not accessible

**Reference Criteria:** Facility Utilization, Permanent and Non-permanent Accommodation, Program Offerings, Quality Teaching and Learning Environments, Transportation, Partnerships Opportunities, Equity.

## Question 2: What additional reference criteria do you think are important for the ARC to consider when developing recommendations?

- Is 2022 looking far enough ahead? If we're making these changes it needs to be over a longer term projection of enrolment - uncontrolled variables
- How specifically were the ratings of the school determined – were recent renovations taken into account? Are those processes available to the public
- The ARC committee and the Trustees should have the opportunity to visit the schools
- Communities involvement (we're not sure how to measure that) and neighbourhoods
- 
- Provide walkable school options to more people.
- Does it promote partnerships/ community engagement is essential?
- What are the actual costs to make Armstrong an acceptable existing school to send their children to.
- Do we force children to commute?
- Does it have Long term vision? Does it rebuild community and encourage growth?
- Are they taking away school property that will be needed in less than 10 years?
- Optimize use of current assets (new renovations) – need to question statistics for the FCI especially Queensdale in 2006-2007 as huge donation by private citizen -- made would not be accounted for in federal funding.
- Does FCI include private donations to specific schools?
  
- Daycare
- Kdg Full Day Program
- Creates family issues ....many families will consider taking students out of the public system and go to the Catholic system rather than go to an unwanted school. This will affect projected enrolment.
- Concerns about safety of a new school environment. Respectful, safe, inclusive. Safe School data should be considered when making a decision. Large concerns about bullying in a new, larger school. No bullying to existing bulling. Not taking into consideration the social/emotional needs of children.
- Accessibility
- Environment created for special programming ...existing program supports ie) technology, snoozelin room, ipads, smartboards...what is going to happen to all of this??? Fundraising that the community did????
- Class sizes getting larger.....creates behaviours, what about kids with special needs??
- Concerns about space in the building and on the playground. Space for 600+ kids. Physical safety.
- Green space....access for the kids?? This will be limited if students are moved.
- Catchment area....are they going to allow out of catchment based on daycare or other needs?
  
- Re: (Queensdale) : Future enrolment must be kept in mind.
  
- Future closures after this program is completed
- Air conditioning, wheelchair accessibility (take \$\$ towards upgrading)

## Question 2: What additional reference criteria do you think are important for the ARC to consider when developing recommendations?

- French immersion program at Norwood should be taken into consideration (ie: move program to another larger location)
- Important to consider:
  - If students are being bussed and not walking to school, they may lack in exercise.
  - Can we consider distributing student catchment closer to the school. i.e. a small radius rather than long rectangular catchment configurations so that students are closer to their schools.
  - Please consider longstanding programs and the supporting infrastructure that are offered by the schools. E.g. Queensdale has the programs and equipment for hard of hearing students.
  - Have we considered city expansion and growth when planning the accommodation review? E.g. business growth on Concession Street and LRT that will affect the Upper James corridor, Juravinski expansion. This will bring more homes and families.
  - Please consider the plant facilities such as washrooms, modernization of receiving schools. Would it be cost effective?
  - Consider the proximity of Catholic schools to any closure/reconfiguration recommendations as we may lose students to the Catholic facility.
  - What are the effects of FDK on enrolment because some of the schools being considered don't have FDK yet. The thought is that the numbers predicted may be inaccurate. Some parents send their children to the Catholic schools because their home schools don't have FDK currently.
  - Day care
- Bussing
  - Recreation with community centres – anti-obesity campaigns, physical fitness
  - Students will lose the daily exercise provided through walking to school
  - Those children walking, will now need to cross major roads that are busy
  - What is the cost to bus the new number of children? Has that been taken into consideration
  - The time frame being considered
  - Are there supervisors on the buses?
  - Age of buildings must be considered. There's only so much rejuvenation that a building can sustain. GLA does not support individuals with a handicap
  - Is there consideration for ensuring that K-5 schools are compared to K-5 and K-8 to K-8 schools?
  - Did we consider that only so many teachers can supervise a playground. Should we have primary children on the same playground as intermediate
  - Latest research shows that the local school model supports an increase in student learning more than the consolidated school-has this been considered
  - Technology has been supported through parental funds. Where will this go now?
  - Special Education classes need room and should be considered too
- Sense of community
  - Are we counting gyms, lunchrooms in counting population figures?
  - Are K-6 schools more beneficial vs. K-8 – are middle schools of 6-8 more beneficial to students?

