



**West Hamilton Accommodation City Review  
Working Group Meeting #8  
Thursday March 30, 2017  
6:00 pm**

**Strathcona  
10 Lamoreaux Street,  
Hamilton, Ontario**

**Agenda**

- |   |         |
|---|---------|
| 1. Housekeeping Items   | 20 mins |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minutes from WG#7</li><li>• Correspondence</li></ul>  |         |
| 2. Key Considerations from WG#7 round-table discussions   | 30 mins |
| 3. Interim Final Report   |         |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contents of the Section 3: Advisory Committee</li><li>• What does the committee want to see in the Advisory Committee Section of the report?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Preferred ideas?</li><li>• Considerations from the Committee?</li></ul></li></ul> | 30 mins |
| 4. Dot-‘Mocracy’  | 30 Mins |
| 5. Next Steps   | 10 mins |

# Working Group #7 Minutes



**West Hamilton-City Accommodation Review  
Working Group Meeting #7  
March 22 2017- 6:00 pm  
Dr. Davey  
Minutes**

**Attendance**

**Committee Members:** Joanna Gibson, Rob Fiedler, Tracy Upham, Barbara Stares, Matt Allen, Tanya Ritchie, David Heska, Janine Durajlija, Melissa Crawford, Nadine Bernacki, Shelly Turk, Teri Lantagne, Khantavy Sayavon, Sue Caven, Nicole Poyton, Katherine Graham, Eleni Jalbout, Jennifer Walsom, Katherine Graham, Alison Savage,

**Committee Member Regrets:**

**HWDSB Resource Staff:** – Superintendent/Chair Sue Dunlop, Estella Jones, Steve Johnstone, Tannis Hamill, Karen Koop, Bob Fex, Gerry Smith, Dan Ivankovic, Sue Pasian

**Trustees:** Jeff Beattie, Christine Bingham, Todd White, Larry Pattison

**Public:** Hess (2), Cathy Wever (1)

**Recording Secretary:** Sue Phillips

**1. Housekeeping Items – Sue Dunlop**

**Minutes from WG#5, WG#6, PM#2**

WG#5 – approved

WG#6 - approved

PM#2 – approved with amendments

**Correspondence**

Committee reviewed the correspondence

**Advisory committee mandate**

Sue Dunlop reviewed the committee mandate and referred to the role of the advisory committee as we come to the end of our work.

**Additional meeting**

David Heska requested another meeting due to time, amount of work and the need to hear from everyone on the committee today.

The committee voted to hold another meeting, Working Group Meeting #8, Thursday, March 30<sup>th</sup>. 6:00 – 8:30 (at latest). Request to hold the meeting at Strathcona School.

**2. Public Meeting #2 Debrief**

Data gathered. Summary of consultation findings included with package.

Committee discussed the Public Meeting feedback.

Question to committee – does the committee want to achieve consensus on one or two options? Or do you want something different to happen?

Committee agreed to present individual preference through round table discussion.

Preferences:

- need to know feasibility of all the options before I go further
- agree
- 2 pieces – I would like us to go through all options and see if they are feasible. We need to narrow things down. We could hold an additional public meeting – only if we came up with something completely brand new



