



**East Kitchener-Waterloo Elementary Schools Pupil
Accommodation Review
Minutes of Public Meeting # 2
January 26, 2010
Margaret Avenue Public School – 7:30 p.m.**

The second Public Meeting of the East Kitchener-Waterloo Elementary Schools Pupil Accommodation Review was held at Margaret Avenue Public School on January 26, 2010.

1. Welcome/Introductions

- Chris Smith, Manager of Planning welcomed members of the public, school communities, and Board staff present for the evening, and made the following introductions:

Frank Ewald, Principal of Lexington P.S., Jon Lencz, Vice Principal of King Edward P.S., Leisa Kuntz, Principal of Prueter P.S., Kelly Wilkinson, Principal of Elizabeth Ziegler P.S., Naya Markanastasakis, Vice Principal of Elizabeth Ziegler, Darlene Stubbs, Principal of Suddaby P.S., Marc Lehmann, Vice Principal of Suddaby P.S., Elke Whitmore, Principal of Bridgeport P.S., Ian Gaudet, Controller of Facility Services, Nathan Hercanuck, Senior Planner, Lauren Manske, Planner and Mary Hingley, Recording Secretary.

Thank you to Brian Ward, Principal of Margaret Avenue P.S., and our host here this evening.

Approximately 79 members of the public were also in attendance.

- Mr. Smith asked the group to make sure they had signed in this evening; a sign in sheet is located at the entrance to the gym. Ms. Hingley will also be taking minutes at this meeting, both of which are requirements of the Pupil Accommodation Review process.
- Mr. Smith noted that the purpose of tonight's meeting is to share with the public the seven preliminary scenarios that have been developed by the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC).
- Mr. Smith also asked the group if any of them had come out to the first Public Meeting, held on November 10, 2009 at Lexington P.S.
 - By a show of hands approximately 25 people advised that they were at the first meeting.

2. What is an Accommodation Review?

- A pupil accommodation review is a formal process established by the Ontario Ministry of Education that a Board must follow if it wishes to review a school or grouping of schools to see if their location, program, facility and enrolment are still providing an excellent educational opportunity.

- The Accommodation Review process is undertaken by an Accommodation Review Committee (ARC), comprised of Principals or Vice Principals from each school in the review area, two members of each school community, municipal reps (usually from the City's Planning Department), we have a rep from the City of Kitchener (the City of Waterloo is supporting us as needed), and Planning and Facilities staff from the Board.
 - We also strive to include a community at large representative, and for this review we did have a member of the K-W Social Planning Council; however she has since had to withdraw.
 - The school and community reps are the only voting members, although we try to work by consensus. Board staff does not vote.
 - Recommendations from the ARC can be to remain status quo (do nothing), to facilitate boundary or program changes, up to and including school closure.
- The elected Trustees for the Waterloo Region District School Board make the final decision. The process requires at least four Public Meetings, the last of which will be to present the ARC's recommendations before they go to the Board.
- There are certain minimum timelines set out for this process. Our thinking is to have an ARC report and recommendation to the Trustees by May of this year, but certainly no later than June. *However, that final date is determined by the ARC's process towards one or more solution.*
- In this case the seven elementary schools under review are in the East quadrant of the Kitchener-Waterloo community. They include: Bridgeport, Elizabeth Ziegler, King Edward, Lexington, Margaret Avenue, Prueter and Suddaby Public Schools.
 - So why these schools?
- We actually started a number of years ago with a Boundary Study of a much larger area stretching from the top of Waterloo all the way down the east side into the Margaret Avenue feeder schools such as Elizabeth Ziegler P.S.
- Eventually, this larger area was broken into three pieces and decisions have already been made in two of those.
 - The first being the construction of Millen Woods P.S. to ease enrolment pressures at Lester B. Pearson P.S.
 - The second being boundary changes for the area and an addition being built onto Sandowne P.S.
 - It was determined that the accommodation review process would be the best way to look at the remaining area which we have called East Kitchener-Waterloo.

