

Received October 15th, 2013

Michael Prendergrast,

This letter is in regards to the proposed closure of Queensdale Elementary School in Hamilton. Queensdale School is the centre of neighbourhood life on the Hamilton Central Mountain, and an economic driver. It is a key factor in whether families move into a community and remain through the years to raise their children. With our school in trouble, the well-being of everyone around is also at risk. This is a concern for the tax paying residents, community businesses and the families of Queensdale School.

In addition, the speediness of the proposed closure for June 2014 is unsettling. If enrolment is a major factor, at least give the school the opportunity to see what sort of increase FDK rollout could possible bring. The school is more than equipped and prepared to handle the addition classrooms with the appropriate amenities necessary for FDK. Queensdale was updated five years ago with beautiful new bathrooms, windows, furnace etc. I'm unsure how a decision can be made to displace Queensdale students from a safe, newly renovated school to a more inadequate aging building that does not have wheel chair accessibility, a proper heating and cooling systems for every floor and asbestos within the building. I feel in speaking with other parents in the community, that Armstrong has already been labelled as "needs improvements" and therefore will always have difficult recruiting new and displaced students. Perhaps closing the larger school (Armstrong) and changing the catchments, so those children filter out to their surrounding smaller school. This could be a possible solution to increase enrolment in the smaller schools. Even creating a JK to 8 at Queensdale, to bring the middle school students back to their communities may assist in the enrolment issue.

It has been raised at Arc meetings that enrolment is not the only issue. Apparently the board feels that the cost to run the smaller schools is not cost effective. No research has been shared to

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support that and I feel it wouldn't take much to debunk that myth. However, research does prove smaller schools are better for children's overall happiness and success.

The children at Queensdale have personal ties with the school in their community. They are lucky to have the opportunity to go to a school where everyone knows each other's name. This climate developed fosters close, meaningful relationships between the adult and child and in-between the children themselves. Also, parents know all the teachers and admin staff and the professionals know the whole family. This is important to me and I feel as a parent and tax payer, I have the right to choose what I feel is best for my child and what environment he would be more eager to learn in.

I'm an engaged parent and I know that parental involvement is key and is reinforced within the HWDSB. If these changes were made, I feel that parents would be less likely to be involved and would no longer frequently visit the school because it is outside of their district. We know that when a parent is involved in their child's education and school life, the child is more likely to succeed. I think this should be kept in mind when deciding whether to close or keep Queensdale open. They have a very active parent council, and lots of community partnerships, volunteers, and committed parents that would find it difficult to continue their efforts for a school outside their community.

I'd also like to mention how respectful environments are easily fostered in smaller schools such as Queensdale. I encourage you to please sit down with Miss Carbone, our school's principal, to discuss bullying and discipline problems in the school. The conversation would be very short because this type of problem does not exist. In larger schools, disciplinary problems are more prevalent than in smaller schools, often causing a distraction and

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interruption in the learning process. Students in a safe setting learn more, are more focused, and feel more positive about their school. Students are more likely to master the curriculum offered. Smaller schools are often able to better engage their students and give them more attention because good teaching methods are easier to apply when there are less disciplinary needs.

Also, the amazing teaching staff that exist at Queensdale. The teaching staff take great responsibility in the children's learning. They have terrific staff morale and appear satisfied with their positions and stay in their jobs as long as they can. They have spent many years together and have created a collaborative work environment that is difficult to achieve when there are high staff turnover rates.

I'm sure with all these letters and earnest requests to keep Queensdale open, you're hearing a lot of reoccurring words and like family, tight knit community, a school with a heart etc. and to you it may not seem like enough of a reason to keep a school from closing but I plead with you as do my family members and neighbours that what it truly is about...the reason to why we want Queensdale to remain open is about human touch. Human touch should still be valued, even in this day and age. Human touch should be enough. This school has touched the children who have attended there in the past and it has touched the student who attend there now. Sometimes the small choice is the right choice if it means strong connections in learning and in life.

