



**West Galt Elementary Schools
Pupil Accommodation Review
Minutes of Accommodation Review Committee Meeting #6
February 1, 2012, 5:30-7:00 PM
St. Andrew's Public School Library**

The sixth meeting of the West Galt Elementary Schools Pupil Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) was held at St. Andrew's Public School on Wednesday, February 1, 2012.

Committee Members Present:

Karen Tomlin, Principal, St. Andrew's P.S., Trevor McWilliams, City of Cambridge Representative, Barry Frame, Principal Dickson P.S., Jodie Hancox-Meyer, Principal, Blair Road P.S., Michelle Schmid, Vice Principal, St. Andrew's P.S., Kelly Deml, Parent Rep. Blair Road P.S., Karen Destun, Parent Rep., Tait Street P.S., Paula Ouellet, Parent Rep., Highland P.S., Lynn Robb, Parent Rep, Blair Road P.S., Maura Fuller, Parent Rep., Tait Street P.S., Bev Fox, Parent Rep., St. Andrew's P.S., Hayley Orman, Parent Rep., Highland P.S., Al Potma, Parent Rep., Dickson P.S., Dennis Cuomo, Manager of Planning, Andrea Kean, Recording Secretary, Nathan Hercanuck, Senior Planner and Lauren Manske Senior Planner, for the Waterloo Region District School Board.

Other WRDSB Staff Present:

None

Regrets:

Wendy Bowker, Principal Highland P.S., Nick Chiarelli, Vice Principal, Highland P.S., Marcia Lubert, Principal Tait Street P.S., Roy Roethel, Parent Rep., St. Andrew's P.S., Rebecca Raineault, Parent Rep., Dickson P.S., Lila Read, Superintendent of Education, Ron Dallan, Manager Capital Projects for the Waterloo Region District School Board.

1. Welcome/Introductions

Ms. Manske, Senior Planner opened the meeting at 5:30 pm and welcomed members of the ARC and welcomed Mr. Al Potma as the new Parent Representative for Dickson PS, replacing Vanessa Meal.

2. ARC Meeting #5 – Draft Minutes Approval

Ms. Manske asked the ARC if there were any corrections/concerns with the minutes from the January 11, 2012 ARC meeting and noted a change to page 12, Public Meetings: tentative date for Public Meeting #2 to read "Thursday, March 1, 2012".

Minutes from ARC Meeting #5 approved with noted change.

Moved by: Karen Destun

Seconded by: Barry Frame

Ms. Manske noted that hardcopies of the minutes will be sent out to the schools for the school binder and the minutes will also be posted on the Board website at:

<http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/accommodation-reviews/west-galt-elementary-schools>

Ms. Manske led the ARC through the presentation, available on-line at:

<http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/accommodation-reviews/west-galt-elementary-schools>

3. Requested Information:

- **Colour Status-Quo maps:**

Ms. Manske provided the colour Status-Quo maps and enrolment projections to the ARC for reference purposes (available online in tonight's presentation, Slide 13) and updated the on the ground (OTG) capacities to include the Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) additions for Highland P.S. and Blair Road P.S. in all scenarios.

- **Bussing Issue at Tait Street P.S.:**

Ms. Manske advised the ARC that she had spoken with City of Cambridge and Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region (STSWR) staff regarding why Tait Street's busses cannot drop off/pick up on Culham Drive and was told that buses are not allowed to drop off/pick up in front of houses. This also holds true for where the buses are loading now, however, arrangements have been made so that they are allowed to do so. There is no intention by the City or STSWR to relocate the bus stop to Culham Drive. Ms. Manske noted that if Tait Street P.S. were to have multiple buses in the future, bus drop off would likely have to be staggered to accommodate.

- **Options for expansion/conversion of facilities based on site and building constraints of review schools:**

Ms. Manske noted that Facility Services staff was unable to attend tonight's meeting but she was able to speak with both Steve Karley, Senior Draftsperson and Ron Dallan, Manager of Capital Projects to discuss requirements to bring area schools up to JK-8 ideal school size (600 pupil places).

