

South Accommodation Review Committee Meeting

Hill Park Secondary School

February 15, 2011

Public Meeting #1

Minutes

ATTENDANCE:

Committee Members

Chair –Superintendent Scott Sincerbox

Voting Members - Bill Barrett, Beverly Bressette, Jackie Brown, Alexandra Butty, Margaret Eagle, Kim General, Derek Hambly, Angela Koklis, Al Pierce, Anne Pollard, Susan Pretula, Teresa Robson, Julia Shen, John Whitwell

Non-Voting Members - Lisa Anderson, Wanda Bielak, Donna Clappison, Gary Deveau, Angela Ferguson, Manny Figueiredo, Randy Gallant, Mag Gardner, Brian Greig, Wes Hicks, Tom Jackson, Peter Joshua, Deb Jukes, Joanna Maul, John Miholics, Lillian Orban, Laura Peddle, Kevin Robinson, Paul Vukosa,

Regrets

Voting Members – Donna Dixon

Non-Voting Members – Ted Koznur, Scott Duvall and Terry Whitehead

Staff and Resource Staff

Daniel Del Bianco, Steve Stirling, Jim Wibberley

Associate Director Kenneth Bain

Superintendent Sharon Stephanian and Superintendent Peter Joshua

Recording Secretary

Tracy McKillop (formerly Skinner)

- 1. Welcome and Introductions** – Superintendent Scott Sincerbox called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. Superintendent Sincerbox commenced the meeting by introducing the members of the committee. He shared that the ARC Committee is made up of parents, community representatives, Principals, school staff, student representatives, Trustees, Ward Councillors and Superintendents.

2. Chair's Opening Remarks – Superintendent Sincerbox informed the audience that the Board of Trustees approved the formation of three secondary accommodation review committees – South, North and West. All but three schools of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board were included in these reviews. The schools that were not included are Waterdown, Westmount and Saltfleet. These schools were not included because their enrolments are larger than their capacity.

The Chair indicated that there are a number of reasons why the Board approved these accommodation reviews but essentially it is because the Board faces challenges on three major fronts:

- The world is changing and changing quickly. Our students are changing as well. They learn differently and they engage differently. We must ensure that our schools, now and in the future deliver the relevant and engaging programs our students need and deserve.
- Like almost all Boards in this province we are faced with declining enrolment. Declining enrolment is a demographic reality across Ontario. This has resulted in a number of our schools having a great deal of excess space or capacity. This excess space is costly to the Board.
- Many of our secondary schools are at the point where they will require costly upgrading and renewal because of their age. In addition we must adapt the physical space to deliver new and innovative programs.

The Chair stated that an overview of some of the information that the committee had received so far would be shared however he stated that the real reason for the meeting was for the ARC Committee members to hear the audience's thoughts, questions and concerns.

3. Presentations

3.1 Overview of the Accommodation Review Process – Mr. Wibberley provided a brief overview of the ARC process. This was an abbreviated version of what had been presented to the ARC Committee. The major purpose of the ARC is to prepare a report for the Board of Trustees with the ARC Committee's recommendation. The Board of Trustees will not make any decisions until they have considered the recommendations from both the ARC Committee as well as the Board's recommendation.

For a look at the full presentation please see the ARC web site at:

http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/?page_id=187

3.2 School Information Profiles (SIP) -Mr. Wibberley showed an example of the School Information Profiles (SIP) and explained that it contains 21 sections and 182 items for the ARC Committee to review. The entire SIP is located on the ARC web site at: <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/South-Sip-2-Updated-January-25-2011.pdf>

3.3 Accessing ARC Information - All of the meetings are open to the public and all of the information that is presented to the ARC Committee is listed on the web site at www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc

3.4 Education for the future – Superintendent Stephanian presented an abbreviated version of the “Education for the future” presentation that was made to the ARC Committee. It touched on the fact that the world has changed, the existing model no longer fits and that the learner has changed. She explained that the personal learning environment is a system that helps the learners to take control of and manage their own learning. They are able to manage their learning both in content and process. For full details of the presentation please visit the ARC web site at: <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Education-for-the-21st-Century-South11.pdf>

