

To: The Members of the Central Mountain Accommodation Review Committee

Re: Criteria for Evaluating Options

I attended last week's working group meeting and would like to thank Jamie for his extra work in creating a summary of the various options as they map to criteria you have been using for the process.

I reviewed the chart and noticed a few items that I would like to bring to your attention.

1. On the first page the standard applied for "capacity" is over 80%. For some of the new options, the chart indicates that multiple schools are not at capacity when in fact nearly all are over 80% in 2022.

Also, while Board Staff have indicated enrolment of 90-110% is the ideal, there are notable inconsistencies in the enrolment projection data, there are indications in correspondence from Tim Simmons to the Ministry of Education that prior JK projections were underestimated (see attached letter) and projections are less and less likely to be accurate as the time increases, I propose that room should be left for underestimation errors in the current projections.

I have also attached a graph from the Ministry of Transportation showing the number of 0-14 year olds is projected to increase over the next 10 years, as well as the projections for increases in population growth due to births.

It is also worth noting that the staff options for other ARCs have been closer to an 85% enrolment goal.

2. Quality Teaching and Learning Environments are not addressed – recall, they were technically quantified in the school ratings provided in your initial ARC binders. I would like to request that the school ratings be evaluated based on current evidence for the schools to establish that they are accurate, and that any deficiencies be addressed in the ARC recommendations.
3. Some of the criteria (JK-8 and school size) are not mentioned in the terms of reference for the ARC. While they are in other board documents, I would like to request that the ARC focus on the specific terms of reference before you, instead of focusing on guiding principles that are changed annually.
4. Using a grading scheme for the options is an excellent idea and as a group you could create one to help you make your final decision. I request that you add the criteria you established as important to our communities when considering your final decision.

Thank you for your continued commitment to making an impartial and evidence-based decision that takes steps to position the Central Hamilton Mountain for success now and in the future.

Thank-you for your consideration of this submission.

Dawn Danko, M(Ed.), B.Sc., MRT(T)

(attachment)

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May 24, 2013

Mr. Tim Simmons
 Chair of the Board
 Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
 Suite 600 – 100 King Street West
 Hamilton ON L8P 1A2

Dear Mr. Simmons,

Thank you for your letter outlining your board's concerns regarding the local implementation of the full-day kindergarten program.

Our government believes that full-day kindergarten for four- and five-year-olds is one of the most important investments we can make. It is about setting our kids on the road to success and building a stronger knowledge-based economy in Ontario. Giving our four- and five-year-olds an earlier start on their learning will improve their reading, writing and math skills, provide a smoother transition to Grade 1, and help increase their success in school and beyond.

Recognizing the importance of prudent fiscal management while implementing full-day kindergarten, the government planned for the program to be implemented over a five-year period, with clear objectives around student enrolment targets tied to budget realities.

From the outset, the Ministry of Education recognized that local school boards were in the best position to determine which schools would be implementing full-day kindergarten for each year, taking into account student population trends, demographics and community needs in meeting the board's enrolment target.

For the 2012-13 school year, which is the third year of implementation for full-day kindergarten in the province, the Ministry of Education provided the Hamilton-Wentworth DSB with a cumulative enrolment target of 3016 students, representing 49 percent of your board's population of four- and five-year-olds. The Hamilton-Wentworth DSB submitted a plan outlining the schools that would be implementing the program for the 2012-13 school year with an estimated cumulative projected enrolment of 2859, or 95 percent of your board's target.

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To recognize that student enrolments at some schools may trend differently from year to year, the Ministry of Education has a process by which school boards may apply for approval to advance or defer implementation of full-day kindergarten at identified schools in order to better align projected and actual enrolment with each year's cumulative student targets. Through this process, school boards can request changes which would mitigate the impact of unanticipated enrolment changes from the time when the initial enrolment projections were made.

I understand that your school board has taken steps to better understand why individual school enrolment projections varied so greatly from the original estimates and, through efforts such as those you describe in your letter, the board is taking actions to reduce this impact for the coming school year.

As always, ministry staff in the Early Learning Division are available to work with your school board administrative team to examine ways to manage the further implementation of the full-day kindergarten program within the existing budgets, and through the use of processes and opportunities available through the regulations.

