



**Baden Elementary Schools Boundary Study
Minutes of Public Meeting #1
May 14, 2014
Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School
7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.**

The first Public Meeting of the Baden Elementary Schools Boundary Study was held at Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School on Wednesday, May 14, 2014.

Approximately 35 members of the community were in attendance including Board staff, members of the Working Group, Kathleen Woodcock, Trustee for Waterloo-Wilmot, and Barry Fisher, Wilmot Ward 3 Councillor.

1. Welcome/Introductions

Lauren Manske, Senior Planner for the Waterloo Region District School Board welcomed those in attendance and gave the following introductions:

Board Planning Staff:

Dennis Cuomo, Manager of Planning
Nathan Hercanuck, Senior Planner
Lauren Manske, Senior Planner
Andrea Kean, Recording Secretary

Principals:

Beth Bodkin, Principal of Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School
Nancy Woodhall, Principal of Baden Public School
Andrea Michelutti, Principal of New Dundee Public School
Roger Boettcher, Principal of Sir Adam Beck Public School
Naya Markanastasakis, Vice Principal of Baden Public School

Superintendent of Education: Laura Hodgins

WRDSB Trustees:

Kathleen Woodcock, Trustee for Waterloo-Wilmot

Ms. Manske led the audience through tonight's presentation available online at:

<http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/boundary-studies/baden-boundary-study/>

Purpose of Meeting:

The purpose of the meeting is to gather [feedback](#) on proposed boundary changes and/or grade configuration changes that may affect all the schools in the study area.

Background/Current Situation

Study Area

Referring to slide 3 of the online presentation, Ms. Manske advised that the Baden Elementary Schools Boundary Study was officially launched by the Board on January 20, 2014 and includes the eastern portion of Wilmot Township, including three schools – Baden, New Dundee and Sir Adam Beck Public Schools.

Baden Public School is currently the only school in the study area to offer Grades 7 and 8. It is also the only school in the area offering a congregated Special Education class (Life Skills) and French Immersion.

Study Area Enrolment (Historic) *(slide 4 of the online presentation)*

Since 2006, this area has seen a 28% increase in enrolment (38% if you remove New Dundee Public School's population). Over the same period, there have been 575 new homes built.

Sir Adam Beck Public School opened in the 2010-2011 school year to relieve some of the enrolment pressure Baden Public School was experiencing at the time. Since then, we have continued to see higher than normal student yields out of the neighbourhood around Baden Public School. Enrolment has become a facility and site capacity issue, especially since the implementation of Full-Day Kindergarten in 2012 at Baden Public School has doubled the Kindergarten population on a daily basis.

While enrolment in the Baden area of the Township has been increasing, New Dundee Public School has been in decline at almost the same rate (-27%) as the growth in the whole study area.

Study Area Enrolment (Projected) *(slide 5 of the online presentation)*

Ms. Manske advised that the enrolment projections (on slide 5) suggest that the peak enrolment has not yet been reached in this area, but that after the peak, the expectation is that enrolment will level-off, and in some areas, decline.

Ms. Manske advised that the enrolment projections are estimates based on several assumptions and use the most current data available. The projections only factor in growth associated with units in approved plans of subdivision or those currently under review by the Township of Wilmot. Assumptions have been made with respect to the timing of the growth because ultimately it will be dependent on the housing market and the demographics of the people purchasing homes in the area.

Ms. Manske noted that the following are two key factors contributing to future enrolment change in the Township:

1. *New development is anticipated in the Township where we expect enrolment increases – (approx. 8000 new people by 2029). This growth is targeted for the Baden and New Hamburg areas of the Township.*
2. *Areas in the Township where no further development activity is planned, we expect enrolment to decrease in the coming years (e.g., rural areas and New Dundee)*

Ms. Manske advised that in both cases, further changes will need to be contemplated (beyond this study) – meaning that in the future, there could be further boundary changes and/or the need to consolidate schools so that students in declining areas are offered the same robust programming as those in the growth areas.

Ms. Manske advised that by carving off areas where future development is planned in the Township, from a school boundary, will provide the Board the opportunity to develop projections and assign phases of development to whichever school has space to accommodate students (which may not be the closest school). These carved-off areas are referred to as ‘*development areas*’.

2. Boundary Study Process (slide 6 of the online presentation)

Boundary Study Process

Ms. Manske advised that every year the Board’s Planning Department prepares a work plan that prioritizes which boundary studies and/or accommodation reviews are to be undertaken over the upcoming school year. She advised that while the 2013-2014 work plan did not identify a boundary study for Baden, it was listed as a school to monitor. Once the enrolment situation at Baden Public School became known (in the fall of 2013), it became apparent that status quo was no longer a viable option.

