



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SIZE AND CONFIGURATION

Legal References:

Related References: *Good Schools Standing Committee Report, May 17, 2007*

Effective Date: *June, 2010*

Revisions:

1. Preamble

- 1.1 The Waterloo Region District School Board believes that elementary schools should be welcoming and secure places, supporting all learners, and helping students to achieve success within an operation and organizational framework that is efficient and effective;
 - 1.1.1 The Board believes that school size (enrolment) and elementary program configuration contributes to achieving these outcomes.
- 1.2 The Waterloo Region District School Board believes that existing elementary school configurations (JK-5, JK-6, JK-8, 6-8, and 7-8) do support student learning, achievement and success, and will continue to support each configuration;
- 1.3 The Waterloo Region District School Board believes that an elementary JK-8 school configuration represents a program preference to meet curriculum and developmental needs but that consideration must also be given to:
 - 1.3.1 existing facilities, community connections and distance;
 - 1.3.2 existing facilities;
 - 1.3.3 student learning opportunities;
 - 1.3.4 needs of the community;
 - 1.3.5 community growth patterns;
 - 1.3.6 funding, including partnering opportunities.
- 1.4 It is the policy of the Waterloo Region District School Board to use the following guiding principles when building new elementary facilities or additions, and when considering Pupil Accommodation Reviews and School Valuation Reports and Recommendations:
 - 1.4.1 JK-8 facilities will ideally have a built capacity of between 500 and 650 students;
 - 1.4.2 JK-6 facilities will ideally have a built capacity of between 350 and 400 students;
 - 1.4.3 JK-6 facilities will be designed to accommodate future expansion to accommodate a JK-8 configuration where practical;
 - 1.4.4 That planning for elementary school configurations consider the following:
 - have at least (2) classes per grade in JK-6 to support professional learning communities;
 - have more than (2) classes per grade in Grades 7 and 8 to support program;

- minimize the number of schools with FTE enrolments over 650 students, including the Early Learning Program, wherever possible;
 - be sensitive to the impact on elementary students of transitioning between schools.
- 1.4.5 Recognition that existing 7 and 8 configurations are providing an excellent learning opportunity and some will continue in operation for the foreseeable future;
- 1.4.6 That the needs of the early adolescent learners are considered as part of design and operation of new JK-8 facilities and by operating existing 7 and 8 facilities by lessening the number of daily student/teacher contacts;
- 1.4.7 That each configuration has high academic and behavioural expectations;
- 1.4.8 That where possible, the boundaries for JK-6 schools and for JK-8 or 7/8 schools be consistent for grade 6 students moving to grade 7, and grade 8 students moving to secondary school.