

Good evening Board of Trustees, Board employees, and guests.

I'd like to start by introducing myself. My name is Kelly Deml, and I am a parent representative from Blair Road School on the West Galt Accommodation Review Committee along with Lynn Robb. I will be speaking on behalf of both of us this evening. A short background on our volunteer experience: Lynn has been a member of the Blair Road School Council for 8 years, and Co-Chair for the last 4. I am on my third year of School Council, Vice Chair of the Blair Road Neighbourhood Association where I coordinate a before and after school program. I am the Secretary of WRAPSC, on the WRAPSC Steering Committee and also a member of the WRDSB's Parent Involvement Committee.

At the Committee of the Whole Meeting on November 12 a Delegation presentation included some serious accusations which contained misinformation regarding the West Galt ARC. I am speaking to you tonight as I do not want the decision by the Board to be impacted by the false information presented by the Dickson Public School parent Delegations, specifically the parent that was a member of the ARC. My concern is also that these fabrications are supported by some Trustees. Lynn and I find this misinformation to be extremely insulting to the role we took very seriously as part of the West Galt ARC.

The ARC consisted of a group of Principals, Vice Principals, a City of Cambridge employee, and parent representatives from each school who gave up their time to attend 13 meetings from September to June, approximately 2 hours long, to create objectives, review research and information, and to develop and evaluate 23 possible scenarios. In addition, we also spent a Saturday to tour each school affected by the Accommodation Review. Every member of the committee was dedicated and committed to the process, and as you can see from the Delegations tonight, we are still committed. The ARC was never a joke, and decisions and meetings were not rushed. Our focus was always to meet our objectives, and to develop a scenario in a timely manner to suit the needs of all students in West Galt-specifically the over population of Highland Public School, as quickly as possible as it is a continuing problem.

Lynn and I feel the West Galt ARC came to a conclusion that was the best possible scenario with the information that we had at that time. Obviously things changed from June when the ARC finalized and democratically voted on the final scenario, to the time in October when the Administration Analysis report was presented to the Board. But in June, building a new school, boundary changes and closing Dickson met the most objectives of our Committee, and impacted the majority of students in West Galt in a positive way.

When the ARC made the recommendation to close Dickson School, it was a decision voted on by all members. There were 8 members for the scenario and 2 opposed-the Dickson School Reps. Contrary to what some people have been lead to believe, the ARC also made this recommendation to better suit the needs of the students at Dickson School.

There was new information released over the summer which included the impossibility of building a new school due to some newly identified constraints (information that would have been very helpful to know before the ARC decided on a scenario). Also, there may be a transportation solution for Tait Street, which was a definite road block for us. The timing of this information did not give the West Galt ARC time to meet again to come up with a new scenario. We believe that Lauren Manske and the

Planners at the WRDSB had our objectives and concerns in mind when they put together the report and recommendations presented to the Board of Trustees.

We want to clarify one other point; there were parent representatives from one school that could be perceived as not being as committed as the rest of us, and they were from Dickson Public School. They both joined the ARC late in the process. We find it ironic that the parent that attended the least amount of meetings (only 5 of 13) is the one condemning the ARC process and the members of the ARC. This same parent rep didn't take the time to read the minutes from the previous meetings and consistently asked the ARC to review "common sense solutions" that we had considered in the past (i.e. just changing boundaries, which is not a solution that meets the needs of all students). These parent representatives were clearly only part of the ARC for their own personal agenda-not to close Dickson School-even if it meant disregarding the needs of 1,523 students at Tait Street, Highland, St. Andrews and Blair Road to suit the needs of 115 students at Dickson.

I will admit when I first volunteered to be part of the Accommodation Review Committee I had a personal agenda of my own; I thought Blair Road School would be excellent as a JK-8 school; my children wouldn't have to travel across town to attend St. Andrew's Senior Public, and it would eliminate a transition to a new school which can often be tough on children.

But very quickly I saw my personal agenda was not going to be a good solution, based on logistics and what is best for the needs of all students and families in the West Galt community. It is the role and responsibility as a member of an ARC to help find a solution for the entire population, and not just the school that a parent represents.

In conclusion, both Lynn and I stand by the scenario that the Planning Department at the Waterloo Region District School Board presented to the Board of Trustees, and we are proud to have been part of the process and the decisions and recommendations put forward. The difficulty of course lies with the responsibility that you can never make everyone happy, but we feel the majority of the students in the West Galt community are going to be positively impacted by the proposed scenario.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kelly Deml & Lynn Robb  
Blair Road Parent Representatives  
West Galt ARC

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Hello my name is Maura Fuller and Karen Destun and I are the Tait St. parent representatives for the West Galt ACCOMODATIONS REVIEW COMMITTEE.

