

# Let's Talk about the Future at CCS

## Background Information for Guests



### Welcome!

Thank you for coming out this evening. Calvin Christian School is at a unique point in its history. We have been blessed with wonderful stability, support and growth. Now we have several options to consider for the future. We need your input to decide how we can best and most faithfully serve our children.

We're pleased that you are here to share your opinions and advice with the CCS Board of Directors. Your responses will help shape the future of the school.

### Our Past

Since the school's founding in 1952, CCS has gone through several stages of change and development. In each change, the core question has been "How can we most faithfully serve our children now?" A deeply committed support community has rallied around CCS to help make the changes happen.

Thousands of children have gone to school here, including many current parents and grandparents. They know the stories of change. Maybe you are one of them!

Most dramatically, in 2001 the original building was leveled and we started from scratch. Since that time, the school population has grown about 25%. Our pace of growth has increased in the last five years.

Even as the school has transformed into what we see today, God has been faithful to this school community.

### Our Present

The current enrollment of Calvin Christian School is about 500 students. Our building was designed for an enrollment of 450. Our property is 4.5 acres.

With current average growth rate of 2.3%, we will be at 575 or more in five years. We are busting at the seams, and need to make decisions.





Schooling always changes. Our building faces new needs for space that were not anticipated in the 2001 build plan. There are four major space challenges now:

- more students need private spaces for one-on-one support from caregivers and education specialists.
- we need an additional Kindergarten classroom.
- our awesome Science lab has been converted into a regular classroom due to growing enrollment. We need this room back.
- Project Based Learning is growing across more of the curriculum. Our students need additional learning spaces as they gather in groups, work with multiple media, and produce learning outcomes.

The school's design allows CCS to add 2nd floor space above the Kindergarten, Music Room and Library. This construction would create space for these four needs, *but would not create space for our growing enrollment.*

CCS is in negotiations with the public school board (HWDSB) to purchase the 1/3 acre parcel of playground that we currently lease from Mountain Secondary School. Mountain Secondary is scheduled to shut down in June. If successful, this land purchase will help us retain land that we already use, but not add new land.

Last year we did demographic research to see where CCS families live, and to look for trends and changes. We looked at changes from 2010 - 2016. In particular, we were interested in the youngest families with children in K - 2. They are the ones who will be here the longest in the future.

Our research indicated that while most of the CCS community is stable, there is a geographic realignment going on. There has been a steady demand from the West Mountain (27%) and the Glanbrook / Caledonia (20%) area. However, we have seen some interesting changes elsewhere, particularly among young families with children in K - 2:

- Lower City grew from 5 to 11%
- Centre / East Mountain grew from 10 to 18%
- Ancaster fell from 25 to 9%
- Hamilton as a whole grew from 47 to 65%

We can see the importance of CCS's West 5th Heritage location more than ever. So what do we do about growth?





## Our Future

CCS has researched coming population changes in our service area and looked at many possible ways of accommodating growth. This is what we need to talk about.

Aside from the CCS family trends that we see already, we can anticipate some future changes as well. For example, Glanbrook and Caledonia expect a population growth of 45,000 - 60,000 people as new family homes are built in developments south of the City. This demographic will be 20% elementary aged. If 5.6% of these children attend independent schools (Ontario norm), that is 450 students. The Christian school share would easily be 100 students, probably more.

In addition, the City of Hamilton is experiencing ongoing growth with movement from other parts of the GTA. The Lower City has a great capacity to absorb more families, and millennials now outnumber boomers in Hamilton. The demand for Christian education in Hamilton should continue well into the future. Thank God!

Christian parents from a variety of denominations increasingly look for options other than the public school system for a variety of reasons. CCS's population will likely increase in diversity in the future as parents find school values in harmony with their family values.

## Five Options

CCS has identified five options that we could pursue to handle the blessing of growth. Some of these five options can overlap with each other, and others do not overlap but require a choice.

This evening we are asking for your thoughts on these options *in principle*. What do you think of them as ideas worth pursuing? This a first layer of public discussion.

We do not have detailed cost breakdowns on each option because there are so many sub-options and overlaps that will impact cost. We expect that discussion of costs will become more relevant at the next tier of decision-making and input.





As we talk about each of the Five Options, please consider these questions:

- What do you like about this option?
- What do you dislike?
- How would this impact on size of school population?
- How would this impact the students' education?
- How would this impact the social / school experience for students?
- What would be the financial impact?
- Which communities are impacted by this option?
- How does this option affect distance / accessibility for families?
- How much disruption does this option make?
- Impact on the changing generation of students?
- What does this option do for the profile of CCS in greater Hamilton?
- Is this feasible?

### *The Middle School Option*

The Middle School is typically a separate Gr 6-7-8 school that focuses on the particular challenges and opportunities involved in teaching young adolescents.

Being separated from the JK - 5 population, the Middle school can be more creative with schedule, with student-teacher dynamics, with pedagogy, and with building design.

