

**Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
North Accommodation Review – Trustee Questions
Special Committee of the Whole Meeting (April 23, 2012)**

Trustee Turkstra

Can staff provide any literature/data which analyzes the distance that students travel to school and their graduation rates and student success?

Please see attached paper entitled *“Brief Research Review - Effects of distance travelled on school achievement”*.

What would it cost to provide transportation to the Boards most vulnerable secondary students in North Cluster?

The estimated cost of providing transportation to the most vulnerable secondary students (Tier 3) currently residing in the North cluster would be approximately \$80,000 to \$240,000 per year. This range is based on the estimated percentage of students requiring Tier 3 intervention (1%-5% of the student population) currently residing and attending a school located in the North cluster.

Please note that the proposed costs are for discussion purposes only and that the actual costs would be driven by the service model, student resident locations and school site/ bell times.

Were there any adaptations/modifications made to the Westmount building to accommodate the self-paced, self-directed, self-contained program?

Generally, original spaces of the Westmount building have been “re-purposed” as opposed to altered.

- An original science prep area is now the “Dispensary”
- Original classroom spaces provide for “Resource Areas”
- The rifle range has been converted to the “Studio B” (music & dance area)
- And a classroom sized area of the original Library has been partitioned-off to create the “student test area”

The re-purposing of original building space is an ongoing “process of reaction” to the changes in program needs throughout the system. There are many examples of re-purposing throughout our facilities. Care must be exercised when re-purposing building spaces. A change in use of a building area may affect the Ministries record of the facility and subsequently utilization and funding.

Capital Funds utilized for the Westmount program needs; (approximately)

- \$100K was invested in 2008 to convert the original rifle-range which was being used as general storage to the new “Studio B”. A music-dance area, work included providing a/c, new flooring, painting, mirrors, some millwork and outlets etc.
- \$20K in 2006 to erect partition walls in the library for the “test area”

The school has invested in equipment and furniture requirements as well as minor aesthetic upgrades to facilitate the specialized program.

Provide a summary of the use and condition of amenities for Parkside and Highland.

Highland	
List of On-Site Amenities	Condition
Tennis court	Good
Soccer field	Fair
Football field	Fair
Track field	Fair
List of Off-Site Amenities	
Veteran’s Park (Baseball Diamond and Mini Soccer fields), Couldry Park (Soccer), Sanctuary Park (Soccer X 2), Conservation Authority trails within 500 meters, Dundas Granite Curling Club, University Lanes, Rock Chapel Golf Course, McMaster University (Altitude), Highland Karate, Dundas and Dalewood Pool.	Adequate
Parkside	
List of On-Site Amenities	Condition
N/A	N/A
List of Off-Site Amenities	
Dundas Driving Park: Splash pad/wading pool, Soccer field, Baseball diamonds (x4), tennis court, lawn bowling green	Adequate

Provide a summary of the combined financial impact of the recommended options.

Please see attached PowerPoint slide

Trustee White

Can staff provide a complete list of amenities at both Highland and Parkside (compared to information presented at public meeting on April 2, 2012)?

Please see attached map.

Trustee Brennan

Regarding the dance program at Hill Park, is the program offered any place else in the system?

The ArtSmart program is only offered at Hill Park. However, arts dance courses are also offered at a number of other schools across the system.

Trustee Orban

1. Does the Ministry of Education provide funding for the construction theatres?

No, the Ministry of Education does not provide funding for a “traditional” theatre similar to what you would find at Ancaster, Glendale or any number of our existing secondary schools. The Ministry does provide funding for “cafetorium” or “gymatorium” style theatres.

Questions raised by M. Campbell at April 10, 2012 Special Committee of the Whole meeting (South)

1. Why was Hill Park put to the foreground of closure Cluster and not until February – why did the sudden change occur?

The closure of Hill Park has been proposed by the South Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) and the revised staff recommendation. The South ARC originally presented the proposed closure of Hill Park at their third public meeting (January 19, 2012). The proposed closure of Hill Park has, in part, been influenced by proposed location for a new secondary school south of the Lincoln Alexander Parkway.

2. Do you have funding for the new school, property to build on and what are projected costs for transportation to the new school? Why not bus students to a facility that is structurally sound and upgrade from there?

