

Amber Bourque

From: Corrie Williamson <c_williamson@bell.net>
Sent: Saturday, October 12, 2013 8:50 PM
To: aboutique@fluke.ca
Subject: Re: School on closure list

Hi Amber,

My daughter is Ok, we wont know for a few weeks if we need to go in for further follow-up bot nothing is broken, either severely sprained or torn. We'll have to see how the next few weeks play out.

Yes please feel free to share my thought with the ARC committee.

Corrie

From: aboutique@fluke.ca
Sent: Saturday, October 12, 2013 3:24 PM
To: Corrie Williamson
Subject: Re: School on closure list

Hi Corrie,

Thank you very much for your email.

First of all, I hope that your daughter is ok?

I am wondering if it is ok with you if I share your thoughts with the ARC committee. We already have shared one letter from a parent from our school voicing their thought, and the more that we have the better.

Let me tell you that there has not been a final decision regarding the school closures. The option that has been published is the one and only option the School Board has come up with, as it is part of the ARC closure procedure as per the Ministry of Education. It is a "starting point" as how the Board put it. The voting members of the ARC committee also have to come up with their options. We have can have one option, or as many options as we can come up with. The final decision will not be made until May 2014.

locate an e-mail address or some sort of contact information I typically give up or have ran out of time to make the initial contact and never have a chance to get back to it. Just some food for thought.

Corrie

From: aboutque@fluke.ca - Amber - ARC member
To: c_williamson@bell.net
Subject: RE: School on closure list
Date: Thu, 19 Sep 2013 12:31:20 -0400
Hi Corrie, GLA

On June 18th, 2013 a letter went home to parents at our School letting them know that there was going to be an ARC for the elementary schools. There has been a petition that has been going around our neighborhood since June, that was created by one of the parents on our School Council, it is also available at local business' on Concession Street.

We are not the only school that is on the list, there are a total of 8 schools in this particular portion of the ARC process (The Central Mountain ARC). For the elementary ARC there are a total of 22 schools that are going through a review. There have been many articles in the local paper, as well as the Mountain news.

You can find all information on the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board website. The website is: <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/>

Please do not think that we are sitting idly regarding our school! There is going to be an ARC committee created from each school, and they will be working with the School Board in regards to the ARC process. We will have a member of the School Council on the committee, along with a parent rep from the community, member of our staff at the school, the Principal, as well as a superintendent. We will be finding out shortly as to whom each of these members will be.

The first meeting will take place October 1st, and will run every Tuesday from 6pm - 9pm. The final decision will go before the School Board towards the end of December, then the Board will announce their intentions. The public is welcome to each of the meetings.

Regards,
Amber Bourque

From: Corrie Williamson [mailto:c_williamson@bell.net]
Sent: Thursday, September 19, 2013 12:01 PM

There are ARC committee meetings every Tuesday until mid-December. The next one is an ARC working meeting, which means public can attend and hear what is going on, but can not voice anything, is this Tuesday at Pauline Johnson School from 6:00pm to 9:00pm. The following Tuesday (I can double check the date) will be the second Public meeting, and it will be held at Armstrong. I strongly recommend that as many parents, students, and members of the community attend, not only to voice questions and concerns, but to show support for Armstrong. Please invite and tell as many people as you can.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Regards,

Amber Bourque

Sent wirelessly from my BlackBerry device on the Bell network.

Envoyé sans fil par mon terminal mobile BlackBerry sur le réseau de Bell.

From: Corrie Williamson <c_williamson@bell.net>

Date: Sat, 12 Oct 2013 14:33:38 +0000

To: Amber Bourque<aboutique@fluke.ca>

Subject: RE: School on closure list

Hi Amber,

I wasn't able to make the meeting with my daughters schedule and injury at school on Tuesday, which resulted in us needing to get her in for x-rays to make sure she didn't break her wrist. I have read about the boards plan in the paper. However I have to ask, has anyone ever considered proposing that Armstrong become or bring in a French emersion program. The current French emersion programs are busting at the seams and are actually turning students away due to a lack of space. If we were to bring this program into our school it may mean that the queensdale and eastmount schools would have to stay open and add a larger gym as they may not be able to feed into our school any more once the program gets up and running.

We have a fantastic music program, one of two of the sensory rooms for autistic children, and if we can convince Mr Trimble and the Ms Rowell to stay on we have a really good team at the head of the school to really make a difference in these kids lives and change the face of Armstrong into one of a caring and loving school.

There are also the athletic programs to consider, we have the space and the gym capacity to bring in a basketball athletic program, or a hockey, or soccer program that would attract more students to our school with these programs.

I'm all for the school boards plan having figured that was what they were planning on doing anyways. it never made any sense whatsoever to close the biggest school in the area and attempt to re-route our kids else where our district was all too big. However knowing how much we hate the

thought of our school being closed I also know that the other parents at the other schools feel the same way. As a matter of fact Leanne Friessen, from the queensdale parent committee, and I have had very lengthy discussions about this matter.

