

To The Minister(y) of Education and whom else it may concern:

This petition has been brought forth by the parents and community members of Cardinal Heights Middle School. After the final decisions made following the "ARC" process we have found that there were several issues in regards to policy and procedure, inconsistencies in regards to decisions based on ministry guidelines set in the Pupil Accommodation Review literature and other issues which are reported within this package. This outlines not just the Boards policy but the procedure in itself.

We are presenting this petition as an official document to display signatures of parents and community members who recognize that ministry guidelines regarding the schools: Value to the students, school board, community and local economy are going to be affected and we are asking that the closure be reversed and the school maintained open to student within the community who wish to attend.

We found after the process that the government outlines in regards to School Information Profiles being incorrect, Community Consultation and Public Meetings not being followed thoroughly as Cardinal Heights School did not have a "walk-through" which also resulted in a low score on its FCI not being questioned by members , "ARC" members felt they did not have adequate time to make such large decisions such as closing entire schools and were not given the amount of time needed and guidelines were set by the board to accommodate their agenda and the fact the school fits in with Ministry Pupil Accommodation Guidelines of being of high value it should have never been considered.

Another issue surrounding the "ARC" process on the Central Mountain also includes a large portion of non-English speaking parents and guardians were unable to attend due to language barriers or even acknowledged the scope of what is happening due to cultural differences. New comers to Canada who don't fully understand social programming and schools are unable to voice concerns when they are unaware of the "norms" and social structures. This has led to many parents not understanding and having to be told after the fact but still in broken language due to the barriers. There happens to be also other demographics such as low income and other at risk/vulnerable members of the community who may have not understood the process until the end as well and due to transportation and child care needs may have not been able to attend or understood the importance of the meetings. Schools which only sent home notes in back packs that may have never reached parents and people within the community who may not have school aged children but wished to attend meetings could not. Also peoples without internet access or an understanding of how to use internet could not keep up with notes on the board's website. Even when child care was available at meetings parents may not have understood this and due to the late hours of meetings sometimes going into 10 o'clock at night people did not wish to participate. One parent told me personally she was turned away from the door due to having a "red" sweater on and having her three kids with her. People who live in the community whom are not parents were not able to voice concerns or represent other community members without children who were concerned on the "ARC" as a member even though these decisions affect them as well.

Concerns with the closure of Cardinal Heights are the students will be separated amongst two neighbouring schools. Pauline Johnson is going to be at 96% utilization in 2017 itself and is now going to be absorbing more students with the closure of Cardinal Heights. The proposal is to build 2 class rooms to accommodate this. Ridgemount in 2017 is projected to have 99% utilization in itself and will take more students with the closure of Cardinal Heights. This means that Ridgemount and Pauline Johnson will both be well over 140% utilization and the only additions being made is 2 class rooms to Pauline Johnson. Another issue is the therapeutic programming for students in both regular curriculum and students attending the Character Network Transitions program. Other schools which will become k to 8 schools will not have the same room and programming to accommodate the children which means a loss of learning will be expected. Boundaries are to be changed and loss of educational programming is expected.

Issues are also being raised as schools within the "ARC" are being kept open despite having below 70% utilization while ones which are higher close. An analogy to explain this is as simple as: If I have defaulted on my mortgage and the bank comes to seize my home and assets I cannot remain in possession just because I stand outside in a public display of disagreement and instead have my neighbours house taken even though they have paid their bills and are not in default.

This seems unpractical and keeping Cardinal Heights open will A) accommodate all the students comfortably without the need of overcrowding and portables B) allow for specialty teachers to continue being utilized and continuing to provide course specific material and learning C) allow the current building with all resources to continue to be utilized especially with recent upgrades and renovations D) it is more cost effective to use what has already been purchased and used within one school opposed to needing the same materials to be spread amongst two .

I have personally read through the "Drummond Report" and different budgets and government recommendations coming from the economics stand points which are behind the closures and consolidations. This process is a reckless venture with no transparency, accountability or empathy for families and neighborhoods. Government spending problems are being loaded on the shoulders of families and communities. The very children you are taking from are the ones who will run the economy in the next 15 years. Without proper education and accesses to a variety of educational material and subjects we will be at a loss of workers and tax payers. There is a baby boom happening as we speak that is being neglected as well. We can expect to have schools which are filled within the next 5 years due to closures and we will have nowhere to build once the land is sold. I am hoping that you can take this information into consideration and re-apply another method of finding capital for school boards to use to build new schools and continue providing service to our children and communities.

This petition and its contents are in accordance to the Ministry of Education's Administrative Review Of The Accommodation Review Process to the best of my ability and the best understanding of the peoples in the community who had wished to help. Any information that is missing can be provided upon request and if any of the information needs to be expanded on please contact me.

