



**West Galt Elementary Schools
Pupil Accommodation Review
Minutes of Accommodation Review Committee Meeting # 2
October 25, 2011, 5:30-7:00 PM
Highland Public School Library**

The second meeting of the West Galt Elementary Schools Pupil Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) was held at Highland Public School on October 25, 2011.

Committee Members Present:

Wendy Bowker, Principal, Highland P.S., Nick Chiarelli, Vice Principal, Highland P.S. Karen Tomlin, Principal, St. Andrew's P.S., Michelle Schmid, Vice Principal, St. Andrew's P.S., Marcia Lubert, Principal, Tait Street P.S., Jodie Hancox-Meyer, Principal, Blair Road P.S., Kelly Deml, Parent Rep. Blair Road P.S., Lynn Robb, Parent Rep. Blair Road P.S., Vanessa Meal, Parent Rep. Dickson P.S., Rebecca Raineault, Parent Rep. Dickson P.S., Hayley Orman, Parent Rep. Highland P.S., Paula Ouellet, Parent Rep. Highland P.S., Bev Fox, Parent Rep. St. Andrew's P.S., Maura Fuller, Parent Rep. Tait Street P.S., Karen Destun Parent Rep. Tait Street P.S., Trevor McWilliams, Senior Operations Planner, City of Cambridge, Lila Read, Superintendent of Education, Andrea Kean, Recording Secretary, Nathan Hercanuck, Senior Planner and Lauren Manske, Senior Planner for the Waterloo Region District School Board.

Other WRDSB Staff Present:

Abigail Dancey, Manager of Communications, Waterloo Region District School Board.

Regrets:

Barry Frame, Principal, Dickson P.S., Roy Roethel Parent Rep. St. Andrew's P.S., Ron Dallan, Manager Capital Projects, Waterloo Region District School Board.

1. Welcome/Introductions

Ms. Manske, Senior Planner opened the meeting at 5:30 pm and welcomed members of the committee and noted that there are a few new members present.

2. ARC Meeting #1 – Draft Minutes Approval

Ms. Manske asked the ARC if there were any corrections/concerns with the minutes from the September 27, 2011 ARC meeting.

None were raised.

Minutes from the September 22nd meeting were approved.

Moved by: Vanessa Meal

Seconded by: Trevor McWilliams

Ms. Manske noted that the minutes will be posted on the Board website at:

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

3. Community Representation

Ms. Manske stated that she had approached some Board committee community members to gauge interest in being a community representative on the ARC. Members approached felt they did not have any connection to the review area. Ms. Manske is still waiting to hear back from another committee (SEAC) who will not be meeting again until mid-November.

Ms. Manske noted that she had been approached by a parent with children in 2 of the review area schools expressing interest in being a community representative. Ms. Manske asked if the ARC members thought that this could be a conflict. The ARC agreed that it is best to have a community representative that does not have any ties to a specific school(s). Ms. Manske will notify the parent who expressed interest.

Ms. Manske asked the members present if they had any suggestions for community representation.

The ARC discussed names of possible community representatives and members suggested the ARC approach the following groups:

- Kinbridge Community Association
- Community Living Cambridge

Action Item:

Ms. Manske to contact the groups listed above to gauge interest in community representation on the ARC.

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

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

4. Discuss Review Objectives:

- **What are the Issues?**
 - Inequity of Sites
 - Site size (if too small there are many constraints i.e., sports fields, places to put portables, room to place additions, etc.) Ms. Manske noted that while Highland P.S. is a large site, it has constraints to its useable space due to hills. Dickson P.S. has a small site without a sports field)
 - Limited parking (*true for Highland P.S. while Dickson P.S. has been able to manage with on-street parking*)
 - Limited areas for bus drop-off/parent drop-off