Let me know your thoughts. Please also let me know when the next meeting is.

Thanks

Corrie

From: c_williamson@bell.net
To: abourque@fluke.ca
Subject: RE: School on closure list
Date: Thu, 19 Sep 2013 17:52:07 +0000

My daughter loses her agenda typically within the first month of school and it so far this year it hasn't made it home at all. I try to regularly check the school website for updates and e-mail is definitely the best communication mode for me, I'm on it all day at work and typically check it once or twice over the weekend. What are family fun nights?

Corrie

From: abourque@fluke.ca
To: c_williamson@bell.net
Subject: RE: School on closure list
Date: Thu, 19 Sep 2013 13:28:25 -0400

Hi Corrie,

Believe me I understand your frustrations and concerns regarding the possibility of our school. Please do not think that anything that you have said, hasn't already crossed our minds. We are completely behind the school 100% and are trying to do what we can to ensure that Armstrong stays open and to voice our opinions, thoughts, and concerns to the School Board.

I understand about not having time, I am also a single mother, that is on call for work 24-7, so my life is hectic and chaotic as well. I do know that all of the information regarding School Council, including our meeting dates, and the Family Fun Night activities that we obtained a grant for our school for, are listed in every students' agenda.

What form of communication will work best for you? We have sent out surveys and questionnaires for many years, and never receive much feedback. I strive to be the best that we can for our students, parents, school staff, and community members. All information and feedback are greatly appreciated. I know that forms and information go home with each student, and am not sure how we can make this better.

Regards,
Amber Bourque

From: Corrie Williamson [mailto:c_williamson@bell.net]
Sent: Thursday, September 19, 2013 1:02 PM
To: Amber Bourque
Subject: RE: School on closure list

Hi Amber,

Thank you for the update. As I don't often get the mountain news, I don't have a chance to read it, and my daughter wouldn't have been at school much that week having had surgery shortly before that and follow-up appointments that week.

I did go online today and find all of the information about it. Basically they are reviewing every school in our area, but what does that mean? Already I have seen an influx of children in the 7 years I have lived here and it is growing every year, I don't honestly think the school boards predictions are correct on enrolment in the future dropping. I do get that our school is under used and morale isn't great, teacher turn around is high. HOWEVER I do think that Mr. Trimble and the VP (sorry drawing a blank on the name) are doing a great job at getting this to change. Yes I agree the school needs work areas of it are quite run down while other areas aren't. However as I am also looking to the future I don't understand the desire to shut down one of the biggest schools in the area when we can easily accomodate all of Eastmount and ALL of the Eastmount area is within walking distance to Armstrong. So what if it means that we need to add crossing guards, (not that I agree with that at all as my daughter is an eastmount student who has very safely walked to Armstrong every day for the last 6 years using the lights at Upper Wentworth and consession. The cost of bussing the kids anywhere else is astronomical compared to a few crossing guards. Sorry I know this isn't your choice, it just baffles me. Between this and the Hill Park closure, I really don't get it!

My daughter dances on Tuesday from 5-7, I'll do my best to make it but it is very difficult as I am a single mother.

I'll be honest, we have been at the school going on 6 years now and I hear little to nothing from the parent committee. I'm not saying that you aren't an active committee, it simply means that the mode of communication being used isn't effective with my family. I have even called the school from time to time to inquiry about different parent committee things as I had no idea who was even on it and gotten no response. It took me 20 minutes today to find an e-mail to contact you. Time is not something I have tons of, I am a single parent raising a competitive dance student, a bi-polar teenager, working full time and running a small business and going to university myself, so when it takes me 20 minutes to

To: Abourque@fluke.ca

Subject: School on closure list

Hi Amber,

I am wondering what is being done about the school being on the closure list. Is there a team being put together to dispute this? Why haven't school parents been notified. I found out when I went on a retreat this past weekend and was asked how I felt about it. Is there notices going home to the families in the school?