As committed members of the West Galt ARC, my fellow Tait St. PS representative and I continued to inform ourselves of the proceedings past our meeting duties. As you know, all board minutes and delegations have been posted on the board websites, where we were made aware of a delegation that was presented at the November 12th meeting. Included in one delegation, were comments made that resulted in the West Galt Accommodation Review Committee being viewed in a poor light. It was evident to us that the Trustees of this board deserved to hear from other ARC members that were present at the beginning of the ARC process. It is unfortunate however that we feel we have to defend the time we spent, the discussions we had, the research we did, and the decisions we finally did agree on.

The first Arc meeting was held on Oct. 5, 2011. At that meeting, it was made very clear to all members that the decisions we would be making would affect several hundred students and their families so commitment to the meetings and following thru with all meetings was imperative. I would like to preface at this time that we walked in as representatives for our own schools but quickly realized that we were not making decisions that were best for our own situations but what would benefit ALL the students of the entire west galt area. At this time, we determined the rationale which gave us the parameters within which we had ALL agreed to work.

During meeting 1, discussion included process, guidelines, board policies, how long the west galt Arc would be together, how many meetings did past ARC's have, how often etc. We picked future meeting dates well into the new year with heavy consideration toward each representation's school and their home school commitments.

A timeline was always forefront in our minds as we realized the importance of making the best decision to accommodate the students of Highland's near double capacity.

It is very important to note that Dickson representation changed hands 3 times throughout our process leaving its last representative unaware of the lengths we went through to fully accommodate all 5 schools in the area. Our decision was made in our 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. By meeting 8, we had discussed up to 10 scenarios. Discussions included, with great care, the closure of any 1 of the area schools, additions, repairs as well as the building of a new school. Some of these meetings included guest speakers speaking on behalf on their areas of expertise, financing, funding and maintenance costs.

We took each school's unique characteristics into consideration breaking them down into strengths, weaknesses and areas of concern. We went so far as to *tour all 5 facilities on a Saturday for a better understanding of what we were dealing with.*

2 meetings alone were spent on boundary changes and after much discussion; we realized that several students would be changing schools multiple times throughout their academic life in West Galt.

Meeting 9 is when Dickson's last representation change took place, completely missing all we had discussed to that point. It was at this time, the new representative was strongly encouraged to read past minutes as many scenarios were discussed, revamped or abandoned.

The ARC was started to investigate how to better accommodate the students in the West Galt Area Elementary Schools. It is obvious that many students and families would be impacted by recommendations that are waiting to be approved by the board. As a Parent of the Tait St. PS community, the changes will benefit the student population that is currently there, and the students who will potentially become part of the Tait family. In conclusion, it is the opinion of my fellow representative and I that the West Galt ARC was successful in the execution of the process set before us on October 2011 through until June of 2012. It was not a joke, nor was it a rushed process, as anyone who attended all meetings or read the minutes can attest to.

## West-Galt Region Accommodation Review Summary

By Member Beverley Fox, St. Andrew's Parent Representative

### Member & Family Summary:

47y old married mother of 2, daughter age 15 & son age 13. Grew up in Midhurst (north of Barrie) & moved to region for University in 80's. "Imported" to West-Galt 20y ago when I married. Husband grew up in West Galt attending Blair, Highland, St. Andrew's & GCI schools. Intimate loyalties to regions of City, schools & long term settlement.

We live in the regional schools our children attend. Daughter attended Cambridge Preschool, Highland, St. Andrew's and now GCI in grade 10 (French Immersion). FI benefits: bilingual, improved study habits & cultural sensitivity vs segregation & "expectations of better citizens".

Son attended same flow & in St. Andrew's in grade 8. FI is not suitable for students with auditory processing, learning disabilities (math taught in French). St. Andrew's Middle School benefits: dynamic clubs, music, arts, sport, class scheduling & social opportunities prep them for high school.

### Profile:

- a. Professional: BA, BScNursing specialization in Critical Care. 18y transplant, Professor, Critical Care & last 10y in Cardiac Research. Published 20+ in New England Journal Medicine. Work with Harvard, Oxford, Duke, Princeton, all Canadian Universities, etc. Respected international RN. Think for a living.
- b. Community: 7y volunteer + 2y secretary Cambridge Football, Cambridge Rowing Club Captain, coached soccer, 3y volunteer Galt Skating Club, 5y volunteer with Chicopee Ski Racing & developed Racing Board, 6y volunteer with Highland, St. Andrew's School Board and church groups. Committed to sport teaching youth leadership, character & fitness.
- c. Value: Individual creativity, knowledge, equal rights of others, that healthy individuals create healthy communities, we all need safe & caring environments for learning (hierarchy of needs).

