



**West Galt Elementary Schools
Pupil Accommodation Review
Minutes of Accommodation Review Committee Meeting # 1
September 27, 2011, 5:00 – 6:30 PM
Highland Public School Library**

The first meeting of the West Galt Elementary Schools Pupil Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) was held at Highland Public School on September 27, 2011.

Committee Members Present:

Wendy Bowker, Principal, Highland P.S., Nick Chiarelli, Vice Principal, Highland P.S., Barry Frame, Principal, Dickson 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., 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., Roy Roethel 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:

Jodie Hancox-Meyer, Principal, Blair Road P.S., Terri Peach, 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 5:05 pm and welcomed members of the committee. Listed members who sent their regrets and informed the group that once a new Manager of Planning is hired, he/she will also be included on the ARC. All members present introduced themselves. Ms. Manske thanked the members for volunteering their time and commitment to this process. The committee members were presented with ARC binders containing accommodation process material such as Board Reports and Policies, as well as reference criteria and the Terms of Reference. The binders are provided to the ARC members to keep all of the information regarding the accommodation review together. Additional information, policies and guidelines can be found on our website at: www.wrdsb.ca

- Tonight's presentation is available on-line at:
<http://www.wrdsb.ca/sites/www.wrdsb.ca/files/27Sep11.arcmtg.presentation.pdf>

2. Explanation of Accommodation Review Process/Background.

What is a Pupil Accommodation Review?

- Formal Process that ensures a decision taken by a school board regarding the potential future of a school (closure or consolidation) has the full involvement of an informed local community.
- Process based on a broad range of criteria regarding the quality of the learning experience for students.

Ms. Manske noted that the Ministry of Education requires a specific process when there is the potential of school closures; and you cannot do it outside this process. In order for the Board to have all the necessary tools to deal with the identified issues we must undertake the accommodation review process.

Ms. Manske went on to explain the reasons why the Board undertakes an Accommodation Review:

Why an Accommodation Review?

- Potential exists with areas under the Board's jurisdiction to accommodate existing and future students in fewer educational facilities.
- Due to declining enrolment, a school or group of schools is unable, or is projected to be unable to:
 - Provide suitable and equitable range of learning opportunities for students;
 - Under normal staffing allocations, organize with combined classes of no more than two grades;
- **Reorganization involving the school or group of schools could enhance program and learning opportunities for students;**
- **Teaching and learning spaces and the site are not suitable to provide the programs and accessibility needed to serve the community and retrofitting and/or enlarging the facility may be cost prohibitive;**
- One or more of the schools is experiencing higher building maintenance expenses than average for the system and/or is in need of major capital improvements;
- The Board has received a formal request from a school community or communities requesting a review of their pupil accommodation facilities. (*Ms. Manske noted that this is not the case here.*)

Ms. Manske noted that the bolded points above are key reasons for the West Galt Review.

West Galt Review Area includes:

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

Ms. Manske produced a map of the West Galt Review area (see page 5 of presentation available at <http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/accommodation-reviews/west-galt-elementary-schools>) and commented that the review area spans quite a large geographical area with Blair Road Public School's boundary drawing a little into the Township of North Dumfries.

Current Enrolment and Capacity

Referring to Slide 6 of the Presentation, Ms. Manske explained the acronyms used in the chart headings:

OTG: On-the-ground capacity (*number on which the Ministry of Education loads facilities based on primary class sizes; doesn't mean we can fit more*)

FTE: Full-time equivalent – *Kindergarten students, because they only attend the school half the time, are not considered full-time.*

FDK: Full-Day Kindergarten – currently only Dickson P.S. has FDK.

Ms. Manske noted that some of the sites are smaller than what we look at today for site size and explained that the Board currently requests sites of 4 acres for 401-500 pupils and 5 acres for 501-600 pupils in new subdivisions. Ms. Manske noted that Dickson P.S. particularly is a tight site and the Blair Road P.S. site is good based on today's standards. Ms. Manske also noted that for all schools combined there are 11 portables with 7 of those at Highland P.S.

