



WEST WATERLOO ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS BOUNDARY STUDY

Minutes of Working Group Meeting #3

Tuesday, March 24, 2015

4:45 – 6:15 PM

Laurelwood Public School, Library

The third Working Group meeting of the West Waterloo Elementary Schools Boundary Study, involving Abraham Erb, Cedarbrae, Centennial, Edna Staebler, Laurelwood, and Mary Johnston Public Schools and the new West Waterloo (Vista Hills) elementary school, was held at Laurelwood Public School on Tuesday, March 24, 2015.

Attendees:

H. Tinnes, Principal, Mary Johnston PS, Don Oberle, Principal, New West Waterloo School, Brad Hughes, Vice Principal, Abraham Erb PS and Centennial PS, Jeff Parliament, Principal, Edna Staebler PS, T. Stroud, Principal, Abraham Erb PS, Mark McMath, Principal, Cedarbrae PS, Holly Corman, Vice Principal, Laurelwood PS, Ryan Barnett-Cowan, Parent Representative, Laurelwood PS, Mairaj Naveed, Alternating Parent Representative, Cedarbrae PS, Deb Bergey, Parent Representative, Abraham Erb PS, Shelly Reed, Parent Representative, Edna Staebler PS, Marny St. Pierre, Parent Representative, Edna Staebler PS, Tracey Nairn, Parent Representative, Centennial PS, Vivian F., Parent Representative, Centennial PS, Dennis Cuomo, Manager of Planning, Andrea Kean, Recording Secretary and Lauren Agar, Senior Planner.

Regrets:

Betti Adams, Principal, Centennial PS, Liz Arbuckle, Principal, Laurelwood PS, Jan Hansen, Vice Principal, Edna Staebler PS, C. Lovegrove, Parent Representative, Laurelwood PS, G. Sikiladha, Alternating Parent Representative, Abraham Erb PS, Nathan Hercanuck, Senior Planner, Elaine Ranney, Superintendent of Education.

1. Welcome/Introductions

Lauren Agar, Senior Planner, welcomed members of the Working Group at 4:50 PM.

Mrs. Agar led the group through the presentation, available online at

<http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/boundary-studies/west-waterloo-elementary-schools-boundary-study/>

2. Draft Minutes Review/Approval

Mrs. Agar asked if there were any errors or omissions in the Minutes from Working Group Meeting #2 (February 19, 2015); no errors or omissions were reported. The minutes were approved without change.

Mrs. Agar advised that the minutes will be posted on the Board's website at:

<http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/boundary-studies/west-waterloo-elementary-schools-boundary-study/>

3. Finalize Goals/Objectives

Goals: (slide 3 of the online presentation)

Ms. Agar asked the Working Group if they would like to make any modifications to the Goals or if they were okay with the Goals as they stand.

The Working Group noted their agreement with the Goals.

Objectives: (slide 4 of the online presentation)

Ms. Agar asked the Working Group if they would like to make any modifications to the Objectives or if they were okay with the Objectives as they stand.

Mrs. Agar noted that the January 2015 revised [Board Policy 3002 – Elementary School Size and Configuration](#) is now available on the Board’s website.

Q: Is a portapak considered permanent accommodation?

R: Mrs. Agar responded that neither the Board nor the Ministry considers a portapak as permanent construction, but it is considered more permanent than a portable. She noted that Laurelwood PS’s permanent Capacity on slide 24 does not include the portapak.

Q: Can the Objective “*To increase the number of students within walking distance to their assigned school (<1.6km)*” be modified to include wording on safety, to address students crossing at unsignalized stops (i.e., roundabouts).

The Working Group discussed including safety wording and requested that the Objective be modified to add “*within **safe walking route** (e.g., signalized intersections or to avoid roundabouts)*”.

Mrs. Agar advised that she would make the requested revision.

Mrs. Agar advised that while we do not have the authority to add a crossing guard (City responsibility) we can advocate for one.

The Working Group did not suggest any further changes to the Objectives.

Mrs. Agar advised the Group to let her know if they would like to make any further modifications to the objectives.

