



**Woolwich & Wellesley Townships Elementary Schools
Pupil Accommodation Review
Minutes of Accommodation Review Committee Meeting #4
November 10, 2011, 6:30 – 8:00 PM
Floradale Public School Library**

The fourth meeting of the Woolwich & Wellesley Townships Elementary Schools Pupil Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) was held at Floradale Public School on Thursday, November 10th, 2011.

Committee Members Present:

Vlad Kovac, Principal Floradale PS, Paul Milne, Principal St. Jacobs PS, Wayne Dunham, Principal Three Bridges PS., Elmer Horst, Parent Representative Three Bridges PS, Susan Marchiori, Vice Principal Linwood PS, Christine Shantz, Parent Representative Floradale PS, Krista Edwards, Parent Representative Linwood PS, John Krupicz, Parent Representative St. Jacobs PS, Steve Snyder, Parent Representative Three Bridges PS, Cindy Weber, Parent Representative Linwood PS, Brenda Martin, Parent Representative Floradale PS, Susan Martin Community Representative, Dennis Cuomo, Manager of Planning, Lauren Manske, Senior Planner, Andrea Kean, Recording Secretary and Nathan Hercanuck, Senior Planner for the Waterloo Region District School Board.

Additional WRDSB staff present:

Nick Landry, Manager of Enrolment, Abigail Dancey, Manager of Communications.

Regrets:

Diane DeCoene, Superintendent of Education, Ron Dallan, Manager of Capital Projects, Facility Services, John Scarfone, Manager of Planning, Township of Woolwich, Geoff Suderman-Gladwell, Principal Linwood PS, Sarah Peck, Planner, Township of Wellesley, Sheila Bauman, Parent Representative St. Jacobs PS, and Lynsey Meikle, Communications Assistant WRDSB.

1. Welcome/Introductions

- Mr. Hercanuck, Senior Planner for the Waterloo Region District School Board opened the meeting at 6:35 pm and welcomed members and introduced Dennis Cuomo the new Manager of Planning for the Waterloo Region District School Board and thanked the Floradale Parent Representatives for the delightful desert of pie and ice cream they provided to the ARC members prior to the meeting.

Mr. Hercanuck thanked the ARC members who made it out to the school tour on Saturday, November 5 and asked them if they had any thoughts on the tour.

John Krupicz felt that touring the 4 schools added a better perspective.

Krista Edwards commented that it gave the opportunity to see how each of the schools compared to each other.

Mr. Hercanuck noted that the ARC has been speaking about equity of facility, site and programs and the school tour was a good opportunity to see the each school firsthand.

2. ARC Meeting #3 – Draft Minutes Approval

Mr. Hercanuck asked the ARC if there were any corrections/concerns with the minutes from the October 26th ARC meeting. Mr. Landry noted a change to his comments on page 3 of the minutes.

Moved by: Krista Edwards

Seconded by: Brenda Martin

Minutes from the October 26th meeting were approved with noted change.

Q: How is the design/structure of the schools decided – why are they all different?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that the structure will be dependent on the size of site you have available, the number of students who will be attending, the program model offered (JK-6, JK-8, 7-8 or 9-12), the architect, and construction benchmarks (cost per square foot) for schools at the given time.

Q: When new schools are built are they finished in such a way that an addition can be added later?

R: Yes, sometimes they leave an area at the end of a corridor where a future addition can be added if site size permits.

Q: Are basements in schools a thing of the past?

R: Yes, we don't build with lower levels as it can create air quality concern necessitating the use of air handling units like we saw at a few facilities on the tour. The new schools are just slab-on-grade with the exceptions possibly being for mechanical pits or an auto shop program.

3. ARC Membership – Community Representatives

Mr. Hercanuck advised the ARC that he had contacted the names of possible community representative that had been forwarded to him by the ARC and had one person interested in joining the ARC as a Community Representative. Mr. Hercanuck asked Susan Martin (who is an invited guest but would also like to be a community representative) to step outside the room while the ARC voted on her Community Representation.

Mr. Hercanuck noted that he had not received enough responses for a quorum as per the ARC terms of Reference on the question of Susan Martin being a community rep and therefore the ARC would be required to vote. He also noted that he had been in contact with Don Harloff, Director Woolwich Community Services which runs youth programs and outreach in Wellesley and Woolwich Township and he had indicated his interest in participating as a community representative.

Q: What are the regulations on a community representative's having ties to a particular school in the review area?