- coming up with guidelines.
- agree with others – regarding feasibility. Need to come to consensus as a group.
- Feasibility
- Need neighbourhood schools. Don't need to go with "hubs". If there is a school there – it becomes a hub. We need the family feeling. Walkability. There is an issue of maintenance in schools. we aren't getting enough money to maintain our schools. We need a cushion to accommodate future enrolment. Feasibility is definitely something we need to have. Need consensus.
- Neighbourhood and walkability is important to me. We are providing advice to trustees. We do not need to achieve consensus. Let the trustees decide from there.
- Feasibility still an issue – would have been good to know things as we went along. If the trustees had let us know whether something could work or not
- Undecided – am sitting on the fence. Queen Victoria has a complete lack of green space which is a big concern. More students coming in would create stress. Idea C was the most viable option to me. Combine Hess/Strathcona. French Immersion at Bennetto.
- Strathcona parents find the initial option is not acceptable. It is unfair to close Hess. Keep the important connections. Preferred Option B. Need a playground at Strathcona because students can no longer go to Queen Victoria Park
- All options are important to people in the room. Want to know feasibility. A list of five feasible options would be good – ranked by importance and pass on to trustees.
- Rank the options on the table – the data will shake itself out and it will honour all the options. I don't want to take the job from the trustees – it is their job – a grueling job- but not our job. They do have the flexibility to come up with something new.
- In creating my proposal there were some very important points. Outdoor play space and buildings in good repair are really important to me. I tried to create an option that gave something needed to every school. Feasibility is something we need to know. I would like to know if my ideas make sense
- I don't think consensus is possible. We need to provide detailed options with feasibility being very important. It is a responsibility that we have as a committee – we have heard from the public. This committee needs to be as unemotional as possible and come up with our best thinking.
- Filling in for an absent committee member so have not been at all meetings. Have been staff at Hess for 28 years so emotions are attached. The community has a huge barrier due to language – they have been loud and clear and united in their strong belief that they don't want the school to close. I am still unclear on staff Initial Option still being out there. The community feels it is unfair to not know where they would go if Hess closes. I would be more likely to go with idea A.
- Need a list of every option and go through them with feasibility lens. Whatever is left goes with a ranking. We do owe it to the trustees to provide as much data as we can but most important is the students. I think the merging of Strathcona and Hess is essentially closing two schools instead of one. Until we know where a combined school would be how can we do that?
- Ranked vote – better idea with feasibility.
- Correspondence from Bennetto parents states opposition to closing schools unless there is a compelling reason to do so. Our purpose is to serve our students well. The first job of the school is education. I don't think we need consensus on an option. Suggest a certain opportunity to express to the trustees some well designed suggestions. Express and put on paper the commonalities. We can make delegations to the trustees.
- My thoughts are included in the correspondence of the agenda package. This process has brought our school community together. In principle, I like A & B the best but it is not financially where this process is going. If I was to rank the options B would be first with C 2<sup>nd</sup> best with location being stated. I think we could narrow things down to B, C & D. I think we have consensus that FI at Bennetto is agreed. We should talk about what size of school we want – do we want 4,5 600 or as big as Dr. Davey. We need to put more thought into boundaries. Hess wants a walkable school and no asphalt playground.



Sue – thanked the group for the thoughtfulness and passion around the table. We have heard from most speakers that we want to know the feasibility of what is on the table

.Ellen Warling provided information based on experience with business cases presented to the Ministry.

1. Idea E – from a staff perspective - where would we find the land for this? It is harder in the downtown core. Asking for three brand new builds is very challenging and not feasible.
2. Idea D – concern might be – Jk-5 vs Jk-8 model. Our guiding principals prefer JK-8 but sending grade 6s to Ryerson would be overcrowding. Perhaps less feasible.
3. Idea C – FI at Bennetto is not an issue at the Ministry. Jk-8 is an interesting challenge. There are pupil places at Dr. Davey and Bennetto but we could ask for it. The challenge becomes why didn't you leave Strathcona as is? Possible.
4. Idea B – works – under school renewal grant. Doesn't have to go. Feasible.
5. Idea A – nothing for ministry. Feasible. School renewal and condition grants.
6. Idea H – do the initial option and submit the students to Dr. Davey can fit. Bennetto FI works. Could work/maybe.
7. Idea F – boundary rejigging, Hess/Strathcona.

Staff initial option. (G) feasible in terms of business case.

We need to do more thinking – come to the table at next meeting with what we have in common. We don't have to come up with one option. What is important is further discussion of actual option. We can look at final report – bring back feedback.

### **3. Interim Final Report - tabled**

- a. Contents of the report
- b. How does the committee envision capturing the work they've completed?
  - i. Preferred ideas?
  - ii. Executive summary of committee/public requests?

### **4. Minutes for this working group meeting - tabled**

Adjourned: 8:40

Next Working Group meeting #8 – Thursday March 30, 2017, 6:00 p.m. Strathcona School

# Correspondence



March 21, 2017

TO: Sue Dunlop, Superintendent of Student Achievement & School Operations  
c/o [tmovre@hwdsb.on.ca](mailto:tmovre@hwdsb.on.ca)

Christine Bingham, Trustee Ward 1 & 2 [cbingham@hwdsb.on.ca](mailto:cbingham@hwdsb.on.ca)

We are writing to express our concern regarding the 'West Hamilton Pupil Accommodation Review', with a specific interest in Central Public School and the vital role it plays in the Durand community.

