

Report to Committee of the Whole April 11, 2011



**Waterloo Region
District School Board**

_____ **Director of Education**

SUBJECT: AD HOC COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS RE: SECONDARY BOUNDARY REVIEW INTERIM REPORT: REPORT # 2

ORIGINATOR: This report was prepared by Marilyn Marklevitz, Executive Superintendent of Business and Financial Services and Treasurer, Nick Landry, Manager of Enrolment, in consultation with Executive Committee.

PURPOSE:

To summarize the work of the Ad Hoc Committee (the “committee”) established to review Secondary School Boundaries. This report also outlines proposed next steps, in accordance with the motion approved by the Board on January 17, 2011.

BACKGROUND:

In the fall of 2009, the Ammendolia Group Ltd. (the “consultant”) was retained to undertake a comprehensive review of the board’s secondary school boundaries during the 2009-2010 school year. Phase 1 of the study was completed and presented to Board on May 17, 2010. The interim report outlined short, medium and long term recommendations the Board should consider in addressing changes to secondary school boundaries. The report and recommendations were grounded in key principles developed by the consultant, in consultation with staff. These principles are:

- Secondary school boundaries should, to the extent possible, reflect a natural boundary that maximizes the number of walkers, serves a local population around the school and supports the delivery of core program;
- Only when there is no natural boundary for a community or school should ‘satellite’ boundaries be used to relieve overcrowding or supplement core school populations.
- The use of specialized programs, such as magnets, to supplement core school populations should be considered in lieu of physical boundary changes.

The consultant also recognized Board Policy 4013 - Secondary School Size in putting forward the recommendations.

In response to the report from the consultant, the Board established an Ad Hoc Committee that was responsible for reviewing the recommendations and reporting back to the Board by January 2011.

SECONDARY BOUNDARY COMMITTEE:

The membership of the committee included representation from across the system, including parents, trustees, student trustees, secondary principals, as well as staff from program, special education, planning, facilities and finance. The committee began meeting in September 2010, and met bi-weekly until March 2011. The membership of the committee and meeting dates are attached as Appendix A.

As a starting point, the committee reviewed the report that had been prepared by the consultant, with a particular focus on the short-term recommendations that had been made. The committee also sought to review the guiding principles that had been developed for the report, and discussed additional points through which the committee’s work should be guided. As noted above and in the report to Board on January 17, 2011, the work of the consultant was influenced, in part, by Board Policy 4013- Secondary School Size. Through the discussions of the committee it was agreed that a proposal would be brought to Board to amend Policy 4013, in order to more accurately reflect the concept of natural boundaries for secondary schools, and more specifically, the notion that

many factors beyond the size of the school contribute to the breadth of program that can be offered and the overall culture of the school.

The current policy and recommended updates are attached as Appendix B. The changes proposed by the committee can be summarized as follows:

- Secondary school boundaries should reflect a natural area around the facility that optimizes the number of students that can walk to school;
- The linkages between senior elementary programs and secondary schools should be clear, and the transition to secondary school should as much as possible avoid splitting students between schools;
- Every student should have the opportunity to attain an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) through a variety of core program pathways at their home secondary school;
- The placement of Board Designated Specialized Programs should be considered in addition to physical boundary changes to support a balanced demographic within the school;
- The size of secondary schools needs to support the delivery of a core program, including a variety of pathways for students; this is typically achieved within a range of 800 to 1400 pupil places, but successful secondary schools can exist outside of these limits by utilizing alternative delivery methods, such as e-learning;
- Decisions regarding new school construction, additions, upgrades and/or boundary changes should support the efficient utilization of overall accommodation capacity within the board;

After establishing a consensus on the guiding principles for the committee, a detailed review of the recommendations made by the consultant was undertaken. Through its work, the committee agreed that community consultation should be undertaken on two of the proposed boundary changes for September 2011; and one for potential implementation in September 2012.

On January 17, 2011, the Board approved the following motion based on the recommendations of the committee and the results of the community consultation that had been undertaken to date in the impacted communities.

