

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB)

West Accommodation Review Committee Meeting

Parkside Secondary School

November 1, 2011

Public Meeting #3

Minutes

ATTENDANCE:

Committee Members

Chair –Superintendent Sharon Stephanian

Voting Members – Christopher Austin, Deborah Beedie, Rosemary Bellefeuille, Phyllis Chasty, Em Del Sordo, Allyssa Horning, Lori King, Heather MacDonald, Sharon Ricci, Judy Shen, Boris Williams

Non-Voting Members – Gudrun Anderson, Paul Barwinski, Judith Bishop, Jessica Brennan, Michelle DesRochers, Rick Hart, Alex Johnstone, Judy Langsner, John Laverty, Brian Lenart, Maria Rikic-McCarthy, Virginia McCulloch, Laurie Swackhammer, Dan Thomson, Anne Waldie

Regrets

Voting Members - Bea Howell, Deborah Knoll,

Non-Voting Members – Krys Croxall, Lloyd Ferguson, Brian McHattie, Russ Powers

Resource Staff

Daniel Del Bianco, Don Hall, Jim Wibberley

Recording Secretary

Tracy McKillop

Superintendent Stephanian welcomed everyone to the third West ARC public meeting and thanked them for their interest in the process and the contribution that they will make to the accommodation review. She thanked Paul Barwinski for hosting the meeting and Bob Kurpeikis, the head of the tech department, for supporting the meeting. Superintendent Stephanian introduced each of the Committee members as well as the Resource Staff, Jim Wibberley and Daniel Del Bianco and Mr. Don Hall from the Facilities Department.

2.0 Opening Remarks – Sharon Stephanian

Superintendent Stephanian stated that at tonight's meeting we will do four things:

The first is to provide an overview of the accommodation review process.

The second is to offer a look at the work completed by the West ARC at its meetings. If you are interested, all the information the Committee has received and approved minutes are available to the public on the Board's website.

Thirdly we will share the accommodation options developed by the West ARC and what the next steps will be.

And the fourth piece is to provide members of the community the opportunity to ask questions and make comments.

3.0 Presentations - Daniel Del Bianco, Deborah Beedie and Heather MacDonald

3.1 Brief Overview of the Accommodation Review Process – Daniel Del Bianco

To view the presentation please click on the following link: http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/WestARC_Public_Meeting3_Presentation-Nov1_2011.pdf

Mr. Del Bianco reviewed "Why we are here tonight" as well as the ARC process. Mr. Del Bianco explained the Terms of Reference <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Secondary-West-TOR.pdf> as well as the difference between the working group meetings and the public meetings. He shared that the ARC works hard to achieve a recommendation and upon completion this report will go to the Board of Trustees (BOT) where they have a minimum of 60 days to make a final decision. Mr. Del Bianco shared the ACR timelines and stated that all of this information is on the Board web site http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/?page_id=2

Why we are here tonight?

- Provide an overview of the Accommodation Review Process
- Review the work completed by the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC)
- Review of "Concept Options" created by the ARC
- Next Steps of the ARC
- Receive input from the community on the ARC process and concept options

The Accommodation Review Process

- The process follows Ministry of Education guidelines, Board Policy and the Terms of Reference
- There are Committee working meetings and public meetings
- All meetings are open to the public
- The Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) is tasked with developing an accommodation solution that will address the long-term requirements of the community

ARC Recommendations

- The ARC will prepare a report that will be presented to the Board of Trustees
- This report will include the ARC's recommendations

- The Trustees will also receive a report from Senior Administration with their recommendations to the Board of Trustees
- The Board of Trustees will make the final decisions

ARC Timelines:

- 10 Working Group Meetings
- 4 Public Meetings
- Work scheduled to conclude in January 2012
- After receipt of final report Trustees have to wait a minimum of 60 prior to voting on a final decision
- Final report due to the Director of Education by January 19, 2012

The mandate of this committee, acting in accordance with the Board’s Pupil Accommodation Review Policy, is to produce a report to the Board that encompasses the following:

- a) Accommodation:** Develop recommendations to maximize the utilization of Board facilities in the review area with a target of 100% utilization for a future ten-year period
- b) Facility Condition:** Develop recommendations for capital improvements (i.e. repairs, renovations or major capital projects such as new construction) into existing facilities and sites along with a funding strategy to pay for those improvements.
- c) Program:** Develop recommendations around the strategic locations of Secondary School programs.
- d) Transportation:** Develop recommendations that address the implications of other recommendations on pupil transportation.
- e) Funding:** Develop a funding strategy to address any capital works that are contemplated in the recommendations above.
- f) Implementation**
- g) Scope:** Ancaster High – Highland – Parkside - Westdale
- h) Timeline:** Final ARC Report Due on **January 19, 2012**

