



**SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
Monday, May 14, 2012 at 6:30 p.m.
St. Thomas of Villanova High School
2800 County Rd. #8, LaSalle, ON**

AGENDA

1. Call To Order
2. Opening Prayer
3. Recording of Attendance
4. Approval of Agenda
5. Disclosure of Interest - Pursuant to the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act.
6. Communications:
 - a. Report: Receive Input on the Director of Education's Report on the Accommodation Review Study for the Amherstburg Area, including St. Bernard, St. Theresa, and Stella Maris Catholic Elementary Schools (P. Picard) 1-8
7. Delegations:
 - a. Delegations Regarding Accommodation Review Committee's and Director Of Education's Report on the Accommodation Review Study for the Amherstburg Area, Including St. Bernard, St. Theresa And Stella Maris Catholic Elementary Schools
Individuals or groups wishing to make a presentation at the meeting are asked to contact Executive Assistant Beth Marshall by noon the day of the meeting at (519) 253-2481, extension 1289 or beth_marshall@wecdsb.on.ca. Information about the Board's accommodation review process and all reports relevant to the review are available on the Board's website at: www.wecdsb.on.ca. The public is also invited to provide written input to Paul A. Picard, Director of Education at the Windsor Essex Catholic Education Centre, 1325 California Avenue, Windsor, ON N9B 3Y6 or director@wecdsb.on.ca.
 - i) Parent, Mr. Ken Broadbent to speak on the potential loss of Catholic students if St. Theresa Catholic Elementary school closes, thus incurring financial loss to the Board. --
 - ii) Parent, Mrs. Katera Zappacosta-St. Louis to speak on the timeframe recommended to transition students to a new school if St. Theresa Catholic Elementary School should close. --
 - iii) Parent, Mr. Camillo D'Alimonte to speak on the possibility of a decline in church participation if St. Theresa Catholic Elementary School should close. --

- iv) Parents, Mrs. Sarah Beaudoin and Mrs. Tracy Perron to speak on projected development within the St. Theresa Catholic Elementary School area. --
- v) Parent, Mr. Allan Parks to speak on potential savings to the Board, the choice of school, and transportation issues if St. Theresa Catholic Elementary School should close. --

8. Closing Prayer

9. Adjournment

Barbara Holland
Board Chairperson

Paul A. Picard
Director of Education & Secretary of the Board



1325 California Avenue
Windsor, ON N9B 3Y6
CHAIRPERSON: Barbara Holland
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: Paul A. Picard

Meeting Date:
May 14, 2012

BOARD REPORT

Public **In-Camera**
PRESENTED FOR: Information Approval
PRESENTED BY: Senior Administration
SUBMITTED BY: Paul A. Picard, Director of Education

SUBJECT: **DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION'S REPORT ON THE
ACCOMMODATION REVIEW STUDY FOR THE AMHERSTBURG
AREA, INCLUDING ST. BERNARD, ST. THERESA AND STELLA
MARIS CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board receive as information the Director's Report on the accommodation review study for the Amherstburg area, including St. Bernard, St. Theresa, and Stella Maris Catholic Elementary schools;

and, that the Board receive public input concerning the Director's Report, and the matters that are addressed in it and in the Accommodation Review Committee's (ARC's) Report.

SYNOPSIS: The work of the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC), established by resolution of the Board on October 11, 2011 to study , report and make recommendations on future pupil accommodation options for the Amherstburg area, including St. Bernard, St. Theresa, and Stella Maris Catholic Elementary schools, has been completed. The Committee presented its final report to the Director of Education on April 16, 2012, and to the Board as information on April 24, 2012. Pursuant to Board Procedure Pr A: 05 Pupil Accommodation Review, the Director is required to review the recommendations of the ARC and to report to the Board on the results of the public consultation process, with analysis and recommendations.

The Board will hold a special meeting to receive the Director's report and to receive public input concerning the Director's report, and the matters addressed in it and in the Accommodation Review Committee's Report.

