

**Walden-Community Action Network
Education Task Force**

***Response to
6 Options
...Developed by
ARC-Sudbury West***

**Presented by: Gwen Doyle, Co-Chair, Walden-CAN
Wednesday, October 17, 2007**

Walden-CAN Education Task Force
...Response to 6 Options developed by ARC-Sudbury West

Background:

On June 20, 2007, Richard Bois- Co-Chair, Walden-CAN & Chair of the Walden-CAN Education Task Force presented our “ **Blueprint For Action**”- in Power Point & detailed written form to the ARC-Sudbury.

Having followed the 2 guiding principles of the ARC mandate “...to ensure that all students continue to have access to the best programming possible, in quality school facilities and to reduce surplus space.” – we presented the following recommendations to ARC:

1. That both Copper Cliff & R. H. Murray PS should be maintained and strengthened as vital Neighbourhood and Community Schools
2. That Lively DSS- the only secondary school in Sudbury West- should be maintained and strengthened, as a viable choice for students – now and for the future
3. That all Grade 7 & 8 students – including French Immersion- from George Vanier PS and Jessie Hamilton PS be moved to Lively DSS
4. That Childcare for infants & toddlers in Partnership with Walden Day Care should be established at LDSS- using 2 classrooms
5. That both George Vanier & Jessie Hamilton PS be closed and sold
6. That a new ‘green’ JK – Grade 6 Elementary School be built in the Growth Corridor- on the south-side of HWY 55

The 6 Options developed by ARC-Sudbury West:

After listening to the other detailed Presentations, from parents & community groups and examining them more fully on the Rainbow Board website, we looked forward to hearing the Options developed by ARC –Sudbury West.

We have listened to the Update re: the demographics and development for Sudbury West, the 6 ‘non-weighted’ Options developed by the committee and the questions/concerns raised by the parents at the Sept. 19th ARC Public Meeting No.3. We have carefully examined all the information posted on the Rainbow Board’s website and discussed the 6 Options.

We strongly endorse and support Option #6 with the following adjustments:

A. We strongly support Recommendation # 1 & 2 - as described in Option 6:

1. RH Murray & Copper Cliff will remain open

- a. Vital neighbourhood/community schools would be maintained & strengthened
- b. Changing the school boundaries could help increase enrollment at R. H. Murray ie 80% capacity with 40 new students

2. Move Grade 7 & 8's from George Vanier & Jessie Hamilton to LDSS

- a. This has proven to be effective & beneficial to grade 7 & 8 students* in other district secondary schools: CVDCS, E. S. Macdonald Cartier, Northeastern S.S, and Marymount Academy.
- b. Include the Grade 7 & 8 F.I students at LDSS...as indicated in our June 20th Proposal"

*See Appendix A – Grade 7 & 8 Students in a Secondary School Setting
Art Neufeld, Former Principal, CVDCS, Member of Education Task Force

B. We cannot endorse Recommendation # 3 – as described in Option 6:

3. Move French Immersion K- Grade 6 to a wing of LDSS

- a. This was a major concern expressed by parents at the Sept.19 Public Meeting

"...I would absolutely not send my children (aged 5 & 8 years) to a high school. It's not good for children that age to be exposed to the same things that older children are exposed to."
Christine Liscum, Lively
- b. We are concerned that this recommendation would segregate the K – Grade 6 F.I. students from their English Program peers and deprive them of the benefits of an elementary school culture
- c. We believe that the separation of the F.I. students K – Grade 6 could cause concerns with a belief of elitism, or their lack of interaction with peers of various abilities and programs could cause anxiety, or even feelings of isolation.

- d. **We strongly believe that F.I. students should be included in the new Green school- rather than be isolated at LDSS**

C. We strongly support Recommendation # 4 ...with inclusion of F.I. K-6 students

4. Combine Jessie & the English program from George Vanier into a new green K- 6 school

- a. We agree that it is fiscally responsible to close & sell George Vanier & Jessie Hamilton...saving \$7.5 million in capital repairs & ½ total operating costs for 2 schools

“...From a taxpayer’s point of view, the most prudent, financial alternative is to close and sell George Vanier & Jessie Hamilton in order to maximize financial resources- from a capital and operating perspective- while meeting the two guiding principles of the ARC Mandate.” *Richard Bois, Co- Chair, Walden-CAN*

- b. We believe that the new green school should be built in the growth corridor – south of HWY 55

- c. **We strongly believe, however, that the F.I. students from George Vanier should be included in the new green school**

Final Comments

The ARC-Sudbury West should be commended for the work they have accomplished over the past months. Knowing the diverse populations they represent, we realize that there will never be a “one size fits all solution”.

The Walden-CAN Education Task Force endorses Option #6, with the revisions we have outlined. We feel that it would be the best solution – using the two Guiding Principles in the ARC Mandate – for the greatest number of students in Sudbury West.

A new ‘green’ school will also attract students currently attending alternative schools and our co-terminus board. Such growth will compound itself in terms of the quality of education received by our children and the community pride felt by their parents.

Based on the current trends, our committee is optimistic in the rate of growth in Sudbury West. Choosing Option #6 will maintain, strengthen and expand access to quality education from pre-school to secondary school- which is vital to developing and sustaining healthy communities in The City of Greater Sudbury.

Appendix A

Grade 7 & 8 Students in a Secondary School Setting

1. Precedence has been set in the Rainbow School Board for Grade 7 & 8 students to attend classes within a secondary school building both at the former Northeastern Secondary School and currently in Chelmsford Valley District Composite School. The model is also currently operating successfully at Marymount Academy in the Sudbury District Catholic School Board.
2. The Grade 7 & 8 students are part of a larger school in certain aspects, yet separate as a group. They maintain their regular elementary teachers and curriculum. Their classes, lunch hour, and free time activities are usually segregated from the older secondary school students. This segregation occurs in a physical sense in that their classes are in a separate wing or part of the school. Their lunch hours are staggered so that they can eat alone, possibly even in a separate location if possible (as done in CVDCS)
3. The students are part of the school when it comes to assemblies e.g. Christmas, Remembrance Day etc. They are able to use a larger and better gym facility, family studies rooms, computer labs, library and shops. This enriches their curriculum in an amazing manner. These activities are scheduled around secondary usage, so that no groups are mixed.
4. Busing concerns are also a non-issue as the elementary teachers supervise the bus loading areas – before and after school- as per their contracts.

Art Neufeld, retired Principal, CVDCS
Member, Walden-CAN Education Task Force