## Question 2: What additional reference criteria do you think are important for the ARC to consider when developing recommendations?

- Have the special needs programs that may require fewer students per classroom been taken into consideration when calculating population percentages
- Major construction and renovations occurring in the West 5<sup>th</sup> / Mohawk area, could be changing demographic of our neighbourhood.
- 2500 jobs are being created at the new Psych hospital, this will likely drive up our student population as families move into our area.
- Social and emotional effects on the students who are going to be moving schools and be separated from friends.
- The FCI should take into consideration more than just the utilities / roof / etc of the schools – what do the rooms look like cosmetically, locker conditions, playground conditions?
- **Queensdale** has historical significance/character
- Keeping students at their home school creates a sense of engagement and belonging
- Emotional well-being of children in the community (uncertainty/safety)
- Traditions and culture of the school (
  
- **Pauline Johnson -**
- Engagement belonging
- Stability safety (YMCA program after school what happens to Grade 4/5 students)
- Traditions and Celebrations of the school will be compromised (Whobalation/Musical)
- Reduces authentic leadership opportunities for Junior Students (peer mediation, peer leadership, intramurals)
- 
- Emotional distress that is caused by school closures
- Community development – close to neighbourhood schools. Blended community (diversity)
- Generational stability/communal destabilization.
- Schools are the heart of the community. Central to the neighbourhood
- Schools contributing to real estate (people want to live in communities where there are schools)
- Look at where monies have already been invested in buildings
- Safety of students (safety of students walking on busy streets,
- Ability of schools to offer extracurricular activities (i.e. safety of students walking home)
- Transportation – look beyond the km distance and the volume of traffic on the streets students are walking on
- Transportation – loss of family time with students as they will be spending more time commuting
- Transportation – loss of exercise for commuting students
- Environmental impact
- Walkability to school is important without crossing any major streets
- Loss of enrolment (students switching to HWCDSB)

## Question 2: What additional reference criteria do you think are important for the ARC to consider when developing recommendations?

- Programme offerings...what data for Number of students in enrolled in school, with family needs of needing day care- before and after vs. number of students that do not need care
- **Review school boundaries.** Is it possible to shift boundaries to have schools at fuller capacity? ...adjust boundaries...put the two smaller schools with renovations to replace Armstrong (close Armstrong)

Will facilities be improved- at par- as students merge into schools.....cleanliness, physical , , ,surroundings, school on busy streets. safe

- Green space-
- Traffic volume
- Safety – walking to schools along busy street.

State of Armstrong School...physical building is declining,,,, older building... potential renovations are needed. Lack of green space., not a good location .

- Class size
- Maintaining the neighbourhood green space
- What are we doing with the closed schools? Building new schools therefore increasing population?
- Do other ARC decisions have any precedent in making this ARC's recommendation
- Grandfathering of out of catchment students
- Will bell times still be the same
- What difference does it make to communities? How do schools affect neighbourhoods and change quality of life in neighbourhoods?
- Safety is not mentioned – concern about walking to school. Physical fitness. This is important and should be considered
- Sense of community in a small school – little kids know big kids
- Small school – all the parents know each other and support each other – this builds community
- A bigger school has loses
- Concern about splitting up community – in Linden Park kids will be split up
- Special needs children – what about changing their schools? - in Linden Park, kids were promised school for longer
- Hard of Hearing program at Queensdale since 1960
- Class size – limiting class size to provide equity for all students. Do all kids have the same opportunity in bigger classes?
- If a school is “full” how can we accommodate for numbers in different grades? – no room or flexibility
- If this is financial issue, what about tax increase?
- Increased cost of bussing
- The impact on community and therefore our children is not considered. Good communities make good kids. Good neighbourhoods rae important