4. Scenario Discussion (slides 5-37 of the online presentation)

Mrs. Agar noted that Slide 5 outlines the study area broken down into projection areas and noted the following:

- Each colour on the *projection area map* represents the current boundaries of study area schools and are broken down into smaller *projection areas* with a letter assigned to each as follows:
 - Abraham Erb PS – (blue) *areas* A, B, C and D
 - Cedarbrae PS:
 - Vista Hills Subdivision portion only – (yellow) *areas* E and L
 - Remainder - (salmon) *area* J
 - Centennial PS – (grey) *area* K (also Gr. 7-8s from *areas* E, L, O, R, U and V)
 - Edna Staebler PS – (purple) *areas* F, M, N Q, P, S and T
 - Laurelwood PS – (green) *areas* G, H and I (also Gr. 7-8s from *areas* A, B, C and D)
 - Mary Johnston PS – (cream) *areas* O, R, U and V
- Each *projection area* will have corresponding student enrolment numbers for JK-6 and 7-8 students (see slide 6).
- *Projection areas* are used as building blocks for developing Scenarios. (Projection areas can be pieced together into boundary options).
- *Projection areas* can be subdivided further (*best to make those revisions earlier in the process*).
- Enrolment numbers are current year enrolments and include all regular track and French Immersion students attending the school in the boundary they reside; does not include students living in the projection area that may be attending another school.

Scenario Development (slide 7 of the online presentation)

Mrs. Agar asked the Working Group to break out into small groups (by school) and handed out information packages which included a breakdown of projected enrolment, capacity, site size for the school, boundary options maps for JK-6 boundary and 7-8 boundary and asked the members to:

- Rank the boundary options (slides 8-31) provided in terms how well they:
 - Meet the goals and objectives of the study (walkability and school size targets)
 - Address the issues identified
- Think about the questions:
 - What do you like or don't like about the option?
 - Are there any capital requirements need to implement this boundary? (e.g., to add 7-8 program to Abraham Erb PS would require specialized spaces)
 - How might this option impact surrounding schools?
 - How well do the JK-6 and 7-8 boundaries work together?

The small groups deliberated on the boundary options provided for approximately 30 minutes.

Mrs. Agar advised that the maps will be sent out to the Working Group members so they can continue to consider the boundary options as we go forward.

Mrs. Agar will provide additional Options and modifications requested during the small groups as well.

Mrs. Agar advised that she has put together the following three possible Scenarios piecing together some of the Options provided this evening:

Scenario 1 (slides 32-33 of the online presentation)

Scenario 1 boundary maps (JK-6 and 7-8) located on slide 32

Scenario 1 enrolment projections located on slide 33

Mrs. Agar noted that Scenario 1 contains the following boundary options for each school:

- Abraham Erb PS: (remaining JK-6) with JK-6 Option 1
- Edna Staebler PS: (remaining JK-8) with JK-6 Option 5 and 7-8 Option 5
- Laurelwood PS: (remaining JK-8) with JK-6 Option 1 and 7-8 Option 1
- Mary Johnston PS: Status Quo
- New West Waterloo: (JK-8) with JK-6 Option 1 and 7-8 Option 7

Scenario 1 Discussion:

Mrs. Agar noted that:

- Abraham Erb PS while still a little over capacity does meet the preferred enrolment size for a JK-6 school.
- Edna Staebler PS's population is reduced
- Laurelwood PS still a good size for a JK-8 (under 700); would require an addition.
- Mary Johnston PS - remains Status Quo because current boundary meets the study objectives.
- New West Waterloo PS – over the longer term enrolment comes closer to capacity. It will be a smaller organization over the first few years as the community develops.

C: Principal Tinnes commented that Trustees will be looking at the 2024 numbers and suggested that is where the Working Group should also focus.

R: Mrs. Agar commented that unfortunately the 2024 numbers are not exact but rather a best guess based on past knowledge and trends. By 2024 we are projecting for a large share of children that have not yet been born. But Principal Tinnes is correct that 2024 numbers (long-term thinking) does need to be of focus.

Q: Mrs. Agar asked if any of the Options picked were considered a front runner for the schools involved during the small groups exercise.

R: Principal Stroud responded that for Abraham Erb PS group liked Option 2 for 7-8 because the numbers would allow for a good 7-8 program that would increase the number of students within walking distance and minimize impact on surrounding schools.

R: Principal Parliament responded that Option 5 for JK-6 and 7-8 would not be one of the top choices for Edna Staebler PS because at 800 students, the enrolment would still be too large.