3.5 Recommendations from Senior Administration to the ARC – Ken Bain, Associate, Director of Education – Associate Director Bain informed the committee that the Ministry policy requires Senior Administration to provide their recommendation to the ARC and the public during the ARC process. There is no stipulation as to when the recommendation is to be presented however HWDSB’s Senior Administration team felt that they would share it early in the process. He shared with the ARC Committee that this is a point in time recommendation and their best thinking at this time. He also said that the committee members could endorse it, set it aside, modify it or simply throw it away. Associate Director Bain stated that the Senior Administration team will be kept abreast of the questions and recommendations of the ARC and this information may change or impact the Board’s final recommendation. He then went on to explain why we have an Accommodation Review. Larger Secondary School environments mean the following for students:

Program Benefits

- Provide greater options for students
- Broader course selection
- Flexible student timetables
- More opportunities for all pathways

Financial Benefits

- Vast majority of grants are provided on a per pupil basis – therefore spreading the funding over fewer schools allows for greater benefits
- Renewal – removing those schools with high renewal needs would allow the Board to reallocate those funds to the remaining schools.

Associate Director Bain spoke of the Reference Criteria as outlined in the Board policy:

- a) Facility Utilization
- b) Permanent and Non-Permanent Accommodation
- c) Program Offerings
- d) Quality of Teaching and Learning Environments
- e) Transportation
- f) Partnerships
- g) Equity

Associate Director Bain showed a chart which outlined the current situation, the on-the-ground capacity, enrolment utilization for 2009/10, 2015/16, 2020/21, the current FCI and the 10 year FCI. He also spoke of the schools located in the South ARC and their associated boundaries with the exception of Mountain which is a Vocational school with no defined boundary.

Associate Director Bain explained the South ARC Cluster Proposed Option – Phase 1

- Close Mountain (VOC) in June 2013
- Close Sherwood in June 2013
- Relocate the students to the existing facilities effective September 2013.

Associate Director Bain then displayed a chart showing the enrolment percentage changes that would result from the above listed closings. Phase 2 of the proposal:

- Close Barton - June 2015
- Construct a new school – funding of any capital projects or improvement will be addressed through:
 - Proceeds of disposition from the sale of the Mountain, Sherwood and Barton school sites.
 - A business case will be submitted to the Ministry of Education which will include all potential cost savings

Associate Director Bain again indicated that this recommendation is intended as a starting point for the ARC to build from. It is completely up to the ARC what they choose to do with this option. He stressed that this is the Board's best thinking at this point in time and that this may change after the ARC makes its recommendation. Associate Director Bain stated they are looking for land in ward six and the new school, if approved, would be built in ward six. For the full colour presentation please visit the ARC web site at: <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/wp->

3.6 The Program Plan – Superintendent Joshua stated that tonight’s presentation provides an important high level look at the program strategy, its guiding principles and its connections to the Education in Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board. He explained that the program strategy is all about a focus on how we can best support your child (student) in learning, achieving and preparing for life during and beyond secondary school. Superintendent Joshua shared the definitions of the program strategy which included:

Personalized Learning - this puts the learner at the centre and provides assessment and instruction tailored to a student’s particular learning and motivational needs.

Pathways – this is a combination of courses that lead to graduation and to a post secondary destination which may include apprenticeship, college, university, community or the workplace.

Specialization – these are programs that allow students to explore their interests. In addition to the programming offered at neighbourhood schools there would be alternative programs which focus on such things as sports, academics, science, arts and languages.

Equity – all students have access to programs when and where they need them and where all students participate to the best of their abilities.

Tiered Intervention – a method used to meet the abilities and preferences of students where the level of support or programming is adjusted appropriately for each student.

The Program Strategy intertwines support to all schools. Superintendent Joshua stated that the first criteria used to assist students in choosing an appropriate program pathway is their individual learning profile and level of independence. What is the goal for the student at the end of his/her secondary years and what is the best plan to achieve that? With the focus on “Learning for All” the schools need to provide inclusive and supportive environments that encourage the engagement and involvement of all students in all aspects of the secondary experience.

Superintendent Joshua spoke of the Spectrum of Programs that would be available in all schools:

Student Support Centres – would provide support to students who are fully integrated into regular class and earning credits.

Student Alternative Support Centres – would be a new support program designed to support students in regular programs but who have anxiety-related or other mental health concerns and require targeted socio-emotional support in order to succeed in their chosen pathways.

A Comprehensive Support Program – is a program that would provide targeted, yet credit-bearing support in the core areas of literacy and numeracy plus inclusion into regular courses.

