

Minutes/Notes from PARC Meeting #1

Burlington Secondary Schools Program and Accommodation Review

January 26, 2017

J.W. Singleton Education Centre - 2050 Guelph Line, Burlington, ON
Board Room - 7:00 PM

[Note: Revisions were made based on PARC member requests \(Feb 14, 2017\).](#)

Attendees:

Present: Scott Podrebarac (Chair), Donna Danielli (Trustee), Eric Szyiko (Parent Rep, ALD), Steve Cussons (Parent Rep, ALD), Marianne Meed Ward (Parent Rep, BCH), Ian Farwell (Parent Rep, BCH), Matthew Hall (Parent Rep, DFH), Tricia Hammill (Parent Rep, DFH), Cheryl De Lugt (Parent Rep, LBP), Steve Armstrong (Parent Rep, LBP), Marie Madenzides (Parent Rep, MMR), Dianna Bower (Parent Rep, MMR), Rebecca Collier (Parent Rep, NEL), Kate Nazar (Parent Rep, NEL), Sharon Picken (Parent Rep, RBH), Lisa Bull (Parent Rep, RBH), James Ridge (City Manager), Maria McLellan (Principal, ALD), Kelli Pfeiffer (Principal, BCH), Nick Varricchio (Principal, DFH), Loraine Fedurco (Principal, LBP), Andrea Taylor (Principal, MMR), Karen Hartman (Principal, NEL), Mark Duley (Principal, RBH), Domenico Renzella (General Manager of Planning), Michelle D'Aguiar (Senior Planner), Dhilan Gunasekara (Planner), Kirk Perris (Ipsos Reid), Adriana Tari (Ipsos Reid), Stuart Miller (Director of Education).

On January 26, 2017, the Halton District School Board (HDSB) held the first of four meetings to deliberate on varying options to manage declining enrolment in several HDSB high schools in the City of Burlington. The HDSB is following provincial guidelines set by the Ministry of Education for school boards to undertake pupil accommodation reviews.

The focus of these meetings is for members of the HDSB's Program and Accommodation Review Committee (PARC) to deliberate on options, drafted by HDSB staff and by PARC members themselves. All options are to be considered and a short list is to be presented to the Director of Education will make a recommendation or recommendations to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees will ultimately decide the best course of action for the Board to remain fiscally sound while also accommodating the communities the Board serves.

The PARC is comprised of 14 volunteers, who are parents or guardians of children in one of seven HDSB high schools located in the City of Burlington.

Leading up to the first meeting, PARC members were asked to complete a short survey online. The aim of the short survey was to gauge members' perceptions on the current options, which

stood at 23 options. The data from the survey served to guide the at-table discussions, which comprised the bulk of the time of the meeting. A short synopsis of the email survey is located in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Email Survey – PARC Options

Option #	Checkbox: Place an “X” in One Box Only per Option			Open Ended	Yes/No
	I generally support this option	I generally do not support this option	More info	Comment (1-2 sentences)	Discussion
Example: Option #99	X			I support this option because...	Yes

The survey generated 7 responses from the 14 participants. At the PARC meeting several members claimed to have had problems opening the email or problems being able to reply.

Organization of PARC Meeting #1

The PARC meeting was held at the HDSB office from 7pm to 9pm on January 26, 2017. Members of the public were invited to attend the meeting as observers only. The meeting began with some introductory remarks from the Ipsos facilitator, and members of the HDSB senior team including Stuart Miller (Director of Education), Dom Renzella (General Manager of Planning) and Scott Podrebarac (Superintendent of Education and Chair of the PARC). As well, Donna Danielli the Trustee ad hoc member to the PARC were introduced.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to two at-table discussions. There were seven PARC members at each table representing each of the seven HDSB high schools in Burlington. One table was moderated by Kirk Perris (Ipsos); the other table was moderated by Superintendent Podrebarac.

The data presented in this memo is derived from meeting notes and recordings taken at the two at-table discussions.

Results

The results present findings from the two at-table discussions. The topic of discussion was each of the 23 options. These options had been previously circulated among PARC members.

About half of the options generated no discussion or support from the online survey, or from the in-person groups and will be recommended for removal from the existing list. These 13 options include Options 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, and 20c.

Options that generated further discussion were presented in sequence below with accompanying summaries of commentary recorded during the at-table discussions:

All options are available on the Board website under Program and Accommodation Review Committee (PARC) Meeting Materials.

Option 4: Some more discussion was requested, particularly regarding the movement of IB programs. There was discussion on the costs and logistics (i.e., movement of IB-trained teachers and IB students). It was identified that there had been four occurrences in Ontario where an IB program had moved from one high school to another. In addition, there was concern regarding the relocation of special education students from Robert Bateman HS ([Revised based on PARC request: Feb 14, 2017](#)).

