

WARD 12 PART

AY Jackson SS - Highland JHS - Zion Heights JHS
 Arbor Glen PS - Cliffwood PS - Cresthaven PS - Cumber Valley MS - Finch PS
 Hillmount PS - Hollywood PS - Lillian PS - Pineway PS - Steelesview PS

PROGRAM AREA REVIEW TEAM (PART) MEETING

October 29, 2015

MEETING NOTES

Present:

<i>School</i>	<i>Principal (and/or rep)</i>	<i>School Council Rep(s)</i>
AY Jackson SS	Boyd Bugden	Aline Chan
Highland JHS	Janay Tonnos	Pradeep Budhera
Zion Heights JHS	Donna Lamb	Liz Christensen
Arbor Glen PS	Bev Kirsh	Jane Yi
Cliffwood PS	Sarah Frost	Melanie Rubens, Yan Liu
Cresthaven PS	Nuzhat Hussain	Shelley Liberatore
Cumber Valley MS	Gaye Lew	
Finch PS	Susan Yun	Salam Heydarinejad
Hillmount PS	Sandra Bauer	
Hollywood PS	Thane Jovanovich	Jaime Brand
Lillian PS		Parisa Tashakori
Pineway PS	Annessa Ali	Linda Cho
Steelesview PS	Hindy Bieler	Jennifer Gillick

Central: Linda Curtis, Superintendent – ER17 FOS
 Alexander Brown, Trustee – Ward 12
 Peter Naperstkow - Educational Planner
 Lori Moore, Supervising Principal – Special Education
 Pam Breese, Administrative Liaison – ER17 FOS

1.	Welcome: Linda Curtis, Superintendent and Chair of this PART
	Linda welcomed everyone and thanked them for their participation in this process. Everyone introduced themselves.
2.	Review Mandate of the Program Area Review Team
	The role of a PART is an advisory one involving parents and principals – to review data & discuss impacts, then make recommendations after hearing from the broader community and construct a report for consideration and final outcome/decision by the Board. The process includes public meetings. Consensus by all members will be sought tonight. If this is not achieved, voting will occur on recommendations by show of hands – one vote per school. In this case, the minority report will be included with the PART report.

	<p>Feedback from the PART meetings as well as community consultations will assist Trustee Brown in explaining the final recommendation and responding to questions from his colleagues when the report is considered for final approval.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Review and Discussion of Public Meeting Feedback for preferred Scenario 5.2</p>
	<p>Feedback from the public meetings has been summarized and was shared with everyone. Themes included Timing of Changes, Readiness of Students, Childcare – Before and After Care, Quality of Programs, French Immersion Pathway, Pineway, and McNicoll PS.</p> <p>A summary was given for each theme by Linda Curtis. Discussions then ensued -- comments, suggestions, questions are bulleted below, with responses italicized.</p> <p><i>Timing of Changes / Readiness of Students</i></p> <p>People seemed quite anxious – parents feel grade 8s will lose their year of being a ‘senior’ but there is a feeling that we do have to move forward.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If there is a change, it should happen as soon as possible. Transitions can be stressful but students adjust quickly. Having a 4 year model at AY Jackson provides for a better experience. Do all the changes at once. ○ No parent wants their children to miss out on being the oldest in the JH school, or to be part of the first group of grade 9s at AY Jackson. Rip the bandaid – make the changes all at once. If the principals of schools accepting new grades have adequate time to plan for the change, it should happen right away. ○ Having students attend Don Mills for grade 9 Gifted and then move to AY Jackson for grade 10 isn’t the best idea for students. They should grow year by year in one school only. ○ They should start in grade 9 at AY Jackson as soon as possible ○ Could 1 JHS move their grade 9’s one year and the other JHS move the next? (ie – move the Zion grade 9s this coming year – and move the Highland grade 9s the next year). ○ Highland students feel very strongly that they aren’t ready and want time to prepare. Zion & Highland are two very different areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>We could move the grade 9’s one year and the grade 6’s the next. But because the pathways are interconnected, it would be difficult to move Zion and Highland’s grade 9’s at separate times. The concern would be the shared pathways not only with the 2 JHS in this FOS but the 3 JHS in the other FOS where a similar PART process is underway. Logistically, it would be most challenging.</i> ○ When changes are to happen, one way is to do pilot studies (ie separate the process, request volunteers, evaluate the outcomes). Could we do that? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The changes really need to occur at the same time in order to meet the necessary student numbers for the programs.</i> ○ Feedback from parents at AYJ is they want the decision made quickly so they know the pathway and can make appropriate choices. ○ If you give your children a chance to rise to the occasion, they will. Ripping the bandaid would be better rather than delaying it and creating more stress, anxiety and tension. Kids will adapt. ○ As someone not affected by this change – I’m hearing parents say “One more year and my child will be ready” ... but then the next group will do the same. If we can do it

