



Forest Hill / Trillium Elementary Schools Boundary Study
Minutes of Working Group Meeting # 3
September 21, 2011
Library, Trillium Public School - 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

The Third Working Group Meeting of the Forest Hill / Trillium Elementary Schools Boundary Study was held at Trillium Public School on Wednesday, September 21, 2011.

Attendees:

B. Brown, Principal of Trillium PS, and our host for the evening, Carol Fuller, Parent Representative Forest Hill PS, Shane Hall, Parent Representative Trillium PS, Jennifer Kroeker, Parent Representative Forest Hill PS, Jennifer Passy, Parent Representative Trillium PS, Nathan Hercanuck, Senior Planner, Lauren Manske, Senior Planner, Andrea Kean, Recording Secretary.

Regrets:

Steve Zack, Principal of Forest Hill Public School, Gregg Bereznick, Area Superintendent

1. Welcome

Ms. Manske welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Nathan Hercanuck, Senior Planner to the meeting and notified the group that the Planning Department is without a manager as Chris Smith retired at the end of August.

In response to the meeting of June 15, 2011 comments, Ms. Manske updated the enrolment projections and there are some significant differences in numbers that were previously presented; the reason being that the base data is different and includes only the students that are attending Forest Hill PS or Trillium PS. Previous numbers included students going to other schools as well. Updated with data current as of September 15th, 2011. Since there are some students attending Forest Hill PS and Trillium PS from out of the boundaries a factor has been applied to each school to include these out-of-boundary students

It was noted that the overall enrolment has increased by 60 students over last year; including 20 in Kindergarten (JK & SK) alone at Forest Hill PS. Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) may be boosting enrolment as we may be drawing some students from the Catholic Board as they do not have FDK at St. Paul or Monsignor Haller this year. Is it possible that they brought older siblings with them too?

Ms. Manske also let the group know that Jennifer Kroeker, parent representative for Forest Hill PS is now an employee of the Board as she has accepted a position at Forest Hill PS and asked the group if they were concerned about a possible conflict. No concerns were indicated.

2. Revised Draft Study Objectives.

Ms. Manske led the group through the presentation (available online at <http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/boundary-studies/forest-hill-trillium-elementary-schools-boundary-study>) to discuss the Revised Draft Study Objectives. (See slide 3)

Ms. Manske revised the Study Objectives based on commentary from the previous meeting.

Revised Draft Study Objectives:

- To develop a solution that is long-term (approx 10 years) by:
 - Addressing future development plans and demographic shifts.
 - Balancing enrolment to capacity using Board Policy 3002 – Elementary School Size and configuration, as a guideline for school size.
 - Addressing the diverse needs of all students by creating a balance of enrolment that recognizes these needs.
- To increase the number of students within ‘safe’ walking distance to school.
- To keep in mind the impact on the senior elementary and secondary boundaries.
- To minimize the impact on students where transitions are proposed.

The group had no objections to the revised study objectives.

3. Scenario Development/Discussion.

C: Trillium PS built capacity is 236 students and is currently at 207. Forest Hill PS is over capacity right now with 532 estimated with addition. Concern that a boundary shift would create two schools that are over capacity.

Q: An expansion will be needed at Trillium PS to facilitate Full Day Kindergarten (FDK). Looking at addition now why not just build once?

R: The way the Board receives its capital funding from the Ministry of Education is different now than in past years. Province looks at priorities province-wide and Board has to present their priorities to be evaluated. Election may changes things if there is a change in government. The money allocated for FDK cannot be used for any other purpose, and we do not expect to get any additional capital funding announcements from the Province until June – this is too late to tie into FDK project.

C: Schools may have to use portables for a couple of years if over capacity.

C: Trillium PS 250-350 capacity; do we aim for larger numbers now to get an addition down the road.

C: Total built capacity of the 2 schools, with the new addition at Forest Hill PS will be 770. Projecting out it does not appear that enrolment at the two schools will be getting a lot over that.

C: Need to find a balance between school size and enrolments were we have built capacity at both with a population balance.

Q: With the number of grandfathered students in the Chandler-Mowat area is it possible to clean things up without creating an inequity?

C: Forest Hill PS has a lack of space with 6 portables and currently has 551 students and 132 of those students are in portables. There is also a concern that Forest Hill PS will be losing classroom and storage with the double gym addition.

C: Referring to Area D on Slide 5, would like to see area broken down into smaller bits as this is a highly populated area.

Q: Is there a series of buildings we would like to include or exclude; as there is a building in the area where some of the children are being bused out of both boundaries on a GRT charter bus.

Action Item: Ms. Manske will take a closer look at the number of children in housing units. Also try to split area D in half to achieve a more even split. Noting that in the Chandler Dr area, all kids area walkers. Areas E, G & H get bused to Forest Hill PS and area E walks. Also will provide more of a dot map plotting of the students

Ms. Manske asked to group to review the scenarios and evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of each. Look for the merit in each and how we can tweak to make it work.

Q: Planning around populations that can shift easily (i.e., due to changes in rental agreements) can we deliver an outcome to balance the enrolment?

R: There will always be things we can not predict.

Action Item: Ms. Manske can look into background numbers for areas I and D to see if there was an influx of students from the Sandhills/Southridge area at some point.

