



West Galt Elementary Schools Pupil Accommodation Review
Minutes of Public Meeting #3
March 27, 2012
St. Andrew's Public School – 7:00 p.m.

The Third Public Meeting of the West Galt Elementary Schools Pupil Accommodation Review was held at St. Andrew's Public School on Tuesday, March 27, 2012.

Approximately 66 members of the public were also in attendance.

1. Welcome/Introductions:

Dennis Cuomo, Manager of Planning for the Waterloo Region District School Board welcomed members of the public, school communities, and Board staff present for the evening, and noted that purpose of the meeting is to share information about the Elementary Schools Accommodation Review running in the West Galt area of Cambridge.

Mr. Cuomo made the following introductions:

- Lauren Manske, Senior Planner
- Andrea Kean, Recording Secretary
- Karen Tomlin Principal of St. Andrew's P.S. and our host for the evening
- Michelle Schmid, Vice Principal of St. Andrew's P.S.
- Wendy Bowker, Principal of Highland P.S.
- Lila Read, Superintendent of Education
- Cindy Watson, Trustee for Cambridge/North Dumfries
- Pamela Wolf, City Councilor Ward 5
- Trevor McWilliams, City of Cambridge ARC Representative

Mr. Cuomo noted that the West Galt Accommodation Review was initiated on February 14, 2011 and since that time the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) was established and is comprised of the Principals of the review area schools, City of Cambridge representative, Trevor McWilliams, as well as two parent representatives from each of the 5 review area schools and Board staff.

Since its inception the ARC has met 9 times and held its first Public Meeting in October 2011 and its second Public Meeting on March 1, 2012; during this time the ARC has looked in detail at the issues in the area and established [goals and objectives](#) to assist in their work, which was handed out to members of the public in attendance.

Mr. Cuomo noted that the display boards at the side of the gym outline several of the scenarios that the ARC has considered so far as accommodation options for the area and noted that so far. He noted that the scenarios presented tonight are those which have been short-listed by the ARC for detailed analysis. He advised that no decisions have

been made at this point. He noted that the scenarios presented may suggest a change to your child's school or closure of a school in the area and advised that these are just options the ARC is discussing and have determined to best meet the goals and objectives they have developed. The ARC still has some analysis and further discussion to do before making their recommendation.

Mr. Cuomo explained that the purpose of this third public meeting is to present the short-listed scenarios in some detail and then provide an opportunity for everyone present to review the materials displayed around the room and get clarification and ask questions in the Open House segment of the evening. He noted that there will be a short question and answer session in order to provide more time for the one-on-one discussion during the Open House segment.

Mr. Cuomo noted that today was Budget Day in Ontario and, following the Drummond Report the Province is embarking on some significant cost cutting measures. While it appears education programs may be spared, the details for education funding for capital construction are still unclear, and advised that the future provincial decisions will factor into the timing of funding to school boards and any recommendation the ARC makes that would require funding from the Ministry of Education. The availability and timing of funding for new schools and additions is still quite difficult to confirm at this time.

Mr. Cuomo pointed out that an important part of the Public Meeting process is to gather feedback from the community and requested that those in attendance complete and submit the Comment Sheets provided and noted that this sheet can be faxed to the Planning Department at (519)570-2172 or feedback can be sent via email at boundaryfeedback@wrdsb.on.ca

Mr. Cuomo introduced Lauren Manske, Senior Planner for the Board who led the audience through tonight's presentation which is available online at: <http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/accommodation-reviews/west-galt-elementary-schools>)

2. Accommodation Review Process

Ms. Manske did a quick recap for those who were unable to attend Public Meetings #1 and #2:

An accommodation review is a review of a group of schools in an area of the Board's jurisdiction, to determine the future of student accommodation within the review area. This formal process is based on a broad range of criteria focused primarily on the quality of the learning experience for students.