Requirements to become a 600 pupil place capacity JK-8 facility:

Blair Road P.S. (Slides 3 & 4 of online presentation)

- Would require 14 additional classrooms and 2nd gymnasium.
- New building footprint would be double current footprint; may need to place complete second story on school to minimize site impact.
- No easy location to add parking spaces for additional staff (approx. 14 additional staff).
- Cost likely comparable to cost of building a new school (most recent comparison for size is Ryerson P.S. – approx. \$8 million).

Dickson P.S. (Slides 5 & 6)

- Would require 19 additional classrooms and a double gymnasium.
- New building footprint would only be possible if existing structure were demolished and new building were multiple stories (no room on site).
- No location for playground or to add parking spaces for additional staff (approx. 19).
- Site size not sufficient to accommodate 600 students.
- Cannot demo building because of Heritage designation.

Highland P.S. (Slides 7 & 8)

- Would require 7 additional classrooms and 2nd gymnasium.
- Only location to add parking for additional (approx. 7) staff would be at front of school requiring a costly retaining wall.
- Cost of infrastructure for 2nd story on FDK addition would be same as for an additional classroom.
- 454 pupil places will likely be the capacity for life of the school – not recommended to have any further additions due to site limitations.

St. Andrew's P.S. (Slides 9 & 10)

- Would require 8 additional classrooms and Elevator.
- Addition could be two story (4 rooms/floor) which could incorporate elevator and take care of some accessibility issues at the school:
 - May be worthwhile moving main office to new addition which would include FDK rooms.
- Site not large enough for a 600 pupil place school; play area is constrained.
- May be enough parking for additional staff (approx. 8-12 staff).
- Not ideal mainly due to site size.

Tait Street P.S. (Slides 11 & 12)

- Would require 11 additional classrooms, 2nd gymnasium and accessibility (elevator).
- Best option would be to add 2nd story to front wing of school.
- No room for additional parking (approx. 15 additional staff).
- No bus drop-off location.
- Not ideal or recommended.

Q: Projection Area O is currently bussed to Tait Street P.S.; are they bussed because of distance or hazard? If Area J is the same distance, they would have to cross St. Andrew's Street as well; would they be bussed too?

Action Item:

Ms. Manske to find out reason for Area O being bussed and determine if Area J would have to be bussed to Tait Street P.S.

Q: Just to clarify, none of the 5 sites are being recommended for conversion to large JK-8 facilities? Not even Blair Road P.S. which I thought would be suitable. It sounds like from Facility Services' perspective that it would make more sense to build a brand new JK-8 school.

R: A Blair Road P.S. conversion would be the most realistic out of the area sites but if we were given the option it would be preferable to build a new JK-8 school in the new Cambridge West development area and leave Blair Road P.S. as is and have it feed into a new school in the [Cambridge West Master Environmental Servicing Plan](#) (MESP) area for grades 7 and 8. Ms. Manske noted that she does need to do a little more work because we are at the point now where we need projections to see what the population may look like in the new development area and knowing the need for a more long-term solution as area schools cannot withstand substantial additions. Smaller additions at schools may be possible but then we may be left with less than desirable school sizes if we go with JK-8 organizations.

Q: What is the minimum number of students recommended for a JK-8 organization?

R: The minimum number for a JK-8 would be with 2 classes each from JK-6 and 2.5 classes for grades 7 and 8 with 23 students per class; an approximate minimum number would be about 500 pupil places.