**Question 2: What additional reference criteria do you think are important for the ARC to consider when developing recommendations?**

- Family considerations – older kids might be able to take buses, younger kids can't
- Putting younger kids with older – want a grade 4 to be with younger and not older kids – concerns of what middle school children would teach and introduce to younger kids
- Traffic congestion: there is not room at Armstrong for all those buses needed
- JK students on buses are a big concern – some of these kids are only 3
- Concern of 3 year olds in same school as 14 year olds
- Neighbourhoods! Neighbourhoods! Neighbourhoods!! Schools build neighbourhoods. School board is not talking about how important this is.
- At smaller schools, kids get more supports – kids get lost in the cracks at bigger schools
  
- Day care
- Distance to get children
- Partnerships – you have disregarded partnerships that exist in the school
- Pride in the community
- Green space
- Accessibility of wheelchairs
- You have a review of how you have come to rate the school
  
- FDK – not being considered as a factor yet – what will happen for Queensdale when the FDK program is put in (availability not on enrollment figures)
- Daycare in area housing JK/SK kids full time
- Assumption that all Eastmount/Queensdale students will go to G.L. Armstrong
- Survey at Queensdale – 60% responded, 15% of those indicated they would send kids to Armstrong 27 students
  
- Before/after school care availability and quality of program (earlier/later hours)
- What is the decision on high school? Where will students go?
  
- How many students can walk to school
- How would changes in programming (FDK) change enrolment numbers for schools – critical
  - All projections are based on current programming
- Community engagement – does the proposal promote community involvement and civic responsibility of students?
  - No moving students out of their community where they live under engagement
- 
- 
-

**Question 2: What additional reference criteria do you think are important for the ARC to consider when developing recommendations?**

- Long-term Vision
  - Is the plan aligned with a reasonable long-term vision
  - Does it account for long-term plans of the city and new employers
- Optimize use of current assets – Queensdale is renovated fully accessible, engaged in community
  - No needs for renovations currently vs. sending students to a non-accessible school in need of major renovations

**Question 3: Using the additional reference criteria, how well does the staff recommendation meet the new criteria? Please explain.**

- It does not.
- Get rid of neighbourhood schools, and make schools too large.
- Community engagement will suffer if students are bussed.
- Queensdale has ability to have full day kindergarten with no renovations or upgrades. No accessibility issues as no mention of \$5 million dollar donation made and used on upgrades.
- Safety issues when students having to cross main streets to get to school.
- 
- Feel that it does not meet the criteria at all. Doesn't make sense from a parent's point of view. Too many questions and concerns about the proposed recommendation.
- Was this scenario created to avoid spending money on FDK??? Looks like all schools that are to close are the ones who don't yet have FDK. Saving money ploy??
- The staff recommendation does not take into account the community feel for these students.
- Smaller schools do not meet the new criteria. Larger school (ie: JK-8) means not having a community feel rather an envelope effect.
- Costs for transportation have not been factored in. Savings would be substantial if less transportation would have to be provided.
- Staff option does not meet the city of Hamilton's criteria of developing walkable communities.
- Staff option may not/does not offer any insight into the costs that will be associated with amalgamation of schools and the upgrading of facilities. (to what degree would the receiving schools be upgraded beyond what was reported....i.e. adding FDK classrooms, adding other classrooms.)
- We don't know/think that the Staff Option considered any of the suggestions made under question 2 or the questions wouldn't have been asked.
- Question #4
- Please consider:
  - What are the REAL renovations required for G.L. Armstrong to be a suitable and will they be done in time? (This question applies to all receiving schools). And if these are EXTENSIVE renovations, and the students have to move out, where will they be housed.
  - Consider additions in the statistics.....Armstrong has had two additions, when were they built and what percentage of the school's capacity is newer?
  - (Specific Concerns about Queensdale, as most of the people at this table represented Queensdale. Queensdale only needs a handful of new students in each grade to be at 100% capacity and doesn't have any portables.)