Unidentified writer

Received October 18th, 2013

Subject: closing Linden Park School

I really try to look at the bigger picture when it comes to the City of Hamilton Board of Education decision to close schools. It just doesnt only effect my family but others as well. I try not to be selfish when it comes to that. But now being a good guy hasnt gotten me anywhere. Here is my family's story. We bought our house around 10yrs ago in the central mtn area. We were so happy that neither one of my kids would ever have to take a bus to school and that all the schools in the area were in walking distance. So first my oldest who attends Hill Park right now and should graduate from there before you close the school will not be effected. He is grade 11 this year so it should work out for him. We live less then 5 mins away from Hill Park. Now my youngest son goes to Linden Park, it is also a 5min walk to school. He is grade 3. With the new possible closur e of Linden Park that would mean that my son would possibly going to Cardinal Heights for grade 4-8. If I understand the reccomendation correctly. Now my son is ADHD, one of us always picks up my son from school. your now going to put him in a school farther away from home, almost a 25min walk, across Mohawk Rd, a busy street to say the least and now that interferes with how and who picks up my son from school. I knew he would be going to that school for grade 6-8 but he would be older by then and perhaps could walk home by himself. So with closing Linden Park this effects my family greatly. Which I know I am not the only one but I thought you should know what a typical family goes thru when you attempt to close schools. Its not easy for the families. . I heard from other parents that the meeting that went on last week the stats given were from 2006. How do you make decisions based on old data? Now I wasnt there and that is just word of mouth but it leaves me with a bad taste in my mouth on the whole system. I understand tough decisons have to be made I just wish it wasnt effecting my kids.

David Berk

Dawn Danko, MSc.(Ed)

11 Buchanan Street
Hamilton, ON
L9A 2V7

To: Hamilton Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB)

Standard Life Building
120 King Street West,
Suite 1120 P.O. Box 2558
Hamilton, ON
L8N 3L1

Attention: Tim Simmons – Chair of the Board

Regarding: The Central Mountain Accommodation Review Process

October 15, 2013

Dear Mr. Simmons,

As a parent and HWDSB community member with a Master's degree in education and over six years of experience in education at the college and university level, I am writing to express my concerns with the current Central Mountain Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) process and to offer my recommendations for the Central Mountain ARC.

Item 1: ARC Selection Process

The ARC members are tasked with impartial critical evaluation of data to determine an evidence-based recommendation for the HWDSB Trustees (the Board) regarding the status of the Central Mountain schools. This process is demanding and requires some experience with statistics and data analysis.

The first concern I would like to address with respect to the current ARC process is the selection of ARC members. While I expect that each of the voluntary members is sincerely motivated to perform their role as an ARC member, given the potential impact of the ARC recommendations on students, parents and communities, the selection of representatives from each school should have been a transparent, formal process. Potential candidates for the ARC should be required to apply for these positions and individual credentials/resumes should be presented to each school community for consideration before members are selected. Understanding relevant credentials and experience is critical for this process to be successful. Any ARC process should begin with the establishment of members' areas of expertise so that the committee can rely on appropriate members who are best suited for various analyses throughout the review.

Item 1: Requested Action

I respectfully request that the school board postpone the current Central Mountain ARC, establish a formal ARC committee member selection process for all schools to follow, and ensure that each school community democratically selects (or re-selects) ARC representatives.

Item 2: ARC Training and Counsel

My second concern relates to the training provided to ARC members. To date, the ARC has had one working meeting and one public meeting. The ARC members need time to review the extensive HWDSB document/policy library, as well as Ministry of Education documents/policies, and time to request clarification of documents and policies to ensure a full understanding of the Board's position and the overreaching review process. The ARC members must be fully informed about their rights in the review process and the implications of potential actions. The committee should not have to rely on asking the 'right' questions to the Board.

Item 2: Requested Action

I request legal counsel be appointed to the ARC, as well as training by an independent consultant/expert in the rules and procedures for the review process prior to data collection and analysis to ensure a fair and transparent review is completed.

