

## **Minutes/Notes from PARC Meeting #3 Burlington Secondary Schools Program and Accommodation Review**

**February 9, 2017**

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

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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), Lisa Bull (Parent Rep, RBH), Sharon Picken (Parent Rep, RBH), Maria McLellan (Principal, ALD), Kelli Pfeiffer (Principal, BCH), Nick Varricchio (Principal, DFH), Loraine Fedurco (Principal, LBP), Jeffery Carey (Vice-Principal, MMR), Karen Hartman (Principal, NEL), Mark Duley (Principal, RBH), James Ridge (City Manager), 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), Lucy Veerman (Superintendent of Business Services), Student Leader.

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On February 9, 2017, the Halton District School Board (HDSB) held the third PARC meeting 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 and then 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 third meeting, PARC members were asked to continue to deliberate by email on outstanding options and to propose new options. The outstanding options were categorized by "No closures," "One closure," and "Two closures." The list is as follows:

### No Closures

- Option 7

### One Closure

- Option 4
- Option 23b
- Option 23c
- Option 29a
- Option 29b

### Two Closures

- Option 9
- Option 15
- Option 19
- Option 20a
- Option 20b
- Option 28
- Option 30a
- Option 30b

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

### Organization of PARC Meeting #3

The PARC meeting was held at the HDSB office from 7pm to nearly 10pm<sup>1</sup> on February 9, 2017. Members of the public were invited to attend the meeting as observers only. The meeting began with some introductory remarks from Board superintendent, Scott Podrebarac.

Lucy Veerman, Superintendent of Business Services, spoke about relevant financial information for the seven HDSB high schools located in the City of Burlington. As an example, the savings from the implementation of Option 19, whereby Central and Pearson would close, was presented.

A discussion followed this presentation with focus on the following topics:

- What would be the implications to staffing from school closures (i.e., would there be job loss?)?  
**Answer:** Staffing assignments have not been looked at as a part of this process. No implications are anticipated for teaching and administrative staff;
- What is the basis of the financial analysis?  
**Answer:** Based on projections, and estimates. Assumptions are indicated directly on the analysis.
- Busing costs?  
**Answer:** Complicated given the fragmented use of buses (e.g., sharing with elementary schools and coterminous board)
- Are portables calculated into the numbers?  
**Answer:** Portable costs were not included in the calculation, but the average portable cost is between \$60,000 - \$70,000. It was also discussed that funding can be acquired from the Ministry of Education to support portable costs.

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<sup>1</sup> The time was scheduled from 7-9pm with an option to extend to 10pm, if necessary.

There was also a second presentation from a consultant's reports on the costs to make the seven HDSB high schools in the City of Burlington AODA compliant (Full report available online). There was some discussion on the validity of the figures, given that numbers were not consistent with previous reporting.

### PARC Engagement with the outstanding Options

The 14 PARC members were asked to pair up by school affiliation and offer their input on the outstanding options, which were positioned around the Boardroom. Accompanying each option was foolscap paper. With reference to the 13 point PARC framework, PARC members were asked to write down supporting details to either "Criteria Met," or "Criteria Not Met," for a given option, along with any suggestions on the foolscap paper.

Along with the written input expected from PARC members, there was also a "dot-mocracy" exercise. After contributing (and reading others' contributions) all the outstanding options, PARC members were asked to attach a dot to three options for which they favoured. Options that received two or fewer dots are not included in the list below. The outstanding options will be the focus of future PARC meetings – the number of dots a given option received are identified in the subheading. In total, 42 dots were distributed (3 dots for 14 PARC members equals 42 dots).

#### **Option 7 – No school closures, cap enrolment at Hayden (9 dots received).**

Criteria Met - Overall: Least disruptive to school communities, given that there are no school closures.

- o Accommodation of students in a permanent facility
- o Cost effectiveness of transportation
- o 80% utilization across the city
- o Regional programming remains an option

Criteria Not Met - Overall: Does not meet a range of outstanding issues, which prompted the PAR

- o Low utilization persists exacerbating fiscal issues
- o No precedent or process for capping enrolment

Suggestion: Boundaries could be adjusted to create stable boundaries and allow for growth.