BACKGROUND COMMENTS: On October 11, 2011, the Board approved proceeding with the establishment of an Accommodation Review Committee to lead a public consultation process in studying, reporting and making recommendations on future accommodation

options for the Amherstburg area, including St. Bernard, St. Theresa, and Stella Maris Catholic Elementary schools.

At its first committee meeting on November 7, 2011, Administration provided to ARC members a background information package and a customized School Information Profile for each school in the study to support them in their mandate. The background information package and profiles are attached as appendices to this report.

Also, at the first committee meeting, the ARC was provided a copy of the Committee's Terms of Reference, as detailed within Administrative Procedure Pr A: 05 Pupil Accommodation. Upon review of the minutes of all committee and public consultation meetings (which are attached as appendices), it is evident that the Committee has been diligent in following its mandate to conduct a comprehensive and thorough public study.

The Committee conducted four public consultation meetings, pursuant to its Terms of Reference. The Committee also invited the community to provide written input to the Director of Education. Written input received, as well as Administration's responses to Committee or community inquiries were attached as appendices to the minutes of the meetings.

Senior Administration has carefully considered the ARC's Report delivered to the Director of Education on April 16, 2012 as well as the minutes and appendices reflecting input from the communities.

In its report (attached as appendix), the ARC submits the following recommendation:

Remain status quo and wait three to five years pending potential growth in the area for all three schools.

Comments

- **The Board shall explore potential growth within the surrounding areas of all three Schools.**
- **The Board shall be responsible for obtaining and presenting pertinent data, from Town of Amherstburg officials to verify potential residential distribution within these areas for the next three to five years, to the ARC Committee and the school community.**
- **The Board shall undertake a boundary review to include St. Anthony School in Harrow, St. Joseph School in River Canard and Holy Name School in Essex.**
- **The Board shall explore enhanced specialized programming such as the Dual Track French Immersion program, full day/every day early learning programs, on-site childcare, specific programming and classroom enhancements for the physically disabled and learning disabled Catholic children in our community, with the intent of attracting students to all three schools.**
- **The Board shall explore the feasibility and/or capability of converting all, one or two of the schools to becoming more energy efficient and eco friendly (i.e. rooftop solar panels, ground source energy for heating and cooling, tinting of southern windows to retain cooling in the summer, etc.).**
- **The Board shall endorse and/or allow the three schools to promote and advertise positive aspects of their schools, through local media or otherwise, with the intent of attracting students to all three schools.**

The Committee has done an exemplary job in reflecting the input received from their communities within the value analysis (value of each school to the student, the community, the Board and the local economy) they have provided to support their recommendation.

Administration is very much in agreement that each of these schools is truly a benefit to their students, the community, and to the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board. However, due to the Board's significant excess capacity, continual decline in enrolment and its resultant reduction in revenue, administration does not believe it can sustain all three of the schools in the immediate future or for the next three (3) to five (5) years, without jeopardizing student programming and learning opportunities for these schools moving forward and without negatively affecting the system in general. Administration submits the following analysis in arriving at its recommendations:

Concern for the "cost drag" of maintaining two (2) underutilized schools

The Board's 2011-12 budget and capital plan considered the Ministry of Education's review of Board operations wherein the Ministry pointed out that approximately 40% of the schools operated by the Board have a utilization rate below 85% of available floor capacity. Below this level, the Board receives diminished grant funding, which is creating a cost drag on the Board's operations. The Ministry recommended that an accommodation review would be required to rationalize the Board's underutilized facilities in order to assist in the future with both the Board's operating and capital deficits.

St. Theresa elementary has the smallest school population in the system. For 2011-12, its Full-time Equivalent (FTE) enrolment is 115. These students are currently accommodated in a facility with an on the ground capacity for 245 FTE, creating a utilization rate of 47%. Full Ministry funding for a building is intended to cover all operating expenses for that school. Full Ministry funding is only realized where the school is at 85% utilization (that school would then qualify for a 15% top up to 100% funding). Because St. Theresa is operating well below the required utilization rate, much of its expenditures are unfunded and the school operates at a loss. The current school expenditures were provided to the ARC by Administration and indicate a total cost of operating the school of \$1,320,164 (summary attached to January 9 Committee Meeting minutes). The unfunded portion of these expenditures creates a "cost drag" on the Board's operations as identified by the Ministry's review.