4. Ongoing: Scenario Discussion

Ms. Manske noted that Scenario 5 was the last scenario standing from our previous meeting.
(Capacities updated)

Scenario 5:

School	Grades	OTG Capacity	Special Programs	Boundary Projection Areas (see map, Slide 13)
Blair Road P.S.	JK-6	294	Spec Ed French Immersion	A, B, C, D
Dickson P.S.	JK-6	161		K, L, M, N
Highland P.S.	JK-6	464	French Immersion	E, F, G, H, I
St. Andrew's P.S.	7-8	424	French Immersion	A to S (7-8)
Tait Street P.S.	JK-6	348		J, O, P, Q, R, S

Ms. Manske noted that Scenario 5 keeps all schools open, with St. Andrew's a dedicated 7-8 facility and the remainder operating as JK-6 facilities with both Dickson and Highland adding Grade 6 as St. Andrew's is now a 7-8 school. Scenario 5 also adds a French Immersion program at Blair Road P.S., and moves projection area J to Tait Street P.S.

Ms. Manske noted that a portion of projection area A is directed to William G. Davis Senior Public School for grades 7 and 8 but noted that to her knowledge there are no children in the area, but noted that under the review we can fix this boundary up so that all of Blair Road P.S.'s boundary feeds to St. Andrew's P.S.

Ms. Manske noted that other boundaries can be tweaked to try to achieve a better enrolment balance for each school.

Q: Ms. Manske asked the ARC if they are comfortable with Dickson P.S. not have a playing field or a proper gymnasium if it were to stay open.

R: Al Potma responded that you do not miss what you do not have and it does not seem to be an issue for those currently attending.

C: Barry Frame commented that he has invited Trustees to come out and see how things work at Dickson P.S. while the students are in the building so they can see the high sense of community and how everyone looks out for each other; noting that a school is more than just bricks and mortar.

Q: Jodie Hancox-Meyer asked if there is pressure from higher-ups to close Dickson P.S. because the Board is paying salaries for administration and maintenance costs for a school of only 100 students.

R: Dennis Cuomo responded that he would not say that there is pressure but that issue has been noted.

Pros:

- Keeps all schools open
- Dedicated 7-8 program at St. Andrew's P.S.
- St. Andrew's would be able to remove portables, allowing for more site space.
- Highland P.S.'s numbers look good (boundary tweak moves Area J students to Tait Street P.S.)

Cons:

- Tait Street P.S. would be over its built capacity and would require an addition.
- Tait Street P.S. site not suitable for an addition.
- Area J would mean additional bussing.
- Small school organizations at Blair Road P.S. and Dickson P.S.

Outcome:

The ARC agreed to keep Scenario 5 but agreed that it may require further tweaking of boundaries to address concerns for Tait Street P.S.

Ms. Manske noted that she has developed maps and prepared enrolment projections for the new Scenarios 6 – 10 which the ARC had developed at the last meeting; changes to projection areas are noted in red.

Scenario 6:

School	Grades	OTG Capacity	Special Programs	Boundary Projection Areas
Blair Road P.S.	JK-8	294	Spec Ed	A, B, C, D
Dickson P.S.	JK-6	161		K, L, M, N
Highland P.S.	JK-6	464	French Immersion	E, F, G, H
St. Andrew's P.S.	7-8	424	French Immersion	E TO S (7-8)
Tait Street P.S.	JK-6	348		I, J, O, P, Q, R, S

Ms. Manske noted that under Scenario 6 all schools would remain open; Blair Road P.S. would need an expansion to accommodate the JK-8 program. Highland, Tait and Dickson would run the JK-6 program feeding to St. Andrew's P.S. which would become a dedicated 7-8 facility and contain any congregated classes. This scenario would also include some boundary changes to try to eliminate bussing while maintaining the school communities.

Pros:

- Keeps all schools open.
- Dedicated 7-8 program at St. Andrew's P.S.

Cons:

- Numbers do not work for any of the 5 schools with this scenario.

Outcome:

The ARC was undecided on whether to keep or discard this scenario.