In November 2013, Planning staff attended school council meetings at Baden, Sir Adam Beck, and New Dundee Public Schools to discuss the situation at Baden Public School and the potential to commence a boundary study. This was followed by a Public Meeting held on January 9, 2014 at Sir Adam Beck Public School.

Following the January 9, 2014 Public Meeting, a [report](#) was brought to the Board of Trustees on January 20, 2014 and staff was instructed to officially launch the Baden Elementary Schools Boundary Study.

Ms. Manske advised that a boundary study is a public process, ensuring that a decision made by the Board regarding attendance boundaries has the involvement of an informed local community.

This study involves a Working Group, made up of up to 2 parent representatives from each school, the school Principals and Planning Staff, a representative from the Township of

Wilmot and the area Superintendent of Education and also includes the Principal of Waterloo-Oxford DSS due to the close proximity of the high school.

The role of the Working Group is to:

- Represent the interests of the students in the study area
- Confirm the actual issues identified in the area (many of these were identified at the Public Meeting on January 9th)
- Develop objectives for the study
- Developing scenarios
- Develop recommendations

Generally, two Public Meetings are held throughout the boundary study process to inform the broader community and to solicit [feedback](#) on the scenarios under consideration by the Working Group with the feedback used to refine the scenarios, or to make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees, whom ultimately make the final decision.

Ms. Manske noted that it is unlikely that we can have a recommendation before the Board of Trustees before the fall of 2014; therefore, **there will be no changes proposed for the upcoming 2014-2015 school year.**

3. **Study Goals & Objectives**

Ms. Manske noted that the 'Goals' explain what the Working Group intends to achieve through the boundary study process.

Study Goals (*slides 7 and 8 of the online presentation*)

The Working Group has identified the following five Study Goals:

- **To address the capacity issues at the study area schools**
 - This can be achieved through boundary changes and/or additions
- **To develop a strategy that is long-term (approximately 10 years), taking into consideration current and future population density and demographics.**
 - May include need for future studies (e.g. accommodation review, new school sites)
 - Will be based on what we know – Ms. Manske pointed out that we don't have all information today that we may have in the coming months, years, etc. This community will continue to see changes and **the outcome of this boundary study is primarily intended to address the current overcrowding situation at Baden.** The Working Group's report may also contemplate some mid and long-term strategies for the study area schools.
- **To minimize transitions for students where changes are proposed through grandfathering/phasing**
 - The Board is mindful of student transitions and attempts to reduce this as much as possible, especially multiple school changes over a short time period.
- **To strengthen the Board's business case for additional capacity funding for current students and as residential development plans progress in the Township of Wilmot**

- Ms. Manske noted that one of the challenges currently faced by school board planners is the way in which funding is allocated to boards for new schools and additions. Boards are required to submit business cases to the Ministry of Education, and funding is provided annually based on Provincial priorities. That means that our Board is competing with all other boards across the province for funding, and all of the schools within our Board are also competing to be a top priority within the Board itself. When reviewing our business cases, the Ministry does not look at one school in isolation; they look at the situation at all surrounding schools. This means that if there is capacity available at a school in relatively close proximity, the expectation of the Ministry is that we utilize that capacity fully before any additional capacity would be granted. Ms. Manske advised that we need to be mindful of this as we develop our recommendations.
- **To provide equitable learning opportunities for students and staff by moving towards the following criteria (from [Board Policy 3002 – Elementary School Size and Configuration](#)):**
 - *JK-6 facilities between 350 and 400 students (approx. 2 classes per grade)*
 - *JK-8 facilities between 500 and 650 students (approx. 2 classes per grade)*
 - *Minimizing the potential for schools with enrolments over 650 students*

Study Objectives *(slide 9 of the online presentation)*

Ms. Manske advised that the 'Objectives' are specific and measurable statements of the 'Goals' and provide the criteria to evaluate the scenarios. The draft objectives are not weighted in any way; therefore the order of the objectives is unimportant.

Study Objectives

- **To reduce enrolment at Baden Public School beginning in the 2015/16 school year.**
- **To increase the number of students housed in permanent capacity within the study area in a cost-effective way, recognizing that there can be no additional capacity built prior to the 2017-2018 school year.**
 - This is the timeframe we are working with due to the current Ministry of Education funding cycle.

