

Dalewood Elementary Accommodation Review Committee Meeting

Dalewood School

May 19, 2011

Minutes (Public Meeting #2)

ATTENDANCE:

Committee Members

Chair –Krys Croxall

Voting Members – Suzanne Brown, Maria Carbone, Nadia Coakley, Pamela Irving, Anita McGowan, Kim Newcombe, Emily Reid, Michael Reid, Kristen West

Non-Voting Members –Judith Bishop, Heidi Harper, Silvana Galli Lamarche, Joanne Hall, Margaret Jobson, Debra Lewis, Peter Martindale, Brian McHattie, Denise Minardi, Colleen Morgan, Michelle Rodney-Bartalos

Regrets

Voting Members - Juanita Parent

Non-Voting Members –

Resource Staff

Ellen Warling, Daniel Del Bianco, Michael Slee, Ron Gowland, Jackie Penman from Corporate Communications.

Recording Secretary

Tracy McKillop

1. Call to Order – Superintendent Krys Croxall, Chair

Superintendent Krys Croxall thanked everyone for joining the meeting and for their interest in the process. She shared that this is the second of four “town hall” style public meetings hosted by the Dalewood ARC. The first was held on April 6th, at Dalewood. The Chair stated that the meeting will focus on the accommodation option prepared by Senior Administration and shared with the ARC at their Working Group Meeting on April 28th. Superintendent Croxall introduced the members of the Committee. The Board staff were then introduced which included Ellen Warling and Michael Slee from the Accommodation and Planning Division, Ron Gowland from the Capital Projects Division, Daniel Del Bianco acting as Support Staff to the ARC and Tracy McKillop, the Recording Secretary.

2. Purpose of the Meeting

The Chair commenced the evening by providing a bit of background about the accommodation review process. In February of this year, the Board of Trustees approved the Terms of Reference for the Dalewood ARC. There are four key reasons behind any accommodation review and they include:

1. To ensure efficient use of available space to accommodate students appropriately as it relates to long-term enrolment demands and facility utilization
2. To ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of our school facilities
3. To continue the revitalization of our schools by reducing long-term capital renewal requirements
4. To continue the implementation of the Board's evolving program strategy

As an organization the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board must address these challenges so that funding can be directed to students and programming. As part of this evening's presentation, you will hear more about these challenges.

Tonight's meeting will do three things:

- The first is to provide an overview of the accommodation review process, timelines and work of the Committee.
- Presentation of the Accommodation Option created by HWDSB Senior Administration.
- And, third to provide members of the community the opportunity to ask questions and make comments about the process.

Superintendent Croxall shared that along with the Agenda was a copy of the norms for the meeting. She stated that it is important to have a robust dialogue about the matters before the Committee and these norms help to achieve that.

She also stated that included as part of the agenda are 2 maps which illustrate the "Current Situation" and the "Accommodation Option" prepared by Senior Administration. We have attempted to address the concerns that were heard from the last meeting around the quality of the presentation by moving the screen closer to the audience and using a new projector.

Superintendent Croxall indicated that this is just an option and starting point for the Committee. This is not intended to be set in stone. The Ministry guidelines and our own Board policy state that we need to make available to the ARC the Board's best thinking on accommodation solutions for this community. The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board chose to make that information available very early on in the process. The ARC may choose to accept the Board option, ignore the Board option or create an alternative option based on what they learn throughout the process.

3. Overview of the ARC Process – for the full presentation please click on the following link:
http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arcelementary/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Dalewood_PublicMeeting2_BoardOption.pdf

Mr. Daniel Del Bianco did a power point presentation giving a thumbnail sketch of the process. The process follows Ministry of Education guidelines, Board Policy and the Terms of Reference.

There will be four public meetings and all others will be working meetings. The Committee has added three additional working group meetings on June 22, 2011, September 7, 2011 and October 5, 2011. All meetings are open to the public; however, only the public meetings allow for the participation of the public.

The goal of the Accommodation Review Committee is to review all of the information that is presented and then make a recommendation to the “Board of Trustees” at the end of the process. When the Board of Trustees has received both the recommendations of the ARC as well as the Senior Administration’s recommendation, the Board of Trustees will make the final decision.

It is important to keep the community informed and all of the information presented to the ARC Committee will be posted on the web site including all correspondence.

4. Presentation of the Accommodation Option Created by Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board – Ellen Warling, Manager of Accommodation and Planning and Ron Gowland, Manager of Capital Projects

To see the full presentation made to the ARC please click on the following link:

<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arcelementary/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Dalewood-Accommodation-Board-Option.pdf>

Close Prince Philip in June 2012 and re-located the students in September 2012.

