



**Woolwich & Wellesley Townships Elementary Schools
Pupil Accommodation Review
Minutes of Accommodation Review Committee Meeting # 2
October 11, 2011, 6:30 – 8:00 PM
Three Bridges Public School Library**

The second meeting of the Woolwich & Wellesley Townships Elementary Schools Pupil Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) was held at Three Bridges Public School on Tuesday, October 11th, 2011.

Committee Members Present:

Paul Milne, Principal St. Jacobs PS, Geoff Suderman-Gladwell, Principal Linwood PS, Wayne Dunham, Principal Three Bridges PS, Susan Marchiori, Vice Principal Linwood PS, Sarah Peck, Planner, Township of Wellesley, Christine Shantz, Parent Representative Floradale PS, Krista Edwards, Parent Representative Linwood PS, John Krupicz, Parent Representative St. Jacobs PS, Andrew Horst, Alternate Parent Representative Three Bridges PS, Steve Snyder, Parent Representative Three Bridges PS, Andrea Kean, Recording Secretary, Lauren Manske, Senior Planner and Nathan Hercanuck, Senior Planner for the Waterloo Region District School Board.

Additional WRDSB staff present:

Nick Landry, Manager of Enrolment
Lynsey Meikle, Communications Assistant

Guests present:

Susan Martin

Regrets:

Diane DeCoene, Superintendent of Education, Ron Dallan, Facility Services, and John Scarfone, Manager of Planning, Township of Woolwich, Vlad Kovac, Principal Floradale PS, Sheila Bauman, Parent Representative St. Jacobs PS, and Elmer Horst, Parent Representative, Three Bridges PS.

1. Welcome/Introductions

- Mr. Hercanuck, Senior Planner for the Waterloo Region District School Board opened the meeting at 6:30 pm and welcomed members and noted that there are new members present. Members did a round of introductions.

2. **ARC Meeting #1 – Draft Minutes Approval**

Web Publication:

Mr. Hercanuck noted that it will be customary at the beginning of each ARC meeting to review the minutes of the previous meeting and identify any errors or omissions. Once the minutes are approved they will be posted on the Board's website.

Q: Will there be links to the presentation and the policies and guidelines referenced in the minutes?

R: Yes. All of the information including those relevant policies and guidelines will be available on the Woolwich /Wellesley Accommodation Review Page but not necessarily through links in the minutes. The presentations for a meeting will be posted at the same time the approved minutes are posted.

Mr. Hercanuck asked the ARC if there were any corrections/concerns with the minutes from the September 22nd ARC meeting.

None were raised.

Minutes from the September 22nd meeting were approved. Moved by: John Krupicz and seconded by: Krista Edwards.

School Tour Coordination:

Mr. Hercanuck asked the ARC if there was any interest in doing a tour of the schools in the review area or would they prefer to hold the ARC meetings at each of the schools.

Q: Would we see all 4 schools in the same day?

R: Yes, we could probably see all 4 in the same morning. Ms. Manske noted that in the past, ARCs had toured up to 7 schools in the same day and finished by noon.

Q: Are there facility issues identified by the Board for the 4 schools that we can look at during the tour?

R: Yes. Facility Services are going through them right now. We can point out what we know. Other issues will likely be identified down the road.

Q: What other schools in the Woolwich & Wellesley Townships are not included in the review?

R: Breslau, Wellesley, Conestogo, John Mahood, Park Manor and Riverside Public Schools.

Action Item:

The ARC agreed to the tour and agreed to Saturday, November 5th as a potential date. Mr. Hercanuck to send an email to the ARC (noting that the school administrators do not have to be at their schools) to confirm date and time and meeting spot.

How ARC members would like their names to appear in the minutes:

Mr. Hercanuck reminded the ARC to let Andrea know how they would like their name to appear in the minutes, keeping in mind that the minutes are available to the public.

Elect ARC Chair:

Mr. Hercanuck noted that the ARC has to elect a chair who will be responsible for running the meeting and developing the agenda. Historically, the Planning Department has assumed the role.

Mr. Hercanuck asked the ARC if anyone would like to be Chair. No one indicated interest and the ARC agreed that Mr. Hercanuck would act as the Chair.

Community Representation on the ARC:

Mr. Hercanuck noted that last meeting there were some names brought forward for community representation and asked if anyone had approached these individuals or if any other names could be suggested.

No one had been contacted.

Susan Martin, who had indicated her interest through Principal Kovac at the last meeting, was in attendance.

Mr. Hercanuck inquired as to Susan Martin's broader community associations.

Mrs. Martin responded that she had 3 children go through Floradale P.S., and all have since graduated from Elmira District Secondary School. She is a member of Floradale Mennonite Church, and a member of other broader community organizations such as Waterloo 4-H, and has volunteered at Floradale, Three Bridges and Linwood public schools.