I also request that funding be provided to ARC members for an appropriate level of community outreach to ensure community stakeholders are consulted in the review process.

Item 3: Proposed Timeline for Implementation of Decisions

A third concern is the proposed timeline of the ARC process.

Currently the Board has indicated that a final decision will be made in May 2014, with expected implementation of the decision effective in September 2014. The current Board staff suggestion includes closing three schools in June 2014, and moving students to alternate locations in September 2014. The Board must be aware that changing child care arrangements is complex and challenging. From a personal perspective, it took our family nine months to find a suitable day care provider for our children when I was returning to work. I interviewed many different providers located on the North Mountain, and I know from experience that options are limited for families. Consolidating students at larger schools will also cause an immediate child care crisis for the area, as local providers are currently positioned to service smaller communities. For example, Pumpkin Patch is a licensed day care near Armstrong School. Pumpkin Patch cannot accommodate any significant increase in new enrolments in the school; unlicensed day care providers are limited in the area.

The child care issue is even more significant for families who have new kindergarten students due to be enrolled in school for September 2014. Families are expected to register for kindergarten in February, and yet the School Board will not issue the decision that has a significant impact on these families until May 2014.

Item 3: Requested Action

I assert that the Accommodation Review timeline is unacceptable. I request that the Board immediately change the earliest implementation date of any school closure to September 2015.

I request that the Board provide ARC members with data detailing current available day care spaces in the Central Hamilton Mountain, projected day care needs, and the numbers of students who will not qualify for bussing and will therefore need alternate drop-off/pick-up arrangements under the current proposed plan.

I request that the ARC include the day care considerations in their final report, as these considerations significantly impact stakeholders including families, students and local businesses.

Item 4: Inaccurate Enrolment Projection due to Delayed FDK

Yet another issue I would like to highlight is the use of inaccurate projection numbers for enrolment in some of the Central Mountain communities. The Board Accommodation Review report clearly states that projection numbers are based on *current programming*. The Board established that the three schools currently recommended for closure (in the initial Board staff suggestion) would not have full-day kindergarten (FDK) until September 2014. Interestingly, Queensdale Public School has had the facilities in place for FDK for the past several years, and FDK could have been implemented without any renovations. The change in programming in the three targeted schools to include FDK is significant. Delaying FDK has had a negative impact on enrolment at Queensdale, Eastmount Park and Linden Public Schools; therefore, the projection numbers do not reflect the real future enrolment at these schools.

Item 4: Requested Action

I respectfully request that the Board delay the Accommodation Review process until FDK has been established and enrolment numbers undergo a correction, so that new accurate enrolment projection numbers can be used for evidence-based decision making.

Item 5: Impact of School Closures on Public Board

Finally, though I have not exhausted my list of concerns in this letter, I would like to let the Board know how the closure of my community school will impact my family and the Public School Board. We moved into our neighborhood well before starting a family because of the community school. We looked a moving three years ago, but chose to stay in our neighborhood because of our community school. In the event that Queensdale Public School closes, we will move our children to our other community school, St. Peter and Paul, and change our tax allocation accordingly. The Board will lose the enrolment of our children through both elementary school and high school if we are forced to make this change. If

the Board is concerned about decreasing enrolment numbers, closing community schools is not the answer to this problem.

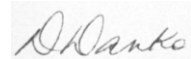
Item 5: Requested Action

I am confident that the ARC and the Board can come together to make evidence-based decisions that are in the best interests of all of our students, staff and communities. As a stakeholder in the Accommodation Review process, I request and expect that decisions will not be made without clear, comprehensive evidence and a strong consideration for the impacts on the communities in the Central Mountain, and within all of Hamilton.

I request that all data provided to the ARC also be made available on the HWDSB website, in a clear designated location, within one week of release to the ARC members.

I would like to thank-you for your consideration of the issues at hand. I look forward to detailed and specific responses from the Board regarding my requests.

Sincerely,



Dawn Danko, M.Sc.(Ed.)