Ms. Warling shared that the Board option is coming early in the process and represents the Board Staff’s thinking today. It may not be the same recommendation that will be submitted to the Board of Trustees at the end of the process. This is just one option for this community. The ARC is also tasked with creating its own recommendation for the Board of Trustees to consider. Both the ARC and the Board Staff will submit a report to the Board of Trustees at the end of the process. Ms. Warling explained that this is a high level scenario without complete costing at this time.

Program benefits:

- Larger schools which provide greater programming option to the students at each grade level.
- There are small English classes at both Prince Philip and GR Allan. At GR Allan there are less than one class per grade in the English program and at Prince Philip there are between ½ and 1½ classes per grade.
- There could be more teachers per grade resulting in better team teaching opportunities.

Financial benefits:

- Grants are provided on a per pupil basis.
- The schools in the community are in need of repairs.
- There are 10 million dollars of outstanding capital repairs required to the buildings.
- The costs to maintain three schools means that the renewal and operating dollars are spread over three schools. If there were only 2 schools this would create efficiencies with regards to operation, maintenance and capital.
- The Board option allows for much needed facility improvements.

Looking at the slide showing the current situation:

- The enrolments for GR Allan and Prince Philip are the same; however, the enrolment at Dalewood was overstated initially. The enrolment at Dalewood is projected to continue to drop.

The change is related to the French Immersion program. The enrolments from Dundana Public School were incorrectly added to the Dalewood projections. In 2007 the Board established French Immersion in Dundas. The program was phased out of GR Allan and into Dundana. This year the program is at K-4 in Dundana. The drop in Dalewood and GR Allen French Immersion that is projected over the next few years is due to the loss of French Immersion students from the Dundas community. The middle school student population from Dundana feeds to Sir William Osler Public School for grades 6-8. It was incorrectly added to the projection for Dalewood.

- This chart illustrates that the enrolment will decline by just under 200 students over the next 10 years.
- The number of surplus spaces will continue to grow from just under 100 today to approximately 275 spaces by 2020. This number is larger than the capacity at Prince Philip.

There was an additional slide in this presentation showing the Population and Dwelling Counts within the Dalewood ARC. To view these slides please go to page 14 on the following link:

http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arcelementary/wpcontent/uploads/2011/01/Dalewood_PublicMeeting2_BoardOption.pdf

Ms. Warling then showed a map showing the current situation which included two junior schools and one middle school. The programs that are offered in this community include: English, French Immersion, Mandarin and special education including: two gifted classes, one communication class and one speech and language class.

The Board option recommends the closure of Prince Philip. The grade structure of the remaining schools does not change. All K-5 students in English and French and the K-3 Mandarin program, Speech and Language class will be accommodated at GR Allan Public School. All grade 6-8 English and French Immersion students along with the Gifted and Communications classes will be accommodated at Dalewood.

The option provides for no change in the enrolments at Dalewood. The option amalgamates all K-5 students at GR Allan. Both schools are recommended for renovations. GR Allan is recommended for a 100 pupil place addition that will bring the school capacity to 599. This capacity while above the enrolment at 10 years out is the number of pupil places required to meet the projected enrolments in the programs. The utilization of the two facilities will reach 86% long term.

The proposed option has no impact on the % of students in French Immersion vs. English in Dalewood. It is approximately 1/3 to 2/3. Under the current situation French Immersion at GR Allan is projected to become more imbalanced over the next 10 years. This is due to the opening of the French Immersion centres in Waterdown and Dundas – Guy Brown and Dundana. The last of the Waterdown/Dundas French Immersion students leave GR Allan this year. In 2010 French Immersion equals 52% of the population and 48% is English. By 2015 the split between French and English is more pronounced at 2/3 French and 1/3 English. The proposal creates a better balance at the school between English and French.

The next slide revealed what the proposed options would include in the renovations. There was also a slide shown which illustrated the estimated walking boundaries of the school. Additional Considerations include:

- Grade Structure
- Balancing of enrolments between the sites

- Enrolment split by program
- The viability of each facility
- The size of each facility
- Geographic features or natural barriers

5. Next Steps

Ms. Warling shared the Summary of Options and the Funding Strategy:

- Close Prince Philip Public School in June 2012
- Relocate students to existing facilities in September 2012 JK – 5 English, SK – 5 FI and Mandarin SK-3 to G.R. Allan
- Grade 6 – 8 (English and FI) to remain at Dalewood
- Provides opportunities for enhanced programming
- Creates a more balanced English/French enrolment at the junior school level

The Funding Strategy included:

- Operational/ Renewal Savings
- Proceeds of Disposition from the sale of the Prince Philip school site
- Funding provided by the Ministry of Education through capital grants and Full Day Learning capital grants

She shared that this is their best thinking at this time and the Committee members could take it, tweak it, throw it away or create their own scenario.