Q: How does an ARC approach someone to be a community representative?

R: In past experience, we have always had trouble finding someone who is interested.

Ms. Manske suggested that we typically approach community members on other Board committees such as the Special Education Advisory Committee.

Mr. Hercanuck commented that for the community representatives we are looking for a broader community perspective; and asked the ARC how they felt about the representatives not having direct connections to any schools so they can bring a different community perspective.

The ARC discussed names of possible community representatives.

Action Item:

Mr. Hercanuck asked the ARC to provide him with names and contact information for possible community representative and he would contact them directly to gauge their interest.

3. Setting Review Objectives:

Mr. Hercanuck reminded the ARC of the homework assignment from the previous meeting and asked if anyone had any issues or opportunities specific to their school that could be combined with the Board's educational and accommodation goals (reference criteria) listed in the terms of reference, which we could use to develop the objectives of the Review.

The ARC discussed issues with boundaries, discussing historical changes and how boundaries have impacted enrolment and transportation.

Q: Referring to the Woolwich & Wellesley Townships Review Projection Areas in the ARC binder; is there something that tells us which projection areas are attached to each school?

R: No, there's nothing in the binder right now but we can make up a new map.

Action Item:

Planning to provide maps indicating which projection areas are connected to each school boundary.

The ARC agreed that there is some desire to have boundaries changed as part of this process.

C: The boundaries in the Heidelberg area force the children to go to different schools. Would like the children to be able to attend the same school.

The Unique Situation at Three Bridges Public School:

Mr. Hercanuck commented that it is his understanding that when the Board was created (amalgamated from smaller local Boards) in 1969 it inherited Three Bridges Public School which historically served the local Mennonite Community and had an historical agreement with that community for transportation. He also noted that the school, until recently, had never had a set boundary and has opted out of certain programs and curriculum which the Board offers at the rest of its schools.

Mr. Dunham responded that Three Bridges P.S. is the Board's attempt to accommodate a unique population. In 1969 the Board kept Three Bridges Public School open due to its unique population. The area also has parochial schools that most of the families served would typically attend. The current enrolment at Three Bridges P.S. is mostly made up of descendants of those who attended when the school was established in 1872. They want their children to attend Three Bridges because they attended and their parents attended.

C: All schools in the review area have some Mennonite population. Why don't these students also go to Three Bridges P.S.?

Mr. Dunham noted that there are 5 distinct Mennonite groups that Three Bridges serves:

1. David Martin
2. Old Order (they operate some parochial schools and pay fees)
3. Mid-West Fellowship (they operate a parochial school and pay fees)
4. Markham (they operate some parochial schools and pay fees)
5. Old Colony (they attend some parochial schools)

Q: Is the curriculum at Three Bridges School significantly different than what is offered at other public schools?

R: Mr. Dunham responded that the curriculum is not so different it is more to do with the population as the fellowship/friendships comes from their church and have the same values. There is a list of 25 “understandings” that are the basis for school conduct. The Board has tried to accommodate these understandings.

Q: What are these understandings?

R: Mr. Dunham responded that sex education curriculum is not taught at Three Bridges Public School, rather it is taught by the family, (which is not that different as other public schools allow children to be excluded from the class if the parent wishes to teach it at home). Also, French is not taught at Three Bridges instead it offers ESL (English as a Second Language) as the majority of the students speak Low German or Pennsylvania Dutch. The students have religious aspects which include the Lord’s Prayer and the saying of grace before meals. Mr. Dunham noted that it is not significantly different than other public schools.

Mr. Dunham also explained that St. Jacobs P.S. and Three Bridges P.S. have a concurrent boundary, (they share the same boundary), and so attending Three Bridges P.S. is a choice for all in the area.

C: Mr. Hercanuck noted that the Board did set a boundary for Three Bridges P.S. as part of the Ministry of Education Transportation Review. Any current students attending Three Bridges P.S. from outside the boundary were grandfathered for transportation.

Q: Is the list of understandings available to the public? It would be helpful to have available to the ARC, as it would provide context to the uniqueness of Three Bridges Public School.

Action Item:

Mr. Dunham agreed to provide the list of 25 understandings to the ARC.

What are the Issues?

The ARC discussed declining enrolment and boundary issues which result in the loss of bus runs which in turn results in students having to spend longer amounts of time on the bus.

Mr. Hercanuck stated that the Board’s transportation policy states that students are not to be on the bus longer than 55 minutes. If there are students approaching this amount of time, this would be considered an issue that would need to be addressed.

Q: It is my understanding that students in Glen Allen/Wallenstein will have to go to Drayton to attend school which is under the authority of the Upper Grand Board. Is there something we can do to change this?

