The ramifications of demolishing part of the East Wing at Ancaster High

Results in the loss of:

20 classrooms including 2 Science Labs (2 of the largest)

5 Teacher Workrooms that currently give work space to 21 teaching staff. The majority of these staff members would no longer be able to have work space as their classrooms will almost certainly be used by other staff members due to the loss of classroom space.

3 computer labs

Remainder of the building:

21 regular classrooms remaining that are not used for LRT, GET, SS/IB, Science, ART, Drama, Music, Tech or Family Studies to meet the needs of those curriculum areas, split in two discrete areas distant from each other (12 in West Wing; 9 in East Wing)

The 12 classrooms in the west wing suffer from poor ventilation and climate control issues. They are on the whole, smaller than east wing classrooms.

This would leave only the two English offices and workrooms, the two small WRs in the West wing, the science office between the two science rooms in the West wing, the Tech office, Phys Ed. Offices and one staff work area in the east wing currently used by history, geography, and F/S. Neither the current East or West wing staff rooms are easily converted in work stations as they lack room for desks to be brought in.

1. Concerns over the number of regular classrooms available:

Just looking at the overall numbers 1386 vs. 915 34% reduction in size (capacity), yet a 49% reduction in # of regular classrooms.

The current timetable for semester 1, based on projected enrolment of 950, could be accommodated by the proposed "right-sized" Ancaster, however, there would only be 18 classrooms empty across the timetable. Simply, this means on average, only 4 empty classrooms would be available on any given period. And this is all classrooms! The only ones available may be the ones dedicated to specific curriculum. This means that subjects requiring "regular classrooms", may have to teach in subject specific classrooms. E.g. English in Science Lab; Math in Art room etc. This does not help teachers deliver quality program. It also introduces the concerns about room maintainance and repair of subject required instruments or equipment. A teacher of a different subject area may struggle to maintain the integrity of a Technology shop.

With the increased enrolment and expected enlargement of Timetable for semester 2, and potential increased enrolment in the future, (building on growth seen this year, SHSM growth, IB growth; factors not seen as considered in the board projections); the remaining 21 classrooms would be inadequate to house all courses and it would be inevitable that classes not suited to subject specific rooms would be scheduled to be taught in them.

As an added point, the number of Science classes, even this semester, would not fit in the four remaining science labs.

2. Teachers are encouraged to post Learning Goals and Success criteria in the classroom. This is extremely difficult if the classroom is not dedicated to the subject or if teachers are teaching in different classrooms for each course. The likelihood of this grows as our timetable is compressed to fit a tighter building structure.

Teachers may have two of the same classes and have to teach in separate rooms; different sides of the school; different subject area rooms. This does not improve program delivery as teachers try to prepare different environments to suit learning.

2. Teacher Workrooms

Five teacher work areas would be demolished under the plan. Where would teachers work during their prep periods? There would be very few classrooms open during any one period so few teachers could stay in their rooms to prepare. Since most teachers would not have access to their rooms during their prep periods, they would not have access to materials etc., in their rooms to prep for labs, activities etc. except for the lunch hour and before and after school.

With no Workrooms, teachers would have to leave teaching materials in their classrooms and yet not always be able to access them since rooms would be in use for all periods of the day by other teachers.

3. Computer labs

All of the above does not include the need to relocate the 3 computer labs to other locations around the school. This may take even more “regular classrooms” out of commission to become computer labs, making the situation even worse for accessing classrooms.

4. Student Help Sessions

Currently a great number of staff willingly work with students during lunch hour and on their prep to help our students succeed. These sessions take place in classrooms most of the time. These classrooms

would be used during prep periods in most cases under the proposal to demolish half of the East wing. During lunch teachers would find it very difficult to have material on hand to support student learning as they are likely to be in multiple rooms for their teaching assignments. Time will be spent tracking down support material rather than supporting student learning.

4. Core building an energy glutton

In an April 27, 2007 article in the Ancaster News, it was reported that, according to the Board's first-ever report on energy consumption, "Ancaster High School is the HWDSB's biggest energy pig". The article went on to say that the electricity consumption of the school was nearly double the second-biggest user. It said that 7 projects were initiated at Ancaster High to help reduce the energy inefficiencies. (new boiler, electrical and building automation systems, as well as replacement of rotting and rusting windows). As far as we know, only the windows in the tunnel were ever replaced.

The core of the building has poor and inadequate supply of electrical service (we suffer frequent interruptions of service and not enough outlets). The walls are not insulated, the panels that line much of the east wing are not insulated, and windows are single pane. As far as water use, bathroom taps and toilets run or are damaged. There is too much heat in some places and not enough in others.

The point is that the actual infrastructure of the building is flawed and no amount of upgrades will solve the flaws in the basic structure that is Ancaster High.

5. Proposal:

If we have to be down-sized;

The staff and students would be better served if the classroom areas of the west wing were demolished and the east wing retained.

10 classrooms, two science labs, 5 offices/workrooms and the WW staff room would be lost. Since the staff room could count as teaching space, this totals 13 classrooms for capacity down-size of (22 x 13) =286. This would leave our capacity at 1169. It would leave the auditorium, Gym D, Drama room and small cafeteria (although access to the last two would be problematic if the outer classrooms were demolished). This would leave the school with a much more workable configuration (all regular classrooms would be in the east wing leading to better staff cohesiveness and efficiency and would leave adequate numbers of regular classrooms to accommodate what we feel is a growing program not a shrinking one. Had we started the ARC process this year, our numbers at Ancaster would have started with the 1012 we have as of Oct. 31st.

Secondly, any "right-sizing" plan must address the deficiencies in the building that inhibit the delivery of quality program.

These include, in no particular order:

1. Increased electrical service
2. Hiding of all wires running through the hallways
3. Removal of remaining asbestos throughout the building
4. New windows
5. Replacement of wall panels along the east wing.
6. New curtains
7. Improved ventilation and climate control
8. Renewal of science labs
9. Adjustment of cafeteria size to accommodate all of our students
10. Addition of a new library capable of meeting the needs of the 21st century learner; including attached computer bookable labs
11. Creation of workrooms capable of accommodating all teachers and in proximity to their teaching areas
12. Improved staff room and staff washrooms
13. A combined main office/guidance area
14. A new front entry to the school that creates an actual front door
15. Improved or new music rooms with practice booths
16. Improved art room
17. Improved driveway and traffic access
18. Improved outdoor lighting for safety and appearance
19. Improved student bathrooms
20. Addition of a fitness centre for Phys. Ed. program and staff use