R: To be a community representative you must not be the parent of a student attending. Susan Martin's children have all graduated therefore she meets this criteria.

C: It would be difficult to get a community representative that did not have a child who was a former student in one of the review schools.

Q: Mr. Dunham commented that he had sent in additional names to Mr. Hercanuck to be contacted for community representatives.

John Krupicz commented that in fairness to those we know are interested the ARC should vote on and can add more community representation in the future if the ARC is in agreement.

The ARC voted on Community Representation and it was agreed that the following would join the ARC as the Community Representatives:

- Susan Martin
- Don Harloff

Susan Martin was invited back to the table as a community representative.

4. Additional Requested Information

Conestogo Public School

Currently 345 total enrolment / 324 Full Time Equivalent (counting kindergarten students as half as they only attend half time) with an on-the-ground capacity of 224 pupil places. It currently has 5 portables and is scheduled for Full-Day Kindergarten implementation in September 2014.

Conestoga PS has a boundary that is very close to St. Jacobs PS in the south which would be difficult to move as St. Jacobs and Conestogo schools are very closely situated and boundaries should be logical and allow students to attend their nearest school.

Mr. Hercanuck noted that an opportunity may exist in the northern boundary area of West Montrose which has about 60 students but that would leave about 280 students at a JK-8 school which would result in a population much smaller than the Board likes to see.

Mr. Hercanuck noted that Conestogo PS was left out of the Woolwich & Wellesley Townships review area because it is a good size for a rural JK-8 school and portables could be replaced with an addition at some point in the future.

Mr. Hercanuck advised the ARC that if they were to add Conestogo PS to the Accommodation Review, the process would have to start over to be fair to the Conestogo community. The ARC would have to go to the Board to request to modify the review area and Conestogo PS would have to be included on the ARC.

Q: What benefit would there be to the review area schools, other than St. Jacobs, if Conestogo PS were to be included in the review?

R: It could allow for a Floradale/Conestogo boundary change but then each school would still require portables.

Q: Why is Conestogo PS growing?

R: Conestogo has been creeping up in enrolment because there is no more developable space in North East Waterloo – there is another 140 homes going into Waterloo East but that is it; because of this, we believe homebuyers have been moving out to Conestogo which gives them easy access to the city.

Q: Will that process even out?

R: Yes, there is no new development activity for Conestogo. It has a good sized JK-8 program for a rural school and enrolment seems to be stable there.

Q: When was the last addition at Conestogo PS?

R: Will have to look into that but most likely when Conestogo and Winterbourne amalgamated in the late 1990s.

Action Item:

Mr. Hercanuck to determine the date of the last addition at Conestogo Public School.

Q: What school size do you like to see?

R: [Board Policy 3002](#) Elementary School Size and Configuration, outlines the preferred with JK-8 being the preferred organization size with 2 classes per grade at the K-6 level and more than 2 classes per grade in the 7-8 levels. This means a JK-6 of about 400-500 and JK-8 of about 500-650 students.

Q: Why did you build Floradale PS at a size smaller than the Board prefers?

R: It is difficult to reach those size guidelines in a rural area because the housing density isn't like it is in the city. The boundaries would have to be much larger and this would impact things like bus ride length.

Q: Why wasn't Floradale built to Board size preferences?

R: The money we got for Floradale PS was special money from the Ministry of Education called Prohibitive to Repair (PTR). Sometimes it is cheaper to build new than to fix it up. The money from the Ministry of Education came with conditions attached that it could only be used to reconstruct the capacity that was there.

Ms. Manske also noted that Board Policy 3002 was not created until after Floradale PS was built and the Board is using this new policy as we move forward with new construction.

It was noted that larger schools have lower administrative costs, better professional learning communities and supports for students and rural areas are problematic when trying to achieve the Board's desired size as boundaries would be too large and bus rides too long. That being said, Conestogo PS is a decent size school.

Mr. Hercanuck noted that while portables aren't the ideal, one larger school is better than many small schools from a program and staffing cost perspective.

Mr. Hercanuck asked the ARC if they want to include Conestogo Public School in the Accommodation review.

John Krupicz commented that there's a reason folks move to the country and perhaps they prefer a school in the 300 pupil size.

Q: Is there a plan for Conestogo PS to be in a future review?

R: No, they were reviewed back in the late 1990s and there are no plans to review in the immediate future.