Review Area (slide 4)

The West Galt review area consists of the following 5 elementary schools:

- Blair Road (JK-6)
- Dickson (JK-5)
- Highland (JK-5)
- St. Andrew's (6-8)
- Tait Street (JK-6)

Potential Outcomes: (slide 5)

An Accommodation Review can ultimately result in recommendations to:

- close one or more schools,
- consolidate schools (*having students from two or more schools at one location*),
- changes in attendance boundaries,
- changes in program (*for example, a JK- 6 school becoming a JK-8 school*),
- complete capital construction projects such as additions, or new school construction.

Ms. Manske noted that all of these outcomes can be seen in the scenarios being shared here this evening.

The Accommodation Review Process (Slide 6)

Referring to Slide 6 of the online presentation Ms. Manske noted that there are several steps to the overall accommodation review process and pointed out that the ARC is nearing the end of the process as is at the second to last step of the chart on slide 6, which is confirming the preferred scenarios.

Ms. Manske noted that tonight is the third of a minimum of four public meetings which are required and noted that tonight she will be presenting the ARC's refined scenarios which the ARC is considering as their recommendation in the accommodation report to the Board.

ARC Mission and Vision (slide 9)

Ms. Manske noted that the Mission is the overall purpose of the ARC/Accommodation Review and the Vision is the overall aspiration.

The ARC's *Mission* is to advise and provide recommendations that will inform the final decision by the Board of Trustees about the future of student accommodation in the West Galt community with the *Vision* of strengthening the quality of the learning experience for students.

ARC Objectives (slide 7)

Ms. Manske advised a summary of the [ARC's Mission, Vision, Goals and Objectives](#) can be found on the back of the comment sheets available at the entrance of the gym this evening.

Mission: Overall purpose of the Accommodation Review

Vision: Overall aspiration of the Accommodation Review

Goals: What the ARC intends to achieve in this process

Objectives: More precise and detailed statements of the goals.

3. Review Objectives: (slide 7)

Ms. Manske noted that there has been some modification to the objective wording since Public Meeting #2, and they are now the final objectives and have been used to evaluate the effectiveness of the scenarios the ARC has considered.

The final review objectives are as follows:

- To reorganize the JK-5, 6-8 school organizations in favour of JK-6, JK-8, or 7-8
- To reduce the number of students currently attending Highland P.S. to better match the enrolment to the schools' built capacity
- To reduce the potential for combined grades at schools by moving towards the following criteria (*from Board Policy 3002*):
 - JK-6 facilities between 350 and 400 students (approx. 2 classes/grade)
 - JK-8 facilities between 500 and 650 students (approx. 2 classes/grade JK-6, 2+ classes/grade 7-8)
- To increase the number of students within walking distance to their assigned school
- To reduce the reliance on portable classrooms for long-term student accommodation
- To reduce unused (surplus) capacity by organizing schools and boundaries to achieve utilization rates (enrolment/capacity) that exceed 80% over the long-term (approx. 10 years)
- To maintain those school buildings that can provide appropriate, purpose-built facilities (kindergarten rooms, gyms, libraries, etc.)
- To reduce the cost to achieve legislated accessibility requirements by 2025

4. Accommodation Options (Scenarios)

Ms. Manske advised that the scenarios the ARC has opted to share with you fall into two categories:

- Short-term boundary changes (with earliest implementation date of September 2013)
- Long-term strategy (with earliest implementation date of September 2015, but more likely to be beyond that)

For each of the scenarios, charts have been provided which show the projected enrolment at each of the schools with the proposed changes. These charts also show what grades are offered at each of the schools as well as the 'on-the-ground' or OTG capacity. This is the Ministry's calculation of the number of students that can be accommodated within the walls of the school. The FI and Spec. Ed. Columns indicate if the school offers French Immersion or Special Education congregated area classes.

Ms. Manske noted that the scenarios are featured on the display board at the side of the gym and the open house portion of the meeting will allow the opportunity to take a closer look at the scenarios and get a better understanding of the changes that are proposed, as well as the differences between the scenarios.

Ms. Manske advised that it is important to keep in mind that even though you may not see a proposal here tonight that affects you; there is always the potential that the ARC has not considered every option yet. She urged the community to continue to follow the progress of the review.

