

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB)

South Accommodation Review Committee Meeting

Education Centre Board Room

September 27, 2011

Minutes

ATTENDANCE:

Committee Members

Chair -Scott Sincerbox

Voting Members - Bill Barrett, Beverly Bressette, Jackie Brown, Alexandra Butty, Ken Durkacz, Margaret Eagle, Kim General, Al Pierce, Anne Pollard, Cheryl Poot, Susan Pretula, John Whitwell

Non-Voting Members - Wanda Bielak, Donna Clappison, Gary Deveau, Angela Ferguson, Randy Gallant, Mag Gardner, Wes Hicks, Peter Joshua, Deb Jukes, Ted Kocznur, Renee Majic, Joanna Maull, Laura Peddle, Kevin Robinson

Regrets

Voting Members - Derek Hambly, Julia Shen

Non-Voting Members - Scott Duvall, Manny Figueiredo, Brian Greig, Tom Jackson, John Miholics, Lillian Orban, Terry Whitehead, Paul Vukosa

Resource Staff

Daniel Del Bianco, Steve Stirling, Jim Wibberley

Recording Secretary

Tracy McKillop

1. Call to Order

Superintendent Scott Sincerbox welcomed everyone to the ninth working group meeting. The Chair addressed a couple of matters.

The first relates to requests for information for the Committee and he believes that over the past few months there has been some level of misunderstanding about this. A request for information needs to be endorsed by the ARC. In other words, request for information come from the Committee not individual members. The Committee confirms the request for information. This will ensure that staff time is focused on the wishes of the Committee. Please remember that there are five ARCs underway at the present time and material is being prepared for each of them. Are there any questions about this?

Superintendent Sincerbox indicated that the second item is about how our Committee operates and it is just a reminder. The work of this Committee has at times been difficult and emotional and this is not usual in reviews such as this. We are all trying to do our best and we all have good intentions so even when we disagree and in our most difficult times we must treat each other with respect.

The Chair informed the Committee that there was a package of information for the night's meeting. It is an extremely busy agenda this evening and it will be a challenge to get through all of it so please keep this in mind as we move through our agenda.

2. **Agenda** <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/South-ARC-Agenda-September-27th.pdf>

Q. Who makes up the Agenda and how is it determined?

A. We base it on the previous meeting – and things that are requested. If there is something that comes up it can be brought up before the Committee and they can say whether or not they want it added to the Agenda.

C. If I ask a question and it can't be answered I would like to be told that it is not available at this time.

2.1 Additions/Deletions – 6.10 would be the Committee of the Whole report from June 2010 has been added. This report includes the non essential work for the schools that was to be done.

It was announced that Trustee Peddle would like to postpone 3.3.4 until she arrives as she is delayed.

2.2 Approval of the Agenda – The amended agenda was approved by consensus.

3.0 Minutes of the meeting of Sept 6, 2011

3.1 Errors or Omissions – there were no changes made to the minutes.

3.2 Approval of the Minutes – The minutes were approved by consensus.

3.3. Business Arising from the Minutes

3.3.1. Extension of ARC Timelines –Jim Wibberley

Mr. Wibberley shared that January 3, 2012 is the last working group meeting and the Committee must be ready to submit the final report to the Director of HWDSB. He shared that if the Committee feels that they can't meet the deadline of January 5, 2012 they could make a motion to extend this date; however, the Board of Trustees (BOT) would like to have an end date.

Q. What time do the BOT need to have this request processed?

A. The request goes to Committee of the Whole first and then to a full Board meeting.

Q. Could we ask for an extension and then potentially finish earlier?

A. You can pick a date down the line and then if you finish earlier that would be great.

Q. Can we pick a date now and delay the public meeting until we feel ready to have it?

A. If you want an extension then I would recommend that the request be made in November.

3.3.2 – ARC Timelines – Daniel DelBianco

Mr. Del Bianco felt that it was important to see how things were going by the end of the meeting because the next public meeting is scheduled for October 18th. As it sits today the final due date is Jan 5th 2012.

Q. Are we having a discussion about the January 5th date because it falls within the Holidays and some of the members will not be here in attendance?

A. If the Committee makes a motion to extend the date then you could move the January 5th date. There was further discussion on the January 5th date.

Joanna Maull made a motion to extend the date from January 3rd to January 19th; however, consensus was not reached. Further discussion took place on the extension date. Some members wanted to stop extending and get down to work.