4. Scenarios

Ms. Manske noted that the Working Group had developed 7 Scenarios to date and decided to bring two Scenarios tonight to share and gather feedback. She advised that the options being explored are looking to accommodate what we know today with respect to enrolment and noted that this could change once we know more about the future development plans in the Township. These two scenarios are the ones the Working Group felt best met the [goals and objectives of the study](#).

Scenario 2 (slides 11-13 of the online presentation)

Ms. Manske advised that the only major change in Scenario 2 from the current situation is that Sir Adam Beck Public School would add Grades 7 and 8 to become a JK-8 school with its JK-6 boundary becoming its Grade 7-8 boundary. Sir Adam Beck Public School students would no longer attend Baden Public School for Grades 7 and 8.

Proposed timing for changes as follows:

2015-2016

- Grade 7 classes added to Sir Adam Beck Public School and it becomes JK-7
- All Grade 8 students in study area continue to attend Baden Public School

2016-2017

- Grade 8 classes added to Sir Adam Beck Public School and it becomes JK-8

Scenario 2 Projections (slide 11 of the online presentation)

The removal of Sir Adam Beck Public School Grade 7 and 8s from Baden Public School reduces the enrolment at Baden Public School by approximately 100 students by 2017 from the status quo projections.

There are enough students at both Baden Public School and Sir Adam Beck Public School in this scenario to support a Grade 7 and 8 program at both schools. The 7-8 enrolment in 2015 at Sir Adam Beck Public School is low because the school would operate as JK-7 only. Grade 8 would be added the following year.

Scenario 2 Addition Concept (slide 12 of the online presentation)

Enrolment projections suggest that a 3 classroom addition (69 pupil places of capacity) at Sir Adam Beck Public School would be sufficient to accommodate the increase in population there as a result of the additional grades.

Any permanent addition would require all 3 of the following conditions be met:

1. *Board approval of this change/scenario*
2. *Board approval/ranking of this addition as a system-wide priority*
3. *Ministry of Education approval and capital funding*

Ms. Manske cautioned that there is no guarantee that the projections will create a strong enough business case to receive funding from the Ministry and because an addition would require that those three conditions are met, we are advising that the first possible date that an addition could be ready, would be for the 2017-2018 school year. (due to the current Ministry of Education funding cycle)

Because Sir Adam Beck Public School does not have rooms in the school for a typical JK-8 facility, the addition may be able to house these special rooms, including Science/Technology, Music (instrumental or vocal) and Art. In the meantime, these classes would need to be accommodated in another way and while we have no definitive answers on this today, the Working Group has explored ***a few possibilities of how these classes could be accommodated:***

- Internal classroom retrofits
- Waterloo-Oxford DSS facilities
- Portable classrooms appropriately equipped

Scenario 2 Portable Requirements (slide 13 of the online presentation)

Ms. Manske noted that should an addition have to wait beyond 2017, projections suggest that Sir Adam Beck Public School should not require more than 3 portables to accommodate the growth. She advised that it is important to note that although this scenario is proposing an addition at Sir Adam Beck Public School, it does not propose an addition at Baden Public School and under this scenario Baden Public School would still require approximately 6 portables to get through the peak enrolment period.

Reasons no addition proposed for Baden Public School:

- Enrolment projections and demographics suggest that enrolment will begin to decline at Baden Public School, reducing the need for additional capacity.
- The school sits on a small site (5.37 acres) for the number of students it accommodates, so increasing the permanent building footprint would mean reducing the usable space on the site. Additional classrooms would also mean additional parking spaces, which would take up play space at the school.
- Any addition there would likely impact the enrolment/capacity threshold needed for any future accommodation in the Township.

Scenario 3 (slides 14-16 of the online presentation)

Ms. Manske advised that the major change in Scenario 3 from the current situation is similar to Scenario 2 - Sir Adam Beck Public School would add Grades 7 and 8 to become a JK-8 school. The difference between the scenarios is that in Scenario 3, New Dundee Public School would be a feeder school to Sir Adam Beck Public School for Grade 7 and 8 and students in the current Sir Adam Beck Public School and New Dundee Public School boundaries would attend Sir Adam Beck Public School instead of Baden Public School for Grades 7 and 8.

Proposed timing for changes as follows:

2015-2016

- Grade 7 classes added and Sir Adam Beck Public School becomes JK-7 (New Dundee Public School Grade 7 students attend Sir Adam Beck Public School).
- All Grade 8 students in study area continue to attend Baden Public School

2016-2017

- Grade 8 classes added and Sir Adam Beck Public School becomes JK-8 and all Grade 7-8 students within the Sir Adam Beck Public School Grade 7-8 boundary attend Sir Adam Beck Public School; includes New Dundee Public School Grade 7 and 8 students.

