

Minutes/Notes from PARC Meeting #2 Burlington Secondary Schools Program and Accommodation Review

February 2, 2017

J.W. Singleton Education Centre - 2050 Guelph Line, Burlington, ON

Board Room - 7:00 PM

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), 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), 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), David Boag (Associate Director).

Absent: Matthew Hall (Parent Rep, DFH), Tricia Hammill (Parent Rep, DFH), Lisa Bull (Parent Rep, RBH).

On February 2, 2017, the Halton District School Board (HDSB) held the second 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 of Education who 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 second meeting, PARC members were asked to continue to deliberate by email on outstanding options and to propose new options. The outstanding options included:

- Option 4
- Option 15
- Option 21a

- Option 6
- Option 7
- Option 9
- Option 10
- Option 19
- Option 20a
- Option 20b
- Option 21b
- Option 22
- Option 23

New options circulated by email included:

- Option 21a (Revised)
- Option 21b (Revised)
- Option 23b
- Option 23c
- Option 24
- Option 25a
- Option 25b
- Option 26
- Option 27
- Option 28
- Option 29a
- Option 29b
- Option 30

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

Organization of PARC Meeting #2

The PARC meeting was held at the HDSB office from 7pm to 9pm on February 2, 2017. Members of the public were invited to attend the meeting as observers only. The meeting began with some introductory remarks from the Board Director, Stuart Miller, who asked for a moment of silence on the recent passing of a student in the Board.

The Ipsos facilitator and Board Superintendent, Scott Podrebarac, alternated in discussing the agenda and meeting norms for the evening. Trustee Donna Danielli was nominated to aid the Ipsos facilitator by recording a speakers’ list to ensure adequate representation for PARC members to offer comments.

The meeting shifted to a discussion about adding another PARC meeting, elementary school enrolment, and transportation, and financials, summarized in the following bullet points.

- Elementary school enrolment was briefly discussed. Stuart Miller indicated that discussing the circumstances of only a few schools would actually require discussion of all elementary schools in Burlington and that this was unmanageable.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to an at-table discussion. Given there were three fewer PARC members in attendance, and at the request of several PARC members, one larger table was arranged to include all PARC members in one at-table discussion. A second table was also arranged for principals from one of the seven HDSB high schools located in the City of Burlington. At the outset of discussions for each new option, a Board Planner provided a synopsis.

The data presented in this memo is derived from meeting notes and recordings taken at the at-table discussion with 11 PARC members and from the second table that included the principals.

Discussion

The results present findings from the main at-table discussion. Discussions were focused on the existing and new options, identified above. All options had been previously circulated among PARC members. Given that existing options had been the focus of the first PARC working meeting, held on January 26th, it was decided to start with the new options that had been devised since this first PARC meeting.

Options that generated further discussion are presented in sequence below with accompanying summaries of commentary recorded during the at-table discussions. This is categorized by pros, cons, questions, and a summary, where relevant.

Option 23b: The main focus for discussion was that Robert Bateman HS closes and Dr. Frank J. Hayden SS undergo a program change.

Pros

- Most Students who walk to Bateman will be able to walk to Nelson HS as they would be within the Board defined maximum walking distance of 3.2 km between home and school.
- A community school is retained.
- A second high school would not need to be closed.
- Can account for growth.
- If the transition of the CPP and other special needs programs (identified as a part of SC-SPED in projections) from Robert Bateman HS to Aldershot HS can be addressed in the current PAR, it can serve as a reference for future decisions.

Cons

- Moving students in the CPP and other special needs programs would pose potential problems given that these students would need to be re-oriented to a new school, new students and new teachers.
- Requirement for new specialized teaching and operational space at Aldershot HS.
- There is no guarantee that students in CPP and ESC programs will have the same programmatic options at the new school (presumably Aldershot HS)

Questions or Comments:

- How many students have an IEP in Burlington?
- Where would the cooking school in Bateman go?
- The CPP program in Bateman was updated only two years ago. Re-building this elsewhere presents little cost-savings
- Would Bateman and Nelson share bussing?
- What is a good transition for CPP? Think about the future - how can we make these changes better for these students in the future. How can we make this transition experience better?

