



**East Kitchener-Waterloo Elementary Schools Pupil
Accommodation Review
Minutes of Accommodation Review Committee Meeting # 10
April 6th, 2010 - 4:45 pm**

The tenth meeting of the East Kitchener-Waterloo Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) was held at Lester B. Pearson P.S., on April 6th, 2010.

Committee Members Present:

Mark Schinkel, Area Superintendent, Elke Whitmore, Principal of Bridgeport P.S., Frank Ewald, Principal of Lexington P.S., Kelly Wilkinson, Principal of Elizabeth Ziegler P.S., Leisa Kuntz, Principal of Prueter P.S., Brian Ward, Principal of Margaret Avenue P.S., Naya Markanastasakis, Vice Principal, Elizabeth Ziegler P.S., Ian Gaudet, Controller, Facility Services, Amy Stewart, parent – Margaret Avenue P.S., Carolyn Laurie, parent – King Edward P.S., T. Gilhuly, parent – Lexington P.S., Peter Brown, parent – Lexington P.S., D.L. Brown, parent – Suddaby P.S., Carrie Dawson-Thomas, parent – Margaret Avenue P.S., Cindy Shirley, parent – Elizabeth Ziegler P.S., Kelly Miller, parent – Elizabeth Ziegler P.S., Michael Reinhardt, parent – Bridgeport P.S., Don Snider, parent – Prueter P.S., Tara Bridger, parent – Bridgeport P.S., Mary Hingley, recording secretary, Chris Smith, Manager of Planning, and Lauren Manske, Planner for the Waterloo Region District School Board.

Regrets:

Gregg Bereznick, Area Superintendent, Nathan Hercanuck, Senior Planner, Janet Hale, Principal of King Edward P.S., Elizabeth Brown, Development & Technical Services Dept., City of Kitchener, Darlene Stubbs, Principal of Suddaby P.S., Susie Fowler, parent – Suddaby P.S., D. Welsman, parent – King Edward P.S., Laura Dick, parent – Prueter P.S.,

1. Welcome/Introductions

Chris Smith, Manager of Planning opened the meeting at 4:50 pm and welcomed members of the ARC.

2. Meeting # 9 – Draft minutes approval

- Mr. Smith asked the group if there were any corrections/concerns with the minutes from the March 25th ARC meeting.
 - No concerns or corrections were raised.
 - Minutes from the March 25th meeting were approved.
 - Moved by: Cindy Shirley
 - Seconded by: T. Gilhuly

3. Tour of Lester B. Pearson P.S.

Mr. Smith led the ARC through a tour of Lester B. Pearson P.S. to demonstrate to the group a purpose built JK-8 facility.

4. Presentations:

- **Brenda Cox-Sangster – Assistant Superintendent of Learning Services – Program (Student Success)**

Mr. Smith introduced Ms. Cox-Sangster to the group and advised that the ARC had asked for a representative from the Board's Learning Services Department to come and speak to the issue of JK-8 school model versus the JK-6 feeding a 7/8 senior program model.

- Ms. Cox-Sangster noted that her portfolio centres on student success, keeping students engaged and in school with a goal to secondary school graduation.
- We are mandated to implement and follow the Ministry of Education's curriculum whether students are in a JK-8 school or a senior 7/8 school.
- There are no advantages or disadvantages to either program delivery or impact on student success in high school. We have never tracked individual success at the high school level depending on which grade school the student came from. This should not matter; it's the program that counts not the building/facility you are in.
- The equipment used for the 7/8 specialized programs, i.e. woodworking, is also mandated by the curriculum, so all schools will have access to what they need. When the older 7/8 senior schools were built, the last one being 1977, they had specialized classrooms built for industrial arts and home economics programs to meet the curriculum requirements at the time, so that space often exists in these buildings. The extent of those programs no longer exists in today's curriculum.
- The Ministry is making a move towards reducing teacher contacts throughout the day as well, and there tend to be more teacher contacts in a 7/8 model than in a K-8 model. Multiple teacher contacts have shown to be an issue for those students who are at risk.

