



NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING #4 West Galt Elementary Schools Pupil Accommodation Review (School Closure Review)

**Tuesday, June 5, 2012, 5:30pm to 7:00pm
St. Andrew's Public School Gymnasium
65 Victoria Avenue, Cambridge**

The West Galt Accommodation Review involves the following schools:
Blair Road P.S., Dickson P.S., Highland P.S., St. Andrew's P.S., Tait Street P.S.

PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC MEETING

The WRDSB is holding a public meeting to gather feedback and answer questions from parents and members of the community about the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) draft recommendations for boundary changes and/or school closures. It is important to note that no decisions have been made by the Board and no changes will happen before September 2013.

MEETING FORMAT

The WRDSB will hold an Open House on June 5 to allow the public to review the draft recommendations made by the ARC. Copies of the ARC's Draft Accommodation Report will also be available. Board staff can answer questions and discuss concerns to ensure that the public is informed about the process and the recommendations.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To close Dickson P.S.
2. To construct a new JK-6 facility
3. To modify the boundary for Blair Road P.S.
4. To modify the boundary and add Grade 6 to Highland P.S.
5. To modify the boundary for Tait Street P.S.
6. To offer only Grades 7 and 8 at St. Andrew's P.S.

For more information, please visit our website at www.wrdsb.ca/planning/accommodation-reviews/west-galt-elementary-schools or contact the Board's Planning Department at 519-570-0003 ext. 4419.

A copy of the ARC's Draft Accommodation Report will be available on the Board's website after Friday, June 1, 2012.

About Accommodation Reviews

Does the community decide what happens to the schools during the Accommodation Review process?

While community input is gathered during the Accommodation Review process, the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) makes recommendations to the Board. These recommendations are presented to the Board in an ARC report. Board administration then responds to the ARC's recommendations and presents its recommendations to the Board in another report. These recommendations may or may not fully support the ARC recommendations. The elected Board of Trustees makes the final decision.

If a recommendation is to close a school, who decides?

The responsibility is completely within the School Board's authority to make decisions about pupil accommodations, including school closures. However, we encourage our community members to engage in the process and communicate their ideas and concerns to the Board. This helps ensure that all concerns and ideas are heard and considered before any decisions are made.

Can the Ministry of Education overturn a school closure or boundary change decision?

No, the Ministry has no legislative mandate to overturn a decision by elected trustees to close a school or to change boundaries. If an individual feels that the accommodation review process was not compliant with the Board's accommodation review policy, then an Administrative Review of a School Board's accommodation review process may be requested. Any participant in the Accommodation Review process can sign an Administrative Review petition. A participant means ARC members, or people who attended a public meeting and who signed the attendance sheet. Administrative Review approval decisions are based on the requirements outlined in the Administrative Review document (available on the Board and Ministry website), including the Board's verification that the people who signed the petition participated in the process or are parents of students at the school.

Why do Boards focus on schools with low enrolments?

Much of a School Board's funding relies on the number of students enrolled at our schools. Since 1997, all publicly-funded School Boards administer the funding they receive from the province for their schools. The goal of the provincial funding formula is to make education funding more equitable across the province. Funding for classroom teachers, education assistants, textbooks and learning materials, classroom supplies, classroom computers, library and guidance services, preparation time (which funds specialist and student success teachers), and professional and para-professional supports is all allocated on a per pupil basis. Funding to heat, light, maintain and repair schools also depends, for the most part, on student numbers.

Are class sizes larger in bigger schools?

No, in 2004, the government introduced a maximum of 20 students per class for primary grades (kindergarten to grade 3), with the exception of full-day kindergarten. The average class size must be 25 students or less in the elementary grades (grades 4 to 8). Because these are Board-wide averages, individual classes may have more (or fewer) students.

What happens to school properties and buildings if the Board no longer needs them?

If a property or building is no longer needed, it is declared a surplus and the Board may choose to sell or lease it. We must first offer it for purchase or lease to public organizations, such as local School Boards, Provincial and Federal agencies, the municipality, local colleges, and universities at fair market value. If no public agency expresses their interest, the Board can use the open market to proceed with the sale/lease of the property. All future uses must be consistent with municipal bylaws.