Ms. Manske also noted that both Highland P.S. and St. Andrew's P.S. offer a Partial French Immersion Program.

Historic Enrolment

Ms. Manske also noted that over the past decade, the West Galt area has seen an overall decline in enrolment of 16 percent from 1861 students in 2000 to 1598 in 2010. These numbers are contrasted with a Board-wide increase in elementary enrolment of 2.7 percent over the same time period. Ms. Manske also noted that these numbers did not include the current year.

Why an Accommodation Review in West Galt?

The Board is conducting an accommodation review in West Galt because of:

- Small school organizations
- Facility conditions
- Grade configurations
- New development
- Accommodation of Full Day Kindergarten (FDK)

Ms. Manske referred everyone to the February 14, 2011 Board Report announcing the West Galt Review available online at:

<http://www.wrdsb.ca/sites/www.wrdsb.ca/files/ReportElementaryBoundaryStudiesAccommodationReview.pdf>

Ms. Manske explained that the West Galt Area is under review because it has seen a decline in enrolment which has resulted in some smaller school organizations than the Board likes to see and given the age of many of the facilities in the review area, there are some facility challenges the Board is facing with these schools with respect to accessibility and facility amenities. In addition, we are also dealing with a few different grade configurations (JK-5, JK-6, 6-8 etc.) and the Board has recently passed a new policy (policy 3002) that indicates where possible we are to review these with a preference towards a JK-8 model. A copy of this policy is in your binders under “Board Reports and Policies” and is also available on-line at <http://www.wrdsb.ca/about-us/board-policies>.

Ms. Manske also noted that there are a few pockets of residential development still planned in the review area, so as part of the review we will have to figure out how to accommodate any new growth as well as dealing with a system-wide accommodation crunch in trying to accommodate the FDK program which is essentially doubling our space requirements for JK/SK students.

Ms. Manske stated that the Accommodation Review Committee can look at combining schools, changing grade organizations to reflect the Board recommended size and configuration, and school condition, (and do a full assessment of facilities to determine what needs to be done over the next 10 years). We will also look at how the addition of the FDK program will affect space at the facilities.

3. Role of the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC)/Terms of Reference.

What is the purpose of an ARC?

- to conduct an accommodation review of a particular school or schools within a given planning area of the Board (e.g. West Galt Review Area)
- to advise and provide recommendations that will inform the final decision made by the Board of Trustees on whether a school or schools should be either closed or consolidated.

Ms. Manske commented that ultimately the ARC is responsible for developing a report to the Board of Trustees on accommodation options for the Review area. The ARC does not make the final decision. The Board of Trustees makes the final decision based on ARC and staff recommendations.

ARC Membership

The ARC Consists of:						
2 Parents From Each School Community:					Area Superintendent of Education:	
Blair Rd.	Dickson	Highland	St. Andrew's	Tait St.	Lila Read	
K. Deml	V. Meal	H. Orman	R. Roethel	K. Destun		
L. Robb	R. Raineault	P. Ouellet	T. Peach	M. Fuller		
The Principal From Each School:					Area Municipal Representation:	
Blair Rd.	Dickson	Highland	St. Andrew's	Tait St.	Trevor McWilliams, Senior Operations Planner, City of Cambridge	
J. Hancox-Meyer	B. Frame	W. Bowker	K. Tomlin	M. Lubert		
WRDSB Planning/Facilities Staff:					Up to 2 Community Representatives:	
Planning Dept.		Facility Services			Community Rep 1	Community Rep 2
TBD - Manager		R. Dallan, Manager Capital Projects			Vacant - TBD	Vacant - TBD
N. Hercanuck , Senior Planner						
L. Manske, Senior Planner						
A. Kean, Recording Secretary						

Ms. Manske went through the membership of the ARC noting that the Manager of Planning has retired and once a new manager is hired, he/she will be included in the ARC. Ms. Manske also noted that the ARC can have up to 2 representatives from the broader community which will be discussed later.