6. Questions/Comments from the Public

Questions (Q), Comments (C), Answers (A)

Q. Only one option was given, do you not have any other options?

A. That is the ARC Committee's job. The Board just gave a possibility.

C. It would be sad to see our school close – had a petition with 828 signatures collected in support of keeping Prince Philip open.

C. A comment was made on the process and he stated that he read literature which indicated that we do not have to have an ARC if we are dealing with enrolment options. This gentleman felt that the process was not honest. He spoke with someone with the community schools and feels that this will affect the community for years to come. He felt that we did not know enough about the enrolment figures to close a school.

A. Ms. Warling shared that the Board did bring forth a recommendation to close a school; however, both the ARC and the Board put forth a recommendation at the end of the process so the outcome could change. The funding that we get from the Ministry does not allow us to maintain the schools that we have and the excess pupil places leaves us with a funding gap because we get funding on a per pupil basis. The Chair also stated that if we want to change enrolment or programming it would also require an ARC.

C. This gentleman felt that the first public meeting was not up front because the Board option was not presented. He felt that the way we live in a community is not captured and the decision we make will matter and echo the future and so requested that the Board not go with the cheapest fix. He stated that all of the schools in the community matter and please think carefully about how we proceed.

Q. Why was Prince Philip chosen? Why that particular facility and wanted the team to present a better rationale at the next ARC meeting.

A. Ms. Warling stated that they looked at the enrolments in the community, the size of the facility and Prince Philip is the smallest, the FCI was taken into account.

C. We are hearing lots about numbers, French vs. English, value to the community and students. Prince Philip is the hub of that community and this will devastate that community. She now feels pitted against other schools. The kids come together at Dalewood and there is value and community in that as well. Some families only have one vehicle per family and what happens when the kids get sick at school and need to be picked up? Why is our community being chosen? She feels that value to the student and the community should be made a priority in the process.

A. The Chair stated that we don't want to divide communities. We have to put an option on the table and the ARC will also put forth an option. We needed to start somewhere and we are not targeting any one community. There are six ARCs in total and more ARCs will be forth coming. We have a backlog of facility maintenance required. This is an open process and people are welcome to share their views through correspondence and public speaking.

C. This gentleman signed the petition even though he lives across from GR Allan. He rejects the logic of the process as well. He understands how the Prince Philip community feels and he does not want to feel like he is in competition with the other communities. Why is there only \$1.00 for every \$18 of need? He rejects this logic and is open to raising the issue with the politicians who are behind this funding issue.

C. Someone stated that they missed the presentation because the flyer said that the meeting was from 7 to 9; however, that was not our flyer.

C. A grandmother from the community felt that the community should be approaching the Ontario Government requesting more funding. She felt that the teacher has less stress with smaller classrooms and it is more beneficial for the students. She enjoys walking her grandchild to school as well and did not appreciate that there would be more bussing required. She was concerned that the other school would not be open to having more students coming into it. She does not like the new building materials that are used and would like to see the older buildings preserved. She feels that the communities have to fight for what they want.

Q. Why has the Board decided to stay with the mandate of Grade 6-8 and had questions regarding the meeting with City for the reconstruction of the recreation centre.

A. Ms. Warling stated that they met briefly with the City who provided them with a feasibility study. They have permission to post the report. It was approved and received by Council and it is in the 10 year plan.

Q. Where is the recreation centre going to be built?

A. The City is looking to expand the size. Discussions are still to carry on.

C. This person moved to the area and feels that they are part of the Dalewood area. They would like to rally against the Ministry. She read some of "Education for the 21st Century" and it pertained to the hub

yet she feels that the Ainslie Wood Community is being left without a hub. She would like the Board to look at a K-8 model. North American wide this is a better model and this way both communities can keep a school.

Q. What is your thought on a K-8 model?

A. The Chair stated that the Board's preferred option would be a K-8 model; however, due to financial constraints that may not be feasible. From past experience changing school facilities from middle to primary and vice versa has been difficult so the Board would generally like to renovate with as little effect on the grade options as possible.

C. This gentleman felt very strongly about this process. His children went through this on the West Mountain and he feels that the kids adapt; however, communities do not. He would like to see the schools from K-8. Why can't that model be adopted here?

A. It is an option for the ARC to consider.

C. This lady felt that the benefits are mostly financial. What is the classroom going to look like? Are we going to run into this again? Is the building going to be falling down?

A. Mr. Gowland shared that they will put funds into GR Allan and Dalewood with a permanent addition. The funding is based on enrolment so trying to stretch funds can be challenging.

Q. A question about the process came up and does the Board study the effect on the community. How does the Board get the data on the impact on the community?