- Inequity of Facilities
 - No proper gym or purpose-built Kindergarten at Dickson P.S.
 - Computer labs located in the library at Highland P.S. and Dickson P.S.
 - Libraries rated below Canadian School Library Association (CASL) Standards at Blair Road P.S. and Dickson P.S. (see Slide 7 of the online presentation)
 - Portables being used at Highland P.S. and St. Andrew's P.S.
 - Air Conditioning (most schools do not have air conditioning)
- Enrolment inequity across the review area
 - Enrolment and Capacity (Board Policy 3002 – Elementary School Size and Configuration Section 1.4.2 states that “*JK-6 facilities will ideally have built capacity of between 350 and 400 students*”)
 - Highland P.S. enrolment at 534 is above Board's desired size.
 - Blair Road P.S. at 241, Dickson P.S. at 114 and Tait Street P.S. at 308, enrolment sits below the Board's desired size.
 - Combined Grades (fewer than 2 classes per grade at Blair Road, Dickson and Tait Street means that there is a greater chance of a student being in a combined grade class more than once.)
- Accessibility Issues
 - Older, multi-storey, fully or partially inaccessible buildings
 - Dickson P.S. not accessible
 - St. Andrew's P.S. and Tait Street P.S. partially accessible
 - Highland P.S. and Blair Road P.S. are accessible
 - Safety and Security
 - Main offices without a view of the entrances of the school (Dickson P.S., St. Andrew's P.S.)
 - Blair Road P.S. *getting a modification*
 - Tait Street P.S. and Highland P.S. *can see front entrance from main office*

Q: When you say building is accessible does that mean just getting into the building? At Tait Street P.S. the doorways are not big enough to fit a double stroller through.

Action Item:

R: Ms. Manske to get additional information on accessibility.

Q: At the last meeting you mentioned that there was legislation on accessibility can you tell us more about that?

R: The Legislation is the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#) which requires the Board to make all schools accessible by January 1, 2025.

Ms. Manske noted that the Board is undertaking this work in phases starting with the Secondary Schools. Phase 2 will be the Elementary Schools and whenever the Board does an addition or new construction at any school, we design to make it accessible. Ms. Manske also noted that the schools are made accessible so as to make sure a student would not have to go too far outside of their neighbourhood to attend an accessible school.

- Energy Consumption

- Based on 2008 data Blair Road P.S. and Highland P.S. are above average energy users.

C: Jodie Hancox-Meyer noted that Blair Road P.S. has a new roof and a third of its windows replaced since 2008 so this should improve the school energy consumption. She also noted that Blair Road P.S. is the only school in the review area with air conditioning which adds to the high consumption and Blair Road P.S. also had solar panels installed on its roof but the energy does not come back to the school, instead it is sold back to the grid.

C: Highland P.S.'s portapak is not insulated and might be contributing to the higher consumption. The portapak is being removed and it would be interesting to see if this will make a difference.

- Boundaries

- St. Andrew's P.S. senior elementary boundary is quite large which results in more students being bussed.

- Transportation

- Safe Walking Distance refers to within a mile (1.6 km) and with no hazards or obstructions that would make hazard bussing necessary.
 - Proportions of students being bussed are not bad; all the schools have some students within walking distance. St. Andrew's P.S. is higher due to large boundary, Blair Road due to servicing a more rural area and therefore has the longest average bus ride times.

- Inconsistent Grade Configurations and Program Offerings

- Grade Configurations:
 - JK-5 at Dickson and Highland
 - JK-6 at Blair Road and Tait Street
 - 6-8 at St. Andrew's
 - Program Offerings:
 - French Immersion (Highland P.S. and St. Andrew's P.S.)
 - Special Education (area classes at Blair Road P.S.)
 - Full Day Kindergarten
 - Dickson P.S. 2011
 - Blair Road and Highland in 2012
 - Tait Street in 2014

Q: Dickson P.S. is offering its Full Day Kindergarten in a regular classroom and not a purpose built Kindergarten classroom?

R: Yes, that's correct. It would have been a retrofit to include everything a Kindergarten room needs.