Corrie

As a resident of the Armstrong community I would like to say that I was appalled by the actions of the representative of Queensdale Elementary School. Taking over a meeting and trying to impose his mandate on the audience. He succeeded in denying not only my community a voice but all others that were present that tolerated such behaviour. There is a fine line between genuine passion for your school and just plain out bullying. The last public meeting we all witnessed this. It is ironic that this type of activity would come from a school that prides itself on its anti-bullying techniques, a quality not exclusive to Queensdale, but to all schools. I hope that we will not have to endure such activities again in future meetings. I'm sure it will not happen at Queensdale. At any rate it's safe at this point to assume that I back the motion that Armstrong remains open. I am a CET that is LEED certified, holds a valid BCIN, and hold valid CFQ's for both Carpentry and Masonry. I understand that Armstrong had the misfortune of being locked into an ARC process that has left us without capital funding for the last 5 years. Some schools have been more fortunate with upgrades to washrooms, windows, etc. It leaves Armstrong at quite the capital disadvantage. Although it has received many essential upgrades, new heating system, new fire system, new security system, and updated electrical. The first floor for the most part is indeed wheel chair accessible. As I read many concerns about air conditioning and how some schools have been recently retro fitted with AC, I have to wonder how these schools got along without it for some many years. AC is a luxury not a necessity for any school to function. But the lack of it is not that difficult a fix. Just as a point of clarification it is public knowledge that there have been no reported cases to either the school or the board of heat stroke brought on the lack of AC at Armstrong as some parents may suggest. Armstrong is the most logical school to remain open, it is accessible by several major bus routes, it is centrally located, (unlike other small schools that are more remote and isolated), the streets can accommodate the traffic generated, the school itself can accommodate the needs of the student body, it supports a broad base local economy and it is in close proximity to all local amenities. Armstrong has served the community well over the years and should continue to do so. Let's not make the same mistake we did with Hill Park. Hill Park was the most logical choice for this community yet it closed. Armstrong mirrors this situation so let us not make the same bad decision twice.

Bruce Smith

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to express my deepest concerns over the school closures. I feel that we have not been given enough time to properly weigh and digest all this information. Some of it is very misleading. To upset the communities and the parents with such a short and ridged time line is unjust and extremely unfair. Why is the timeline being imposed so hastily? Why is it that the public has to make such important decisions based on very condensed information? I have been a life time resident here at Armstrong and I have witnessed the closure and demolition of Inverness Elementary School, now Hill Park Secondary School all with little attention given to the public. This isn't your own personal real estate to broker off as you please; it was bought and paid for by the public. A public that deserves to have its opinions heard and most importantly its words heeded. Armstrong has a proud and rich heritage as does its community. The school always seems to be bristling with activity, after school programs and weekend programs. I see the students routinely at the public transit routes on their way to a class excursion. I also see them walking to take advantage of our local library, a rare sight these days. Armstrong has so much to offer this community and ample room to make any student welcome and feel at home. I realize that this is a financial decision, but the way I see it Armstrong already has a good footprint to accommodate more students as it so proudly has in the past. If it were up to a public vote I would cast my ballot to keep Armstrong open, alive and vibrant for all communities to enjoy.

Yours Truly

Beverly Henderson

November 1, 2013

Dear Mr. Prendergast

I'm writing you this letter due to the concern I have regarding the possible closure of Eastmount Park Elementary School.

My husband and I bought within the Eastmount community because of what it had to offer. Such as a local school within walking distance, as well as a child care within the school building that serves from the age 2 and up. Not too mention that the mountain kids klub and Eastmount softball league all share the same grounds. The winning decision was that we wanted our child to grow up within a smaller school setting. We do not regret this decision what so ever.. Our daughter has grown up so much thanks to everyone involved within the Eastmount Park "family". We did not or do not want her growing up in a larger school setting. I'm sorry but she will not get the same sense of belonging as she does now.

Our daughter has been there since she was two years old due to her attending Today's Family child care, since my husband and I both have to work full time. We never had the first day panic as many parents and children experience the first day of kindergarten due to the seamless day entry that she was able to be a part of. She knew her teacher, her classroom, as well as everyone in the building by the time she entered JK. By closing Eastmount it is so sad that other children in our area will never be able to experience the seamless day entry in a smaller school setting. It is very scary as parents to think that all of this could be taken away from us in just a few months.

Yes, Eastmount Park is a smaller school but it has so much to offer. It is truly a family! We can walk into the building or be standing on the playgrounds and everyone knows who are daughter is. As a parent to witness this it is truly a blessing and heart-warming. We like many other families in the community chose Eastmount because it is a smaller school and our children actually have a name and not just be a number. It will be a shame to lose it

Another concern of ours is that you are not just possible closing our community school but splitting up the boundary? Seriously? has anyone actually sat down and thought about the implications this can have on the young children that it involves? It is absolutely disgusting to have to tell your child that the only school, friends, teachers, child care providers that she has known for the past 5 years will be taken away from her. She will not just be losing her school and teacher but losing the many friendships that she has developed over these years. It breaks my heart that I may have to tell her this. Can you tell me this... are the children involved being thought of or are they just numbers to the board to bring up the numbers in larger school buildings? It's bad enough to close a school in a community but to also throw in a second thing such as splitting the boundary. Eastmount Park is the only one being affected by this boundary change in such that the children from the other schools at least have their old friends to go with them to their new

school. Has anyone thought about allowing the children to stay together in order to help them through this huge life changing event.

As well has anyone thought about providing on site flexible quality child care for those of us that do have to work full time?

I do have concerns about my child attending Armstrong in regards to the poor shape that the building is in and no to mention the HUGE safety concern with the half way house that is directly across the street. As well as it is located on a main road where Eastmount is located on a quiet side street area. Eastmount Park is rated in better condition then Armstrong re the charts the meetings have provided for us. The chart that you provided us with says that in 5 years time you may be able to see a drop in students achievement as well as health. This is hugely concerning as parent who has a child with have health issues. But by staying at Eastmount they don't predict any changes nor does this building affect her health. I have read all the notes and charts and I'm so not impressed with my findings.

