

I would like to suggest when reviewing the boundaries for schools that elementary feeder school students be kept together. In particular I am addressing the combination of Parkside/Highland and the fact that students at Beverly Central may be divided and sent to Highland and Ancaster. If you are expanding Highland to accommodate the additional students, please ensure there is enough room so that students from Beverly Central are not split.

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Hi everyone!

I read this great article in the Flamborough Review today. Thought it was very important for you all to see!

Here's the link (ARC secretary- please add this article to correspondence as well):

<http://www.flamboroughreview.com/news/article/297288>

It was a suggestion made by now retired Hamilton principal (Murray Kilby) to add grades 7 & 8 to the high schools especially with elementary schools adding full time JK & SK over the next few years that will require additional space within the elementary schools. Many JK/SK classes currently alternate days using the kindergarten classrooms Mon/Wed/alt Fri and Tues/Thurs/alt Fri and will each soon need their own classrooms within their schools. (In Dundas full time JK & SK coming in : Yorkview in Sept 2011, Greensville in 2012, Dundas Central, Millgrove, Sir William Osler scheduled in 2013 and Dundana in 2014 for full time JK/SK).

Link for today's article on JK/SK in the Spec:

<http://www.thespec.com/news/local/article/542132--all-schools-to-get-all-day-kindergarten-by-2014>

Then the grade 6's from Spencer Valley (a grade 6-8 middle school) could stay at their originating elementary schools and then it could be closed. Really the truth is that the grade 7 & 8's (13 & 14 year olds) these days have more in common with high school students physically, educationally, emotionally than they do with kids that are 4 to 11 years old (JK to grade 6).

Apparently there are many schools doing this already successfully including in Burlington and Oakville. Grades 7 & 8 could have an alternate lunch period like they used to have 2 lunches at Parkside when enrollment was higher a few years back.

If you think about it a number of years ago the high schools went from grade 9 to 13 and so had 5 years worth of students. Losing grade 13 left them with only 4 years worth of students and resulted in lower enrollment. So this is really just restoring that balance. The elementary schools in that time have not only added JK but are now going to full time JK & SK so this is a wonderful idea to restore the balance of all the schools as far as enrollment is concerned.

He also mentions that keeping high schools open should be a board priority because their closure will also hurt elementary enrollment since parents are less likely to move into an area without a high school. (Not to mention all the other impacts on Dundas as a whole if Parkside were to close such as declining property values, loss of vibrancy with all the youths gone from the Driving Park and the core of town, financial loss of local businesses supported by students, more school buses on the road and less walking by students (so many Parkside students not only walk to school but also walk into town every day at lunch- a 3km round trip), loss of Parkside as used by the community for the gym and other meeting space, loss to the students themselves of not being able to access all the rich assets within walking distance of Parkside (Public Library, Art Gallery, arenas, Co-op opportunities, after school part-time jobs..... the list is endless!)

I quickly ran the numbers for 2013/4 enrollment at Parkside adding in grades 7 & 8 (from all Parkside's feeder schools) using the Board report that I have which is called "Summary of Average Class Size by Grade and School" which allows me to project totals forward. So the ARC report from the board says Parkside would have 527 students in 2013 without changes (or 68% utilization) and if you added the grade 7 & 8 kids that would be another 258 student for a total of 785 at Parkside in 2013/4 which results in 101% utilization! Problem solved!!

The same could be done for Highland as well with similar results. With full enrollment the board should be able to access the necessary funding to make needed upgrades to the high schools. The elementary schools will have the increased funding from the full time JK & SK students. The board would still have proceeds of disposition from one school - the Spencer Valley site. (and possibly other middle school only schools across the board).

This just makes so much sense and is such a straight forward solution that is a win for everyone. I hope the West ARC Committee is able to give this solution its due consideration.

Thank you.

Diana Kenel, CA  
Parkside parent, Dundas resident &  
Owner of Rock Chapel Golf Centre (which is used by phys ed students &/or golf teams from  
Parkside, Highland, Dundas Central, Osler, & Waterdown from the HWDSB)

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This is what I would like to recommend and ask:

1 Has the board have considered providing French Immersion at the Ancaster High School? Not only would provide a neighbourhood high school for kids interested in this program, but would also help AH to boost their numbers.

Seems to be that Anacaster High school is struggling with numbers, meanwhile we have all the Mountain and Ancaster kids sent to Westdale which has over 1700 students. Doesn't make any sense.

2 If the consideration has not been made, can it be seriously considered and if so what can we do as parents to expedite the process?

3 While this is done is there any way to have a shuttle from Ancaster to Westdale? Parents and students seem to be in huge disadvantage to have their Ancaster kids to go all the way to Westdale to continue with French Immersion. City buses take over an hour each way and grade 9 kids are still quite young to be left alone on the bus.

Please let me know when can I expect an answer and if you have any suggestions as of how I can make this message be heard widely.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Margarita De Antunano

parent grade 8 student currently at Norwood