Mr. Hercanuck pointed out that the community representatives should represent the broader community and not be connected to any one school in particular. He noted past ARC community representatives were members of the YMCA, SEAC and represented the community at large possibly using school facilities after hours for community use.

In addition we have a number of resources we can draw from at the Board on an as-needed basis, such as staff from learning services to speak about curriculum delivery, special education etc.

Ms. Manske also pointed out that we have voting and non-voting members on the ARC.

Terms of Reference – Voting/Non-Voting Members

Voting Members:	Non-Voting Members:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Representatives • Community Representative(s) • Municipal Representatives(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Staff • Superintendents • Principal(s) • Other Board Representative(s)

Ms. Manske noted that the decisions throughout this process will be made by consensus whenever possible; however, when a consensus cannot be reached, a majority vote will consist of 50 percent plus 1 of the voting members present at the meeting the day the vote is

held. A vote cannot be held without a quorum. A quorum consists of 50 percent of the voting members of the committee.

Should there be a vote on a particular subject we will try to make it known before the meeting so that members interested in voting on the issue can make sure they are present, or submit a vote beforehand if they cannot make it. We will also look at the possibility of using on-line voting which we have used in the past.

Terms of Reference – Role of the ARC

The ARC is responsible for:

- Review Objectives (*Ms. Manske advised that we will spend time at next meeting developing these*)
- School Information Profiles (*as discussed earlier*)
- Accommodation Options (Scenarios)
- Accommodation Report and Recommendations (*Planning Dept. will write the draft on ARC's behalf*)
- Public Information and Access (*Responsibility of Planning Dept.*)
- Community Consultation and Public Meetings (*done through a minimum of 4 public meetings with the first scheduled for October 5, 2011 in which we will share the equivalent of this meeting*) The ARC is not required to attend the public meetings, but might find them useful as they are used to share the ARC information and progress with the public and collect public feedback. Ms. Manske also noted that the information is also shared with the public through the minutes of our meetings.

Ms. Manske noted that the ARC will develop the review objectives, which are generic statements that can be applied to any school and reflect the desired outcomes of the ARC, from the issues brought up by the local school communities, larger public body and the Board Reference Criteria

The ARC is also responsible for the completion of the School Information Profiles which is a template that contains categorical information about the schools in the review area. They exist so that everyone has all the same information about each school in the review, so that ARC can craft a sound recommendation.

The Planning Department will be responsible for running the public meetings and ensuring the information is available to the general public on our website and in the Accommodation Review Binders that will be available in the main office of each school.

The ARC will use the objectives and the information from the School Information Profiles to develop accommodation options (referred to as scenarios) to meet those objectives and address the issues.

Using the objectives as a screen the ARC will narrow down the scenarios, to a recommendation(s) (sometimes we have two) that will be presented to the Board of Trustees in a report.

Terms of Reference – ARC Meeting Procedures

- The ARC shall meet at an agreed upon schedule and location.
- ARC meetings are not public meetings. Non-members may attend meeting provided they are invited by the ARC. *(It should be noted that anyone that attends the meeting as an invited guest will not be considered a voting member.)*
- Minutes and secretarial support for the ARC will be provided by the Board's Planning Department. *(Ms. Manske noted that minutes will be posted on-line once they have been approved by the ARC which will occur at the following meeting; consequently the minutes will always be one meeting behind.)*
- An agenda for ARC meetings will be prepared by the Board's Planning Department and sent to the ARC members prior to each meeting. Minutes from the previous meeting will accompany the agenda for ARC approval. *(sent via e-mail or fax; please provide Andrea with your contact information)*
- Once approved the agendas, minutes and presentations from each ARC meeting will be made available in hardcopy in the main offices of each of the schools in the review area and posted on the Board's website at <http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/accommodation-reviews/woolwich-and-wellesley-township.S.-elementary-schools> *(Ms. Manske noted that each school in the review area will have a binder to be kept in the main office and Planning will provide each school with information to add as it becomes available.)*

Election of ARC Chair:

Ms. Manske asked the members if any one was interested in Chairing the ARC. In previous ARC Planning Staff where given the role. No one indicated interest in taking on the role. Ms. Manske asked if there were any objections to Planning assuming the role. No members were opposed. Ms. Manske to act as Chair.