The funding for a new school would, in part, be funded through the estimated proceeds of disposition from the sale of school sites along with a business case submission to the Ministry of Education for the balance of funds. The impact on transportation varies depending on the proposed options. For the most part the implications on transportation are negligible as students residing south of the Lincoln Alexander Parkway, which are currently being provided with transportation to schools north of the Linc, could potentially be within walking distance to the proposed new school. Quite often the cost of refurbishing an existing facility can be just as expensive as constructing a new school and when reinvesting in an existing school the Board needs to ensure the long-term viability of that facility.

3. Have you looked into property that Hill Park currently sits on to confirm the use of the land?

Should the Board of Trustees close Hill Park and sell the school site, the new land owner would be responsible for obtaining municipal approval for any redevelopment proposal.

Brief Research Review - Effects of distance travelled on school achievement

The Evidence-Based Education and Services Team was asked to briefly review published research literature to determine if there is a correlation between the distances or time a student spends travelling, and their success in school. A small body of literature supports a negative correlation between student travel time and/or distance and the likelihood that student will be successful. The majority of the literature focuses on elementary students, although some literature looked at secondary school attendance.

The literature is largely focused on the effects of consolidating smaller rural school districts into large rural school districts. In rural areas there is a clear correlation between long bus rides, decreased attendance, and poor student achievement. This relationship is confounded, however, by the effects of socio-economic status. Students from poorer families are less likely to have their own car, or to be driven to school by their parents, resulting in increased school bus usage, longer times and/or greater distances travelled. These studies also note the negative impact that an increased distance from school has on rates of student participation in extra-curricular activities and parental engagement with their child's school.

There were two relevant studies that examined the effect of distance from school on academic achievement in urban school districts. Both of these studies also supported a negative correlation between distance/time spent getting to school, and academic achievement. However they also noted a number of other factors that may confound this correlation. These include socio-economic status, student characteristics (e.g., race, ethnicity and family composition), neighbourhood characteristics, and past school attendance.

One study defined long travel times as "more than 30 minutes" in a rural setting, and "more than 22 minutes" in an urban setting. These were arbitrarily taken from local policies, and the intent was to determine if the standard for travel time was met. Another study used travel time as a variable, and found a consistent decrease in attendance across a variety of travel times. They did not specify a specific threshold at which travel time had a greater impact.

A 1973 study found that the impact of student travel time is less important for students in Grade 4 than in grade 8. It was least important for students in grade 11. It is unclear how much of this is due to external factors such as the acquisition of driving privileges, or the change in peer relationships across the developmental stages.

Estimating the specific impact that school distance contributes to poor school achievement in secondary students with any degree of confidence would be very difficult, given the limited models available and poor understanding of the contributions of other factors. While travel time does have a negative impact on attendance, there are a multitude of other factors that may have as great an impact, or greater impact than student travel time.

Articles reviewed:

Gottfried, Michael A. (2010). Evaluating the Relationship Between Student Attendance and Achievement in Urban Elementary and Middle Schools: An Instrumental Variables Approach. *American Educational Research Journal*, 47, 434-465.

This report was prepared by the Evidence-Based Education and Services Team.

Howley, C. B., Howley, A. A., & Shamblen, S. (2001). Riding the School Bus: A Comparison of the Rural and Suburban Experience in Five States. *Journal of Research in Rural Education, 17(1), 41-63*

Jimerson, L. (2007). Slow Motion: Travelling by School Bus in Consolidated Districts in West Virginia. *A publication of the Policy Program of the Rural School and Community Trust.*

Lu, Yao-Chi, Tweeten, Luther (1973) The Impact of Busing on School Achievement. *Growth and Change, 4, 4, 44-46*

Schlossberg, M., Greene, J., Phillips, P. P., Johnson, B., & Parker B. (2006). School Trips: Effects of urban form and distance on travel mode. *Journal of the American Planning Association, 3, 337-346*

Secondary Accommodation Strategy

Scope of the Staff Recommendations:

- Proposed construction of two new secondary schools (north and south)
- Significant upgrades to Highland Secondary School

Impact:

- Elimination of approximately **5,000** surplus pupil places
- Increased overall utilization rate of the three clusters from **62%** to **89%** by 2020
- Potential Long-Term Renewal Savings: **\$115 million**
- Potential Long-Term Operational Savings: **\$46 million**

Estimated Cost of Project: \$83 million

Potential Proceeds of Disposition: up to \$43 million

Balance to fund: \$40 million



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|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Baseball Diamond | Grightmire Arena | Soccer/ Football Field |
| Dundas Community Pool | Lawn Bowling Green | Splash Pad/ Wading Pool |
| | Tennis Courts | |