Initial Information Presented to the West ARC:

- School Information Profiles (SIP)
- Accommodation recommendation prepared by senior administration
 - Close Parkside (June 2013)
 - Relocate students to existing facilities (September 2013)
 - Reinvest in remaining facilities to enhance their program and learning environments
- Correspondence from the community

The Committee have looked at the School Information Profiles (SIP) which are profiles of all the schools involved in this ARC and contain 181 items.

Mr. Del Bianco shared the Staff Recommendation. He explained that the Board is mandated to come up with a recommendation by the Ministry. Mr. Del Bianco indicated that the Board decided to put their recommendation out early in the process to initiate discussion. The Program Strategy has been shared with the Committee as well as the correspondence that has been received to date.

Mr. Del Bianco ended by encouraging everyone to view the web site or feel free to attend the meetings.

3.2 Work Completed by the West ARC – Deborah Beedie

West ARC member Deborah Beedie shared that the ARC Committee continues to work very hard to meet the needs of every community that is affected by the ARC process. She indicated that the ideas that come forward are a lot like our children because everyone believes that their own are correct so the Committee has incurred some struggles during the process; however, they are getting closer to some proposed ideas and options. Ms. Beedie shared what the Committee has been working on since the last public meeting as well as the additional information that was requested by the West ARC Committee.

Since Our Last Public Meeting

- 3 Working Group Meetings
- 2 Presentations
 - Facilities Management Overview – Summary of School Visits by Student Representatives - Judy Shen and Alyssa Horning visited all of the schools and presented their findings to the ARC Committee.
- Reviewed Community Input
- Decided to move forward with 2 proposed accommodation options

Information provided to the ARC:

- ReCAPP Summary by School
- Transportation Policy
- Historical Enrolments by School
 - Report from the Ministry of Education
 - Report from the Social Planning and Resource Council of Hamilton
- New Housing Development Forecast for Dundas and Ancaster
- List of HWDSB Leased Spaces for Programs
- Community and Continuing Education Summary
- French Immersion Summary
- HWDSB Sold Property Info
- Parkland Maps
- Summary of Administrative and Operational Costs by School
- Computer Summary
- Distance to Schools
- Correspondence from the Public

Summary of Working Group Meetings:

Working Group Meeting #6 (June 16, 2011)

- Presentation: HWDSB Facilities Management Department
- Presentation: Summary of School Visits by Student Representatives
- Discussions regarding accommodation options (large group)
- Direct resource staff to further explore potential boundaries and financial implications for the following options:
 - HWDSB Staff Recommendation
 - Closure of Highland and Parkside and the construction of a new school on one of the existing sites or a new, centrally located site

Working Group Meeting #7 (September 20, 2011)

- Review of options generated at June 16, 2011 Working Group Meeting #6
 - Eliminate options which include rebuilding on the Parkside site or a new centrally located site
- Directed resource staff to explore 2 additional options including:
 - Closure of Parkside and Highland and the construction of a new smaller (1,000 pupil place school) and the “right sizing” of Ancaster High
 - Closure of Ancaster, Highland and Parkside and the construction of a new school on Ancaster, Highland or a new, centrally located site
- Explore potential upgrades to the Highland site under the Staff Recommendation

Working Group Meeting #8 (October 11, 2011)

- Review of options generated at September 20, 2011 Working Group Meeting #7
 - Eliminate option which includes the closure of all three schools and rebuilding on Ancaster High, Highland or a new, centrally located site
 - Eliminate Staff recommendation to close Parkside and relocate those students to Highland
- Proceed to public meeting to seek input on the following option:
 - Closure of Parkside and Highland and the construction of a new 1,250 pupil place school on a centrally located site
- Second version of this option would include the construction of a smaller school (1,000 pupil places) and the “right sizing” of Ancaster High

3.3 Concept Options Created by the West ARC – Heather MacDonald

West ARC member Heather MacDonald shared the West ARC Recommended options and asked the community to give feedback about the options that she will be presenting tonight. She showed a map of the current school locations and boundaries and current utilization and projected utilization.