She noted that the ARC is always open to receiving suggestions for alternative scenarios that are not displayed here tonight and asked those in attendance or those of you reading from home to please send in any suggestions to boundaryfeedback@wrdsb.on.ca

Short Term Scenarios:

Scenario 16 (slides 9-11)

Intended to off-set the current pressing issues of the enrolment pressures at Highland P.S.

- Boundary change between Blair Road P.S. and Tait Street P.s. (area south of the City limits; including the Riverview Settlement area of North Dumfries) – approximately 21 student this year.
- Boundary change between Dickson P.S. and Tait Street P.S. (a few properties off of St. Andrew's St. – (currently 2 students living there who are attending schools out of boundary for various reasons)
- Boundary change between Highland P.S. and Tait Street P.S. (a few properties along Beechwood Road) –currently 71 students JK-6
- St. Andrew's P.S. would be affected for the Grade 6 boundary because of the changes between Highland, Dickson and Tait (approximately 12 students this year)

Scenario 16 - Projected Enrolment:

The proposed boundary changes manage to off-set some of the enrolment pressure at Highland; however, will not fully eliminate all of the portables there.

Scenario 16 - Objectives Summary:

Meets only half of the review objectives.

Objective	Meets	Doesn't Meet
To reorganize the JK-5, 6-8 school organizations in favour of JK-6, JK-8 or 7-8		X
To reduce the number of students currently attending Highland P.S. to better match the enrolment to the schools' built capacity	X	
To reduce the potential for combined grades at schools by moving towards the following criteria (from Board Policy 3002): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• JK-6 facilities between 350 and 400 students (approx. 2 classes/grade)• JK-8 facilities between 500 and 650 students (approx. 2 classes/grade JK-6, 2+ classes/grade 7-8	X	
To increase the number of students within walking distance to their assigned school		X
To reduce the reliance on portable classrooms for long-term student accommodation	X	
To reduce unused (surplus) capacity by organizing schools and boundaries to achieve utilization rates (enrolment/capacity) that exceed 80% over the long-term (approx. 10 years)	X	
To maintain those school buildings that can provide appropriate, purpose-built facilities (kindergarten rooms, gyms, libraries, etc.)		X
To reduce the cost to achieve legislated accessibility requirements by 2025		X

Scenario 20 (slides 12-14)

Short-term boundary change to off-set enrolment pressures at Highland P.S.

- Boundary change between Blair Road P.S. and Tait Street P.S. (same as scenario 16 - Riverview Settlement area)
- Boundary change between Highland P.S. and Blair Road P.S. for the area on the west side of Highland's boundary – Grand Ridge Drive and Kent Street areas (approximately 58 students in this year...minus the students who would stay because of FI)
- Boundary change between Highland P.S. and Tait Street P.S. (same few properties along Beechwood Road as Scenario 16 as well as Wedgewood and Delvan Drives – currently 87 students JK-6 at these addresses)
- St. Andrew's P.S. would be affected for the Grade 6 boundary because of the changes between Highland P.S., Blair Road P.S. and Tait Street P.S. (approximately 24 students this year)

Scenario 20 – Enrolment Projections:

Scenario 20 does a better job of reducing the enrolment at Highland P.S. and the number of portables; however, it would likely mean a portable or two at Tait Street with the projected enrolment.

Scenario 20 – Objectives Summary:

Meets the same objectives as Scenario 16

Objective	Meets	Doesn't Meet
To reorganize the JK-5, 6-8 school organizations in favour of JK-6, JK-8 or 7-8		X
To reduce the number of students currently attending Highland P.S. to better match the enrolment to the schools' built capacity	X	
To reduce the potential for combined grades at schools by moving towards the following criteria (from Board Policy 3002): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• JK-6 facilities between 350 and 400 students (approx. 2 classes/grade)• JK-8 facilities between 500 and 650 students (approx. 2 classes/grade JK-6, 2+ classes/grade 7-8)	X	
To increase the number of students within walking distance to their assigned school		X
To reduce the reliance on portable classrooms for long-term student accommodation	X	
To reduce unused (surplus) capacity by organizing schools and boundaries to achieve utilization rates (enrolment/capacity) that exceed 80% over the long-term (approx. 10 years)	X	
To maintain those school buildings that can provide appropriate, purpose-built facilities (kindergarten rooms, gyms, libraries, etc.)		X
To reduce the cost to achieve legislated accessibility requirements by 2025		X