R: Nick Landry, Manager of Enrolment responded that under the Education Act we are not allowed to go outside our Board’s jurisdiction to recruit students.

C: Ms. Manske noted that the residents can request to be released by the Upper Grand Board through an out of district process to be able to attend a school in the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) boundary.

C: Mr. Landry responded that the students will not be eligible for transportation; as it would be against the Education Act.

Q: Could you do a swap with kids wanting to go to the Upper Grand Board?

R: Mr. Landry noted that, that would not be an option; it would be a violation of the Education Act.

C: Ms. Manske noted that the Board no longer offers courtesy bussing.

Q: What is courtesy bussing?

R: Courtesy bussing refers to allowing a child to ride the school bus when they do not qualify for bussing, if there is sufficient space on the bus.

The ARC agreed to address the following Objectives/Issues:

- To address school based and community based boundaries.
- To address transportation (busing) to reduce the amount of time students spend on the bus.
- Address student transitions where changes are proposed to ease transition for students (will look at grandparenting with sensitivity to grade 8 students finishing out at current school)

Reference: Criteria

Mr. Hercanuck reminded the ARC that the Board has provided the following criteria to be considered when developing the objectives and accommodation options:

- **Transportation**
 - Maximize the number of students within school boundary who are within walking distance, minimizing the need for transportation and annual operating costs. (*Mr. Hercanuck noted that we could modify this to look at time spent on the bus*)
 - Refer to Board Policy 4009.
- **New Facilities/Site Selection**
 - Where new construction is proposed, refer to the Board's site selection criteria (revised draft May 1, 2008) for elementary school site size, frontages shape location, topography and services, and other preferences.

Q: Does the Board own any land in the review area?

R: No, not to my knowledge.

- **Safe and Secure Learning Environments**
 - Ensure all facilities provide a safe and secure learning environment for all students and staff (refer to Board Policy 6000). (*Mr. Hercanuck noted that we could look at*

projects to enhance safety by making sure the office has an unobstructed view of the entrance. Also noted that Board would get a better price if we bundled projects.)

- **Grade Configuration**

- When the opportunity arises, JK-8 is preferred over JK-6 and congregated 7/8 program; however, the Board currently operates schools JK-5, JK-6, JK-8, 6-8, and 7-8
- Consider the Good Schools Standing Committee Report Elementary School Size and Configuration, May 14, 2007.

Mr. Hercanuck noted that Three Bridges P.S. does not offer the Kindergarten Program. Some of the students do not start school until Grade 1, while others attend St. Jacobs P.S. for the Kindergarten Program and then attend Three Bridges for grades 1-8)

- **Equity and Accessibility**

- Maximize the number of facilities that adequately meet student and community needs for accessibility.
- Consider the equity of facilities, site, size and program standards.
- Refer to Board Policy 1008 – Equity and Inclusion.

Mr. Hercanuck noted that all schools in the Board have to be fully accessible by 2025 and noted that Floradale P.S. is accessible but St. Jacobs P.S. is not.

Ms. Manske stated that accessibility does not just mean stairs but also includes door knobs, washrooms, and the width of doorways, etc.

- **Permanent Accommodation**

- Minimize the number of students in portables or temporary structures.

- **School Utilization**

- Maximize the use of the existing facilities.

- **Program Offerings**

- Consider the Board's Procedures 1000 and 1040 regarding French Immersion
- Maximize the equity of program offerings (i.e., Music, French Immersion, etc.)
- Minimize the number of combined grades at a school (Consider the Good Schools Standing Committee Report: Elementary School Size and Configuration, May 14, 2007).

Mr. Hercanuck noted that the Board believes that schools with at least 2 classes per grade in JK-6 and 3 classes per grade at the 7-8 level support optimal learning environments for students. For a JK-8 school this means about 500-650 students which would be challenging here in the rural area. But we can look at sufficient size programs and try to reduce the number of combined grade classes.

Q: Does the situation at Three Bridges P.S. include combined grade classes with 3 grades?

R: No, but its close.

Q: Referring to the combined grades; does that happen everywhere or just here?

R: They can happen anywhere and occurs Board-wide. We try to maintain an average of approximately 24 kids in each class – if we don't have enough students in a grade, we will have look at combining classes.

C: Ms. Manske noted that it would be very costly to the Board to run classes with fewer than 20 students. Teacher's salaries are 85 percent of the Board's budget.

Q: What is the capacity of Floradale P.S.?

R: Floradale P.S.'s built capacity is 322 students, right now it sits at 270 students and could be expanded on as it sits on a wonderful site which is the second largest owned by the Board. The largest site is Linwood P.S.'s site. Mr. Hercanuck noted that the students would have to come from somewhere (and not the Upper Grand Board).

Q: Do the schools in the review have instrumental music programs?

R: It is rare for JK-8 school to have an instrumental music program.