Thank you,

Sarah Warry-Poljanski and the Cardinal Heights Middle School Community

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References :

Board of education Long Term Facilities Master Plan

<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/LTFMP-Update-2014.pdf>

Section 5: LTFMP Guiding Principles

<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Section-5-LTFMP-Guiding-Principles.pdf>

Long Term Facilities Master Plan – Accommodation Strategy Schedule

<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Long-Term-Facilities-Master-Plan1.pdf>

Central Mountain ARC schools \sip's

<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Central-Mountain-School-Information-Profile-Final11.pdf>

Board report package

<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Board-Report-re-Elementary-ARCs.pdf>

Final decision

<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/>

Character Network Transition program description can be found starting on page 20 of this document

<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Special-Education-Report-1213.pdf>

Hamilton Central Mountain ARC, Cardinal Heights School.

The Hamilton Central Mountain elementary ARC was held in the 2013-2014 school year. It had included several schools such as Queensdale Elementary, G L Armstrong Elementary, Franklin Road Elementary, Linden Park Elementary, Ridegmount Elementary, Eastmount Park Elementary, Pauline Johnson Elementary and Cardinal Heights Middle School.

Cardinal Heights is a grade 6 to 8 middle /transitional school located on 70 Bobolink Road in Hamilton. It is located besides Pauline Johnson a K to 5 school which feeds it. Cardinal Heights is just south of Linden Park another K to 5 school which feeds it and down the street from Ridegmount a K to 5 which also feeds it as well. Several of the other schools which are located closer to the mountain brow feed into G L Armstrong School which is a K to 8 school.

The current enrolment at Cardinal Heights is 318 students and the schools capacity is 308 meaning the school is fully utilized at 103%. The enrolment is expected to continue to be above 100% or just slightly below no less than 90% in the future. This in my opinion should have made the school ineligible to be reviewed under the ARC process.

Cardinal Heights sits on 9.2 acres and has a basketball court and adequate green space for the students to play. They often use this outdoor space for gym and other activities within the school day. The school is also wheel chair accessible through out and has no barriers to washrooms and there are several entrances and exits that are boundary free as well including automatic door opening buttons within the school.

The school is located on side roads and away from major traffic which is optimal for students whom are walking to school and live within the neighborhood. Due to its location away from heavy traffic it is also free from heavy pollution from idling cars and children can cross the roads with a high degree of safety.

Being a middle\transitional school in which students are brought together from different feeder schools in the area allows the children who range in age from 11 to 14 depending on their birthday to connect and learn to co habituate together in the class room prior to their move to high school. During this transitional time they are given the opportunity to explore and become pre- teenagers in a comfortable environment which fits their needs and they are surrounded by supportive staff that recognize their physical and mental changes and can provide a comforting environment. There is a "School Support EA" who is available to students and teachers and helps host various programs with the students and acts as an ear for students when issues arise.

Not being surrounded by younger children in the school the students are able to grow and find themselves while they transition from children into teenagers. They are able to be adolescents and make mistakes and find themselves without worry or caution. This is beneficial because it allows them time to themselves with their peers and teachers to learn what is socially acceptable and what is tolerable among society.

The students are able to utilize the school and have specialized classes and courses that help develop a passion for learning and opportunity to grow. The students have one home room class but several classes they visit each day, they are welcomed by specialty teachers who are very knowledgeable and comfortable in the subjects they teach. This allows for optimal success and each specialty room is retro fitted to display subjects and learning material specific to the subject being taught.

The school has one gym which includes two designated gym teachers. One for males and one for females. This allows students undergoing puberty and perhaps some self-conscious emotions to participate in Phys Ed with students of the same gender making them feel less awkward and self-conscious. Having separate gym classes also helps to allow our Muslim and other Middle Eastern students participate in gym without any barriers due to the division of the male and female students making the school very culturally sensitive to our multi culture neighborhood. The students participate in Phys Ed five days a week all year round, something that will be unachievable in a K to 8 school due to limited time and space when that many students are utilizing one gym. Also the gym is large enough for the students to utilize freely with adequate running and exercise space. This may be lost when students are moved to neighbouring schools. The Phys Ed teacher is also responsible for health class and other activities that fall within the category of physical education and health.

This school is currently is 100% Wi-Fi compatible and students are encouraged to bring in any electronic devices that may help enhance their learning, and Ipads and other devices are available for use as well. Students in the school are learning how to use modern day technology and are able to communicate with staff through such means.

The HWDSB is currently looking to implement a 21st Century Learning Model which included wireless technology and e learning. This school already has all the hook ups and hardware to meet the needs of this model and should be viewed as an asset as the building will not have to incur any costs to bring it up to speed with the new learning model. With this the students are able to use the technology within the class room when they are doing projects in classes.