4. Discussion of Issues/Setting of Review Objectives:

Reference: Criteria

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.
 - Refer to Board Policy 4009. *(Ms. Manske noted that the Board has adopted an [Active Transportation Charter](#) which will also be kept in mind when developing options)*
- **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.
- **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).

- **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, & 7-8
 - Consider Board Policy 3002.
- **Equity and Accessibility**

Maximize the number of facilities that adequately meet student and community needs for accessibility. (*Ms. Manske noted that accessibility is a big issue and all Board facilities are required by law to be fully accessible by 2025.*)

 - Consider the equity of facilities, site, size and program standards.
 - Refer to Board Policy 1008 – Equity and Inclusion.
- **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 (refer to Board Policy 3002).
- **Program Changes/Considerations**
 - Maintain Ministry's target for Primary Class Sizes (PCS)
 - Consideration for the impact implementation FDK (Full Day Kindergarten) will have on the facilities. (*Ms. Manske noted that all schools will be running Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) come September 2014.*)

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.

Examples of Objectives in Previous Accommodation Reviews:

- Review current elementary schools organization.
- Address community schools/transportation that is within reasonable travel time, distance and cost.
- Establish mid to long-term boundaries and viability of all schools involved in the study areas.
- Support optimal use of facilities, capital and operating resources.

Accommodation Review Scenarios:

- Options created to address issues and objectives raised and developed by the ARC and the general public as well as the Accommodation Reference Criteria.

- The Accommodation Scenarios can include (*but are not limited to*):
 - Boundary Changes
 - Program Changes
 - New Construction (renovations, additions, whole new facilities)
 - School Closure/Consolidation
 - Maintaining the Status Quo (doing nothing)
 - Any combination of the above

The ARC is responsible for developing the Accommodation Review Scenarios and may include public feedback obtained at the public meetings and from information submitted through the [Boundary Feedback](#) email. Ms. Manske noted that the ARC will use the objectives to rank the scenarios.

Accommodation Report and Recommendations:

- ARC's must complete an Accommodation Report, using the customized School Information Profiles that will make recommendations regarding the future of the schools being considered and submit the report to school board administration. (*Board Trustees*)
- The needs of all students within West Galt review area are to be considered.
- ARCs must share the Accommodation Report, in plain language, with the community at a public meeting; usually Public Meeting Number 4.

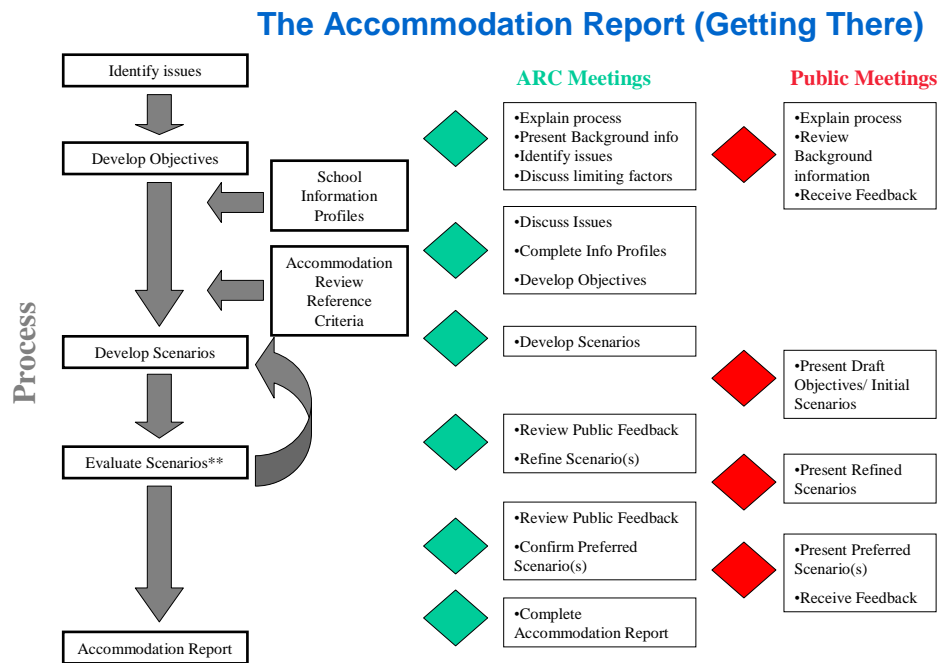
The Planning Department will write the report in plain language, which is important if the ARC is making tough decisions, the community will want to know how the ARC came up with its recommendation.

