

## Presentation to CCRSB - Hub School Model

### Joint Operational and Educational Services Committees

December 17, 2014

Following is a brief presentation on the development and CCRSB's criteria for a hub school model for Wentworth Consolidated Elementary School and on our intentions going forward to save our school.

First, we wish to respond to the letter of October 31<sup>st</sup> from Gordon Anderson and Vivian Farrell, Committee Chairs, in which they clarified how CCRSB has interpreted the provincial Guidelines and Criteria for a Hub School Model.

To be clear, you have confirmed that CCRSB requires any Wentworth hub school to contribute annual revenue of \$244,796 -- basically the full net operational and educational services costs for the school -- plus the full capital costs of repairs, maintenance and an ongoing contingency fund. You have also confirmed by letter of December 9<sup>th</sup> that there is 1 classroom and bathroom space available for use in any proposed hub school.

We are very disappointed that CCRSB would even consider imposing such an unattainable and unrealistic financial requirement for our hub school model. Surely, Board members will see that this lacks any sense of fairness to our community and, to us, is a setup for failure. We believe that the hub school model deserves more credible consideration than this.

With respect, the narrow interpretation of the Guidelines (page 2), as referenced in your letter, is taken out of context and omits the first part of that section -- "Any proposal for use of available space in a public school must also clearly demonstrate how it will: Result in no increase to capital or operational costs for the school board or the province, as compared to the board's plans regarding that school facility."

Your interpretation has taken the 'bullet point' completely out of context. Clearly, it is stated that *the available space* (the one classroom) cannot result in the increased costs. For clarification, the reference to 'cost savings' is in the next 'bullet point' of this section. We believe that the reference to cost savings does not imply full cost recovery based on the closure of the school.

You should be aware that the Province does not require the same revenue expectations for a hub school model in Wentworth. In response to a direct question in the Legislature from our MLA Jamie Baillie ‘if it was her department that was asking such a large amount of money from such a small school’, Minister Karen Casey stated a categorical “No”.

So, the information provided by CCRSB management at the last joint Committee meeting on October 21<sup>st</sup> that such revenues from a hub school model were requirements of the Province was false.

Regardless, by CCRSB management insisting that our community must contribute annual revenue of nearly a quarter of a million dollars plus cover all maintenance and capital costs to satisfy the hub school model, our community has been misled for the past eighteen months into believing that there were reasonable and achievable alternatives to the closure of our school. In a letter to us on December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013, Gary Clarke, Superintendent, responded to our concerns of waiting for hub school criteria by stating that it was his hope “that any guidelines established by the province can have a fairly wide application”. Instead, the narrowest interpretation of the guidelines has been taken and in doing so, you have made it impossible for us to further pursue any reasonable options for a hub school model in Wentworth.

It should be noted that as part of the school review process, the Wentworth Study Committee recognized that a hub school model had limited potential in our school where limited space is available for other uses. However, we do believe there are significant cost savings to be achieved in both operational and educational services – for example, garbage collection can be done by the County and administration responsibilities can be shared with other schools.

We continue to struggle with the reality that if our school space is nearly fully utilized, if the catchment area was enforced our enrollment would be near the provincial class average and if our elementary children attend other schools most will spend between 2.5 and 3 hours per day on a bus, why should our school be closed?

Minister Casey has recently invited us to a meeting with your Chair and Superintendent to discuss our concerns and to provide clarification to the provincial guidelines for hub school models. We are hopeful that she will lead us to a fairer approach to reasonable options for our school.

In the meantime, we will focus our efforts in other ways, primarily to have the closure decision reconsidered by the Board or set aside by others.

We have significant new information regarding the short comings of the CCRSB school review process, student busing requirements, the enrollment analysis and other sources of revenues and cost savings for our school.

We will be formally requesting a meeting with the Board to present this information.

Respectfully presented,

Wentworth School Sustainability Association

Note: At the Joint Committee Meeting, it was noted that management believed more space was required for educational services in the Maitland School than in our Wentworth School (both have similar enrollment and class structures). When questioned on this, we were advised that the 1 classroom in Wentworth being made available for 'hub model use' was made possible by combining library and multipurpose space and rescheduling special education programs. We are concerned that the overall educational services could be compromised by even taking the 1 classroom away from school use.