St. Bernard with an FTE of 207, within a facility with an on the ground capacity of 362 is operating at a 57% utilization rate. The estimated total cost of operating the school is \$1,926,188 (summary attached to January 9 Committee Meeting minutes). The unfunded portion of these expenditures also creates a further "cost drag" on the Board's operations.

Stella Maris is currently at 93% utilization and is therefore receiving full funding to cover all of its operating expenses, \$2,189,822 (summary attached to January 9 minutes).

Is there potential for growth in the area where enrolment at the three schools can be projected to increase to a level allowing for continuance of the three schools?

The committee gathered information through the Municipality and the community. Lori Bratt, Planning Coordinator for the Town of Amherstburg attended at the Committee's meeting on February 29, 2012. She presented the committee with a map of the

Amherstburg/McGregor area which highlighted various areas of potential development. Ms. Bratt could not provide timelines for when building could be projected to begin, as each area is in different stages of being serviced and approved, and when the developers do begin, the work is usually done in phases over so many years. As an example, she suggested that “the 800 units in the Hunt Club Creek Development could take a couple of years to begin the work”. Through an e-mail presented at the public meeting on February 1, 2012, Ms. Bratt confirmed that an upgraded and expanded wastewater treatment facility will be coming on line in the area in mid 2013 and this may be a catalyst for the larger developments (i.e. Hunt Club Creek and Amherst Quarries) to move forward.

Ms. Bratt expected that the development on the properties referred to as Golden Farm, Woodland Trails and a small phase of Amherst Quarries may move forward in the next two years. She noted that Kingsbridge Subdivision continues to move forward with phases of their development on an ongoing/annual basis; however there are no building permits yet for the next phase in the Kingsbridge area, which is ten (10) plus years in to development. She confirmed Amherstburg had fifty-eight (58) new residential units constructed in 2011 and based on the statistics of the last three (3) years would forecast a continuing increase in the residential units being built in the town.

There was also an e-mail provided from Peter Valente, real estate broker, in which Mr. Valente indicated they were expecting to see some action in The Big Creek Development within three to four months. The lots were serviced and ready to build. They also anticipated starting service on the Hunt Club Creek Development in about two (2) years. Mr. Valente noted that they have been hit hard by the recession in the area, but that things look to be turning around, and he expects that market will get stronger each year.

In reviewing this information and the Foundation Report: Essex County Official Plan Review of August 2011 (n.barry lyon consultants limited), it is fair to conclude that some population growth is anticipated for the Amherstburg area. It is also fair to say that the amount and timing of that growth is speculative.

There is also a concern that household growth does not necessarily directly equate to student population growth within our Catholic schools. It is noted in the County Official Plan Review that distribution assumptions for household growth are tied directly to the population distribution assumptions, as well as incorporating the following principal assumptions:

- *“Household characteristics of those expected to move into each municipality over the forecast period, i.e. senior, singles, families, etc. Such assumptions have a significant impact on the average number of people residing in a housing unit, dictating the number of units required to house the forecast population growth; and,*
- *Declining population per unit. It was assumed for each municipality, as a result of an aging population and limited growth in the proportion of families or average family size, that the average existing household size will continue to decline, resulting in the need for additional units to house the existing population. That is, even if the population in each municipality were to remain unchanged over the forecast period, demand for additional housing units would still exist. For example in the Town of Essex between 2001 and 2006, the population decreased by roughly fifty (50) people, yet the number of households increased by over two hundred (200) units”.*

With consideration for the above assumptions, the representation from the Municipality that there were fifty –eight (58) residential units built in 2011 does not directly translate into an increase in the number of catholic students available to fill schools. As an example of this, between 2006-2011 Amherstburg's population and household units both grew in number, but in fact all three (3) schools suffered from declining enrolment: Stella Maris from 293 FTE in 2005/06 to 282.5 FTE in 2011/12; St. Bernard from 295.5 FTE 2005/06 to 207 in 2011/12; St. Theresa from 162.5 FTE in 2005/06 to 115 FTE in 2011/12. The projections for 2012/13 show again a decline for each school: Stella Maris 260.5 FTE, St. Bernard 192 FTE and St. Theresa, 113.5 FTE. It is also a concern that it is noted within the Essex County Official Plan Review that "it is likely that a significant portion of Amherstburg's population growth will consist of older age-groups".

Even if there is a population growth in the Amherstburg area, it is administration's concern that that growth may not be sufficient to counteract the declining numbers in the area schools due to demographics. For the coming school year 2012-2013, the Board will have 2,231 grade 12 students graduating. The projected enrolment for Junior Kindergarten is currently 1136. The Board will therefore be seeing 1095 more students leaving the system this year than coming in. It is evident from the enrolment data that this downward trend is projected to continue year-over-year.

Could a boundary review support the maintenance of the three (3) schools?

The Committee has recommended a boundary review of all three (3) schools that would include St. Anthony (Harrow) and St. Joseph (River Canard). Administration can not foresee how this review could assist in increasing utilization at St. Bernard and St. Theresa without jeopardizing the neighbouring schools in the system. St. Anthony (Harrow) has a current utilization of 78%, while St. Joseph (River Canard) is at 74%. Both of these schools are currently below the full funding threshold. To draw from these schools would not assist the Board in alleviating the resulting "cost drag" on the system.

Can we wait three to four years to see?

In Administration's most recent financial status report filed with the Board on April 24, 2012, the projected deficit for Facilities Services - school operations and maintenance is \$1.09 million dollars for the current fiscal year. The Ministry of Education's June 2011 review noted that School Operations for the WECDSB ranked in the top thirty-six (36) boards of the most overspent in the province. The Board must look to reducing these costs. Annual building and school based expenditures at the three (3) schools; Stella Maris, St. Theresa, and St. Bernard are \$94,823, \$77,788, and \$75,065, respectively. Also funded from the School Operations and Maintenance allocation are custodial salary and benefit costs which are estimated at \$102,342, \$82,622 and \$107,716 at Stella Maris, St. Theresa and St. Bernard respectively. With both St. Theresa and St. Bernard below the 85% utilization threshold, neither generate full school operations funding to cover these costs. WECDSB is not maximizing the benefit it could be receiving from the allocation, which is causing a budget pressure. Only at Stella Maris are these expenses fully covered by Ministry funding.

In addition to those annual expenses, the Board must anticipate renewal expenses for these schools. St. Bernard was constructed in 1960, and its projected one (1) year and ten (10) renewal needs are \$2,257,501 and \$2,962,601. Stella Maris was constructed in 1958 with projected one (1) year and ten (10) year renewal needs of \$1,544,794 and \$2,157,898.

St. Theresa was built in 1968 with projected one (1) year and ten (10) year renewal needs of \$1,761,970 and \$2,242,010. Similar to the School Operations and Maintenance allocation, top up funding is also provided to supplement the school renewal allocation. However, with the existing utilization rates, the Board is not maximizing the eligible School Renewal grant.

ADMINISTRATION'S RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board approve, effective September 2012, the consolidation of St. Theresa at the St. Bernard site with renovations and improvements at St. Bernard; and that St. Theresa be officially closed and the property declared surplus to the Board's needs; and further,

That the Board maintain Stella Maris, and dependant on future enrolment numbers, consider a possible future boundary review to include Stella Maris, the new merged school community at St. Bernard, and nearby schools, in order to ensure that all schools in the area are operating at optimal utilization.