Option 6: The discussion was only that there was agreement at one table to change the boundaries for Dr. Frank J. Hayden SS.

Option 7: The discussion was to consider having the same boundaries for French Immersion and English programs. Further, details were sought on the proposed process to cap grade 9 student enrolment at Dr. Frank J. Hayden SS. There was also resistance to install portables to manage enrolment overflow in any high school.

Option 9: There was a request to have more data on student enrolment in the apprenticeship program, community pathways program, and SHSM program. Further discussion regarding special education programs and non-credit bearing programs ensued. There was concern regarding the relocation of special education students from Robert Bateman HS ([Revised based on PARC request: Feb 14, 2017](#)).

Option 10: A general comment for more discussion was requested. There was also concern regarding the relocation of special education students from Robert Bateman HS ([Revised based on PARC request: Feb 14, 2017](#)).

Option 15: A general comment for more discussion was requested.

Option 19: There was a degree of support for Option 19, as compared to the previously identified options in this section. There was concern, however, with the outcome of splitting grade 8 cohorts from varying feeder schools, that students should not be crossing the QEW highway, that a walkable school is needed with emphasis on affected students in Lester B. Pearson HS were to close, and the impact of additional transportation costs to bus affected students if one of the two named high schools were to close. There was a request to amend the option so that Robert Bateman HS did not receive a French Immersion program.

Option 20a: There was a request for more information that would be available from a meeting held by the Board on February 1, 2017. Boundary review information was desired.

Option 20b: There was support to consolidate the French Immersion programs at select schools to create large French Immersion programs. There was also a request to know if Gary Allan HS could be considered as part of the option.

Option 21a: A general comment for more discussion was requested.

Option 21b: A general comment for more discussion was requested.

Option 22: It was noted by some PARC members, that in their opinion, if this option were to be implemented, M.M. Robinson HS would need a new wing to accommodate special education programs. PARC members discussed whether funding for this extension could be acquired, in part, from costs savings if transportation was reduced. There were concerns, however, that Burlington Central high school is currently not AODA compliant ([Revised based on PARC request: Feb 14, 2017](#)).

Option 23: Option 23 generated the most discussion with a mixture of members who support this option and members who do not support this option. This option would require construction of a new wing at M.M. Robinson HS to accommodate special education classes redirected from Robert Bateman HS.

There was a recommendation that Kilbride PS, CH Norton PS, Florence Meares PS and John William Boich PS be redirected to Lester B. Pearson HS as feeder schools.

There was also opposition to this option as it was felt that Robert Bateman HS has received numerous upgrades over the last few years for special education programs and that M.M. Robinson HS currently does not have the facility capacity to meet special education programming requirements if programming were moved from Robert Bateman HS. Further, the prospect of bussing special education students to Milton was deemed unacceptable as it would require vulnerable students to change schools, including new teachers and school environments multiple times.

The issue of grandfathering special education students was then discussed. Given that special education students have special needs and that this arrangement would remain in place for up to seven years, would pose challenges to the grandfathering proposal.

An added comment was that this Option would result in low enrolment in the French Immersion programs at Aldershot H.S. and Burlington Central H.S.

Overall:

In order to make informed decisions on the feasibility of a given option there was a desire to have greater access to budgeting decisions and changes (e.g., basis to determine and reason for change of projected renewal needs costs). The same broad request was for transportation costs. A specific request was to understand how the number of feeder schools to Lester B. Pearson HS had been reduced to 1.5.

In terms of consideration for alternatives, there was a noted comfort of having schools operating as low as 90% capacity and as high as 110% capacity. Considerations were also noted for

portables as a temporary option to accommodate enrolment overflow, as well as creative timetabling whereby larger enrolment could be reasonably accommodated.

Some additional questions that were posed are listed as follows:

1. What is the number of timetable conflicts at all secondary schools Burlington and Halton?
2. What is the number of students in the Orchard Park PS, Alexander's PS and John William Boich PS that opt to attend Corpus Christi Catholic SS?
3. Why was Dr. Frank J. Hayden SS built when there was a shortage of space?
4. What are the costs to build a new wing for SC-SPED students at M.M. Robinson HS? Could savings from transportation be used for this new wing?
5. Can the Board produce costs and logistics to move CPP/SC-SPED program and equipment to another school?

The meeting concluded with information on school tours, the invitation to circulate more information, including new or revised options, include missing emails of PARC members, and a reminder of the next PARC meeting, scheduled at the same time and location on February 2, 2017.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05pm.