The school is able to gain more community partnerships if it were to implement a before and after school programing for the students and it also has amenities which can be used by the public and potential partnerships with businesses and community members (utilizing the gym, the kitchen room, the studio etc.). This is something that can be looked into by the School, School Board or even Parent Counsel come September.

Issues surrounding the ARC process:

Like most ARC processes which are happening within the city and the province most parents and members of the community became very uneasy about the rules and procedures. For three quarters of the time the process turned into a game of divide and conquer. Most parents and members of neighborhoods grouped together and each school was pit against each other pointing out each other's flaws in a hunger games style war.

This was very inappropriate as most positives about schools were quickly dismissed by their flaws from opposing schools. During meetings people were told to sit in small groups and collaborate together and voice their concerns and create options and material for the ARC members to work from.

Again most groups consisted of school parents and community members gathering together and trying to keep their school off the chopping block. During the early process parents weren't allowed to have an open forum where they could voice questions to the ARC members or the superintendent in charge.

When the time came for that portion later on in the process many questions were left unanswered or members of the community and ARC members would engage in shouting matches. Members of the community, parents and ARC members easily became annoyed with each other and at times people lost their tempers. This was a very unwelcoming process and it often ran late into the night which then resulted in things being rushed and time not being utilized as fully as it could.

On several occasions ARC members were tired and just wanted to go home. They had spent many hours going through information and trying to make choices in such a short period of time and they would at times what seems like vote to just get it over with. It was understandable as a parent watching sometimes it became so frustrating you would just yell out or leave the room. The ARC members had asked for additional meetings as they felt they did not have enough time to make such large decisions in such a short time frame but they were told they would only have X amount of meetings.

In our ARC there were around 30 different options that were proposed. The ARC did not have enough time in my opinion to explore all of these options. There were a few sticky situations which occurred when members of the public were sure that the process was nothing more than a tactic as the proposal to build one new school had been put forth by different parent from different schools and was not one of the final choices. There seemed to be options the Board was just not willing to explore or consider even though the public highly favored them.

There is school property and other land which parents suggested building new schools on which are now in question as members of the public fear it is going to be sold to a developer and homes will replace the two schools on one site and just sold on another. This became very frustrating as the development, immigration and natural turn over for homes in the Central Mountain is changing dramatically at this time.

On Central Mountain we have lost our **only** High School in ward 7. So with the arc process so many parents are fed up and don't find the process fair. At times myself and others had questioned the numbers and projected enrolment data as I had found data suggesting otherwise. During delegations city counselors had attended and expressed their concerns for the board's lack of judgment in school closure decisions as the projected growth in the eyes of the city is far ahead of what is being projected by the board's consultants.

This especially with the closures of our high school and it has been released that students whom are moving to neighbouring high schools cannot take compulsory courses in class because they are filled and there is no room. This is now making parent uneasy about what to expect at the elementary level.

During meeting parents from other schools had pointed out some of the "mistakes" made in the boards Facility Condition Index which I am also about to do as well in regards to Cardinal Heights. Schools which had recently received sometimes in an upward of a few hundred thousand to million dollars were being labeled as in poor or fair condition. This is disturbing as the millions in renovations to certain schools were about to go down the drain and tax payer money is wasted. Parents went as far as taking pictures and questioning the board members as to why the school was labeled so poorly. It appeared at times that there was negligence and omissions to make some schools appear worse than they are.

In regards to Cardinal Heights FCI I am unsure how it was conducted and can be justified with "ARC" members when a walk through from ARC members and a majority of trustees never took place. They had missed the walk through due to an incident and the walk through was never rescheduled and conducted. I have heard that only 3 of our 12 or so Trustees had visited the school.

This alone would presumably leave members with the inability to make an informed decision about the school based on the condition, the programs and the opportunities provide. I have attached photos of the school and equipment to justify its need to continue operating. It has become apparent that schools are being closed just for the sake of closing them to comply with the Ministries mandate. On top of it the entire "ARC" process has also made it easier for the HWDSB to make massive changes to schools which they could not have without this process as members of the public would highly disagreed with other wise.

School Programing:

The school hosts a program in which students with social, emotional and behavioral issues from within neighbouring schools attend called "Character Network Transitions" information about this program is available from the HWDSB. It consists of a therapeutic approach to helping the children build the skills to work back into the "regular" school system. It is inclusive and students within the program are involved in school programing and graduations etc. I had gotten the opportunity to speak with a parent of a child going into grade 6 this coming September and hear about the excitement that their son will have a great place to learn , be able to utilize the schools many specialty programs and be in with a population of other students in that small age gap. It is disturbing to see how this closure will affect some of our most vulnerable students who are receiving quality care and are succeeding within the system due to the availability of the program at this location.