Future Development Areas have also been identified and have been removed from the boundaries of any of the study area schools.

Scenario 3 Projections (slide 15 of the online presentation)

By removing the Sir Adam Beck Public School and New Dundee Grade 7 and 8s from Baden Public School, enrolment at Baden is reduced by approximately 160 students by 2017 from the Status Quo projection, resulting in enrolment at Baden Public School being less than it is today.

Similar to Scenario 2, there are enough students in Scenario 3 at both Baden Public School and Sir Adam Beck Public School to support a Grade 7 and 8 program at both schools.

Scenario 3 Addition Concept (slide 16 of the online presentation)

Enrolment projections suggest that a 4 classroom addition (92 pupil places of capacity) at Sir Adam Beck Public School would be sufficient to accommodate the increase in population there as a result of the additional grades.

This addition would require the same approvals as Scenario 2, and the first possible date for it to be ready because of the current funding cycle is the 2017-2018 school year.

In the meantime, these classes would need to be accommodated and the same options are being explored here as in Scenario 2, but taking into account additional students at that grade level.

Scenario 3 Portable Requirements (slide 17 of the online presentation)

This scenario would reduce the number of portables required at Baden Public School from 6 to 4 in 2017 as compared to Scenario 2.

Even with a 4 classroom addition, Sir Adam Beck Public School would likely require a portable in the 2017-2018 school year; but likely needed for the short-term only.

5. Next Steps (slide 18 of the online presentation)

- Working Group reviews public meeting comments
- Working Group refines scenarios based on public feedback
- A minimum of 1 additional Public Meeting
- Working Group to develop recommendations
- Staff bring recommendations to the Board of Trustees
- Trustees vote on recommendations

Ms. Manske noted that public meeting #2 is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, June 18, 2014 at Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School and advised that the date may change if feedback received from the community dictates that there is a lot of additional work to be done.

Ms. Manske advised that the intention is to have a report and recommendations presented to the Board of Trustees this fall and noted that the Board will not be meeting in October due to the upcoming Trustee election in that month, meaning the report will have to be submitted to the Board in early September or November 2014 for a final decision.

Website (*slide 19 of the online presentation*)

Ms. Manske shared the Board's contact and website information and advised that the Working Group information is available there including the Scenario 2 and 3 display boards from tonight's meeting. She asked for feedback and comments on the scenarios and shared the email address for the boundary study - boundaryfeedback@wrdsb.on.ca

6. Questions/Other

Mr. Hercanuck did a review of the most frequently asked questions and answers ([available here](#)) and opened the floor to questions/comments from 7:40 – 8:00 pm:

Q: Will Baden Public School be the only school offering the French Immersion program?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that while Baden Public School is currently the only school to offer the [French Immersion program](#), there is the possibility for the other schools to offer it as well, as the program is based on parent interest (through the [registration process](#)) from within the homeschool boundary and starts at the Grade 1 level.

Q: Township of Wilmot Councillor Barry Fisher asked if the Working Group gave any consideration to adding the Grade 7-8 program to New Dundee Public School instead of Sir Adam Beck Public School and bussing students there; given New Dundee Public School's declining enrolment.

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that New Dundee Public School typically has less than 2 classes per grade of 7-8s and noted that like Sir Adam Beck Public School, the older New Dundee Public School facility does not have specialized Grade 7-8 classrooms and would not be the most efficient use of resources to build those rooms there and bus students from Sir Adam Beck Public School there as well.

Q: How would Sir Adam Beck Public School be able to utilize specialized classrooms for Grades 7-8 at Waterloo-Oxford DSS; how would that work?