That the Waterloo Region District School Board change the Secondary School boundaries between Huron Heights Secondary School and Preston High School so that the area of south west Kitchener bounded by Trussler Rd., New Dundee Rd., Bleams Rd., Stauffer Dr., Groh Dr., and Strasburg Creek as illustrated on Appendix A currently designated to attend Preston High School be directed to Huron Heights Secondary School effective September 2011;

And that existing students currently attending Preston High School from the affected area be granted the option to be grandparented to Preston High School and transportation be provided for those students to complete their diploma up to a maximum of four years;

And that the Waterloo Region District School Board not change Jacob Hespeler Secondary School's boundary so that students residing in the area south of Highway 401 continue to attend Jacob Hespeler Secondary School as illustrated on Appendix B effective September 2011;

And that the Waterloo Region District School Board undertake during the 2011/2012 school year, community consultation with respect to the proposed Secondary School Boundary changes between Kitchener Waterloo Collegiate Institute and Sir John A. Macdonald Secondary School identified in the Interim Secondary School Boundary Report originally presented to Board May 17, 2010.

STATUS:

In cooperation with the impacted schools, staff have begun the process of communicating these changes to students, parents, Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region, as well as to the various departments within the board in order to prepare and adjust for the September 2011 implementation.

Subsequent to the Board meeting on January 17, 2011, the committee met to discuss the medium and long term recommendations included in the consultant's original report.

As noted in the consultant's report dated May 2010, the medium term recommendations are intended to address pressures that will confront the board within 5-10 years. Similar to the short term recommendations, they are based on current and projected enrolment, as well as facility utilization. They also consider the implications of the Region of Waterloo's long term growth forecast. The long term recommendations consider all of these factors and are intended to highlight potential pressures over an 11-20 year time horizon.

Over the medium term, the report recommended the board examine the need for a new high school in South West Kitchener, as well as a possible boundary change between Bluevale Collegiate (BCI) and Waterloo Collegiate (WCI) to alleviate anticipated growth pressures at BCI. However, the recommendation regarding BCI and WCI needs to be reviewed within the context of the consultant's long term observation, that demographic and development trends in the area around WCI, along with the capital needs of the facility, raise questions about whether WCI's current location is best suited to meet future accommodation needs of the Board.

South West Kitchener

As noted in the report to Board on January 17, 2011, Huron Heights Secondary School has a built capacity of 1,131 pupil places. As of October 31, 2010 the enrolment at the facility was 1,217.4 FTE, which necessitated the placement of three portables on site this past summer. It is anticipated that these enrolment pressures and the need for temporary accommodation will increase in 2011-12, as students in the Huron Woods, Huron Village and Doon communities are directed to Huron Heights, in accordance with the boundary change approved by the Board on January 17, 2011.

In the consultant's report from May 2010, it was acknowledged that while South West Kitchener has been approved for major green field development, the majority of that development is yet to be realized. Accordingly, Regional population projections for the area predict that the total population could increase by another 8,000 people over the next 10 years further contributing to increases in school aged children within the Huron Heights boundary. As these developments proceed and other residential neighborhoods within the current catchment mature, the Board can expect further enrolment growth and accommodation pressure at the facility. In the short term these students could be accommodated through the reconfiguration of existing internal space, and/or temporary accommodation (portables). However, the consultant's report indicated that over the medium to long term, a threshold may be reached within this area to support another secondary school, and prior to any permanent additions being made at Huron Heights, the feasibility of another secondary school, including its potential location, should be examined further.

The committee has examined this recommendation and is in agreement that prior to making any permanent additions at Huron Heights, which may or may not be able to accommodate the anticipated growth in this area, the feasibility of a new secondary school should be examined further. This, the committee acknowledges, needs to include a review of the Laurentian West area, including Williamsburg and Activa, which is currently transported to Cameron Heights Collegiate in downtown Kitchener. It is the position of the committee that this boundary is not consistent with the notion of community schools, and therefore should be examined as part of this process. Further to this, because of the amount of time required to complete the process to build a new secondary school, including seeking Ministry funding, this analysis should be undertaken immediately in order to meet the anticipated growth pressures which will materialize beyond the next 5 years.

Bluevale Collegiate/Waterloo Collegiate

The consultant's report recommended that over the medium term, the board may need to consider a boundary change between Bluevale Collegiate and Waterloo Collegiate. The boundaries of BCI and WCI wrap around the East and North end of Waterloo, serving both established and newly developed areas of the city. As of October 31st 2010, BCI has a built capacity of 1,449 pupil places, and an enrolment of 1,414.75 FTE. It should be noted that BCI is in the process of a major capital project, including the addition of 16 permanent classrooms which replaced temporary accommodation in September 2010.