Superintendent Joshua then went on to explain the Spectrum of Programs that would be available in all clusters:

Graduated Support Program – this program would be similar to a pilot program that is currently being offered at one site in our system. This program has 2 parts: The Personalized Support Part of the program is a 4 year program designed to solidify functional skills in literacy and numeracy, provide life skills training and focus on independence skills. Students would participate and be integrated appropriately into the school community. The transition part of the program would last a maximum of three years and involve a planned transition to the community, focusing on skills determined by the transition plan which assist the student in their integration into the community through co-op or work experience placements.

Specific Support Program – would provide such support, plus some inclusion into the secondary school community as personally appropriate. This program would provide intensive, personalized support in various areas, such as life skills, communication and personal care.

Personalized Learning Centres – would provide individualized programs not housed in a regular high school setting. These students would receive the supports necessary to transition back to the regular school environment or to a workplace setting as appropriate.

Superintendent Joshua stated that there are two other programs which need to be provided as part of the spectrum of services in order to meet the needs of all of our students. These include:

The Extensive Support Program – which would provide targeted support to students requiring extensive and continuous support and supervision, and very personalized support programs. This program would be offered in at least one location in Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board.

The Intensive System Support Program – which is a program designed to support students in very unique situations where none of the existing programs will meet their unique needs, such that an individualized solution must be explored and developed collaboratively with our community partners.

For the full colour presentation please visit the ARC web site at:

<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/SecondaryProgramStrategy.pdf>

4. Questions and comments from the Public:

The floor was then opened up to the public to share their views and ask any questions they may have.

Lynn Hick asked why Westmount was not put under consideration. She further asked if the Board was looking to upgrade Westmount and if the program currently offered at Westmount is going to be offered at any other schools. Ms. Hicks asked why Westmount was being protected.

The Chair responded by saying that the members of the ARC are only able to deal with those schools under review and listed in the Terms of Reference.

Ken Durkacz stated that some of the students would be going to three different schools over a four year period and asked how that is a good choice. Associate Director Bain answered by saying that we are a long way from having a new school and there is a lot that needs to happen before we get to that point. We need to keep our eye on the end - a good facility with new programming. This could mean upset for some and having three schools in four years.

Dave Hilbert felt that this recommendation was cost driven and wondered if there had been research done on the revenue stream. He felt that it would be advantageous to use a questionnaire and ask the parents of the community if this recommendation came to be will their children leave the public school system and choose an alternative Board. Associate Director Bain stated that the HWDSB is keeping their eye on the end result of having a new facility which is well resourced and providing students with excellent programming and hoped that in the end people would want to come to this school.

Jeremy Siemens asked if we could make the schools smaller and asked to have the FCI explained. He wanted to know why Sherwood had a higher FCI than the other schools. Steve Stirling explained the FCI (Facility Condition Indices) is the collection of data which breaks every facility down into components- e.g. floors, walls, doors and assigns a value and a life cycle to each of them. It is a calculation used by the Ministry of Education for all Boards across the province. The FCI is influenced by the age and make up of the building (e.g. what kind of boiler system) and is considered a planning tool.

Dawn Sawford explained that she is a teacher of students with challenges, mostly autistic children, and that her work requires more space. She wanted to know what the accommodation plan for her students would be, how they would be supported and if they would be split up. Superintendent Joshua stated that this only solidifies our thinking that some students require intense support. If the student's program needs are that they need to be in one space then that will be part of our program plan. This may require more than one program or it may need to be in one space or within a cluster on one or two schools.

Grant Darby had a data question. If the FCI is a planning tool when will we see the data that supports this recommendation? He also asked if we looked at the OSSLT results. Mr. Stirling informed Mr. Darby

that the ARC has requested the data which will be provided at the next working meeting. This information will be posted on the web site after it has been presented to the ARC Committee. Associate Director Bain stated that the reason for the recommendation to close Sherwood was in part due to the FCI and its location, which is close to the mountain brow, and there is no room to expand the building. It is also in close proximity to Barton Secondary School. He went on further to say that EQAO and OSSLT were not part of the decision making. The Board was looking at the bricks and mortar as well as accommodating the students of the future.

Melanie Verrier was concerned that the FCI was being considered over and above the enrolment numbers. She would rather see the facility upgraded over being torn down. Saltfleet is over capacity so the students on the Stoney Creek mountain are being bussed to Sherwood Secondary and she questioned what school these students would now be transported to. Associate Director Bain reiterated that at this point in time this is only a concept plan so no boundary changes or transportation routes have been determined. It is in the works, however, nothing has been defined.