The school has a "School Support E.A" whom is a Child and Youth worker employed by the board that works with the students throughout the day and preforms various tasks and provided the students with someone to talk to and work with when they are having issues. There is only a hand full of "School Support E.A's" within the city and having one for our pre-teens is very important both educationally but therapeutically as well. Some students receive information and help they would not otherwise from outside of school.

There is a designated room in which the School Support EA works out of and students in the school are able to get together and spend recess and free time interacting in the designated class room. They are also able to work out of the class room with permission from their teachers if there are any issues.

While there during break and free time they are able to participate in activities such as video games, arts and crafts, computers, a musical key board, games tables (air hockey, foz ball etc.) and many more. There are also Child and Youth workers from within the community whom are working on their program through Mohawk College who participate and do activities and spend time with the students as well.

It is a very welcoming and comfortable environment which is utilized heavily. The youth are able to connect with other students whom are having difficulties making friends and different groups and activities take place. An estimated 80 students come to the program in September and by June around 20 may be remaining. These students are able to connect with others and build friendships and bond in a safe space. The demographic is mainly grade 6 students who utilize this program.

Groups such as "Girls Group" in which girls from the school can meet and talk about issues and a specific "Girl Group" in which girls whom are having difficulties making friends or fitting in are able to connect with each other and work on social skills.

The school hosts "Welcoming and Appreciations" where staff, students and community members are welcomed and appreciated each week which also helps teach students about the value of friendships, staff and community member involvement.

There is a baking club and different cooking activities which take place with the School Support EA, teachers and community help (college students, parents etc) as well inside of her room where the kitchen is located.

Entire classes of students participate through the year in a cooking event where they cook a meal together and eat it and sometimes it is specific to their course (the French class bakes biscuits etc.).

With the kitchen the school is able to provide their Nutrition Program. The Nutrition Program is utilized by a large majority of the student population. It runs 5 days a week and includes healthy snacks from at least 3 different food groups. They have a drop in breakfast which is utilized by 50% of the students and about 20 students receive full lunches each day from the school as well. The Taste buds program is funded through grants received by the school itself. Due to the schools demographic it is able to provide services to the students who may be identified as vulnerable and upon closures it is unsure whether the same programs will be met at neighbouring schools.

Other programs the kids participate in things such as a group about Restorative Justice where they communicate their issues with their peers and the School Support EA and are taught how to problem solve and deal with conflict resolution , By grade 8 many students themselves have the skills to do this alone. There is a social Justice Committee.

There is a very good strategy taking place within the school which eliminates almost 100% of bullying. With the help of such dedicated teachers who are taking the time to help the students identify their differences and learn to problem solve and work with peers even when issues arrive. This kind of attention may not be provided in a full k to 8 schools as the large population and age differences. Due to the age range all students can be provided information and help that suits them specifically in one stop with the staff. Students whom are identified as experiencing issues or entire class rooms that may have trouble getting along are provided opportunities to do Community Building in which they do circles where they problem solve and sort through their differences with the help of staff .

The Student Centre is accessed by 100's of students each day.

Specialized Teachers:

The schools ability to provide specialized teachers is also ideal as the students are given the opportunity to explore more and have their questions answered more thoroughly and their time is utilized to the fullest potential.

The art teacher for instance is a professional artist and is able to answer questions based on not only theory and practice but also from the perspective as someone whom is employed and makes a living off of the craft of art itself. The arts program has partnerships with The Centre 3 for Arts.

There is a dedicated music teacher whom is able to provide not only theory but practice of music and has specialized training and understanding of music. Not only does the curriculum work happen but students are able to connect and see real life experience from this. Students participate in vocal and instrumental programing. There are various clubs and extracurricular activities in the field of music as well including bands, choir, instrumental music and students are able to use the many instruments on site.

He students also have access to a state of the art recording studio which is equipped with cameras, video cameras, recording and play back software, computers and editing programs etc. Students are able to both music and video projects. They utilize this equipment in various classes to produce items such as music videos, documentaries, films, news cast and PSA'a.

They have a science room in which they learn science and technology (construction). They are able to make various models and projects. The rom allows space for building and exploring and is equipped with eye wash stations, sinks and gas connections for science.

As mentioned the School Support E.A is very valuable to the school and the community for the work she does with the student and the teachers, this will be a loss.

All of the teachers I had met with throughout the year have been very genuine and caring and seem to have the student's best interest at heart. We find many teachers today are feeling burnt out or over worked and stressed and it is affecting their teaching abilities. The teachers at Cardinal Heights always seem ready to teach and happy to be around the students. Having teachers who genuinely care and are not feeling over worked and feel as if they are respected and trusted by their fellow staff and principal makes a great learning environment for students. It would be a shame to see all the hard work these teachers have put in be lost. Teachers who have secured equipment, grants and go above and beyond to have the skills to teach to their students.