Located in the Durand neighbourhood, a compact downtown residential neighbourhood that continues to experience heavy residential intensification, Central Public School is a key resource for our community. Despite having a range of other public, private and alternative education options in the area, parents consistently see the value in Central and choose to send their children there. This is reflected in historic, current and projected enrolments that result in utilization rates well over 100%. With downtown Hamilton identified as an 'Urban Growth Centre' in Ontario's *Places to Grow Proposed Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshow, 2016*, there is no reason to expect the current residential intensification pressures or associated school enrolment levels to diminish. One would expect increased enrolment based on the multiple multi-storey high rise intensification projects currently proposed within the downtown neighbourhoods.

Central Public School also provides important historical context to the Durand neighbourhood and to the history of education in Ontario. Built in 1853 the school is designated under the Ontario Heritage Act and highlights the work of renowned Hamilton architect, James Balfour. Culturally, Central was the largest graded public school in Upper Canada and was the only public school in Hamilton at the time of its opening.

Central Public School is a well-utilized school and beloved part of the Durand community. It represents both a local, municipal and provincial landmark, as well as an example of efficiently used tax dollars. We should look to the larger HWDSB policy for a solution; specifically, 'Guiding Principal' #2 in Section 6 of the Board's *Long Term Facilities Master Plan: 2015-2018* should be reviewed and revised. 'Guiding

Principal' #2, states that optimal utilization rates of school facilities should fall between 90-110%. This asks parents to expect and accept overcrowding in our children's schools – an intolerable expectation and one not founded in Ontario Ministry of Education policy. If HWDSB were to adopt a more rational utilization range, such as the 80-90% outlined in the Toronto District School Board's *Long Term Program and Accommodation Strategy 2016-2025*, not only would Central Public School be seen as well utilized, but the entire 'West Hamilton' study area would collectively fall into the same category.

As parents and engaged community members we are keenly aware of the vital role neighbourhood schools play in a community. Central Public School plays such a role in Durand, much as the other eight schools named in this study play in their neighbourhoods. It is because of this awareness we are compelled to call for the preservation of not just Central Public School, but all nine of the named schools in the West Hamilton Accommodation Review. The Durand Neighbourhood Association supports all neighbourhood school and calls on the Committee, the HWDSB Trustees, and representatives at all levels of government to do the same.

Sincerely,



Frances Murray, President

Durand Neighbourhood Association Board Members: Dennis Baker, Roberta Harman, Barb Henderson, Wes Jamieson, David Levy, Paul Nichols, Christopher Redmond, Geoff Roche, Yonatan Rozenszajn, Anne Tennier

Cc: Rob Fiedler



**From:** Joan Cosby

**Sent:** Thursday, March 9, 2017 1:05 PM

**To:** Stranak, Cindy; Johnson, Aidan

**Cc:** Larry Pattison; [jason.farr@hamilton.ca](mailto:jason.farr@hamilton.ca); [mayor@hamilton.ca](mailto:mayor@hamilton.ca); [cbingham@hwdsb.on.ca](mailto:cbingham@hwdsb.on.ca); [remulhol@hwdsb.on.ca](mailto:remulhol@hwdsb.on.ca); [twhite@hwdsb.on.ca](mailto:twhite@hwdsb.on.ca); [ahorwath-co@ndp.on.ca](mailto:ahorwath-co@ndp.on.ca); [mcoteau.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org](mailto:mcoteau.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org); [cballard.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org](mailto:cballard.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org); [mhunter.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org](mailto:mhunter.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org); Joan Cosby; [sdunlop@hwdsb.on.ca](mailto:sdunlop@hwdsb.on.ca); [ejones@hwdsb.on.ca](mailto:ejones@hwdsb.on.ca); [cfragomeni@thespec.com](mailto:cfragomeni@thespec.com); [dheska@thespec.com](mailto:dheska@thespec.com)

**Subject:** Hamilton Wentworth District School Board - Potential Closure of Hess Street School

Greetings Aidan Johnson Team,

When Aidan was running for a seat on council, I was among a group of volunteers to accompany him during a door to door meet and greet canvas of two-high rises in the north end of Ward 1, on Oxford and Queen North within my neighbourhood. I was very happy that Aidan had the opportunity to meet and visit with a number of the residents to get a clearer picture of the day to day struggles that some of Hamilton's marginalized citizens including newcomers, people with disabilities, people living with the serious challenges of poverty and people who struggle to communicate effectively in English. The school attended by most of the children living there is Hess Street Public School. It happens to be in Ward 2 however, I believe that more than half of the students are Ward 1 residents.