Located in central Waterloo near both the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University, WCI has a built capacity of 1,215 pupil places, and as of Oct 31st 2010, an enrolment of 1,463 FTE. In its report, the consultant emphasized that while current enrolment at WCI exceeds its built capacity, demographic and development trends in the area are likely to result in declining enrolment over the medium term, to a point where enrolment is at or below the built capacity of the school. Further to this, it was noted that approximately 500 students attend WCI from out of boundary.

The committee has examined this recommendation and agrees that, based on the demographic trends in the area around WCI, as well as the growth in Bluevale's boundary, the Board should continue to monitor the enrolment of BCI and examine the possibility of a boundary change that includes WCI, should projected growth in BCI's boundary materialize. However, in order to address the long term recommendations of the consultant, the committee recommends that staff and the consultant undertake further analysis of the long term accommodation needs in the Bluevale and Waterloo Collegiate catchment areas, including the facility needs and requirements of the WCI building.

Board Designated Specialized Programs (Magnets)

As one of the considerations for the study, the consultant recommended that the Board consider the use of Board Designated Specialized Programs, in addition to physical boundary changes, to supplement core school populations. Amongst the committee members there was much discussion about the benefits and challenges associated with specialized programs, including the process for introducing a program and ensuring that it aligns with the priorities of the Board as a whole. Within this discussion, it became apparent that schools with declining enrolment or unbalanced student demographics may benefit from such programs although the impact on all schools must be considered as well. A process is in place through the Ad Hoc Specialized Program Committee to oversee the development and approval of Board Designated Specialized Programs. Based on this understanding, the committee recommends that the Specialized Program Committee continue to review the use of Board Designated Specialized Programs in consultation with Planning and Facility staff as a means of complementing core school populations and balanced demographics across the system.

Ancillary to the above, there was some discussion about the Fast Forward (FF) program that is currently offered at five schools—SJAM, KCI, GRCI, JHSS and GPSS. In some instances, the students in this program may be required to travel farther than is necessary as the boundaries may not be consistent with community or transit connections. As well, the FF boundary for SJAM and KCI is large and contributes to the accommodation pressures at SJAM.

As a result the committee recommends that the fast forward boundaries be examined further.

Ad Hoc Committee

At this point we would like to thank the committee members for investing their time and effort in this initiative. The perspectives brought to the table by our trustees, student trustees, principals, parent representatives and staff from different departments within the board contributed to the overall effectiveness of the committee. The work of the committee has been accomplished.

COMMUNICATIONS:

The report from the consultant as presented to the Board on May 17, 2010 is posted on the Waterloo Region District School Board website along with the consultant's accompanying presentation.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

No financial implications at this time. In 2009, the Board approved a budget of \$100,000 to fund the Review of Secondary School Boundaries. To date, approximately \$40,000 has been spent, and the remainder is sufficient to fund any of the work outlined in this report.

SYSTEM SUCCESS PLAN:

This report relates to the day-to-day operations and facilities planning of the Board, which provide the foundation for the System Success Plan's areas of learning, caring, and connecting with students, staff and the community at large. It also relates to the area of Caring contained within the Board's Strategic Plan, which encompasses the belief that the community supports safe and secure learning environments.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board refer the changes to Policy 4013, as proposed by the Ad Hoc Committee on Secondary Boundaries, to the Policy and By-Law Committee of the Board for further review and consideration;

That Waterloo Region District School Board staff continue to work with the consultant to conduct further analysis on the accommodation needs in South West Kitchener, including the possibility of amending the boundary for the Laurentian West area and/or facility changes;

That Waterloo Region District School Board staff continue work with the consultant to analyze the long term accommodation needs in the Bluevale and Waterloo Collegiate catchment areas, including a possible boundary change and/or facility change;

That Waterloo Region District School Board continue, through the existing Specialized Program Committee, an ongoing review of specialized programs to complement core school populations and balanced demographics;

That Waterloo Region District School Board undertake a boundary review of the Fast Forward Program during the 2011-12 school year, and that a recommendation be brought to Board in January 2012 for implementation in September 2012;

That Waterloo Region District School Board disband the Ad Hoc Committee on Secondary School Boundaries.