I'm wondering what options have been brought up such as making it a Jk-8 school since we do have the extra rooms? or by going back to the old days were it was Jk-5 and then they ALL go to Armstrong for 6-8? or by extending this timeline it is not realistic.

I really do hope that whoever is involved in the final decision really and truly knows and understands what devastation could be done by closing Eastmount Park. I'm afraid by us being a smaller school that our voice will not be heard.

I hope that by writing you this letter that you realize what a mistake it would be in closing Eastmount Park as well as splitting the boundaries.

If you would like to contact me to discuss any of my concerns, it would be welcomed.

Sincerely a very concerned parent,

Crystal Holland

To ARC Committee

I have read about the boards plan in the paper. However I have to ask, has anyone ever considered proposing that Armstrong become or bring in a French emersion program. The current French emersion programs are busting at the seams and are actually turning students away due to a lack of space. If we were to bring this program into our school it may mean that the queensdale and eastmount schools would have to stay open and add a larger gym as they may not be able to feed into our school any more once the program gets up and running.

We have a fantastic music program, one of two of the sensory rooms for autistic children, and if we can convince Mr Trimble and the Ms Rowell to stay on we have a really good team at the head of the school to really make a difference in these kids lives and change the face of Armstrong into one of a caring and loving school.

There are also the athletic programs to consider, we have the space and the gym capacity to bring in a basketball athletic program, or a hockey, or soccer program that would attract more students to our school with these programs.

I'm all for the school boards plan having figured that was what they were planning on doing anyways. it never made any sense whatsoever to close the biggest school in the area and attempt to re-route our kids else where our district was all too big. However knowing how much we hate the thought of our school being closed I also know that the other parents at the other schools feel the same way. As a matter of fact Leanne Friessen, from the queensdale parent committee, and I have had very lengthy discussions about this matter.

Let me know your thoughts. Please also let me know when the next meeting is.

Thanks

Corrie Williamson
Parent

Received October 29th, 2013

Dear Trustees, ARC Members, and HWDSB staff:

I am writing you today to voice my concerns with the proposed closure of Linden Park Elementary School at 4 Vickers Road, Hamilton.

Our son is enrolled in the Junior Kindergarten program at Linden Park, and we have another son who will enroll in Junior Kindergarten in 2016. Already, in the two short months since our oldest started school, we have witnessed amazing growth and knowledge within our son. He has already made many friends and we can see him benefitting from all he is experiencing at Linden Park. My husband and I have become involved on the Parent Council and have also already come to love this little school very much. In fact, I attended this school as a child thirty years ago (Senior Kindergarten through to Grade 5) and it means so much to me that my son is attending the same school. I myself have many wonderful memories and lasting impressions from my teachers and experiences at Linden Park. I had hoped for the same for my children.

To propose a closure in June of 2014, in eight short months, is ludicrous. To propose a closure, period, will be devastating to our community.

I'll begin with my concerns regarding child care. Currently, my son attends Today's Family at Linden Park in the mornings before school begins, as well as after his Junior Kindergarten class finishes for the morning. He stays for the afternoon and we pick him up after our work day finishes. It provides a seamless day as he is within the same building and he is with many other children who attend JK with him. If the decision regarding the closure of Linden Park is to be made in May – with the closure actually occurring in June – what happens to Today's Family? Presumably it will close, too. How are we (and other families) to scramble to find summer care for our children? And for the fall, when he attends his new school, for that matter? A months' time is not enough notice to find a daycare that may accommodate him. Will Today's Family relocate to either Pauline Johnson or Ridgemount schools? My understanding is that the YMCA currently operates before and after school programs at these schools so I would assume that the answer is no, they would not relocate. Also, we had transferred our son to the Linden Park centre this past July in order that he would not have to adjust to starting a new daycare and Junior Kindergarten at the same time. To change this routine yet again less than a year later, with a brand new school and daycare, is not in our child's – or any child's, for that matter - best interest. Yes, some children adapt and cope well with change, but many others do not. How do you expect a solid foundation of confidence, well-being, etc., to be built for a child when their routine and life is turned upside-down? What about the older children who have attended Linden Park and the daycare centre for years with the same children, who will now be separated and split up at different schools? It is unfair and disruptive.

Secondly, I feel that the fate of Linden Park has already been decided. In particular, I find it curious that no preparations have been made at Linden Park to accommodate the full-day kindergarten that is to come into effect in 2014. Why is this?

Regarding the physical state of the school, the purpose of the Board's "Healthy School and Workplace Pillar" policy is as follows:

"Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) is committed to creating and supporting healthy schools and workplaces. HWDSB aims to create healthy living, learning and working conditions in

Received October 29th, 2013

schools and workplaces through a broad approach that includes healthy environments, activities, programs, policies and practices.”

