



**East Kitchener-Waterloo Elementary Schools Pupil
Accommodation Review
Minutes of Accommodation Review Committee Meeting # 9
March 25th, 2010 - 4:30 pm**

The ninth meeting of the East Kitchener-Waterloo Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) was held at Margaret Avenue P.S., on March 25th, 2010.

Committee Members Present:

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., D.L. Brown, parent – Suddaby P.S., Peter Brown, parent – Lexington P.S., Carrie Dawson-Thomas, parent – Margaret Avenue P.S., Cindy Shirley, parent – Elizabeth Ziegler P.S., Kelly Miller, parent – Elizabeth Ziegler 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:

Elke Whitmore, Principal of Bridgeport P.S., Mark Schinkel, Area Superintendent, Gregg Bereznick, Area Superintendent, Janet Hale, Principal of King Edward P.S., Ian Gaudet, Controller, Facility Services, Elizabeth Brown, Development & Technical Services Dept., City of Kitchener, Darlene Stubbs, Principal of Suddaby P.S., Amy Stewart, parent – Margaret Avenue P.S., Carolyn Laurie, parent – King Edward 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.

2. Meeting # 8 – Draft minutes approval

- Mr. Smith asked the group if there were any corrections/concerns with the minutes from the March 9th ARC meeting.
 - No concerns or corrections were raised.
 - Minutes from the March 9th meeting were approved.
 - Moved by: Kelly Miller
 - Seconded by: D.L. Brown

3. Public Meeting # 3 – Discussion/Observation

Mr. Smith asked the ARC for any comments/observations they had from attending the public meeting or from the comment sheets emailed to them.

- Lexington P.S. had a good showing, lots of support
- discussion of JK-8 model versus 7/8 model about 50/50, parents seem torn, either way we go some people will be upset
- good group, lots of good discussion
- informative, friendly (but did feel the tension around the JK-8 versus 7/8 model issue)
- Board Trustees do make the final decision, and the perception was that they will choose the cheapest option, some also felt that the Board has already decided what they are doing

Mr. Smith noted that staff was not there to defend the scenarios – just to provide the information and look for feedback.

- some thought that there would have been a formal presentation that night and were not aware of the open house format, may need some more distinction between the types of meetings
 - the Open House format was described on the flyer and on the Board's website
- the 7/8 issue was a hot topic, concern expressed over inaccurate information being given (a Lexington parent distributed a flyer to several houses with scenario details and opinions – unsanctioned by Lexington P.S.)
- the ARC is still interested in viewing a JK-8 school facility, so that we can see what it's like, and to share that information with our school communities

Mr. Smith noted that at the next ARC meeting on April 6, 2010 we have Jim Berry from Special Education joining us for a presentation. We will arrange to host that meeting at a JK-8 school, as well as ask a member of the Learning Services Department to come in and speak to the questions around the JK-8 versus 7/8 model with respect to curriculum.

Q – Can we get the current transportation run times to Margaret Avenue? by student as well?

R – Yes, we can get the overall run times, min/max and average times students are on the bus for you.

- as ARC members we need to know more about the JK-8 and 7/8 programs than most parents, but there are still lots of questions out there, especially if you have children that are not even in school yet
- not enough is known about the 7/8 senior program – that was evident in the public meeting comments
- skepticism is natural when we don't know what it's all about, or have had no exposure
- when asked their preference, the Ministry of Education and the Board of Trustees answer is that they will support whatever is best for the students. The curriculum is the same for both models, just delivered differently
- decisions made by the ARC will impact more junior students and students to come because it will take time for any changes to be implemented, or new schools to be built
- there was also a feeling at the Public Meeting that a school would definitely be built on the Falconridge site – it was noted that this idea was given to the community by realtors/builders when they purchased homes in the area

Q – A question was raised at the public meeting: I pay higher taxes in Waterloo and my child goes to school in Kitchener, how does that work?

R – There are no separate Kitchener or Waterloo education taxes, the province sets a rate and collects from each of the municipalities in the Region at a rate established by the Province then sent back to each Board on a per pupil basis. Taxes are also no longer differentiated between Catholic and Public Board support...it is all one pot of money distributed on a per pupil basis.

4. Scenario Costing

Ms. Manske led the ARC through a discussion of the costing details for each of the scenarios.

Q – In Scenarios 2 and 10, Margaret Avenue P.S. is closed; do we know what revenue we could expect from the sale of the property?