### ARC Process & the Dynamic Threads We Wove:

1. Democratic:
  - a. All members provided input & respected by others. Discussions were thoughtful, provocative, full of debate, creative.
  - b. Dynamic & productive.
  - c. Leaders of group provided full up-to-date knowledge of Board, City, FI, Schools (all Principals & Vice), children, family & stats. Excellent understanding of each school needs & abilities.
2. Caring:
  - a. Child, family & friends focused

- b. Best holistic education, safe environment, cultural & spiritual sensitivity
  - c. Clarity shared & fostered
  - d. Fair to all children in consideration of race, religion, economic status, home location
- 3. Autonomous:
  - a. ARC goals defined first couple meetings & were shared.
  - b. Agendas shared & then left at door
- 4. Productive:
  - a. Creative problem solving
  - b. Physical & intellectual processes. Physical in that we attended schools & shared needs. Intellectual in that we gave all for 13 meetings.
  - c. Tore each school down, rebuilt, re-organized, moved hills, cut-down City Parks and then re-built our concepts in drawings & maps.
- 5. Community Focused:
  - a. Least distance for children
  - b. Least disruption for community
  - c. Respect the growth in North Princess (Dom Farm) & North Salisbury
  - d. Respect rights of all children in F-I & FI program
  - e. Respect the needs of children living in region
- 6. Board Focused:
  - a. Full-Day Kindergarten
  - b. Disability Accessible
  - c. Fiscally responsible
  - d. School size responsible
- 7. School Focused:
  - a. Right to attend your school in safe, comfortable & enriching environments. Should not have to walk through snow to attend to physical needs. Should be able to walk off school bus in safety. Should be able to attend an assembly in comfort.
  - b. Provide best teaching milieu for professionals to share with children.
  - c. Physical characteristics & restraints of school building, lot & ability to expand over time.
- 8. Heritage Focused:
  - a. Maintain the history of our neighborhood without hindering health, knowledge or democracy of all children in said neighborhood.
  - b. Historical contexts in school zones incorrectly tied in with real estate.
  - c. FI started at Highland & has heritage tie with school & neighborhood.
- 9. Future Focused:
  - a. How do with balance numbers & placement opportunities in consideration that now we have a crisis; 3y will involve new homes in 2 areas; & 10y balance of territory needs?
- 10. French Immersion:
  - a. Classes large enough to support educational & social learning.
  - b. Centralize at GCI to further support course content in French
  - c. Strong parental commitment to transport & study

- d. School investment in resources to support program: teacher knowledge, course selection, and materials.
  - e. Privileged & potential for social segregation.
11. Play:
- a. The right of every child based on age & development to express themselves in physical ways by self & in teams in a space required for the numbers of children at a school in all seasons. Portables eat playgrounds.
12. Portables:
- a. Considered a temporary small class environment = permanent necessity. Is it fair that one school has 100 children JK-5 inside comfort while 10 portables of 25-30 (250-300) are outside in portables?
    - i. Highland walk around to front of school for bathroom break in poor weather & all seasons to seek shelter of school.
    - ii. St. Andrew's children stow coats & mitts in lockers, then walk outside to portable. Son missed 7w with flu & pneumonia x2 last year in winter. Does this hinder health?
    - iii. Why are we accepting a decline in small class & poor temp control?
13. Change is Hard, but Inevitable:
- a. When in life did we ever face 100% certainty?
  - b. How can we provide 100% certainty and confidence in our children's daily lives?
  - c. How can we make transitions the least stressful for all?
  - d. How can we resolve our environment crisis in a timely manner?
14. Geography of West-Galt:
- a. The River runs through it.
  - b. Hills & dales with indirect roadways for buses & walking
  - c. Business core, residential wings & country living
15. Taxes & Trustees:
- a. My taxes have increased 100% (home, school) in the 20y living in our home. Corporate & employment taxes increased. But rights of children's educational environments have not been addressed in West-Galt in decades. Original structures have had some additions & renovations but no new schools.
  - b. Please accept your commitment as a Trustee in deciding on your constituents needs & avoid loyalties to alumnae schools. Tax base supports Trustees & School Board.
  - c. Consider Cambridge & Region vs historical divisions of old Cities.
16. Voting Parent Reps Commitment:
- a. Tait: 2 consistent members for 13 meeting duration
  - b. Highland: 2 consistent members for 13 meeting duration
  - c. Blair: 2 consistent members for 13 meeting duration