**Question 3: Using the additional reference criteria, how well does the staff recommendation meet the new criteria? Please explain.**

- It doesn't
- Closing a school (Linden Park) which doesn't have after school care, programs etc yet keeping others open
- Transportation-congestion of roadways. Supervision on buses? Safety of young on bus with older children?
- A JK-5 model and a 6-8 model, would be better
- You want to build a new school but you don't have the funding on the table for the new school.
- Ridgemount will be at 161% capacity
- Greater transparency in data collection
- Linden Park and Queensdale could continue to exist while construction of a new building occurs
- Your data indicates that you are running for 10 years at capacity. You cannot plan for schools at capacity. What's the contingency for the potential for new construction
- With the Cardinal and Ridgemount plan, you will have two newer schools close to each other
- Play-based learning works better in a supportive environment without grade 8s.
- Boundaries are easier to change from the centre. The current plan closes two schools on the North
- 
- How is the enrolment projection calculated? Questions in our group about why the population started at 40,000 and then after a huge drop off, completely levels off in following 10 years
- Have they taken into consideration future needs in case population increases? Has maximum capacity been calculated? Would there be a buffer or contingency plan in case population trend shifts?
- The new recommendation does not meet accessibility standards – how would this be corrected?
- Do the \$ figures for renovations take into consideration the need to upgrade the older buildings as well as installing elevators / ramps etc?
- 
- Staff recommendation would not recommend the new criteria the schools have added.
- 
- **Queensdale/Pauline**
- 
- Statistics are not the only measure of a school, especially in a small community
- Numbers and percentages do not represent emotions or how children, staff and parents feel about their school. It is impossible to separate this emotion from reality. Students are not just numbers. It impersonalizes the system.

People are skeptical that the process is not transparent. Changes were made from the initial ARC meeting regarding Pauline Johnson. No where in the initial information did it state that Pauline would be changed to a K-3 school.

**Question 3: Using the additional reference criteria, how well does the staff recommendation meet the new criteria? Please explain.**

- **Armstrong**
- Data creates an unfair picture of other schools, demonizes some schools who are facing the same reality with knowing what the real situation might be.
- 
- Timelines seem to be way off. How can all of this be implemented by September 2014?
- How will all of the construction be completed on time?
- Absestos safely removed by the time the students return?
- Safety of the children
- Doesn't address greenspace, walkabilty, timeline, environmental impact.
- Mental health of staff and students
- Larger classrooms mean less teacher contact with students.
- 
- Group strongly feels staff recommendation does not meet it in any way
  - If considering transportation, safety, community, etc.
- The assumption is bigger schools are better – this group feels this is not better
- There is a lot of concern about safety (Armstrong having halfway house, too crowded for bussing, little kids with older kids, etc.)
- What about historic value of Queensdale? History is not being considered
- 
- It does not at all – these issues have not been considered (FDK impact, Daycare impact, High school impact)
- Feasibility – what is happening?
- Still questions surrounding data on original reference criteria – not sure how the data was used in respect to the criteria
- 
- The proposed plan does not meet the additional criteria