R – We don't have that information yet, we could have an appraiser give us an estimate. Also note that part of the building is designated under the Ontario Heritage Act. Therefore, future owners would also be required to comply with this Act.

Q – If we choose a scenario that does not build on the Falconridge Drive site, would the Board sell it or keep it for possible future use?

R – The Board would make that decision; we could sell for revenue, but we wouldn't want to sell the site if we thought we might need it 10 years from now.

Q – If Scenario 10 is chosen and Elizabeth Ziegler is converted to a JK-8 facility, are there any advantages to having 2 7/8 programs so close – the other school being MacGregor Senior School?

R – There would be a negative impact on MacGregor's enrolment and Elizabeth Ziegler's "feeder boundary". It also may cause some confusion around boundaries for those who live close to MacGregor.

5. Draft Valuation Report – Front runners?

Mr. Smith asked the ARC if they felt any of the scenarios could be removed for now in an attempt to narrow down to a front runner or two.

- Consensus around the table was to drop Scenarios 8 and 9.

C – If we can solve the problem by spending \$12 million instead of \$19 or \$20 million, we should look at that. The Early Learning Program will put a new fiscal strain on the Board as well as the new transportation policy.

R – Operating and Capital costs are generated differently (new school construction comes out of a different budget than school operating costs).

C – Regarding Scenario 1 - what if we re-build Lexington P.S. as a JK-6, and build a JK-6 at Falconridge Drive with the option to add on a 7/8 program as needed? This will address our community school issue now and give us some time with the JK-8 versus 7/8 question.

C – There was a feeling at the public meeting that people were not as worried about the 7/8 issue as they were about having a neighbourhood school.

C – Bridgeport enrolment numbers are a problem in Scenario 1.

R – We can try to adjust the scenario and work on that piece and other details if we decide to go forward with it.

Q – Is it possible to get a breakdown by percentage of how the public ranked the 5 scenarios at the public meeting?

R – We will tally that information and send it to the ARC via email.

Mr. Smith asked the ARC parent reps to return to their school communities to make sure we aren't missing any issues.

C – None of the remaining scenarios address the issues for Suddaby P.S. They will still have split feeds coming out of grade 6.

R – That issue has not been dropped; we can still build on the scenarios, and do some adjusting to address that particular issue.

6. Review Objectives

Mr. Smith noted that the next step for the ARC will be to put the remaining scenarios (1, 2 and 10) up against the review objectives for another look.

C – I could vote on Scenario 1 now.

A discussion ensued where the idea of Scenario 1, perhaps as an interim measure, could be supported by most in attendance, with the intent it would give everyone the time to fully consider the 7/8 program delivery.

Perhaps even do a Pupil Accommodation Review of just the older, core 7/8 schools such as Courtland, Sunnyside, MacGregor and Margaret Avenue to address enrolment issues at those facilities.

In the meantime, our objective of community schools is addressed in Scenario 1, while not limiting a Scenario 2 or 10 in the future. It would be fairly cost effective as well in terms of initial cost of construction.

7. Roundtable

There being no further discussion, Mr. Smith noted that the next ARC meeting scheduled for April 6, 2010 will take place at a JK-8 school, so that we can tour the facility.

- Planning will contact Lester B. Pearson P.S. to see if we can host the meeting there.
- Planning will ask a member of the Learning Services team to speak to the ARC.
- Jim Berry, Assistant Superintendent of Special Education will also be making a presentation at the meeting.
- Due to the length of the agenda, we will extend the meeting from 4:45 – 8:00 pm and provide dinner for the ARC.

Q – Will we have feedback from Public Meeting # 4 that we need to take into account before submitting our report and recommendations?

R – We have added another ARC meeting on Tuesday, April 20, 2010 to address that.

Q – Since scenarios 8 and 9 are off the table, can we share this with our school communities?

R – Yes, you can share that information with your school council, etc.

8. Future Meeting Dates

- Ms. Manske noted that the ARC's Draft School Valuation Report and Recommendations will need to be completed by the end of April to get a decision from the Board by June 2010.
- We will hold an additional ARC meeting on Tuesday, April 13, 2010 at Margaret Avenue P.S. to work on the Report if needed.
- 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 6:25 p.m.

Future Meeting Dates:

Tuesday April 6, 2010 @ Lester B. Pearson P.S. – 4:45 – 8:00 pm

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