A. Superintendent Croxall shared that this is the opportunity for the Committee to hear about your concerns. They will have to consider the impact on the community and we are hearing that this would not be a good thing.

C. This person feels that we are lucky to have the three schools – two that merge into the middle school. Can we look into the walkability of the community? Can we get more funding? They would like to address the K-8 vs. the K-5 however she feels that it is advantageous having the K-5 feed into the middle school. It is a good preparation for grade 9 and the students have the opportunity of meeting kids from other schools. They have things like art and music in the middle school.

C. Can we look at a more green school? For example having solar panels, looking at green technology, collecting rain water, we need to look at every opportunity.

C. The Pastor in the Ainslie Wood Community bought in that area to raise a family. He is excited to see the two communities coming together. He feels that taking the school out of the community is like taking the heart out and it is going to affect churches and the stores as well as the economy. He asked the Committee to consider the voices that they are hearing tonight. He asked if the Board could go with the K-8 model. He understands that the Board does not have all of the answers but feels that money should not direct the outcome. He asked the Committee to be courageous and make a decision that would benefit everyone in the long run.

A. Ms. Warling shared that the staff will help put different option together with the ARC as they work through the process. They will start with the base data and then build on that. What we are hearing tonight is very beneficial.

C. The numbers and dollars don't make sense. These sorts of changes have a long term effect and not all kids do well with change. They do better with fewer transitions. She would like to see the K-8 model and is happy that the communities can come together and work on this.

- C. Josh helps with the Big Brother and Big Sister mentoring program. Every week that his is Prince Philip he sees the benefits of a small classroom. He feels that the best experience in his undergrad was at Prince Philip...an experience that he will not forget.
- A. Superintendent Croxall shared that the primary grades are capped by the Ministry. Most of the classes are 20 students or below in the primary grades with maybe the occasional class a bit larger. Only occasionally are any classes up to Grade 8 in the 30's. Although there may be more students in the school it does not mean that the class size will be larger.
- C. Antonio likes to see such a strong sentiment. He stated that research is showing that walking and being in good physical health are beneficial. The question is "How do we get people walking?" What everyone wants we already have in a walkable community. There are benefits of being in good physical health at an early age and this is something that accompanies these children for the rest of their life. This will give them more productive lives in the long run and saves on transportation costs.
- C. Karen went to four schools by grade 4 due to boundary changes. Is there consideration given to communities sharing - e.g. seniors having shared accommodation to help finance the needs of the school maintenance?
- A. Ms. Warling shared that part of the Terms of Reference states that the Board must offer facility partnership and the Board is currently exploring that option right now however there are other things that need to be considered such as student safety, costs involved. It is not just a matter of filling up the building but receiving revenue to support the costs.
- C. Linda walked to a one room school and was bussed later on. She had challenges getting bus tickets from the Board when her kids went to school. With gas pricing going up what will this mean for transportation for the students and what kind of programming will they have?
- C. There are long term health benefits as well as long term benefits to the community. Parents meet each other on the street when they are walking their kids to school and this feels very important.
- C. George has lived in the Prince Philip community for 40 years. There have been a lot of student homes in the area and now with the building of the residence new families are coming back into the area and fixing up these homes. Please think about the people in the community.
- C. Another gentleman always wanted to be in the Prince Philip area and is very sad to hear that it will be closing. He has a daughter in Kindergarten and shared that there are a lot of new families coming into the area.
- C. Jan felt that it was important to be able to walk to school. She likes Dalewood as the middle school and feels that the transition to middle school is a good thing. She would like to keep the middle school.
- C. Michael Reid spoke on behalf of the parent representatives. He feels that it is their job to reflect what the community has said so if you believe that it is important to walk to school ...they hear what you are saying. Please continue to write into the ARC info with your questions and comments.
- C. Suzanne Brown wanted to speak to the comment about working together. She heard of the importance of the communities working together and heard the community when they requested the ARC to look at the long term goal. She feels the weight of this decision.
- C. Kristen West spoke of the importance of a home distribution list and encouraged other schools to do the same. She asked the communities to get their email distribution list up and running.
- C. When Prince Philip was built it was designed to accommodate a second floor addition.

C. Another lady works from home and sees people walking and talking on the street. The people from the community stop and talk to one another and the heart of Ainslie Woods is not Fortinos.

Q. How much weight does the Recreation Centre being built affect the decision?

A. The Chair stated that it does not influence it.

C. Westdale is a planned neighbourhood. See the wealth in the social complex. The three schools work together and want to see the neighbourhoods working together. This provides an opportunity for these communities to build on this. The kids in grade 5 are busting to get to Dalewood. Be visionary and be radical and yes we need to talk about the greening of the community.

Superintendent Croxall encouraged the people to submit the questions and comments and thanked everyone for participating in the meeting.