



**Grand River South/Sunnyside Elementary Schools Pupil
Accommodation Review
Minutes of Accommodation Review Committee Meeting # 2
February 18th, 2010 - 4:30 pm**

The second meeting of the Grand River South/Sunnyside Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) was held at Sunnyside P.S., on February 18th, 2010.

Committee Members Present:

Heather Preddie, Principal of Rockway P.S., Jeff Lovell, Principal of Sunnyside P.S., Julie Lobsinger, Principal of Wilson Avenue P.S., Maria Lotimer, Principal of Howard Robertson P.S., Rebecca Jutzi, Vice Principal of Sunnyside P.S., Andrea Michelutti, Vice Principal of Howard Robertson, Darren Batt, Vice Principal of Franklin, Libby Martz, Vice Principal of Lackner Woods P.S., covering for Dayle Buller-Power, Al Watt, Vice Principal of Wilson Avenue P.S., Ron Dallan, Manager of Capital Projects, Facility Services, Richard Briston, parent – Franklin P.S., Stuart Gallacher, parent – Lackner Woods P.S., Naz Ritchie, parent – Lackner Woods P.S., Christine Lassel, parent – Rockway P.S., Jennifer Childs, parent – Sheppard P.S., Diane Kewley, parent – Sheppard P.S., Kelly Kempel, parent – Sunnyside P.S., Robert Dean, parent – Wilson Avenue P.S., Jonathan Blake, parent – Rockway P.S., Mary Hingley, recording secretary, Nathan Hercanuck, Senior Planner, Lauren Manske, Planner and Chris Smith, Manager of Planning, for the Waterloo Region District School Board.

Regrets:

Gregg Bereznick, Area Superintendent, Dayle Buller-Power, Principal of Lackner Woods P.S., Jane McVeigh, Principal of Sheppard P.S., Bonnie Heimbecker, parent – Wilson Avenue P.S., Edda Kerr, parent – Sunnyside P.S., Katie Anderl, Municipal Rep – City of Kitchener.

1. Welcome/Introductions

Chris Smith, Manager of Planning opened the meeting at 4:35 p.m. and welcomed the committee members.

2. ARC Meeting # 1 – Draft Minutes approval

- Mr. Smith asked the group if there were any corrections/concerns with the minutes from the February 4th ARC meeting.
 - No concerns or corrections were raised.
 - Minutes from the February 4th meeting were approved.
 - Mover: Robert Dean
 - Seconded: Richard Briston
- Mr. Smith also canvassed the ARC on how they would like their name to appear in the minutes which will be posted on the Board website for public access.
 - The ARC provided their preference to Planning staff.

- Mr. Smith asked the committee members who would be interested in taking a tour of the schools in the review area. There was a good response, and 2 dates were put forth for consideration:
 - Saturday, March 6, 2010 and Saturday, March 27, 2010. *It was felt that holding the tour on a Saturday was recommended in order to view all of the schools at once and in the daylight. It was also suggested that the ARC use one of the future meeting dates to view the Sunnyside facility.*
 - By a show of hands, Saturday March 6, 2010 at 9:00 am was selected for the tour, starting location to be determined.

3. Setting Review Objectives

- Mr. Hercanuck put forth some sample Issues and Opportunities to begin discussion on the setting of review objectives:
- **Sample Issues:**
 - too many portables at Lackner Woods P.S.
 - inconsistent feeds to senior 7/8 program (Lackner Woods and Franklin feed to both Sunnyside and Stanley Park)
 - Grand River South community south of Fairway, and east of Old Zeller are transported out of their neighbourhood (no community school, bus ride length)
- **Sample Opportunities:**
 - more permanent space to accommodate current and future students
 - JK-8 option (there are none in this review area)
 - consistent feeds for the senior 7/8 program

Mr. Smith asked the ARC for any issues/opportunities that they would like to bring forward:

Q – Regarding consistent feeds – part of the problem may be French Immersion, not all of the 7/8 schools offer the program. Only Stanley Park has French Immersion for 7/8 in this area.

R – French Immersion (FI) is a choice program – an issue could be the absence of a FI program for the 7/8's.

Q – There is currently a child in a wheelchair at Wilson Avenue, and their home school boundary for 7/8 would be Sunnyside, but without an elevator that student would be directed to a school that is accessible but away from their friends.

R – Accessibility issues will be highlighted throughout this review process. It is a goal to have all facilities accessible by 2025. There is an Accessibility Committee that looks at the facilities, prioritizes them and long term plans are set out. If the ARC's recommendation includes an accessibility piece, it could move that facility up on the list to be looked at. Mr. Dallen noted that Secondary Schools have been targeted as the priority for the next 4 years by the Accessibility Committee. Once the Secondary Schools have been addressed, he noted that Sunnyside P.S. is on a prioritized list for elementary schools.

Q – Can we add utilizing current classroom space before any new construction?

R – Yes, that could fall under fiscal responsibility. We can determine what surplus space is available in each of the schools.

Q – Can we look at additions as well, for example adding a second storey to an existing facility before building a brand new school?

R – Utilizing our existing facilities makes sense; we could use the existing land to add on rather than building up which in most cases is our preference. Existing structures may not be suitable for a second storey.

Q – We need to look at enrolment projections for the next 10 years; schools like Breslau and Lackner Woods will be very overcrowded.

R – That is why Lackner Woods is included in this review – to help find a solution for them, and Breslau P.S. is included in the Breslau/Stanley Park Accommodation Review which is underway now as well.

Q – This is an opportunity to address the inconsistent feeds, maybe re-shift some boundaries to develop/maintain the community feel. This could result in a decrease in transportation as well.

R – Boundaries are developed to follow natural areas as much as possible, but we can look at boundary shifts when we get into scenario development, this can be an opportunity.

Q – It's hard to discuss community school issues, if you are not attending a school in your community.

R – We do try and address that as well through this process.

Q – Will we have to build a new school in this area with the potential growth here?

R – That is what we will work towards; finding a solution to address the growth. It could mean a new school, additions to existing facilities or a combination of both. If we recommend an addition for example, we will need to address any facility deficiencies (i.e. a 7/8 program with no double gym).

Mr. Hercanuck brought forth some sample objectives that Planning staff had put together for the ARC to review and discuss:

- Establish mid to long-term boundaries and viability of all schools involved in the study area.
 - we define long-term as 1 generation through JK-8 (about 10 years)
- Maintain/develop equitable facilities – school, site and condition that are financially feasible.
 - make sure there is appropriate space at each facility
- Support optimal use of facilities, capital and operating resources.
 - be fiscally responsible
- Support equitable program opportunities.
 - opportunity: currently no senior French Immersion program in this area
- Address facility issues at existing schools.
 - for example: accessibility, parking lot maintenance, portables, electrical upgrades
- Address community schools – transportation that is within reasonable travel time, distance and cost.
 - boundary changes to achieve community school, thereby reducing transportation with walk-in option
- That facilities support programs by providing safe and secure environments for students and staff.
- Review current elementary schools organization.
 - JK-6 feeding a senior 7/8 program or JK-8 model with JK-6 feeders
- To have regard for the Good Schools Standing Committee guidelines on school size and ensure well-balanced student populations.

- report in ARC binders and on Board website
- To take into consideration distribution and accessibility of Special Education and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs.
- Address student transitions where changes are proposed.
 - for example: grandparenting out or phasing in

Mr. Smith noted that the objectives are a key piece of this process. We will use them when it comes time to develop and evaluate scenarios to take forward to the public as possible solutions. He then asked the ARC if there were any concerns/strong feeling towards a certain program model; JK-8 or JK-6 feeding a central 7/8 program.

Questions/Comments:

Q – Has research been done on this question, are there benefits one over the other? What is best for the students?

R – There are pros and cons for both models. This Board has not built a 7/8 senior school since 1977. The program used to be geared towards more of a junior high with specialized classes. Today, the curriculum is a JK-8 continuum. Our Board is leaning towards the JK-8 model, however; there has been no firm direction at this time. The Waterloo Catholic Board facilities are all JK-8 schools, which can be a challenge for smaller organizations with lower enrolments. When we talk about transitions, we will still have that with JK-6 feeding a JK-8. There is support for both models.

- Regarding research; there is some that the Americans have done, and we can post the references for you to review.

Q – Are there any JK-8's in this review area?

R – No, there are none in this review area.

C – The question of what model is preferred is a personal one, and context has a lot to do with it, and what you have experienced.

C – If it looks like the Board will settle on a JK-8 program delivery model and eventually most of the senior grade 7/8 schools are phased out, would we disadvantage our students and community by recommending to maintain the JK-6, congregated 7/8 program model? Generally, the 7/8 facilities are in older buildings, expensive to repair, make accessible, etc. We need to look beyond personal views for future generations, if the rest of the system is going that way.

