

**North Accommodation Review Committee Meeting**

**Sir John A Macdonald Secondary School**

**February 22, 2011**

**Public Meeting #1**

**Minutes**

**ATTENDANCE:**

**Committee Members**

*Chair – Vicki Corcoran*

*Voting Members – Jayne Bentley, Sandra Binns, Anna Busse, Michele Cameron, Michael Chalupka, Lisa Deys, Annie Fu, Jane Henry, Rick Kunc, Prema Rao, Joyce Schneider, Dawn Spencer, Grant Thomas, Jane Withers*

*Non-Voting Members – Robert Barlow, Scott Barr, Marco Barzetti, Danielle Bawden, Paul Beattie, Judith Bishop, Marilyn Bratkovich, Chad Collins, Glenn Cooke, Geoff Coombs, Mark Currie, Rich Gelder, Bob Pratt, Pam Reinholdt, Pat Rocco, Tim Simmons, Todd White*

**Regrets**

*Voting Members – Marie Jackson, Barb Wachner*

*Non-Voting Members – Jason Farr, Eileen Griffett, Bernie Morelli, Don Pente, Michael Root, Sharon Slater*

**Resource Staff**

*Daniel Del Bianco, Steve Stirling, Jim Wibberley, Michael Slee, Don Hall, Kevin Morton, Ellen Warling*

**Recording Secretary**

*Tracy McKillop (formerly Skinner)*

- 1. Welcome and Introductions** – Superintendent Vicki Corcoran called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. Superintendent Corcoran commenced the meeting by introducing the members of the committee. She 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 Corcoran 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 public's thoughts, questions and concerns.

### **3. Presentations**

**Overview of the Accommodation Review Process** – Mr. Del Bianco began the evening presentation explaining why there was a public meeting. The reason for the public meeting is:

- To provide an overview of the ARC Process
- To present the recommendation prepared by the Board Staff
- Address any questions related to the ARC process and School Information Profiles (SIP)
- Provide input to the ARC members to assist them in developing their own options

Mr. Del Bianco 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. Mr. Del Bianco showed a slide of the purpose of the future public meetings and an outline of what will be discussed at those public meetings.

For a look at the full presentation of the Accommodation Review Process please see the ARC web site at:

<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Overview-of-the-ARC-Process-North1.pdf>

To see the slide presentation shown at the Public Meeting held on February 22, 2011 please see the Arc web

site at: [http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/NorthARC\\_Public\\_Meeting1\\_Final.pdf](http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/NorthARC_Public_Meeting1_Final.pdf)

**School information Profiles (SIP)** -Mr. Del Bianco 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/North\\_forBinder2.pdf](http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/North_forBinder2.pdf)

**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](http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc)

**Why an Accommodation Review** – Associate Director Bain informed the audience 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 that this is a point in time recommendation. Associate Director Bain stated that HWDSB currently has 2,600 extra seats within the secondary schools. The Board is funded on a per student basis and not by the facility and they receive the same amount of funding regardless of the number of buildings that the Board operates. At the moment there is approximately \$160 million in outstanding renewal needs in the secondary schools. Associate Director Bain then went on to say that change is required that the status quo is no longer an option. If HWDSB has the right number of buildings then they believe that they can deliver exceptional education for the students in well resourced schools. HWDSB will be able to deliver programming in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – Please see the web site for more information at: <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Education-for-the-21st-Century-North1.pdf>

HWDSB will also have access to engaging programs and leaning environments – Please see the web site for more information at: [http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/?page\\_id=229](http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/?page_id=229)

Associate Director Bain stated that our students learn differently today and are experiencing a different world. This process will provide more opportunities for the students. It will allow them to have access to more pathways and more chances for success beyond graduation.

If we can combine some of the schools and increase enrolment then larger Secondary School environments can 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 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 North ARC and their associated boundaries.

Associate Director Bain explained the North ARC Cluster Proposed Recommendation

- Close Delta and Parkview 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. The money from the sale of Parkview and Delta will be reinvested into the remaining schools. Associate Director Bain went on to explain that this is a concept plan only. The boundaries still need to be looked at and re-aligned and the transportation changes are yet to be decided. He stated that the Board wants the same things for the students at Parkview that the parents would like. Superintendent Joshua is putting a program strategy in place that will support the students. Associate Director Bain stated that the ARC is here to listen to the questions and comments of the community. The floor was then opened to the public to begin with their questions and comments.

### **Questions and Concerns:**

**David Darbyshire** was concerned with the lack of signage in Sir John A Macdonald, that he was unable to locate the Agenda, that the meeting was at 6:00 p.m., which falls in the middle of the dinner hour, and that there was no staff to welcome the committee members or the public to the meeting and/or the building.