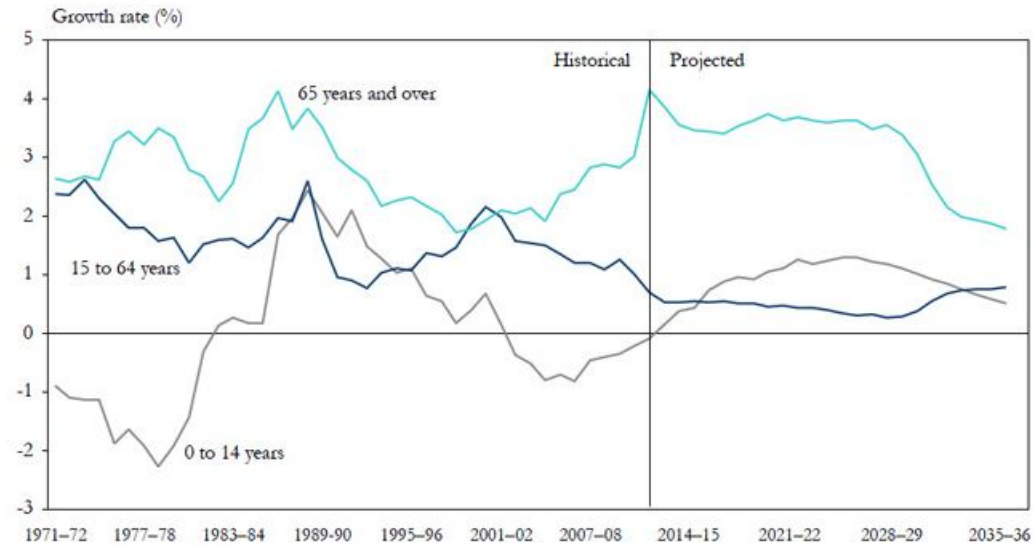
Thank you for sharing the concerns of the Hamilton-Wentworth DSB around the implementation of this important initiative.

Sincerely,



Liz Sandals
Minister

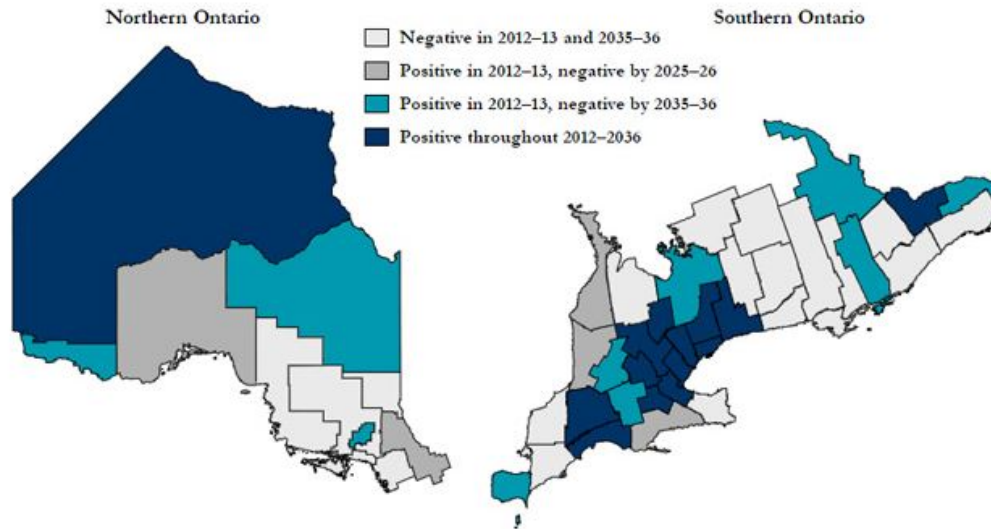
Chart 6
 Pace of growth of population age groups 0–14, 15–64 and 65+ in Ontario, 1971 to 2036



Sources: Statistics Canada, 1971–2012, and Ontario Ministry of Finance projections.

Note: increase in 0-14 year olds until at least 2026

Chart 7
 Evolution of natural increase by census division, 2012 to 2036



Source: Ontario Ministry of Finance projections.

Note: Natural increase (due to births, not immigration) projected to increase for the Hamilton area through 2036.

January 22, 2014

To the ARC committee: I would appreciate it if this correspondence was read aloud to the committee as has been past practice in the last working meetings. Thank you.