Scenario 7:

School	Grades	OTG Capacity	Special Programs	Boundary Projection Areas
Blair Road P.S.	JK-8	294	Spec Ed	undetermined
Dickson P.S.	JK-8	161		undetermined
Highland P.S.	JK-8	464	French Immersion	undetermined
St. Andrew's P.S.	Closed			
Tait Street P.S.	JK-6	348		undetermined

Scenario 7 would close St. Andrew's with Tait Street a JK-6 and the remaining schools JK-8.

Ms. Manske noted that she did not map or prepare enrolment projections for this scenario as it would not be feasible given comments from facility services on JK-8 facility requirements.

Outcome:

The ARC agreed to remove Scenario 7 from further consideration.

Scenario 8:

School	Grades	OTG Capacity	Special Programs	Boundary Projection Areas
Blair Road P.S.	JK-8	294	Spec Ed	A, B, C, D, K
Dickson P.S.	Closed			
Highland P.S.	JK-6	464	French Immersion	F, G, H, I, L, M
St. Andrew's P.S.	7-8	424	French Immersion	E, F, G, H, I, J, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S (7-8)
Tait Street P.S.	Closed			
New Beechwood Road School	JK-6	600		E, J, N, O, P, Q, R, S

Scenario 8 would close Tait Street P.S. and Dickson P.S., building a new JK-6 school on the Beechwood Road site, with large boundary for the new school. Highland P.S. as JK-6 and St. Andrew's as a dedicated 7-8. Both Highland and the new school would go to St. Andrew's for 7-8. Projection Area K (originally in Dickson P.S. boundary) is moved to Blair Road P.S.

Q: Is the Beechwood site big enough for the school and play area?

R: Ms. Manske responded that the Beechwood site is approximately 5 acres with an adjacent park and when doing a new school it would presumably be a multi-storey facility so there would be a smaller building footprint freeing up more of the site for play space.

Pros:

- Dedicated 7-8 program at St. Andrew's P.S.
- Numbers may allow Blair Road P.S. to not require 2nd gym addition.

Cons:

- Blair Road P.S. would need addition to house the 7-8 program (Art, Science and Technology rooms).
- St. Andrew's numbers are very low.

Q: Would it be better to change Blair Road to a JK-6 rather than having to do an addition for the 7-8 program?

R: Yes, due to the low numbers at St. Andrew's P.S. it would be best to have Blair Road be a JK-6 and have the grades 7 and 8s go to St. Andrew's.

Q: Could we have French Immersion (FI) offered at the proposed new Beechwood school?

R: We could look at that possibility but would not want to have many more kids at the new school as projected numbers are already at capacity for the new school.

Q: How many children are in Area E?

R: There are currently 75 JK-8 students (49 JK-5 at Highland P.S.)

R: Trevor McWilliams responded that there have been 2 plans in area E for Grand Ridge Estates that were recently registered: 59 singles in phase 1 and 53 singles in phase 2. He also noted that there is one more phase in the existing subdivision yet to be registered.

Q: Are those numbers included in your projections?

R: Yes.

C: If a new school is built on the Beechwood Road site residents in area N pocket may want to go and some are closer than those in area I; we may want to consider doing a swap between areas N and I.

R: Ms. Manske responded that the ARC can draw boundaries that are more logical if this is a scenario worth keeping for other reasons.

C: Numbers for St. Andrew's are very low in this scenario.

Q: What would this scenario look like if we were to keep Dickson open and have the Special Education program housed there?

R: That would require construction for site accessibility.

Q: What if we made Blair Road a JK-6, the new school a JK-8, how would that impact on St. Andrew's P.S.?

Outcome:

No decision was made on keeping /dropping this scenario.