C – Margaret Avenue P.S. experiences at the most 5 teacher contacts in a day, but some have 3.

Q – What is meant by teacher contacts?

R – A time table might have 7 subjects – with a different teacher for every period/subject.

- A 7/8 school typically does experience more teacher contacts with the way their time tables are set up. The principals however, are working to reduce this, by having 1 teacher lead more than 1 subject. High schools are also trying to reduce teacher contacts from 4 to 3 by combining periods.

Q – What is the number of students, or critical mass in a JK-8 school setting required to attract specialized teachers?

R – A full teaching assignment for specialists would be eight grade 7 and eight grade 8 classes. Teacher staffing has gotten tighter over the years as well, however.

Q – Instrumental music – does a child miss that opportunity in a JK-8 school?

R – There is a Music Review taking place right now because there is no standardized guideline, and we are trying to establish one. Almost all of the 7/8 schools offer an instrumental or band program, but only a few of the JK-8's offer it.

- Please note that the curriculum does not require an instrumental program to be offered at the 7/8 level, only vocal.

- Ms. Cox-Sangster also noted that there is a great deal of time and energy spent on the transition to high school and making it as smooth as possible for students. In a 7/8 school time is spent transitioning grade 6 students in and you only have them for 2 years before they are transitioned out to high school. In a JK-8 model, there is opportunity to follow those students all the way through until high school. The Waterloo Catholic Board operates JK-8 schools exclusively.

Q – The Good Schools Standing Committee recommends a minimum of 2 classes per grade level, isn't that small for a 7/8 program? (Note: The Good Schools Standing Committee guideline: minimum of 2 classes per grade in JK-6, *more than* 2 classes per grade in 7 and 8).

R – It would depend on the total enrolment, the Catholic Board does it. You would not get a specialist teacher for 150 – 200 grade 7/8's.

Q – We try to keep a healthy population for the 7/8's (the new Millen Woods P.S. is a JK-6 school that will open in September 2011 and will feed its 7/8 students back to Lester B. Pearson P.S.). Is a 50/50 split JK-6 and 7/8 desirable? Or is that too many 7/8's?

R – You want to avoid an imbalance in student population, budget decisions, etc. are made based on enrolment, and you would not want a 7/8 program or a JK/SK program, for instance, to dominate the numbers.

Mr. Smith thanked Ms. Cox-Sangster for her presentation to the ARC.

- **Jim Berry – Assistant Superintendent Learning Services (Special Education)**

Mr. Smith introduced Mr. Berry to the ARC and thanked him for his attendance tonight.

- Our goal is to provide a seamless education for those students in our Board with special needs. We look for ways to support them more efficiently and effectively with the resources and money we have been allocated. We also try to keep these students in their home school communities where possible.
- These needs are taken into account when a new school is being built, or renovations are proposed.

The floor was opened for questions/comments addressed to Ms. Cox-Sangster and Mr. Berry.

5. Question/Answer period

Q – If there is surplus space at a facility, typically that is where special education will be housed. It was mentioned that the preference is to have these programs in new schools, or purpose built spaces, what is the balance?

R – That is a challenge we face. If we have a school with space, it could work for a Life Skills class because no massive renovations would be required. New school construction can have special education needs built into it for current or future use; it is easier than a retrofit.

Q – What about expanding a special education program that currently exists in a school if space is available?

R – There are limits to the numbers in that case. Depending on what type of class, we are limited to the number of students. Our goal is at least 1 program at the primary, junior, and intermediate levels. Otherwise you could have the situation where a child with special needs has the same teacher for multiple years. We want to see a progression through the building for those students.

Q – How many students in this Board have special needs?

R – Our Board has a total of 60,000 students (40,000 of those are elementary students). Of that number 16,000 are identified as special needs in some way. There are approximately 800 – 850 of those that are in congregated settings.