As an observer of last night's meeting I cannot help but wonder if I am the only one that feels that the voting method employed was very confusing and was extremely out of the previous context that the other votes were taken. In the past you had voted on the top three choices, now the voting is very convoluted and subject to no type of previous methods that were employed for voting. To make the voting procedure so arbitrary on such a serious subject seems to trivialize the issues at hand. There should be a set precedent for the voting criteria and it is one that should be adhered to consistently. I heard various comments from individual ARC members that the voting was extremely unorthodox, confusing and unfair. I would like to see that question put to the ARC committee at the next meeting to see if they echo similar sentiments and feel that another vote should be taken. There were also a numerous number of other options that were deemed to be similar as pointed out by two of your ARC members and those were options 22 and 32, yet these were not combined as the others were. Why is that? And do the members feel as though they should not be combined as one as some others were? Did they also feel that 10 minutes was an adequate amount of time to constructively work on and complete the task on hand of trying to combine Options 6-11, and 7-23 ? Do you at the board work within these types of conditions? Trying to make a decision in ten minutes when in fact it should have been deferred to the next meeting. Perhaps this also should be addressed to the ARC committee at the next meeting. Do they feel that 10 minutes was enough time to dedicate to such a serious task? Or should more time be allotted?

A number of these options present some very fundamental and problematic issues:

Option 22, which is very similar to option 32

The board has stated on numerous occasions that Hill Park is not deemed suitable for "right sizing" for any elementary scenario. Even if the scenario were to say let's "right size" Linden Park to suite where would the children attend school during the so called "right sizing of this school? There are some are pretty costly expenditures involved with this case. Boilers and heating systems are not just off the shelf products waiting to be purchased. Fabrication takes time and I see no contingency plan for this type of renovation, nor do I see any timelines involved in any of this proposal. Right sizing any building can be extremely costly. Without the proper channels of consultants, the projection of time and money would be purely speculation and guess work. Something that contractors rarely place bids on. These costs and unknowns wouldn't just affect the community of Linden Park but also that of Queensdale, Armstrong, Eastmount, and Cardinal Heights. Where is the backup plan in case this doesn't attain funding? There are a lot of unknowns in this scenario that affect a large scope of communities. This proposal divides up one of the largest student body's in one community and put them in 3 separate locations, some go to Linden Park, some to Queensdale and some to Eastmount. Wait it doesn't end at this point, the students from Armstrong that are sent to Queendale and Eastmount then after grade 6 get to make

another transition to yet another school, that being Linden Park. I believe that the goal of the Arc committee is to minimize the impact on a community not maximize it. These kinds of transitions are not conducive to any type of pupil stability and/or positive learning environment. The sentiments at a previous meeting found it unacceptable to disrupt 150 students in one community. What then is the rationale behind the ARC accepting that it is fine to disrupt over 300 students? This is a question I would like addressed by the ARC committee before these proposals that suggest this move forward. The student numbers at Franklin road are below capacity. You're suggesting closing Armstrong, a school that already accepts students from both Eastmount and Queensdale and already supports a FDK-8 format. It is an existing structure that is already prepared to do the job and you want to get rid of it. Queensdale doesn't meet the board criteria of JK-8, nor does Eastmount. The student would have to attend yet another school for 7-8. Eastmount doesn't even the required 5 acres the board is seeking. If it had to add a parking space it wouldn't be able to accommodate this. There is no mention of the transportation that will be required to get the students from Queensdale, Armstrong, Eastmount and Ridgemount to get to the Linden Park site. There is also no mention of the traffic precautions necessary for those that may walk. Fennell itself in the past has had two incidents involving students from Hill Park crossing the road. There are too many transitions, lack of time lines, and too much of maintenance of schools that do not meet the criteria. Option 22 comes in as one of the higher cost programs to initiate.