A vote was called to extend the final date to January 19th and a motion was carried by a vote of 9 to 3. Dan will come back to the Committee with proposed dates of additional meetings.

3.3.3. ARC Membership –Scott Sincerbox

Superintendent read a statement regarding ARC Membership. I was as follows: “If you recall, at our first ARC meeting this year we raised the issue of ARC membership. Our intent was, as a Committee, to affirm those members who no longer fit the criteria as outlined in the Accommodation review Terms of Reference.

Since the policy remains silent on the issue of ARC memberships, it is important that as a Committee we affirm those members to continue in their role. We sought legal advice on the issue and an argument could be made to exclude those individuals who no longer meet the criteria for membership. We don't want that to happen.

Our interest is in ensuring the continuity of those members by validating their role on the Committee. For your information, the school councils of these members have also endorsed their continued participation on this ARC.

At this point, we are now looking for affirmation that the South ARC supports the continued participation of Cheryl Poot (Hill Park), Beverley Bressette (Mountain), and Anne Pollard (Mountain).

Consensus was given to support Anne Pollard and Beverley Bressette continuing as the Parent Representatives for Mountain Secondary School and Cheryl Poot for Hill Park Secondary School.

Q. Are the students still on the Committee?

A. Yes Julia let me know that she was unavailable tonight.

3.3.4. Board Indicator Data – Peter Joshua and Mag Gardiner

A motion was put forth to defer this item until Trustee Peddle arrived. The motion was carried.

4.0 Minutes of the meeting of September 15, 2011

4.1 Errors or Omissions – there was a minor change made to the minutes.

4.2 Approval of the Minutes – The amended minutes were approved by consensus.

4.3. Business Arising from the Minutes –There was none.

5.0 Mountain and Parkview Presentation – Follow-up Questions

1. Is the "physcoeducational testing" similar to an IQ test (for instance, like the Grade 4 testing)? If not, what other attributes is it looking at?

This testing can include an IQ test. It looks at determining a students' ability to learn, their suitability for certain types of learning environments, how they problem solve, what their skills, strengths and areas of needs are and sometimes their preferred learning style; all of which impacts the type of programming they will need to be successful, the level of challenge they can manage and what they will likely excel at or be challenged by. It will also determine if there is a presence of a Learning Disability (L.D.) or if the learner's level of intelligence as demonstrated on the tests, indicate a Mild Intellectual Delay (M.I.D.)

2. If this testing is IQ, what, if any, of the pathways (ACUW) are they able to succeed at? How much modification to a pathway would be required? Can you suggest some courses that one of your students could be readily integrated into?

This testing does not determine or predict whether or not a student will be successful in any of the described Pathways. The testing does provide information that will determine if they meet criteria for admission to either Mountain or Parkview which focuses on workplace preparation and transition to community living as we are a "SWT" (School to Work) preparation based program. Our courses are at the locally developed, open and workplace level. Our courses provide accommodation and modification as required on an individual basis according to the IEP for each pupil in our schools as all pupils are on and IEP (Individual Education Plan). Our students achieve success when program is differentiated according to their learner needs as outlined in the IEP and more recently, the Learner Profile which is being developed for all learners at both Mountain and Parkview by staff.

3. Using the ARC Handout titled "Pupil Counts by Grade of Where Study Area Residents Attend", if all the Mountain/Parkview students went to the school in their catchment area, some schools, such as Barton, would only attract about 20 students. Is such a low number

feasible to offer special programming - for example, even if the students were integrated some of the time, I expect they would still require some specialized programs.

Some of our students are regularly integrated or have chosen to attend their local school; local schools have begun to support the unique needs of our learners with a variety of responses derived from typical Tier 1, 2 and 3 interventions based on the need, demand or specific case. The Board's program strategy refers to varying levels of support to be offered to all learners according to their needs, preference, and demand. The model of inclusion and its details for providing the specific support of our type of learner includes references to stand alone specialized programs such as intensive literacy, numeracy and personal life management skills and direct inclusion in "regular" classroom settings where the appropriate support or accommodations can be readily accessed.

4. Would these students be able to find a social peer group?

100% of students are out of catchment because we don't have a catchment area. There are a number of students involved in inclusion at other schools. Not all of the identified students attend Mountain; they may try their home schools or try Mountain later or return to their home schools upon graduation or after they have received 1-2 years of support in the area of literacy and numeracy, for example. As most of our current and incoming grade Nines have mostly come from "Special Classes" in grade eight from across the district, they make new friends or may have friends/acquaintances from the community or earlier elementary school experience. Some students do not seek peer relationships or find relationships difficult. It is for those reasons that we ensure all students are attached to a Caring Adult. At Parkview we are not able to provide a social peer group. Each of the students is very individual and some don't want a peer group.