Mr. Hercanuck noted that while Conestogo PS has experienced growth it has an even number of students across each grade and as there is no future development potential, there is no anticipated significant growth increase.

The ARC agreed that it would be difficult to draw a boundary between St. Jacobs PS and Conestogo PS that would move no more than 10/12 kids.

Q: How often can a school be reviewed?

R: No more than once every 5 years.

C: The only reason we would want Conestogo PS included would be to increase enrolments in one of the review schools; this should not be done at the expense of another school community.

Q: What is the population density if we include the very north west corner of Conestogo's boundary?

R: That section may have 10 kids or less given its rural nature.

Mr. Hercanuck commented that for the sake of 10 kids is it worth it to move an established boundary when this can be handled with an Administrative Boundary Change that can leave Conestogo PS outside this Accommodation Review?

Q: Can the ARC put that recommendation in its report?

R: Yes, we can recommend the Administrative Boundary Change for West Montrose.

It was noted that the Balsam Grove area, which lies right in the boundary line, is home to a number of kids that attend private schools.

Q: How many years ago was it that Linwood had a boundary change?

R: In 1995 Floradale took a piece off Linwood's boundary.

It was noted that if boundaries are arranged only taking into account the transportation distances, school sizes may suffer.

Q: Are there too many schools for the density of the population?

R: Ms. Manske responded that if there are families already attending they can stay on or go to the new schools. Anyone new to the area would have to go to the new school.

It was noted that surplus capacity may be an issue.

It was recommended that the ARC Report should make recommendations for future Conestogo boundary change for transportation.

Mr. Hercanuck noted that there will be implications if adding Conestogo PS to the Accommodation Review but the opportunity is still on the table and will be left to the ARC to decide if they want to discuss in the future.

Student Transportation

Nick Landry, Manager of Enrolment for the Waterloo Region District School Board led the Working Group through the presentation (available on line at <http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/accommodation-reviews/woolwich-and-wellesley-townships-elementary-schools>)

Out-of-District

Issue

- Prior to 2010 no policy regarding students who attend from out-of-district
- Transportation practices inconsistent with the Education Act and inefficient routing.

Impact

- There were 800 students who attend Board schools from out-of-district
- 647 of those received bussing

Reasons for Attending from Out-of-District

- Historical Agreements:
 - Waterloo Oxford District Secondary School
 - Elmira District Secondary School
 - Floradale Public School
- Proximity to Nearest School:
 - Glenview Park Secondary School

The Education Act

Section 35 – Resident Pupil’s Right to Attend more Accessible Elementary School:

An elementary student living more than 3.2km from their resident school and more than 0.8km to the nearest bus stop may attend a school of the same type that is in a another district or zone.

Section 39 – Resident Pupil’s Right to Attend Secondary School in Another District of Zone:

A student may attend a secondary school in another district or zone that is more accessible to the person than any secondary school in the district of which the person is qualified to be a resident pupil.

Issue:

- Transportation practices inconsistent with the Education Act and inefficient routing.

Action:

- Amended transportation procedure to reflect Education Act requirements and written agreements

Education Act:

8.1 Where a student's home address is located outside the district, the following guidelines will be used to determine transportation eligibility:

- Where the home address is within an existing agreement area, transportation may be provided in a manner that is consistent with established distance guidelines.
- In the absence of an agreement governing the admission of out-of-district students, students admitted under S.35(Resident Pupil's Right to Attend more Accessible Elementary School) and S.39(Resident Pupil's Right to Attend Secondary School in Another District or Zone) of the Education Act may be provided with transportation in a manner that is consistent with established distance guidelines.

8.2 Transportation will not be provided to out-of-district students that do not qualify under these provisions. Accommodations for specialized programs may be made based on approval of the Executive Council.

Result:

- Improved clarity for students, parents, schools and Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region.
- 400 students are transported from out-of-district

Q: Can we get a copy of the historical agreement for Wallenstein?

R: Mr. Landry responded that he can provide the agreement at a future meeting.

Q: Is there a time limit on the historical agreements or would they have to be renewed?

R: Mr. Landry responded that he would have to look into that.

Action Items:

Mr. Landry to provide historical agreement for out-of-district attendance in the Wallenstein Area and determine if the agreements are for a limited time or can be renewed.

Bus Ride Length:

Mr. Hercanuck noted that while going over the School Information Profiles at the last meeting the ARC had requested more meaningful statistics on bus ride length and in that regard, he had broken down the average ride times further to provide the number of students by bus ride length in 15 minute increments.