The principal of the school Mrs. Simpson is a wonderful lady and leader. The school has an open door policy and allows teachers, students, parents and guardians the opportunity to address concerns at any time. You do not need to schedule appointments or wait days to meet with her, she is always available. The teachers have a high degree of respect for her and the students as well. She is very caring and compassionate and when you speak to her you can tell that she is very invested into making better

futures for the students. She has helped the school acquire many grants and equipment and should be considered an asset to our student's futures.

When you enter the school it is not hard to see that the students are enjoying themselves while they learn. This is something that we should be praising especially due to the age of the students. While we have no High School within the community come this September, having a middle school should be mandatory as it allows the students to mingle and meet prior to high school and become familiar with each other and kids from various neighborhoods within our community. It allows teachers and other staff to become familiar with the students habits and behaviors and prepare them for high school and prepare the high school for them. Having a safe place for pre-teens to grow, discover and learn in very hands on ways is very important and should be taken advantage of. I cannot stress enough how important this school is to the children whom attend it.

Equipment in regards to the learning environment:

- 4 mounted smart boards in class rooms
- 6 wall mounted 50" televisions (apple tv) are located in class rooms
- Music room is equipped with various instruments, musical hardware and various instruments for effective learning through theory and practice.
- Science room with various scientific hardware and learning materials, including sinks, eye wash stations and gas taps and adequate space to build and display projects.
- Art room equipped with art supplies, smart board and adequate space to hang and display art work.
- Gym has a new score board which was purchased with money from fundraising and has a price tag of eight thousand dollars.

Partnerships:

The school currently has partnerships with other educational facilities within the city. The school takes in about 20 Child and Youth Worker students from Mohawk College each year that do clinical placements and apprenticeships within the school. These students are able to help students in class rooms and groups/clubs within the school. It is beneficial to both the school and the CYW students.

There is a partnership with McMaster University where the BScN program sends 3rd year students to do Community Health at the school and 2 co-horts a year.

St. Charles a community adult learning school also offers a partnership in which its Personal Support Worker students can do program placements within the school as well.

These opportunities will potentially be lost with the closure of the school.

Grants and community funding:

The school currently receives grants monthly from the Taste Buds program to fund the nutrition program in the school. The school feeds a large portion of the students daily through the nutrition program and also a drop in breakfast and making lunch for children whom may not have one around 20 students a day.

The school has received funding from organizations such as Speak Up for their student voice project and they received \$1000 to help fund their private school studio.

The school also received a \$2000 grant from the Hamilton Community Fund to help for the studio as well.

The parent counsel and fundraising brings in between five and ten thousand dollars a year as well which helps purchase various things within the school and subsidize school trips and outings.

These are things staff and parents have worked to get and will be potentially be list with the closure.

Pupil Accommodation Review Policy which should have been acknowledged

4.0 Reference Criteria

4.1 The key criteria that will be used by the Accommodation Review Committee to fulfill its mandate

Include, but are not limited to, the following:

a) Facility Utilization:

- Cardinal Heights has a capacity of 308 students. The enrolment at 2012 was 318 students which equals 103% utilization. In 2017 they will have an estimated enrolment of 279 students which is 90% utilization and in 2020 estimated enrolment of 302 students which equals 98% utilization.
- 291 of the attending students or 92% are in catchment and within walkable and 23% are eligible for busing. Only 5% live outside of catchment.
- In terms of current under or non-utilized space the numbers provided by the board show a clear indication that this should not apply as the school is above capacity and will continue to be at or around capacity for the next ten plus years . Also the amount of students utilizing the school within the catchment as indicated on the student distribution map is high and will continue to be so within the future.

In regards to Facility Utilization the numbers reported by the board clearly indicate that not only is the school above optimal utilization but the majority of students also live within the area as well making it a walkable school which uses a few buses but still remains an optimal benefit to the community in which it is located. Upon closure the students will be divided into two neighbouring schools which will be already at a 905 and above utilization. This will lead to over-crowding and the need to purchase new materials and items to be divided amongst the schools when it is readily available now at no extra cost.

Also:

One of the schools that remains open after the ARC final decision is at 68% utilization and will remain below 75% for the next ten years. Its student distribution is only at 77%. And out of catchments is at 18.9%. The cost per students and to run the school is a medium to high level as well compared to others making it unusual that it remains open and underutilized.