Do you know how many other students with IEP's similar to a Mountain/Parkview student are currently in HWDSB?

We don't have that data right now; senior staff of the Board might be able to furnish that figure if requested.

Can you give me a profile of the students who would have a challenge with integration from one school to other?

There are many variables that we have seen having had an affect on our learner profile in their transition to one school or program to another or to go directly to their home school from grade eight. The challenges they have found in the past included: large class size, pace of learning, large school environment, lack of peer group, poor adaptive skills, inability to identify and access appropriate support, inability to compete for limited spots on sports teams, access to clubs or activities due to financial or systemic barriers, intellectual or academic challenges due to their cognitive or learning needs and an inability to overcome barriers or seek assistance when required, previous history with other students may occasionally cause problems in transitioning or integrating, to name some of the significant challenges we have seen in the past.

In sum, key challenges are intellectual, academic and social. Emerging mental health issues for many adolescents and the combined challenge of adolescents with mental health and learning needs as seen in our profile would pose additional challenges in supporting a successful transition. These are some of the key factors to be considered in supporting transitions, both now and in the future.

Additionally, some students find it easier to transition or try another program or school if they have peer support; this can come in the form of friends they already know, people from the past or “buddies” in the form of “welcoming ambassadors” to support them as they make the transition and along the way so they are not alone. There are many features of a successful transition that apply to our type of learner that apply to many students. Generally, a welcoming staff who understands and accepts their unique needs, is able and willing to provide support for them in the way they need in order to be successful, is patient, understanding and non judgmental when challenging situations arise, is able to advocate for them without taking away responsibility and has a unique set of skills in dealing with students who have varying levels of ability and skill both academically, cognitively and socially. If they have higher adaptive skills they would find the transition easier.

C. What will the Mountain and Parkview need to transition?

A. Superintendent Joshua indicated that during the SEAC Open House you will hear from the students who had adapted and who fit this profile.

Mr. Paul Beattie shared that the students who will be struggling are the students who are teenagers going into grade 9. Some of the students have challenges coming to a new school and often have anxiety issues. They need to feel that they are not different and to feel safe and have a sense of belonging. It is pure acceptance. They have experienced bullying in the past so to go to a new peer group is fearful.

Q. How does someone get identified? What is the process? What does it mean when they are identified?

A. They experience difficulty usually in the Elementary school but it happens in the Secondary as well. A recommendation would be made for the student to see a Learning Resource Teacher (LRT) and if they feel that they require an assessment then that would be the next step. There are seven categories of identification. The students receive a written IEP and then things are put into place to support them in their education.

Q. If a student changes schools do they lose their IEP?

A. If they are within our Board then the IEP goes with them. If they come in from another Board then they are asked if they have been identified. A member stated that they had a student the previous year that came in from another Board and it took a long time to have an IEP put in place for her.

Q. How long will it take to transition 300 mountain students into the program? You will have the main stream students as well as the identified students.

Superintendent Joshua indicated that it is of the utmost importance to have all of the plans in place. We understand the difficulty that would ensue if we were to do that at the last minute. There are already processes in place when transitioning from Elementary to Secondary schools.

C. Cheryl Poot stated that when a student came in from the United States and an IEP was put in place right away. The Principle in the U.S. was contacted and within 30 days, as is dictated by the law, they had the IEP in place. There was discussion around this point and Ms. Poot indicated that they are already looking at the identified students coming into the school in 2012.

Superintendent Joshua stated that in the last two years HWDSB has paid attention to the early leavers. They have the support in the schools to bring those students back in and they were prepared ahead of time. He shared that it requires planning and implementation so no students fall through the cracks.

Q. Have we done our students a disservice by not integrating them sooner?

A. Mr. Beattie shared that the supports and programming for the students has increased immensely. Superintendent Joshua indicated that the Board is always learning and adopting new programs and skills to support our students. Support is received provincially as well. There is some excellent work being done currently in preparing the students to move forward.

Mr. Beattie shared that our issues are a global issue. He recently spoke at a conference and people were very interested in the strides that HWDSB is making.

C. I am concerned about splitting these students up. I feel that they should remain together.

Wanda Bielak shared that there would be extra training required for the staff in the school.