In support of its recommendation, Administration submits the following:

Value to the Student:

St. Bernard has the largest on the ground capacity of the three schools. It has 155 vacant pupil places available, which is more than enough to welcome the 113.5 students scheduled to attend St. Theresa in September 2012. As indicated in its school profile and as so well communicated by its community through the consultation process, the school currently offers valuable programming to students and a safe, comfortable learning environment. The building is less than one (1) kilometre from St. John the Baptist Parish and the students greatly benefit from frequent and meaningful involvement with the Church. Being within the town itself, students attending the school shared how much they appreciated the opportunities they had to experience amenities nearby, including parks, community library, and museums.

Administration certainly also sees the great value of St. Theresa to its school community and understands their strong feelings toward a more rural, smaller school. Through public consultation, the St. Theresa community did a wonderful job of profiling their school and it also is a place where students are offered very valuable programming and a safe and warm learning environment. For valid reasons, the St. Theresa community is very proud of its well established and very successful instrumental music program. Parents and the community have invested both time and finances to ensure its success.

Administration strongly believes that the valuable programming offered at both of these schools could be merged and continued through the assistance of an integration committee, comprised of both representatives from St. Theresa and St. Bernard. Administration believes that the St. Bernard building would offer the most potential for the new merged community. St. Bernard currently offers a full day early learning program and all kindergarten students at the merged school would have the benefit of this program.

Administration would recommend financing be committed out of the Board's budget for improvements to the school that would assist in accommodating merged programming, including an instrumental music program.

The move is proposed to take effect in September 2012, and Administration would work with the integration Committee through the summer months and in to the school year to ensure a smooth transition where representatives from both schools would be given opportunity for input and involvement in the establishment of a new merged school community.

Value to the Community and to the Local Economy

As highlighted within the ARC's Report and as is evident through the public consultation process, "the students at Stella Maris, St. Bernard and St. Theresa strive to remain valuable examples in their communities through their acts of charity, by cleaning up litter and being respectful of their community's residents and properties". Administration believes that both the students from Stella Maris and the new merged community, sharing ideas at the St. Bernard location, would continue their good works within the Amherstburg community and would continue to support the local economy within the town.

Value to the Board

The Board is in a position where it must reduce its deficit. In closing St. Theresa and merging the students with the student population at St. Bernard, the Board eliminates a situation where two (2) schools are operating under the Ministry's utilization threshold. The new merged community would be at the 85% utilization threshold and no longer would the unfunded operating expenses of the schools be accumulating to the Board's deficit. In the future, dependant on future enrolment, the Board may consider boundary reviews with Stella Maris and nearby schools in order to ensure that the schools in the area are operating at optimal utilization.

To assist the Board's deficit situation, closure of St. Theresa and creation of a merged community, in addition to the savings of the operation, maintenance, and renewal expenses for the St. Theresa site, would result in the savings of 6-7 teaching staff salaries (\$519,888-\$606,536), 0.5 custodial salary (\$24,367), and 0.33 Learning Commons Specialist salary (\$13,320). The Board could also realize proceeds from the possible sale of the St. Theresa property, the property first being offered to other school boards and government organizations at fair market value, before placement on the market for potential third party purchase, in accordance with Ontario Education Act Regulation.

In Summary

Administration commends the ARC and the communities it represented for conducting and participating in a comprehensive and thorough public consultation study. Their input was invaluable to Administration throughout its analysis and formulation of its recommendation.

Administration's recommendation is respectfully submitted for community feedback.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Referenced in the Background Comments section.

TIMELINES: September 2012 – Subject to public input received and final approval by the Board.

APPENDICES: All appendices to this report can be found on the Board’s public website at www.wecdsb.on.ca by clicking on “Accommodation Review Committees”

REPORT REVIEWED BY:

<input type="checkbox"/>	EXECUTIVE COUNCIL:	Review Date:	--
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	EXECUTIVE SUPERINTENDENT:	Approval Date:	April 30, 2012
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION:	Approval Date:	April 30, 2012