Option #1 – Closure of Highland and Parkside and rebuild on a new centrally located school or a school on the Highland site. Ms. MacDonald reviewed the proposed forecast of enrolment and the utilization rates under this option.

Option #4 - Closure of Highland and Parkside and rebuild on the Highland site with 1,000 pupil place OTG and the “right sizing” of Ancaster. Ms. MacDonald reviewed the proposed forecast of enrolment and the utilization rates under this option.

Daniel Del Bianco reviewed the financial summary and what the long term legacy costs are for these options. This includes upgrades for the program strategy implementation. He stated that legacy costs are everything that is back logged in renewal needs. The legacy costs are broken down into a number of different categories.

3.4 Next Steps – Heather MacDonald

- There are still lots of work remaining
- **Working Group Meeting #9 (November 22, 2011)**
 - Review proposed upgrades to Ancaster High
 - Review impact on transportation

- Develop program strategy
- Review input from the community
- **Public Meeting #4 (December 13, 2011)**
- Present final ARC recommendation
- Review components of final ARC report

Ms. MacDonald stated that the Committee would like the first half an hour of the question period to be dedicated to the ARC options and they would like to hear some constructive criticism about the options that they have considered. She shared that the Parkside Representatives have done a tremendous job on the Parkside Community's behalf.

Superintendent Stephanian drew people's attention to the meeting norms which were located on the back of the Agenda. She shared that it was important that there be a full and respectful dialogue about the matters before this Committee and these norms would help to achieve that.

4.0 Questions/Comments from the public:

C. I am concerned about the numbers in the projections.

A. The secondary enrolment projections are directly related to what is happening at the elementary level and you have four options for these students – English Catholic, French Catholic, English Public and French Public. It would be different if you have one school board.

Q. How did you come up with the numbers?

A. You begin by looking at the JK level and this goes through the system and this will give you the number at grade 8 to secondary school. There is always dialogue with the City to keep abreast of development in the area. People are not leaving their homes; they are choosing to remain in their homes as seniors and people are having fewer children.

Q. Only 3% of the funds are going to Parkside. Highland has a high needs so wouldn't it save the Board money if Highland was closed?

A. We have RECAP data provided by the government and this is something that is province wide. When priorities were looked at the priorities at Parkside were not as high as the other schools. This is something that the ARC Committee looked at. They looked at the OTG capacity and their final decision was not solely based on this.

Q. It would cost a lot of money to close 2 schools so wouldn't it make more sense to close one school and send some of the Highland students to Parkside?

The Chair restated the options to clarify any misunderstanding.

A. We took Parkside off the new building options due to the size of the land. Any new construction needs to be on 15 acres of land so building on the Parkside site is very restrictive. That is why we chose a new site or the Highland site. There is a lot of land; however, the Board does not own the land.

Q. The Greensville Public School is interested in the right sizing of Ancaster. There was no mention of boundary changes. Will we be relocated to Ancaster and will the public be involved?

A. Parkside and Highland students would remain in the Dundas area if they are currently in that catchment area. We would keep the existing boundaries. Right sizing Ancaster would be demolishing part of that school.

Q. Would Parkside and Highland remain open if they rebuild on the Highland site? Would that still be in 2013? Are the French immersion students being looked at and where will they be going?

The Chair shared that the Committee will be looking at timelines at the upcoming meetings.

Don Hall shared that in order to implement the proposal it would need to go to the Ministry so it would depend on when the Ministry would approve it. The planning for a new high school would take a year and another year and a half to build. So it would be approximately 2 ½ years from the approval of the Ministry.

Q. Are there more specific deadlines?

A. That is the best that we can do at this moment because it is based on what is approved.

Superintendent John Lavery indicated that we are currently looking at a program strategy. We currently have French Immersion (FI) at Westdale and we are not looking at changing that; however, that could open that up for discussion. We will have FI in this cluster of schools.

A man from Greensville asked the Committee to consider the community aspects. The Parkside School was everything when he grew up and he would like the Committee to consider this.

Diana Kenel read a statement which you will find on the web site after the West ARC meeting on November 22nd.

West ARC member Heather MacDonald stated that while it may appear that the Board is making the decisions and although Superintendent Stephanian is a Board employee she does not have a say in our vote. Your "Plan B" did come through as correspondence and was not stifled by the Board. The Board does not have any influence on the Plan B. Your representatives can bring this forward again.