It would seem that this policy is not being met at Linden Park seeing that it falls within the “Poor” range on your Facility Condition Index (FCI). Why was the school allowed to slide into such a state of disrepair in the first place?

And given that the closure of Hill Park Secondary School, adjacent to Linden Park, has been now expedited to June of 2014, it seems that it would make sense to the Board to close Linden Park at the same time and sell off the entire parcel of land in order to fund the construction of one of your proposed “super schools.”

On the topic of “super schools”, it is a proven fact that students excel within smaller schools, but I am sure you are aware of this. Why you would want to cram 500 students into one school, which will have no sense of community or closeness, is beyond me. This is how students fall through the cracks. Too many students, too few teachers, total anonymity. Again, tell me how this is in our children’s best interest?

Finally, the location of Linden Park is amazing. Adjacent to Sackville Hill Park and Seniors Centre, Hill Park Recreation Centre, large recreational fields... situated within a neighbourhood that is seeing a huge turnover in terms of older residents selling to new and young families... Young families whose children will no longer have a school within walking distance, who will be put on a bus at the age of 4 and shuttled off to a school with 500 other children. There has been such a wonderful partnership between Linden Park and Hill Park that has now been broken. Please do not do any further damage to the other links that Linden Park has within our community but shutting its doors.

I implore you to reconsider your option to close Linden Park - there must be some other option that does not involve shuttering Linden Park. Please, do what is best for our children. This is a small school with a big heart; with its closure, you will essentially be ripping the heart out of our community, a community that my family and others may and will not want to be a part of if this option goes through.

Regards,

Emily Coe

Michael Drendergrast, Superintendent

ARC Committee

I just wanted to write in and let the board and the ARC committee that I presently support the proposed plan for the closure of Queensdale and Eastmount schools and having the balance of the students attend either Armstrong or Franklin Road School. I am a supporter of Armstrong School and believe it is best suited to perform the job. It is with a heavy heart that I say this as I do not wish any community to lose their schools. I have analyzed the different scenarios and find that this would be the best possible solution and outcome for all. I understand what communities are saying about smaller schools but it just isn't feasible at this time to sustain them. Other school boards maintain a high level of education with larger schools, JK-Grade 8 and I see no reason why this board and the communities cannot achieve the same.

Sincerely

Jason and Karen Muller

Received November 1st, 2013

Dear Chris Charlton
c.c Pat Stones and Scott Duvall

I am deeply concerned about our sense of community in myneighbourhood. Recovering from the inevitable loss of our local highschool Hill Park,which I will assume will also result in the closure of the Hill Park Ontario Early Years Center,I am deeply saddened to hear that our local elementary school, Liden Park, is now on the "choppingblock."

As a devoted stay at home mother, who does not drive, I am feeling extremely let down by the City, School Board and the Government. I am sickened that our children have to pay for Mcguinty's expensive poor decisions, such as the 'GasPlant Scandal'.

These decisions effect my family, as well as many other newand young families within our community. To provide example, I'm going to tellyou my story. In 2010, pregnant with my son, I thought I struck gold when wefound our home in a nice neighbourhood, that was close to schools, shops,doctors and an early years center! As I mentioned, I do not drive, and beingclose to so many services was very important to us and effected our choice inwhere we bought our first home. Words cannot express how upset I am to be losing the Hill Park Early Years, I met many wonderful people in my community,had support and workshops to answer the many questions a first time parent has.I am certain Early Years kept me from Post Partum Depression with all thesupport I received from them. As my son grew and became a big brother he hasmade friendships, and is continuing to grow and learn there, I'm saddened myinfant daughter will now be deprived of the same services in her toddler andpreschool years.

My son is now old enough to be enrolled in school for 2014. Linden Park, our closest school, may nowbe closing. This concerns me and many of my neighbours for various reasons. Myfirst concern is the community. The young families that have been snatching upthe reality in this area are now going to reconsider. Reality value within thisarea will drop. Families will have to consider moving away to go to homescloser to other schools. My son will be deprived of daily walks to and fromschool with his parents first, and then later with his friends. The independencethat you feel walking to school, he will now be deprived of. He will not get tocome home for lunches, which are extremely limited at school because of the growingconcerns about allergies. He won't get to learn his neighbours the way I didwhen I was growing up as he will be forced to be driven to school by bus. Greatway to fight childhood obesity too, walking to school daily.

My second concern is the children that will "getlost" in the system. How can we give our children the "BestStart" if we're cramming several schools into one? I guarantee somechildren will get lost. In the "no fail" world that is school today,children who do not keep up will continuously fall behind within these giantmassive classes. Until they are so far behind, they struggle to earn credits inhighschool, struggle to get into post secondary and later struggle to get adecent job. A dangerous domino effect as children will on day inherit our city.