Scenario 9:

School	Grades	OTG Capacity	Special Programs	Boundary Projection Areas
Blair Road P.S.	JK-8	294	Spec Ed	A, B, C, D, K
Dickson P.S.	Closed			
Highland P.S.	JK-6	464	French Immersion	F1, G, H, L, M, N
St. Andrew's P.S.	7-8	424	French Immersion	E, F, G, H, I, J, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S
Tait Street P.S.	JK-6	348		P, Q, R, S
New Beechwood Road School	JK-6	450		E, F2, I, J, O

Scenario 9 would see a new Beechwood Road School with new boundaries, close Dickson P.S. and put in JK-6 at Highland P.S. and Tait Street P.S., Blair Road becomes a JK-8 and St. Andrew's a dedicated 7-8. Tait Street P.S.'s boundary is reduced and Highland takes on Dickson's population.

Q: Would this work better if Highland P.S. remains status quo and Blair Road gets an addition?

R: Blair Road P.S. would likely need an addition for the 7/8 program anyway.

Pros:

- Reduces size of Highland P.S.
- Maintains senior school.

Cons:

- Not a lot of merit in terms of numbers.

Outcome:

No decision was made on keeping/dropping this scenario.

Scenario 10

School	Grades	OTG Capacity	Special Programs	Boundary Projection Areas
Blair Road P.S.	JK-8	294	Spec Ed	A, B, C, K
Dickson P.S.	Closed			
Highland P.S.	JK-6	464	French Immersion	F1, G, H, L, M, N
St. Andrew's P.S.	Closed			
Tait Street P.S.	JK-6	348		D2 , O, P, Q, R, S
New Beechwood Road School	JK-8	650	French Immersion	D1, E, F2, I, J, (JK-6) D, E, F, G, H, I, J, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S (7-8)

Scenario 10 closes both Dickson and St. Andrew's and builds a new school with new boundaries, with Highland P.S. and Tait Street P.S. JK-6 feeding into the new school for grades 7-8. Blair Road becomes JK-8. Projection Area D split between new school and Tait Street P.S. The new school would offer French Immersion.

Q: What if we modified to keep Dickson open?

R: The new school is at maximum size and there may be new development in Area E in the long-term. Tait may be above, Blair Road is too low and Highland is underutilized; numbers may not warrant keeping Dickson open.

Q: Can we have a smaller boundary for the new school?

R: We can always look at making modifications to the boundaries shown.

Action Item:

Ms. Manske, for next meeting, will develop more projections for the new development area (Areas C & E) and more facility information to work with to plan for possible construction for the long-term.

C: Barry Frame commented that we may be doing this review five years too early.

R: Trevor McWilliams agreed that according to projections the area is not going to grow without the new development area and noted that perhaps we should be just reviewing the boundary for Highland P.S. if they will eventually be going to the proposed school in the new development area and implement another French Immersion (FI) program at another school to take pressure off of Highland P.S.

Q: Will the new Moffat Creek P.S. offer FI?

R: Ms. Manske noted that it has not been decided yet but noted when a new program starts it is offered to the Grade 1 class only and grows up from there and indicated that it may still require a small boundary tweak to get additional kids out of Highland P.S.

- Q: What are the resources needed for a school to operate FI?
- R: Text/curriculum resources, library etc.
- C: I think the suggestion is to not take the program from Highland but to add another program at another school.
- C: Bev Fox commented that it's her experience that it works better socially to have multiple classes of grades at a school to not isolate the FI kids.
- C: Barry Frame commented that the FI classes can be combined in with the rest of the school if FI is offered in the AM and then the FI take regular classes in the PM; while it is a nightmare for scheduling it works well for the kids.
- C: If Blair Road is made ready to take on the incoming population of the new development area the Board may not need a new school in area C.
- R: Ms. Manske noted that is something the ARC can consider.
- C: Trevor McWilliams commented that the Cambridge West Development Area is going through Master Environmental Servicing Plan right now and the City is hoping to get the schematics this year so they will know the number of units with the environmental constraints taken out. He also noted that the City does not have an application for the Grand Ridge Estates development area which has been on the books for twenty years and suggested that the Board might want to consider acquiring the property for a new school now (which can be sold as surplus if not needed) instead of sinking a lot of money into area schools which might not be necessary.
- Q: Hayley Orman asked if the ARC can look at moving a portion of Highland's boundary to Blair Road P.S. to alleviate some of the pressure on Highland P.S.
- Q: How many of the Highland P.S. FI students are from Blair Road's boundary? If we were to consider offering FI at Blair Road P.S. would this have an effect?
- R: There are none in area A, only 1 in area B, 16 in area C and 2 in area D.
- Q: How many are on the waiting list?
- C: Ms. Manske commented that Learning Services staff would have the answers to these questions and advised the ARC that she would invite both Learning Services and a Special Education staff to attend our next meeting.
- C: Al Potma noted that Dickson P.S. manages well for a small facility.
- C: The Board also offers an Enrichment Program which tends to change locations depending on the Grade level it is being offered at.
- Q: In the area where Tait Street was overcrowded, how many were FI students and how many FI students are still in the area if that area were to move back to Tait Street again?

