

The Research & Analytics Department was engaged to summarize feedback received during the second phase of the accommodation review which took place during January and February 2024.

Background

In light of public input and suggestions to improve the accommodation strategy received through phase 1 of the consultation process, HWDSB’s Board of Trustees passed a motion to expand the original Flamborough Centre/Mary Hopkins Temporary Accommodation Strategy Review to include Balaclava, Guy B. Brown, and Allan A. Greenleaf.

The public was again invited to provide feedback on the proposed strategy which resulted in data for thematic analysis from the following sources:

- Public Meeting on January 22, 2024, with approximately 120 people in attendance
- EngageHWDSB – 11 comments, 516 page views
- Emails to planning@hwdsb.on.ca
- Advisory Committee notes

The table below lists themes that emerged from the data sources that were analyzed. One change to note between the first public meeting and the second one is that we could not provide facilitators for table discussions at the second public meeting due to its expanded scope. Instead, tables were set up around the meeting space with chart paper detailing the proposed scenarios. Each scenario had an accompanying piece of chart paper on which participants could record their feedback under the column headings ‘advantages’ and ‘disadvantages’. Respondents were encouraged to place a colour coded dot (corresponding to the five schools involved in the different scenarios) next to their submission to indicate which school their comments were in reference to. We used the feedback to compile school-based priorities and concerns that will inform the Board’s decision-making process.

The tables below list the themes that emerged from all data sources that were analyzed.

Mary Hopkins	Flamborough Centre	Allan A. Greenleaf	Balaclava	Guy B. Brown
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Splitting cohorts 2. Renovations 3. Portables 4. Building code 5. Green space 6. Lowering enrolment 7. Skepticism regarding projected numbers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Septic system 2. Well water 3. Bussing 4. Parking and traffic safety 5. Minimal student moves 6. Bell times 7. Splitting siblings and school communities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Field condition, loss of blacktop 2. Use Waterdown HS 3. Traffic safety 4. Green space 5. Capacity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Condition of school 2. Septic system 3. Well water 4. Splitting school community 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parking 2. Green space 3. Bussing 4. Splitting up students 5. Gym time 6. Space for portables 7. Supervisory sight lines

8. Building condition				
9. Equitable education				

Here is a description of the themes listed above:

Mary Hopkins

1) Splitting cohorts by moving French Immersion (FI)

- Keeping siblings together is important. If FI is moved, siblings who are not all in the program will be split up.
- French Immersion students are not an insular group; they are part of the school. If FI is moved, students who have gone to school together since Kindergarten will be separated.
- Moving students is going to be traumatizing.
- Do not want to lose grade 5. The grade 4 students are not old enough or mature enough to be leaders in the school. We need the grade 5 students.

2) Impact of renovations

- Lengthy renovation that is occurring right now will result in the loss of the gym and instructional space. This exacerbates the overcrowding already happening.

3) Reduction of portables

- There are currently too many portables at MH and this cannot be the status quo at MH.
- Scenario 6 is the only scenario that reduces MH's portables.
- Portables are already taxing MH's infrastructure.

4) Compliance with building code and fire marshal

- Has a compliance review (building code and fire marshal review) been done since the portables have been added?
- Does the scenario increasing the number of portables account for the electrical needs of air conditioning units?

5) Green space

- Green space is lost due to portables.

6) Lowering enrollment

- Purpose of this accommodation strategy is to lower MH's numbers; however, multiple proposed strategies do nothing to lower MH's numbers.

7) Scepticism regarding projected numbers

- Enrolment projections for MH have been inaccurate for years. Enrolment could exceed scenario projections.
- Projections for enrolment numbers south of Hwy 5 might be incorrect. Newcomer families often have more than 2 children. Basements can be converted into rental units so that houses contain 2 families.

- Why are 2026 numbers being used? Current numbers show overcrowding.

8) Condition of building/inadequate facilities

- The 'Music room' is a cart. Specialized programs are 'on carts'. There is no elevator.
- The building is old.
- There is not enough gym space. This will worsen during the renovations.
- Students in portables are too far from washrooms and there are not enough washrooms for all the students which causes unacceptable wait times.

9) Equitable education

- School conditions are resulting in inequitable education opportunities, and this is reflected in our EQAO scores.

Flamborough Centre

1) Septic system

- FC is overcapacity based on its septic and water systems.
- System cannot handle additional students.

2) Well water

- Water is not potable.

3) Bussing

- Bussing is currently an issue – there is a driver shortage, and the buses are not reliable.
- Students who currently walk to school would be forced to bus in some scenarios.
- Long bus rides are not acceptable.

4) Parking and traffic safety

- There is insufficient parking already.
- The parking situation is dangerous as staff and visitors have to park on the street. With increased enrolment, this situation will worsen.

5) Minimal student moves

- Parents prefer a solution with minimal student moves because student transitions/transfers are stressful.

6) Bell times

- Dividing students between schools creates problems because of different bell times.

7) Splitting siblings/school communities

- Keeping siblings and school communities together is important.
- Splitting cohorts will separate friends.
- Scenarios 5&6 are detrimental to FC – it is unfairly impacted.

Allan A. Greenleaf

1) Condition of field/loss of blacktop with portables

- The field floods and is icy in winter which keeps students on the blacktop for recess. If the portables go on the blacktop this will reduce outdoor play spaces.

2) Utilize space at Waterdown High School

- Can space be used at Waterdown HS temporarily until the new school is built? Childcare already uses space there. Waterdown HS has empty space and can accommodate this arrangement.
- Use Waterdown for grades 7&8 until the new school is built.
- Can Allen A. Greenleaf use Waterdown's gym if the situation at AAG becomes overcrowded?

3) Traffic safety

- The parking lot is congested already and will grow worse with increased enrolment.
- Neighbouring intersections are quite dangerous. Increased traffic will cause unsafe conditions.

4) Green space

- Portables will reduce green space. There will be no space for students to play.

5) Capacity

- There are concerns that AAG will be overburdened due to some of the proposed solutions.

Balaclava

1) Condition of school

- The building is in poor condition already. An influx of students will overtax the facilities.

2) Septic system

- The septic system already has problems.

3) Well water

- There are well water issues.

4) Splitting school community

- Keep students and staff together to maintain peer relationships and staff networks.

Guy B. Brown

1) Parking and traffic safety.

- There is insufficient parking at the school and adding more students will exacerbate the problem.
- Street parking is dangerous.
- 'Traffic is a nightmare; it's a safety concern'.

2) Green space/space for portables

- Portables will take away green space.
- HWDSB spent \$125,000 on the soccer field. It would be ruined by portables.
- The field is on a slope – much of it is unsafe and unusable. How can it accommodate portables and what will be left for kids to play on?
- GBB has a small property to begin with.

3) Bussing

- Busses are frequently late.
- Bussing is unreliable. Adding more students will mean more students are affected.

5) Gym time

- Increased population will limit gym time.
- Gym access is already limited.

6) Supervisory sight lines

- Sight lines for supervision are poor because of the slope. If portables are installed, this will worsen the sight lines.

Questions and Suggestions

Feedback in the form of suggested resolutions is described below along with questions that were posed:

Divide the boundary south of Highway 5

- Numerous respondents suggested dividing the boundary south of Highway 5 and splitting incoming students between multiple schools in order to reduce the impact on those schools.

Utilize space at Waterdown High School

- Numerous respondents suggested using the available space at Waterdown High School and questioned why Waterdown was not included in the planning as a temporary measure until the new school is open.

Questions about accuracy of projection numbers

- Some participants were sceptical that scenarios will be temporary and that school communities will be locked into new, uncomfortable situations for the long term.
- The Catholic board is declining students based on capacity. Have these numbers been accounted for?
- What constitutes a 'house' in HWDSB's calculations? Do apartments count? Is HWDSB considering the possibly high density of rental properties and newcomer families with multiple children?
- The Ministry of Education has already deemed some schools above capacity yet HWDSB's matrices do not.
- Some parents want more enrolment projection data including 2027 projections to stress test solutions.

Critique of meeting format

- The public meeting format was criticized because participants came expecting to be able to pose questions in a town hall style meeting and to be heard in front of the whole group.
- Participants wanted to ensure that other school communities heard about their school struggles, thus fostering empathy and understanding.

- Chart paper on tables made it feel like high school.

New school funding

- Multiple questions arrived about what happens if the funding for a new school does not go through.

Conflict of interest

- A parent questioned the Associate Director's involvement wondering if it is a conflict of interest.

Millgrove

- Why was Millgrove school not included?

Student mental health

- Mental health for students needs to be prioritized. Not all guiding principles are equal.