In addition to their current challenges of getting an education, these kids are facing the prospect having to be bussed to another location as the HWDSB is looking at closing their school. Virtually all of the students at Hess Street Public School currently walk. The proposed solution, if the school is closed, is to bus all of the students to another location. This is one more barrier to education for the children already facing challenges. If they miss the bus, it is likely that they won't find a way to get to school late. If they need to stay late for extra help, they'll miss the bus home. Many families have no car, and walking a great distance could pose challenges for the student and/or the adult responsible for their well-being. Although extremely important, it is not just an issue of proximity to the school that needs to be considered for this student group. What are the other factors that will positively contribute the students' successful educational outcomes?

Years ago I volunteered with Parkview School by Tim Horton's Field. Parkview was a smaller high school where students faced various challenges that would more likely be overlooked or exacerbated in a larger high school setting. Parkview provided them with excellent support to help them overcome their unique barriers to educational success. During its operation in the

years before it closed, some students successfully transitioned to other high school programs after developing specific skills and for others, after graduation from Parkview, went on to jobs in their communities and some went on to post-secondary programming. If a student had a challenge outside of school that required additional support there was someone who they trusted to provide them with direction. There were times students came back after graduation to share their success stories or to ask for guidance navigating their life after high school. When the decision to close the school came about, the school board assured all those who were vested in the students' success that they would track the children being re-directed from Parkview to ensure that they didn't fall through the cracks and moved on to a successful transition from high school. Having to travel further and learn in a setting where they felt like outsiders and different from the norm is difficult for high school students. I expect that it will be even more difficult for the grade school children at Hess Street Public School if that school is closed. Unfortunately, Hess Street Public School's faculty cannot get too involved as their careers could be at risk, as they were at Parkview.

I understand that it is late in the game. There was a meeting last night that apparently did not go well, but I am hoping that Aidan can lend his voice of reason and compassion to those students' families, fighting for the future of their children's opportunities to become good citizens of tomorrow. This is what makes Hamilton strong.

As an aside from the above, but also an important argument, is the short-sightedness and lack of proper long term financial analysis. There is a significant increase in residential development in the area. One site is on Barton Street, east of Locke Street that is nearing completion which will add to the school's enrolment numbers. There are also new builds expected right next door to the Barton location. The second major development, if and when the city moves forward with the planned new social housing development at the old West Harbour stadium site, will have Hess Street Public School, if still standing, easily working at capacity.

All things considered, it doesn't make sense to close Hess Street Public School for a short-term financial benefit when you look at the future costs - both financial as well as loss of human potential for many families of the children attending Hess Street School. We need to make these decisions for the long run.

I am hopeful that Aidan, ***and others included on the CC line***, will be able look into the issue and lend support.

Thank you for your consideration of helping to support this important issue.

Joan Cosby

**Revised Option for PAR 2017 West Hamilton City Elementary Schools**  
**by Nadine Bernacki, Parent Representative for Strathcona School**  
**March 28, 2017**

**This option includes my original submission minus the parts of it that were deemed unfeasible by city staff at our last PAR meeting last Wednesday.**

**I worked through the numbers and have actually determined that I DO NOT RECOMMEND THIS OPTION as it will not save money, nor will it benefit our communities.**

**In addition, I would like to voice my support for the Board to maintain the status quo with only boundary and program movement to maintain walkability and to reduce overcrowding at schools. I hope that the funding model will change at the provincial level at some point in the near future. For the present, I think it is best to manage our resources to the best of our ability and to maintain all the schools in our West Hamilton City Elementary School area to be maintained and left open.**

**The information below outlines the portions of our ideas that were considered feasible by city staff. I have followed them to the best of my ability to their logical conclusions.**

**Sincerely,  
Nadine Bernacki**

**Outline of Mar 8 Expanded Option minus un-feasible portions**

**Move Central boundaries to transfer some Central and Ryerson students to Queen Victoria School to reduce population pressure on Central and Ryerson.**

**Move French Immersion boundary to anything outside of the new boundary encircling EK and Central Schools. Second French Immersion program to be started at Bennetto.**

**Move the Ryerson boundary to include only EK and Central School catchment areas.**

**Close Hess and Strathcona and build a JK-8 school, with 500 pupil places maximum, on a site to be determined (Central Park, Victoria Park, SJAM site, or other site) to have new buildings which meet benchmark and accessibility requirements, keep close communities and siblings together, reduce renewal costs, and accommodate generous play spaces. A community hub with a recreation centre (and an indoor pool with hot pool) is also needed and could be created for these neighbourhoods.**

