

Minutes/Notes from PARC Meeting #4

Burlington Secondary Schools Program and Accommodation Review

February 16, 2017

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

Board Room - 7:00 PM

Revised sections noted by date.

Present: David Boag (Associate Director and Acting 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), Lisa Bull (Parent Rep, RBH), Sharon Picken (Parent Rep, RBH), Maria McLellan (Principal, ALD), Kelli Pfeiffer (Principal, BCH), Nick Varricchio (Principal, DFH), Rebecca Newcombe (Vice-Principal, LBP), Andrea Taylor (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), Mark Zonneveld (Superintendent of Education), Gord Truffen (Superintendent of Education), Gerry Cullen (Superintendent of Facility Services).

Absent: Scott Podrebarac (Chair), Kate Nazar (Parent Rep, NEL).

On February 16, 2017, the Halton District School Board (HDSB) held the fourth 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 fourth meeting, PARC members were asked to familiarize themselves, and offer input by email on five outstanding options that were short-listed (including Option 23, which was not discussed during the third PARC meeting). One additional option, Option 3b, was put forward for consideration between the third and fourth PARC meetings. Relative to school

closures the options are listed as follows:

No Closures

- [Option 7b](#)

One Closure

- [Option 3b](#)
- [Option 4b](#)

Two Closures

- [Option 19b](#)
- [Option 23d](#)
- [Option 28c](#)

Click on the links above to view each option.

Organization of PARC Meeting #4

Presentations from Board Members

The PARC meeting was held at the HDSB office from 7:00 pm to 10:15 pm on February 16, 2017. Members of the public were invited to attend the meeting as observers only. The meeting began with some introductory remarks from the Board associate director, David Boag.

During the opening of the meeting, there was a brief discussion to hold an additional PARC meeting on February 23, 2017. It was decided to wait until the conclusion of the meeting to determine if a sixth PARC was necessary.

Subsequently, Board Superintendent of Facility Services, Gerry Cullen, spoke about facility costs for the seven HDSB high schools located in the City of Burlington. A summary of his remarks included the following:

- The posted facility data now is as close as it needs to be for the purposes of understanding facility costs.
- The initial projected data released was based on a TCPS database, which is not in use and incorrect. The Ministry and the Board transitioned to the VFA database, which is the data currently provided. These are considered accurate.
- The new database spreads the costs of projects needed at a facility over multiple years to ensure uniform expenditure throughout multiple years. The swing in costs could have occurred because things could have been pushed out or completed before that 5-year window.
- The initial \$1.8 million costs to renovate Burlington Central was based on a TCPS assessment method, which is not in use and not correct; the current projected needs list can be considered accurate.
- The HDSB can only spend what it receives from the Ministry of Education. The HDSB provides the Ministry with a shopping list of what is needed. What gets completed is dependent on how much money the Ministry allocates to the HDSB.

PARC Engagement with the outstanding Options

The 14 PARC members were asked to pair up by their school affiliation and participate in small group discussions with one or two other paired PARC members. Each small group included a

Board superintendent, who served as facilitator, and as note taker.

The groups were organized as follows:

- Group 1: Pearson and Hayden PARC reps
- Group 2: Aldershot and Central PARC reps
- Group 3: MMR, Bateman and Nelson PARC reps

With reference to the PARC framework, each group was to deliberate on the following four questions:

1. What elements of the framework have been addressed in this option?
2. What elements of the framework have not been addressed in this option?
3. How could this option be made better or enhanced? ex. Capital improvements, program improvements, transition planning.
4. Is there an option that can/should fall off the table?

The following presents a synopsis of discussion items from each at-table discussion. Comments are presented in aggregate and a final “Overall” summary identifies the consensus at a given table regarding the viability of an option.

Option 7b – No school closures, Hayden boundary change.

[Option 7b details](#)

What elements of the framework have been addressed in this option?

- Provides room for growth; Pearson expands to 84%; MMR is at 64%

What elements of the framework have not been addressed in this option?

- Does not provide for stable long term boundaries as both Bateman and MMR are significantly under utilized
- Overall, more than 1,500 empty pupil places remain – low enrolment at Aldershot, Bateman and MMR; Hayden’s high enrolment is only temporarily solved. Potential for another secondary PAR likely in a few years since issues are not addressed
- Potential for Orchard students to transfer to the Catholic School Board instead of attending Pearson
- Cohorts are split

Tweaks: How could this option be made better or enhanced (e.g., Capital improvements, program improvements, transition planning)?