Issues identified are:

- Potential overcrowding, underutilization of some of the older schools, the need to address the temporary nature of the classroom wing at Lexington P.S., the best way to serve new development in both Kitchener and Waterloo along the Grand River north of Bridgeport and to explore alternate school organizations, e.g. JK-6, JK-8 and or congregated senior 7/8 program.

Objectives:

- The ARC has established a number of objectives for this review; they are listed on the handout you received tonight.
 - These are used as decision screens, and not only guide our thinking, they will become key in determining one or more recommended solution(s).

- The objectives are still draft because they are open to further discussion, so if you feel there is something you would like added or modified, please let us know, and we will take it to the ARC.

3. Purpose of Tonight's Meeting

- The purpose of tonight's meeting is to share with you the initial scenarios the ARC has looked at, and to get your feelings about them.
- These are initial scenarios, no decisions have been made. We have not costed these in any detail, due to the number of scenarios. We hope with your comments to be able to trim one or more, and we may end up with variations or new scenarios to discuss with the ARC.
- To get some meaningful discussion on so many scenarios with this many people present, we have planned to break into smaller groups and move to classrooms with one of the Principals or Vice Principals to act as a discussion facilitator. Each room will need a volunteer to act as a "recorder", so that we can gather all of the comments.
- At this conceptual level, we are asking that you cover each scenario and let the group know what you like and don't like about them. Feel free as a group to discard any scenario, or look at improvements to one or more.

Mr. Smith opened up the floor to any general questions regarding the accommodation review process.

Q – If the Trustees won't be voting on any ARC recommendations until June, will the changes be effective for this September?

R – No, there will be no changes for September 2010. We give at least a year's notice for any boundary changes, and with regards to school construction, that could take 2 or 3 years to implement.

Q – Are the draft objectives listed in order of importance?

R – No, the objectives are not ranked nor weighted at all.

Q – The question of JK-8 school organizations versus the senior 7/8 model, where has this come from?

R – This has been a frequent question with other boundary and accommodation reviews. The Board operates both organizations, JK-6 feeding JK-8 and JK-6 feeding the senior 7/8 schools. The feeling is that the JK-8 model is where we are headed with a continuous curriculum; less students are bussed out of their neighbourhoods, potentially saving on transportation costs. On the other hand however, the 7/8 model gives students some program/extracurricular options and a junior high school experience. We don't get money to build pure 7/8 schools anymore, it's either JK-6 or JK-8.

Q – Regarding the School Valuation Frameworks for each school, when will they be available?

R – The frameworks are complete and were posted on the website today.

The link is:

www.wrdsb.ca/about-us/planning/accommodation-reviews/east-kitchener-waterloo-elementary-schools-accommodation-rev

Q – Capital costs will be a factor, are the 7 scenarios we are looking at tonight viable?

R – None of the scenarios have been costed out yet; it's still early in the process and there are too many of them at this point.

Q – The scenario that rebuilds Lexington, how would that be done? Is there capacity at neighbouring schools to house the Lexington students during any construction?

R – Depending on the scenario, we could stage it. It does take approximately 2-3 years to build new, from design through to completion. As an example of staging, Floradale P.S. has been re-built out in front of the existing school, so when the students move into the new school, the old building will be torn down and turned into parking space. Logistics is the key here, as well as student safety through any planned construction.

Q – Does the Good Schools Standing Committee recommend JK-8 schools?

R – They have not taken a preferred position going forward on this yet.

Q – Accessibility issues – are they addressed in these scenarios – are we including this piece?

R – We do have an Accessibility Committee, and this is one of the review objectives.

Q – My concern is finance – making an older multi-level school accessible is very costly.

R – Fiscal responsibility is our goal, and that is what we are looking at, it's all part of the process.

Q – Does the Board look at sidewalks and access when building in a new development?

R – We look at where the best place is for us, full development means sidewalks will eventually be put in, this is a City cost. A Pedestrian Charter has been adopted by all the municipalities and has guidelines for sidewalk implementation. In the short term, we may require some student transportation.