- For the schools in this review area, there are 200 students in congregated classes. Elizabeth Ziegler P.S. has the greatest number of special education classes because they currently have the space.

Q – What kinds of special education programs are there?

R – The kinds of programs we support are:

- Area Composite classes (grade 2 and 3) going towards a Life Skills program.
- Behavioral programs (social/emotional)
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)/Pervasive Development Disorder (PDD)
- Developmentally challenged - Medically fragile – life at risk (1:1 ratio, often requires a fulltime nurse). Can range from fully ambulatory.
- Enrichment opportunities
- ECO – environmentally controlled – anxiety issues
- Hearing impaired (we support children as young as 2 or 3 years of age, as well as students out of district)
- Orthopedic needs – may require an accessible site (mostly fully integrated)
- Vision impaired (these students are supported in their home school setting)
- Learning Disabilities
- Life Skills

Q – Is Special Education as successful in a 7/8 model as it is in a JK-8 model?

R – With experience in both models, I can say that students with special needs struggle more with transition. There is a sense of familiarity in a JK-8 school when a student does not have to make a move. There is a certain amount of comfort for the student, staff and parent in that situation.

Q – One of our goals in this review is community schools, is that hard to achieve for special education?

R – The geographic location of a school is certainly something we look at. Depending on the students need; for example if they require wheelchair access, it may not always be possible to keep the student in their home school community/boundary. We do look at ease of accessibility to the school for transportation purposes as well as for the parent/guardian. There is a range in the ratio we are required to support a student, and the ranges are based on need and age of the student. For example, a medically fragile student might need a 1:1 or 2:1 ratio.

Ms. Cox-Sangster noted that with the implementation of the Early Learning Program (ELP) in September 2010 at 12 of our schools, and full implementation by 2015 in all of our schools, this will create another balance point. Having perhaps 200 JK and SK students out of the total

population could create an imbalance with the rest of the school, and will be something we need to look at as well.

- The ELP Program will increase the number of students in JK/SK from 20 to 26, with a 26:2 staff ratio, so more staff will be required – we will be filling the schools more.

Q – In a JK-8 school is the budget split across or dedicated to each grade?

R – The budget is based on a per pupil allotment, and the Principal in consultation will decide where the priorities lie or where the curriculum specifies money to be spent each year.

Q – In a 7/8 school money is dedicated strictly for the 7/8's, in a JK-8 model would that be shared across the school then?

R – Could be. It's generated on a per pupil basis, but each year spending could be targeted to a specific priority(ies). In a JK-8 school, that could be at primary one year, and intermediate the next. You are still sharing the resources across the school.

Q – How are the Child Youth Workers (CYW) assigned to the schools?

R – That would be based on the number of students and support staff available; some schools may have a greater need proportionately than others. Every school with a 7/8 program has a CYW available to them.

- There is also an Alternative Suspension Program involving the CYW. If a student is suspended for 6 or more days, a CYW is assigned (regardless of the grade level).
- Funding is different for Special Education, there is a budget allocated for those needs, as there is for the English as a Second Language (ESL) program.

Q – Where are the 7/8's located in a JK-8 school? Are they separated from the rest of the school?

R – The 7/8's are typically in one wing/area of the school, to make it easier for rotary. They may be on a slightly different timetable from the rest of the school.

- They are however offered leadership opportunities and a chance to support the younger students in the school.
- It was also noted that in JK-6 and JK-8 schools, some assemblies may have specific attendance due to the type of information being presented.

6. Dinner Break

7. Scenario Discussion – Front runners?

Mr. Smith noted that Scenario 1, 2 and 10 remain on the table currently. It was determined at the last ARC meeting however; that Scenario 1 seems to be the front runner if some variations are made.

Scenario 1 currently:

Two new JK-6 facilities are built (Lexington and Falconridge), the 7/8 program remains at Margaret Avenue P.S.

Revised Scenario 1:

- Rebuild a JK-6 facility at Lexington - keeping the permanent structure (office and learning resource centre).

- Build a new JK-6 facility on Falconridge Drive with the option to add a 7/8 program in the future.