**Roger Waldren** is a member of the parent council. Mr. Waldren was concerned that none of the feeder schools were informed. He asked the question “aren’t we important?” Associate Director Bain indicated that there was information sent home to the associated cluster schools, advertisements were placed in the local newspapers, and communication went home in the back packs. Associate Director Bain stated that he will take it away and investigate.

**Dave Hutton** requested that the slide showing the boundaries be displayed again. He stated that 9 or 10 months ago there was a “red code” series which highlighted the health and social identities of the inner city. Mr. Hutton asked if the Board will provide the ARC with information on the students in the inner city and are these students being considered at any point?

**Sandy Leyland**, the grandmother of a Parkview student felt that the students of Parkview will be bullied in a regular school and will eventually drop out. She expressed that we need trade schools and that these students do not fit into a regular school. Ms. Leyland was concerned with the programming and questioned what the projections will look like. Superintendent Joshua spoke of the program strategy and he did acknowledge the strength of the programs that are being offered at Parkview. He also shared that the Board is talking about enhancing the level of support for these students. Literacy and numeracy support will be offered along with the types of courses that they will need to meet their own individual goals. Ms. Leyland felt that there would be too many students in the high schools. Superintendent Joshua stated that the Board will have social support and programs, like the ones that are currently available at Parkview, in all of the schools. Daniel Del Bianco also spoke of the enrolment projections and over the last 10 years enrolment has been declining. Mr. Del Bianco shared that the trend has been happening at elementary cluster schools which then transfers to the secondary school level. They also look at the documented evidence from the census for the information as well. Such things as immigration patterns and the number of births which are occurring are the type of information which is recorded on the census. He also stated that HWDSB secondary schools have been built to accommodate a higher number of students. Associate Director Bain reiterated that HWDSB wants the same things for the students at Parkview that the families do. He stated that Superintendent Joshua is putting in place a program strategy that will support the students.

**Praema Rao** stated that there are two schools recommended for closure and you have indicated that the money will be reinvested into the existing schools. She stated that there are times that the schools sit empty for decades. Ms. Rao questioned if the Board has buyers already since it has been mentioned numerous times during the presentation that the monies will be reinvested. Associate Director Bain stated that the short answer is “no”. He indicated that the Board does have to declare the schools surplus and it could be a long process. The properties have to be offered at fair market value to ten preferred agents and those agents are

required to purchase the properties at fair market value. If the preferred agents are not interested in purchasing the properties then it can be opened up to the public. Associate Director Bain stated that the money will be reinvested into the remaining schools and programming.

**Steve Calverley** shared that years ago he was informed of the closure of Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School. He stated that neighbourhoods change and what the Board is recommending is that we leave a neighbourhood with no secondary school. He feels that the Board needs to think about the long range investment and to keep in mind the “code red” information when considering the future of these areas. Mr. Calverley feels that these areas require urban renewal and that is less likely to happen with fewer schools. It makes the area much less attractive. He went on to ask if consideration has been given to consolidation e.g. Parkview sharing the school facility with Delta. Having two schools come together to share space yet maintain their own identity. He gave an example of a school in St. Catherines.

**Michele Cameron** stated that children learn through consistency and we need equity for all. We need the trade schools and you are closing schools like Parkside. Superintendent Joshua spoke of personalized learning in program strategy and indicated that class size is taken into consideration when looking at the needs of these children. Ms. Cameron indicated that the statistics for autism and PDD (Pervasive Development Disorder) is on the rise and asked “how are you going to meet the needs of these students?” Superintendent Joshua shared that the Board is well aware of the rising needs and building program strategies based on these statistics.

**Alison Whipps** is a Mohawk Student completing a placement at Parkview. Ms. Whipps brought forth a petition with 126 votes on it (please see attached) from the Parkview students asking “Keep the Parkview Students Together”. She indicated that these students come to Parkview because this is where they feel that they fit in.

**David Darbisher** stated “in Hamilton we work together collaboratively. The closures are happening in the areas where poverty is a challenge”. He encouraged and invited the representatives from the community, dealing with these challenges, to come and share at the next meeting. Associate Director Bain indicated that the Terms of Reference recognizes the need for community representation and perhaps in the future a representative from these groups will have a opportunity to sit on the ARC committee.

**Charae Friesen**, a Delta student, asked why the meeting was held at Sir John A Macdonald and not at Delta. Associate Director Bain explained that Delta is not accessible and the Terms of Reference stipulates that the schools must be accessible to host the public meeting. Ms. Friesen asked why Delta is not being made accessible and Associate Director Bain shared that is one of the reasons that it is slated for closure.

