

Correspondence #1

Good morning,

I am a parent of Greenville School and attended the public meeting on Wed. Nov. 6. I will not be able to make the next public meeting on Wed. Nov 13, and as such would like to propose some ideas to the ARC working group.

1. I propose the closure of 4 of the 5 schools including; Beverly Central, Greenville, John Seaton, and Millgrove.
2. I propose that a new K-8 school be constructed to accommodate the students of Beverly Central and John Seaton. There could be a few options for the site of this school including the existing Seaton site as well as the Beverly Community Centre, pending Greenbelt approval.
3. I propose that Spencer Valley be significantly renovated to a K-8 school to accommodate the students of Greenville and Millgrove. This would also include adding on a community centre/recreation facility and increasing the size of the parking lot of Spencer Valley.
4. At both of these proposed school sites, consideration for community partnerships could be considered, such as;
 - Partnership with daycare centre for before and after care and full day care for infant/preschool kids.
 - Relocate Greenville Pubic library and add on as part of renovation at Spencer
 - Approach City of Hamilton to determine if willing to co-fund community centre at Spencer Valley with pool, and jointly used recreation/gym facilities. After school hour recreation programming could occur here.
 - Approach City of Hamilton to determine co-funding to renovate Beverly community centre if necessary, or to co-fund rec/gym facilities at the Seaton site.
 - Approach other community organizations such as YMC to see if satellite location is feasible with jointly used rec/gym facilities at Spencer Valley
 - Approach private organizations/businesses to determine interest in renting out facilities for after school hours.

We could make Spencer Valley the hub of the Greenville community by looking at other options for school/land use to open up for use by the community for after-school hours. The same thoughts could be applied to the Seaton/Beverly school.

Nicole Pontefract, B.Sc., KIN, R.KIN

Registered Kinesiologist

Correspondence #2

Good afternoon,

I am writing with respect to the West ARC Elementary School review. I would like to request that additional information pertaining to the FCI (Facilities Condition Index) be disclosed by the HWDSB. I would like to know the specific details with respect to the FCI analysis and how the FCI number was achieved for each school under review. This information should be made public so that suitable options can be presented to the ARC committee.

I appreciate your attention to this matter.

Kind regards,
Nicole

Nicole Pontefract, B.Sc., KIN, R.KIN

Correspondence #3

October 31, 2013

Dear Ms. Turkstra,

We moved to Greensville in the Tews Lane / Medwin area 3 years ago, and one of our main motivating factors was because of the excellent reputation of Greensville Public School. We have two young daughters, our oldest of who is now in Grade 1. Our experience with the school since starting JK has been nothing but extremely positive and the school has providing an excellent start to our daughter's educational experience. This is in terms of the excellent quality teaching, the supportive group of students across all grades, and the participation and involvement of the school from the local community members. Greensville School is an educational model that should be celebrated and expanded, not shuttered and closed.

We are extremely concerned about the recent proposal to close Greensville and potentially merge the school with Spencer Valley for a number of reasons.

First, the proposal to close Greensville appears to have been generated with very little to no input from the affected community and parents. My understanding after discussing with some of the current ARC members is the current proposal to merge Greensville with Spencer Valley has been presented to the ARC without any direct input until recently. In addition, the proposed timeline to close Greensville – if this does occur- by June 2014 is utterly irresponsible and unfathomable how this could even occur with any real renovations to Spencer Valley by September 2014, other than possibly some portables. This surely cannot be considered in the best interest of the students to rush such a dramatic move that may have significant negative repercussions on both the community and the students.

Secondly, at the recent meeting October 2 was the first public meeting to discuss this proposal, many questions regarding this proposal were either not answered or deferred for later discussion. There are many unanswered questions and information that is not being provided that we as the taxpayers and members of the community are entitled to be made aware of before a decision affecting all of West Flamborough is implemented. In addition and even more concerning, after speaking with some ARC members and reviewing what information is

actually being provided to the ARC to make this decision, there seems to some very important information that could dramatically affect any recommendation that is not being provided. To many of us with students attending Greenville we are extremely concerned about this decision – which seems to already have been made, rather than presented for feedback or any meaningful discussion.

