

Correspondence #1

Dear Committee Members

I would hate to see the Millgrove Public School closed. Yes Millgrove is a small community, but a very desirable area to live. Not all want to live in an urban environment, and Millgrove offers rural living within minutes of Watertown, Burlington, greater Hamilton, and the newer developing commercial area at Highways 5 & 6. No there has not been much development in the Millgrove area in the last few years, but that can be directly related to the Green Belt zoning and limitation of severances. Development and new housing has been limited to existing lots, or older homes that have been renovated and upgraded. The current growth of Waterdown, and the need to expand the Waterdown High School, supports that this is a desirable area. With that demand, comes the need for supporting facilities: schools and libraries. Accessible schools, where children of all ages are not subject to extended bus rides. Schools that can accommodate fluctuating populations, and not be subjected to over populated class rooms. Schools that have a site large enough for building expansion if required. I think Millgrove Public School has a prime location, a nice large site, and supporting after school day care beside and across the road from the school, which is so important to working families. Yes the school is an older one, but the cost of renovation and upgrading would probably be less costly, than bussing over a number of years.

I hope the committee members will see the benefits of the Millgrove Public School and support the local community, and vote to keep the school open.

I have lived in the Millgrove area for over 30 years, and have had a child attend the local schools in past years.

Sincerely;

Linda Sway

Correspondence #2

Good afternoon,

We are Greenville residents and parents of two children going to Greenville school. We would like to voice our opinion on the school closures and we're hoping this is the right avenue to take.

We are supporting the vote that recommends closing Spencer Valley and building a new school on the current Greenville site, and then have Millgrove students feeding into Greenville for grades 6-8.

This is such a great area, and with the new planned arboretum behind the school, we think it would be in the students best interest to have this site for the new school.

Thank you for your time,

Keri & Dan Kreuger

Correspondence #3

Rosalyn & Robert Vanderboom

933 Brock Rd, RR#4

Dundas, ON

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December 10/13

To the Working committee of the ARC

Regarding Proposed Solutions for the West Flamborough ARC review

Re: Specific proposed one site solution for Greensville (GV), Spencer Valley (SVS) & Millgrove (MPS) only & closure of MPS.

Having attended the public meeting, we must respond to the information discussed on Dec. 4/13, as it concerns us greatly.

The purpose of the ARC review is to twofold: to decide on the best education solution for children and their community, AND make recommendations for the long term accommodation plan to achieve 90-100% accommodation status. Hence, whatever solution proposed must meet both objectives.

Discussions to close Millgrove school, and consolidate it with a Greensville located K-8 school may achieve 90-100% accommodation; however, it negates key guiding principles and does not achieve all required criteria.

It cannot be said that it is in the best interest of Millgrove's students to attend a K-8 school, for up to 10 years, establishing key childhood friendships with Greensville & Millgrove students, only to be separated from their lifelong Greensville peers to attend Waterdown High school (WDHS). Deciding to consolidate to one school only would necessitate a further costly repeated high school boundary review, to determine if parents would then want their children to attend Dundas High school with all their peers. Speaking as a member of the boundary review committee of 2012-2013, three surveys completed (2 at cost to the board) resulted in consistent data that indicated 67% of parents wished their children to attend WDHS. Why create a more detrimental, divisive school pathway that will not meet the quantified wishes of Millgrove families? Data indicated that parents wanted to minimize the amount of separation from their K-5 peers (they wanted to keep this age peer group together for middle school), attend a rural school, and 67% consistently selected WDHS as the high school of choice. Attendance at Spencer was the unique HWDSB board solution for middle school, to minimize peer disruption, allow attendance at a rural school and attendance at WDHS. A decision which results in Millgrove students being separated from their K-8 peer group (10 year friendships) is NOT in the best interest of these students learning and overall development. If the one site solution is proposed, the only workable solution then becomes sending all students to the same Dundas high school, negating the stated wishes of parents, and forcing a new high school boundary review (if Dundas High school is able to accommodate students from MPS not currently in their projections). Does the working group truly believe that this is an acceptable, healthy school pathway? By moving to one site only for GV, SVS, & MPS, there is a huge impact on the school experience of MPS students, as currently proposed. While it is not in the mandate of the ARC to make high school decisions, how can you support

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creating this costly & deleterious outcome? Would this be an acceptable school path and solution for all elementary students in this ARC? The answer is clear...

Well, it actually was proposed for a portion of Greensville students (approximately 30) to move to MPS for K-5, to join Greensville peers at Gr. 6 at SVS, to later attend Dundas High school. We understand that this is no longer a proposed solution, as the community did not support it, and their voice has been heard, (despite the fact that removing these students did not meet the accommodation projection needs of MPS as recommended by staff, as this was secondary to the community voice). We can only hope that the voices representing the best interests of MPS students will be heard equally, as the consolidation to one site does not meet the best educational interests of our community, nor represent our wishes. To achieve the required accommodation projections, there are many solutions that may be entertained, while keeping the MPS site open and a site in Greensville open.