Referring to Slide 5 of tonight's presentation (available online at

<http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/accommodation-reviews/woolwich-and-wellesley-townships-elementary-schools>)

Ride length for each school is broken down by AM and PM and the runs are usually different (run in reverse) or altered as not every student rides in the morning and afternoon.

All runs are compliant with the Board's policy as there were no runs over 60 minutes for any of the schools in the review area.

Both Floradale and St. Jacobs have over 50 percent of their transported students on the bus for 15 minutes or less because of their more compact boundaries.

Linwood has the largest boundary therefore the majority of Linwood's transported students are in the 16-30 minute bus ride range.

Mr. Hercanuck noted Three Bridges unique situation in that it has a recently introduced transportation boundary but existing students are grandparented so the busses do travel outside the boundary for pickup/drop off. He also noted the significant difference in average ride length between AM (27 minutes) and PM (16 minutes)

It was also noted that there is a physical transfer at St. Jacobs PS for some students who are bussed to Three Bridges PS.

Q: Can we get the percentage of students (for each school) that are bussed?

R: Mr. Hercanuck noted that that information is already in the School Information Profiles.

Q: What are the walking distances?

R: Walking distances for JK-SK - 800 meters, Grades 1-8 - 1.6 km, High School - 3.2 km

Q: What if there are no sidewalks?

R: If there are safety concerns we would use hazard bussing but not necessarily for low traffic areas without sidewalks (i.e., cul-de-sacs).

FDK Program

Mr. Hercanuck noted that during the school tour he had been asked about the rollout of the FDK programs which is to be rolled out in phase over five years across the province.

Floradale PS was a Year 1 school in 2010, Linwood PS is scheduled for Year 3 – September 2012 and St. Jacobs PS will be in year 5 – September 2014.

FDK Capital Improvements

Floradale PS space for the FDK program was constructed as part of the PTR (Prohibitive to Repair) funding received to rebuild the school. This funding was a special one-time fund by the Ministry of Education available for schools whose repair cost represented a significant portion of the cost of rebuilding a brand new school.

Linwood PS is scheduled to receive a 2 classroom addition off the primary wing to accommodate the program.

St. Jacobs PS has not been decided yet. We have submitted our request to the Ministry of Education but are waiting for approval of the capital expenditure.

Three Bridges PS will not be offering the FDK program.

Q: Has someone from the Board made a decision on how they will modify St. Jacobs?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that he will find out for the next meeting

Action Item:

Planning to provide details of St. Jacobs FDK modification.

Mr. Hercanuck noted that the Ministry of Education uses the OTG Capacity whereas the Board uses a Functional Capacity when allocating portables. A noted difference being that the Ministry spreads computers out over the entire school and does not recognize special use classes such as computer labs that are not used the entire day.

Q: Do we have the Functional Capacity numbers?

R: No, it depends on the school.

Q: Do you take Functional Capacity into account?

R: Yes, we take 1 room off for computer labs, senior component may have technology shop, Art room; it really depends on the site and what programs are being offered.

Census Population Statistics

Mr. Hercanuck noted that one of the issues identified by Board staff in the report recommending the accommodation review for the area was declining enrolment and the question was raised at a previous ARC meeting, are there really less students in the area, or are there just a smaller proportion attending our schools as there are a number of options in the community (private, parochial schools).

Mr. Hercanuck pulled some Census data and noted that he is using 2006 data as the 2011 data most likely won't be available until the spring.

Referring to Slide 8 of the presentation Mr. Hercanuck noted that he is using a population pyramid which is what demographers like to use to study populations. Each bar represents the number of people in the Review Area for a 5 year age grouping or cohort. For the Board's use it is the bottom of the pyramid we are most interested in. Ages 5-14 represent most of the elementary aged population and the 0-4 range represents what we should be expecting to enter the system in the next few years.

Referring to Slide 9 of the presentation Mr. Hercanuck noted that moving to the 2006 Census data, we see a drop not only in the elementary school aged population but also the 0-4 range, which says that there are less children in the elementary system, leading to our enrolment decline.

Q: How do they determine that someone exists? A lot of the transient population may not be on the knowable grid.

R: Information is gathered through the Census (it's the law to fill out your census), and from voter registration.

Mr. Dunham responded that he would argue that there are a lot of people missing.