**Milton Friesen**, a Delta parent, asked what research has been done to reflect what will happen to the neighbourhood when these schools close. Associate Director Bain indicated that this information can be requested through the ARC Committee so that it can be further explored.

**Sue Farquhar** felt that the public meeting was very unwelcoming. There were no signs, no greeting and no one to welcome the community members. Ms. Farquhar had concerns over the closures of Mountain and Parkview. She stated that “as an adult you might be able to function in a “normal” school but these students are not able to function in a “normal” school”. She asked why the Board is not making Delta a French Immersion school because the kids are being bussed to schools that offer this program.

**Cody Brooks**, a Parkview student, feels that this closure will create chaos. She indicated that everyone has their own idea of what “normal” is and she feels that this closure is a big mistake.

**Eva Filinski** stated that Parkview is unique to the Board. She stated that normal programming is not an option for these students. They need job skills that can lead to a career path. Parkview provides special classes for these children and these students need these unique programs and facilities. They have the proper teacher/student ratio and the teachers at Parkview understand their needs. It may cost more money to provide these programs but how much are these students worth. Parkview promotes inclusion and self confidence. Mrs. Filinski stated that if these students are placed in a “special” class within a regular school there is a stigma associated with that. For more information please feel free to read Eva and John Filinski’s letter (attached).

**Mark Daniels** expressed concern over school transit and boundary changes. Mr. Daniels wondered how we are going to support all of the transportation needs of the students.

A community parent feels that we should dispose of the boundary map. He lives in the Barton and Sherman area and questioned how you can have community or the feeling of community if the students are shipped to outer areas.

Another parent asked “how many students get lost in Delta now and if you are increasing the population in the school how many students are going to slip through the cracks when you have so many kids in a school. She expressed that Delta has made a great effort to get to know her son. She stated “if Delta and Sherwood are being closed you will lose those students to the Catholic Board and these schools may not close for years.”

Another question was raised “has the Board considered keeping Delta open and bringing more students into Delta from the code red area?” It was stated that research has shown that supporting students who come from the impoverished area feel better about themselves and it did not affect the more affluent students.

**Terry Westlink** asked the question “if you wanted to close Delta why put new windows in the school?” He also shared his concern over maintaining the heritage of the building. Kevin Morton shared that anytime the Board replaces windows they engage architects and they make every effort to maintain the heritage of the building and they certainly did not replace the windows to reduce the heritage.

There was concern raised regarding the start time of the public meeting and Associate Director Bain stated that the start time of the public meeting is decided on by the committee and they have the right to change the time through a voting procedure.

**Richard Barns** indicated that his daughter wants to go to Parkview. He shared that it took three years for the Board to diagnose her with ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) and that she has also undergone hip surgery. He feels that these children are better off in a special school like Parkview rather than a regular high school. Mr. Barns’ daughter would like to attend Mohawk College and requires a certain level of reading and math. At Parkview they have a special program to support this goal and he does not want his daughter to get lost in the system and drop out of school.

**Ms. Foster** asked if anyone has thought about having the students at Parkview, Mountain and any other special needs students at Delta all in one school. She shared that her son has experienced the best school years of his life right now and does not want that changed.

A student from Parkview shared that he was always a student that slipped through the cracks and he finally feels at home in Parkview. He said that they feel like family to him.

A parent wanted to know why the tour was scheduled for a Saturday. He felt that it was like touring a city that has been evacuated and you miss the heart of the city when it is empty. Mr. Del Bianco stated that we are physically challenged to have everyone be able to attend the school tours when it is in the evening. It is dark

in the evenings and makes it difficult to see the facility. Weekday is impossible because the committee members are working.

The next question asked was “how many schools on the East side are affected by LRT (light rail transit)?” Trustee Barlow shared that LRT stops outside of Delta.

**Brenda Reid** stated that her daughter could be in Delta for one year before it closes and Ms. Reid wanted to know what would make her daughter want to go to Delta for one year only. Associate Director Bain shared that this is only a recommendation at this point in time and the Board is asking all students to register at their home school because no one is sure where this is going to end up. He then stated that in April the Board will provide their proposals of what programs will be provided in which schools – e.g. hockey at Sherwood.

**Sandra Binns** wanted to know how long it will take to implement these new programs. How will it benefit the students who are in their last year of school? Superintendent Corcoran indicated that there is a considerable amount of time from the final decision of the Board of Trustees to the closure of any schools. The ARC Committee can also suggest different recommendations for the implementation of the programs and the closure of the schools. It was then asked why a new school could not be built between Sir John A Macdonald and Sir Winston Churchill? Associate Director Bain stated that the Board is unable to consider a new school until the Ministry clarifies the funding of new schools.