Received November 1st, 2013

Children who are advanced will not be challenged as teachers won't have the time for them with their oversized classes. These children maybe bored and not meet their full potential. If not cultivated, these skills maybe lost, what a tragedy that would be. All just to save a few bucks in taxes that we would have had if Mcguinty managed our tax dollars effectively. Instead of throwing away billions of dollars on gas plants that resulted in nothing.

My third concern is will my child be deprived of his Kindergarten education all together. As a mother who cannot drive due to driving anxiety, walking 1.2km daily in all kinds of weather with a one yearold in tow, is less then ideal. I may have no choice but to homeschool my child for Kindergarten, something I would rather not do as I believe his social and emotional development is equally important to his intellectual development. How will he get this if not further exposed to children his age? It's not like I can continue taking him to the local early years center anymore either...

I know I am not alone on these thoughts. There are many upset parents within my community. I don't know if this letter will make a difference but at least my voice is heard to someone who may have the power to help us, and help our community. Please consider a route other then our children's educations. Please save our community. I know many of us don't want or wish for "superschools".

Thank you

Justine Marquis

Received Nov 5th, 2013

To the HWDSB and the ARC committee:

I would like to express my support in favour to the Boards proposal for possible school closures. Armstrong just happens to be a wonderful school and I and my children have had nothing but positive experiences from not only the school but the community that surrounds it. With our newest principle the school is really headed down a proper path and I can only project it will get better in the future. Armstrong by far is the ideal location for the new agenda set out by the board. Its' proximity to public buses, public library, community policing center and to our beautiful escarpment make it the best suited location for any school. It does need some upgrading but this perhaps is the result of funding being denied to our school for the last 5 years. You should also consider that rather than build a new facility at the Cardinal Heights Location that it be built on the Armstrong property. This is the best suited central location for it.

Lauren Millar

Received November 6th, 2013

Last night I went to my first public meeting. It turned out not to be what I expected. My childrens school is on the chopping Block. It's Eastmount Park. I don't know how you could think about shutting our school when the school you wish them to go to is in desprite need of care and upgrade. It's not fully accessible, has asbestos issues, the green space lacks a lot to be desired and to top it off there is a halfway house across the street. Also no before or after care on site.

At Eastmount our green space is owned and maintained by the city and it is far more child friendly and lots of room. Also we have a active community centre that runs breakfast clubs in our school. It would not need as much work to allow our school to go up to grade eight, as we have the room to accommodate. So much on the positive for our school to remain. We also have on site child care which give so much help to parents and children. If any school should close it should be GL Armstrong.

Sincerely Lisa Mantysaari

October 28, 2013

Mr. Michael Prendergast, Superintendent
Hamilton Wentworth District School Board
Standard Life Building 120 King Street West, Suite 1120
P.O. Box 2558, Hamilton ON L8N 3L1

Dear Mr. Prendergast

Re: School realignments

I know that you have to make difficult decisions to balance the cost of providing well equipped schools for Hamilton's children with the ideal of having a school in every local community. I also know that the decrease in overall enrollment in public schools means many spaces in public schools are empty. Keeping empty spaces is obviously not efficient or good use of education dollars.

However, my concern is that as decisions are being considered about what spaces or schools are redundant, the HWDSB remembers that space is needed for more than just classes. I am a volunteer tutor working through the Neighbour to Neighbour "Kids Can Succeed" program. This program is over 10 years old and the results show that our tutoring helps the many primary aged children who fall behind in developing reading skills to catch up so that they are not left behind academically right through High School.

When I first began to tutor about five years ago the only space available for our quiet one-on-one work was the janitor's closet! Luckily the following year the principal of that school was able to figure out how we could share space with other non-classroom one-on-one workers.

I have been tutoring at Eastmount Park School for a number of years now. The eight Neighbour to Neighbour tutors at this school work with 16 children twice a week and thus use our tutoring space every Monday to Thursday from 11:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. In addition to needing space for the tutoring, we also need storage space for several bins of supplies, books and records. Initially they were kept in the teachers' resource room (in front of and in the way of some of their own resources). However, more recently we have been able to tutor in an empty classroom which we share with other very important non-classroom programs that offer extra support to children with challenges. Even though we still have space scheduling conflicts at times, it is wonderful to have that room because we are not cramped, we are able to have our resources right next to where we work and, most importantly, the children are not distracted by other activities or things around them.

I beg you, please, as you decide how best to use public school facilities, remember that space is needed for the regular and important non-classroom work that goes on in the schools every day.