While the Middle School model traditionally has not part of OACS schools network, there is widespread adoption in Christian schools in western Canada and USA. As well, the HWDSB Hamilton Public School system operates Middle Schools such as Dalewood, Ryerson, Chedoke and Glen Brae. TDSB (Toronto) has 56 Middle Schools.

Currently CCS has 155 students in Gr 6-7-8. If they were at another location, then the remaining population of about 350 students would have room to grow on the West 5th campus.

A CCS Middle School would likely be owned and operated by CCS. Students would transfer seamlessly from the West 5th Heritage Site to the Middle School campus.

A Middle School could be located at a variety of places. The HDCH campus in Ancaster is one option, a surplus public school is another.





### *Buying or Leasing a Surplus Public School*

As the number of elementary-aged students declines in the City of Hamilton, the HWDSB is mandated to find greater efficiencies with the network of schools across the City. As schools are merged in order to keep buildings full, other schools are declared surplus and leased or sold to various public and private organizations.

It is arguably easier to buy a used school than to do greenfield construction, particularly since it may be difficult to find sufficient land to plan a new school from scratch. A used school, like a used home, may come with challenges however.

Our Canadian Reformed counterparts have chosen this option as they have grown in the Hamilton area. Timothy Christian School on East 25th St was Burkholder Drive Public School. Apparently this group plans to continue a similar process in the future.

This option would create a second campus in addition to our West 5th Heritage site. CCS would own and operate both sites.

### *Growing to the South*

Currently 10% of the CCS's population comes from the Caledonia area and 10% comes from the Glanbrook / Mount Hope area. These percentages have remained steady over time and over all grade levels. So currently we have about 100 children coming to CCS from the southern tier: Glanbrook / Caledonia.

As you have already read, we are projecting at least 100 *additional* children from the southern tier in the future, based on urban growth.

These 100 new students plus the existing 100 students gives us a conservative estimate of 200 students. That's more than enough to start a new school.

There are suitable properties available in the Caledonia area north of the Grand River on Argyll and on Greens Road. This would be greenfield development. We would be building a new school "from scratch."

Another possibility could be purchasing and upgrading a former school in the Caledonia area. Such a school/property would not need to be rezoned to institutional.

A southern option could be accomplished by either a new school society, partnership with another school organization, or as satellite campus to our West 5th Heritage site.





## *Partnerships*

The concept of a shared economy is becoming more accepted today. For independent schools and other Christian organizations, that can take all kinds of interesting shapes. Collaboration can lead to shared physical space or to a shared organizational structure.

When complementary organizations are able to use a building for multiple uses, then there is less waste and greater affordability. CCS already does this in a small way by renting the gym to a church.

The partnership model can have even more dynamic faces. For example, Indwell and Hughson Street Baptist are rebuilding together to create worship space and social housing in north Hamilton.

Milton Christian School plans to partner with the City of Milton on the shared use and maintenance of parkland. Stratford Christian School has successfully done the same.

The Niagara Association of Christian Schools (Smithville and Stoney Creek) could be interested in partnering with CCS in developing one of CCS's options. HDCH could be interested in partnering in another.

There is a group of Christian educators with a vision of beginning a small school downtown, drawing in children from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and providing a program of studies more focused on project based learning. Could we be a partner?

Some of the local churches have classrooms. Is there room for partnership with them?

Neighbour to Neighbour is next door to CCS. Is there room for partnership with them?

How creative do we wish to be?



## *West 5th Heritage Site*

547 West 5th Street has been the heritage home of CCS since the early 1950s. Many parents and grandparents of current students have fond memories of attending here.



With the total rebuild of CCS in 2001, the community invested in the school's future. Many cutting-edge concepts were designed into the building, and the quality of the build was very high. The building remains an important attractor to prospective families.

The building was designed with a capacity of 450 students. We are now over capacity.

Since 2001 a number of changes have occurred that require us to re-visualize our use of space. You read about these changes in the *Our Present* section of this Background. Adding a 2nd floor above the current Kindergarten, Library and Music rooms gives us space to meet these needs. *It does not accommodate additional growth.*

Rather than expanding to a second campus elsewhere, it may be simpler to do what we have always done: keep redeveloping our West 5th Heritage site.

However, we have no room to build for growth. The Ontario standard is 1 acre per 100 children, and we already exceed that on our 4.5 acres.

If we want to focus on growing on the West 5th Heritage site and no other, then we need to consider buying land from our neighbours: the HWDSB (public school board), the Hungarian Orthodox Church, Neighbour to Neighbour, or neighbouring homes.

Buying more neighbourhood land would give us space to expand the building, or build elsewhere on this campus.



## *Our Ideal Christian School for Hamilton*



In this option, participants are asked to think at a blue-sky 20 000 foot level. If we could ignore the current realities of our limitations of property and other factors, then what would we like to see? Let's discuss these matters:

- What is the ideal size of a Christian school (min / max)?
- What type of program should the school offer?
- What would the extra-curricular program look like?
- Who is our target population?
- Should we have a missional school?
- How significant is denominational background of CCS families?
- Should we reach out to the marginal populations of Hamilton?
- What other big blue-sky changes should CCS look into?

Notes:

