



**East Kitchener-Waterloo Elementary Schools Pupil
Accommodation Review
Minutes of Accommodation Review Committee Meeting # 7
February 9th, 2010 - 4:30 pm**

The seventh meeting of the East Kitchener-Waterloo Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) was held at Margaret Avenue P.S., on February 9, 2010.

Committee Members Present:

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 of Elizabeth Ziegler P.S., Elizabeth Brown, Development & Technical Services Dept., City of Kitchener, D.L. Brown, parent – Suddaby P.S., Cindy Shirley, parent – Elizabeth Ziegler P.S., Kelly Miller, parent – Elizabeth Ziegler P.S., Amy Stewart, parent – Margaret Avenue P.S., Carolyn Laurie, parent – King Edward P.S., T. Gilhuly, parent – Lexington 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, Nathan Hercanuck, Senior Planner and Lauren Manske, Planner for the Waterloo Region District School Board.

Regrets:

Mark Schinkel, Area Superintendent, Gregg Bereznick, Area Superintendent, Ian Gaudet, Controller, Facility Services, Janet Hale, Principal of King Edward, Darlene Stubbs, Principal of Suddaby P.S., Peter Brown, parent – Lexington P.S., Carrie Dawson-Thomas, parent – Margaret Avenue 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 4:35 pm and welcomed members of the ARC. He also introduced and welcomed Mark Hoerd, a Mohawk College student who is currently working with the Planning Department, and who will observe tonight's meeting.

2. Meeting # 6 – Draft minutes approval

- Mr. Smith asked the group if there were any corrections/concerns with the minutes from the January 12th ARC meeting.
 - No concerns or corrections were raised.
 - Minutes from the January 12th meeting were approved.
 - Mover: T. Gilhuly and seconded by: Cindy Shirley

3. Ongoing

Draft Review Objectives:

- Mr. Smith noted that no suggestions/changes were brought forward from the public regarding the Draft Review Objectives at the January 26th Public Meeting.

School Valuations – School Information Profiles:

- Ms. Manske noted that the completed School Valuations/Information Profiles are now posted on the website:
- www.wrdsb.ca/about-us/planning/accommodation-reviews/east-kitchener-waterloo-elementary-schools-accommodation-rev
- Hard copies of the profiles were also distributed to each Principal for the School Binders.

4. Public Meeting # 2 – Follow-up

- Mr. Smith asked the group for any feedback/comments they had or have heard from the January 26, 2010 Public Meeting.
- Ms. Manske noted that there was positive feedback regarding the format (break out sessions), there was a high volume of well thought out comments sent in. Two common themes: support for the north/south division, and not closing any facilities.
 - support for scenario 2 from the Lexington community, they want a school to remain on that property, they want a community school, but some were okay to continue with the 7/8 program at Margaret Avenue P.S.
 - good discussion, good mix, positive comments, looked at the bigger picture and were open to all options.
 - had some teachers in our session that supported the north/south split, and thought the JK-8 option was a good one.
 - felt a lot of emotion was expressed when reading the comments, it is easier sometimes to put thoughts down on paper rather than expressing them in a public forum.
 - strong support came through for the JK-8 model.
 - break out session format – great for asking questions.
- Mr. Ward, Principal of Margaret Avenue P.S. noted that one of his grade 8 teachers spoke to his students about the JK-8 model and the senior 7/8 school model to get their views. He advised that about 95% of the students favoured the 7/8 model, having their own school, making new friends after grade 6, even having to travel by bus were all very positive things for them.
 - these comments were reiterated by other ARC members with students at Margaret Avenue P.S.
 - there is public support for the 7/8 senior school model as well, and a lot of passionate support for Margaret Avenue P.S.

Q – Is the general public notified of the Public Meetings?

R – Our Public Meeting Notices are advertised in The Record, the Waterloo Chronicle and The Kitchener Citizen (East Edition) for this review. As well the notice goes home with each student

at a school in the review area. Some schools in the past have advertised the meetings on their outdoor school signs as well.

- Mr. Smith noted that the question of ranking the Review Objectives came up a couple of times at the Public Meeting.
 - does the ARC want to rank them? We can wait and see if we need to put more weight on one or more of the objectives when it comes time to make our recommendation.
 - there was no strong interest at this time to weight the objectives.

Q – There has been a lot of discussion around a JK-8 model. How is a JK-8 school laid out? Are there separate areas for the older students, etc?