Option 32 is very similar to option 22, (they should have been combined)

A lot of the concerns will mirror those of Option 22

- Once again dividing up the largest body of students at GLA and having these students attend schools that don't meet the criteria JK-8, site size too small etc.
- Once again taking away a school that already meets the criteria of the board, Armstrong, to send them to and maintain two separate buildings as opposed to one, in schools that are not even centrally located. The children from Eastmount and Queensdale already attend Armstrong
- This is just a change in geography but with negative implications, these students will once again be moved twice during their elementary careers, again not very conducive to a positive learning environment
- Busing involved for Queensdale, Armstrong and Eastmount when it comes time to attend 7-8 grades. I guess it might be good practice for their next journey to High School
- Busing is also involved for Ridgemount
- Consideration for the major streets to be crossed at Mohawk and Fennell have been neglected
- This project comes in also as one of the higher cost scenarios
- Way too many transitions for students when existing structures already exist and are being utilized for these purposes and meet the public's needs as well as the communities and more importantly the students' needs

Being disabled and do not drive I am dependent on the public transit system to get from one location to another. Both Queensdale and Eastmount only offer one bus sporadically that pass by their locations. I would have to take two buses to get to Queensdale, which consumes much time. These two schools are very difficult to access unlike Armstrong and the selection of buses that run past it. What about

important walk to amenities neither Queensdale nor Eastmount can offer these as Armstrong can. Armstrong supports a large local economy whereas the others support none. What about the after school programs that Armstrong supports such as Basketball, and indoor Hockey. Could they support the weekend programs offered at Armstrong? The other two schools neighbourhoods and gymnasium's couldn't support any of the above stated. There are more than just numbers to consider. You are suggesting to close Armstrong without examining the true impact to the community and students. The school already serves the immediate community and those that are adjacent to it. It defies logic to disrupt the largest community of students in a pre-existing structure that meets and exceeds the board's criteria only to send them to schools that do not meet the criteria and stand to lose much more than they can gain from these facilities.

The fact remains that I endorse common sense and right now the only two options available for this are 6-11 and 7-23.

The members of the ARC must walk a fine line trying to lookout for the student's best interests and that of the community. But somehow with these two options of 22 and 32 you have strayed from the path. You have a responsibility towards the students and your communities of course; however it does come with a certain set of parameters as mandated by the board. For example a JK-8 format, 500 students, min. 5 acres of land etc. Do I agree with them all, of course not? Do I believe we can satisfy all the criteria? Most certainly I do not. Can you come close to meeting it? Yes. However it is not with options like 22 and 32. Have any of any of the ARC members even considered the notion that the board has already committed Hill Park as part of the proposal for ministry funding for the new south high school, (which isn't even a secured deal to date), that is why the date for closure was moved up to 2014. Do you not think that Linden Park property has not also been discussed along with Hill Park, after all they are adjacent to one another, like one parcel of land. At least that's the way developers look at. Do you think the board would admit it even if it were true? Developers and sellers like to bundle properties.

At any rate the further that the committee steers their decisions away from the given criteria the more likely it will become for someone else make the decision for us all. Meaning the Board and the Trustees will make the decision for you. And we've all seen the types of decisions that they have made in the past. The further you fall from the criteria the easier you will make their jobs.

Thank you for entertaining my thoughts and opinion's

Brad Forbes

Concerned, (as the rest of us), community resident

January 22, 2014

ARC members, the Board and the Trustees:

I would appreciate it if this letter was read aloud to the ARC committee and that my concerns and questions be seriously considered and addressed.

I have been an outside observer at the last few meeting and I must say that I am expressing some genuine concern for the way that options have been qualified and dismissed this time around. In the past break away groups have been formed and the options thoroughly discussed. They had been discussed first in the breakaway groups and then as a group as a whole. At which time the voting was conducted. There were no options to blend certain options together if they were remotely similar, in fact when it was mentioned to the board staff and the committee as a whole not one person from the board said to the group that you may blend those options that you feel are similar and then we may vote on those as well. It wasn't until the meeting on the 14th of January until us as an audience or the ARC committee had heard that this was a feasible thing to do with such options. A lot of options were dismissed in the past because they were similar to others we have seen despite the fact they did have differences. (1) All of a sudden blending these options is fine? (2) Why is it then when the ARC committee member from Armstrong who was supported by a member from Franklin Road, pointed out that both options 22 and 32 are almost identical that these two options were not merged in fact they were left as two separate entities? Merging may have left room for yet another option that may not be so similar to reach the table. Now that option is gone. (3) Is this happening to help expedite the compressed time allowed for such serious decisions that impact all our communities? (to speed up the process).(4) I would like the Board to ask the ARC committee members how they feel about the voting process that took place on January 14th, the open forum debate and voting process. This is where if one person said yes to an option it moved forward. This type of voting broke all protocol that we have seen in the past. The meeting last night changed the rules of voting even further. The vote was extremely confusing, followed no past precedents and in fact had some members abstaining from voting at all. (5) I would like the question(s) addressed to the committee as to whether or not they found the voting confusing, proper or fair. (6) Do they feel that these last votes should be re-examined and possibly revisited? (6) As for the options 22 and 32 I would like to hear one or all of the ARC committee justify with some degree of rationale or logic how at the last meeting displacing approx. 150 students from Linden Park was an undesirable concept, (as we all feel about any of our communities), but suddenly dividing up one single community of over 300 students became acceptable? Where is the rational and logic behind that? It absolutely defies any unless of course I am missing key elements somewhere if so please explain it to me. You divide this community up into two. The largest student body and somehow this is acceptable. Armstrong if you look at the map is the only school provided in the North location that actually provides a FDK-8 system, (a system that fits the boards' criteria), it already accepts the students from Eastmount and Queendale. There is no other school around Armstrong that can provide this service to all three of these North communities. If you look at your proposals 22 and 32 you will find that it eliminates Armstrong in order to send the students to two separate schools for grades JK-6 that are not easily accessible for students or parents alike by public transit. This is a role reversal of situations. Both Queensdale and Eastmount do not meet the criteria of the JK-6, or the 500 student

parameters. Eastmount does not even have the required lot size sitting at a mere 1.7 acres. Look at the proximity of the proposed new Linden Park JK-8 system to the adjacent Franklin Road School, which is also a grade JK-8 system, it is less than a km away. The same could be said if we looked south to Cardinal Heights another system that goes to grade 8. These scenarios create a cluster of these schools in a concentrated area all at the expense of sacrificing Armstrong, the only school north of this cluster to already provide the JK-8 system that extends into the communities of both Eastmount and Queensdale. Looking at the Map it would make more sense to close down Franklin Road and have all the students then attend the newly transformed Linden Park so that all the facilities there may still be enjoyed. These two schools are almost side by side. Further to this it would make more sense to utilize the existing structure of Armstrong as it is utilized now, JK-8 that accepts the students from both Eastmount and Queensdale. These students already attend this school so I believe the transition may be a little easier for the student body. With these proposals of 22 and 32 you are robbing the community in the north of the only school that presently is utilized and meets the board's criteria. It also serves 3 schools and community's needs. To add to this you're suggesting that moving children not once but two times during the course of their stay at the elementary schools. Yet somehow this disruption is supposed to have a positive impact on the students. This type of thing is not conducive to a positive learning environment at all. The students will suffer as a result.

Options 22 and 32 are almost exactly the same.

These two options are merely a shell game taking the largest student body at Armstrong of over 300 students and dispensing them with little or no regard for their educational wellbeing. This divides the student body to two schools that do not even meet the criteria of the board. To two schools, Eastmount and Queensdale that already attend Armstrong. All this does is play a numbers game with little or no regard for the affected students. It is trying to maintain two facilities that do not meet the criteria of the board and are under capacity. Dividing the largest number of students and delegating them to these two schools only serves the purpose of filling seats it does not address the needs of the students, or the criteria set out by the board and the public. The reason to maintain them as grades 6-8 is so that these schools may feed into Linden Park to justify and maintain its numbers. Option 32 suggests that the grade 7-8 from Eastmount attend Franklin Road. These two options have not addressed properly the number of transitions students must make, the transportation of the students nor the wellbeing of the students. Closing one school to bolster the capacity of two other schools that do not meet the expected criteria is most certainly not making the best use of the existing facilities or looking after the best interest of a community(s) or the students that reside within them.

(7) One final question of concern that I would like you to address the committee about. This deals with the rushed 10 minutes that the committee had to blend options 6-11 and 7-23 together at the end of the last meeting. Does the committee feel that this was an adequate amount of time to deal with such a subject or do they feel that it should be allotted more time at the meeting?

I realize that my letter may seem a bit harsh and probably repetitive, and I do appreciate the work being done by the ARC committee especially since you are all volunteers. However this letter does raise some valid concerns.

Thank You

Christina Renard