The next question raised was “why had Delta never been upgraded and made accessible?” Superintendent Corcoran indicated that the standards of accessibility have changed. Mr. Morton shared that elevators have been put into other schools during a major renovation and Delta is a very old school and has very thick walls which would mean major renovations and a high cost.

A parent asked why there is not any representation on the ARC from the elementary schools. Associate Director Bain stated that in the Terms of Reference there was no allowance given for representation from the elementary schools and that would create a very large committee.

**Mark Daniels** shared that his daughter went to Delta and he wondered if the staff will be abandoning ship to look after themselves. Associate Director Bain stated that it is a professional decision that the staff will have to make.

**Dave Hutton** stated that on either side of Delta’s auditorium are stairwells that could house an elevator. Mr. Hutton went on to ask if the Board has determined the cost of replicating a hair dressing program, the kitchen catering or the food baking programs at the other schools. He stated that in his opinion the schools in the inner city are being pillaged and there would be tremendous costs involved in moving the programs that they currently have at Delta.

A parent in the community commented on the land sites on the Mountain. She stated that a new school would require the Board to self fund and if they self fund one then they will not have the funds available to self fund a second school.

An administration support staff indicated that she had gone through the pamphlet of “Education in HWDSB.” She is confused about the model that we are giving our students and feels that we are limiting our choices instead of embracing them. Superintendent Joshua reiterated that we are embracing what is written in the pamphlet. He referenced the programs that are currently offered in Mountain and Parkview and stated that is the type of programming that we want available in all of our schools. Not all of the students who need this type of support are able to attend Parkview or Mountain and HWDSB would like to offer that support to all of the students who need it.

Another parent expressed that Parkview offers smaller classes and specialized programs. She felt that when these students are in a larger school some of these students may not go out for the school play, whereas in a smaller school environment they would feel more comfortable to try out for something like that.

Superintendent Corcoran suggested that they look at the program strategy on the web site.

The question was raised “how can we get more information prior to the May 10<sup>th</sup> public meeting? Mr. Del Bianco stated that the Board works toward answering all questions or requests prior to the next committee working meeting. He shared that no question is off limit provided that it does not conflict with any privacy issues and the ARC committee has already asked a lot of questions as well as requested additional information.

**Leslie Falzone**, a Parkview parent, shared that her son has a learning disability. He picked Parkview because of the program that it offers. Her son was teased at other schools and if he chose Sir Winston Churchill he would be subjected to the same behaviours. Ms. Falzone went on to ask where the money would come from to build a new school. Associate Director Bain stated that the money would come from the sale of the properties as well as the operating cost reduction. He indicated that when the Board is closing a school the money will go to the construction cost of a new school and the renovation of existing schools.

The next question asked was “is the Board closing schools that are IP Schools?” Superintendent Corcoran shared that there are self contained schools within other schools as well.

**Anna Mori** encouraged the committee members to come and visit Parkview during the day when the school is fully functioning.

Another parent wanted to know if the Board would consider moving the archive center to Delta from Vincent Massey.

The statement was made “these kids should not be shoved off to other schools – they need a special program.”

The next question raised was “if you reduce the number of schools from the other ARCs would that fund the new school? Will the money from the north schools be put back into the new school?” Associate Director Bain shared that if schools are closed then the money can go into two streams – the renovation of the older schools and the building of the new school.

**Dana**, a teacher at Parkview, stated “We are a family, and a community. Teachers have been raising money and Parkview has great community supporters. These students need to have a place to showcase their talents and feel safe arriving on the short bus.” Dana would like everyone on the ARC to come to the school to see the work that they do at Parkview.”

A parent shared that she feels like the Board is taking from the poor to give to the rich. She said that the Board is closing schools in the needy areas to give to the more affluent areas. She asked the ARC to reconsider the recommendation of the board. Associate Director Bain reiterated that the intention of the Board is to reinvest the money in the existing schools. He said that if we can’t self fund then the Board will not build a new school unless the Ministry comes through with funding.

**Jim Holubeshen** asked if there are provisions for lowering the capacity of a school. Mr. Del Bianco stated that the on-the-ground capacity is Ministry directed. Mr. Holubeshen then stated that closing off a wing would not change the capacity and Mr. Del Bianco agreed with him.



**Anna Mori** stated that some of the students at Parkview have a reading and math level that is below Grade 5. She inquired if the Board was going to hire Educational Assistants to support these kids in regular school or will they fall through the cracks. Superintendent Corcoran stated that this is a need that will be addressed.

Superintendent Corcoran thanked everyone for coming out to the public meeting and sharing their questions and concerns. The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.