#### Question 4: What else do you feel is important for the ARC to consider as they begin developing options?

- Why is a bigger school better?
- What are the options for parents that don't want to have their students go to GLA –Catholic Board options – less enrolment
- How will the Board plan the transition
- Transportation – information, are the boundaries able to be reassessed
- Why a new school is being recommended in one area and renovations in another (ie two additional classrooms to Armstrong vs major at Ridgemount)
- What happens to schools that are closed (torn down? Sold?)
- Can the ARC make recommendations about timelines and goals to be achieved before school closures
- Where is the high school going? How do we make recommendations when we do not know yet.
- 
- Daily cycle
- Emissions, diesel fuel for buses, greenspace community
- Safety! Is it a safe location? Busy street, group home at upper wentworth and concession.
- Students are stuck on tarmac instead of the playstructure at Armstrong.
- What is the crime rate? Police station on concession for a reason.
- Where are the students going to actually go? 15% will go to Armstrong, some go to catholic and others will try to send out of catchment.
- Tax payers might decide to go to catholic instead of public.
- Bad management on school property purchase or sale ie Scott park.
- Previous schools that were proposed to close (ie Huntington) or closed , and needed to be used again.
- What external factors are they looking at LRT huge influx to area, Mohawk College, Juravinski, employment opportunities to specific communities
- Seniors are leaving neighbourhoods after 40yrs.
- 
- Consideration of the overall needs of individual children
- 
- Healthy Active Living policy???? Children spending more time on bus goes against this.
- Engagement Matters...part of the Board's policy....not being met. Less parent involvement if this happens. People will not be engaged. Taking away the sense of community of a smaller school environment. Who says that a large K-8 school is the "ideal" model???? Not necessarily so. Cardinal Heights and Pauline Johnson remaining a "middle" and "primary" school goes against this model.
- What will happen to our teachers and their jobs??? Will they follow the kids to their new school? Kids have developed positive relationships with their teachers and don't want to lose that.
- 
- Making comparisons between a larger JK-8 school to a smaller school (JK-5) is not fair comparison.
- Programming needs to be taken into consideration.

#### Question 4: What else do you feel is important for the ARC to consider as they begin developing options?

- Provide mobile programming throughout the system. Specialized programming be offered in variety.
- Community safety needs to be taken into consideration
- Staff turnover is much lower in the smaller school communities.
- Should consider EQAO test results into decision making process
- School closures affect real estate values as having a good school within the community increases home values.
- 
- When this plan goes through, what's the difference between expenses and savings?
- The human impact: parents, schools, communities, families. Is this just about dollars and cents? People have chosen their homes based on schools.
- Impact on property values.
- Have you considered parental decisions based on choices they will make – ie) sending your child to a school that's at 161%
- Recommend that students not be moved into a new facility
- 
- Have they considered the need for future program requirements? If we fill a school to 100% and then we find a need for a specialized program (ie; hard of hearing program) where would we find the square footage?
- Our group would like to see the factors that went into the assessment of the school. Is there room for reassessment? Should be taken into consideration.
- As the numbers of students increases, how will they change the staffing requirements to keep the optimal ratio? Will bullying increase with fewer teachers and "new kids" in the school.
- Do we have information on community impact that increasing the population of a school has.
- We need a reasonable timeline – September implementation seems too quick – too much work is required at each school to reasonably expect all necessary renovations at the affected schools will be completed.
- What's the rush for putting the process into place? The ARC is being rushed into a decision that may not be implemented for years.
- Has the staff recommendation been considered against the comment at the opening meeting "we won't move kids from one straw house to another straw house".
- All steps need to be better outlined so public knows what changes are happening to the schools ie; elevator will be installed by September 2014 – windows replaced by 2015 – air conditioning added by 2014.

#### Question 4: What else do you feel is important for the ARC to consider as they begin developing options?

##### Queensdale/Pauline Johnson

- Previous renovations, investment in the building that would be wasted if the school was to close.
- What is the rationale/explanation for the guiding principals that led board staff to make these decisions. What data was used?

##### Queensdale

- Enviromental impact of additional transportations
- Obesity concerns/health if students are no longer walking to school.

##### Queensdale/Pauline Johnson/Armstrong

- Timelines are a concern. Will there be enough time for staffing and transition to ensure that the well being of students is taken into consideration.
- These changes are seismic. We might be making a mistake if this gets pushed through. Who becomes accountable?
- Can trustees make their own decision despite our recommendations.? If so, we may be wasting our time.
- 
- Close Norwood and introduce French Immersion back into home schools
- 
- Mothball sections of schools until enrolment has increased
- Ensure enrolment numbers are correct (FDK only in some schools so parents have chosen schools that do offer FDK)
- Have to consider that parents will chose HWCDSB or school options (GL Armstrong numbers will not be valid as students will not attend)
- Survey from Queensdale shows that out of 66 percent of school population surveyed only 27 students elected to attend GL Armstrong
- Timelines are not realistic. How can a big decision be implemented in such a short timeframe?
- Have to look at the impact on the community
- Make sure all schools are considered equally even if they aren't the largest voice
- 
- Request noted above- review the shifting of school boundaries

##### concerns

- location of school-

- government services provided in community that may impact learning

- intergrete special needs students into regular schools

#### Question 4: What else do you feel is important for the ARC to consider as they begin developing options?

Movement of special needs classes to schools

Will programs be equity across all schools.

