



**East Kitchener-Waterloo Elementary Schools Pupil
Accommodation Review
Minutes of Accommodation Review Committee Meeting # 1
September 29th, 2009 - 4:30 pm**

The first meeting of the East Kitchener-Waterloo Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) was held at Bluevale C.I., on September 29th, 2009.

Committee Members Present:

Mark Schinkel, Area Superintendent, Ian Gaudet, Controller, Facility Services, Elke Whitmore, Principal of Bridgeport P.S., Kelly Wilkinson, Principal of Elizabeth Ziegler P.S., Janet Hale, Principal of King Edward P.S., Frank Ewald, Principal of Lexington P.S., Brian Ward, Principal of Margaret Avenue P.S., Leisa Kuntz, Principal of Prueter P.S., Elizabeth Brown, Development & Technical Services Dept., City of Kitchener, Michael Reinhardt, parent – Bridgeport P.S., Tara Bridger, parent – Bridgeport P.S., Kelly Miller, parent – Elizabeth Ziegler P.S., Cindy Shirley, parent – Elizabeth Ziegler P.S., T. Gilhuly, parent – Lexington P.S., Peter Brown, parent – Lexington P.S., D.L. Brown, parent – Suddaby P.S., Joanne Davis, parent – Suddaby 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, Darlene Stubbs, Principal of Suddaby P.S., Trudy Beaulne, Social Planning Council of K-W.

1. Welcome/Introductions

Chris Smith, Manager of Planning opened the meeting at 4:40 pm and starting with Planning Staff, had the committee members introduce themselves. Thanks were extended to the community members for volunteering their time and commitment to this process. Thank you to the Principals of each school involved in the review for their support and input as well.

2. Background/Explanation of Accommodation Review Process

- Binders were distributed to the membership to keep all of the information regarding the accommodation review together.
- An extra binder will be provided to each school to have available for public access.
 - Principals will be asked to keep the binders up-to-date with new materials from the meetings.

Mr. Smith explained that the Pupil Accommodation Review is a formal public process which works under Ministry/Board guidelines, timelines and requirements: *The formal public process ensures a decision by a school board regarding the future of a school has the full involvement of an informed local community.*

- Since this review was approved by the Board in June 2009, we will be using the Ministry's Guideline from May 2007. The Ministry developed a new Guideline

that will be applied to reviews approved after September 30, 2009. We can, however, incorporate some of the ideas of the new Guideline into this review.

- Mr. Smith reviewed the ARC Meeting Procedures with the group The ARC shall meet at an agreed upon schedule and location. The agendas, minutes and presentations from each ARC meeting will be posted on the Board's website. A feedback email address is in place for public comment as well: boundaryfeedback@wrdsb.on.ca. Planning staff and Trustees have access to this account.
- The formal accommodation review process is different from a Boundary Study in that school closure/consolidation can be considered.

The Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) recommendations can lead to large scale changes, involving major decisions, i.e. school closure/consolidation, boundary changes, program changes, school construction projects, etc. The recommendations are brought to the Board of Trustees to make the final decision.

Ms. Mankse explained the background for conducting an Accommodation Review in East K-W.

- The need to consider the possible consolidation or closure of a school in the review area exists because of: facility condition, enrolment decline, new development, new direction in curriculum/school organization and the potential for new facilities.
- Lexington P.S. is primarily a porta-pack structure that has almost reached its theoretical useful life with maybe 5 years left before any major maintenance issues need to be addressed.
- The Northeast Boundary Study that began 2 years ago resulted in a boundary change for Lester B. Pearson P.S. and construction of the new Millen Woods P.S. to open in 2010. The study also resulted in boundary changes for Sandowne and Lincoln Heights Public Schools.
- We are not looking at a long term solution for Lexington and Bridgeport schools which could involve the 7/8 boundary for Margaret Avenue (thus the inclusion of its feeder schools: Prueter, King Edward, Suddaby and Elizabeth Ziegler).

Mr. Smith reviewed the ARC membership makeup, and advised the intent is to move forward by consensus. However, when that is not possible decisions will be put to a vote. Voting members are parents, community and municipal representatives. The WRDSB staff are non-voting members.

Mr. Smith advised that we need to establish a committee chair at the next meeting, by either electing a member or having Planning Staff act as chair, the approach used in the Southeast Galt Pupil Accommodation Review.

Mr. Smith noted that a tour of the schools in the review area might be very helpful to the ARC. Coordination of a tour, the day and time can be set up by the Planning Dept., so by the next meeting you can decide whether or not you would like to participate.

3. Role of the Accommodation Review Committee/Terms of Reference

- A brief overview of the role of the ARC was discussed as well as the reference criteria.
- A handout was provided to all ARC members outlining the Terms of Reference.

Q/C – Is this reference material available to the public?

R – Yes, and the pertinent material is in your ARC binders under the Board Reports and Policies tab. Additional information/policies/guidelines can be found on our website at: www.wrdsb.ca. If you can't find a specific reference material, please let Planning know and we will get it to you.

4. Discuss the setting of Review Objectives

Mr. Hercanuck explained the important job of setting review objectives.

