



Accommodation Review
Committee (ARC) Recommendations

**JR Wilcox CS, Cedarvale CS, Arlington MS,
Rawlinson CS, Humewood CS
Accommodation Review**

April 2010

CONTEXT

On October 28th 2009, the Toronto District School Board approved the establishment of the JR Wilcox CS, Cedarvale CS, Arlington MS, Rawlinson CS, Humewood CS Accommodation Review Committee (ARC). The five schools in this community are significantly under enrolled at this time at **49% utilization**. The projected enrolment to 2018 is only 52%. The task of the ARC was to investigate ways to resolve the under enrolment and find meaningful solutions to better meet the educational needs of all the students in the community. *(Note: Facilitator change—49% should read 51%. 13/04/10)*

Eight private meetings of the ARC and four public meetings took place. Letters were sent to parents of the students of ARC schools and to the community to inform them of the process of the Accommodation Review, the dates of public meetings and the process for deputations. Additional information was sent to notify the community of a change in the date of one meeting. Advertisements were also placed in local English and ethnic newspapers to ensure that appropriate communication and information was available. The agendas, minutes and presentations that took place at all the public meetings were posted to the Better Schools Brighter Futures website: www.tdsb.on.ca/brighterfutures. These included the planning information that formed the basis for discussions and decisions made by the ARC. The recommendations developed by the ARC involved extensive input from school communities. A survey distributed to schools and community was summarized and the results were considered by the ARC. Deputations from the community were heard at the third public meeting. Many of the deputations were also submitted in writing and can be viewed on the TDSB website. French program information was provided by the Program Co-ordinator for French as a Second Language to the ARC. Information about K to Grade 8 schools was also provided. The Facility Framework - *Building for Tomorrow* - was presented for consideration. The Manager of Child Care Services was consulted about potential moves of any childcare facilities. The ARC Facilitator met with the staff of each school under review to discuss the process of the Accommodation Review and the options under consideration by the ARC.

The extraordinary work of the parents, community member, students and school principals, supported by TDSB staff, was extremely challenging. Each of the five schools is an excellent community school, serving a diverse and involved community and staffed by teachers, support staff and administrators who represent our Board's daily commitment to student success, instructional excellence, and strong leadership in safe and welcoming schools. The Childcares and Parenting Centres that are housed in the schools play a significant role within the community. Adult ESL programs are also offered at one school where there is considerable demand for English language classes. Each school carries a history and a legacy that both defines and is defined by its neighbourhood. The intrinsic value of each site was considered during all deliberations. ARC members worked tirelessly to support the best decisions for all constituencies. There was no obvious or easy solution.

Thirteen options were presented for evaluation that focussed on a combination of four variables to address the under enrolment in all five schools—building utilization, grade configuration, programs offered and attendance boundaries.

The TDSB aim of an 80% utilization rate for schools was examined and the need for a potential closure of at least one school was discussed so that capacity in the schools could be closer to the desired utilization rate, and to ensure that sustainability of the student populations and the viability of remaining school buildings could be achieved in the future. The source and range of available capital funds was researched by an ARC member and discussed at meetings. The concern that capital funds be available to support any infrastructure changes was a constant theme at all meetings.

Grade configurations in the schools were discussed that focussed on JK to Grade 8, the possibility of preserving JK to Grade 6 in some or all the schools and took into account a Grade 7 and 8 middle school option.

The location and range of programs offered by the schools in the Accommodation Review was discussed. These included the addition of programs to schools such as Special Education, French language and International Baccalaureate as well as the possible addition of an Alternative School.

The ARC considered the option of changing the attendance boundaries of the schools. This included a boundary change that could have involved schools outside the area of the schools considered by the ARC.

The committee wishes to acknowledge the input of non-voting members and TDSB staff who contributed to this process. The ARC also wishes to acknowledge the contributions of literally hundreds of parents whose input, questions and concerns have greatly assisted the committee in its deliberations. The ARC membership reinforced that each of the five Accommodation Review schools have a strong sense of community which they wish to see maintained. All suggestions brought forward by the ARC emphasized the need to support student learning and student achievement as well as providing viable programs within schools that would offer optimal choice for students.

RATIONALE

Based on suggestions and discussions of the ARC, thirteen options were developed by planning staff and examined in detail to reflect all of the following changes.

- Building Utilization—Possible School Closure(s)

The current utilization rate (2008-09) of the five school buildings is 51% with a total student count of 1428. If no changes occur to the schools, the rates for the five schools to 2018 (with Early Learning included) would be 52% with a total student count of 1452.