The ARC Terms of Reference on the Board website lists the following as being considered during the review of each school:

“School Information Profiles (SIP) are designed to help the ARC and the community to understand how well schools meet the objectives and the criteria outlined in the ARC terms of reference. The SIP includes data for each of the following four considerations about the schools: Value to the student

Value to the school board

Value to the community

Value to the local economy

We recognize that the school’s value to the student takes priority over other considerations about the school. A SIP will be completed by Board administration for each of the schools under review. The same profile is used for all schools under review within a planning area - See more at: <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementaryarc/west-flamborough/school-profiles/>

I would like to highlight several points that should be strongly considered in the decision whether to close a School with such an excellent and storied history:

- Greenville Public School has been in existence since 1818 and has been a cornerstone of quality elementary school education for West Flamborough for many years. In fact, its history has been nothing less than outstanding throughout this period.
- Standardized Testing Scores for Grade 3 students have been in the top percentiles for both Math and Reading and higher than both the board averages and the provincial averages every years since Standardized testing began. This is testament to the quality of education and commitment of the teachers, students and parents of Greenville School. This also highly is supportive of the value to the student, the board and the community of this school.
- The ARC committee presented a series of projections for each school being reviewed. I would like to point out that when questioned on where this data was derived, we the parents were not provided with an answer. In addition, the board web site data states 3 different enrollment projections for Greenville. As you are well aware, West Flamborough is the fastest growing segment of Hamilton. However, despite that and using the projected enrollment numbers provided, it appears the board is expecting a reduction in enrollment in Grade 1-5 for the years 2017 through 2022. It is worth highlighting that using the Boards projected numbers, years 2017 -2022 actually see an expected higher number of enrollment in grades JK and SK than are current levels. As students are expected to continue on to Grades 1-5 this indicates that enrollment after 2022 will be expected to continue to high and utilization of the school functioning at or near 90 percent. At a minimum, the data presented by the Board needs to be more transparent as to it’s source, and consideration beyond a few years taken in to account.

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- Walking distance and transportation to school. As a Sport and Exercise Medicine Physician, it is extremely important to me that schools provide as many opportunities for students to be physically active throughout the day in various forms. It is also a priority of the Canadian Pediatric Society, World Health Organization, and Ministry of Education of Ontario. On reviewing the current “Walking Distance” maps for both Spencer Valley and Greensville, currently the geographic distribution of students attending Greensville , approximately 80% of the students are within the “walking distance” to the school. This is an extremely valuable asset for students as it provides them the opportunity to walk or bike safely to school, increase their daily physical activity and encourage a healthy lifestyle. On a personal note, walking or biking to school has been one of my daughter’s favorite part of going to school since she was in JK. In contrast, if the students of Greensville are moved to Spencer Valley, it will mean that only 5-10 percent of the current students in JK-Grade 5 will be within walking distance. Aside from the added cost of bussing students, and the length students will spend sitting on busses rather than being active, this is a very concerning fact. Even if some students wanted to still bike or walk to school, for most current students would have to cross a busy intersection at Brock Road, and there is no sidewalks to get to Spencer Valley. It is worth pointing out that Canada has one of the highest rates of childhood obesity, and inactivity is a large part of this unfortunate statistic. As a Sport and Exercise Medicine physician, it is embarrassing that a board would not make access to school within walking distance a priority or look at alternate options that would still allow many students the option to walk to school.
- The other significant concern from the October 2, 2013 meeting is the timeline presented for this “preliminary option” to close Greensville School and merge with Spencer Valley. The timelines suggests closing Greensville as of June 2014 and shifting students for September 2014. For a “preliminary” option, this is an extremely aggressive time frame for no apparent reason, especially considering according to the ARC process and timelines, the final recommendations aren’t to be presented until May 2014. It is incomprehensible that the Board would make this decision with only 1 months before the start of the next school year and make any accommodations or infrastructure improvements to Spencer Valley to accommodate the influx of students that would be acceptable or with the education of the students in mind. It makes many of us seriously question whether the decision has already been made to proceed with this “preliminary option”. If after careful review of all the facts, it is clear that this option is a good decision, then proper planning and preparations should be made for the transition of students with the students best interest in mind, not the Boards or the Ministry of Education.

In summary, West Flamborough is a growing and committed community with many young families moving to the area, who have a vested interest in the quality and accessibility of our childrens education. Greensville School has a long standing reputation of superb academics and student enrichment as well as community involvement. It is not a school in significant decline in education or spirit. There are many unanswered and concerning facts that have presented in the “preliminary option” presented by the ARC at the first public meeting on October 2, 2014. We strongly request that the concerns of the community and parents of Greensville be considered and discussed. I welcome the opportunity to discuss these concerns before any final decision are made.

Sincerely,

Wade and Lori Elliott
20 Tews Lane
Dundas, ON

11/10/2013

Correspondence #4

Ms. Turkstra and West Flamborough ARC Committee members,

After attending last evening's public meeting, I would like to comment on a few concerns that surfaced. There was a consensus that a proposal for one large school to house the current 5 schools was not in the best interests of the students or the communities. Therefore, to address the projected decreasing enrollment and fiscal challenges, it seems apparent that two solutions are needed to accommodate the needs and desires of the communities and students of our five schools.

It appears that due to student pathways and the large geographic area, there are two distinct groupings of schools in this ARC process: (a) Dr. Seeton and Beverly; and (b) Spencer, Greensville and Milgrove. The concerns of the parents representing each school group/area differs. Parents from Dr. Seeton and Beverly expressed their concerns about the current infrastructure of Dr. Seeton school, long transportation times and equality in education (rural vs. urban). Other than what I've gathered from last night's meeting, I'm not familiar with the challenges and issues of the school communities of Dr. Seeton and Beverly. Perhaps the amalgamation of these two schools in a new building in a more central location will address their needs (provided that this a financially viable option).

Parents of Milgrove and Greensville seem most concerned about losing their community schools that are currently thriving, the pathway of the students through the school system, and the possible fracturing of our communities due to proposed boundary changes.

I am a parent of two children currently attending Greensville School and another to enter JK in 2017. I would like to point out that without the decline of the projected enrolment at Spencer and Milgrove, there is no reason to target Greensville School for a closure at this time. Our current building amply houses the student population, our current utilization rate is 92%. Our EQAO results are outstanding. For a rural school, we have a large percentage of students who can walk to school. Our school yard is large and equipped to keep our children active, not to mention the school's proximity to Webster's Falls and the trail network to be developed behind the school. And, we have a before and after-school care program. I realize that the Board has deemed an "ideal school" as a JK to grade 8 with 500 to 600 students, but I believe that is a very narrow definition. The quality of education that my children are receiving at Greensville School is extremely high. Greensville School is my ideal school. I would prefer it not to close.

That being said, I understand that the Board has a responsibility to provide education in a fiscally responsible manner to all of its students. By amalgamating Greensville School *and* Milgrove School with Spencer Valley, we can create a school that fits with the "ideal school" criteria of the Board and, I believe, would allow the Board to deliver education to our children in a more fiscally responsible manner, while meeting our high standards. The resulting amalgamation of these three schools would offer many benefits. Namely, it will:

- (1) reduce the number of current and projected vacant student spaces;
- (2) decrease the number of split grade classes (due to a larger pool of JK to grade 5 students);
- (3) lower costs (administrative, maintenance and operational);
- (4) reduce the number of transitions for our students (core group of students together JK to Grade 8 then splitting in half for high school);
- (5) eliminate the need to separate a few families from their school communities due to proposed boundary changes.
- (6) allow for the Board to dispose of two school properties and reinvest those funds into improving the current facility at Spencer Valley to accommodate a primary and junior divisions.

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- (7) decrease transportation times for many of our students (Greensville and Spencer currently share buses which adds additional travel time to current bus routes);
- (8) allow for the pooling of educational resources;
- (9) allow for the pooling of parent resources- fundraising, social functions, etc.

As this idea is of a greater scale than that brought forth by the Board, the timeline for implementation should be extended past 2014 to perhaps 2015 or beyond to ensure adequate funding is available to prepare the building for a tripling of its school population and the influx of primary and junior students.

Although I briefly mentioned this option at last night's meeting, I thought it prudent to present it to you in writing. No matter which option is selected, I know as a parent committee you are doing your best to ensure we maintain the high quality of education our children are currently receiving.

Thank you,
Angie Gordon

Greensville School Parent

Correspondence #5

Hi,

Reading the letters coming home about the West ARC involving Greensville and millgrove schools, what is the proposed boundary changes. I found the current boundary map on the website but millgrove is not listed on the map. I live in the south east portion and want to know what changes are proposed for the second option of closing Greensville school. Also I understand that the secondary west arc mentions the millgrove students will attend Waterdown school. Waterdown high is not listed on the secondary arc. Will the new boundary showing the closing of Greensville change the boundaries for the high school? As these situations affect our family It would be nice to know where our children will be attending.

Thank you for your time.