Mr. Smith noted that changes happen that often we cannot predict. For example, the Early Learning Program (ELP) or all day learning for kindergarten that will be phased in over the next 5 years, and the Primary Class Size (PCS) initiative a few years ago that limited primary class size to 20 students. These changes will impact planning/building/facilities, etc. for years to come.

C – Would it be a good idea to look at the full vision that Dr. Pascal has set out for JK-12 as part of the rationale for the newly introduced ELP Program? That might help with this discussion.

R – We have to work with what we have, for example, some Board's that are experiencing low enrolment have had to go to a grade 7-12 model to keep schools open. We are driven by circumstance.

Q – A balanced demographic is not brought out enough; there is diversity in the population. Kitchener-Waterloo is growing and changing and all students deserve access to the same elementary program. Do we have access to this information?

R – We do see all of Stats Canada’s demographic information, and we can bring some of those pieces of information as we see necessary.

Q – Can we share these objectives with the school community yet?

R – We would like to trim them up a bit first, and perhaps have a bit more discussion at the next ARC meeting before we take them to the public for feedback; however, we can discuss the issues and opportunities with others in the school communities.

Mr. Hercanuck noted that the objectives are still in draft format at this time; we can re-visit them/adjust them as needed. Planning will take the sample objectives back and re-work them including the suggestions from tonight’s meeting.

4. School Information Profiles

Mr. Hercanuck noted that the ARC may customize the Board’s generic School Information Profiles. Planning is working on compiling the information returned so far for the profiles.

Q – Why are the EQAO results in the profiles? They are only one small piece of a school organization and they may distract the review process.

- (EQAO testing is done in grades 3 and 6, so does not pertain to the senior 7/8 schools).

R – The Capital Plan Advisory Committee developed what goes in the School Information Profiles a few years ago, before an Accommodation review was completed, but ARC’s can customize the profiles by adding/removing information if that is the decision of the ARC.

Mr. Hercanuck polled the ARC to see if there was opposition to removing Section 1.5 (EQAO results) from the profiles.

- There was no opposition – Section 1.5 – student outcomes (EQAO results) will be removed.
- Members of the public can find this information on the Ministry’s website if necessary.

Q – With the implementation of the Early Learning Program, there are some questions we can’t answer in the profiles because it is an unknown at this time.

R – We understand that, so we would suggest you answer the questions as things stand now for your school (2009/2010 school year).

5. Roundtable/Questions/Comments

Q – What are we trying to accomplish – the end result, equal enrolment?

R – With the new development around Lackner Woods P.S., we are looking for the best way to resolve the enrolment pressure there. Some schools are underutilized, might mean transporting students to those schools, but that could create conflicts with the community school desire. We

will look at all these issues. Ultimately we are trying to accomplish what we set out in the objectives.

Q – Is there a specific budget? Will the final decision be based on cost?

R – There is no specific budget and while cost is a factor, it is not the only one looked at. We will develop scenarios to take forward to the public, see if we have some front runners, the second round will involve costing out the scenarios and taking those back for public feedback. The Accommodation Review we did in the South East Galt community of Cambridge last year saw the ARC's recommendation accepted by the Board of Trustees, and it was not the cheapest option.

Q – The community has a voice in this process?

R – Yes, very much so, public input is a big part of the review process.

Q – What is the best way to get the information back to my school community? I don't feel comfortable answering all the questions.

R – Supply the information through the school council. Planning staff would be happy to attend a school/parent council meeting to share the process. Information can be put in the school newsletter with links to the Board's website where all of the information will be posted. The ARC school binders are in each school office for those that don't have access to a computer. Creating a blog may be an option.

6. Future Meeting Dates:

- The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 4, 2010 at Sunnyside P.S.
- The school tour is scheduled for Saturday, March 6, 2010 at 9:00 a.m.
- Mr. Smith thanked all for coming and the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Future Meeting Dates:

Thursday March 4 @ Sunnyside P.S. – 4:30 – 6:00 pm

School Tour – Saturday March 6 at 9:00 am

Tuesday March 30 @ Sunnyside P.S. – 4:30 – 6:00 pm

Tuesday April 20 @ Sunnyside P.S. – 4:30 – 6:00 pm