Thank you,



Pam Byers
Neighbour to Neighbour tutor and
Eastmount Park classroom volunteer

Received Nov 8th, 2013

I would just like to relay a reality check to all people concerned with this ARC. I work for both private and unionized companies and what I have found in most cases once the business has become financially unviable it is the employees that take the first round of hits not the general public. It starts with clawing back benefits, wage freezes, temporary layoffs and then permanent layoffs. At the end of the day the company begins to consolidate its' assets. Does anyone else see a trend here? Last year around this time the general public was subjected to a work to rule campaign by the educators of our very communities and now it's' the Boards turn. Neither party had any concerns about the welfare of our children at that time, but now the "educators speak" up once it affects them in their own neighbourhoods. It's is quite ironic where peoples values stand, I guess only when it suits their purposes. I was just wondering how many staff the Board will be relieving of their duties before and after this process is done. I can't blame all teachers for the activities of last year but certainly the majority. Moving forward to the last public meeting I must say that I haven't seen such a display of aggressive behaviour in a long time. There were children present at this meeting that had to witness a display of how not to conduct yourself and the total disregard for any other individual or community present. I like many others had valid concerns that I wish could have been addressed at this meeting, instead our questions, our voices were selfishly muted by a community representative. There is protocol for public speaking at any meeting and this most certainly was not it. I am embarrassed for the community he represents and the sentiments that they clearly endorse. These meeting, as the ARC meetings, are not political platforms for any one community. We have seen time and time again these meeting addressing Provincial Legislation and these meetings are clearly not the correct form to address these issues nor are the people present really in a position to properly address these types of questions. These types of question should anyone have any real concern about them should be taken to Queens Park and addressed there not in these meetings. These questions just distract and lead people away from the real common issue at hand that we all face. The more important thing to do here is to find common ground that will better serve all communities and our children, not just serve one particular community. Thank-you for your indulgence in this matter

Ray Lewis

November 5th, 2013

To the Board of Education, the trustees and the members of the ARC committee:

I am writing this letter to express to all those concerned my concerns over the entire Arc process, the time constraints, the out dated and misinformation, and in general the procedure itself which seems to be jaded. I do not have any professional accreditations to suffix my last name, such as an educator, or perhaps an Engineer. These titles are not necessary to validate my position or my factual claims; I am merely a tax payer in the residential community of Armstrong Elementary School. I do not utilize my friends in the media, theatrics or over dramatized unsupported statements about other communities. I am however more than willing to express logic and facts. I do not make any apologizes for Armstrong being the best suited location for the extension of the already existing programming and curriculum, JK-8. Armstrong is an icon not only to this community but also to the entire mountain. It supports a large Concession Street economy; it has a community based police department one block away, and a public library within in walking distance. Armstrong is a unique school as we are all inclusive. Our boundaries not only support our community but also stretch far beyond the board expectations. Armstrong has such a reputation that it attracts other groups from outside our community and welcomes them to our neighbourhood to utilize our school. Every weekend we open our community and school to a diverse group of new immigrants so that they may attend a program that teaches them how to assimilate to our culture and society. This is not only a benefit to our school, our society, the local businesses, and the immigrants that utilize this opportunity but it is also an invaluable learning tool. It teaches our children and our community acceptance and tolerance of all people regardless of religion ethnic background or beliefs. The size of the school itself can support up to 630 students, with ample maturely treed green spaces, 1st Floor wheel chair accessibility, (in the past we have heard it is not accessible at all), two gymnasiums, (one itself being wheel chair accessible), new updated heating system, new fire alarm systems, new security system, updated T-8 lighting, and some renovated classrooms. The versatility of the space at Armstrong and the surrounding streets are the reason why we are capable of supporting such diverse programs now and in the future. Unfortunately the adjacent smaller schools such as Eastmount or Queendale cannot make the same claims as the property sizes, school sizes, congested narrow streets cannot at this time will not even support the regular flow of everyday traffic and parking, thus producing a safety hazard. What would they do with the extra flow of not only traffic, but noise/air pollution, more pedestrian/automobile traffic and bus traffic? Would they accept this in their community on weekends as well? Not likely. Armstrong has erected in, partnership with the city, a new traffic signal at the North West corner of the property. This is supported by a full time crossing guard at the North East corner of the property. Armstrong is the best centrally located location. It is on a major bus route that routinely supports 4-5 separate major buses making the school easily accessible but to use, also, for class outings and trips. Other schools such as, Queensdale are isolated and not easily accessible at all, thus possibly prompting more parents to drive rather than use convenient public transit, in turn increasing air pollution. As a matter of public record everyone may view the WHMIS sheet for Armstrong concerning asbestos. I did survey this document and found that the prevalence of asbestos for such a large school is very low, it is only found in a small portion of the school in the ceiling