1. Correct sizing a Greensville site. Greensville currently requires a school of approximately 375 maximum (Current Greensville 200 students, SVS 175 students).
2. Reviewing the internal catchment boundaries for Millgrove public school to enhance its ability to meet accommodation targets.
3. Reviewing the unique location and role of Millgrove, with respect to Waterdown growth, as an elementary school that meets the needs of both wards 14 & 15. Millgrove crosses both the rural and urban boundary, in its proximity to Waterdown, and the future anticipated growth surrounding the Waterdown bypass.

We urge you to review and weight all criteria equally.

While attractive to close MPS and utilize the funds to build a new, 550 capacity school in Greensville, this does not represent the most requested solution for Millgrove students, and does not treat all students equally within the ARC. 21st century buildings are just one criterion in this decision. Also, let's not confuse concepts - a 21st century building does not equate it to 21st century learning – it is not the same!

While suggesting that transportation time is modifiable, and recommendations can be made, we suggest that once completed, the working group committee will not be able to affect the decisions made by the independent combined transportation board (HWSTS), to impact the transportation decisions that govern students' daily lives. There is no mechanism in place to enforce, in practicality, the working committee's length of bus ride recommendation. Bus planning is determined by HWSTS alone, and ride times evaluated only for new students, based on "normal conditions" (see ride time policy on HWSTS website). Hence, reduction in bus ride times appears to me, a mere platitude, and not a reality, negating the educational needs of bused students from the northern aspect of the MPS catchment area.

Millgrove school has fostered 21st learning, despite its 100 year old building, as demonstrated by the quantifiable EQAO success rate. Why would the board want to remove a successful, highly functioning school body? Why undo a "thriving entity"? Why does everyone believe that 21st learning only occurs in a new building? How ludicrous to believe that 21st learning does not occur in well respected, historic universities & buildings like Queen's, Oxford & Cambridge, and that new buildings are required to achieve 21st century learning. Looking at the university level, sites with effective learning add to their historic footprint, rather than remove the old buildings! Why is the board considering pulling down a 100 year old building, with only \$1.3 million in FCI, when all younger buildings have greater capital costs? Why create a new school entity with unproven success? The age of the building and the size of the student body do not ensure success!

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If the Greenville community decides that building on the GV school site is preferable build location, a historic building could be maintained on site (separate from a new, right sized combined GV & SVS school), and they could retain the benefits of a walkable location. Alternatively, if the SVS was selected, the septic bed would meet the needs of the “right sized school”. Having had a child succeed at SVS, adding K-8 only builds on SVS known record for success.

Millgrove has a unique, daycare solution, that meets the needs of all children in a family, whether infant or school age, for the whole calendar year. This model is the most effective for parents, and was aspired to but not attained by the Ministry of Education when implementing full day learning. Why suggest regressing in our model of daycare? Why not aspire to a better model that truly meets the needs of working parents.

We understood the mandate of the ARC working committee was to work collaboratively, to attain the best educational strategy for all students within the ARC. We do not believe that one site (for all students from GV, SVS, and MPS) and closing MPS is in the best educational interest of students from MPS. Please collaborate and review if the accommodation objectives can be achieved, without compromising the best stated solution for each community. Millgrove parents were unanimous at the public meeting, indicating there is no support for the closure of MPS.

Please hear our voice, as we ask for MPS to remain open for K-5, followed by a Greenville located middle school, and WDHS for high school, as those akin to our children’s best learning needs,

Sincerely,

Rosalyn & Robert Vanderboom

Correspondence #4

Dear ARC Working Groups,

I contact you as a parent of two children - one at 4 months, and the other at 3 years of age - living equal walking distances (<1km) to either Spencer Valley or Greenville schools. Closing one school versus the other will not affect the distance that our children will walk. Further, I do not expect that one versus the other would make a substantial difference to our property value or convenience-of-location within the community. Thus, I am perfectly neutral in those regards. However, the Spencer Valley location will present a safety concern for our children, due to lack of sidewalks.

This concern stems from my experiences while driving past the two schools. Due to the location of our home, I've travelled both routes frequently in the past. I've learned to avoid Old Brock Rd. immediately before and after school hours, since I sometimes encounter kids walking, literally, down the middle of the road. In contrast, the route past Greenville School often includes convoys of parents and strollers but I observe no issue because there is a sidewalk. Now, if you make Spencer Valley a K-8 school and put those parents and strollers on the road (e.g., my wife and our children), then I foresee a significant safety issue.

I'd prefer the Spencer Valley site if it had sidewalks. The reason: I presume that construction of a new school on the Greenville site would either (a) limit outdoor activities during construction or (b) necessitate transfer of all students to Spencer Valley during construction. Either way, at least one of our children would experience significant interruption. However, that interruption would seem preferable to convoys of children, parents and strollers (e.g., my wife and our children) walking

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to Spencer Valley without sidewalks. This will occur; it does with the current middle-school kids, and will become convoys of K-8 children, parents and strollers.

My suggestion: The requirement for additional sidewalks should be considered a "given" whenever considering the Spencer Valley location. If you can do that, the board can do that, council can do that, the ministry can do that... then I'm all for the Spencer Valley location.

With regards to renovation versus a new school, I would prefer renovation, with a presumption that it would be less disruptive to students, and more cost-effective.

Continuation of an after-school program, such as Umbrella, is also desirable.

The sidewalk issue remains the "elephant in the room" though.

Regards,
Alex Martin