

Proposal:

Combination of Initial Option & Committee Option 2

Concept:

- Fessenden and Queen's Rangers close.
- ASPS gets an addition and renovations. K-8, dual track school.
- Rousseau gets a new building. K-8, dual track school.
- Bray gets a new building.

Conditions:

- A boundary review would be required to have the following effects:
 - Keep Rousseau at around 400 students and send extra students to ASPS where there is more space to accommodate the students.
 - Allow QR families to attend the school that is nearest to them to reduce travel time on buses. These schools could include Beverly Central, CH Bray, Sir William Osler, or Greenville.
 - Allow many, but not all, of the QR families to continue attending a rural school (BC or Greenville).
- There needs to be discussion around the location of a new Bray building. Please see attached notes.
- The school board and trustees needs to consider whether or not asking for \$37 million to build 3 new schools would save money in the long-term, or weaken the business plan being put forward because of the high price tag associated with it. ASPS and Rousseau each have an FCI over 65%. What will happen to those schools in the next 5-10 years as they near closer to expiry, but have a recent renovation and addition on them?

Rationale:

- Of all of them, it is the option that is most closely tied to the guiding principles, which was the goal.
- No school is operating below capacity, so there is financial responsibility in this plan.
- There is significant consolidation, so it would make a good business case for the grant.
- Every school involved makes some compromises and some gains.
 - Bray gets a new building. Some will be happy with the location, others will not be.
 - Rousseau will be stable at around 400. They gain an FI program and a new facility, but lose some green space.
 - Many QR students will go to a brand new school, close to home (BC or Bray). Some will get to stay in a rural school, some won't.
 - Fessenden gets an improved facility on the same lot, but some FI resources will be re-allocated.
 - ASPS gets some renos and an addition. Students will go back to their feeder schools.

Framing Question: Should it be a priority to keep Queen's Rangers open?

Throughout this process, the major point of contention has been whether or not to keep QR school open. Although it would be nice for them to do so, there are some major concerns with this as a priority.

Equity:

At working meeting #2, we had it clarified that we are applying for a consolidation grant, and that the strength of the business plan put forth relies on the idea of consolidating schools. Where is the equity in a business plan that would save a school of 128 students, but risk grant money for 1400 other students in Ancaster who need improved facilities and learning conditions? We need to be thinking about the whole community, and not what is best for our individual schools.

Diversity:


At working meeting #3, it was stated that Queen's Rangers does not want to "mix city kids with urban kids" because of the differences in culture. HWDSB supports an equitable and inclusive learning environment (Policy 1.2), with an intended outcome of "supporting positive learning environments that are respectful and welcoming to all". This is counter-intuitive to the idea of preserving the rural culture. Our school board encourages diversity, and having rural students learn together with those of a more urban lifestyle would promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. It should also be considered that the Grade 7 and 8 students from QR are already attending school in Ancaster, and that many of the rural families come in to Ancaster for extracurricular activities and community events.

Financial Responsibility:

In times when finances need to be at the forefront of every decision, there needs to be discussion around the idea of annually paying large sums of money for administrators and caretakers for a student body of only 128 students. Additionally, the cost of operating a building at 50% capacity needs to be considered into the equation. This is an incredibly large sum of money to spend every year on a very small number of students.

Support for the Concept:


Not all of the Queen's Rangers families want their school saved. Some of the families are looking forward to a boundary review that would place them at a new rural school (Beverly Central), or another school that might be closer to them. We knew this to be true when there was resistance to presenting a boundary review at the public meeting, as it would divide the support received for keeping the school open. Here are some screen shots of families who voiced their concerns in the online petition to save Queen's Rangers, which were not included in the copies that were distributed to the committee.




John N
Hamilton, Canada

Jan 12, 2017

I'm signing because I don't agree with this petition but it was the only way I could make a comment. Simply put, I would rather see my kids go to the new rural school at the Beverly Community Centre than Queens Rangers. This accommodation review is an opportunity for that to happen. Please be respectful of all voices and let this process happen.


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M Smith
Hamilton, Canada

Jan 12, 2017

I agree in part with the last post. I'm neither here or there on Queens Rangers because I think the new Beverly school is awesome. I mostly don't like that Flamborough kids go to Ancaster, that seems foolish! Why do the QR kids not go Highland in Dundas? So I'm in support of Beverly because it means our kids aren't on a bus to Ancaster. Beverly is a NEW rural school, there aren't many of them being built!!!