Also Copied:

Chris Charlton – MP, Hamilton Mountain

Monique Taylor – MPP, Hamilton Mountain

Kathleen Wynne – MPP, Premier

Liz Sandals – MPP, Minister of Education

Bob Bratina – Mayor, City of Hamilton

Scott Duvall – Councillor, City of Hamilton

Chris Murray – City Manager

Dr. John Malloy – HWDSB, Director of Education

Michael Prendergast – HWDSB, Superintendent of Student Achievement

Jessica Brennan – Trustee, Vice-Chair

Judith Bishop – Trustee, Ward 1 & 2 West Lower City

Ray Mulholland – Trustee, Ward 4 East Lower City

Todd White - Trustee, Ward 5 East City

Laura Peddle – Trustee, Ward 6 East Mountain

Lillian Orban – Trustee, Ward 7 Central Mountain

Wes Hicks – Trustee, Ward 8 West Mountain

Shirley Glauser Ward 9 & 10 West Stoney Creek

Alex Johnstone Ward 11 & 12 East Stoney Creek Ancaster Glanbrook

Jessica Brennan Ward 13 Dundas

Karen Turkstra Ward 14 & 15 Flamborough

Hamilton Central Mountain Accommodation Review Committee

John-Paul Danko, P. Eng.

Hamilton Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB)

Standard Life Building
120 King Street West,
Suite 1120 P.O. Box 2558
Hamilton, ON
L8N 3L1

Attention: Tim Simmons – Chair of the Board

Regarding: Elementary School Closures – Hamilton Central Mountain – Review Process

Dear Mr. Simmons,

At the conclusion of the Hamilton Central Mountain Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) public meeting on October 8th, 2013, the top three concerns from each round table discussion were brought forward and publicly discussed.

As an affected parent and community member, I would like to take this opportunity to bring forward my top three concerns to the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB), Trustees and ARC members.

1. There Is No Scientific Evaluation Process

As a structural engineer with over 15 years' experience with detailed structural and financial evaluations of multi-million dollar public infrastructure projects, I have never been involved with an evaluation process that did not begin with specific evaluation criteria, including a defined grading system.

At the October 8th ARC meeting, the public was presented with seven vague, generic, reference criteria - but absolutely no information as to how those criteria were to be applied or graded. HWDSB staff seemed particularly interested in presenting facility utilization statistics and condition index numbers, but no graded evaluations of any other criteria were presented.

Furthermore, there does not seem to be any quantifiable threshold that defines when a school will be closed or will remain open. For example, at my school of concern, Queensdale, (accepting the HWDSB's presented numbers at face value), out of the seven reference criteria Queensdale is only marginally below acceptable for two out of seven (facility utilization and permanent and non-permanent accommodation).

Requested Action by the HWDSB

I ask that the HWDSB immediately stop the ARC process until such time that the board can provide the ARC and the public with a specific, scientific evaluation process that includes a quantified grade for each reference criteria under consideration, a defined weighted ranking structure for the graded reference criteria, and a specific, scientifically calculated threshold that will define whether a school will be recommended closed or remain open.

2. The Greater Hamilton Community is Not Involved

Schools, particularly elementary schools have a substantial effect on their surrounding community – from the neighbourhood level, right up to the long term formal development plans of the City of Hamilton and Province of Ontario; however, only teachers and parents are formally involved with the ARC process.

It seems that the board has done little, if anything, to inform the greater Hamilton community of the pending changes to their neighbourhood school. Nor has there been any mention of the official development plans of the City of Hamilton and Province of Ontario for the communities involved.

For example, in the Queensdale neighbourhood, we have five major employers within walking distance that will drive future development: Hamilton Health Sciences – Juravinski Hospital; Hamilton Health Sciences – Juravinski Cancer Center; St. Joseph's Healthcare - West 5th Campus; St. Joseph's Healthcare – Charlton Campus; and Mohawk College. All of these employers have been identified by the City of Hamilton as future high growth employment sectors for the City, specifically healthcare and education.

