



SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
Thursday, May 17, 2012 at 6:30 p.m.
St. Anne High School
1200 Oakwood Dr., SS #3, Belle River, ON

REVISED

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. Items:
 - a. Report: Receive Input on Director's Report: Accommodation Review Study for the Lakeshore Area, including Our Lady of Annunciation and St. John the Evangelist Catholic Elementary Schools (P. Picard) 1-8
7. Delegations:
 - a. Delegations Regarding Items On the Agenda
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, Maureen Weissenboeck, speaking on behalf of a group of concerned parents on the values of St. John the Evangelist Catholic Elementary school. --
 - ii) Parent, John Peltier to speak on the potential closing of St. John the Evangelist Catholic Elementary school and its affect on children with special needs. --
 - iii) Paul Mullins to speak about boundary adjustments, population growth and community use of St. John the Evangelist Elementary school. --
 - iv) Steve Chevalier to speak about the uniqueness of a small rural community school and Administration's recommendations with regards to St. John the Evangelist school. --
 - v) Parent, Holly Ralston to speak about the value of a small rural school especially for special needs children. --

- vi) Parent, Kirk Halliday to speak about the value of St. John the Evangelist Elementary school to the students, board, and community. --
- vii) Parent, Suzanne Cammalleri to speak about the value of St. John the Evangelist Elementary school, submit updated petition results, review a letter received from the Ministry of Education regarding the petition and the benefits of rural schools. --
- viii) Parent, Sara Broderick to speak about Our Lady of Annunciation Elementary school's continuing commitment to Catholic education. --
- ix) Parent, Stacey Gagnier to speak about shared boundaries. --
- x) Parent, Bev Vanier to speak about the benefits of a new rural school. --
- xi) Parent, Karmel Brockman to speak about Our Lady of Annunciation Elementary school's value to the whole student. --
- xii) Jody Percy Constituency Assistant, Taras Natyshak MPP mentioning that MPP Natyshak will continue to press the Minister of Education to review the funding formula, and to take into account the unique role that rural schools play in many small communities across the province. --
- xiii) Rev. Dave Boutette, Pastor of St. John Evangelist Church to speak about the decision's impact on the possibilities for evangelization and the Catholic faith culture of the Woodslee community. --

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 17, 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 LAKESHORE AREA, INCLUDING OUR LADY OF ANNUNCIATION AND ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board receive as information the Director's Report on the accommodation review study for the Lakeshore area, including Our Lady of Annunciation and St. John the Evangelist 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 Lakeshore area, including Our Lady of Annunciation and St. John the Evangelist 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 Lakeshore area, including Our Lady of Annunciation and St. John the Evangelist Catholic Elementary schools.

At its first committee meeting on November 10, 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 unanimously agreed to the following recommendation:

Maintain both schools and undertake a boundary review for the Woodslee/Essex./Belle River areas including St. John the Evangelist, Holy Name in Essex, St. William and St. John the Baptist; and/or that shared boundary areas be considered to increase utilization for both St. John the Evangelist and Our Lady of Annunciation.

Comments

- **Evangelization through children is at risk with the closing of either school. What children acquire in a rural school seems to be more significant than what people realize, and with any closure, a number of our students might be lost to the public board.**
- **This is the only option that ensures that the student population of St. John the Evangelist remains intact.**
- **This is the most preferred recommendation from the members of the Committee from Our Lady of the Annunciation. It is also their priority that the student population stay together and they feel that the above recommendation would be their best option of ensuring that.**
- **We owe it to the rural communities to provide Catholic education that is accessible within those communities wherever possible.**
- **The Committee feels very strongly that the closing of either of these two schools would be detrimental to the communities they serve.**
- **Encourage more municipal participation and joint use agreements to create community hubs.**
- **These two schools should be considered priority schools for the community use rentals, similar to the priority status of Immaculate Conception and St. John Catholic Elementary schools in Windsor.**

- **That the Ministry of Education and the Board explore the benefits of a Parenting and Family Literacy Centre at these locations. This program currently exists at the Greater Essex County District School Board and other locations in the province but not in our Catholic Board or in this area.**
- **Given the possibility for growth in Lakeshore and Essex, leaving St. John the Evangelist open will help alleviate possible over-crowding at St. William, St. John the Baptist and Holy Name.**
- **Due to the unique boundaries for Our Lady of the Annunciation - Lake St. Clair to the north and Chatham Kent to the east, and the lengthy distance to adjacent schools, maintaining Our Lady of the Annunciation school at its present location will ensure English Catholic education to a very large geographical area.**
- **Both schools should work with their municipality to encourage growth and investment in the small rural communities.**
- **Establish recruitment committees at each school in concert with the parish to promote Catholic education.**
- **Due to continual community support and an active Parent Council at Our Lady of the Annunciation, the students are provided with technological learning support for curriculum development such as iPads and smart boards. These investments are utilized regularly by all students and staff daily to enhance programs and learning opportunities.**

Although the representatives from Our Lady of Annunciation clearly stated that the above recommendation was their preferred recommendation, they also see the following as a possible, viable option for their community and put forward the following recommendation (The majority of the committee members from St. John the Evangelist are not in favour of this option and do not endorse it as a recommendation to the Board):

Our Lady of the Annunciation recognizes this recommendation as an alternative by consolidating St. John the Evangelist and Our Lady of the Annunciation or the exploration of a possible partnership with another Catholic Board for a new rural school building to be constructed preferably near the new Visitation Church in Comber or at an alternative, centrally-located site on property to be determined pursuant to a comprehensive site search. The above alternatives would be dependent upon either a consolidation or partnership agreement and approved Ministry funding during which time, the involved schools(s) would remain open.

Comments:

- **Engage in planning for future rural Catholic education needs.**
- **Create a facility with joint use agreements to utilize part of the school facility specifically during school hours. This would create a “hub”, which would operate agencies from community services, i.e. child care, child and family services, Social Planning councils, provincial and federal resources and Family Resources. The potential for after school use would then exist and create the possibility of increasing services in an otherwise under-served area.**
- **That the Ministry of Education consider and the Board actively pursue Community use of Schools if funding is provided for a new building, choosing this location as a *priority school* in our rural setting. Given the proposed location of the school access to the 401 highway, County Rds. 42, 46, 8 and 77, this can all be done with ease leading to many surrounding underutilized areas**

such as the Township of Lakeshore, Leamington, Essex and Chatham Kent. It was stated that both Immaculate Conception and St. John School in Windsor are labeled as priority schools, but there are no such Catholic schools in the county.

- **Enhance the learning environment through green technology and 21st century technology.**
- **That the Ministry of Education and the Board explore the benefits of a Parenting and Family Literacy Centre at the location. This program currently exists at the Greater Essex County District School Board and other locations in the province but not in our Catholic Board or in this area.**
- **The majority of St. John the Evangelist Committee members dissent to the recommendation of this option but acknowledge this as a viable option for the Annunciation community.**

The Committee has done an exemplary job in reflecting within their recommendations and comments the input received from their communities. Administration is very much in agreement that both of these schools are 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 must highlight the following concerns for the recommendation to maintain both of these schools:

Concern for the "cost drag" of maintaining 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.

Currently St. John the Evangelist's student population is 165 FTE (third lowest population in the system). These students are currently accommodated in a facility with an on the ground capacity for 245 FTE, creating a utilization rate of 67%. 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. John the Evangelist is operating well below the required utilization rate, much of its expenditures are unfunded and the school operates at a loss.

Our Lady of Annunciation is a smaller facility with an on the ground capacity of 112 FTE. It is currently above 100% utilization with 138 students and is therefore receiving full funding to cover all of its operating expenses.

Concern for school operations and maintenance costs

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 WECDSD ranked in the top thirty-six (36) boards of the

most overspent in the province. The Board must look to reducing these costs. Estimated annual building and school based expenditures in 2011-12 at Our Lady of Annunciation and St. John the Evangelist are \$67,662 and \$56,883 respectively. Also funded from the School Operations and Maintenance allocation are custodial salary and benefit costs which are estimated at \$61,941 and \$61,210 at Our Lady of Annunciation and St. John the Evangelist respectively. With St. John the Evangelist below the 85% utilization threshold, it does not 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.

Concern for renewal needs and facility condition

In addition to those annual expenses, the Board must anticipate renewal expenses for these schools. St. John the Evangelist was constructed in 1963, and its projected one (1) year and ten (10) year renewal needs are \$1,021,125 and \$1,363,413, with Facility Condition Index (FCI) one (1) and ten (10) year of 25.2% and 33.6%. Our Lady of Annunciation is an older building, constructed in 1948. Its projected one (1) year and ten (10) year renewal needs are \$1,071,669 and \$1,231,486, with FCI one (1) and ten (10) year of 57.8% and 66.5%. Our Lady of Annunciation is currently within the “critical” range of the Ministry’s benchmarking for condition of assets (i.e. FCI > 30%). 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 rate for St. John the Evangelist, the Board is not maximizing the eligible School Renewal grant it could receive for this facility.