C: St. Jacobs P.S. has a volunteer operated strings program which runs after school hours.

C: Mr. Hercanuck noted that we can also look at accommodating other programs including French and Music.

- **Program Changes/Considerations**

- Maintain Ministry's target for Primary Class Sizes (PCS)
- Consideration for the impact implementation of the FDK (Full Day Kindergarten) will have on the facilities.

Mr. Hercanuck noted that Floradale P.S. is the only school in the review area that runs the FDK program; all schools in the Board will have FDK by September 2014.

Q: Referring to the Enrolment Projections included in the ARC Binders; do the enrolment numbers for Floradale P.S. include FDK?

R: Yes, but FDK numbers are not included for the other schools. You can ignore the FTE (Full Time Equivalent) number and use the Total number to see the impact of the Full Day Kindergarten Program.

Mr. Hercanuck noted that Linwood P.S. will offer FDK in September 2012 and St. Jacobs P.S. will offer FDK in September 2014.

C: Linwood currently has 1 portable temporarily on site because it will lose the use of 2 classrooms while construction work is done for the implementation of the FDK Program.

Mr. Hercanuck also noted that Three Bridges P.S. will not be offering the FDK program.

Q: Will St. Jacobs be getting an addition for FDK?

R: Yes, the Ministry will be providing funding for that addition.

It was noted that another issue could include existing Kindergartens rooms may be undersized as washrooms will need to be located inside the classroom and the requirement is 1200 square feet for new Kindergarten rooms including the washroom.

It was noted that at St. Jacobs P.S. has 2 Kindergarten classrooms but they are not located together and the Library is not purpose built and may be too small.

Mr. Hercanuck noted that in order to provide equitable access to facilities for students the Board is looking at benchmarks for facilities such as gym space, library etc. on a square foot per student base.

Sample Objectives from past reviews:

Referring to Slide 9 of tonight's presentation, available on line at:

<http://www.wrdsb.ca/sites/www.wrdsb.ca/files/11oct11.arcmtg.presentation.pdf>

Mr. Hercanuck outlined some sample objectives which were developed from the identified issues, which we have used in pervious reviews.

Action Item:

Mr. Hercanuck agreed to compare the Reference Criteria outlined in the presentation to the Reference Criteria located in the ARC Binders, to see if they are the same.

4. School Information Profiles:

• **Customize Framework?**

Mr. Hercanuck advised that the ARC can customize the Board's generic School Information Profile to the schools under review.

- The School Information Profile includes four considerations:
 - Section 1: Value to the Student
 - Section 2: Value to the Board
 - Section 3: Value to the Community
 - Section 4: Value to the Local Economy

Action Item/ Homework for the ARC:

Mr. Hercanuck asked the ARC to look at the sections of the School Information Profiles and ask themselves if the information requested would give you the whole picture or is there anything else you would like to know about the schools which is not in the template.

5. Roundtable:

Q: Is it okay for Susan Martin to be a community representative?

R: Deferred until next meeting.

The ARC agreed that Mrs. Martin could continue to attend meetings as a guest until the community representatives has been agreed upon by the ARC.

Action Items:

- The ARC to forward names and contact information of possible community representatives to Mr. Hercanuck; Mr. Hercanuck will contact to explain process and gauge interest.
- The ARC members to keep in mind any issues at their schools to bring to the next meeting.

- Mr. Hercanuck to craft generic objectives for the next meeting.

Q: Do we ever go back and change the review objectives:

R: The objectives will be brought forward at the 2nd Public Meeting as ‘draft’ objectives and we may decide to modify them based on community input. The scenarios or options we develop will not likely meet all objectives and it can be a balancing act when coming up with a preferred scenario(s).

6. Future Meeting Dates/Times:

- **Public Meeting #1**

The First Public Meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, October 18, 2011 at Elmira District Secondary School from 7:30-9:00 p.m. in the small gymnasium** located closest to the main parking lot.

The meeting will be a formal presentation and cover the same information which was outlined at the first working group meeting, followed by a Question and Answer period as well comments sheets will be available for the public. ARC members are not required to attend the public meeting but may find the meeting useful.

Regarding providing busing for those wishing to attend the public meeting; we will not be providing busing as no one expressed interest.

- **Working Group Meetings:**

The ARC decided that future meetings would take place on Wednesday nights.

- **Working Group Meeting #3**

Wednesday, October 26, 2011

6:30-8:00 p.m. at Linwood Public School Library.

Mr. Hercanuck thanked the ARC for coming out and adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Future Meeting Dates:

PUBLIC MEETING #1

Tuesday, October 18, 2011, from 7:30-9:00 p.m., @ Elmira District Secondary School

ARC MEETINGS:

Wednesday, October 26, 2011, from 6:30-8:00 p.m., @ Linwood Public School