- Tweak option to enhance enrolments at Bateman and MMR
- Move boundaries to split Pearson and MMR to get to 70% utilization
- Move English boundary; instead of going to Pearson students would go to MMR
- Halton West (under construction) is going to go to MMR, which will produce 40-50 additional students

Overall: Remove (Group 2 & 3); tweaks (Group 1)

Option 3b – Nelson closes; Hayden and Central program change.

[Option 3b details](#)

What elements of the framework have been addressed in this option?

- Bateman utilization is high at 100%, which may be a concern due to space requirements for SC-SPED; MMR is re-balanced
- Addresses walkability and busing minimized
- Stable long term boundaries addressed to some degree. However, there is a potential for redirected Orchard community students who may choose to transfer to English program or attend a nearby school in the Catholic School Board

What elements of the framework have not been addressed in this option?

- Cohorts split for English and French Immersion programming; Pineland elementary school will no longer feed into Nelson
- Long term, Pearson enrolment declines

Tweaks: How could this option be made better or enhanced (e.g., Capital improvements, program improvements, transition planning)?

- Central (South of QEW) and MMR (North of QEW) utilizations are lower than other high schools. Could this enrolment be balanced?
- If Bateman is near or over capacity what is the impact/effect on those special student programs - taking IB from Bateman to MMR

Other comments (Revised: Feb 24, 2017 - 4:49 pm)

- Lessening options for gifted students if they go from Nelson to Pearson; more timetable conflicts, penalizing gifted kids by moving them
- Central loses French Immersion, which is an optional program
- Partnership with City of Burlington for track at Nelson is lost if it closes
- Does not address walkability – half of Nelson on buses; all FI from Central on buses – total?
- Does not give Pearson program viability in ENG as Gifted programming is different

Overall: Support, with tweaks (all three Groups).

Option 4b – Bateman closes.

[Option 4b details](#)

What elements of the framework have been addressed in this option?

- English and French Immersion cohorts are kept together at Hayden

What elements of the framework have not been addressed in this option? (Revised: Feb 24, 2017 - 4:49 pm)

- Viability of programming an issue at Aldershot as their enrolment remains low for the English program
- Program viability at Pearson as the addition of specialty programs does not increase ENG program viability
- Fiscal responsibility not addressed as moving specialty programs and equipment from Bateman to another school would be costly, including the construction of new facilities to house specialized programs at Nelson. Bateman also has the lowest cost to bring up to accessibility standards
- Utilization is not great – MMR is low; Nelson, Pearson and Hayden are high
- Portables will be needed at Pearson, Nelson and Hayden
- Physical environmental state of existing schools – not consistent – close Bateman, but Central needs significant repairs

Tweaks: How could this option be made better or enhanced (e.g., Capital improvements, program improvements, transition planning)?

- Move IB and gifted programs from Pearson to MMR to increase utilization at MMR. This would also address over utilization at Pearson under the current option
- Move IB and gifted program from Pearson to Central

Other comments

- Lessening options for gifted if they go from Nelson to Pearson; more timetable conflicts, penalizing gifted kids by moving them
- Nelson over utilized– new facilities will be constructed to accommodate the new influx of students – not an immediate solution – will eventually bring utilization down
- Course conflict at 80% at Central and Aldershot
- Can the Board provide costs of relocation for specialized programs from Bateman?

Overall: Support with tweaks (Groups 1 & 2); remove (Group 3).

Option 19b – Pearson and Central close; Hayden and Bateman program change.

[Option 19b details](#)

What elements of the framework have been addressed in this option?

- If space within school buildings are made available for secondary students, then this option might address the issue long term
- Good program viability in English and French immersion programs
- Gifted program has room for growth at Nelson
- Fiscally responsible given that construction of a new wing at Nelson would not be necessary
- Elementary cohort from Pineland will go to Nelson
- Bateman new French Immersion programming would be coming from Boich elementary school.

What elements of the framework have not been addressed in this option?

- Less walkability and more students transported
- Moving ESL to Aldershot does not help enrolment in English programs
- Aldershot is overcapacity and should not take ESL students

Tweaks: How could this option be made better or enhanced (e.g., Capital improvements, program improvements, transition planning)?

- Potential for grandfathering was discussed
- Transition planning for schools up for closure need to be discussed as there is potential for students to leave school before 2018 implementation, which might affect 2017 enrolments and programming at schools
- Redirect the entire Orchard community (Boich, Orchard Park and Alexander) to Bateman. This will increase Bateman utilization and decrease utilization at MMR
- Removing French Immersion from Hayden and creating a new French Immersion program under this option is not preferred, as opposed to Option 28c.
- Nelson has the capacity for ESL students – should flow east
- Only one school closure is needed
- Slice the community down Brant street – this is a tweak that needs to happen if this option goes through – need to change the boundary
- Hayden enrolment remains an issue

Questions or Comments

Don't want to impact program viability for FI at Bateman, check numbers.