The Province of Ontario has also specifically endorsed a detailed growth plan for the Golden Horseshoe (Places to Grow Act, 2005) that, among other objectives, envisages increasing intensification of existing built-up areas, intensification corridors and major transit areas. The Act even recognizes the importance of infrastructure to support targeted growth. Elementary schools are a major part of the infrastructure that supports this growth.

In the Queensdale area, the City has targeted both the Upper James corridor and Concession Street for major infill redevelopment and transit expansion including the proposed Light Rail Transit (LRT) A-Line. It does not seem that the board is aware of the City and Province's long term development plans and has no interest in taking the big picture goals of either the City of Hamilton or Province of Ontario into account.

Requested Action by the HWDSB

I ask that the HWDSB halt the current ARC process until such time that official representation from the City of Hamilton, the Province of Ontario and the greater community can officially be included in the ARC process.

3. The HWDSB Has the Appearance of Acting in Bad Faith

At the October 8th, 2013 central mountain ARC public meeting, it was abundantly clear that the public has little confidence in the ARC process, HWDSB staff or the informed decision making abilities of board trustees.

Again, as a professional engineer it is my experience that a valid decision rests entirely on the validity of the base data and the assumptions used to derive that data.

For Queensdale School, Linden Park and Eastmount Park – the three schools recommended for immediate closure, it appears that the board has taken specific steps well in advance of the ARC process, designed to justify the eventual closure of these three schools.

Queensdale School, Linden Park and Eastmount Park, the schools recommended for closure, are the only Central Mountain schools not scheduled to receive full day kindergarten until after they are recommended to close – even though no renovations/modifications would have been required to implement full day kindergarten at Queensdale anytime in the past 3 years.

The effect of full day kindergarten on enrolment numbers cannot be understated.

Queensdale is in direct local competition with both Norwood Park (HWDSB French immersion) and St. Peter and Paul (Catholic board) for enrolment. The board's decision to exclude full day kindergarten has put Queensdale at a distinct disadvantage in attracting positive enrolment numbers. Furthermore, because Queensdale is a smaller school, even a small change in enrolment – a handful of students per year - will drastically effect its long term enrolment projections.

At the same time that the board has chosen to deny Queensdale, Linden Park and Eastmount Park full day kindergarten until after the ARC decision is made, the board is currently in construction (during the ARC process) adding two full day kindergarten class rooms to another school under review but not recommended to close (Ridgemount - with the construction of six additional class rooms recommended to be completed by September 2016).

The cumulative impact of these actions by the board leads a reasonable person to conclude that the board is acting in bad faith.

Requested Action by the HWDSB

I request that the HWDSB delay the current ARC process until full day kindergarten has been fully implemented at Queensdale, Linden Park and Eastmount Park and that each school's enrolment numbers be reevaluated in three to five years, after the effects of full day kindergarten have been allowed to augment and stabilize enrolment.

Conclusion

Thank you for taking the time to address my concerns. I look forward to your detailed response to the three action points requested.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J.P. Danko', with a stylized flourish at the end.

John-Paul Danko, P. Eng.

Also Copied:

Chris Charlton – MP, Hamilton Mountain
Monique Taylor – MPP, Hamilton Mountain

Kathleen Wynne – MPP, Premier
Liz Sandals – MPP, Minister of Education

Bob Bratina – Mayor, City of Hamilton
Scott Duvall – Councilor, City of Hamilton
Chris Murray – City Manager

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Alex Johnstone Ward 11 & 12 East Stoney Creek Ancaster Glanbrook
Jessica Brennan Ward 13 Dundas
Karen Turkstra Ward 14 & 15 Flambrough

Hamilton Central Mountain Accommodation Review Committee

Received October 15th, 2013

Dear Sir,

I am writing in regards to the proposed closure of Queensdale school. I do not usually get involved in politics of any sort, however this topic strikes a chord. My wife and I have three children attending Queensdale and we have always felt fortunate to have this school within our community. As with any parent I would never take my child's safety for granted, I do however take comfort in knowing that within the Queensdale community our children are recognizable by other parents just as their children are recognizable by ourselves. To say there is a strong sense of community and friendship would be an understatement. All three of our children enjoy learning and have respect for their teachers as well as other students. They are in fact showing a positive response to learning that I only wish I knew as a child. It is time for people to start looking into the quality of education rather than the number of students in the building. Queensdale is more than just a building and school, it is the heart of a community. Thank you for your time.