Q. Are we looking at having all of the staff prepared for the students who will be coming into the school?

A. Superintendent Joshua indicated that the Board would have teachers network with each other. All of the staff are getting more comfortable with knowing the students and have been developing profiles for these students.

Consensus was given to move off of item #5.

6.0 Data and Option Updates

6.1 Facility Partnerships Update – Dan Del Bianco

Mr. Del Bianco went over the updates regarding Facility Partnerships. He shared that the expenses of the renovations, and maintenance would need to be proportionately shared by the facility partner.

Q. What kind of safety checks would be in place?

A. The Ministry has set guidelines for partnership and they have to be conducive to the education environment.

The Ministry and the Board Policy states that Facility Partnerships are in place to help reduce the costs. There was discussion around the benefit of having community partners.

6.2 Current Partnerships in Secondary School– Daniel Del Bianco

The Community partners are listed in the SIPs.

6.3 Spaced leased by HWDSB and HWDSB admin sites – Daniel Del Bianco

These are identified in the SIPs as well.

There were no questions on 6.2 or 6.3

6.4 Summary of program discussion – Peter

Superintendent Joshua apologised for not getting the information to the Committee sooner. The Committee looked at the information. No questions were asked.

6.5 Students transported to Westmount – Mag Gardiner

Superintendent Gardiner indicated that 86 students are eligible for HSR passes; however, only 32 picked them up. These are students identified with an IEP.

Q. Why passes and not tickets?

A. This information comes from transportation department so we are not sure why that was determined.

Q. How do they determine what is more cost effective and what are the eligibility requirements?

John Whitwell stated that a number of years it was determined to give out passes however for the Special Ed students it was easier to give them bus tickets.

Consensus was given to request which schools get bus passes versus tickets, why tickets versus passes and what are the eligibility requirements and the eligibility for co-op students?

6.6. Administrative Recommendation Decision Criteria –Jim Wibberley

This is a high level recommendation that provides the Committee with the Staff's initial thinking. The Staff will provide a second report to the BOT at the same time as the ARC and this may differ from their original recommendation.

No questions were asked.

6.7 Students by Program Plan Tier – Peter Joshua

Superintendent Joshua spoke of Vocational Education which is the training of students for jobs. These are non academic courses primarily but they are credited. He stated that there has been some misunderstanding of inclusion and some people believe this to be full inclusion. It is not necessarily full inclusion since that will depend on the student. The value of inclusion would support better general health and someone who interacts well and looks forward to going to school. This does not mean that all of the current programming gets thrown out. We talk about getting the support they need which could be a portion of the day. When they are ready with lots of support they will transition into a regular classroom environment. This is not the full inclusion model that you see in other Boards.

Q. How is the full inclusion determined?

A. Customized programming is the key here and being mindful of what the student needs. Gradually inclusion would increase if the student was ready. There is a student voice piece to this as well.

Q. Who makes the decision?

A. It is a team support who helps to make that decision, not just one person. An advocate voice is essential as well.

Q. When should the programs be in place?

A. We currently have some programs in place. It is monitored by us as well as outside groups. Some programs may take a little time but we are mindful of that.

Q. When are these students going to learn math?

A. That program is running in a few places and it is part of the plan for the future programming.

Anne Pollard said she is grateful that the people who are making decisions are learning what vocational students need and the programming required for these students.

Trustee Peddle shared that she hears that the people are worried about these students especially when we are implementing new programming. She would like to see evidence that it works.

Superintendent Joshua encouraged everyone to come and attend the open house on October 13th, these are students who are similar to students in Mountain and Parkview, and have transitioned into a composite school/classroom. They may not have a diploma but will have a certificate and they have support.

Q. Does the Ministry offer additional funding to support these students with additional EA support?

A. The Ministry does offer additional funding. The goal is to support these students on an individual basis.

Q. When putting these students into a mainstream high school can we put the teachers, who they are accustomed with, will be there to support them?

Again Superintendent Joshua suggested coming to the open house and asking these students questions regarding their teachers. We will be looking at having familiar faces of not only support and resource staff but teachers as well.

6.8 Out of Catchment students for Program Reasons – Peter Joshua

Superintendent Joshua thanked all of the principals for their hard work and support to put this together. This was a lot of work.

Q. Most of the students are staying in their home school. Only Sir Allan MacNab has 50% out-of-catchment in one program.

A. It is fairly new having SHSMs and we anticipate that the parents and students will understand the flexibility of these programs.