Community Consultation and Public Meetings:

- Consultations must be based on the customized School Information Profiles in order to elicit input from the various perspectives around the value of a school.
- The ARC must seek input and community feedback on options for accommodating students who would be affected by a school closure.
- A minimum of 4 Public Meetings are to be held to consult and present the Accommodation Report and Recommendations.
- Minutes reflecting the full range of opinions expressed at the meetings are to be kept, and made publicly available.
- Website for this review: <http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/accommodation-reviews/west-galt-elementary-schools>

The Accommodation Report (Getting There)

The process is outlined as follows:



**Scenario development and evaluation may go through multiple iterations as scenarios are evaluated , and new ideas result from the evaluation.

Referring to the chart above Ms. Manske explained that the left side outlines the process progression and the right side outlines where the ARC meetings and Public meetings fall along the process and what “historically” has happened at past meetings along the way.

Ms. Manske advised the ARC that the typical ARC process includes a minimum of four public meetings, and that they could expect somewhere in the area of 12-15 meetings of the ARC, meeting on a bi-weekly basis. Ms. Manske asked the members to let us know if they can not commit to the process as it is quite a time commitment.

Q: Will meetings always be on the same week night?

R: We will discuss what works best for members and we can also change the time to make more suitable.

5. Explanation of School Information Profiles

Ms. Manske advised that the ARC may customize the Board’s generic School Information Profile for 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

- The profiles are an information tool used to gather facility, program, transportation, security, community use, information. Ms. Manske noted that the ARC can customize the profile template if needed.
- The profiles must give us all the same information for each school so we are able to look at the schools equally.
- The ARC has the ability to add or take away or modify the profiles categories. But the same information must be available for each of the schools in the review area.

Public Information and Access:

- ARC's are to ensure that all information relevant to the accommodation review is to be made public by posting it in a prominent location on the Board's website or making it available in print upon request.
- All information that is used to determine the value of a school must be publicly available.
- Where relevant information is technical in nature, it is to be explained in plain language.

Ms. Manske noted that all minutes and agendas for the meetings will be available on-line and that the minutes are not posted until they are approved by the ARC so they generally are a meeting behind.

Ms. Manske also asked the ARC to let the Planning Department know if information posted on the site is not in clear language and she will re-word.

Next Steps:

- ARC to discuss issues and develop review objectives. (*to be discussed at next meeting*)
- ARC to review the School Information Profile Templates, and modify if necessary.
- ARC to discuss existing conditions, accommodation options and recommendations.
- ARC to prepare Accommodation Report and Recommendation(s).

Action Item: Ms. Manske asked the ARC members to look at issues that their school is facing as homework for the next meeting

West Galt Accommodation Review Process Minimum Timeline:

Ms. Manske noted that Board Policy 4000 – sets out the minimum timelines for an Accommodation Review and outlined the minimum timeline for this review as follows:

- February 14, 2011 – October 5, 2011: 30 day minimum period between Board announcement of Accommodation Review and first public consultation (not including summer break). *This minimum was met already.*
- October 5, 2011 – approximately January 20, 2012: Public consultation period, minimum 90 days (not including Winter break). Minimum of 4 public meetings.
- Approximately January 24, 2012 – approximately April 3, 2012: Minimum 60 day period (not including Spring break) between ARC submission of Accommodation Report and Trustee vote on recommendation.