Jeremy Kish

Received October 15th, 2013

Good evening Linda.

May I first share a link to my latest post, Good places to Learn -
<http://shakingthetree.ca/blog/2013/education-good-places-to-learn/>

I have been following the plea for the Queensdale community to encourage decision makers to keep Queensdale.

I encourage us all to stop/cancel and re-look at what we have learned from our recent ARC reviews rather than continuing with this process. The decisions to close so many schools (and it will be 52 and counting by the time our High Schools have shut down that will have closed since 1998), that has Hamiltonians and parents scared and fearful of the Hamilton we are undoing. We have all worked so hard to bring this great city back to life and show the world what they have been missing in this hidden gem.

As we build this city though, we have to remember two of the most important features of it as we plan it's future: Walkable schools, and being surrounded by green space.

I encourage us all to seek alternatives to closing schools.

The Catholic Board in Edmonton has implemented a pilot project called Schools as Community Hubs. I think we can look well beyond this and come up with creative ways to fill all that space. http://www.ecsd.net/parents/schools_hubs.html

I would love to see what a Canada-wide collaboration of thoughts would look like, on the topic of saving community schools and filling empty space until the demographics change. [The Central Project](#) we could call it in honour of how the Durand residents helped save Central back in '79.

For example, may I ask why you and your staff are not housed in schools across this city rather than a central building? I think de-centralizing of so many things is the key to creating these hubs and stronger, safer, communities to raise a family.

I believe everyone is going to see Hamilton as a hub going forward. I would love us to continue having many hubs within this major hub.

More of my education-based pieces can be found here as they relate to school closures. <http://shakingthetree.ca/blog/?s=education>

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Larry Pattison Jr

Received October 15th, 2013

Dear Mr. Prendergrast,

The Board's proposed plan that would see our children taken farther away from home, placed on buses rather than walking, taken from a neighbourhood community school with green space, fewer children, a sense of safety in community, a building in great condition, bright classrooms, air conditioning, recent updates and then busing them farther away to a school 20 years older, in a commercial area on a busy street, with three times the student population in a building that needs many upgrades is neither viable nor acceptable. While I'm all for the democratic process, I think the proposed deadline for making such an important, impactful decision is completely unrealistic and disrespectful to those that are involved. Isn't Hamilton striving to be the best place to raise a child?.....I hope so.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns,

Nancy Kish, Mom of three amazing Queensdale kids

Received October 22nd, 2013

Dear Mr. Prendergast,

As one of many concerned parents, as a devoted Hamiltonian, I am confused as to why this process is one in which we are thrown to the lions to figure out who gets devoured while the board employees watch from above and do not offer one single alternative to keeping our schools open. In listening to other concerned Hamiltonians as well as others in Ontario who have gone through this disheartening process, there is an overwhelming sense of mistrust and abandonment, as well as the unfortunate knowledge that the concern is not for the welfare of our children, but only for \$\$\$\$\$. Why is nobody listening to the populous? There have been many plausible solutions put forth as to creative ways to keep schools open while utilizing the spaces, have any such ideas even been considered? Future projections are just that, projections; we are building more houses yet tearing down schools. I'm looking forward to seeing the emergence of some creative, forward thinking with acceptable ideas that consider what is ACTUALLY best for our children; rather than this ARChaic process.