Colleen Kaus questioned how the enrolment projections can be predicted if no decisions on boundaries or transportation have been made. Associate Director Bain said that the projections are based on the current situation of students sitting in front of a teacher four periods a day, five days a week as well as the students from Sherwood attending the other existing schools.

Anne Pollard felt that the data was not clear or correct because Mountain classrooms are not the same as other schools. Ms. Pollard felt that there would be a high rate of drop out due to the challenges that these students may face. She stated that these students have lived lives of profound difficulty and wanted to know how the Board, teachers, administration staff, support staff and students will prepare for the arrival of the special needs students. Superintendent Joshua recognized the training and support that the staff has received to work with these students. He also acknowledged that training and support will be required and shared that a pilot program has been in place this year. Superintendent Joshua indicated that this is being worked into the program strategy.

Anne Pollard read a letter from a parent (**Pat Burns**) from the Mountain Community. She spoke of how the Mountain students are supported within the community and the closeness of the school. It is a place that the students can call their own. These students are bullied at other schools and wait to be able to come to Mountain Secondary School and become a part of the community. The parent spoke of the Wilson reading program and wondered how you can administer the same program across the schools when you have twenty students in the class and they are spread out throughout the other schools. Superintendent Joshua stated that this is the first stage in leading these students toward the regular reading program credit and felt that this is a program that needs to be offered in all schools. The Board would like to have programs that will lead these students to apprenticeships and jobs in the community. The goal is to support these students with the new program strategy.

Tony Gzik wanted to know how the committee can make a good decision when they do not have the correct data to support it. He stated that Sherwood has a good graduation rate and if it is fixable then why would the Board want to close it. Mr. Del Bianco informed Mr. Gzik that these are the type of

questions that the ARC committee needs to hear to ensure that the SIPs and the information are as accurate as possible.

Brent Ellis is a student at Sherwood and he advised the committee that Sherwood is known for its hockey program. Since he has become involved in the hockey program his skills have improved greatly. Brent wanted to know what will happen to the hockey program. Superintendent Joshua acknowledged the importance of having these programs and shared that the Board will be coming back with the Program Strategy in April where they will be informing the ARC Committee where these programs will be offered.

Lynn Hicks thought that the program directions are fantastic and exciting and she understood that the students are changing and we need to change along with them. Her concern is that if Sherwood closes then the Board needs a better plan to look after these students outside of bricks and mortar. She felt that the Sherwood Staff are a team; they look after the students and are a model for other schools. They are great team builders. Associate Director Bain acknowledged the applause from the audience and shared with Ms. Hicks that the ARC Committee is listening and when the Committee makes its recommendations to the Board of Trustees they can also recommend an implementation schedule.

Michael Brown shared his story that he lives in Ancaster yet felt that Sherwood was the best fit for him. Saltfleet was full and he wanted a fresh start so he transferred to Sherwood and is very happy with this school. Michael asked the question: "where will I be going to school?"

Laura K, a parent from Sherwood, said "shame on the Board" for letting Sherwood get into such a despicable state. She wanted to know "where these are students going to go" and "where is the "community" when students need to be bussed to outside areas?" She stated that the Board wants to move the students and yet no boundaries changes have been decided on yet.

Nancy Stazicak, a Mountain Secondary parent stated that "these kids don't fit into a huge school and you are going to lose them." "At the moment you have people who care about them and teachers who work with them."

Andrew, a Mountain Secondary parent, made a request of the ARC Committee – "please don't close the school because he doesn't know where his daughter will go."

Grant Darby posed a second question "when the closest school is five km away how does that create community?" Superintendent Joshua stated that the Board supports what is currently in the schools and will continue to bring community support into the schools. There will be a sharing of those resources.

At this point in the meeting the Chair assured the audience that the ARC Committee will be considering the question and the comments that they are hearing tonight.

Jeanette Pattison's son, who is currently a student at Mountain Secondary School, wanted a guarantee that each student will receive what they are getting now – individual support. She wanted a "yes" or

“no” answer. Superintendent Joshua answered “yes” and stated that we need to be absolutely sure that this support is in place.