Long-Term Scenario:

Scenario 14: (slides 15-17)

Scenario 14 is seen by the ARC as more of a five or more year plan. It involves the construction of a new school (for which the Board will need to funding from the Ministry of Education) so this is would be the long-term goal of this scenario.

- The closure of 2 schools – Dickson P.S. and St. Andrew's P.S.
- The construction of a new JK-8 school
- Dickson P.S.'s population would be distributed to the remaining schools – Blair Road P.S., Highland P.S., Tait Street and the new school.
- The Grade 7 and 8 program for the area would be offered at the new school (replacing St. Andrew's P.S.)
- Other boundary changes would be between Highland P.S., Tait Street P.S. and the new school as well as Tait Street P.S. and Blair Road P.S. (Riverview Settlement area)

Scenario 14 – Enrolment Projections

The new school would be built with a capacity of approximately 650 pupil places. The cost of construction would be approximately \$12 million for the new school.

Scenario 14 – Objectives:

Scenario 14 meets all of the objectives except for the third objective relating to school size, it is better than [Status Quo](#) for Tait Street P.S. and Blair Road P.S., but the ideal target is still not achieved here.

Objective	Meets	Doesn't Meet
To reorganize the JK-5, 6-8 school organizations in favour of JK-6, JK-8 or 7-8	X	
To reduce the number of students currently attending Highland P.S. to better match the enrolment to the schools' built capacity	X	
To reduce the potential for combined grades at schools by moving towards the following criteria (from Board Policy 3002): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• JK-6 facilities between 350 and 400 students (approx. 2 classes/grade)• JK-8 facilities between 500 and 650 students (approx. 2 classes/grade JK-6, 2+ classes/grade 7-8)		X
To increase the number of students within walking distance to their assigned school	X	
To reduce the reliance on portable classrooms for long-term student accommodation	X	
To reduce unused (surplus) capacity by organizing schools and boundaries to achieve utilization rates (enrolment/capacity) that exceed 80% over the long-term (approx. 10 years)	X	
To maintain those school buildings that can provide appropriate, purpose-built facilities (kindergarten rooms, gyms, libraries, etc.)	X	
To reduce the cost to achieve legislated accessibility requirements by 2025	X	

5. Next Steps (slide 18)

- ARC reviews comments from Public Meeting and develops recommendations including transition strategies
- ARC prepares draft Accommodation Report and Recommendations
- Public Meeting #4 (entirely Open House format)
 - Scheduled for May 1, 2012
 - Draft Accommodation Report presented
- ARC submits final Accommodation Report to Trustees
 - Tentatively May 14, 2012
- Staff review ARC report and prepare their own report and recommendations
- Trustees vote on recommendations of ARC and Staff (*historically both reports have been very similar*)
 - Tentatively late September/early October 2012 (*will not happen prior to the fall because minimum timelines must be met*)

Webpage:

Ms. Manske noted that all relevant information about this review is available on the Board's website and advised those interested to continue to check back on a regular basis as we will continue to update the information as it becomes available. She also noted that for those who prefer, this information is also available in hard copy in binders at each of the schools in the review area.

Contact Information:

Ms. Manske advised that for those who would like to participate in this review they can do so by sending in comments to our email address (boundaryfeedback@wrdsb.on.ca), by calling us, or through your school reps. on the ARC and school council. You can also continue to come out to the Public Meetings.

Ms. Manske noted that for those who would like to get in touch with her directly – she would be happy to chat on the phone or via email if there are any questions or concerns.