A gentleman asked "if we can down size Ancaster Secondary School then why can we not down size all of the four schools?" A few years ago you tried to close Central due to lack of enrolment and now it is full with a portable on the front lawn. A lot of people moved into this area because there was a school in the area. I would like to keep all four schools open.

A Community member commended the Committee on their hard work and has noted the support of the Board staff. There is a lot of co operation between all of the ARC members and they are very honouring of each other. This has been a very positive atmosphere. She is in favour of closing a school in Dundas and the right sizing of Ancaster. It is cost effective to have fewer schools and to meet the program needs for the students of the future. I believe that having a new school - one in Dundas with great programming would work well. We have been very patient in waiting for funding to come to the Dundas area.

A resident of Greenville talked about the future of our students and with the demographics it is difficult to see what the future will offer. He feels that option 1 gives you more flexibility if you need to adjust the capacity if enrolment numbers are higher than expected.

Don Hall stated that if we look at the 2020 numbers we have room for the growth. If the costs are above and beyond what we have projected then we would need to go back to the Ministry to look for more funding for an addition.

The Chair shared that when looking at the overall capacity we also need to look at the programs that are being offered. When we look at the 21st Century learning, where students are not always sitting in a classroom, (e.g. e-learning) this will also affect the enrolment and utilization.

A mother is pleased that the close three and build one option is off the table. I understand the financial impact and the difficult task at hand. What would the demolition of Ancaster look like and would the students be affected? Do you have land in Dundas?

Don Hall shared what the right sizing of Ancaster would encompass. The school was built with three separate additions and consists of four different sections. The east end of the school would be removed. The work would need to be done in advance of the demolition and the students would remain in the school. We do not have land in Dundas so we would probably rebuild on the Highland site.

A gentleman addressed the philosophical approach of the Committee and the optimal size of the school. He stated that bigger is better due to the programs that can be offered; however, he still feels smaller is better. He feels that students are known when in a smaller school. What are the things that have been put forward in favour of keeping Parkside open?

ARC member Deborah Beedie spoke of walkability and that the downtown core benefits greatly from the student. Having had a child go through Parkside she has seen the good grades that they achieve and how well the students are prepared for University. They have had feedback from the Professors at the University indicating this fact. The teachers put in a lot of extra time and when she went to Dundas everyone knew each other and this is helpful when children have challenges, for instance - anxiety.

Cody shared that in 2009 they started a chapter of "Best Buddies". What will happen to this program if Parkside is closed? What is going to happen to the students with IEP's (IEP – Individual Education Plan)? These students will be lost.

Superintendent John Laverty congratulated Cody on the Best Buddies Program (a mentoring program for identified students). He shared that this program can exist in any school so that program could be part of the new school. Students with an IEP are required, by law, to be looked after and supported in the school. It is upsetting to move these students; however, we do have transition programs which would support these students in moving from elementary to secondary or from secondary to secondary.

Q. There is lots of emotion here. If we go with a 1250 pupil place school are we not considering moving our students to the Ancaster area? She feels that our children deserve a new school. If we are not closing in 2013 can we please stop saying that this school is closing. I would have put my daughter here. If we are building a new school are we keeping this school open until a new school has been built?

A. Yes that is correct.

Q. How likely are we to get funding for a new school since there are other ARCs wanting new schools? Can we have a plan B in case we don't get the funding? The Parkside catchment is up highway 6 so she is worried that they will be affected.

Daniel Del Bianco stated that there are currently three Secondary ARCs. The other two ARCs are looking at closing three schools and building a new school. We are one of 72 school Boards across the Province so we have to put together a strong business case. They will weigh all of the requests that they receive. There is more than enough space and capacity in Waterdown to accommodate it increasing enrolment and more.

Q. A lady asked about the transportation policy and the amount of time a student remains on the bus. Some of the students are on the bus for 2 ½ hours per day. What are the guidelines about the amount of time a student should be on the bus? Have you considered the quality of life for the Flamborough students and shouldn't we be looking at the boundary and changing this and sending our kids to the Waterdown School?

A. Since Waterdown is outside of the Terms of Reference they can only make a request for a boundary study. Anyone outside of 3.2 km is eligible for bussing in the rural area. The web site indicates that students should be on a bus for one hour.

A gentleman extended thanks to the Committee and for respecting Greensville and West Flamborough. We heard that some of the boundaries were going to be adjusted and our children would be sent to Ancaster. We are definitely resistant to going to Ancaster and we have an affinity for Dundas. He would like to put forward to build a new school with a new identity that respects the history of both Highland and Parkside. They are rivals in sports but friends in the Community.

