

**Facilitator Report Back - East Hamilton Public Meeting # 1 - October 10, 2013**

Facilitators reported on the top three priorities raised in group discussion as noted below. Information will be provided to Committee Members for information and consideration as a recommendation is developed.

**Group 1**

- Disparity in ages is a concern when children 3 to 13 years old are mixed within a school - maturity levels differ considerably
- Transportation - will junior and senior students ride separate buses or will they be mixed - what will the guidelines be for walking - safety must be considered
- What are the hard numbers - what percentage of kids come from other schools out-of-catchment - are any updates available on numbers or enrolment - perhaps a survey should go out to Woodward and Roxborough Park parents to see if they are interested in having their kids go to Hillcrest or somewhere else rather than assuming they will attend Hillcrest

**Group 2**

- What happens in terms of development after the school is closed - vandalism is a concern
- What will the ratio of teachers to schools be when schools are closed
- Controls will be needed for younger children interacting with older children on the playground

**Group 3**

- Transition for special needs children to be considered
- Boundaries - if my child is designated to go to one school but my house is closer to another school can I send my child to the school that is closer to my home
- Timelines - is the closure date written in stone

**Group 4**

- Does the JK-8 model make sense and not just save money - is there evidence to support the model
- Can a larger school adequately support the needs of special needs learners
- How would the JK-8 schools support diversity

**Group 5**

- Does the JK-8 model fit with special needs students - maybe a JK-5 school is a better fit
- How will school closures affect the sense of community and property values - how will community groups currently offering programs be impacted - what will happen to community groups in the schools that close - the morale of students, staff and the community must be considered
- Transition time needs to be considered

**Group 6**

- There is not enough current data - enrolment data more current than 2012 is needed - transportation costs needed - actual costs for renovations versus new construction needed
- How will the impact to staff, students, parents and the community be considered
- Transition - what supports will be put into place to support special needs students and all students

**Question 1: How does the staff recommendation follow the reference criteria?**

- Availability of full day JK/SK in locations that decisions are being made about prior to implementation.
- Parents like the small school feel in the community, not necessarily being evolved into a larger group of community.
- What will happen to the school (Roxborough Park, Parkdale)
- Younger children should not be put together with older children so quickly
- Smaller schools work better for teaching children with reading, math
- Attention is given to smaller school
- Lack of bullying in smaller school (more controlled)
- Charts do not make sense for predictions
- Area not used right in bigger schools (Viscount Montgomery)
- When the predictions are wrong, what happens once schools get too full?
- Classroom space (seems full already in big schools)
- Close 2 schools instead of 3
- Balance the schools (change boundaries)
- Issues with older children
- Teachers too busy to teach properly
- Younger children hanging around and seeing older children
- Timeline of renovations
- Viscount Montgomery needs more renovations than Rosedale
- With schools closing, how much is divided to each school staying open to renovate
- Estimates seem not right in values
- There is turn over in the areas to younger families
- Time lines of the decisions and time lines to the proposal do not seem like a lot of time
- Transportation to schools?
- Walking to school (JK to 5) too far and unsafe
- What about teachers? Do they move as well?
- Amount of children for Principal and Vice Principal
- Maximizes facility utilization
- Many schools are close together, so SOME students may not require additional transportation costs.
- Most of the students displaced by school closures will require transportation.
- Before & after school care / early years programmes at some K-8 schools.
- Rosedale students will not gain better facilities and will require additional transportation.

- Could look at adding grades to existing K-5 schools. (ie K-6 or K-8)
- We are unclear about specific programmes offered and who will gain or lose through consolidation.
- Some K-5 schools offer many extra-curriculars that would be lost through consolidation.
- If a school closes (ie Woodward going to Hillcrest) students could gain in terms of better facilities, and programmes. Other schools (Rosedale to Viscount) will NOT gain in terms of facilities or programmes.
- Rox Park is 2 floors with no elevator, and is not very accessible.
- Some students with special needs choose smaller schools (population wise and physical plant) to best accommodate their child's needs.
- Woodward has the highest utilization percentage out of the 4 JK-5 schools.
- Can the future projections be looked at again...eg. new, younger families are moving in; Woodward is the farthest North school and growth is expected on the Beach Strip.
- We need current enrolment numbers for October 2013, in order for increased accuracy.
- The playground at Woodward needs to be fixed, parents have moved children to the Catholic systems regarding this issue.
- Growth trends need to be examined eg. Families are moving from Toronto.
- Woodward has the wiring for portables. There used to be 4 portables.
- Woodward has a large property.
- There is a concern of class sizes for grades 4 to 8. There is only a cap on primary grades.
- There won't be enough caring adults in a class for a higher number of students. The fear is that there will not be enough of a focus on primary students if they are in a JK-8 setting.
- They are scared that primary students will be forgotten about.
- What will the cost of bussing be?
- What will be the boundary be for who receives bussing and who doesn't?
- Will children be forced to cross 3 major streets to come to Hillcrest. Melvin, Woodward, Barton. For Rosedale they will have to cross Lawrence and King.
- This is a HUGE safety concern.
- How long will bus rides be?
- Will there be age groups on buses?
- There are HUGE safety concerns surrounding the whole bussing issue.
- Woodward and Rosedale are single floors, but the stage is not wheel chair accessible.
- Hillcrest has a visually impaired fire alarm.
- Parkdale, Rosedale and Roxborough do not have barrier free bathrooms.
- Parkdale doesn't have a barrier free entrance.
- Capacity of school utilized – a classroom that has changed
  - What is the ID of a classroom – is a computer lab a classroom? – In that percentage is a computer lab an empty space?
- Does the jk to 8 model make sense? And not save \$\$\$ - is there evidence to support the decision?
- If we put jk to 8 the jks might get hurt on the playground while they are playing.
- Does the arc take account for the younger families moving in?