Ms. Manske thanked everyone for coming out and reminded those in attendance to leave comments in the comment box at the entrance of the gym or email us at boundaryfeedback@wrdsb.on.ca and noted that any comments sent to boundary feedback will also be accessible to the trustees.

6. Questions/Other

Mr. Cuomo opened the floor up for any questions/comments:

Q: Scenario 14 does not consider adding the Grade 7 and 8 program at Blair Road P.S. which had been shown in previous scenarios. Considering the new development proposed in that area, will this pose a problem for the school in the future and are you no longer considering adding Grades 7 and 8?

R: Ms. Manske responded that at this point there is a lot of uncertainty around the timing and number of proposed housing units in new development area of Blair Road. With enrolment as it is now without that development, Blair Road P.S. would

have a very small 7/8 program which would pose challenges whereas, the scenarios presented this evening recommend housing the 7/8 program in the space available at St. Andrew's P.S. for the short-term (Scenarios 16 and 20). In the long-term future Blair Road area may be separated out to self-resolve when the new development does happen and may require a new school of its own in the new development area; our may require its own separate study at that time.

Q: Is the ARC only considering one long-term proposal?

R: Ms. Manske responded that there is one preferred long-term proposal at this point (Scenario 14); the ARC has considered others as well.

Q: Concern was expressed over the possibility of going from smaller community schools to a larger JK-8 facility; does the Board not consider that a school of 650 students is too large?

R: Ms. Manske responded that the Board has a policy on school size ([Board Policy 3002](#)) which recommends a size range of 500-650 students for a JK-8 facility; the new school would meet this recommendation.

Q: Is it correct that one of the ARC's goals is to reduce Highland P.S.'s population to make it smaller; so why would you consider making a new bigger school?

R: Ms. Manske responded that the ARC is trying to make Highland P.S. smaller because it offers the French Immersion program and is currently using 6 portables to house its over-population (the facility is not built to handle the number of students that attend there); Highland's site has many challenges for expansion. Scenario 14 would help achieve the reduction at Highland as the new school's boundary would take-on part of the Highland, Dickson and Tait Street populations. Board Policy states that a JK-6 population should be between 350 and 400 students. The new school would offer the 7-8 program for all of the review area schools.

Q: Could Blair Road P.S. offer the French Immersion (FI) Program?

R: Ms. Manske responded that the Board has a policy and procedure for implementing FI programs which is based on level of interest expressed at a school for the program; any school with enough interest for the program in Grade 1 can start a FI program.

Q: Referring to Scenario 14 and the note on the New School (Beechwood Road Site) the note states that *Location subject to site feasibility study*; what does that mean?

R: Ms. Manske responded that the site on Beechwood Road is 4.7 acres and adjacent to a municipal park; this note means that should the ARC recommend this Scenario, we have to determine if it is appropriate to build a 650 pupil place school on the site.

Q: Is the Board trying to include the park on the Beechwood Road site?

- R: Ms. Manske responded that the Board has many agreements with municipalities around shared usage of parks and the Board prefers to build new schools in areas where there are adjacent municipal parks.
- Q: What happens if the Ministry will not give the \$12 million needed for the new school?
- R: Mr. Cuomo responded that this is the reason the ARC has been considering a two tier strategy; if the recommendation is put forward by the ARC and approved by the Board, a business case will be required to explain to the Ministry why we need to replace 2 schools with 1 new school. In the meantime we will have adjusted the boundaries to address enrolment issues while we wait.
- Q: A young student from Dickson P.S. asked where the Dickson P.S. students will go if their school should close?
- R: Ms. Manske responded that the Dickson students would be redirected to one of the other review area schools depending on where you live within the boundary.
- Q: What would be the expected timing for the boundary changes plan in Scenario 14?
- R: Ms. Manske responded that if the Board were to approve the recommendation, no boundary changes could be put into effect until September 2013 at the very earliest.
- Q: Would it be feasible to do an addition at Highland P.S.?
- R: Ms. Manske responded that Highland P.S. while it is not impossible for Highland P.S. to handle another addition, it would be at a very high price and could significantly compromise the site; may be close to cost of building a new school. The Highland P.S. site has many constraints and an addition of classrooms to the site would require costly retaining walls, a second gym to serve the larger population as well as additional parking for additional staff.
- Q: If we were to get a new school, what year would it be built?
- R: Ms. Manske responded that 2015 would be the absolute earliest a new school could be built and that would require everything to proceed without any delays; however, it is likely to be beyond that date that the ARC would recommend building. The timing still needs to be determined.
- Q: When would the Blair Road area get a new school?
- R: Ms. Manske responded that if another school is warranted in the Blair Road area because of development, it would be well beyond 5 years.
- Q: Would it not make more sense to build the new school in the Blair Road area now and send the Highland students there?