Sincerely,
Nancy Kish

Received October 15th, 2013

Hello Mr Duvall,

I am writing to you about the proposed closure of Queensdale Elementary School. This closure makes little sense. Queensdale is a important to the community. 1) It was massively renovated a few years ago. The building is in top shape. 2) Some children and parents will have to cross major roads to get to GLArmstrong school. 3) More children will have to be bussed to GL Armstrong (costs of bussing were not detailed at the Accomodation Review meeting Oct 8) 4) GL Armstrong is in a congested area and in need of repairs. 5) Queensdale is a green area for the community. 6) The Board's track record at real estate sales is abysmal...better not to let the Board sell any property. Often bigger is cheaper is not true...remember the Mike Harris imposed amalgamations of Hamilton and Toronto? Young children should not be walking long distances to mammoth schools. I hope you will attend the Nov 5 Public Meeting at GL Armstrong. The Queensdale community is upset about this proposed closure. Thank you.

Nick Morra 9 Wavell Ave Hamilton ON 905 388 4802

Dear Ms.Sheppard...Here is an email that I sent to Councillor Scott Duvall.Please bring it to Superintendent Prendergast's attention.
Councillor Duvall's reply will follow in a separate email shortly. Thank you.

Received October 15th, 2013

RE: ARC process on Hamilton's Central Mountain

To the Board of Education and ARC members,

I am a parent of two school aged children, as well as an active community member in the Queensdale area. I was greatly concerned when I heard of the Board's "recommendation" to close Linden Park, Eastmount, and Queensdale and merge these schools and the remaining five schools to create "mega" schools of 500-600 students.

One of the main reasons we moved to this area was because of Queensdale School. It was highly recommended as one of the best schools in Hamilton. It is also a five minute walk from our house. I believe in keeping my children healthy and involved in the neighbourhood we live in. One of the ways we do this is by WALKING them to and from school every day. Depending on our schedule, I am also able to pick up my children and bring them home for second nutrition break. If Queensdale were to close, and your proposal is accepted, I would have to drive my children to Armstrong, as we are two houses outside of the bus catchment and I will not be walking my children across Upper Wellington and down Concession street two times every day.

I also strongly believe that schools play a major role in building strong and friendly neighbourhoods. Your proposal to close not only Queensdale, but also two other small community schools leads me no alternative but to put my children in the Catholic school that is a 10 minute walk from our house. Who knows when Armstrong will be next on the chopping block? I believe that by going to St. Peter and Paul, my children will have a better chance of building relationships within our neighbourhood, and feel that they will spend more time at home and playing with friends, than sitting in a car, commuting to a "mega" school, where they will just be a number, and not a name.

I am also concerned by the time frame given for this change to take place. Already, the children are worried about what will be happening in regards to their schooling next year. They need time to adjust to a major change such as a school closing, and moving to a school that is almost triple the size of the one they now attend. Since your final decision will not be made until March or May, that leaves very little time for the children to get used to the idea of not being with their friends, and in the school they have been attending (and expected) to attend for the rest of their elementary school career. This is also not an adequate amount of time for those trying to find new daycare for their children. There are many children at Queensdale who are dropped off and picked up by grandparents or neighbours living nearby. The proposition of a mega school outside of the neighbourhood would cause a huge problem for many parents relying on daycare in this area.

I am sure there is another solution to the enrollment problem you are trying to fix. In putting our children's well being first, and striving for the best possible environment in which they are to learn, I know you, the Board of Education, can come up with a solution that will keep schools and children in their communities. Please let this ARC process and decision reflect that.

Sincerely,
Riann Kinniburgh

Received October 14th, 2013

Subject: ARC timelines

I am a Queensdale parent with some concerns about the ARC process, and in particular to time lines being put forth by the Board.

It does not seem realistic to be closing schools by the end of the current school year. Kindergarten enrollment is in February, and the school closures will be decided and announced in May. Are the affected schools supposed to enroll children hoping to stay open? If they don't enroll new students then they are fulfilling the boards plan that has been put forth, and thereby making the entire ARC process false and a waste of everyone's time.

I choose to have faith in the Board, therefore this process has to be extended.

Also, I believe the Board has to look beyond 2022. As seen with Scott Park, the Board has to think further ahead and have plans that are more broad thinking and speculative. Not simply looking for a quick fix that will solve some problems now, yet create bigger problems in the future.

Sincerely
Rachel Kostuk