- Transportation costs for students 1.2 kms away? And could we get a late pick up for after school programs?
- Open up early years in some of the schools? To bring up the numbers( community use)
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**Reference Criteria:** Facility Utilization, Permanent and Non-permanent Accommodation, Program Offerings, Quality Teaching and Learning Environments, Transportation, Partnerships Opportunities, Equity.

**Question 2: What additional reference criteria do you think are important for the ARC to consider when developing recommendations?**

- Future closures after this program is completed
- Air conditioning, wheelchair accessibility (take \$\$ towards upgrading)
- French immersion program
- Daycare (before & after programs)
- Ages for afterschool programs
- Times of afterschool programs
- Breakfast programs
- How set in stone is this recommendation
- Children with disabilities or special needs .
- “My son would not have been as successful in a large K-8 school, as he was at Rosedale, which is K-5”).
- There is a lack of resources and support (ie EA support) in schools.
- “I don’t believe a larger school would be able to offer the same level of support and individual attention.”
- Community partnerships may not be transferrable as schools are consolidated.
- Will the same level of community support even be available, since community groups may not be able to accommodate larger groups, and may not have enough funding?
- Timelines should be adjusted for transitions of both students and staff. (not to mention physical resources)
- What about physical assets that were purchased through community partnerships (ie Home & School)? Where does it go? Is it wasted?

- As schools approach capacity resource teachers (Music, Art, etc) will lose their classrooms and be teaching “off a cart”.
- At what capacity would schools require portables? With capped class sizes, most schools would run out of rooms long before 100%.
- What current room uses (ie libraries) would be lost as a result of approaching capacity.
- What happens to schools that closed? Are lands and buildings to be sold?
- Data from previous ARC’s regarding how many parents transferred their children to the suggested school. (Percentage of families who moved to Catholic Boards, French Immersion etc.)
- Specific building conditions, needs and associated costs. Eg. Asbestos, boilers, windows etc.
- Looking at crossing socioeconomic boundaries to go to a new school.
- Worried about transition of special needs student from one school to another – how they are going to be impacted
- Transition of special needs students from one school to another and also the proximity to school – especially for parents in an emergency situation
- Boundary changes – my house is closer to Hillcrest than Ballard, but Ballard is my designated school
- If I send my child out of catchment because of safety, will my second child be able to move too?
- What schools currently have FDK?
- Public consultation re boundary changes?
- Class sizes? Some children have issues with big classes and the teachers can’t help with one on one help.
- Kids being pushed thru instead of giving them the proper help

**Question 3: Using the additional reference criteria, how well does the staff recommendation meet the new criteria? Please explain.**

- [illegible]

**Question 4: What else do you feel is important for the ARC to consider as they begin developing options?**

- Parent, teacher, community morale should be considered.
- Losing a valued school can cut the heart out of a community and destroy existing partnerships.
- Financial issue, as community partnerships etc affect local businesses.
- How does the closing of a local school affect the property values (specifically the Rosedale community)
- Parents (especially of young children) do NOT like putting their kids on the bus.
- Some people purchased homes in certain communities because of existing facilities. Closing schools affects their lives quite a bit.
- Geography plays a role in some of the communities (Rosedale & Woodward specifically)
- Instead of closing 4 schools, could we close 3 schools and reorganize existing programmes.
- If a school is underutilized, could it be reorganized into a K-8 school rather than just closing.
- If you are looking to reduce the number of pupil places, why not close a large school, rather than several small schools.
- The projected enrollment is questionable, Rosedale's population is in transition and new families move in. Population is up 6% over last year and may continue to rise.
- Ballard is 100 years old, is on a small lot and has no grass. Closing that one school would be equivalent to closing 3 small schools
- In projecting population, need to consider immigration
- Facility condition index should take a high priority in choosing schools to close.
- In five years, with declining enrolment, will we be back in the same position?
- The impact the options will have on property values and other local businesses.
- What will happen to current out of catchment students if their new "home" school is moved?
- Survey parents and the community regarding what they would do, should the options go through...eg. Take children to Catholic Board, home school, French Immersion etc.
- There are bullies at my school which is smaller. If they go to a bigger school with older students will my child be bullied more?
- Closure date seems too soon – June 2014
  - Is the closure date written in stone?
- How would the proposed 4 to 8 schools accommodate the needs of the diversity?
- How do we make the change without losing the facility as a community resource (ie bookmobile, election center)?



East Hamilton City 1 Accommodation Review  
Additional Notes/Questions from Thursday, Oct 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013 Public Meeting

- If the staff option is accepted 3 JK-8 schools, will the catchment area change? Where can I see the new visualization?
- Potential rebuild – how can I justify? Explain sending my daughter to a 90 year old school?
- Will some current catchment areas change? (e.g., For Parkdale school, will it be east of Parkdale or west of Parkdale?)
- Partnership opportunities
- If you were to put Hillcrest, Roxborough Park and Woodward together into Hillcrest school, there would be 1,041 students
  - Roxborough Park has 3 JK/SK classes
  - Roxborough Park just got a new kitchen put in for a breakfast program
  
- Why should my student walk 10 plus blocks instead of one block for schooling?
  
  
- Is the K-8 school a better student experience? Is this a best practice? Is there a best practice?
- Less of school spirit
- Creating a new school pride – trying to develop new school culture
  
  
- Our current caretaker managed the choir, will they at the new school?
- Will some of the same teachers move to the new proposed?