C – This variation allows some time for a review to be done around the 7/8 issue, and to address those schools involved (Margaret Avenue, Sunnyside, Courtland Senior and MacGregor).

Mr. Smith noted that Planning is currently working on a draft policy to state the Board's preference regarding JK-8 model versus the 7/8 model, this will however take time to be reviewed and adopted.

C – Scenario 1 still does not address the split feeds at Suddaby, King Edward and Elizabeth Ziegler schools.

R – Keeping Margaret Avenue open does give us the option to adjust the feeds in the future.

C – Mr. Gaudet noted that the Ministry of Education is in the process of changing the Capital Funding model which will have an impact on school construction.

- Currently, funding is based on New Pupil Places (NPP) dollars, and is adjusted yearly.
- Most of the province is in an enrolment decline, so this model will not work as well any longer.
- The proposed change could see a centralized capital model, where you make your business case (there has been no confirmation from the Ministry on this new model yet).

Ms. Manske noted that the difference between the two models (JK-8 and 7/8) raises an issue in our Pupil Accommodation Review Policy. If we were to change the boundary for Margaret Avenue and remove half of its population, are we setting them and other 7/8 schools up for an accommodation review or inherent closure? We heard very strongly at the Public Meeting that Margaret Avenue P.S. is working very well.

C – Bridgeport is at capacity currently, Scenario 1 does leave them under capacity, and they just completed an addition.

Q – The population at Bridgeport is a concern, can we work on that?

R – Yes, we can work on those details and timing.

C – It brings us back to one of the main reasons we are here, and that is to find permanent accommodation for the Lexington P.S. students.

Q – Could we face a situation like W.T. Townshend in this review? The school was built as a JK-6 with intention to add the 7/8 program, which was done, only to remove the 7/8's when enrolment spiked and the school became overcrowded.

R – In that case area development came on faster than projected due to some specific local factors. There are opportunities for additional school sites in the area; however they are a few years away from development. We have not closed the door on that situation – the 7/8 program move at W.T. Townshend is a temporary measure.

Q – A question was addressed to Mr. Schinkel, Superintendent of Education. Would it be possible to eliminate the senior 7/8 schools and exist with only JK-8 schools like the Waterloo Catholic Board?

R – That would be a profound challenge for our Board; there is certainly no simple answer. I cannot underestimate the will of the Trustees to move in the direction of JK-8, as it becomes more difficult to perpetuate senior 7/8 schools.

Mr. Smith added that we are taking steps to move in that direction. We will continue to fully support the 7/8 senior model; but as mentioned earlier, a policy is being written to clarify the Board's position.

Q – Do you have a calculation or a number for the students/schools that will be impacted by this review that are not directly involved? For example, Courtland and MacGregor.

R – We have not looked at those numbers yet; we can plot the students and look at the boundary change impacts to them.

C – Most of the Lexington facility is a temporary structure, with approximately 5 years left before some money needs to be spent.

R – Facility Services can extend the life of the structure if necessary, with ongoing repairs as needed.

Q – Will it be more expensive to build a JK-6 school with the intention of adding the 7/8 piece later?

R – Not too much, we plan for the extra space at the design phase and build the double gym, extra capacity in staff rooms, etc. initially.

Q – If we build on Falconridge Drive knowing that it will expand to JK-8, are we predetermining the next Accommodation Review?

R – Not necessarily, we are just building in for the option of extra capacity, it could turn out that we need the space for the JK-6 population. Falconridge Drive is the more central location for expansion, and is where the growth is coming.

Q – What will happen to the Lexington students if we decide to re-build the school on the current site?

R – Facility Services has not addressed that question yet, they would like to get some sketches done up for review and to gauge the scope of work, and where construction could take place.

Ms. Manske asked the Lexington parents which they would prefer for their community – moving to Falconridge for 1 year or learning in portables on the Lexington site during the construction.

Q – Is that a recommendation this group could make?

