

Good evening, I understand that there will be a public meeting coming up this week. I am very sorry I cannot sit through another "Don't Close My School" blues. I live in Strabane and I have 3 children. My oldest will be going to Dundas for high school in 3 years and my younger guys still have to start school.

I honestly believe and feel that the best option for all within the community is to close both schools open a new modern school which the children will benefit from. Whether you keep it on Highland property or move the location to another (not too much further as my children will already be on the bus for an hour). I keep hearing horrible things about Parkside and I attribute it to its location (lots of places for children to hide and experiment drugs/sex resulting in teenage pregnancy). As a parent those are very scary things to hear. I have also recently been told Parkside has a drug rehab program for its students!

So I guess my only real concern will be, where will the kids go to school if you put this school on Highland property.

Thank you for your time and good luck on Tuesday night.

Kind regards

Jenn Routledge

Hi

Rhu and Michael Sherrard has sent the message below.

Comments

Please keep Ancaster High OPEN Reasons to keep the school where it is. - Twin pad arenas and Spring Valley down the road which support the Program of Choice - Hockey _ Partnership with the Rotary center for use of their facilities -use of gyms, fields, baseball diamond - Teen Center across the street which is specifically open during lunch hours so as to service the needs of high school students - Partnership with Cedar Springs, for use of their fitness facilities, by all of the gym classes - Spring Valley/Dundas Conservation across the street, used by Science, geography, phys ed. classes - Attached Pool , used by all gym classes - Attached auditorium, used by theater arts program and if we are to get the new Special High Skills Major Program in -Theater and Performing Arts would be integral to that program. -Location near to village and shopping plazas - used by family studies program. - The Triathlon which is student run, only one of its kind in Ontario - only able to run because of that location - Extensive soccer fields which are not only used by community but have a school run tournament each year which generates revenues for the school - Life Skills class which operates it's co-op placements from the Village core, ventures out weekly for excursions in the - Core, uses the pool and community center and feels that they couldn't run their program from another location - The fact that as a school we utilize all the accompanying resources and facilities around us to support our school teams i.e.: arenas, soccer fields, cross country trails, pool baseball diamonds etc - Last yr 10 teams made it to OFFSA - National Cycling center across the street

I appreciate the care and consideration the West ARC has put into its proposal and understand its responsibility to "right size" Ancaster High. But this must not be done at the expense of the valuable facilities that have been planned, developed and financed in part by the former administrations and citizens of Ancaster. -----

Alex Johnstone,
Trustee, HWDSB
18 January 2012

Regarding: the ARC proposal for Ancaster High School

Dear Ms Johnstone,

I attended the West ARC meeting at Highland last night and was impressed by the work of the committee and the legitimate concerns expressed by parents, teachers and community partners.

During the presentations we heard about the wonderful amenities that students of Ancaster utilize in their school programs. The playing fields, pool, theatre, green space and community centre all contribute to the quality of education enjoyed by students of Ancaster High. Highland parents responded, understandably, with envy and perhaps feeling that Ancaster has received undo preferential treatment from the Ministry or HWDSB. We must remember that Ancaster High enjoys its current location with all those facilities because of the forward thinking members the former ANCASTER School Board and ANCASTER Town Council long before they were swallowed by the City of Hamilton, and because of Ancaster citizens who worked hard to fundraise to help build the pool, the community centre and enhance the theatre.

We MUST NOT undo that legacy. That unique complex was built by the people of Ancaster for the people of future generations. Any plan to solve the accommodation problems of Ancaster High MUST include the retention of property, pool, theatre and location.

I offer this perspective as a citizen who has been involved with Ancaster schools for over fifty years as a student, as a teacher, as a parent and now a grandparent, also as a member of Theatre Ancaster and as someone who helped fundraise for the Aquatic Centre and the Community Centre.

Respectfully,

Doris Holder

Hi Tracy,

These are my comments and questions that I read last night.

Please include with information from last night's meeting / correspondence.

Thank you.

Diana Kenel

My name is Diana Kenel and I'm a Parkside parent. We live in Dundas and our youngest son will be in grade 12 in September 2013.

The presentation tonight by the Accommodation Review Committee for a new school in Dundas represents only 50% of the picture. The other 50% is the board staff option.

I had a meeting last week with our trustee, Jessica Brennan. There are 11 voting trustees and 6 votes are needed to pass a motion. It is a very political process and she said that at this time she doesn't have the necessary voting alliances among the trustees to get a motion passed for a new school in Dundas with trustee Judith Bishop of Westdale and her influences being the biggest obstacle. Given this, I think it's important that we hear a little more about the board option.

Up until now the board has used the reason that their option might change at any point to avoid discussing it. Well now it's the end of the process, the report is due in 2 weeks and there are major inconsistencies with what you have been saying compared to what you have in writing.

At the last public meeting at Parkside, after the reactions to your now withdrawn option of sending all of Flamborough's students to Ancaster, you said that there would be no catchment changes. Yet on your website, which now shows the original board staff option, it still shows 132 students from the combined Parkside and Highland populations going to Ancaster in 2013. Which students are these?

Or if as you say, there will be no catchment changes then the actual combined population at Highland in September 2013 in the existing building would be 1,194 students which is 270 students over Highland's capacity and represents a utilization rate of 129%.

Obviously this is far too many kids to fit in the school as it is now even with portables given that the school only has 1 gym, limited cafeteria space and insufficient science labs. Is the idea to add all of these additional facilities to Highland within the next year?

Then I heard from one of the ARC members that Jim Wibberley from the board told her after the last public meeting that she could be assured that nothing would be moved on in Dundas until 2015. That he would bet his house on it. So is the implementation date for the board option 2013 or is it 2015?

The message we all received by phone inviting us here tonight said that "public consultation is at the heart of the accommodation review process." You can't say that and then keep 50% of the information from us. This isn't a game. This is our children's future and these are answers that parents from both Parkside and Highland want to hear from the board tonight.