

# **Walden-Community Action Network Strongly Supports ARC Option A**

***...The best solutions for the five schools  
In Sudbury West***

**To be presented by  
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Rainbow District School Board Meeting**

## **Walden-CAN Strongly Supports ARC Option A ...The best solutions for the five schools in Sudbury West!**

### **Walden- CAN - Working within the ARC-Sudbury West Process**

This is the fourth time that members of the Walden-CAN Executive & Education Task Force have provided input throughout the ten month ARC-Sudbury West process. At each stage in this process we have worked conscientiously within the guidelines and parameters established by the Ministry for the accommodation review of our four schools in Walden and Copper Cliff PS.

At our first Task Force Meeting we unanimously agreed that any Options we presented or subsequent input/responses to Options developed by ARC-Sudbury West would be the best solutions for the students and communities of all five schools.

Before we began our deliberations we coordinated an Information-Gathering Meeting with the ARC parent representatives for the five schools and Trustee Gord Santala to discover 'first-hand' how the ARC process would work and how solutions to the surplus space issues at four schools and overcrowding at one would be developed. The parents were excited about the possibilities of thinking outside the box, working together to develop the best possible solutions for all the students of the five schools- even though they acknowledged that some sacrifices would have to be made. We were assured that the public would have plenty of opportunities to provide input throughout the process- before any final Options were presented to the Administrative Council and the Trustees.

We were encouraged throughout the process because this time ARC members were not only listening to the public input and incorporating many of the suggestions as they developed their final three Options for the five schools in Sudbury West.

The final Nov.12, 2007 ARC-Sudbury West Report- although not pleasing to all community members was a creative and viable alternative. The Walden-CAN strongly supported Option A- as outlined in our November 2nd response to ARC-Sudbury West- as the best solutions for all 5 schools.

We were surprised and very disappointed at the December 17th Board Meeting to hear the Director's recommendations- which ignore vital aspects of this thoughtfully produced report- in particular Option A- the preferred choice of the committee and the community.

**I. Walden - CAN does not support the Director's recommendation to close R.H. Murray PS!**

**A. The Administrative Council's recommendation ignores the consistent support of Copper Cliff PS and R.H. Murray PS by ARC and community input:**

- i. In each Option developed by ARC throughout the ten months both Copper Cliff PS and R.H. Murray PS were to remain open – as vital community schools
- ii. At no point in the Public Meetings did parents, former students, community groups or residents suggest closing Copper Cliff PS or R.H. Murray PS
- iii. Public Presentations stressed the unique and vital role these two, community schools provides for the students, families and communities – now and in the future.
- iv. Walden-CAN has consistently supported maintaining and strengthening both Copper Cliff PS and R.H. Murray PS- as a vital resource to the communities
- v. The final three Options developed by ARC recommend that Copper Cliff PS and R.H. Murray PS remain open
- vi. Option A- the preferred Option by the majority of committee and the community recommended that RH Murray remain open and the extension of the boundary towards the east for new students – effective September 2008.
- vii. **Walden-CAN strongly supports ARC Option A- as the best solution for Copper Cliff PS and RH Murray PS!**

**B. Closing R.H. Murray will have significant, long-term, negative, impact on the students, families and communities of Walden West.**

- i. The vast geographic area of Walden West – with widely separated, rural Communities - cannot be treated the same as the tiny area of Copper Cliff.
- ii. Closing the only elementary school from Lively to Espanola will have significant, long- term, negative impact on the communities of Walden West.

- iii. Current trends in education (USA, other countries) support strengthening and investing in small, community schools
- iv. The Administrative Council continues to ignore the positive impact of the economic growth and development happening in Walden West– now and in the future.
- vi. Serious concerns have been raised by RH Murray parents and community about inflated figures in the School Valuation for RH Murray- which impact the Facility Condition Index
- vii. Policies restricting the money that school boards may invest in renovations to older school can trivialize the long-standing relationships between rural schools and the communities they’ve anchored for generations

**II. Walden-CAN strongly recommends that the Board take pro-active steps to develop policies, which will lead to a sustainable, healthy secondary school in Sudbury West**

- A. Access to education from JK – Grade 12 - is essential and should be protected and developed to ensure a sustainable, healthy community for Walden (Sudbury West) - now and in the future
- B. Policies of former school boards helped create the declining enrollment problems at Lively District Secondary School
- C. The Director’s comments “...concerns remain regarding the viability of program at Lively District Secondary School ” have had an immediate negative impact on the future enrollment at LDSS
- D. **The Board should start by acting on ARC recommendations in Option A:**
  - i. Move Grade 7 and 8 students from George Vanier PS and Jessie Hamilton PS to Lively District Secondary School (English and French Immersion)
  - ii. Make Copper Cliff PS a feeder school of LDSS

- iii. Offer Grade 9 –12 French Immersion at Lively District Secondary School (LDSS would offer FI from Grade 7 –12) – starting in with Grade 9 in 2008
- iv. Use a portion of Lively District Secondary School for non-student use

**E. Walden-CAN strongly supports ARC Option A- as the best solution for LDSS**

**III. The City of Greater Sudbury is a Community of Communities and the Rainbow District School Board is an integral part and should reflect the same core values as the Constellation City**

- A. The Constellation City Report was adopted by Council, in January, 2007 and already 90 of the recommendations, have been implemented
- B. **The Board should reflect the same values as the Constellation City in the ARC-Sudbury West process:** inclusiveness, preservation and celebration of community history; openness and accessibility; transparency and accountability; fairness and superb communications
- C. **Walden-CAN strongly supports ARC Option A – as the best solutions for the five schools in Sudbury West**

**IV. Walden-CAN has serious reservations about the democratic process of the accommodation review in Sudbury West**

- A. From the first announcement in the newspapers about ARC-Sudbury West people in Walden were skeptical about the whole process:
- B. If a plan was already conceived from day one, there was no reason for our schools and communities to be involved in the ARC process!
- C. **Walden-CAN continues to hope:** That all the agonizing of our parents, former students, community groups and residents and the ARC-Sudbury West were an exercise in democracy – not an exercise in futility.