R: Ms. Manske responded that she can provide a summary of FI numbers.

Q: Are these projections based on FI just being at Highland P.S.?

R: In Scenario 10, we also have the proposed new Beechwood Road school offering FI.

The ARC discussed the French Immersion program further and decided they had many question to ask Learning Services staff around how the Board determines which school get the program and how parents can be help have it offered in their home schools.

Q: Can we do an addition at Blair Road P.S. and still build a new school in the Cambridge West Development area?

R: Possibly. That may depend on the number of units that can be built in that subdivision.

C: Mr. Hercanuck noted that it is a reasonable outcome of the review to look at a recommendation to deal with the immediate situation while having regard for the long-term; it is not a requirement of the Accommodation Review process to close or open a school.

Q: Are we being premature to make long-term changes now; would it be better to look at stop gap changes now to address the next few years when we are expecting an increase in population up to five years out. Would it be better to look at cleaning up existing building and come back to this again in five years?

C: We would not have to consider making school accessible if we are just looking at making things work for the next five years.

C: Trevor McWilliams noted that we many know the numbers in two years or it could take a lot longer for development to proceed.

C: Mr. Hercanuck noted that these are all good points, however, thought must be given to any short-term options recommended to ensure that they do not preclude any longer-term recommendations, (i.e., boundary changes that move neighbourhoods twice in a short period, or additions to schools that take away threshold for long-term capital projects).

Q: Are builders required to pay development charges to go toward building new schools?

R: Ms. Manske responded that they pay development charges which can only be used to acquire sites and to prepare sites to build, but not for capital construction costs.

Q: If we were to move forward with a recommended scenario for a boundary change for Highland P.S. how long before it could be implemented?

R: If we could get a decision before January 2013 it could be implemented for September 2013 as long as construction is not required for implementation.

Action Items:

- Ms. Manske to invite Learning Services and Special Education staff to our next meeting to answer questions.
- The ARC to forward any specific questions they would like to ask re Spec Ed, FI and Enrichment programs via email to: lauren_manske@wrdsb.on.ca
- Ms. Manske to provide plotted maps and handouts and provide summary of FI numbers.

5. Public Meeting #2: Are we ready?

The ARC decided to go ahead with Public Meeting #2 on Thursday, March 1, 2012 at Blair Road Public School to share what the ARC has done so far with the community and get public feedback on the objectives, programs and limits to school sites and school condition reports outlining what may need to be done at the facilities over the next 5-20 years.

6. Future Meeting Dates:

ARC Meetings:

ARC Meeting #7: Wednesday, February 15, 2012, 5:30-7:00 p.m. @ St. Andrew's P.S. Library

ARC Meeting #8: Wednesday, March 7, 2012, 5:30-7:00 p.m. @ St. Andrew's P.S. Library

Public Meetings:

Public Meeting #2: Thursday, March 1, 2012, 7:00-8:30 p.m. @ Blair Road P.S. Gym

7. Roundtable/Wrap up

Ms. Manske thanked everyone for coming out and the meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.