#### **Option 4 – Bateman closes (4 dots received).**

Criteria Met - Overall: Next to Option 7, it is least disruptive to school communities, given that there is only one school closure, and there is a neighbouring school nearby (Nelson) that could absorb some of the Bateman students.

- o 90% utilization rate met
- o Unified cohorts

Criteria Not Met - Overall: Compromises issues of programming and equity for all HDSB

students

- o Uncertainty if all programs will be offered (e.g., OYAP, SHSM)
- o CPP, Essential, and LEAP all move to one school
- o Balance of enrolment not met (Hayden remains over-capacity; Pearson remains under-capacity)
- o Nelson requires portables
- o Split cohorts
- o Bateman daycare closes

**Option 19 – Pearson and Central close; Hayden program change (15 dots received).**

Criteria Met - Overall: Disruptive given that two schools are closing, and leaving a large gap in downtown Burlington without an HDSB high school; utilization met.

- o Full range of programs (mandatory and optional)
- o Fiscally responsible (utilization rate is improved; transportation savings)
- o Accommodation of students in permanent schools

Criteria Not Met - Overall: Compromises issues of programming and equity for all HDSB students

- o Increases use of portables
- o Increases transportation costs
- o Elementary PAR will be required; splitting of cohorts
- o Specialized programming is lost
- o Does not balance enrolment
- o Lose Pearson nursery
- o Walkability decreases

Suggestions:

- o Tweaks to Aldershot and Bateman to balance enrolment;
- o Tweaks to facilitate stable long term boundaries (e.g., Increase boundary for FI South Burlington east (Aldershot), move some FI to Nelson and to Bateman
- o Avoid splitting Pineland cohort between Nelson Bateman

**Option 28 – Pearson and Central close; Aldershot and Hayden program change (9 dots received).**

Criteria Met - Overall: Disruptive given that two schools are closing, and leaving a large gap in downtown Burlington without an HDSB high school; utilization met.

- o Accessibility addressed
- o Stable boundaries
- o Good range of programming
- o Minimal use of portables
- o Fiscally sound

Criteria Not Met - Overall: Compromises issues of programming and equity for all HDSB students

- o Transportation costs are high
- o Elementary PAR will be required; splitting of cohorts
- o Specialized programming is lost
- o Lose Pearson nursery

Suggestions:

- o Increase Bateman enrolment by moving Nelson English boundaries
- o Increase Aldershot English boundary to include Maple.
- o Keep Pearson
- o Correct error in utilization for 2019 at Dr. Frank J. Hayden SS.

### **Moving Forward**

At the conclusion of these exercises, several discussions ensued.

One PARC member lamented the fact that there was disproportionate attention given to Option 19 and other information (e.g., financial) on Central, stacking the deck against this school. This was deemed substantial, given that comments on the foolscap reflected some of the information presented at the front end of the meeting. The feeling from the PARC members representing Central that accurate and additional information was needed. Further, Option 23 was not listed. As a means to ameliorate this situation it was decided that Option 23 (not Option 23b or Option 23c) would remain with the shortened list of options.

As a counterpoint, one PARC member commended the process during the meeting and found it to be informative, given that there are multiple aspects to be considered, and that the financial issue was only one issue among many.

Another PARC member pondered why some members had placed a sticker on Option 7, as it offers little improvement to the current enrolment issues facing the Board. Several PARC members responded that it was the option that caused the least disruption (i.e., no school closures), and therefore was a vote on principle.

The evening concluded with some remarks from Stuart Miller, Director of the HDSB, and a student representative. Stuart spoke about interacting with the student leaders when the PARC went on school tours, and reminded the PARC to consider the value of student input in its decision-making.

One of the student leaders spoke to remind the PARC members to not only think about finances but think about what is overall best for the students.

**The meeting adjourned at 9:45pm.**