next year and do it the right way, the model will work.

- Current grade 7 students at Highland are fine with the move because they have a full year to prepare and a grad celebration as a milestone. But the current grade 8 students are nervous and unprepared. The logistics of trying to do a double cohort graduation will be challenging in terms of planning for staff as well as financially to parents.
- If September 2016 is the decision – This has been a challenging year labour-wise and in order to support getting everyone ready, we need to have all staff on board. Messages can be misinterpreted when the message is through paper rather than at staff meetings which currently cannot be held.
- Zion Hts – The principal met with grade 8s only at the beginning of October and said this was being considered so they are aware. Parents and students would have input. Students are ready -- their first question was “will we have our own grad?” Of course they will. Grade 9s want a different graduation to the grade 8s which we will accommodate. Staff members have known about these accommodations and have been anticipating them. They may not be happy but they know it’s inevitable. The Zion staff will step up to the bar when the time comes to launch our grade 8’s and grade 9’s over to AY Jackson, and to welcome our new grade 6s. There has been no opposition whatsoever – not one phone call from October till now about the changes.
- Highland is a totally different story in terms of concerns from parents, students and staff. They would like to have a step-by-step process instead of everything moving together. They feel they need a longer time to prepare – September 2016 is too rushed.
- Grade change related to Gifted isn’t a good idea (attending one school for grade 9 and then another for grade 10). Do we have the confidence that we can handle all this at once? Student Safety – crossing major roads? Do we have the capacity to carry it out properly? An extra year would help to prepare kids (ie - safety training)
 - *Principals of middle schools – Lots of preparation in the spring (open house for grade 5’s who will be coming the following September) plus a day visit including school tour & presentation to orient the students. Guidance counsellors attend their schools to discuss the transition as well. Parents are encouraged to walk the route with students or take the TTC route with them to prepare them. Community liaison officers can assist with student safety to prepare the students in terms of crossing main roads. Schools are responsible for preparing the kids and take it very seriously. Some students can take the bus together as a unit – parents organize rides – it tends to bring the community together with a common goal. Feedback from students is they feel ready, not unsafe. Grade 6s really seem to enjoy middle schools and the specialty teachers, bigger gyms, different teachers and activities – to prepare them for high school. Kids can be prepared and rise to the challenge.*
 - *(Trustee Brown) The Board recommended a letter be sent to the Mayor to work on the problems we have with school safety. We can engage local Councillor David Shiner to focus on problematic areas – if we advocate strongly, we can get support. If we can identify the areas needing more focus, we can then approach the City to work out an arrangement to ensure student safety.*
- Logistics – are kids ready emotional psychologically – are parents ready? From the kids’ point of view, how much time do we need to prepare? There are only 7 months left to prepare them. They end up emotionally attached to their school. Parents – what is their level of buy-in in this process? Is there a voting process or statistical data?
 - *We won’t be taking a vote. You as School Council reps represent the voice of the parents. The public meetings provide an opportunity for feedback. We are an advisory committee – the Senior Staff and Board of Trustees will ultimately make*

the decision. Whenever there's a change, it becomes a "new normal". These changes have a track record & history of being successful – we have good examples of middle schools to follow – there are only 4 grade 10-12 secondary schools in TDSB. We will need to prepare the parents as well as the students.