**Move SAGE and SAGE Quest programs together to Bennetto school to help optimize utilization at that site and to keep the SAGE siblings together at one school and to not create a school larger than 500 at Strathcona & Hess.**

**Move Hess/Strathcona eastern boundary to Bay Street to transfer pupils to Dr. Davey to reduce size of new Hess/Strathcona school to a maximum 500 pupil places.**

**Using SCC money to meet the renewal and benchmark items via the consolidation of schools will allow the board to fully renew Bennetto school and bring all of the schools in our area up to date with available funds from other Ministry of Education funds.**

## **PART ONE:**

### **Earl Kitchener, Central, and Ryerson Catchment Boundaries**

1. Move eastern catchment boundary for Central to James St., northern boundary to Main St.
  - *students will not have to cross James Street*
  - *students will not have to cross Main Street after LRT construction (probably less than two students affected)*
  - *lines up boundary with Earl Kitchener northern boundary (makes sense)*
  - *reduce population pressure at Central AND Ryerson, estimated 50 students from Central and 30 from Ryerson to Queen Victoria*  
**Central:  $304-50=254/283=90\%$**
2. Ryerson 6-8 catchment boundaries moved to include new Central boundaries
  - *makes sense to keep Central and EK kids together and not have to bring in students from other areas when the school is already overfull.*  
**Ryerson impact:  $410-30*\text{estimated}=380/343=110\%$**   
**Queen Victoria impact:  $557+50(k-5)+30(6-8)=637, 637/758=84\%$**

## **PART TWO:**

### **French Immersion Boundary for EK and Ryerson**

3. With respect to new catchment boundaries listed above move French Immersion Boundary for any students residing outside of the EK and Central catchments to be accommodated at a new French Immersion program location at Bennetto school
  - *creates greater convenience for students in North End of City to participate in French Immersion*
  - *relieves student population pressure from EK and Ryerson*  
**EK Impact:  $561-54=507/548=93\%$**   
**Ryerson Impact:  $380-15=365/343=106\%$**   
**Bennetto Impact:  $497+54(k-5\text{ FI})+15(6-8\text{ FI})=566/744=76\%$**

## **PART THREE:**

### **Strathcona and Hess Schools**

4. Merge the populations of Strathcona and Hess St. schools into a new JK-8 school on a TBD site with generous play space and green space, (former locations as possible community hubs/rec. Ctrs)
  - *keep Hess Students in walkable Strathcona neighbourhood where they live*
  - *create generous outdoor play spaces for both Hess and Strathcona students, both which are currently lacking*
  - *create space for community hub and recreation centre in Strathcona neighbourhoods*
  - *improved facilities for both Strathcona and Hess students*
  - *improved ability of HWDSB to financially sustain these two schools as well as others*
  - *creates opportunity for community cohesion across socio-economic backgrounds by including more diversity into both school populations*
  - *ideally keep this school to less than 500 students to help create cohesion in diversity at this school*  
**Strathcona Impact:  $188-188=0$  - closed**  
**Hess St. Impact:  $346-346=0$  - closed**  
**New School for Strathcona and Hess Students**  
**New School:  $188(K-5)+346(K-8)=534$**

**PART FOUR:**

**Other boundary and program movement**

**5. Grade 6-8 students from former Strathcona catchment at Ryerson to transfer to New Strathcona/Hess school**

- *makes sense to keep the JK-8 children from Hess with the JK-8 children from Strathcona – it could detrimentally affect kids who have bonded to each other to split them up in Grade six.*

**New School Impact: 534+55=589**

**Ryerson Impact: 365-55=310/343=90%**

**6. Move SAGE and SAGE Quest Programs to Bennetto School**

- *create cohesion between JK-8 SAGE programs in one location*
- *create opportunity for Bennetto children to participate in this program*
- *reduces size of facility needed for strathcona/hess school*
- *improves utilization of Bennetto facility*

**New School Impact: 589-63=526**

**Ryerson Impact: 310-43=267, 267/343=78%**

**Bennetto Impact: 566+63+43=672, 672/744= 90%**

**7. Move western catchment boundary of Dr. Davey to Bay Street to transfer some New Strathcona/Hess school students to Dr. Davey ~ 60 students**

- *reduces size of facility needed for strathcona/hess school to help facilitation of cohesion*