R: Vice Principal Corman responded that Option 1 for JK-6 and 7-8 were near the top as choices for Laurelwood PS because they did not have quite as much impact on the school as some of the other options. She noted that part of the discussion for this scenario would be:

- where would the 7-8 students go;
- will they be centralized or spread out amongst the other schools
- will resulting numbers be large enough to offer a viable 7-8 program.
- How will French Immersion (FI) program numbers be affected?

R: Mrs. Agar noted that at least 100 students would be required for a strong 7-8 program (at least 2 classes per grade at the 7-8 level as per Board Policy 3002); however, for Laurelwood PS, more than 100 would better due to the impact of the FI program.

Q: How many classes of regular and FI track 7-8 students does Laurelwood PS currently have.

R: Vice Principal Corman responded that there are 2 classes of each track.

C: Mrs. Agar noted that by September 2017 Abraham Erb PS (currently Gr 1-4 FI) will have FI students graduating into the 7-8 program at Laurelwood PS.

Q: Would the FI program at Abraham Erb PS expand to Grades 7-8; if we were to add the 7-8 program at Abraham Erb PS?

R: Mrs. Agar responded that ultimately that would come down to whether we did add Grades 7-8 at Abraham Erb PS. If not, we have to look at sending them to Laurelwood PS (or wherever is deemed suitable at the time). If we pick an Option where Abraham Erb PS has Grade 7-8, we would have to look at how viable it would be to keep the FI 7-8's at the school (depending on attrition rates at both schools) or would we have to congregate at one location. That would be something to be discussed with Learning Services staff and be dealt with as an implementation piece.

Mrs. Agar noted that Scenario 1 would have Abraham Erb PS feeding to the New West Waterloo (Vista Hills) school for grades 7-8 rather than feeding to Laurelwood PS.

Scenario 2 (slides 34-35 of the online presentation)

Scenario 2 boundary maps (JK-6 and 7-8) located on slide 34

Scenario 2 enrolment projections located on slide 35

Mrs. Agar noted that Scenario 2 contains the following boundary options:

- Abraham Erb PS: becomes JK-8 with JK-6 Option 1 and 7-8 Option 1
- Edna Staebler PS: JK-8 with JK-6 Option 3 and 7-8 Option 3
- Laurelwood PS: JK-8 with JK-6 Option 1 and 7-8 Option 1
- Mary Johnston PS: Status Quo
- New West Waterloo: JK-8 with JK-6 Option 3 and 7-8 Option 3 (no feeder schools)

Scenario 2 Discussion:

Mrs. Agar noted that the numbers aren't too bad for Abraham Erb PS as a JK-8 school. There will be some decline below the ideal numbers.

C: Principal Stroud noted that Option 2 is preferred for Abraham Erb PS over Option 1 because it would add in projection area F which would boost the numbers for Abraham Erb PS.

R: Mrs. Agar advised that Option 2 could be considered as well.

C: Principal Parliament noted that the Edna Staebler PS group would like to see a revision to the Options for Edna Staebler PS to remove everything north of Columbia St. from the boundary to bring numbers down to 710.

C: This Scenario would see the New West Waterloo school's enrolment at 780 by 2024. The revision to add projection area F to Abraham Erb PS would help reduce the numbers at the new school.

Q: Are the projection areas being taken out of Edna Staebler PS being directed to the new school.

R: Yes. Projection areas F and M are currently attending Edna Staebler PS and under Scenario 2 would be directed to the New West Waterloo (Vista Hills) school.

Mrs. Agar noted that she would put together a new Scenario to have projection areas E, L, P, N and M attend the New school and have projection areas A, C, D and F attend Abraham Erb PS.

Q: Which school would see the greatest impact under Scenario 2?

R: Laurelwood PS and Edna Staebler PS.

Scenario 3 (slides 36-37 of the online presentation)

Scenario 3 boundary maps (JK-6 and 7-8) located on slide 36

Scenario 3 enrolment projections located on slide 37

Mrs. Agar noted that Scenario 3 contains the following boundary options:

- Abraham Erb PS: becomes JK-8 with JK-6 Option 1 and 7-8 Option 4
- Edna Staebler PS: becomes JK-6 with JK-6 Option 5 and 7-8 Option 6 (no 7-8)
- Laurelwood PS: becomes JK-6 with JK-6 Option 1 and 7-8 Option 5 (no 7-8)
- Mary Johnston PS: Status Quo
- New West Waterloo: JK-8 with JK-6 Option 5 and 7-8 Option 5

Scenario 3 Discussion:

- Scenario 3 would consolidate the 7-8 program into 3 locations:
 - New West Waterloo (Vista Hills) school (feed from Edna Staebler PS)
 - Abraham Erb PS (feed from Laurelwood PS)
 - Centennial PS (feed from Mary Johnston PS students only)
- Laurelwood PS would feed to Abraham Erb PS for 7-8 (reverse of today) - Reason being - If we have to build an addition would only build at one location.
 - Whether Abraham Erb PS the most ideal location for the addition would be up for debate.
- New West Waterloo (Vista Hills) school boundary would only take in projection area F from Edna Staebler PS's JK-6 boundary and ultimately all of the 7-8 students from Edna Staebler PS's boundary would now attend the new school for 7-8.

C: This would result in an increased need for bussing.

R: Mrs. Agar responded that Scenario 3 would not meet the increase in walkability objective in any way. It does not support community schools. She noted that in terms of the objectives Scenario 3 is not a good option. While the numbers aren't too bad at Abraham Erb PS for a JK-8, we would be essentially shifting the overcrowding issue from Edna Staebler PS to the new school and leaving Edna Staebler PS under capacity.

Mrs. Agar asked for feedback from the small group exercise. She asked for their top options to be used in developing new scenarios for the next meeting. She also asked the groups to hand in their worksheets.

C: Principal Tinnes noted that it would be interesting to see a Scenario for everyone's top option and how that would affect the other schools in the study area.

R: Mrs. Agar responded that she would put that together.

Small Group's feedback received as follows:

New West Waterloo (Vista Hills) school group:

Reviewed slides 8 – 13 of the online presentation which includes school information and possible boundary considerations (JK-6 and 7-8) for the New West Waterloo (Vista Hills) school as follows:

- Current enrolment includes students attending holding schools
- JK-6 boundary options 1 - 5 (see slides 9 and 10)
- 7-8 boundary options 1 - 8 (see slides 11 and 12)
- Corresponding enrolment projections for all options (see slide 13) for 2016-2024.

The New West Waterloo (Vista Hills) school group provided the following feedback on the boundary options:

- Liked Scenario 2 with Option 3 with tweaking (to projection areas N and F) to coincide with Edna Staebler PS's requested modification, would work well for the new school.
- Everything but an enrolment of 905 looked good.

Abraham Erb Public School group:

Reviewed slides 14 - 17 of the online presentation which includes school information and possible boundary considerations (JK-6 and 7-8) for Abraham Erb Public School as follows:

- JK-6 boundary options: Status Quo, Options 1 - 3 (see slide 15)
- 7-8 boundary options 1 - 4 (see slide 16)
- Corresponding enrolment projections for all options (see slide 17) for 2016-2024.

The Abraham Erb Public School group provided the following feedback on the boundary options:

- Option 2 for JK-6 and 7-8 is our top option because:
 - It maximized capacity and minimized impact on Laurelwood PS versus Option 4.
 - It also maximizes the number of students within walking distance to Abraham Erb PS
 - Would allow a sufficient number of 7-8 students to offer a strong program while still have a manageable number of 7-8s for both schools.

Edna Staebler Public School group:

Reviewed slides 18 – 23 of the online presentation which includes school information and possible boundary considerations (JK-6 and 7-8) Edna Staebler Public School as follows:

- JK-6 boundary options: Status Quo, Options 1 - 5 (see slides 19-20)
- 7-8 boundary options: Status Quo, Options 1 - 6 (see slides 21-22)
 - Note Option 6 (removes Grades 7-8)
- Corresponding enrolment projections for all options (see slide 23) for 2016-2024.

The Edna Staebler Public School group provided the following feedback on the boundary options:

- Top Option (new) would be to remain JK-8 and remove all areas north of Columbia St.
- A 2nd Option would be to remove the Erbsville Road Triangle area (projection area T), which would alleviate the concern with those students having to cross Columbia Street.
- Status Quo not an option
- Do not like Option 6 – prefer to remain JK-8

Mrs. Agar noted that she had added projection area T back to Mary Johnston PS in Option 1 JK-6 (see slides 30 and 31) which would result in enrolment going from 435 today to 575 in 2016 in a school with permanent capacity for 447.