Q – Regarding the objectives, is there a rating system assigned to them? For example, is finding a permanent solution for Lexington number one priority?

R – As mentioned earlier, the draft objectives are not ranked or weighted in any way, they identify the issues that we need to look at and are used to evaluate scenario effectiveness.

4. Scenario Review

Ms. Manske gave a brief overview of the 7 preliminary scenarios:

- These scenarios have been developed and refined by the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC). The ARC has narrowed down everything we have discussed to the 7 scenarios we are presenting tonight. Some other scenarios have been discussed, however, they were not chosen to present to you tonight because the ARC felt that they did not meet the objectives as well as the ones that are here.
- For a list of these scenarios as well as tonight's presentation, please visit the Board's website at: www.wrdsb.ca/about-us/planning/accommodation-reviews/east-kitchener-waterloo-elementary-schools-accommodation-rev
- It is important to remember that no decisions have been made yet, and we are not presenting any of these scenarios tonight as a front-runner. The intention is to solicit feedback and see if we have missed any key points, then we'll continue with the process. Hopefully, by the next Public Meeting we will have put a cost to some of these scenarios for you.
- Since all of the scenarios we are looking at involve some construction, we anticipate it could be a further 2 – 3 years before any implementation, so we are looking at September 2012 at the earliest.

- At this point, we are looking at the total number of students at a school instead of Full-Time Equivalent where JK's and SK's are counted as .5 and since the just announced Early Learning Program (all day, every day kindergarten) should be fully implemented in all schools by 2015. Any new construction would include a greater number of Kindergarten classrooms than we would have typically built in the past to accommodate the Early Learning Program.

Status Quo

- simply status quo, no boundary changes
- would rebuild Lexington to accommodate the projected enrolment based on the existing boundaries
- this is a 7 school scenario
- Bridgeport with its recent addition would be under some enrolment pressure due to the development activity we expect over the next several years out of the Bridgeport North area
- enrolment at Lexington does decline slightly due to the boundary change approved in June of last year which will take effect September 2012 (some of the bused students will be in Sandowne Public School's boundary as of September 2012)
- there would be no transportation delivery changes under this scenario, but more students would be transported from the Bridgeport North area

Scenario 1

- this is an 8 school scenario that keeps the current 7/8 program with JK-6 feeder schools model
- would build a JK-6 facility on the vacant school property the Board owns at 410 Falconridge Drive, Kitchener **and** rebuild a JK-6 school on the Lexington P.S. property.
- only boundary changes would be between Bridgeport and the new Falconridge Drive facility
- cost of this scenario would be greater than the status quo due to the construction of an additional JK-6 facility; however, the cost may not be that much greater than some of the other options (we still have to work this piece out)
- this scenario does involve a greater number of smaller neighbourhood level schools
- there would be a reduction in transportation for JK-6 students as the students in the area around the Falconridge Drive property are currently transported to Bridgeport P.S.

Scenario 2

- this is a 7 school scenario and the first proposing a facility closure
- in this case, Margaret Avenue P.S. would close, and the 7/8 program would be offered at 2 JK-8 facilities instead
- would be multiple construction projects in this scenario
- an addition to Prueter P.S. which may involve a new double gym, additional classrooms for 7/8 senior students and an elevator to make the facility fully accessible
- this scenario also proposes the construction of 2 new facilities, reconstruction of a JK-6 facility at Lexington and a JK-8 facility on the Falconridge Drive property

- grade 6 students from Bridgeport and Lexington would go on to the Falconridge Drive school for grades 7/8
- remainder of the area (south of the expressway) who currently attend Margaret Avenue would instead feed Prueter P.S. for grades 7/8
- there would likely be a reduction in 7/8 transportation and some JK-6 transportation under this scenario