R – We can visit one if anyone on the ARC wishes. Newer JK-8 schools are generally 2 storey structures, with specialty rooms and lockers for the 7/8's, usually upstairs. They run rotary classes so are typically in one part of the school, so that when they change classes, there is minimal disruption to the rest of the school. If there are portables on site, it is more than likely that the 7/8's are not in them, due to the rotary schedule and specialized facilities they use (i.e. science and tech rooms).

- Mr. Ward noted that the Principal and staff ultimately design what the JK-8 school will look like. The 7/8's might start out at one end, but you will see a mix happen with the teacher schedules overlapping with the junior division. Scheduling and gym use are a challenge in a JK-8 program, due to the competition for services.

5. Discussion of Preliminary Scenarios (Front runners? Any cuts? Variations?)

- Mr. Smith asked the ARC if they felt that any of the scenarios brought to the Public Meeting didn't work.
 - there were concerns with the high numbers at Bridgeport in the Status Quo Scenario and Scenario 7.
 - they have just undergone a major renovation; there is no where else to go.
 - traffic may become an issue at Bridgeport P.S.
- Ms. Manske handed out details for the new Scenario 10, which came from a request of an ARC member:
 - it is a 7 school scenario.
 - builds a new JK-8 at Lexington, a new JK-6 at Falconridge, converts Elizabeth Ziegler to JK-8, and closes Margaret Avenue P.S.
 - this scenario combines pieces from Scenarios 2 and 3, and proposes to have a 7/8 program to the north and the south.
- Ms. Manske also distributed a handout with JK-6 and 7/8 enrolment numbers broken down for Scenarios 2, 3, 7, and the newly created 10.

Comments/Questions:

C – If we are going to separate the JK-8 schools, this one organizes the numbers better.

C – Scenario 10 also moves the Special Education component from Margaret Avenue to Elizabeth Ziegler.

Q – There is a lot of discussion about the JK-8 model and if we are going that way. We need to keep in mind that we won't be converting all schools to JK-8; a JK-8 model won't really exist in entirety. We will still have JK-6 schools that feed to a 7/8 program, transitions will still occur, so why close down the successful 7/8 program at Margaret Avenue?

C – In Scenario 7, and using the highway as a divider (north/south) the 7/8 program at Margaret Avenue would suffer; the numbers are too low to sustain it.

C – Could we have a JK-8 in the north, and take the 50 students from Suddaby that go to Courtland and reroute them to Margaret Avenue to increase their numbers?

- Mr. Smith noted that we can fine tune Scenario 1, it seems to have some good support and we don't close any schools with it. It meets the community school piece for Lexington and Falconridge, and meets the senior 7/8 program for those that like it.
- Mr. Smith asked the group for some discussion on the remaining scenarios, and which ones we will take forward to cost out.
 - he noted that if we choose to cost out only a few scenarios, we are not dropping the others permanently; they are always there for us to re-visit if the ARC or members of the public wish to.

Status Quo

- Scenario 8 is Status Quo with some boundary changes to better balance enrolment, so we will take forward Scenario 8 only. **Drop Status Quo at this point**

Scenario 1

- 8 school scenario that addresses community/neighbourhood schools, with a central 7/8 program, no school closures. **Keep and cost out.**

Scenario 2

- 7 school scenario that splits the 7/8 program north and south, closes Margaret Avenue. **Keep and cost out.**

Scenario 3

- 6 school scenario, closing Lexington and Margaret Avenue, numbers too high at Falconridge. **Drop at this point.**

Scenario 7

- 7 school scenario, closing Lexington. The numbers at Bridgeport and Falconridge are high; Margaret Avenue numbers are low, loss of community school for Lexington. **Drop at this point.**

Scenario 8

- 7 school scenario, is Status Quo with boundary changes. **Keep and cost out.**

Scenario 9

- 7 school scenario, closing Lexington, similar to Scenario 8. **Keep and cost out.**

Scenario 10

- 7 school scenario, splits 7/8 program north and south, closing Margaret Avenue. **Keep and cost out.**

It was agreed by the ARC to take forward Scenarios: 1, 2, 8, 9 and 10 and have some detailed costing done for the next meeting.

6. Roundtable

Q – What is the definition of a community school? We may all be working on different ideas.

R – Planning loosely defines as: maximum walk-in school population, are identified with a geographic area; hopefully no major roadway bisects the boundary, and might be related to a park or greenspace.