B) Program Offerings:

- Cardinal Heights currently host programs and clubs to the students in terms of extra-curricular activities which include:
 - Choir, Band, Jr/Sr 3 Pitch, Cross Country, Jr/Sr ,Basketball, Jr/Sr Volleyball, Track and Field, Swim, Flag Football, Orienteering, Chess Club, Juggling Club, Art Club, Yearbook, Baking Club, Dance, Yoga, Rachelles club (anti-bullying) , student center , Student Council, Cardinal's Got Talent, Perch (student store), pizza sales school store, Go Girls Health Action Team ,Cardinal Commitment ,student/teacher rock band, intramurals, open gym and boys club and more .
- As for curricular program the school has specialty teachers for courses which include but are not limited to science, music, art, specialty trained support staff etc.

The many available programs and extracurricular activities have been mentioned above. With students being moved into other school there will be neither time or space to carry out all of these activities. Also teams will be more competitive and students may not qualify to be full time players in sports and activities due to the availability of space and time. This is unfortunate as it keeps our children physically and mentally active and teaches a healthy lifestyle which affects both learning and self-esteem.

d) Quality Teaching and Learning Environments:

- The entire school is 100% wireless and hosts many different opportunities in regards to technology. (Desktop PC, laptops, netbooks, IPADS deployed in all classrooms)
- The 21st Century Learning Model which is being adopted by the HWDSB is already able to fully function within the school due to its technological savvy environment and should be considered an asset in regards to this. The school has been retro fitted with the necessary equipment to follow through with e learning and other projects.
- New smart boards, Ipads, and other electronic devices are in use now.
- Specialized teachers for each course including arts, music, science, gym etc.
- Physical Education is provided 5 days a week, year round with boys and girls separated.

e) Transportation:

- 23% of students are eligible for busing, this amount will remain around the same if the school closes as the designated school is close by and will require busing students to that location as well.
- The number of students whom will require a bus if the school closes will still require busing to get to and from their new designated schools.

f) Partnerships Opportunities:

- The school has partnerships with the community which includes but is not limited to Mohawk College, McMaster University and St. Charles Adult Education in which post-secondary students have clinical placements in the school working with Cardinal Height staff and students .
- The school also has received many grants and partnerships for programing such as the nutrition program Taste Buds, Centre 3 for Arts , and the received a \$2000 grant from the Hamilton Community Fund for its recording studio.

The many oppotunities are outlined above and these are things that may be lost and will affect not only the students in the school in regards to extra help from CYW students and public health students but also to the college and university student clinical placement learning as well.

g) Equity:

- The school has several barrier free entrances and exits in the building, it is wheel chair accessible throughout the entire inside, and it has no barriers to washrooms and several which are designated specifically for those with disabilities.

7.0 Accommodation Review Committee Accommodation Report

7.1.2 The implications for the program for students both in the school under consideration for Consolidation, closure or program relocation and in the school(s) where programs may Be affected.

The school hosts several programs which may be currently unavailable in other schools at this time. Thousands of dollars have been put into the schools studio, electronic equipment, wireless technology and other programs. Upon closure of the school it is unknown whether the same programming will be available at equal or better quality at the newly designated schools upon entry date for student being moved to neighbouring schools and what will become of the things purchased with grants and fundraiser money from parents and community members.

It is my understanding that upon entry to K to 8 schools, students will no longer have specialized teachers but one teacher who teaches various courses throughout the day. With that specialty programs and a lack of funds for such thing as musical instruments and other hardware may not be accessible to students at all times and for after school or extra-curricular activities. The loss of programs and activities which keep students involved and learning is a concern especially at this age. Students who may not be interested or do well in traditional studies may enjoy spending time on creative arts and musical programming which keeps them interested in school and attending and helps build their self-esteem and a support system with these specialty teachers whom are now involved in their lives.

The current physical condition of the school in regards to the Facility Condition Index:

The building has been identified as being "FAIR" which identifies that it has damages and will affect the learning environment, teacher turnover rate and student attendance and achievement etc. To see guidelines and details please check page 87 of this document

<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/08/Board-Report-re-Elementary-ARCs.pdf>

The building was marked as being "FAIR" when there have been many upgrades and additions including but not limited to:

- New windows installed within the past 5 years
- Washrooms have been re done in the past 5 years
- The school offers several washroom locations and several wheel chair accessible and friendly washrooms
- Floors in the office and library were re tiled in 2013
- The exhaust fans throughout the school were replaced with in the past 2 years
- Fire retardant stage curtains were purchased for \$5000 and are installed on the stage in the school gym within the past two years
- The outside of the schools concrete stairs and hand rails are sturdy and to code
- The front entrance doors of the school are new, installed recently with security camera system.
- Doors and locks within the school have been changed within the past few years

When a walk-through of the school was not conducted and ARC members were not shown or told of updates. This made the school look as if it costs more to keep up and that it will be a liability in the future to fund therefore the decision was based on incorrect information which resulted in over exaggerated costs which will not be required in some cases and waste of money which had already been spent to perform finished upgrades and purchases. The non-performed walk through also took away from ARC members seeing the value of the learning environment and what is provided to students which and will be lost in a K to 8 setting. Specifically the specialized teachers and equipment and the therapeutic value which students receive from staff, groups and programs and other offerings from the school.