The ARC considered:

- a) 80% utilization of all schools
- b) One school closure: options were presented that considered Cedarvale, Wilcox and Arlington for closure.
- c) Two school closures: options were presented that considered the closing of:
Cedarvale CS and Arlington MS; Cedarvale CS and JR Wilcox CS; Humewood CS and Arlington MS; Arlington MS and JR Wilcox CS.

- d) If two schools were closed, a boundary change and a school in another Accommodation Review could be involved.
- e) A full-service community hub model school
- f) The present condition of each of the five facilities
- g) The availability of capital funds for facility upgrades

The ARC agreed that:

- The target utilization rate of 80% was not to be a factor in the final decision
- The status quo was not an option given the potential future low school enrolment
- Only one school would be closed.
- Either JR Wilcox CS or Arlington MS would be the school closed

- Change in Grade Configuration

The present grade configuration of the schools is four JK to Grade 6 Junior Schools and one Grade 7 & 8 Senior School.

The ARC considered:

- a) Status quo
- b) All schools with JK to Grade 8
- c) Options that offered JK to Grade 6 and JK to Grade 8.
- d) Maintaining Grade 7 and 8 middle school.

The ARC agreed that:

- JK to Grade 8 was the chosen grade configuration

- Change in Programs Offered and/or their Location

The following programs are presently offered in the five schools:

- i. SK to Grade 6 French Immersion (Rawlinson CS)
- ii. French Extended Grade 4 entry program (Rawlinson CS)
- iii. French Extended Grade 7 entry program (Arlington MS)
- iv. International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (IB MYP) (Arlington MS)
- v. International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (IB PYP) has been approved for Cedarvale CS and possibly at JR Wilcox CS
- vi. Special Education programs:
 - JR Wilcox CS: Primary Communications/Learning Disabled
Junior Communications/Learning Disabled
Kindergarten Intervention Program
Kindergarten Diagnostic Program
 - Arlington MS: No Special Education programs
 - Cedarvale CS: Primary Autism
 - Rawlinson CS: Primary, Junior and Intensive Behaviour Programs
 - Humewood CS: Multiple Exceptionalities

The ARC considered:

- a) Maintaining the present French programs
- b) Addition of French Immersion and Extended programs
- c) Maintaining and increasing the Special Education program offerings
- d) Continuing to offer International Baccalaureate—both PYP and MYP
- e) Introducing an Alternative School

The ARC agreed that:

- All present programs should be maintained
- If space is available, additional programs could be considered for the schools
- An Alternative School should be considered for Humewood CS

- Change in Attendance Boundary

The ARC considered:

- a) Changes to attendance boundaries of Cedarvale CS, JR Wilcox CS and Arlington MS

The ARC agreed that:

- No boundary changes take place

The ARC voted that, of the thirteen options presented and based on extensive discussion of the considerations and agreements above, the following preference of school organization go forward:

- Four JK- 8 Schools and One school closure of Arlington MS
- JR Wilcox JK-8 + French Extended Grade7-8
- Cedarvale JK-8
- Rawlinson JK-8 + French Immersion SK-8 & French Extended Grade 4-8
- Humewood JK-8 + French Immersion SK-8 & Grade 4-8 (New Programs)

Implementation of recommendations, if approved

The ARC discussed the transition of students and the development of a communication plan that will involve school staff, students, parents and community if the recommendations are approved. The ARC emphasized that all constituencies must be consulted, that any disruptions be kept to a minimum and that no portables be used at any time during or after the closure of the Arlington MS. It is also important that the physical condition of the school facilities be considered an important factor during the design phase so that all the schools be planned, designed and retrofitted to operate at the same high level of health and safety. It is the sincere wish of the ARC that, if Arlington MS is closed, the school communities of Cedarvale CS, Humewood CS, J.R. Wilcox CS and Rawlinson CS work to bring their middle-school-aged children together for joint social, recreational and athletic programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The JR Wilcox CS-Cedarvale CS-Arlington MS-Rawlinson CS-Humewood CS Accommodation Review Committee received a 2/3rd majority vote by secret ballot to go forward with the following recommendations.

1. Arlington Middle School be closed.

2. J.R. Wilcox Community School, Cedarvale Community School, Humewood Community School and Rawlinson Community School become JK- Grade 8 schools.

Recommendations #1 and #2 are contingent on the complete implementation, at a minimum, of the Facility Framework, presented by Sheila Penny, Director of Strategic Building and Renewal and Daryl Sage, Director of Strategy and Planning at the March 25th private meeting.