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Framing Question: If CH Bray gets a new build, would Ancaster High or Dunham Road be the better location?

Here are the 9 points of consideration that have been brought forward by the CH Bray community:

Transition:

If we build on the current site, students will go through an awkward transition, during the demolition and construction. This might include a) filling rooms at ASPS/QR and using portables or b) taking over Fessenden after all other renovations/additions have been made to the other schools. However, if construction takes place on the high school site, we would remain in our current building, and then move over when construction is complete. It would be a much smoother process for the children, and much less taxing on them.

Favours: Ancaster High

Timing:

If we build on the high school site, we would be able to move into a new building much sooner. The high and urgent needs of our building demands that. If we build on the existing site, we may have to wait until all the other schools get their renos, and then our students could move into Fessenden while demo and construction is being done on a new Bray. This could take as long as 7-10 years. This amount of time in our current building is unacceptable.

Favours: Ancaster High

- Our school has been in a desperate state for many years. Bray needs to be the absolute top priority if funding is rolled out in phases, as we have high and urgent renewal needs.
- Is it possible to push the grant application through faster due to the poor condition of the building?

Traffic Flow:

There are strong traffic flow concerns at both sites. On the current site, Dunham Dr. is already very busy around bell times. When Wilson St. is backed up as a result of morning highway congestion, it is nearly impossible to get in to the school, as there are no alternative roads that provide access. It would worsen with an additional 150 kids, and extra busses. Additionally, some of our green space would need to be used for a kiss-n-go, for additional parking, and for a larger bus turnaround area, in order to make a new building work at the current site. Snow removal and emergency vehicle turnarounds would be required as well. If we build at the high school site, we don't know where traffic would be routed. This is a concern because a traffic study wouldn't be done until after the grant money is secured. Possible options include Jerseyville or Meadowbrook.

- If the Trustees decide to build at the high school, we will reinforce that opening up Taylor Road to traffic is absolutely not an option.

Walkability:

One of the school board's guiding principles in making these decisions is encouraging walkable communities. Based on the scatter plot, moving to the Ancaster High site would increase the number of families that are within a walkable distance to the school. It could also shorten the bus time for potential QR students coming in.

Favours: Ancaster High

Green Space:

Putting a new school on the high school site, would mean the elimination of green space in two parts of the community. The large, open field at the high school would drastically reduce in size. It is also possible that the Dunham Dr. property would be sold. Additionally, the trees on this location provide shade for students in the hotter months of school. The Ancaster High location does not offer that.

Favours: Dunham Dr.

- Could we request that any monies procured from the sale of the Dunham Dr. property be put toward renovations and upgrades to Ancaster High School – another school that has high needs?
- Could we request that the Dunham Dr. land be sold to the city, and kept as green space, with soccer fields and a play structure?

Design:

Building on the current space may limit design options for the new building. Designing a school for 500 kids would likely mean a 3-storey school in order to preserve green space. This will have an impact on the surrounding properties, as well as the type of space that students will be housed in, and the ability for teachers to supervise lunch periods etc. Building on the high school site would leave more flexibility for a building that captures natural lighting and provides a layout that works better for student transitions between classes, and supervision.

Favours: Ancaster High

Influence:

There is concern that having our little ones so close to the high school could lead to them being influenced by foul language, smoking, and inappropriate behaviour. There have been several upsetting incidents on the Bray path that justify this worry. On the flip side, building a feeder school adjacent to a high school promotes partnerships between the schools. Bray students could benefit from more co-op students in the classrooms and more volunteers to coach extra-curricular activities.

- If the Trustees decide on the high school site, we would request that the bell times of the two schools maintain their 35-minute difference, and we could request that the elementary play area be fenced in (this may already be required).

Recreation:

Opening a new Bray on the high school site, would give the students access to the swimming pool for field trips, swim team practice, and the grade 3 swim program funded by the board. It would also provide access to a track. It would, however, affect the whole community by eliminating some of the soccer fields that are regularly used in the summer months. Is it possible to relocate the soccer fields to the ASPS property?

Property Values and Neighbours:

Regardless of where a new Bray may be built, there will be neighbours who will not be pleased. The neighbours that back on to Bray and who live on Dunham will not be happy with a potential 3 storey building and increased traffic on the road. The neighbours that back on the high school, and who live at Taylor and Valleyview would be negatively impacted by a new school nearer to them. Additionally, the families that live on Meadowbrook would see increased traffic flow during bell times if that is where the entrance to the school may be.