Mr. Hercanuck responded that the information we have available to us and looking at the enrolment at our schools year to year confirms the enrolment decline.

Three Bridges PS Understandings

Referring to Slides 10-15 which outlines the 19 understandings Mr. Dunham commented on the following:

5. Limited use of audio-visual equipment – tape recorder, radio overhead projector, filmstrip projector, movie projector, computer. Use of film, only as a last resort to teach a concept, or review a concept. Never used for entertainment. No television.

Q: You do have computers in the basement at Three Bridges PS, how are they used?

R: Some of the parents are not opposed to their use, we just have to use them carefully and not in a trivial manner. Some parents like them and some do not. (For example we have software that will type what is spoken which can be useful for a child who has problems with writing their thoughts but there are parents that do not want the technology to be used therefore we do not use it.) We have 5 different Mennonite groups and the use of technology is different for each.

Mr. Dunham noted that an Issue might be the Number of families of old order and Markham attending school.

Q: Would the Markhams be opposed to computers?

R: No, they have them.

Mr. Dunham noted that video is not used unless there is no better way to teach a concept and parents are informed as to the educational purpose and what we are showing.

It is the church that people look to for guidance as to what's acceptable.

Q: Inclusivity – don't have to feel discriminated against. If you have one student not included – how do you address that if they feel disrespected?

R: There is a disadvantage when you opt out of curriculum, for those who do want that program; it is implied that it is offered at the school.

Q: How do we honour tradition and knowing the Board has a program standard which the Board endorses; and what's unique at each site or what do we have to give – are you doing a secular publicly funded school?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that room is needed for special needs of community and being inclusive while balancing needs of the Board.

7. Only Children of Mennonite faith are enrolled at the school.

Mr. Dunham noted that if someone wants to register at Three Bridges, we are a publicly funded school, so anyone can attend our school. This agreement, which was developed in the 1960s was the Board's attempt to accommodate this population.

C: Three Bridges Public School enrolment is 100 percent Mennonite.

R: If someone from the community wants to attend we can't say no.

Mr. Dunham noted that in the past he would not take new students if it would require the school to add another class. In the past there was a waiting list because there was no boundary. The reason for the enrolment decline at Three Bridges might be because of the transportation boundary that limits transportation to a smaller area.

Mr. Hercanuck noted that anyone can attend Three Bridges PS as it has no enrolment boundary but they won't be eligible for transportation unless they are within the new transportation boundary which is coincidental to St. Jacobs PS boundary.

13. Careful selections of excursions or trips to increase the children's learning experiences.

Mr. Dunham noted that the David Martin group does not go on trips.

14. We try to avoid homework assignments so the children will be available for duties at home.

Mr. Dunham noted that some parents support homework if the child is not applying self in class, but most parents don't support homework.

Mr. Hercanuck noted that these understandings were written over 40 years ago and some are not acceptable today.

Mr. Dunham noted that he has never had to say no to any parents who wished to enroll their children; once they are aware of the school's unique circumstance they will ask which other school their child can attend.

Mr. Dunham commented that Three Bridges PS is a community school where the parents have a larger influence. He has to consult with parents to seek inputs because if he should accidentally offend someone that might result in there being less students at the school the next day.

Q: What if families don't want the learning opportunities that are recognized by the Board and curriculum?

R: Because of the single culture of the school, the 'opted out' curriculum is meeting the needs of the community.

Mr. Kovac questioned whether we are disregarding kids that could attend that school by not offering these things?

Mr. Dunham responded that the reverse could also be true; are we disregarding kids by offering the things they don't want?

Q: Will the list of understandings be included in the minutes.

R: Yes, they are included in the presentation.

Mr. Hercanuck noted that equity may be a concept we explore further with the objectives.

5. Draft Issues/Objectives

Mr. Hercanuck advised the ARC that we ran over time and therefore will be looking at the Draft Objectives at the next meeting.

6. School Information Profiles

Deferred to next meeting

7. Future Meeting Dates/Times

Working Group Meeting #5

Wednesday, November 23, 2011 at
6:30-8:00 p.m. at St. Jacobs PS Library

Mr. Hercanuck thanked the ARC for coming out and the Floradale Parent Representatives for their hospitality and adjourned the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Future Meeting Dates:

ARC MEETINGS:

Wednesday, November 23, 2011 from 6:30-8:00 p.m. @ St. Jacobs PS, Library

PUBLIC MEETINGS:

TBD