Scenario 3

- this scenario proposes 2 facility closures, Margaret Avenue and Lexington P.S., making it the only 6 school scenario that we are exploring tonight
- would involve constructing an addition on Elizabeth Ziegler P.S. to accommodate the grade 7 and 8's
- facility accessibility would need to be addressed, a double gym and additional classrooms would also be needed to accommodate the senior students
- this scenario proposes the construction of a JK-8 facility on the Falconridge Drive property
- this scenario results in some larger schools
- transportation changes likely balance out

Scenario 7

- this scenario proposes the closure of 1 facility; Lexington P.S.
- construction of 1 JK-8 facility on the Falconridge Drive property
- this is a 7 school scenario, that would keep part of the 7/8 program at Margaret Avenue
- the senior 7/8 boundaries are slightly different, the dividing line is around University Avenue (or the border between Lexington and Bridgeport's current boundary)
- only a portion of Bridgeport students would go to the new Falconridge Drive school for grade 7 and 8 and the remainder would continue to go to Margaret Avenue (split feed)
- the 7/8 program at Margaret Avenue would be smaller than its current enrolment due to the introduction of a 7/8 program at Falconridge Drive

Scenario 8

- there are no proposed closures in this scenario
- this is a 7 school scenario
- the only change from status quo would be a boundary change between Lexington and Bridgeport Public Schools
- the 7/8 program would remain at Margaret Avenue P.S.
- would involve the reconstruction of Lexington P.S. as a JK-6 facility, but at a slightly larger size than it is currently

Scenario 9

- this scenario proposes the closure of Lexington P.S. in order to build on the Falconridge Drive property
- this is a 7 school scenario
- keeps the 7/8 program at Margaret Avenue P.S.
- Lexington students would be split between the new site and Bridgeport P.S.

- would probably add some transportation for JK-6 in Lexington's area, but reduce Bridgeport's current transportation

4. Break Out Sessions

Ms. Manske advised the group that we would break into smaller groups for some discussion on each of the scenarios presented.

- On the bottom right-hand corner of the comment sheet you picked up when you came in tonight, you will notice a number. That number will be the group you have been assigned to. We like to split you up in this way with the hope that we will get some different perspectives in each discussion group.
- A few of the Review area Principals and Vice Principals have offered to help facilitate our break out sessions. Planning staff will be circulating to answer any questions groups may have.
- We will reconvene in the gym in about an hour, and do a brief wrap up.
- If you would like to submit your comment sheet tonight, there is a box provided at the door, otherwise you can email us your comments at: boundaryfeedback@wrdsb.on.ca
- Group #1 will be facilitated by Jon Lencz in Room 6.
- Group #2 will be facilitated by Frank Ewald in Room 8.
- Group #3 will be facilitated by Brian Ward in Room 20.
- Group #4 will be facilitated by Darlene Stubbs and Marc Lehmann in Room 17.
- Group #5 will be facilitated by Naya Markanastasakis and Elke Whitmore in Room 14.

The break out sessions began at 8:20 p.m. and the group reconvened at 9:30 p.m.

Mr. Smith thanked the facilitators and recorders for their assistance, as well as everyone else for coming out to the Public Meeting.

5. Next Steps

- Mr. Smith noted that the comments/results from discussion this evening will be brought back to the ARC.
- We will look for common themes/threads and fine tune the scenarios.
- Mr. Smith commented that he observed there was good discussion that took place in the break out sessions; people were looking at the bigger picture.
- 2 distinct delivery models were discussed.
- When the number of scenarios has been narrowed down, costing will come into play.

Q – When do you need the emails with our comments?

R – As soon as possible would be great, our next ARC meeting is February 9th, where we will be discussing the comments and we need time to collate these for the ARC.

Mr. Smith asked the group at large if they liked the break out session format of this meeting, where there was an opportunity for smaller group discussion.

The response was very positive.

Mr. Smith thanked all for coming, and gave the contact numbers and Board website information for the public to access with any questions or comments:

Website:

www.wrdsb.ca/about-us/planning/accommodation-reviews/east-kitchener-waterloo-elementary-schools-accommodation-rev

Email:

boundaryfeedback@wrdsb.on.ca

Phone:

519-570-0003 ext. 4419

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.