**Ad Hoc Committee to Study the
Secondary School Boundary Review Interim Report**

Committee Members

John Hendry	Trustee - Waterloo
Ted Martin	Trustee - Kitchener
Cindy Watson	Trustee - Cambridge
Mary Lou Mackie	Executive Superintendent of Education
Chris Smith	Manager of Planning
Nathan Hercanuck	Senior Planner
Nick Landry	Enrolment Manager
Ron Dallan	Manager of Capital Projects
Jim Berry	Assistant Supt., Learning Services – Spec. Education
Kim Keena	Learning Services Coordinator- 7-12
Jennifer Shortreed	Secondary School Principal - Waterloo
Lila Read	Secondary School Principal - Kitchener
Stuart Cross	Secondary School Principal - Cambridge
Michele Lewis	School Council Rep. – Waterloo
Susan Reid	School Council Rep. – Kitchener, KCI
Jen McLellan	School Council Rep. – Kitchener, CHCI
Jane Bennett	School Council Rep. – Cambridge, JHSS
Linda Roechner	School Council Rep. – Cambridge, GPSS
Chris Patton	School Council Rep. – Cambridge, PHS
Brett Crowley	Student Trustee
Natalie Wennyk	Student Trustee
Marilyn Marklevitz	Executive Superintendent of Business (Chair)

Consultant to the Committee:

Jack Ammendolia The Ammendolia Group Ltd.

Meeting Dates

September 23, 2010	October 14, 2010	November 4, 2010
November 18, 2010	December 2, 2010	December 16, 2010
January 6, 2011	February 3, 2011	March 10, 2011



APPENDIX B
CURRENT
BOARD POLICY 4013
SECONDARY SCHOOL SIZE

Legal References:

Related References:

Revisions:

1. Preamble

- 1.1 The Waterloo Region District School Board believes that secondary schools should be welcoming and secure places, supporting all learners, and helping students succeed within an operational framework that is efficient. The Board also believes that, school size can contribute to achieving these outcomes.

2. School Size

- 2.1 It is the policy of the Waterloo Region District School Board to use as a guideline the following principles when building secondary schools and/or when adjusting secondary school boundaries:
- 2.1.1 a target school size of 1100 students per school;
 - 2.1.2 a target range of school sizes from 800 to 1400 students per school;
 - 2.1.3 efficient utilization of accommodation capacity;
 - 2.1.4 offering of a mandatory course list and a periodic review of this list;
 - 2.1.5 provision of funding and resources required to deliver, at a minimum, the list of mandatory courses;
 - 2.1.6 public consultation, in accordance with Board policy.



Legal References:

Related References:

Revisions:

1. Preamble

- 1.1 The Waterloo Region District School Board (Board) believes that secondary schools should be welcoming and secure places, supporting all learners, and helping students succeed within an operational framework that is efficient.

2. Secondary Schools

- 2.1 Therefore, it is the policy of the Board to use as a guideline the following principles to support its vision of secondary schools:
- 2.1.1 Secondary school boundaries should reflect a natural area around the facility that optimizes the number of students that can walk to school;
- the natural area around a school is understood to encompass those areas that are within walking distance and the local neighbourhoods that identify with that school
- 2.1.2 The linkages between senior elementary programs and secondary schools should be clear, and the transition to secondary school should as much as possible avoid splitting students between schools;
- 2.1.3 Every student should have the opportunity to attain an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) through a variety of core program pathways at their home secondary school;
- 2.1.4 The placement of Board Designated Specialized Programs should be considered in addition to physical boundary changes to support a balanced demographic within the school;
- the board reserves the right to move Board Designated Specialized Programs to achieve balanced enrolment in areas that are under growth pressures from within the natural area around the school
- 2.1.5 The size of secondary schools need to support the delivery of a core program, including a variety of pathways for students. This is typically achieved within a range of 800 to 1400 pupil places, with a target size of 1,100 students per school, but successful secondary schools can exist outside of these limits by utilizing alternative delivery methods (e.g., e-learning);
- 2.1.6 Decisions regarding new school construction, additions, portables, upgrades and/or boundary changes should support the efficient utilization of overall accommodation capacity within the board;
- 2.1.7 When considering any of the above noted actions, public consultation should be undertaken in accordance with Board policy.
- 2.1.8 Notwithstanding the above, there may be circumstances which would necessitate an alternate solution.