- Q: Dickson P.S. and St. Andrew's P.S. are both designated heritage buildings, is there a City of Cambridge special committee that looks after that?
- R: Trevor McWilliams, City of Cambridge Representative responded that there is a Heritage Committee and that both buildings are on the Heritage Registry.
- Q: What does the Heritage Committee like to see done with Heritage Buildings that are no longer used for their original purpose?
- R: Ms. Manske responded that the ARC would have to keep the Heritage issue in mind but it does not prevent us from closing a school. It will make selling the property more difficult because the new owner would have to use the building in such a way that is mindful of the heritage status.
- C: Mr. Hercanuck noted that the Heritage Designations would also have to be kept in mind in the event that the ARC may consider plans for additions or new construction at Dickson or St. Andrew's Public Schools.
- Q: What percentage of Highland P.S.'s enrolment is French Immersion?
- R: Wendy Bowker responded that approximately 50 percent of the students are enrolled in French Immersion.
- Q: Is the French Immersion Program offered in such a way that there is a school offering the program in every area Board-wide?
- R: Yes. In the cities, but the program may not be offered Grade 1-8 yet if it is new to the school/area.
- C: Ms. Manske noted that any time the Board implements the French Immersion Program it starts at Grade 1 and will work its way up, adding additional grades as the original class progresses to the next grade.
- C: In order to offer the French Immersion Program there has to be an expressed interest from enough parents. Ms. Manske noted that this might be hard to achieve in low enrolment areas, when you have only 1 class per grade in some schools.
- Q: If the program was already implemented at a school, is it possible that some students would leave to attend their home school if they too offered the program later?
- R: No, the new program would be behind because it starts at Grade 1 only when first implemented so would not be offered at the higher grades until the original Grade 1 class progress to that level.
- Any Other Issues not listed?
Ms. Manske asked the ARC if they were aware of any other issues.
The ARC did not bring forward any other issues.

Ms. Manske reminded the ARC that they could forward any issues to her via email.

- **What are the Opportunities?**

- Board owns a site (sports field) located on Beechwood Road, Cambridge (4.922 acres)
- Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK), once implemented, will increase the utilization of existing facilities.
- Pockets of development to add more residential units and increase enrolment (*Ms. Manske noted that some schools in the review don't need the increase and Blair Road P.S. would be impacted. If West plan goes ahead the Board will be requesting a new school in the new sub-division development*)
- Review current elementary school organization. (*Area does not currently have a JK-8 school; we could look at including a JK-8 program under this review*)
- Explore Partnerships with community groups/other
Child care through FDK program (*could include before and after school child care program and any other partnerships we wish to explore*)
- Match enrolment to capacity
being mindful of over or under utilization of space.

Q: Why is the Board favouring the JK-8 option?

R: Ms. Manske responded that the ARC can invite Learning Services Staff to a future meeting to explain the benefits of the JK-8 program and noted that there are benefits to both the JK-8 and 7-8 programs depending on what the community feels works best for them.

C: Ms. Manske noted that at the next meeting Trevor McWilliams, ARC Representative for the City of Cambridge, will share the City's future development plans with the ARC.

Accommodation Review Objectives:

What are the Accommodation Review Objectives?

- Generic statements describing the desired goals of the Accommodation Review.
- Derived from the issues brought up by members of the ARC and general public and the Accommodation Review Reference Criteria. (*Ms. Manske noted that the Accommodation Review Reference Criteria was explained at the meeting on September 27th and is also available in the ARC binders, the binders located at each school and on-line in the minutes of the last meeting.*)

Ms. Manske provided examples of objectives from previous reviews: and noted that the ARC will develop scenarios which will be compared against the objectives, which are written in such a way as to ask a question which can be answered with 'meets' or 'does not meet' the objective.

Ms. Manske asked the ARC if they had developed any objectives based-on the issues discussed, or if they would like Planning to come up with some sample objectives which the ARC could discuss and modify.

C: Superintendent of Education, Lila Read commented on the Example Objective “*Establish mid to long-term boundaries and viability of all schools involved in the study area*” noting that it is not clear if this is the role of the ARC and could be misleading in terms of what our role is.

Q: Can we get a copy of the boundaries for the high schools; the boundaries don’t match and also include schools that are on our borders?

R: Yes, we can provide maps with boundaries and same information as we have for the schools in the review area.

