

It is my understanding that each of the groups within the ARC are seriously considering the recommendation of building a new high school in Dundas, possibly at the Highland site, and eventually closing both the existing high schools in order for the public board to remain relevant in the Dundas and Flamborough areas relative to the Catholic board. I suppose if the board found a way to get the money to replace its similarly aged head office accommodations then it should be equally possible for the board to find the money to build a new school in Dundas.

The question then becomes where is the best place to house the students in the interim period until the new school is built. The Highland site in its current state has terrible transportation problems with major morning congestion. Its roundabout barely has enough room for the existing school buses let alone accommodating double or triple that amount. While members of the committee have been suggesting that in the long term with a complete reworking of the site and with the addition of a turning lane by the City that the larger Highland site could accommodate a new school, it is clear that right now it can't handle the increased student traffic not to mention the logistical and safety nightmare of running a school on a construction site.

What I'd like to recommend to the committee is that in the short term all students move temporarily to Parkside while the new school and upgrades to the road systems are being evaluated and built. While the impression that the board has given is that Parkside is a much smaller school than Highland, the reality is quite different. I have enrollment data for both schools from the last 15 years that I requested from the Ministry of Education. I made a similar request from Parkside and then through the ARC process and even though the information is easily available in the school's office I have been denied access to it so far.

So I have a copy here of the Ministry of Education's enrollment numbers for Parkside and Highland. What you will see is that through much of the 90's Parkside had the same or higher enrollment than Highland. In fact, over 900 students. It wasn't until about 2003 when the board first decided to recommend closing Parkside that it started to orchestrate its demise by changing catchments to favour Highland and also by stopping the shuttle bus between the schools from going both ways. It now only goes from Parkside to Highland. It's been a calculated and manipulative process by the board to reduce Parkside's enrollment to Highland's benefit. I think it is important for the true facts to be presented here to this committee.

The reality is that Parkside has 1,118 full sized lockers lining its hallways. All in working condition. The board's projection for 2013 for the combined schools would be 1,062 students actually leaving 56 lockers to spare. Also very important to note is that the area Parkside uses for its buses can handle an almost unlimited number of busses safely and efficiently in its current state. Parkside's building condition is also in much better shape than Highland's according to the board's own documents. In fact, my previous submission to this committee is that given all this information together with all of the towns assets at Parkside's fingertips, Parkside should be the school to remain open into the future but respecting the voice of the committee if the collective decides that a new school is in the best interests of the community then in the short term it is clear that it is best for the students to be at Parkside until the new school is built.

Another important benefit to temporarily using Parkside is that if the board is truly in favour of the Highland site in the long run then it will put all its efforts into getting the approvals and construction done of the new school. Whereas if you house the kids in the old Highland building, the board, having achieved its goal of closing Parkside, may come up with excuses and reasons to delay the project you voted for and use your taxpayer dollars for its own pet projects leaving Dundas and Flamborough without a new school. What will be next...closing Highland too...remember Ancaster is just around the corner from Highland... believe it or not that's what the head of the board has been suggesting at recent meetings.

My question for the board tonight relates to democracy. On the front page of the Hamilton Spectator this morning it said on Monday night, the board amended its regulations to require that the trustees give priority to the interests of the board over the interests of their constituents. Since it is the trustees that are ultimately tasked with deciding between the board option and the ARC option, how does this change in the code affect their ability to choose anything but the board option? And furthermore, since this change in the regulations seriously affects the smell test of the democracy of this process will the board commit to releasing the vote of each trustee along with the total amount of new money each ward receives from the board from the vote date until the next election?

Thank you.

Diana Kenel

School Enrolment in Highland and Parkside Secondary School, 1995-1996 through 2008-2009

SCH NUMBER	SCHOOL LONG NAME	1995-1996	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2007-2008	2008-2009
916679	Highland Secondary School	862	838	830	863	908	908	914	913	800	857	901	849	869
933880	Parkside High School	900	864	854	870	903	855	874	858	823	795	721	684	636

Source: As reported by schools in the School October Report, 1995-1996 to 1997-1998.

Source: As reported in the Student Information System (SIS), 1998-1999 to 2005-2006.

Source: As reported by schools in the Ontario School Information System (OnSIS), 2006-2007\* to 2008-2009\*.

\*Data is not strictly comparable to 2005-2006 and earlier years due to a change in data collection methods in 2006-2007 onwards.

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