- d. Dickson: 2 members attended first 2 meetings then stopped without rsvp to group. 2 further members joined later: Al at meeting 7, then Dianne at meeting 9 of 13 meetings.
  - e. St. Andrew's: 2 consistent members for 13 meeting duration
  - f. Social votes: attempted to place 2 members, but only 1 joined from City, but he had to reframe from vote due to working for City.
17. School Geography & Wheel Hub:
- a. Blair supports North Galt & new builds on Dom Farm.
  - b. Highland supports Victoria Park region & FI
  - c. Tait supports South Galt
  - d. St. Andrew's supports middle school evolution & FI
  - e. Void in Southwood (Beechwood) area & new North Salisbury requires new school
  - f. Dickson ethical equalization challenge: fiscal responsibility, environmental health & safety (portables, playgrounds, classroom size), class size, disability renos, no room for FT-Kinder vs loyalty
  - g. WRDSB to conclude final boundaries & external FI students with current numbers
  - h. Respect Dickson's heritage & high economic potential for re-sale

### **Summary:**

Fully support ARC recommendations for final ARC report. Many thanks to the City & Board staff for extensive knowledge, support, clarification & public community meetings throughout this formal process.

There was ample time for community members to communicate to parents of the ARC, City & Board staff personally, by email, by school staff processes and in multiple staged public meetings in professional and constructive means. Every input was shared per meeting & incorporated into our decision tree.

Democratic voting was the basis for the decision presented (8 to 2). The decision tree was concluded with ARC report and our vote endorsed our work. The process was requested by the WRDSB, we provided excellent results and it is complete.

I enjoyed the rigors of the ARC process and I wish to thank the ARC members for their involvement, commitment and careful consideration of the needs of all of our children in West-Galt. Many hours of work & dedication went into the tree. But I will not stand for defamation of character personally, professionally & as an ARC group.

I wish to thank the Waterloo Regional School Board Trustees for your time and consideration to this matter. Clarification contact:

Beverley Fox, BA, RN, BScN, CCNC(C)



Dec 10, 2012

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Dear trustees and board members,

I am here today regarding the West Galt Accomodation Review and to request that the planning department provide a clear and final proposal outlining all the facts of this new plan, in writing, to both Trustees and all community members. I am asking that this is done 3 weeks prior to any presentation to the Trustees. This will allow everyone time to fully understand all the drastic implications to all the stakeholders in West Galt, including parents, children, teachers, etc.

If the planning department is not here tonight, please make a formal acknowledgement of my request. I would also like copies of their response(s) to this request be sent to all ARC members, Trustees, all superintendants and to the director, Linda Fabi.

We need this to have adequate time to understand and so that the Trustees can vote fairly.

Thank you for your time this evening.

Dianne Ray



Good Evening

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Paula Ouellet and I was one of Highland Public School's parent rep. for the West Galt Accommodation Review Committee that concluded earlier this year. I have 2 children – my oldest is in gr. 1 French Immersion and my youngest will starting JK next Sept. I have lived in Cambridge for the last 10 years having moved from Peterborough (9yrs). My hometown is Renfrew, Ontario.

As of today Highland has 565 students, so we are 134 students over our built capacity. This week we have our Christmas concerts. Because of the amount of students we have to have 4 separate concerts (2 for our kindies and 2 for our main part of the school). Even though we are well over capacity we make it work. Do I wish that when the new Kindergarten wing was being added that a second floor was added so that we could get rid of portable and bring students in – Yes.

When one thinks of school we think education and community. Every school is a community no matter what size it is. Nobody wants to loose their community. Do I wish that the Arc came up with other solutions -Yes? But unfortunately we are in a no win situation. Highland is over capacity, Blair, Tait and Dickson are not. Unfortunately we spent most of the meetings debating with the Dickson reps about their school and not dealing with Highland's over population.

I have asked many of our out of bounds families why they choose Highland and the biggest response is location. I do believe that Cambridge still has 1 under service area for the French Immersion Program – South Galt. I think that we need to add an immersion program in maybe Moffat Creek.

I do feel that the Arc did the best job that we could have done with the information we had. Any information that we asked for Lauren Manske willing made available to us. I'm sure that all school rep would agree that we all hoped to get changes to make our schools better or remain open. I do not think that we need to redo the ARC. Endless amount of meetings would have never resolved the issues, unless one group got the solution they wanted. Loosing a school in your community is never the solution you want to hear. Change is the most difficult thing for anybody to go through. But with change we have growth.