- If Pearson is closing does that fill MMR properly? And does this deal with the Hayden issue?
- If Central closes – accommodation for Gr. 7-8 will need to be determined.

Overall: Support (Groups 2 & 3); Tweaks (Group 1)

Option 28c – Pearson and Central close; Hayden program change.

Option 28c details

What elements of the framework have been addressed in this option?

- More cohorts remain together
- Program viability at MMR; program viability for SC-SPED and all English and French Immersion
- Fiscally responsible (e.g., no renovations; transportation for up to 600 students is feasible)
- Utilization is good
- No use of portables
- Allows for expansion of new ministry or board programs

- Maintains existing community use/partnership with Nelson, and Bateman; and with self-contained placements

What elements of the framework have not been addressed in this option?

- Walkability not addressed as more students are transported.
- Does not create new French Immersion program at another school over Option 19b.

Tweaks: How could this option be made better or enhanced? ex. Capital improvements, program improvements, transition planning.

- None

Overall: Support (Groups 1 & 3); Remove (Group 2)

Option 23d – Pearson and Bateman close; Hayden program change.

[Option 23d details](#)

What elements of the framework have been addressed in this option?

- Balances enrolment south of the QEW

What elements of the framework have not been addressed in this option?

- Accommodation an issue as Nelson exceeds capacity
- Viability of programs a concern as French Immersion program not equally distributed as there are 3 French Immersion schools south of the QEW and 1 French Immersion school north of the QEW
- Fiscal responsibility not addressed. Moving specialty programs and equipment from Bateman to another school would be costly, including the construction of new facilities to house specialized programs at Nelson. Bateman also has the lowest cost to bring up to accessibility standards.
- Utilization is not good; one school would be at a low utilization rate and three would be at a high utilization rate.
- Stable boundaries a concern as students may enroll in a school in the Catholic School Board and/or French Immersion students may transfer to English program. This might be an issue short term, that might correct itself in the long-term. However, there is still uncertainty regarding parent choice.

Tweaks: How could this option be made better or enhanced (e.g., Capital improvements, program improvements, transition planning)?

- Nelson is overcapacity, but change this by moving Nelson gifted program enrolment to Aldershot or Central
- Move Central IB to Aldershot; provide busing for IB program
- Move Nelson gifted program enrolment to Central
- Move SC-SPED to a school other than Nelson to manage its utilization
- Boundary change – move the French Immersion boundary – which will solve Nelson

- overcapacity
- Move more French Immersion students to Central

Questions or Comments:

Given that Nelson and Bateman currently share transportation, if this were removed, is Nelson able to share transportation with Central? Are there other options to consider?

For Nelson, viability of programming would be way over. Space for SC-SPED is comparatively larger per pupil than in conventional programming; a classroom that may accommodate 30 pupils in conventional programming contains 10 pupils in SC-SPED programming. Therefore, having 75 pupils in SC-SPED programming would require significantly more space than is currently available at Nelson.

Overall: Support (Group 1 & 2); Remove (Group 3) (Revised: Feb 24, 2017 - 4:49 pm)

Wrap Up and Next Steps

At the conclusion of these exercises, several discussions ensued and a synopsis of each option was discussed with a tally of responses from each table. This is highlighted in grey font at the conclusion of each option. The overall conclusion is that the outstanding six options will not be removed, but may be subject to tweaks in advance of the release of the survey on Monday, February 27, 2017.

The final remarks were directed towards the upcoming public meetings, scheduled for Tuesday February 28, 2017 and Tuesday March 7, 2017, and the survey being devised for public input. The Ipsos facilitator led this part of the discussion. A summary of points are listed as follows:

1. Review structure of public meeting on February 28th; March 2nd
 - A format similar to the second and third PARC meeting where there will be six stations – one for each option
 - Each station will include a superintendent and/or planner to explain the context of a given option
 - Paper surveys will be distributed, along with instructions to direct people to complete the survey online
2. Survey
 - There will be 3 questions per option with a focus on favourability as it relates to the PARC framework. Each option will include two close ended and one open ended question.
 - There will be an open link to complete the survey available to the general public; and a unique link to complete the survey available to parents/guardians who are registered with the Board's internal email system.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15pm.