- Setting review objectives is a **key** step of this process.
- We will brainstorm some ideas at the first few meetings, and bring forth issues that we hope to do better with. For example, an issue could be the fact that a student spent the last 3 school years in a portable.
- The review objectives will be “draft” in the beginning, and we will take them to the public meetings for feedback. The objectives can be altered if necessary as we proceed.
- The objectives are critical to the process, especially at the stage of reviewing scenarios. They will be used to measure success of the scenarios/options brought forth.
- The ARC was asked to think about these, the overriding purpose of the accommodation review and we'll work on this at the next meeting. Any suggestions of review objectives are welcomed.
- Sample Review Objectives were displayed.

5. Explanation of School Valuations – School Information Profile

- The school valuation template (also referred to as School Information Profile in the new Ministry Guidelines released this past summer) were explained, and the committee members were asked to fill in as much information as they could for their school– a lot of the information will come from the Facilities, Special Education, Planning or other Board departments.
- The profiles are a tool to gather facility, program, transportation, security, community use, etc, information; we then collate the information.

Mr. Smith reiterated that the school profiles will not be used as comparators, schools will not be scored against each other. The profiles are simply tools to gather information on a consistent basis.

6. Future Meeting Dates and Location(s)

Mr. Smith referred everyone to the Proposed Accommodation Review Timelines in the presentation, noting the minimum timeframes set out by the Ministry for this review process.

- Mr. Smith asked the group if the 4:30 pm start time for the ARC meetings works for everyone, understanding that conflicts, family commitments/personal issues arise, making it hard to attend every meeting.
- Meeting venue was discussed, one central location is preferable, and the group was asked if they knew of a venue that would be available.
- Brian Ward from Margaret Avenue offered their library for future meetings.
- The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 13, 2009 at Margaret Avenue P.S.

7. Questions/Other

- Mr. Smith asked the group if they had any questions/concerns so far regarding the process. For example, some ask why aren't the Trustees on the ARC? Our Board has decided not to include them, and is in our Policy (other Boards include them, and some are re-thinking that decision). The Trustees will be invited to the Public Meetings, however.

Q/C – Since we are to consider review objectives for the next meeting, can we throw some ideas out now?

R – Yes, that's a great idea.

Q/C – Are there accessibility mandates that come down from the government?

R – Mr. Gaudet replied that there is an accessibility committee comprised of Trustees, WRDSB staff and parents that review and strategize. They set goals, and are stringent on timelines. No specific money has come from the Ministry yet, but the accessibility plan is in place. We group our schools into 4 areas and one of the goals is to have one secondary school in each area that is fully accessible, for example.

Mr. Smith added that any new construction meets the Ministry accessibility standards.

Q/C – Regarding the review objectives, we know that the Lexington porta-pack has surpassed its life span and we would like to see a permanent structure.

- Do we build on the existing Lexington school site or on the vacant Falconridge school site?
- Also, should the new school be JK-6 or JK-8?
- If it's built as JK-8, what happens to Margaret Avenue, since Lexington 7/8 students feed to them?
- Currently it's quite a distance for Lexington 7/8 students to be bused to Margaret Avenue, why can't they go to the closer Lincoln Heights?

R – Mr. Hercanuck responded that we will try and roll all of these issues up to encompass **all of the schools** into the review objectives.

Q/C – Lexington as a JK-8 school is appealing, perhaps we can look at sections of 7/8 students going in different directions, for example Kitchener students could go to Margaret Avenue and the Waterloo students could go to the newly built Lexington.

R – This could be a possible review objective: Fate of the 7/8 program.

- Transportation is an issue as well and will be an important piece to look at.

Q/C – Speaking for the Falconridge area (which currently attends Bridgeport P.S.), the builder told them a school would be built on that site, and houses were purchased on that basis.

- Lots of students attend the Catholic schools in that area because they are JK-8 and are newer facilities.
- Bridgeport P.S. is currently undergoing an addition, which will need to be kept in mind and enrolment sustained.

R – Mr. Smith noted that regarding the Falconridge school site, the Region is just releasing the plans of subdivision, which have been on hold up to now until improvements to Bridge Street are completed. He noted that Waterloo is quickly running out of greenfield development.

Q/C – What led to this process, some people here seem to know more about what's going on?

R – Some of the people present took part in the Northeast Waterloo Boundary Study over the last 2 years, which led to this accommodation review. We will do a re-cap of the boundary study next meeting to give all of you some background. In the interim you can visit our Board website to familiarize yourself with the study as well as the Board Reports that ultimately brought us here.

Q/C – What is the status of all day kindergarten?

R – There are no timelines yet, it will happen most likely as a phased process.

- The proposal is all day kindergarten with seamless childcare (Pascal Report).
- Any new construction has been built with this in mind already.
- It will be a huge impact on our enrolment however: adding 3,700 to 4,000 to our numbers, requiring facility upgrades across the system.

- Mr. Smith thanked all for coming, and the meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.

Future Meeting Dates:

Tuesday Oct. 13th @ Margaret Ave P.S. – 4:30 – 6:00 pm

Tuesday Oct. 27th @ Margaret Ave P.S. – 4:30 – 6:00 pm

Public Meeting # 1 – Nov. 10th @ Lexington P.S. – 7:00 pm