Craig Hagopian, a Hill Park parent, felt concerned that the review committee has not been given a full view. Some of the schools have been exempted and if this were a business model you would be looking at 85% capacity and not 100%. He also felt that the Board should be treating each school equally and not exempting Westmount from the ARC. Mr. Hagopian stated that perhaps the Board should bring the specialty programs on the east mountain as well or amalgamate a couple of schools if necessary and use the savings to reinvest it into the existing schools and let the Ministry pay for a new school.

Steve Dungavel wondered how the numbers for enrolment can be accurate when Lawfield, which is a new school, already has portables on it. Mr. Del Bianco said that it is always interesting because enrolment has been declining across the Province. He stated that some of the enrolment figures come from the census. In 2002 enrolment peaked and since that time it has been on a steady decline at the elementary level. If you fast forward that ten years it is going to happen in the secondary schools. There will always be fluctuations due to people moving in and out of the area however the Board has to look at the trend.

Mark Strobl has been a teacher at Sherwood for fifteen years and stated that having the school at the edge of the mountain has never been a challenge and they even have students from below the mountain in attendance at Sherwood. Mr. Strobl feels that if Delta closes then there will be a large hole in the area and he urged the ARC Committee to look at the catchment area. He also wanted to know if the ARC Committee members discuss this with the other ARCs in order that the best recommendation is made.

Dawn Sawford is a teacher at Sherwood and feels that they are a good team, who care about the students, and doesn't understand why the Board would want to break up a good team. Superintendent Sincerbox shared with Ms. Sanford that the teams and the programs will be servicing all of the schools.

Jeremy Siemans asked if the projections and enrolments take into consideration the demographics seniors moving out of the area and new families moving into the area. He feels that Sherwood is a great school with great teachers. Geographic proximity to a school is important and he does not want his children to have to go five kilometres to get to school. Mr. Del Bianco indicated that the projections for older home areas are different than the newer home areas. Newer homes have an impact on enrolment however older homes do not have the same impact.

Kelly George-Dalgleish, who is a teacher at Hill Park and lives in the Sherwood, questioned if elementary catholic students, who come to Sherwood Secondary School, has been taken into account as part of the data collection. She then stated that Sherwood has made such a come back with the hockey program. Have arena facilities been taken into account. Mr. Del Bianco explained that enrolment projections do take into account those that come in from the catholic and private schools. He also stated that the program strategy will take into account the needs of the special programs.

Bev Bressette was concerned about the students at Mountain school. She asked if there was an assumption that there would be less A.D.D. or A.D.H.D. students. Superintendent Joshua again indicated that the needs of the program would meet the needs of the students. If the students need a special needs program then that will be taken into account.

Grant Darby indicated that Sherwood would be a great place to have a school within a school. Can you have the special needs program in Sherwood? Superintendent Joshua felt that this may promote segregation if you have a school within a school.

Jessie Zsiros from Sherwood feels that they have a wonderful program. Ms. Zsiros wondered why this was not taken into account when they have thirteen hundred students who are thriving at a school. She then proceeded to inquire where these thirteen hundred students were going to be placed. Superintendent Sincerbox stated that this still needs to be taken into account. No decisions have been made at this time.

Linda L stated that her niece does not want to go anywhere other than Sherwood Secondary School because she lives around the corner from the school. Linda wanted to know what would happen to the building – is it going to sit and rot until it is sold?

A member of the community stated the history of Sherwood Secondary School and commented on the state of the building. She also stated that there is an elephant at the back of the room, and no one has spoken about it, and that is that the Board could sell the land for a fortune.

Mary Persichin spoke of another building that needed repairs and millions of dollars a few years back and is unhappy that Sherwood is now in the same condition.

Jayne Ellis felt that a motivation for students to attend Sherwood Secondary School is the sports program. She wanted to know how sending the students to three different schools in four years supports having consistency in teenagers lives and she stated that teenagers need consistency. Superintendent Joshua shared that the program strategy will need to reflect all of these comments.

Bob Williamson who is a retired teacher from Sherwood indicated that both Sherwood and MacNab Secondary Schools were fine designed schools even though they have decayed. These schools have the highest population in all of the schools within the city so why would you want to close them?

Kathy Archer drives the special needs students. Ms. Archer stated that in 2002 and 2003 Ward Six schools were closed. She asked the committee to please remember the students in Ward Six and do not close more schools like you did in 2002 and 2003.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m. There was a brief meeting of the ARC Committee members after the public meeting to discuss and vote on the date of the School Tour. It was decided that the date would remain as March 26, 2011. Consensus was reached.

