

## **Addendum to Solution to ARC Peterborough High School Issues 2011**

Peter Spasov

A working group of the Ontario Ministry of Education produced a document, “Planning and Possibilities: The Report of the Declining Enrolment Working Group” henceforth referred to as DEWG. I have highlighted three relevant sections of DEWG, followed by comments and suggestions.

... Improved partnerships, efficiencies, and relationships with community organizations are important ways to address the effects of declining student populations. ... There is a wide range of partnerships and cost-sharing agreements that boards can explore in areas such as programs, services or staff....We recommend measures to build community dialogue and to encourage wider use of effective partnerships with both education and community partners....

The Province of BC has formed Neighbourhood Learning Centres. It appears that the Toronto School Board has formed community hubs. Saskatchewan has implemented a community-school partnerships model, establishing the SchoolPLUS program, which enables community groups to make use of additional school space caused by enrolment decline. This shows that governments and boards can follow through with alternatives. If the board will not do this, please enable the local schools to do it. Possibly schools with more local control have stronger incentive to try these types of innovative solutions.

Here is one possible partnership with community partners. There are projections that the percentage population of the elderly will increase while that of children will decrease. Perhaps schools will develop course offerings to seniors such as health and fitness, gardening, arts, culture and other things seniors may find interesting. Funds to finance these programs may come from agencies involved with seniors and/or direct fee for service.

### **Question and Answers**

1. Does the proposal fall outside the mandate of ARC?

No, it appears that the ARC mandate may include any proposal that suggests methods to handle the issue of reduced enrolment. In my opinion, the proposal for more local control is within the mandate because it is a proposal to provide educational programs and services and lays out fiscal parameters.

The policy statement concerning closures mentions: the Board will consider boundary changes, blending arrangements, consolidation, closure, alternate use of surplus space or other measures.

The proposal for more local control certainly includes “other measures” and may indirectly include others such as blending and consolidation, but with the difference being that local decisions will drive them instead of a pre-ordained board directive.

2. Does the proposal require revisions to Board policy?

No, it appears not, in my opinion. The proposal is mainly about operations, not policy. A key point is that ARC is to advise on possible outcomes. The proposal is a possible outcome. There is nothing in BA-1.2 that refers to budget control constraints except for “fiscal parameters.” No elaboration about fiscal parameters is found but is presumed to the no deficit requirement of the Education Act.

I have searched through some policy documents, including a quick scan of the Education Act, and have found nothing that seems to address local budget control constraints.

Other question and answers are available upon request.

## References

1. Planning and Possibilities: The Report of the Declining Enrolment Working Group, <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/DEWG.pdf>
2. Hubs for All: Merging Education and Community in Everybody's Schools <http://www.slideshare.net/DavidClandfield/schools-as-community-hubs-nov-09>
3. Neighbourhood Learning Centres <http://www.neighbourhoodlearningcentres.gov.bc.ca/partnerships/stakeholder.php>
4. Government of Saskatchewan SchoolPLUS <http://www.education.gov.sk.ca/SchoolPLUS>
5. Making Schools Work A Revolutionary Plan to Get Your Children the Education They Need By William G. Ouchi <http://books.simonandschuster.com/Making-Schools-Work/William-G-Ouchi/9781439150450>
6. State vs. Local Control of Schools. ERIC Digest Series Number 24. <http://www.ericdigests.org/pre-927/state.htm>
7. Farmer-Hinton R, Holland N. THE INFLUENCE OF HIGH SCHOOL SIZE ON ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY INFORMATION, CONVERSATIONS, AND ACTIVITIES. American Secondary Education [serial online]. Fall2008 2008;37(1):41-61.
8. "Community schools: bringing together community partners to increase opportunities for youth." The Education Innovator 25 June 2009. Academic OneFile. Web. 19 Apr. 2011.
9. Reach Every Student Energizing Ontario Education, Good Places to Learn <http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2010/10/new-schools-create-opportunity-for-ontario-students.html>

Other references are available upon request