

Thank you for hosting last night's ARC review meeting at Parkside High School. I unfortunately had to leave early and kindly request if the following questions/comments were not addressed after I left, please could they be considered as part of the ongoing discussion/review:

- Is there an academic consideration and financial consideration when looking to close schools. Parkside is renowned for its strong academic standing. Will this be considered if Parkside closes and the students amalgamate with Highland. Could this plan to ensure academic excellence continues be shared with the community
- We were led to believe in the presentation that the Ancaster High School option (i.e. for Flamborough based students) was now 'off the table'. I am please seeking confirmation (or not!) in this regard
- We were led to believe in the presentation that no student would move school until the new school was built/ready for operation, if this option was selected/approved. I am seeking confirmation in this regard
- What are the transition plan considerations and can we be advised of other prior examples of where 2 High Schools have amalgamated i.e. how this transition occurred to ensure smooth integration. Parkside and Highland could be considered 'rival' schools and am curious what this integration would look like if the option of the Highland site to be used for the new school Versus a neutral site is selected
- Similar to bullet above, I would also like to see the academic standing of graduating Grade 11 and 12 students who experienced a High School transition during a time that is critical to their education and potential careers.
- With respect to the staff recommendation to close Parkside High School, may we receive the specifics of why and how this recommendation was tabled and under what guidelines/determining factors
- What considerations have there been with respect to Waterdown High School and its capacity issues, the continued urban sprawl in Waterdown and sprawl likely continuing West of Hwy 6 in the coming years – perhaps an opportunity to revisit the boundaries of Waterdown in conjunction with the Flamborough community versus Ancaster considerations?
- What is the Transportation guidelines for how long students should encounter a bus ride to and from school?

I appreciate your time,

Regards

Z. Thurgood (Parkside and Millgrove P.S./Spencer Valley affiliate)

My children are students at Beverly Central and Dr. John Seaton.

When I first heard about ARC, I was concerned, but the HWDSB has since been making a big effort to make the ARC process open. This is appreciated.

However, I confess that I find it hard to get worked up about it. My children will be on the bus for over an hour whether they go to Highland or to Ancaster; this is true for most families in this area. For me, a drive to Dundas or a drive to Ancaster amounts to pretty much the same thing. I know this sounds awful, but that's the truth. When I look at the highschoools available to my children, I see that they are decent schools, the staff are basically good, and the programmes (while not as extensive as I would like to see my kids have access to) are a heck of a lot better than what I had available to me in my small country highschoool.

I appreciate that ARC has a big job ahead of it. I think they are doing the right thing by trying to keep the big picture in mind; they even have to think past 2020 if they want any funding they receive to be a truly good investment. When I read about closing schools and building new schools, I worry that we're getting all excited about shiny new things rather than being smart in our use of resources.

If I were to have my say on anything at all, I would like there to be a cap on the amount of time a child has to sit on a bus each day. Would that get more rural families involved in the process?

Sincerely,
Jessica Veter

I was also in attendance at the ARC meeting at Parkside on Tuesday night. My concerns mostly lie in where the surplus children will go during the years that the enrollments exceed the capacity of the schools ie; 2014 – 2020 (projected).

I would also like to correct the information provided below about the “**right sizing**” of Ancaster. According to the presentation this is applicable in **option 4** (1000 place school) not option 1 (1250 place school).

A real concern of mine is that Ancaster could be “right sized” to **915** places, the new school would hold **1000** places and Westdale would hold **1521** places. That makes total 3436 Capacity over the 3 schools. It is projected that the enrolment in 2014 will be 3556 that's already a shortage of 120 places, BUT with Ancaster projected to already be over capacity at that time, and Westdale running very close to capacity at 97% that means the new school would be way over capacity and since Ancaster would already be over capacity it wouldn't be possible for the excess to be distributed there and that would most likely lead to boundary changes being necessary. I'd also like to point out that these enrolment “projections” assume a drop in enrolment over the years 2010 – 2014 to be almost 500 students. That seems like a lot to me. If these projections are off it could mean even higher numbers of students that would/could be displaced to other schools, as well as increasing the likelihood of boundary changes.

I am a strong advocate for smaller schools. I like the idea of my kids getting a new high school to go to while maintaining the advantages of a smaller population, yet I understand that programming is better for larger schools. Why not then try to even it out by making the schools closer in numbers so we're all on a more level playing field.

I too feel that the ARC are doing a good job with the task set before them. It is up to the parents to make sure that our choices/concerns are, at the very least, heard.

Thanks to Mrs. Anderson for getting the ball rolling on that score.

Mary-Anne Martin

Current Beverly AND Highland parent.