Q: Superintendent Read stated that often students are not feeding into the same secondary schools. Can we align boundary feeds in a way that makes more sense for kids and families?

R: That is something we can add as an objective.

Q: Could we also get the numbers for the French Immersion Program showing where the kids are coming from and the amount. Also can we compare to other schools in Cambridge with numbers for out-of-boundary?

R: Ms. Manske responded that she could do a comparison and pull numbers for Elgin Street P.S., Clemens Mill P.S. and Ryerson P.S.

Q: Can the ARC make recommendations that fall outside West Galt review area?

R: Ms. Manske responded that if we want to include the boundaries of other schools we would have to bring them into the review and be members of the ARC. We could not consider unless that school community is involved.

Q: Does the Catholic Board use the same policies as the Public Board for school size and configuration?

R: Ms. Manske responded that all elementary schools under the Catholic Board are JK-8 schools and are governed by their own Board policies, and not sure if their secondary school feeds are consistent.

Q: Does the Catholic Board give the Public Board information on their reviews?

R: Ms. Manske noted she has a good working relationship with her counterpart at the Catholic Board and they share their information with each other.

C: Trevor McWilliams asked if it would be helpful to the ARC to have the boundaries for the Catholic Board for the schools in the area.

Q: Does the Board keep a record of how many families they lose to the Catholic Board because they want their children to attend a JK-8 school?

R: Due to privacy issues, the Board is not allowed to ask that question when a student leaves our system, as it is considered confidential.

Q: Can't we just look at the turnover rate?

R: Children can leave our Board for different reasons for example special education can drive kids back and forth to different schools.

Action Items:

Ms. Manske to provide:

- Sample draft objectives for the ARC to consider.
- Boundaries and information for schools outside the boundaries of the review area.
- Add to objectives - align secondary boundary feeds in a way that makes more sense for kids and families.
- A comparison and pull numbers for Elgin Street P.S., Clemens Mill P.S. and Ryerson P.S. for the French Immersion Program and show where kids are coming from.
- Boundaries for area Catholic schools.

5. School Information Profiles:

- **Customize Framework?**

Ms. Manske noted that the School Information Profiles are still being completed and once completed will be available on-line and advised that the profiles can be customized to add, remove or modify information as seen fit by the ARC.

The School Information Profiles include the 4 considerations:

Section 1: Value to the Student

Section 2: Value to the Board

Section 3: Value to the Community (*includes school rental information*)

Section 4: Value to the Local Economy

Ms. Manske asked the ARC if there was a piece of information they would like to see added to the profiles. None were brought forward.

Ms. Manske asked the ARC to take a look through the profiles and decide if any information should be omitted.

Ms. Manske noted that the Board does not use this information to rank the schools but uses them as an information gathering tool.

6. School Tour Coordination

The School Tour Date is set for:

Saturday, November 19th starting at 9:30 a.m. at Blair Road P.S. and carpooling to each school in the review.

Ms. Manske noted that if anyone is unable to attend the tour we can try to arrange an alternate day for the school tour.

7. Roundtable

Ms. Manske asked the ARC if they were clear on the ARC's role and what our purpose is.

C: That set-up in the library makes it difficult to hear and asked Ms. Manske to sit at the middle of the table for the next meeting.

Q: Will Mr. McWilliam's presentation information be made available to members who cannot attend the next meeting?

R: Mr. McWilliams will provide his information in pdf format and Ms. Manske will post on the website.

8. Future Meeting Dates:

Ms. Manske reminded the ARC that Trevor McWilliams, City of Cambridge, would be presenting at the meeting on November 15th and the ARC will be discussing objectives.

The agenda for the November 29th meeting will have us getting into scenarios and options.

ARC Meetings:

ARC Meeting #3: Tuesday, November 15, 2011, 5:30-7 p.m. at Highland P.S. Library.

ARC Meeting #4: Tuesday, November 29, 2011, 5:30-7 p.m. at Highland P.S. Library.

Public Meetings:

TBD

Ms. Manske thanked everyone for coming out and the meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.