C. A woman stated that she appreciates the work of the Committee. She would like the people to understand that the Board option is still on the table to be presented to the Board of Trustees.

Superintendent John Laverty indicated that this was put on the table as a starting point. The Executive Council needs to meet and deliberate if they want to have the same option or if they want to change it. We have heard what the ARC Committee has been saying and working on. Superintendent Laverty reiterated what the existing Staff Recommendation currently is; however, this could change prior to going to the Board of Trustees.

Daniel Del Bianco shared that the Staff Recommendation has the potential to evolve as the ARC Recommendation has evolved. It did involve boundary changes.

C. A woman came specifically because she heard that the students in Flamborough were going to be bussed to Ancaster. That is not an option; however, she would be open to having them go to Waterdown. The long bus rides affect the quality of life for her children.

Q. A gentleman shared that he is happy that the boundaries are not changing. What is the difference between a 1000 pupil place school and 1250? Every time there is a new school you have an influx of

students into the new school so will this affect the size of the school? There is historical data so have you looked at that?

Daniel Del Bianco stated that the cost of a 1250 pupil place school is more and would require the need to redesign the school for the population. In right sizing it you do not have excess space to maintain. Secondary Schools are open so Catholic and Public school students have a choice of which school they would like to attend. Yes there is data available; however, it is also affected by the programs that are being offered e.g. SHSMs. There are no definitive plans that can determine the number of students that will come to the school. We have to build it for the long term sustainable needs of the schools. If enrolments change or development happens we need the capacity to be flexible and due to the way that the funding works we need to build for the long term sustainability.

ARC Member Heather MacDonald lives in Ancaster and indicated that the students often go to the Catholic Board in grade nine but return for grades 11 and 12 due to the programs that they offer. We need to get and keep them in grade 9.

C. A Physiotherapist that has been in many schools and has seen how much anxiety the Staff Recommendation is causing in the students. She chose her community based on the feeling that she gets and is very angry about the possibility that her kids would have to go to Ancaster.

ARC Member Heather MacDonald clarified what happened with Diana's correspondence. Ancaster options came forward earlier in the meeting and Diana's correspondence came under correspondence. The Committee can look at that as a plan B. The Staff option has never been off the table. We have pushed it aside and are working on our own options.

Mr. Del Bianco indicated that the ARC Committee has dismissed the Staff Recommendation. The two options that are on the table are what the ARC Committee are considering. We as Resource Staff have been diligent in putting all of the information on the web site and sharing all information with the ARC Committee. We have option numbers 1 and 4 on the presentation so that everyone can track the option since its inception.

Q. Would option 4 include selling land?

A. It is within their parameters as funding strategy to make a recommendation to sell off some the land.

C. In my personal opinion it is unfathomable to build a 1000 pupil place school where we currently have 1300 students. I would prefer option #1. I was at a meeting and heard that the Committee was looking at boundary changes. Some of the students are going to St. Mary's because it is a new school.

Q. What is the impact of moving the students from Mountain and Parkview into the regular schools and how are we going to support these students?

A. Daniel Del Bianco shared that the South ARC and North ARC would like these students to remain together and the program together in a new facility or one of the existing facilities. They do not need to keep the Mountain or Parkview buildings as long as the program and the students remain together.

C. A woman indicated that the evening has been very helpful tonight. She reiterated what the ARC process is and asked if it is possible that no changes will be made since she has heard this for the last 20 years.

Dan shared the ARC process again ... two reports go to the Board of Trustees and there is a 60 day cool off period after which time the Trustees will make a final decision. Ultimately the Ministry is the one that says "Yes" or "No" to the funding for new school. The Trustees initiated the ARCs because they see the need for change.

C. We talk a lot about celebrating diversity and Parkside is half of the size of Westdale. I believe that smaller schools are a good option especially when kids are taking their own lives.

C. I would like to formally ask that the plan B option be considered and put on the table.

The Trustees receive both the ARC report and the Staff Report and it is not an either or situation and it is the decision of the Board of Trustees and they can choose one or the other or a combination of the two or something that they would like to see.

Adjournment took place at 9:00 p.m. The Chair thanked everyone for sharing their thoughts and questions. She also stated the date of the upcoming working group meeting which is on November 22, 2011.