- R: Ms. Manske responded that the Blair Road and Highland areas are not linked in terms of transportation and the Highland students would have to be bussed to that area if that were the solution; as well, the Blair Road development area is under review and it will be many years out before a site is available and that building can happen in that area.
- Q: Does the Board have a school site on hold in the Blair Road development area?
- R: Ms. Manske responded that the Board has expressed an interest, and has the authority to request a site in that new development if it is warranted.
- Q: Has the ARC considered moving some of Highland's students to Dickson P.S.?
- R: Ms. Manske responded that Highland would need to redirect more students than could be accommodated at Dickson P.S.; Dickson currently only has 1 surplus classroom and adding any more students to Dickson might require the use of a portable which Dickson does not have the site capacity to handle.
- Q: Why not add the one Grade at Dickson to fill the classroom?
- R: Mr. Cuomo responded that it would be quite difficult to find an area in the Highland boundary that would send an entire grade to another school to fill one classroom; he also noted that we do not want to make boundary changes now and have to change them again in a few years, it is better to make changes that are sustainable in the long term.
- Q: Concern was expressed over what will happen to the heritage designated sites, Dickson and St. Andrew's, should they be closed and whether they will be abandoned.
- R: Mr. Cuomo responded that the Board has a process to follow when decommissioning surplus schools; and the Board would work with the City and community to find a suitable use for the buildings and would not abandon these historic buildings.
- Q: Does the Board have any concerns about housing 650 students in 1 school; is there any concern about younger students being bullied by an older student?
- R: Ms. Manske responded that the Board runs JK-8 facilities and noted that Cambridge has Clemens Mill P.S. which has a population close to 800 students, Stewart Ave P.S. is also close to this amount and the new Moffat Creek P.S. opening in September is a 650 pupil place school. The Board also runs JK-8 through the region and all new schools are being built JK-8.
- R: Mr. Cuomo responded that JK-8 facilities are run province-wide and the Board does not have any concerns with the younger and older students being together; many of the older students will have siblings in the lower grades and the students are supervised by the Board's many talented staff.

- C: A member of the audience voiced her support for the JK-8 program and noted that there have been many studies done that support keeping a child in the same school from JK to Grade 8; it is beneficial for the student to have fewer school changes and it is beneficial to the teachers as well.
- Q: Has the ARC looked at the possibility of using the \$12 million to expand and upgrade the schools we already have?
- R: Mr. Cuomo responded that the Board does not have the \$12 million. The ARC has considered the feasibility of additions and there are difficulties associated; the \$12 million in question would have to come from the Ministry of Education and that is the amount they would fund for a new school JK-8 at a capacity of 650 students; The Ministry would fund any feasible additions separately.
- Q: Is it easier to close schools and open new schools?
- R: Mr. Cuomo responded that by the year 2025 every school will have to be 100 percent accessible to accommodate wheelchair access. The older multi-storey buildings have many challenges to being made accessible. They also require more money for other renewal projects as well. With a view to the future it is better to have a school more centrally located and fully accessible that students can walk to sooner than having to revisit the accessibility issues again at a later date.
- Q: Has the impact to the students been considered for the students that would be going from a small school to a large school?
- R: Mr. Cuomo responded that the ARC has considered the impacts; noting that the students from Dickson currently graduate from the small school to the larger St. Andrew's P.S. for the senior program. He noted that there would be school led plans in place to help with the transitioning. The ARC can also consider recommending grandfathering (allowing students to finish out at a school or starting early at a new school) depending on which scenario it recommends.
- Q: Has the ARC considered that the review area students do not all attend the same secondary school; some attend Galt Collegiate while others attend Southwood Secondary?
- R: Ms. Manske responded that the ARC has discussed the secondary boundaries and noted that there may be a need for an adjustment in the future to align with the elementary boundaries; however, there are no changes to the secondary boundaries being proposed as part of this review.
- Q: Concern was expressed over moving students with developmental issues from the smaller school to a larger school and how those issues would be dealt with.
- R: Mr. Cuomo responded that the schools develop strategies with the parents and the students to help ease the transition to the new school.