Laurelwood Public School group:

Reviewed slides 24 – 28 of the online presentation which includes school information and possible boundary considerations (JK-6 and 7-8) Laurelwood Public School as follows:

- JK-6 boundary options: Status Quo, Options 1 - 2 (see slide 25)
- 7-8 boundary options: Status Quo, Options 1 - 5 (see slides 26-27)
 - Note Option 5 (removes Grades 7-8)
- Corresponding enrolment projections for all options (see slide 28) for 2016-2024.

The Laurelwood Public School group provided the following feedback on the boundary options:

- Preferred Option 1 for JK-6
- Preferred Option 3 for 7-8 to keep the 7-8 program stable. If numbers go lower than 100 the program will suffer.

Q: Is there a magic number of students that keeps a 7-8 program viable?

R: Mrs. Agar responded that having fewer than 100 students would make it difficult to offer rotary and specialized teachers. Numbers would need to be higher when FI program is included. This is consistent with the school size criteria outlined in Board Policy 3002 indicating that the preference is to have at least 2 classes per grade at the 7-8 level.

Mary Johnston Public School group:

Reviewed slides 29 – 31 of the online presentation which includes school information and possible boundary considerations (JK-6) Mary Johnston Public School as follows:

- JK-6 boundary options: Status Quo and Options 1 - (see slide 30)
- Corresponding enrolment projections for all options (see slide 31) for 2016-2024.

The Mary Johnston Public School group provided the following feedback on the boundary options:

- Status Quo is the only option. If we were to add the Erbsville Road Triangle it would mean that we would need 4 or 5 more portables (currently have 2 portables) to accommodate that increase enrolment. Or would have to look at the cost of an addition.

Mrs. Agar noted that Mary Johnston PS would likely require a second gym and additional washrooms to accommodate that number of students.

5. Public Meeting #1

Mrs. Agar advised that **Public Meeting #1 will be held on April 23, 2014 at Abraham Erb PS** and noted that at the first public will include:

- Formal Presentation outlining:
 - the Boundary Study process
 - initial Scenario concepts
- Question and Answer Period

She advised that the Working Group members are welcome and encouraged to attend but are not required to do so. Minutes will be taken and comment sheets received will be shared with the Working Group.

Mrs. Agar advised that she would get the public meeting notice ready and asked the members of the Working Group to get the word out to their school communities.

6. Next Working Group Meeting (#4)

The Working Group agreed to meet on Thursday, April 9, 2015 from 4:45-6:15 PM at Edna Staebler PS.

7. Roundtable

Q: Principal McMath noted that he had already had some questions about it not making sense to have students transfer to Cedarbrae PS in 2015/16 when they will only be there for a year and asked if that would be a discussion for the Working Group.

R: Mrs. Agar responded that those types of requests might be best decided through the Principal to Principal process based on where the student is attending currently and whether that school can continue to accommodate them there.

C: A parent representative commented that projection areas M and N should be kept together because area M encompasses only two streets in the Clair Hills community and should be directed to the same school as the rest of that community (in area M) to retain their sense of community.

Mrs. Agar thanked the Working Group for attending and adjourned the meeting at 6:15 PM.

Action Items:

- **Mrs. Agar to revise Objectives to add “within safe walking route (e.g., signalized intersections or to avoid roundabouts)”.**
- **Option maps will be sent out to the Working Group members so they can continue to consider the boundary options as we go forward.**
- **Mrs. Agar to develop a new Scenario that has projection areas E, L, P, N and M attend the New school and projection areas A, C, D and F attend Abraham Erb PS.**
- **Mrs. Agar to put together Scenarios for our next meeting for each group’s top option to show how they would affect the other schools in the study area.**
- **Working Group to provide any ideas for Scenarios to Mrs. Agar.**
- **Working Group members to provide any appropriate community locations for posting of Public Meeting Notices.**
- **Working Group to send any contacts to be used on a check list for distributing the Public Meeting notice and forward contacts and addresses to Andrea.**
- **Andrea to provide graphic of Public Meeting flyer to be displayed on the City’s digital screens at the Recreation Complex and RIM Park and forwarded to neighbourhood associations.**
- **Principals to forward the requested number of hardcopy flyers needed for their school to Andrea.**

Future Meetings:

Working Group Meetings:

- **Working Group #4: Thursday, April 9, 2015; 4:45-6:15 PM at Edna Staebler PS**
- **Working Group #5: TBD**

Public Meetings:

- **Public Meeting #1: Thursday, April 23, 2015, 7:00-8:30 PM at Abraham Erb Public School, Gymnasium.**
- **Public Meeting #2: TBD**