- *Kids will build relationships wherever they go – moving the grade 9's will still leave JHS as great schools but having a 4 year high school experience will enrich students much further.*
- The hesitation of “they’re not ready” is focussing on the social emotional aspect – “I don’t get to be the senior, I’m not with my friends” ... If we focus on the academic benefits of children moving up earlier – more opportunities as grade 6s in middle school rather than elementary – same with grade 9’s being in high school rather than JHS – we need to change to that being the focus.
- Grade 6s that I speak with at Cresthaven are so ready to be gone – they don’t want to be in elementary anymore – they want to move on to middle school or junior high. It’s obvious in their behaviour that they are socially ready to be treated more as an adult. For the safety issue – Hillmount’s catchment comes from Don Mills with crossing guards at Don Mills & McNicoll – grade 4’s are already crossing roads themselves. It can be dealt with by way of crossing guards, etc.
- Ranking of schools was raised as a concern.
 - *We are trying to make all schools as equitable as possible. We don’t look at ranking when making these decisions but we do try to do what’s best for all schools in order to make them equitable.*
- Questions about the lunch program supervision
 - *Middle School grade 6s – Cummer Valley - 2 lunches with an in-school lunch program – parents must give permission for students to leave property.*
 - *Junior High – Zion has working cafeteria – grade 9 students can leave school property – grade 7/8 students require parental permission (if the school reverts to 6/7/8, access to leaving would be limited with parental input).*
 - *Highland doesn’t have a cafeteria and only 2 LRS - grade 7/8/9 students require parental permission to leave but many go home – honour system mainly.*
- There was a concern expressed about who would be legally responsible if a grade 6 student left the new middle school during the lunch period without parent permission and got in an accident. There would be an increased risk with the younger students being in a school where many other students leave at lunch.
 - *Having a dialogue with students to pre-empt this kind of situation would be beneficial. Grade 8s could model behaviour as peer leaders as well. There are many examples of middle schools and we look to them for best practices to determine how to manage things like lunch, etc. Risks need to be mitigated. Safety (walking to/from school – lunch periods) – transition teams will work with parents, students and staff/police to prepare students and reduce the risks for students. The model of a school can change – kids can be excited just to have a cafeteria in school.*

Childcare – Before and After Care

The TDSB Childcare manager is looking into programs available. There are no examples of before/after programs in middle schools. Providers haven’t been interested in running a program due to low numbers. Parks & Recreation programs are a viable option for parents. A plan will be in place to address these concerns. Many concerns can be alleviated by way of conversations between principals and parents.

Quality of Programs

People were concerned about teachers moving, etc. Reassuring them of the collective agreements in place to support the teachers to ensure fair processes will help to address these concerns.

French Immersion Pathway

There is much concern around the pathway for French programs. Some parents want York Mills so are prepared to do one year at Windfields for grade 9, and then move their students to York Mills. Other parents want fewer transitions and want a pathway that leads to Newtonbrook. If parents prefer that pathway to the official one, we could accommodate them at Newtonbrook so parents could choose. This would solve the issue.

Pineway

This is the only school where enrolment didn't increase. Many questions were raised around French or Gifted programs being placed there. Part of the concern is Pineway is our smallest physical plant. Putting French or Gifted there leaves no room to grow. With the status quo, Pineway will be at 77% in 10 years. With these changes they will be at 66% which, due to the size of the school, is only 30 less students. Some feedback came that by not putting a French program at Pineway those students would be denied access to French Programs. This is not the case as French Immersion and Extended French are open to all students of the board. If parents apply by the deadline their children are guaranteed a spot in a program. Many local students choose to go to schools outside the Pineway area through optional attendance. We need to draw all the local students into Pineway perhaps through an Arts focus, STEM focus, etc. Music or Sports were also suggested. New families are moving in but not having their students attend Pineway – we need to make it a Magnet School. Engaging the community will be key. Through a consultation process with the Pineway community, we can determine preferences and enhance the school's programming. . Because they are a small plant in size, putting those programs at Pineway would lead to another transition 5 years down the road if their numbers grow. AY Jackson had a similar experience a few years ago – without adding Gifted or French, but instead adding programs (SHSM), parents responded well and enrolment increased.

McNicol PS

The school closed in 2000 and is currently leased by Adventure Place (serving as community hub for students on ASD spectrum). Breaking the lease would be most difficult, and would affect the houses being built in the area. 120 students live in that attendance boundary which isn't enough to make the school viable. The building is on the surplus list.