- Q: Why is the Board rushing to make the schools accessible now, when they are not required to be accessible until 2025?
- R: Mr. Cuomo responded that this is the reason the ARC is looking at Scenario 14; the phased plan recommends the minor boundary change and then recommends the new school at a later date, keeping in mind the length of time it may take to acquire the funding and build the new school.
- Q: What is the timeframe expected for Scenario 14; would it be 5-7 years?
- R: Mr. Cuomo responded that it could take 5-7 years if we were to get the funding from the Province. Right now the earliest we could expect would be 2015 for a new school and the ARC is looking at least a 5 year timeframe.
- Q: The Alison Park students are being sent together to the new Moffat Creek P.S. but you are considering dividing the Dickson students among three different schools; is there no concern about fracturing our community?
- R: Ms. Manske responded that the division of the Dickson boundary was considered on the basis of the students being able to walk to the designated school. The ARC can look at ways that may keep the students together but that will likely mean some of the students will have to be bussed.
- Q: How will the new development area in the Blair Road area affect the area schools once it begins to be developed?
- R: Ms. Manske responded that the ARC has considered the effects of new development; but at this point it is an unknown part. The City of Cambridge advised that it may be several years before we see any development in that area. The Blair Road development area will likely have the numbers to require its own school and therefore be considered separate to this review.
- C: A member of the audience commented that the teachers in the Board are really good with the kids and are experienced in helping to make sure changes are implemented smoothly keeping the best interest of the students in mind.
- Q: Will the needs and classroom supports of the special education students who have to move from their homeschools be considered in the recommendations; can the ARC ensure they are not lost in the shuffle?
- R: Mr. Cuomo responded that the opportunities for full time staffing for special education can often be better achieved in the larger schools than in the smaller schools based on program enrolment. He noted that the Superintendent of Learning for Special Education, Jim Berry had spoken to the ARC about the Special Education Program and noted that Mr. Berry's comments are available online in the [February 15, 2012 Minutes of ARC meeting #7](#).

Mr. Cuomo thanked everyone for coming, and gave the contact numbers and Board website information for the public to access with any questions or comments. He reminded those in attendance to please fill-out the comment sheets and send them in either via fax at (519)570-2172, by email at boundaryfeedback@wrdsb.on.ca. The ARC will be taking the comments provided into consideration and please send your comments in before Public Meeting #4 which is scheduled for May 1, 2012.

A member of the audience requested to have a comment entered into the minutes after the formal Question and Answer period had ended; comment as follows:

C: Please ask the ARC to consider offering Special Education Programs at the new school should it be built in the West Galt community. This would provide students with the special education learning opportunities within their own community so they would not have to be bussed outside their own community to get the supports they require; and for the program to provide the flexibility necessary to address various special education needs as opposed to a specific need program. The ARC should include as part of its recommendation, that the need for a Congregated Special Education Program be addressed by the Board's Learning Services Department, prior to the development stage, should a new school be proposed.

The formal presentation ended at 8:20 p.m. and Mr. Cuomo and Ms. Manske made themselves available to answer questions one-on-one until 9:30 p.m.

Website:

[West Galt Elementary Schools Accommodation Review | Waterloo Region District School Board](#)

Email:
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519-570-0003 ext. 4419

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519-570-2172