



. . . Memo

To: Chair and Members of Committee of the Whole

From: Councillor Paul Sharman

Cc: James Ridge, Joan Ford, Jo-Anne Rudy

Date: March 31, 2017

Re: Halton District School Board Program and Accommodation Review Process

Colleagues,

This memo is a response to the many conversations and emails I have received from residents of Ward 5 and elsewhere in the city. They have asked me as a Councillor and therefore, by definition, community leader how City Council can help to end community disruption created by the continuing [Burlington Secondary School Program and Accommodation Review](#) (PAR). I know each of you have received many requests for you as a council member, and us collectively to take a leadership position in this matter.

All members of council are well informed about the way in which the community has engaged in a highly fragmented process that pitted past, present and intended students, family members and other community members in highly emotional lobbying to protect “their” school to safeguard family routines and quality of life from being adversely affected. An analysis of this unfortunate situation is well documented in a March 23, 2017 article written by Denise Davy in the Hamilton Spectator <http://m.thespec.com/opinion-story/7205589-school-closure-process-a-nightmare-for-parents>. The process, to quote from the article “has pitted school communities against each other as exhausted parents throw other schools under the bus, desperate to save their own. Thousands of parents have been worked into a frenzy as they furiously run around setting up Facebook pages, launching petitions, delivering flyers, organizing rallies and meeting in coffee shops”.

As the public engagement component of the PAR comes to an end and the Halton District School Board begins to summarize their findings and recommendations, I believe that now is the time for City Council to show leadership and to take a public position. After much discussion with stakeholders I therefore submit the following Motion to Committee and Council for your approval.

Your demonstration of respectful, whole community representative, leadership is much appreciated.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Sharman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paul Sharman
Ward 5 Councillor,
City of Burlington and Region of Halton

Motion:

Whereas, the Provincial Government made changes to the Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines in 2015; and

Whereas, the current Halton District School Board Program Accommodation Review underway in Burlington has created extensive angst in the community; and

Whereas, there has been extensive concern with many aspects of the Accommodation Review process, particularly the requirement that the Board provide an initial recommendation, and consequently the functioning of the Program Accommodation Review Committee; and

Whereas, the decision to close schools, being a complex matter, should have accomplished:

- a) a clear understanding of the purpose and objectives of a Program Pupil Accommodation Review
- b) improved community consultation
- c) an Accommodation Review Committee model that is inclusive of the broader community
- d) no adverse impact on the educational experience of all students
- e) consideration of the impact on the community

Therefore, be it resolved that the Council of the City of Burlington:

Request that the Province of Ontario suspend all current school closure reviews in Burlington until the Program Accommodation Review Guidelines are modified to address the significant process concerns that have been raised.

Provide copies of this motion to Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario; the Honourable Mitzie Hunter, Minister of Education, MPP; Eleanor McMahon, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, MPP; Indira Naidoo-Harris, Minister of Women's Issues, MPP, Patrick Brown, Leader of the Conservative Party of Ontario, MPP and Andrea Horwath, Leader of the Provincial New Democratic Party.