**New School Impact: 526-60=466, 466/500=93%**

**Dr. Davey Impact: 518+60=578, 578/816=71%**

**School Enrollment Projections for Changes proposed**

	OTG	2016 enrol	% cap.	Pt 1	Pt 2	Pt 3	Pt 4	New 2016 Enrol.	New OTG	New Capacity
Bennetto	744	497	67%		+54 +15 =566		+63 +43 =672	672	744	<b>90%</b>
Cathy Wever	800	714	89%					714	800	<b>89%</b>
Central	283	304	107 %	-50 =254				254	283	<b>90%</b>
Dr. Davey	816	518	63%				+60 =578	578	816	<b>71%</b>
E.K.	548	561	102 %		-54 =507			507	548	<b>93%</b>
Hess Street	450	346	77%			-346 =0		0	0	-
Queen Victoria	758	557	73%	+50 +30 =637				637	758	<b>84%</b>
Ryerson	343	410	120 %	-30 =380	-15 =365		-55=310 -43=267	267	343	<b>78%</b>
Strath-cona	245	188	77%			-188 =0		0	0	-

New Hess						+346 +188 =534	+55=589 -63=526 -60=466	466	500	<b>93%</b>
Totals	4987	4095	82%				4095	4095	4792	<b>85%</b>

**Only 195 pupil places reduced – only changes overall utilization by 3%**

**Financial Results of suggested changes**

	Accessibility, Benchmarks where possible, and high and urgent renewal needs	With proposed changes	Difference			
Bennetto 1966	\$2,714,270	\$2,714,270	0			
Cathy Wever 2006	\$325,244	\$325,244	0			
Central 1851	\$2,933,208	\$2,933,208	0			
Dr. Davey 2010	\$295,313	\$295,313	0			
Earl Kitchener 1915	\$8,167,987	\$8,167,987	0			
Hess Street 1974	\$4,996,854	0	-\$4,996,854			
Q. Victoria 2009	\$115,890	\$115,890	0			
Ryerson 1975	\$560,053	\$560,053	0			
Strathcona 1956	\$2,305,110	0	-\$2,305,110			
New Hess	0	\$10,000,000	+\$10,000,000			
Totals to come from SRG	<b>\$22,413,929</b>	<b>\$15,111,965</b>				
Totals to come from SCC	0	<b>\$10,000,000</b>				
Total spent	<b>\$22,413,929</b>	<b>\$25,111,965</b>	\$2,698,036 additional cost			

***It will actually cost the school board more to do this plan. And I suspect it will not benefit the communities. We would be further ahead to***

***maintain the status quo and hope that in the future provincial funding for school renewal and maintenance is improved.***



I came onto this review committee as the only person at Queen Vic to come forward to be a part of this. I am so glad I did as it gave our school a voice in this review that may not otherwise have been heard. At Queen Victoria, Todd White and I held a meeting about what people's biggest concerns were with the school. I can say that both from that meeting, and my own conversations with people of the Queen Victoria community that the complete lack of green space, a play structure, and the small size of the school property itself are the main concerns. We strongly feel that students, for example, coming from Central, would not be a logical step, as the Queen Vic outdoor space cannot accommodate several more grade 6,7 and 8 students.

That brings me to the idea put forth by our committee that I feel is most viable solution. Idea C: Hess and Strathcona combine into a new K-8 school, and a new FI program at Benetto.

I agree with this idea for a few reasons:

First, the obvious, that by combining schools, one school, let's say Hess, isn't lost or becoming another school of the past. Instead, it's a 2-become-1 scenario.

Second, in this 2-become-1 scenario, school communities will interact with one another for greater diversity, education, and that feeling OF COMMUNITY specifically can be strengthened and built upon.

Finally, French Immersion at Benetto is great because it will become a sought after program in the North End, and share in some of the high demand for French Immersion in this city.

Provided that the new K-8 school would be built in an ideal, logical location that Hess students and families can still easily walk to, I believe Idea C is the best one.

I just want to end by saying that I think it's quite interesting that the Initial Option that was a proposal of closing Hess St has in large part through this review process become a school community to PROTECT & PRESERVE. I think it is the desire of many of us – but I will speak for myself – that maintaining the quality of life in terms of school community for the students and families of Hess. It is a school that serves many new immigrants who, often due to financial strain and unfamiliarity of a new place, are vulnerable. That being said, by maintaining a school in this area, these students, their families, and their educators can continue to thrive and contribute to the city at large.

Sincerely,  
Eleni Jalbout