4. Considerations Discussed prior to Voting

Secondary Gifted

Placement of the Gifted program at AY Jackson is dependent on converting AY Jackson to a grade 9-12 model. If the grade 9 entry is September 2016, the Gifted program will proceed there. If not, Gifted students would have to be redirected to Don Mills CI (key pressure point for accommodations) for grade 9 and then move. This would be problematic due to the Board's policy stating they will not be redirected – creating a lack of critical mass for the program.

French program

A concern was expressed about losing the French Middle Immersion program for parents who feel their kindergarten students aren't ready for French Immersion – moving isn't a concern but losing Mid-Immersion takes away an opportunity for parents hoping for that option down the road.

The MI program can't stay at Hollywood due to space needs. The option would be to move it to another location and unfortunately there's not a lot of space since we would need a K-6 school. The transition for grade 6's was supposed to be to LB Pearson but because LB Pearson was over-crowded, Hollywood kept the program to accommodate the system. This has created space issues now at Hollywood.

 ***Proposed Solution*** – Move MI program from Hollywood but let the French Department decide whether to replace with an Extended French program or replace it with French Immersion.

Gifted Program

Concern was expressed about the grade 6 Gifted students having to move from Hillmount when parents were anticipating a grade 4-6 experience.

All grade 6 students at Hillmount (both regular and Gifted) are integrated so having one group move and the other not, would split the students, plus create a double entry at Zion over 2 years which is not ideal.

Approval Process

Community consultation will be a large part of the decision of the Board of Trustees. Specific departments will make recommendations ie - Special Ed (Gifted) and French.

Open Plan Schools

Is there going to be funding for this so we can address the existing concerns around the openness of schools? In some areas of Steelesview PS, children can't concentrate or hear or think clearly. Moving towards full integration increases the needs of all the students.

Adding 85 students in the Gifted program with only 2 actual classrooms in the school will create challenges (cap is 25 each).

Financial aspects of the implementation must be noted in the PART. The LFT process included input from principals and no concern regarding this was identified previously, but is now being raised as a concern if the Gifted program is added at Steelesview. Lori Moore clarified that a number of open concept schools with the Gifted program have been very creative in making them work. The concern can be included in the Renovation Request Cycle in Spring to be evaluated.

Name Changes

If the changes go through, there will be name changes to the schools from JHS to MS.

Autism Program

Would the shift of the Autism program from Finch to Pineway be harmful to students by creating another move?

Natural transitions would be sought – the Finch program wouldn't close right away. The Spec Ed department would create natural transitions to support the students (16 in total) depending on class size (ie – 2/3/4 program or 3/4/5). None of the students in the Autism program are from the Finch catchment area which would make moving the program somewhat easier as they are already bussed.

5.	Achieving Consensus (<i>show of hands</i>)
	<p>Boundary Change – <i>unanimous consensus reached.</i></p> <p>French Program – <i>unanimous consensus reached.</i></p> <p>Special Education (Gifted pathway and Autism Program) – <i>unanimous consensus reached.</i></p> <p>Grade Changes – <i>unanimous consensus reached.</i></p> <p>Implementation – Vote Taken When to Implement the Changes  2016 – Yes 19 No 4  All at once – 21 Phase it in - 2</p>
5.	Next Steps
	<p>The next steps in the PART process are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the PART membership to submit their report sometime this week; • Staff to review the PART membership Report, and create a Staff Response Report, sometime next week (Mon Nov. 9); • The highlights of the Staff Response Report will be made public by posting it on the Board’s web site http://www.tdsb.on.ca/AboutUs/StrategyPlanning/CommunityInvolvement.aspx • Individuals have the opportunity to speak to the Trustees about this matter at Planning Priorities Committee on November 18. Requests to speak must be made in advance http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Leadership/Boardroom/Delegations.aspx • The Board of Trustees will decide on this matter on November 25. <p>Once approved, Transition Teams will be created to focus on implementation. Teams will be comprised of staff and parents, led by Superintendent Curtis.</p>
6.	Adjournment
	<p>Everyone was thanked for their work and commitment to the process. The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.</p>