Value to the Student, School Board, Community and Local Economy:

The learning environment at the school: The school has a very good environment as it has specialized classes with proper materials and hardware available. The school itself regarding physical shape is in good condition with many upgrades and if properly maintained should be of no real concern. The only noticeable upgrades needed are lockers. The fact the students have gym five days a week should be seen as an asset. This is helping them physically and it is shown physical exercise helps mentally as well. The school has a very therapeutic setting in which teachers and support staff are able to help students and participate in extracurricular activities and program that help students learn intellectually and also develop emotionally. Some of the students at the school may be identified as vulnerable and this allows extra help to ensure they are getting help to overcome any barriers they may face.

Student outcomes at the school: The school generally has average to above average scores depending on the subject. Students from grade 8 attend a math program at Sir Allen McNab High School to obtain grade 9 math credits which is not done at every school. With the students having a variety of teachers they visit each day also helps them build relationships with adults and helps them to achieve better scores. When students have just one teacher and they have differences the whole year may be "ruined". If they feel no connection to the teacher or there are differences some students begin acting out. Due to the students feeling comfortable and having connections to different teachers this allows them emotional stability which helps with their learning.

Course and program offerings: Specialized teachers provide course specific instruction in class specific class rooms. The school is able to provide teachers, course material, hardware and extracurricular activities and programs to the students. If in a K to 8 school these children may not have the rooms which are retro fitted with course specific material and hardware. For instance art may be done in the home room with no specialty art easels or "space" for materials and displaying work. Music may be done in specific rooms but it is unknown whether the HWDSB will have instruments set up full time in these classes in each school to accommodate all the students and after school they will be available for use in extra circulars and special programs. 100% Wi-Fi throughout school allowing students to utilize technological devices for enhancement and use of smart boards and 50" televisions. The 21st Century Learning model being implemented by the HWDSB at this time actually involves schools being retro fitted with Wi-Fi and technological devices , this school is already capable of this so closing it does not make much sense in regards to that .

Extracurricular activities and extent of student participation: Numerous as mentioned. If the students are placed in a K to 8 school there may not be enough time or teachers to carry out the same amount of activates currently being provided. The schools will certainly not have the School Support E.A available and the specialty teachers to provide certain learning experiences for the students before and after school as well.

The ability of the school's physical space to support student learning: Excellent, space is well utilized, fitted to meet students and staff's needs. Rooms as mentioned are fully utilized for course specific learning. Outside space is used as well and not over populated. If moved to a K to 8 school the students will lose the "space" as they will be in an environment they have to share amongst all other grades and not get the same amount of time or quality out of classes such as gym, art, recess etc.

The ability of the school's grounds to support healthy physical activity and extracurricular activities: Basketball court outside, full gym inside and optimal green space for physical activity. Music, art and other rooms for specific activities including materials and hardware (art supplies, instruments, gym equipment, kitchen for baking clubs etc.)

Accessibility of the school for students with disabilities: Free movement throughout school, multiple barrier free doors, and multiple accessible washrooms the school recently had updates and new washrooms installed.

Safety of the school: School has new doors and locks, new front entrance doors equipped with video security system; building is in good shape inside. Windows have been replaced and there are multiple exits in case of an emergency.

Proximity of the school to students/length of bus ride to school: Longest bus ride to school is estimated 29 minutes, 92% live in catchment area. This won't change much as the students being bused will require buses to their new locations as well.

Availability of training opportunities or partnerships with business: The school offers local post-secondary institutes partnerships for clinical placements and apprenticeships within the school working with student and staff.

The boards ARC plan is outlined as taken from their website

<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/board/facilities-master-plan/>

<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Section-5-LTFMP-Guiding-Principles.pdf>

Elementary

Section 5: LTFMP Guiding Principles

In order to ensure that Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) provides equitable, affordable and sustainable learning facilities, the following LTFMP Guiding Principles have been created. These principles guide and assist in creating the framework for determining the viability of our schools, which is a key component in the development and implementation of the Long Term Facilities Master Plan.

The following guiding principles are consistent with the commitment to provide quality teaching and learning environments that are driven by the needs of students and programs:

- 1. HWDSB is committed to providing and maintaining quality learning and teaching environments that support student achievement (HWDSB Strategic Directions, Annual Operating Plan 2011-12)**

The school in question does not have any issues with learning or environment and is ready for 21st Century Learning Models to be introduced without the need of upgrades except tangible items like more IPADS. This means that the school is also able to keep up in regards to the plan to use less printed materials and more online resources.