Q: Is change necessary or worthwhile being mindful that Trillium PS will have higher numbers once FDK is implemented; may not want to change the boundary if enrolment will increase naturally due to FDK.

R: FDK is not necessarily a predictor of increased enrolment; some schools are showing a decrease in enrolment with the new FDK.

Q: Do you have Catholic Board info around which schools have FDK?

R: Not on hand, but we can get that information.

Action Item: Ms. Manske to supply list of the Catholic Board's FDK years 3, 4 and 5 schools.

Q: Is there the potential to get students from Monsignor Haller depending on their FDK year, which we will not maintain?

R: It can depend on when Monsignor Haller will have FDK.

C: Area H would be in walking distance to Trillium PS and would include 63 children. Can Trillium PS handle this many students?

Q: Mr. Hercanuck asked whether any of the parents felt that their home school was located outside their community and do the children in area H walk to their friend's houses in area E?

R: Never heard any parents say their school is outside their community and because it's a busy area with major roads parents drive their kids and even the safety of the community trail is questionable.

Ms. Manske directed everyone's attention to the Scenarios to decide which ones to keep:

- Scenario 1 (Slide 6)
The group felt that these numbers don't work
Would it work if you separated areas F and G.?
- Scenario 2 (Slide 7)
The group felt that the numbers weren't bad
Wanted to know if students in area I would get transportation? JK/SK would be bused but not Grades 1-6. Elmsdale would walk further to Forest Hill PS than to Trillium PS and Westmount is only way across street for areas E & D
This scenario would severely sway demographics.
- Scenario 3 (Slide 8)
Increases Trillium PS's enrolment above capacity and creates unused space at Forest Hill PS.
- Scenario 4 (Slide 9)
Forest Hill PS would be well below capacity while Trillium PS would be well over capacity.
Areas D & H are sent to Trillium PS. Having all of area D significantly impacts Trillium PS's number and would require an addition to the school.
- Scenario 5 (Slide 10)
Forest Hill PS below capacity and Trillium PS above capacity with this split. Area H has 50 students. Would we have a better balance if area D stayed at Forest Hill PS?
Ms. Manske indicated that she could do other combinations.

Ms. Manske directed the group to the handouts and asked for feedback on what combinations of areas they thought might work and she would put together more scenarios for the next meeting on October 12th.

B. Brown commented that the ideal would be to have 2 classes at each grade level as it promotes professional knowledge and improves learning at the class level. An enrolment in the 300-350 range would be the ideal size to achieve that objective.

Q: What would the numbers be if you split areas F and G?

Q: Could we have scenario with areas H and I going to Trillium PS?

C: Areas H, G and F are currently bused to Forest Hill PS and H walks to Trillium PS but bused for JK/SK.

Ms. Manske asked the group if there are any scenarios that are not work exploring and the consensus was not to discuss scenarios 1, 4 and 5 any further.

Action Item: Ms. Manske to look at numbers for area D and extend Chandler-Mowat. Split up D and put group to Forest Hill PS and Trillium PS.

Comments on Scenario 2:

C: It was noted that Scenario 2 has nice clear linear boundary and reduces transportation and the enrolment numbers are good. Noted that 180 students would have to change schools and some may be at risk students.

Decreases demographic diversity at Trillium PS, by doing one way shift. Senior Elementary in areas I, D and E go to Laurentian PS. Areas A, B and C go on to Queensmount PS providing more of a half and half split in the senior elementary feed.

Comments on Scenario 3:

C: Scenario 3 would require 3 or 4 portables at Trillium PS and drop enrolment at Forest Hill PS. Would be taking students from permanent space and moving into temporary accommodations.

Q: Could we do a split of area I and have eastern part of I going to Trillium PS; also do Elmsdale split with 25 + to Forest Hill PS and remainder to Trillium PS.

C: Do a north/south split and an east/west split of area I.

C: Scenario 3 as it stands does not work.

The group agreed not to discuss Scenario 3 any further.

Comments on Status Quo Scenario:

C: Status Quo Scenario is also on the table; maybe we are having this meeting 3 years too early or 3 years too late! May need to look at boundaries again once FDK is implemented.

Ms. Manske reminded the group to let her know if there was any other information they might think of that has not been discussed.

Ms. Manske will provide the new scenarios for the group to review and provide feedback before the next meeting on October 12, 2011.

4. Future Meeting Dates:

Next Meeting to be held on: Wednesday, October 12th, 2011
5:00 pm – 6:30 pm
Forest Hill PS Library

First Public Meeting to be held on: Thursday, October 27th, 2011
7:00 pm – 9:00 pm
Trillium PS Gymnasium

Planning Department will do flyer for public meeting and will be sent home with each student as well as published in the Kitchener Record and the Kitchener Post.

Principals to add to October Newsletter and post on school website and reader boards.

Flyer may need to be translated.

Action Item: Jennifer Kroeker agreed to forward language requirements to Ms. Manske.

5. Roundtable.

Q: Have any of the parent representative been approached by members of the school community inquiring about the boundary review?

R: Some inquiries at Trillium PS about the possibility of losing students to Forest Hill PS.

C: It's not unusual for the community to get engaged until there is something to discuss.

Ms. Manske thanked the members for coming out and the meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.