- R: Beth Bodkin, Principal of Waterloo-Oxford DSS responded that right now the details of how that would work have not been determined but noted that Waterloo-Oxford DSS and Sir Adam Beck Public School currently do some sharing of facilities (playing fields). She advised that the sharing of classrooms would have to be done through analyzing the scheduling of blocks of time. She noted that Waterloo-Oxford DSS Music program staff is especially excited about the possibility of sharing the Music infrastructure with the Sir Adam Beck Public School students and instilling an interest in the Music program with students before they enter high school. The administration and staff at Waterloo-Oxford DSS are willing to work to make the sharing of facilities available during the transition period and until specialized Grade 7-8 classrooms can be made available at Sir Adam Beck Public School.
- R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that because Waterloo-Oxford DSS is so close to Sir Adam Beck Public School, the opportunity exists that the high school can help out in the short-term and that internal retrofits to Sir Adam Beck Public School and/or use of portables may also be considered.
- Q: What sorts of grandfathering options will be offered for siblings?
- R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that to reduce the transitions for students all students that start at Baden Public School for Grade 7 in 2014 will finish out there for Grade 8 as well. The Grade 7-8 program will be grown at Sir Adam Beck Public School, as the 2014 Grade 6s will remain at Sir Adam Beck Public School for Grade 7 in 2015 and Grade 8 in 2016.
- R: Ms. Manske responded that in 2015 Sir Adam Beck Public School families could have a child in Grade 7 at Sir Adam Beck Public School and a child in Grade 8 at Baden Public School. If [Scenario 3](#) is chosen this could be the case for New Dundee Public School families as well. Grandfathering for families has not been contemplated at this point.
- Q: Will Waterloo-Oxford DSS's enrolment impact its ability to share its facility with Grade 7-8 students from Sir Adam Beck Public School given the Township's boom in enrolment at the elementary level – has that enrolment boom shown up at the high school level?
- R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that the Activa subdivision in Baden is the exception in enrolment for the Township and noted that older areas have levelled off or are in decline, and is the case for other parts of Waterloo-Oxford DSS's attendance boundary, which includes a portion from a neighbouring school board as well. He also advised that the Ministry of Education's [34 credit threshold](#) (effective September 2013) has reduced the number of Grade 12 students returning for a 5th year, which has further reduced secondary school enrolment across the board.

- R: Principal Bodkin responded that any accommodation of the Grade 7-8 specialized classes would be a short-term solution for approximately 2 years until the specialized classrooms can be constructed at Sir Adam Beck Public School and enrolment at Waterloo-Oxford DSS is at a level where it would be able to provide assistance in the short-term.
- R: Mr. Hercanuck added that we would not be looking at Waterloo-Oxford DSS to carry the full load of the 7-8 program, just use of specialized classrooms for Art, Music, Science and Tech classes or a portion thereof.
- Q: In theory it sounds great that the 7-8s could use spaces at Waterloo-Oxford DSS – but how would that work; would there be supervision for students when go from one school to the other; can we count on the blocks of time being available for classrooms at Waterloo-Oxford DSS and what about instruction time loss when moving between schools?
- R: Superintendent of Education, Laura Hodgins, responded that these are all great questions that unfortunately cannot be answered until a preferred Scenario has been chosen and a recommendation is approved by the Board of Trustees; then a transition committee, consisting of school administration, teaching staff and parents, will be put in place to discuss the transition issues and come up with solutions prior to implementation. First, we have to determine if we have developed the right solution (Scenario) and we are requesting and welcome your feedback on that to see if we have landed on the right solution to address the enrolment issues at Baden Public School or if we have more work to do.
- Q: Will there also be sharing of staff at Waterloo-Oxford DSS in conjunction with the classrooms?
- R: Superintendent Hodgins responded that there would not be sharing of staff.
- Q: So the solution will either be Scenario 2 or Scenario 3? Were there other scenarios developed and can they still be considered?
- R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that the Working Grouping had developed 7 scenarios and evaluated the scenarios against the [Goals and Objectives](#) and determined that [Scenario 2](#) and [Scenario 3](#) best meet those requirements. The other scenarios have been put aside but are available [online](#) in the minutes and presentations of the Working Group meetings.

Ms. Manske thanked everyone for coming out, and asked those in attendance to provide their feedback on the comment sheets provided or to send an [email](#). The contact numbers and Board website information were shared. The formal presentation concluded and Ms. Manske invited those in attendance to take a look at the display boards outlining the scenarios and advised that Planning staff would be available to answer questions one-on-one.

Mr. Cuomo, Mr. Hercanuck, Ms. Manske, Superintendent Hodgins and Principals Bodkin, Boettcher, Michelutti and Woodhall were available to answer questions one-on-one until 8:30 p.m.

Contact Information:

Website: <http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/boundary-studies/baden-boundary-study/>

Email: boundaryfeedback@wrdsb.on.ca *(please indicate Baden in the subject line)*

Phone: 519-570-0003 ext. 4419

Fax: 519-570-2172

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You may register as a delegation by calling Jayne Herring, Manager of Corporate Services, at 519-570-0003, ext. 4336 during regular business hours. You should register by noon on the Thursday prior to the meeting.