- 2. Optimal utilization rates of school facilities is in the range of 90- 110%**

The school is now operating at above %100 percent and will continue to. This should have made it invalid as a choice of closure and not been included in the group of closures especially when one school which should have by this guidelines been closed as well but hadn't. If the surrounding schools cannot handle the children they will require portables and parents will ask that their children be bused to other schools.

- 3. Facilities reflect the program strategy that all students need personalized learning, pathways, schools with specialization and cluster and community support (Learning for All: HWDSB Program Strategy)**

The school already has in fact some programing that relates to the "learning for all" with the

"Character Network Transitions" the school is fully able to accommodate anything within board directives or policy.

4. Transportation to school locations will not normally exceed 60 minutes one way (Transportation Policy, 2011)

Again the longest estimate bus ride is no more than 30 minutes.

5. School facilities meet the needs of each of our students in the 21st century (Education in HWDSB, 2011)

Already done.

6. Accessibility will be considered in facility planning and accommodation (Accessibility (Barrier-Free)"Pathways" Policy, 1999)

The school is all one level and has many doors to enter and exit throughout the building and has many upgrades to wheel chair accessible washrooms in regards to physical needs. The school is one of a few that has a School Support E.A and designated room in which students are able to access and utilize.

7. School facilities provide neighborhood and community access that supports the well-being of students and their families (A Guide to Educational Partnerships, 2009)

The community is unhappy with the decision and feels "duped" as they did not expect the school to be considered for closure due to the above 100% utilization rate and condition of the school. The schools nutrition programs that feeds all students but also provides for a demographic of "at risk "youth as well and the social emotional needs as well with caring and trained staff.

8. School facilities have flexible learning environments including adaptive and flexible use of spaces; student voice is reflected in where, when and how learning occurs (Education in HWDSB, 2012)

Again all classes are utilized as course specific and are utilized as such. Also again the School Support E.A has a room in which students having problems in class can also go sit and work quietly with permission from their teacher or principal.

9. Specific principles related to elementary and secondary panels:

a) School Capacity – optimal school capacity would be 500 to 600 students, which creates two to three classes for each grade

b) School Grade/Organization –Kindergarten to-Grade 8 facilities

c) School Site Size – optimal elementary school site size would be approximately six acres

d) French Immersion – In dual track schools a balance between French Immersion and English track students is ideal for balanced program delivery

Cardinal Heights sits beside its sister school a k to 5 elementary Pauline Johnson. The two schools are in good condition and house students at above 100% utilization. It makes more sense to keep the two running as is instead of inserting another 30 to 40 % of students into Pauline Johnson with the addition of only two more rooms.

The students will lose their specialty rooms and teachers, their School Support E.A, the kitchen and those classes and the gym space for everyday physical activity and after school actives and extra circulars. The school will also then have to share space for recess outside as well and hall way space if moved into the one school. It is not practical to try and fit so many students inside of one school which was not built to accommodate that many students and parents are already outraged and will be very unhappy if portables will be needed in the future due to lack of space. Plus with the loss of programming available to the children already and for those entering into grade six this September from feeder schools and for specialty programming into the Character Transitions Network this move is highly unstable and it will most likely interfere with the students ability to progress and do well . In regards to having several classes for each grade I do not believe the school will fit all the children. The schools numbers can be seen here: http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/files/2013/10/K.3-PaulineJohnson_ByGrade.pdf. The school is estimated to have around four or more Kindergarten classes alone. There is no way they will be able to receive the same type of programing they do now and what other parents are expecting their children to receive as well when it is time for 6 to 8 for their children.

There is a French immersion school within the boundary in Ward 7 Central Mountain and it was never in the "ARC" review due to the French programing and with.

In mine and other parents opinion's this school should have never been considered as its closure will do more damage than anything else to the students both in it and to the ones in Pauline Johnson when that small space will be excessively over utilized.

The process set by the board doesn't reflect on the policy guidelines set by Ministry and the process is not being carried out properly, things are being omitted or not properly disclosed and people are being misled. Members are not being given enough time or information to make proper decisions and the board itself should be at fault for schools which are not kept up and maintained instead of closing them. The costs for something's are highly exaggerated and the formula and programing they use to determine costs are incorrect. If they had any concern with cost I think they should consider opening the field and utilizing better cost estimate programs and put a bid out for cheaper labor and construction costs.

As a parent and a tax payer I am hoping that the least that can be done is that someone is able to come out as an individual third party and look at the process and what decisions were made based on the information provided or not and give some justification for the decisions if they believe they were appropriate to the parents, tax payers and members of the community.

Thank you,

Sarah Warry-Poljanski