Use of green space on school property

- If building is sold, what will the property be used for.
- 
- What is the ministry criteria for the physical state of the building... What reference points were used for the percentages.
- 
- **Three top points for facilitator to speak on**
- 1. Daycare...transferred to new school and availability of data of students requiring day care.
- 2. Boundaries- can they be changed . Can we look at movement as part of the reference item may input.
- 3. Physical states of schools and surroundings eg. then environmental options, -& neighbour hood

#### Recommendations for next sessions

Make sure that all speakers are visible and audible

- Slides should be bigger and easier to read.
- A more reasonable pace
- Stability for children.
- Community atmosphere
- In a smaller school, students feel like they are part of a family. Some need that because they don't get that at home
- 2 smaller schools would be better than one giant school
- Close Armstrong and split it between Queensdale and Eastmount Park. Too many renovations needed at Armstrong
- Traffic coming to and from the schools daily. Can the neighbourhoods handle the extra volume of traffic???
- TOP THREE POINTS RAISED BY GROUP
- Timeline – can we get this all done in time for September of 2014?
- Capacity during renovations and building
- If close the schools and housing goes in, that increases the population and inflates the enrolments in neighbouring schools. This also eliminates green space.

#### Question 4: What else do you feel is important for the ARC to consider as they begin developing options?

- 
- Linden Park:
  - There is a possibility of having a community hub on the Linden Park campus. There is great potential for a vision for that property. Everything from Early Years to an Elementary School to a High school to rec centre to a seniors complex is there – Make this is a hub for the community and an intergenerational community in the center of the mountain. This is a perfect central mountain location. It would meet future needs as well.
  - Those connections are already in place, and wouldn't even have to be added. It is already a hub that could be only made better.
  - The land is free. Other properties could be sold.
  - Special needs kids with anxiety were promised 2 more years at least in the school
  - There are two classrooms missing from the data
  - Transportation is a big concern – every single student would need to be bussed.
  - School is close to public transit for those who need it
- Queensdale:
  - Transportation issue – all the kids walk. This builds community
  - Historical value with queensdale – we have the land, we own the land
  - We have the space for grades 7-8 if we need it
  - We have recent renovations 5 years ago
  - We are wheel chair accessible – Armstrong is not
  - We have beautiful green space, big trees, a lot of space in front and back
  - We have a very strong parent community
  - We have our community attachment with Olivet United Church, convenience stores, Fun Fair, Christmas Store
  - Our school did a poll and only a small number of parents said they would go to Armstrong. Parents will transfer to the Catholic board rather than go to Armstrong - board will lose children and tax dollars. 117 children were represented in the survey and only 17 said they would go. The rest said they would find a different school.
  - Concern with Armstrong – falling apart, not accessible, no green space (owned by city), group home across the street, busy commercial street attached to the property, congestion for the buses – can barely stop on Concession now
  - There's not enough room in the primary room in Armstrong to hold all the students
  - The community revolves around Queesndale – this would change the whole community
  - It is wonderful school, with no bullying
  - Queensdale is NOT IN FAIR condition!!! This is doubt about this.
  - Small schools are better for helping children with special needs and those kids that may get missed in other places
  - Safety concern is big: 4 year olds on a busy street on a bus
  - The playground at Armstrong is not adequate for so many students
  - Queensdale had a lot of money put into it in recent years – why waste this?