R – Phasing and timing is something we can put in the recommendations.

Mr. Smith noted that up until about 5 years ago, we never would have had students on site while work was being done to their school. Today, with all the safety precautions in place it has become possible and even preferable. Ms. Whitmore, Principal of Bridgeport commented on the excitement generated by doing just that with the recent renovations to her school. Recent construction at Wilson Avenue, Ryerson, Floradale, Franklin and others were also noted.

8. Draft Valuation Report – Recommendations?

Discussion ensued on possible recommendations for the report and what the ARC would like to see.

- Build a JK-6 facility on Falconridge Drive with the option to add a 7/8 program.
 - Mr. Smith felt it important to recognize the 7/8 expansion piece, noting the move to a JK-8 model which is the Board's desire.
- Scenario 1 has students being removed from the Bridgeport boundary, decreasing its numbers over time.
- We could re-build Lexington first, keeping the Falconridge students at Bridgeport for a little longer. Push back the construction of the new JK-6 on Falconridge a bit (may even have the 7/8 issue resolved by then).
- That will address the community school objective in both the Lexington and Falconridge Drive areas.
- The current boundary feed for Elizabeth Ziegler to Margaret Avenue involves 8 students in total (Areas N and O). Perhaps we could shift those 8 students to MacGregor P.S. for consistency of feed. (Something we can get to under the boundary details)
- Recommend an accommodation review for the 7/8 schools (not including any of the feeder schools).

Q – Regarding timing for our recommendations, would we prefer to re-build Lexington first?

R – Yes, if you can keep the students on site safely, there is no reason to hold up this project.

Q – Are there portables available with washrooms built into them?

R – Yes, they are a bit more costly and there are code requirements for fixtures, etc.

Ms. Manske asked the ARC how they felt about a portion of the Falconridge boundary being moved to Lexington.

- Falconridge enrolment estimated at 207 in 2013 as a JK-6, and increasing to 275 in 2016.

C – Concerned about Falconridge at 200 capacity. Fearful that if Lexington gets built first, then a couple of years down the road, the Board decides not to build on Falconridge Drive, and our community gets split between Lexington and Bridgeport.

R – If the new school is part of the approved recommendations, the Board could not change their minds easily, and not without public input. We can look at better balancing the enrolment numbers between the 3 schools in the north through boundary adjustments.

9. Roundtable

Ms. Manske noted that there is a fluctuation in Lexington's numbers year over year, especially with the boundary change slated to happen in 2012, with 120 students moving into Sandowne P.S.'s boundary. (This decision was a result of the North East Waterloo Boundary Study conducted in 2008-2009.)

- Consider pushing the Sandowne addition timing back?
- Perhaps we can time our recommendation with the 2012 boundary change at Sandowne, not at the time of the addition. (The addition at Sandowne was recommended after a 2 year boundary study, and was a permanent solution for them.)

Q – When the decision has been made for this ARC, can our schools go ahead with their Capital Expenditures, which have been on hold pending the ARC?

R – Yes, we will let Facility Services know that Elizabeth Ziegler can go ahead with their plans.

10. Future Meeting Dates

- The next ARC meeting is on Tuesday, April 13, 2010 at Margaret Avenue P.S.
 - Ms. Manske will draft some recommendations and send out to the ARC prior to the April 13th meeting.
- Public Meeting # 4 – Open House will be held at Elizabeth Ziegler P.S. on Thursday, April 15, 2010 from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
- We will hold an additional ARC meeting on Tuesday, April 20, 2010 at Margaret Avenue P.S. to make any adjustments to the ARC's Report and Recommendations if needed.
- Mr. Smith thanked all for coming, and the meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Future Meeting Dates:

Tuesday April 13, 2010 @ Margaret Avenue P.S. – 4:30 – 6:00 pm

Public Meeting # 4 – Thursday April 15, 2010 @ Elizabeth Ziegler P.S. – 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Tuesday April 20, 2010 @ Margaret Avenue P.S. – 4:30 – 6:00 pm