3. JR Wilcox house the grade 7 entry point for French Extended Grade 7 & 8.

4. French Immersion SK to Grade 8 be established at Humewood Community School and consideration be made for the implementation of Grade 4 entry French middle immersion program.

5. Humewood CS be considered as a site for an alternative school.

- 6(a) The International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (IB PYP) at Cedarvale Community School and at J.R. Wilcox Community School be maintained.

- 6(b) The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (IB MYP) at Arlington Middle School be relocated to J.R. Wilcox Community School and Cedarvale Community School.

- 6(c) Other schools in the area should be encouraged to seek similar certification.

- 7(a) A reasonable, respectful and transparent transition opportunity be provided for students and families affected by all potential changes.
- 7(b) Any changes that occur must create minimal disruption to communities, students, families and staff in these school sites.
- 7(c) No portables will be used.

- 8 A school and community committee be established to support collaborative opportunities among and between any schools affected by this ARC.

- 9. Community be invited to give ongoing and genuine input into the design processes which emerge from the recommendations, and that opportunities to improve safety and accessibility at these sites be explored

- 10. As soon as possible after the final recommendations are approved at the TDSB Board Meeting in June 2010, a community committee be struck to investigate the development of a full service community school in the area of the schools of the Accommodation Review.

- 11. Existing childcare and early learning opportunities be protected or expanded if feasible.

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DISSENT REPORT

Submitted by ARC members:

**Kevin Ghiglione, Parent Arlington MS, Robin Fraser, Parent Arlington MS,
Deborah Adams, Parent Humewood CS, Adrienne Galway, Parent Humewood CS**

9 April 2010

Introduction

The following, Kevin Ghiglione, Robin Fraser, Deborah Adams, Adrienne Galway dissent from the decision /recommendation of the majority and recommend instead creation of an Integrated Full Service K-8 Community School at the Arlington site.

At the start of this process we understood and accepted the mandate set out by TDSB for the ARC:

- Achieve a goal of at least 80% utilization in the family of schools
- Excellence in education
- K- 8 with less transitions for students
- Consider school closure
- Remaining schools to have between 400 – 500 capacity

In doing our research and coming up with various models for consideration we looked to Chris Spence's Vision of Hope for guidance. The Vision of Hope reflects a desire to create full service smart schools that are:

- K-8
- Integrated into the Community
- Cutting Edge Technology – Wired for Today and Tomorrow
- Parent Academy - greater opportunities for parent involvement
- Safe Facilities
- Green Building/ Eco Friendly
- Energy Conservation.

We have a rare opportunity to meet the Vision of Hope by dreaming big and creating a world class school that prepares our children for success. We believe it is time to be creative in our thinking of what a fully integrated community school should look like. Multiple configurations of school closures were considered. In our presentation of January 14, 2010, we presented 9 options (see link http://www.tdsb.on.ca/wwwdocuments/schools/area_review_committee/docs/Arlington%20Parent%20Rep%20ARC%20PPT.pdf.)

Our desire is to embrace a dramatic reimagining of our community. A full service community hub school aligns with both the ARC's mandate and the Vision of Hope. The reality involves the closure and amalgamation of 2-3 schools.

Our Proposal:

- Build an Integrated Full Service Community School (IFSCS)
- Integrate cutting edge technology
- Minimum Gold LEED designed Eco/Green school
- Create a community centre hub
- Centrally located and accessible by all five communities
- Take advantage of the ravine and park facilities.
- Partnership with the City at the Arlington/Phil White site
- A flagship school for the TDSB
- Lasting Value to the Community
- Do it Once. Do it Right.

To do this we recommend that the Board:

- Closes 2-3 sites
- Students from closed sites move to Arlington site which becomes an Integrated Full Service K-8 Community School
- Remaining sites move to K-8 model

This preferred configuration results in achieving 95% utilization rate in our family of schools. We calculate the 2013 percentage increases to 119% and to 116% in 2018.

With a large critical mass our students will benefit with:

- Better funding
- Larger and competitive sport teams
- After school programming
- Diversity in community
- Broader program offerings, including arts and music
- Single grade classes
- Poised to achieve full status IB certification

What is needed:

- Deep retrofit or rebuild
- Partnerships with public / private entities
- Integrate public and community infrastructures to allow for community programs in the school
- consolidate and provide space for adequate child care / day care facilities
 - Re-define the relationship between education and our community

By increasing the utilization rate to over 95% we feel justified in requesting a new build.

We have to be bold in our thinking and create solutions that will bind our communities together, offering programs that are diverse and address the various needs and interests of all stakeholders. We believe our solution is a win for our community, a win for our students and a win for our school board.