#### Question 4: What else do you feel is important for the ARC to consider as they begin developing options?

- Queensdale did not have full day JK/SK until next year – how did this affect our numbers?
- The hard of hearing children right now are integrated with our mainstream children – this is a benefit
- Many of us will consider CHANGING OUR TAXES to support the private board
- Concerns with bullying when combining schools

- Remember we are talking about children. Small schools are best for kids. We want to keep our small schools. We do not agree that the big school is the way of the future.
- Children need different education plans – that is easier to do in smaller schools
- It would be hard for special needs kids to start at a new school and have new changes – this would be stressful for many of these kids
- There is concern about validity of the numbers – Queensdale condition is better than fair. Want a reassessment. We would like an outside unbiased assessment. Queensdale was renovated in 2006. Has it been evaluated since then? There was a lot of money put in at that time.
- The date of closure is a HUGE concern. This is too soon for these schools. Especially schools that needs renovations
- What will happen to staff of the schools that close?
- How can we hear in May the plan and then be ready for September? What if we want to apply for out of catchment?
- Are we considering how this impacts our communities on the mountain?
- Schools need a new and independent review of the states of the buildings
- Why did you start purging sage program, autism program last year, did you already have
- Review the rating of schools transparency
- Consider the students and the community
- Give us 2013 info not 2006
- 2006 – Queensdale had 5 million
- Relationships with community churches, businesses
- Inclusive neighbourhood
- Boundary review
- Age of the school/Armstrong 1930
- Safety and proximity to the busy road / safe bus drop off zones
- Social, emotional and educational and physical needs of the children not being considered



#### Question 4: What else do you feel is important for the ARC to consider as they begin developing options?

- Timeline, time for schools to transition but trying to push things through they have an agenda / not transparent
- Frazer report shows Armstrong at the bottom 3 of schools – how will you achieve high levels of student engagement
- America is going with the small school model – 500 – even secondary
- Consideration of neutral health, emotional, social well-being of students in big hub schools
- Boundary reviews
- Safe school, police visits, issue of bullying
  
- Real numbers – transportation costs, new construction costs
- Staffing – what is happening to staff?
- Real timelines – smaller school benefits all kids – how are students with learning needs (exceptionalities) dealt with in bigger schools?
- We would like new options to be considered other than the option presented (we don't like the option for Queensdale families)
  
- The proposed option does not consider all of the reference criteria – it appears to prioritize facility utilization and permanent non-permanent. Accommodations over all other criteria – even quality teaching/learning environment
- Loss of sense of community including daycare, partnerships, relationships, friendships with the closure of school
- What are the costs and timelines and what is the reality?
  
- Check the statistics
- The numbers for Queensdale are contested (FCI is not correct – major renovations have been done – inspections need to be done to verify data)
- Change in programming (FDK) WILL impact enrolment for the schools which would be closed. Need to allow FDK to be established and then reassess numbers and make new projections
- Stats on where students will actually go – how many will go to the Catholic Board or other schools
- Poll at Queensdale of >60% of parents showed <15% of students from Queensdale would actually go to Armstrong
- International and Ministry initiatives to increase physical activity and walking to school (October 5 – 11 is international walk to school week)
- If data is from 2006 this is prior to Queensdale renovations – these need to be accounted for
- Tax impact – Board needs to consider how many tax payers will change tax allocation to the Catholic Board
- Possible renovations at Armstrong – there is asbestos in the building and renovations cannot take place while students are in the school
- New employers that are a walkable distance from the brow (St. Joe's, JCC, Mohawk College, new mental health hospital) that will draw new people with young families to the area over the next few years
  - Related trends in driving/choosing to live near workplaces
- Differential needs of elementary versus middle school students elementary students do not need specialist teaching
- Reasonable timeline for implementing closures
  - It is not reasonable to make a decision in May and plan to implement in June
- Equity does not relate to school size – students don't want bigger schools

## Parking Lot Questions from Central Mountain Public Meeting One – October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013