- How many of those children who have an IEP are enrolled at Bateman?
- How will transitions of CPP and ESC students be handled?
- Is there available data on IEPs that includes individuals on the autism spectrum?
- Desire for data on IEP by school. It is important for everyone to realize that there are placement options associated with IEP; there are five placements options with anyone with an IEP. IEP students may not always be able to go to their home school due to their type of placement.
- Where would the OYAP program go?

Option 23c: The main focus for discussion was that Robert Bateman HS closes and Dr. Frank J. Hayden SS undergo a program change. The fundamental difference from Option 23b is that the SC-SPED program relocation (with the exception of ESS) would split students to a high school depending on where they reside north or south of the QEW. Those who are north would be relocated from Robert Bateman HS to M.M. Robinson HS; those who are south would be relocated from Robert Bateman HS to Aldershot HS.

Pros

- The number for the south are favourable.
- For students who would be relocated from Robert Bateman HS to M.M. Robinson HS, this option would be favourable given that M.M. Robinson HS already has a special education program. M.M. Robinson HS also has a pool.

Cons

- Splitting such a large SC-SPED program will inevitably minimize options for students (currently enrolled at Robert Bateman HS).
- Lester B. Pearson HS is still underutilized (but this can be tweaked for the north).
- Aldershot HS will still have difficulty accommodating the special education program.
- Grandfathering does not benefit the students.
- Similar or identical facilities would have to be built in either Aldershot HS or M.M. Robinson HS.

Questions or Comments:

- Are these numbers taking into account smaller classrooms or regular classrooms?
- Need additional information at what exists at M.M. Robinson HS and if it can accommodate more students in the special education program.
- What would be required if additional space were needed to be constructed (in either Aldershot HS or M.M. Robinson HS) and what would be the cost?
- Growth will happen North of the QEW.
- How will CPP students be grandfathered if they are in school until they are 21 years of age?
- Robert Bateman HS has all types of programs - so how are we going to find this huge space to accommodate all these students?

Option 26: The main focus of Option 26 is that Burlington Central HS and Lester B. Pearson HS close, leading to an overall reduction of 1,512 secondary pupil spaces by 2020.

Pros

- A suggestion to alter the numbers (or tweak) at Aldershot HS and M.M. Robinson HS. This would be accomplished by moving some students from the current Aldershot HS boundaries in north Aldershot to M.M. Robinson HS, thereby enabling these students to be within the Board defined maximum walking distance of 3.2 kms between home and school. This would also serve to lessen the enrolment pressures facing Dr. Frank J. Hayden SS.
- Elementary students from the Orchard community that feed into Dr. Frank J. Hayden SS were originally going to Robert Bateman HS. Shifting boundaries so that these students return to Robert Bateman HS would also serve to increase this school's enrolment.

Cons

- Similar concerns raised with Option 19 (see minutes from January 26, 2017).
- Proposed school closures leave too many schools over utilized.

Questions

It was asked that the percent utilization for Robert Bateman HS indicated for 2026 be corrected from 65% to 80%.

Moving Forward

With little time remaining, it was decided that the meeting should be called to an end. The following topics were addressed to close out the meeting:

- The topic of transportation was discussed, and deemed to be unmanageable given that bussing is shared between school boards.
- A request for financial information on each of the seven HDSB high schools in Burlington was requested. Scott Podrebarac indicated that the AODA report would be available prior to the third PARC meeting, scheduled for February 9, 2017.
- Adding an additional PARC meeting for February 16, 2017 was considered, as was lengthening the time, up to 10pm, for the remaining PARC meetings.
- PARC members were expected to respond to an email from Scott Podrebarac on input for the options not discussed at the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00pm.