6.9 Option maps and information – Dan Del Bianco

Mr. Del Bianco went over the ideas that have come from the Committee and each one has an associated graph and the enrolment data. He threw out some ideas out to the Committee for them to consider:

- One option is status quo.
- Another option is the staff recommendation – it is a recommendation until such time that the ARC takes it off the table – it shows phase one.
- Do we want a new school in the option?
- Do we want to keep the Mountain program as its own program?
- Do we want to keep the staff option?
- Closure of Barton and Mountain and space the schools across the cluster
- Closure of Sir Allan MacNab and Mountain
- Closure of Hill Park and Mountain
- Closure Barton and Hill Park

Q. How are any of these closures going to affect Westmount?

Trustee Peddle shared that she was concerned that there are gaps in the data.

6.10 – Committee of the Whole report – Daniel Del Bianco

June 2010 – This is a list of all the non –essential work that would have been done if there was not an ARC. This work was suspended due to the ARC. Westmount was not included because it was not included in the ARC. For any of the schools not in the ARC work can or is proceeding.

Beverley Bressette would have liked it printed larger.

3.3.4 Board Indicator Data Report – Peter Joshua and Mag Gardner

Superintendent Joshua stated that this report is produced by the Ministry and is a snapshot of data. It is developed as indicators for principals and teachers for grades 9-12. It shows the provincial grad rates, what is happening in the Board and how students are doing on standardized tests.

Superintendent Gardiner shared the following information.

It is important to note that the Ministry snapshot data does not accurately capture students registered in Westmount's program. The Ontario Student Information System (ONSIS) captures data three times a year across the province. These dates are the same for all schools in Ontario. For Westmount, this means that students who complete a course early or carry over a course into the net semester or year are not included in the Ministry's data set. This affects several hundred students every year.

Since we know credit accumulation data and course pass rates at Westmount are not accurately captured due to the Westmount delivery model, there are a number of other data indicators that can better measure student achievement for these students. For example, OSSLT and EQAO are standardized tests written by all students across the province. In both tests, Westmount students exceed the provincial average. In 2011, Westmount had 93 per cent of students pass OSSLT, which was ten percentage points higher than the province. In EQAO grade 9 math, Westmount achieved 85 per cent in Academic, which was 2 per cent higher than the province. In Applied, 47 per cent of students achieved levels 3 and 4. This is 5 per cent above the provincial average.

We also know that of the 2006 cohort of students who began at Westmount over 97 per cent of those students graduated in either 4 or 5 years. Another 2 per cent left with plans to graduate through Alternative or Continuing Education. We do know that a number of students do choose to leave the Westmount program because it is not the right fit. Last year, for example, 6 per cent of the 2010-2011 students chose to pursue their credits at another school.

Westmount is a different school, with a unique delivery model. The Ministry is aware that the data set doesn't provide an accurate picture of credit accumulation at the school because students are provided the opportunity to achieve credits at their own pace, following their own timelines.

Questions:

Q. 2008-09 data is not up to date?

A. It is the nature of the collection of the data.

C. Westmount must have a more accurate picture – perhaps we can rely on the school data.

A. That is why this is important that we know that Westmount students are graduating.

C. Look at the number of students who choose to leave Westmount and what their grad rates are. It would be important for all schools to understand.

A motion was put forth indicating that the Committee would like to see the data showing how many students leave after grade 9 or grade 10 and how many students are graduating. Mr. Wibberley shared that gathering this would be labour intensive. It would need to be done student by student and school by school. He asked the Committee to consider before they ask for this – would this be useful information to add value to the ARC process. The motion was removed from the table.

Trustee Peddle indicated that this was not the item she wanted deferred. She wanted to speak to 3.3.3. ARC Membership. The Chair stated that 3.3.3. has already been talked about and consensus given.

Consensus was given to leave item #3.

7.0 Accommodation Options

Consensus was given to defer this item and this will be the heart of the meeting on October 18th.

8.0 Other Business

8.1 Planning for the Public Meeting

A motion was put forth to switch the next public group and working group meeting and dedicate the entire meeting to options. Consensus was given and the meetings have been changed to:

October 18th working group meeting

October 27th – public meeting

8.2 Other

A request was made for data pertaining to Board admin programs or sites. Where would the people end up if the program was moved? How big are they and how much space they need?

Consensus was given on this request for data.

9.0 Correspondence – It was in the package and can be seen by clicking on the following web site.

10.0 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:06 p.m.