- Why split the boundary for the kids from Eastmount Park?
  - New families moving in or have moved in
  - How can you compare a K-5 to a K-8 with numbers of students?
  - If my Queensdale child goes to Armstrong what extra physical activity can be added to compensate for not walking? Why are “out of catchment” and special needs children and non-full time Kindergarten kids not counted in the statistics for school numbers?
  - How will it affect Armstrong if only 20 kids from Queensdale go there?
  - Was the \$5million donated to Queensdale school for upgrades (air conditioning, new windows, wheelchair ramp, new gym)?
  - Does the FCI account for private donations? Queensdale already has extensive renovations – the FCI of 55% is NOT accurate.
  - Why move Queensdale kids from a school that has been brought up to code 5 years ago to a school that needs a lot of renovation?
  - Incomplete funding stats due to un-started programs – FDK
  - Are numbers based on census or just enrolment?
  - When were the school conditions evaluated and by who? Year?
  - How can we make a decision based on data from 2006? We want current reviews of condition facilities.
  - How can you predict how many children will be born in 10 years?
  - How did they come up with the rating of each school? Who decides this?
  - Where do the Board people who gather statistics get their info? And why do the people get the statistics 6 years later?
  - Where is the up to date data? (2006)
- 
- Tier school (i.e., French immersion to all schools)
  - Why is there no mention anywhere what will happen to special needs children? Will they stay in one room on lower floor forever?
  - Where will special needs go? Both Linden Park and Queensdale have Special needs
  - What is the equity policy? How will it be addressed by the change?
- 
- Safety – distance to school
  - Safety of students
    - Transportation increase walking
    - Schools are the heart of the community
    - Refusal to change the neighbourhood
    - Consequences of school closures, loss of enrolment
    - How are you going to ensure the safety of Queensdale student if they go to Armstrong?

## Parking Lot Questions from Central Mountain Public Meeting One – October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013

- Safety
- Safety of students (distance)
  
- When will information about the new South Secondary school be shared?
- How can the board even suggest new construction for a JK-8 school when they don't even have property for the high school that is supposed to open in 2016?
  
- What repairs will be done to Armstrong to make it a safe and up to date environment, also wheelchair accessibility?
- Why isn't the North Central part of the mountain getting considered for a new school?
- Why are we putting students in the oldest school on the mountain?
- Placing students in the oldest building on the mountain – why aren't you considering a new school for north central?
  
- Are children's social and emotional growth/well-being taken into consideration?
  - Parental and community involvement – sense of belonging
  - Larger school leave children without a voice and leaves families feeling isolated
  - Why fix something that isn't broken?
- Where is the research supporting the emotional and well-being of children in 500-600 population vs. a school with 200-300 kids (also spending an hour on the bus versus walking)
  
- What effect on traffic and the environment is bussing all these students going to make?
  
- Why is the Board intent on rushing this process? What are the future plans for property where Queensdale is?
- How is this going to be done?
- Is it realistic to close so soon?
- Why was June 2014 chosen for closure date?
- Do you really believe June 2014 is a realistic timeline? What is realistic?
- Totally disrespecting transition (social securities of children)

## Parking Lot Questions from Central Mountain Public Meeting One – October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013

- I would like to know what will happen to our teachers and their jobs?
- Why is bigger better? Who decides this? Quantity vs. Quality!
- The teaching profession right now is on 3-4 years wait to get a job... Where are all the (downsize) teachers going? Quality vs. Quantity.
  
- Current daycare arrangements – accommodated by bus schedules?
- Is there capacity in receiving school to take on the added daycare?
- Have you considered parents' daycare arrangements? – for out of catchment kids
- Will there be before/after care?
- What do “partnership opportunities” mean?
  
- Linden Park – the Sackville Hill Park community already includes programs for Early Years to seniors & Recreation Centre (Early Years, Linden Park, Today's Family, Hill Park, Sackville Senior's Centre & Sackville Recreation Center).
  - It is centrally located on the mountain easily accessible by Public Transit
  - It is an intergenerational community hub and should remain so
  - Why is it not being considered for new school construction?
- Can the Sackville Hill land be morally & ethically sold? Land was donated for community use.
- K-8 on Hill Park property
- Cannot be sold? Ethical/moral dilemma.
- Why is Linden Park even on list? Land Sackville Hill request to City – Location, Location, Location.
  
- What changes to my taxes are we going to see if the staff plan is implemented
- Refusal to change school neighbourhoods – will change to the catholic school