C – Margaret Avenue is part of a community, and if we value that, don't close it. Part of the risk buying a home in a new development is that the school you think or hope to get built near you might not happen.

R – True, but the thrust of our enrolment comes from the new development areas, and by definition, building there makes it a community school.

Ms. Manske advised the ARC that a report was brought to the Committee of the Whole on Monday, February 8, 2010 by the Transportation Review Committee with recommendations to reduce the walking distances for students in the Waterloo Region District School Board.

- The recommendations were adopted, and may be ratified by the Board of Trustees at the Board Meeting on February 22, 2010.
- These changes will impact our scenarios; transportation costs will increase in some cases, and reduce in others (especially in a community/walk-in option).

Q – What are the reduced distances and when will these changes happen?

R – The proposed changes would take place September 2010 and the new distances would be:

- JK and SK: 0.8 km
- grades 1 – 3 1.6 km
- grades 4 – 6 1.6 km
- grades 7 – 8 1.6 km
- grades 9 – 12 3.2 km

Q – Why was this done now, when we want to save money and reduce busing for environmental reasons?

R – Mr. Hercanuck noted that he is on the Transportation Review Committee, and explained the reasons:

- The Ministry of Education's Effectiveness and Efficiency (E&E) Review was done to review the transportation policies of Board's across Ontario.

- The Waterloo Catholic Board and our Board have already combined services to save on transportation costs (transportation consortium); however, there were 2 distinct transportation policies being used.
- The E&E Review suggests our Board to match the Catholic Board walk distances.
- Funding for transportation is based on the E&E Review, if you spend more, but do it well, you get more funding.
- We hope to increase our rating to get more funding to cover any transportation deficits.
- Our Board has 60,000 students currently, and the proposed distance changes would mean putting an approximate additional 6,000 students on buses.

Mr. Smith noted that we have always had a lot of complaints with our distance policy, especially for grades 7 and 8. We used to offer courtesy busing (i.e. if we bused a grade 1 student and there was a sibling in grade 4, that would not normally qualify, courtesy busing would include that sibling, but it was very inequitable since it depended on bus routes and space in a given area). Courtesy busing would be eliminated under the new policy.

C – This will impact our scenarios, would like to see the new walking distances reflected.

R – The 1.6 km walk web is already on the website for all schools; we will add the 0.8 km web and reflect this change in Margaret Avenue’s walk web.

Q – Have we decided on a school location for Public Meeting # 3? Lexington P.S. would like to host it.

C – Bridgeport P.S. was suggested as a venue as well.

- It was decided that Public Meeting # 3 will take place at Lexington P.S. and Public Meeting # 4 will be at Bridgeport P.S.

Ms. Manske noted that Public Meeting # 3 will be an Open House format, we will have display boards with the scenario details/costing, and Planning staff will be on hand to answer questions.

Due to the consultation process with Facility Services and other departments to cost out the scenarios, the ARC was asked to consider cancelling the next meeting scheduled for February 23, and to change Public Meeting # 3 from March 9 to March 23, 2010. March 9 will be changed to ARC meeting # 8.

- The ARC was in agreement with these changes.

Q – As another option to our scenarios, can we look at Lexington as a JK-8, Margaret Avenue stays open with all of Suddaby students directed to them, instead of splitting between Margaret Avenue and Courtland P.S.?

- Margaret Avenue’s numbers go up, but Courtland’s go down.
- We could look at moving the specialty program from Suddaby to Courtland to boost numbers.

R – We can look at this as an option at our next meeting.

Q – Regarding the Review Objectives, do we say enough about meeting student needs; socially, educationally, developmentally, or do we need to add another piece? We do care about the kids and their best interests, perhaps it’s not stated strongly enough.

R – We can add another objective, perhaps something around equitable program opportunities. We will come up with something for the ARC to review at the next meeting.

Ms. Manske added that if anyone was interested in touring a JK-8 school, to please let Planning know and we can set something up.

7. Future Meeting Dates

- The next ARC meeting is Tuesday, March 9, 2010 at 4:30 pm at Margaret Avenue P.S. in the library.
- Mr. Smith thanked all for coming, and the meeting adjourned at 6:10 pm.

Future Meeting Dates:
Tuesday March 9, 2010 @ Margaret Avenue P.S. – 4:30 – 6:00 pm
Public Meeting # 3 Tuesday March 23, 2010 @ Lexington P.S.