Ms. Manske informed the ARC that this can be a long process and the earliest we can possibly finish is April 2012 but with such a challenging process, and based on past

experience, in all likelihood this review could extend into the next school year as the major school breaks are not counted in the timeline.

Mr. Hercanuck commented that with a boundary study, the school consolidation option is not available whereas with an accommodation review all options are available but it does not dictate that the result is a school closure.

6. Roundtable:

Ms. Manske asked the ARC members how they would like their names to appear in the minutes and to indicate on the sign-in sheet.

Ms. Manske polled the members on the best day of the week to hold the ARC meetings. Members indicated their preference with a show of hands and it was determined that Tuesday was the best evening for the majority of members with a 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm start and finish time.

Q: Why does the Board prefer JK-8 schools?

R: There is some research that supports that JK-8 schools, with its fewer transitions is beneficial for learners. Curriculum is organized in continuum. It is also operationally effective in regard to having fewer facilities.

Ms. Manske advised the ARC that if we were to look at the JK-8 model in the scenarios we could have staff from Learning Services come in to answer questions on the topic. As well we can bring in Board staff to speak about other issues as well, including curriculum and facility operations.

Q: Have there been any Accommodation Reviews done in this area in the past?

R: Mr. Hercanuck noted that there was a review done in East Galt which resulted in an addition for Avenue Road P.S. and a new school to be built on Myers Road (Moffat Creek P.S.) and two school closures (Lincoln Avenue P.S. and Alison Park P.S.)

Q: Once the Board makes its decision, does it typically take 3 years to get something completed?

R: It can take 2 years from the time it's approved to the time we can open a new school. Smaller projects, such as additions, take less time. Once the Board approves a project, we have to get funding from the Ministry of Education and that process has changed and we now have to create a list of priorities for our Board which the Ministry looks at while looking at the priority list of other Boards as well. The Ministry will now only give out funding for capital projects in June of each year. This process could change again if there is a change in government with the election.

Q: Has the Board predetermined an outcome for this review?

R: The Planning Department asked for this review to address some issues, but has not fully considered all possible outcomes. Planning likes the organic nature of the review process as there is no determined outcome. There are certain things the Board would like to see, but every review is different. We have to meet the review criteria first and foremost (which the ARC comes up with) and it can come down to dollars depending on how good the situation is.

Ms. Manske reminded the ARC members to give their contact information to the Planning Department by contacting Lauren or Andrea directly via telephone or email. As well they should keep in mind that emails received to boundaryfeedback@wrdsb.on.ca are accessible to the Board trustees.

Q: Do you post the presentations on the website?

R: Yes, the presentations will be posted on the website at the same time the minutes are posted which is usually one week behind due to the minutes being approved at the following meeting of the ARC. If we have maps, we print copies for the meetings as well we can email the presentation to the ARC members with their agendas if that is the preference.

7. Future Meeting Dates:

ARC Meetings:

ARC Meeting #2: Tuesday, October 25, 2011, 5:30-7 p.m. at Highland P.S. Library.

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

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

Public Meetings:

Public Meeting #1: Wednesday, October 5, 2011, 7-8:30 p.m. St. Andrew's P.S. Gym.

The Public Meeting Flyers will be sent home with every student in the review area via school; published in the Cambridge Times and the Record.

School Tours:

- Ms. Manske advised the ARC that Planning can set up a tour of the schools in the review area, to get perspective on each of the facilities; their challenges and opportunities.
- The tour can take place on a Saturday morning and the ARC members can carpool.
- The ARC can look at setting a date perhaps. at the next meeting.

Ms. Manske thanked everyone for coming out and the meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.

Future Meeting Dates:

Public Meetings:

Wednesday, October 5, 2011, from 7-8:30 pm @ St. Andrew's P.S. Gym

ARC Meetings:

Tuesday, October 25, 2011, 5:30-7 p.m. at Highland P.S. Library.

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

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