tiles and flooring tiles. Non in the pipe wrap etc. I would challenge any school or residence that was built prior to 1980 to firmly state with true conviction that their school or residence did not or does not contain some source of asbestos. It was commonly used on a wide variety of building products. As we all know asbestos creates no threat unless it is disturbed, and with all the new technology now for the removal of such it is really a non-issue. The notion that larger schools and busing students are negative environments for children is also questionable when we can plainly see living working examples of this every day. It can be found in the Catholic School Board System, the French Immersion Schools and even in our own public school systems, (example Franklin Road, Armstrong etc.), and rural students have been bused for years. Perhaps we should pole these schools and see how they are so successful. I would have to say that Armstrong is probably one of the better shaped schools in the Central Mountain District. I say this not only because it's age, but also due to the fact that the school has been locked into an ARC system for the last 5 years where as other schools have not. This means that we were not as fortunate as some the other schools that were not locked into an ARC process that have enjoyed the many extensive renovations done to them recently. It could be seen as unfair advantage over the schools where capital funding is being withheld pending the outcome of the ARC, kind of like comparing apples to oranges. This means that funds requested by Armstrong for much needed maintenance has been denied for the last 5 years. That being said that without all the work being done on Armstrong it still is in amazing shape as compared to other schools showing me that it has a good foundation, a solid footing for any needed and necessary renovations and updates if the school is to remain open. Let's face it any school can be retrofitted and renovated, just look at the money the board wants to put into Sherwood Secondary School. We have the necessary public infrastructure to support the number of students, the school is centrally located near many major bus routes making it easily accessible and the building is already equipped to handle the projected school population. There is plenty of room for the extra vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Many obstacles with regards to the present student population have already occurred to Armstrong, the early demise of our sage program, (affected student numbers), the autism program again affected the numbers, so there is no denying that there isn't politics at play in this scenario. Even before the ARC was started Armstrong was already being compromised. The value of the school to this community as well as others goes without saying, the school is irreplaceable. But rather than attack other communities with negative propaganda, I would much rather focus my attention on what is best for the children of all our communities. It is with this in mind that I feel, along with an entire community, including some people in other communities such as Eastmount and Queensdale, that Armstrong is the clear and logical choice to remain open. While other communities plant shrubs,(hopefully money trees), I would like to focus my attention on what is the most appropriate action for the students of our community now and in the future. I will state again that I will not apologize if Armstrong meets all the criteria necessary.

Sharon Nixon

Parent

Concerned and active community member

Taxpayer

NOVEMBER 5th, 2013

Petition

I am presenting this petition on behalf of the 2084 concerned community members. We are concerned with the potential closure of Armstrong Elementary School. All names have been cross referenced to the best of our abilities. You will note that our community here at Armstrong extends far beyond the boards recommended boundaries as we have an immigrant community that also enjoys the use of our community and its' facilities. This makes them a part of the Armstrong community, and you will find many addresses that are outside the boundaries. We have noted them and tried to keep them separate. This is our community speaking up and out about the possible closure of Armstrong School. Through this we are expressing our sense of a strong community and great pride in our school.

Presented By:

Sharon Nixon



MP Chris Charlton
905-574-3331
Lillian Orban, Ward 7 Trustee
905.573.9181
Tim Simmons, Chair of the Board
905.308.6832



Help Save Queensdale School

helpsavequeensdale@gmail.com



MP Chris Charlton
chris.charlton.cl@parl.gc.ca
Lillian Orban, Ward 7 Trustee
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Tim Simmons, Chair of the Board
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Received

Nov 5th, 2013

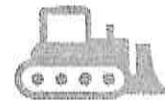
★ Save ★

QUEENSDALE

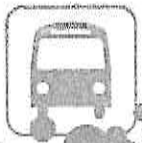
Public School

A SCHOOL THAT HAS RECEIVED OVER

\$3 million in repairs
over the last **seven years**



IS GOING TO BE
DESTROYED
NEXT YEAR



WHERE CHILDREN WILL
BE SENT BY BUS
(OR BE DRIVEN
BY PARENTS)

MORE CARS...
MORE POLLUTION



TO PUT STUDENTS
INTO AN OLDER,
OVER-CROWDED
PUBLIC SCHOOL



October was Walk to School Month

whereas at Queensdale,
every day is walk to school
day - theres no need to
cross busy, unsafe streets

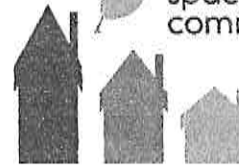


BUT

IT'S NOT JUST KIDS WHO LOSE

Lack of proximity +
to schools

Loss of green
space in the
community =



... **YOUR**
property values
will **PLUMMET!**



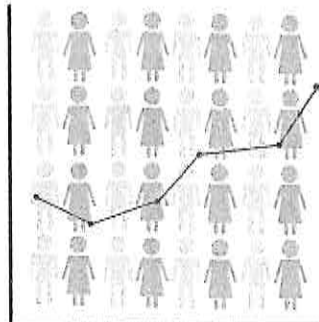
AND YET,
smaller schools
mean **better** education



THE REVIEW PROCESS
IS DONE USING FLAWED DATA,
AND THERE IS NO WAY
TO APPEAL A DECISION

SO WHO REALLY BENEFITS?

The Drummond Report estimates that enrollment
decline will end in 2014, and begin to increase
around 2015. ¹Chapter 6 - "The Current Challenge"
<http://www.cpco.on.ca/ResourceLibrary/Drummond/Chapter6.pdf>



Will we be ready
for the **FUTURE,**
or are we planning
only for **TODAY?**

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

GET INVOLVED
SPEAK OUT
SAVE QUEENSDALE