Can boundary review and potential population growth in Lakeshore increase enrolment at St. John the Evangelist to the Ministry threshold while still sustaining enrolment at other area schools?

A report addressing “The Proposed Closure of St. John the Evangelist Catholic Elementary School, Some Growth Aspects to Consider”, dated March 6, 2012, was prepared by Cindy Prince, M.A. and submitted to the ARC, at the request of Mr. Paul Mullins, a member of the Woodslee community (report attached to minutes of March 8, 2012 committee meeting).

In her report, Ms. Prince projects population growth for the Maidstone Growth Area served by St. William School in Emeryville and St. John the Baptist school in Belle River and anticipates an additional annual 31 – 91 (or 61 as an average) Catholic elementary students in to the area. She also projects another 18% growth occurring outside of the Maidstone Growth Area and reasonably expects some of that growth in the catchment areas for Our Lady of Annunciation and St. John the Evangelist.

Administration is certainly encouraged by these forecasts, but is cautious. In discussions with the Municipality it is apparent that many of the land developments listed in the schedule to Ms. Prince’s report have existed on paper for quite some time and there is no real expectation that they will ever be developed.

There is also a concern that predicting the number of Catholic children in new housing growth is an inexact science. Housing growth alone does not necessarily lead to increases in population. An excerpt from the County’s 2011 Foundation Report For its Official Plan Review notes, “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 50 people, yet the number of households increased by over 200 units". This can be attributed to the changing nature of families (i.e. single parent families, aging population, etc.) which is creating a demand for households, but not necessarily increasing population.

As encouraging as Ms. Prince's forecasts for the area may be, there is concern that despite similar forecasts provided to the Board by Watson and Associates in its report of April 16, 2008 for increasing enrolment at St. William school and consistent enrolment at St. John the Baptist, the actual enrolment numbers each year at both of those schools has been significantly less. St. John the Baptist is currently just below the Ministry's full funding threshold at 78% utilization with 433 students. There are currently three (3) closed classrooms at the school.

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 1,136. 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. It is administration's concern that the projected growth in the Lakeshore and surrounding area may not be sufficient to counteract the declining numbers in the area schools due to demographics alone.

ADMINISTRATION'S RECOMMENDATIONS:

After serious consideration and full analysis of the material submitted from the study, Administration presents the following recommendations:

That the Board approve Our Lady of Annunciation remaining open while the Board pursues a partnership with the French Catholic Board and/or another neighbouring Catholic Board, as well as Ministry of Education funding, for a new rural school building to be constructed preferably near the new Visitation Church in Comber or at an alternative, centrally-located site on property to be determined pursuant to a comprehensive site search; and that Our Lady of Annunciation be closed and the property declared surplus to the Board's needs should the new school be realized and the students be accommodated in the new school building; and further

That in the 2012-2013 school year, the Board conduct a boundary review for the Woodslee/Essex/Belle River area, including St. John the Evangelist, Holy Name (Essex), St. William and St. John the Baptist to determine whether enrolment at the schools can be balanced so that each school meets the Ministry of Education utilization funding threshold; and that if the Board determines that this cannot be achieved, St. John the Evangelist school be closed and the property declared surplus to the Board's needs effective June 2013 and the school community be accommodated at St. John the Baptist effective September 2013.

In support of its recommendation, Administration submits the following:

Value to the Student:

Administration believes that the cost savings that could be realized through the partnership with another school Board may be an incentive for Ministry investment. A new school building for this school community would be the optimal accommodation option for the Our Lady of Annunciation community. Administration agrees with the assessment of the ARC in

stating that “Due to the unique boundaries for Our Lady of the Annunciation - Lake St. Clair to the north and Chatham Kent to the east, and the lengthy distance to adjacent schools, maintaining Our Lady of the Annunciation school at its present location will ensure English Catholic education to a very large geographical area”, and recommends that, pending the securing of a partnership and funding for a new building, the current school remain open. The Board would also be encouraged to consider some of the suggestions brought forward by the ARC to assist in increasing enrolment pending the pursuit of a new facility.

The St. John the Evangelist community has effectively communicated through the public consultation process that they want their school building to remain open and are not in favour of a recommendation for a new school outside of the Woodslee area. As indicated in presentations at public meetings, written submissions, and signed petitions, the community greatly values their rural school and it is clear that the school is certainly of value to its students in providing a quality Catholic education. Administration’s concern is with the Board’s ability to sustain that level of education at that location and throughout the system into the future. Although encouraged by forecasts for increased population in the area, administration is cautious and believes that a boundary review with public consultation with all of the Belle River/Essex/Woodslee area school communities will assist in determining whether enrolment can be balanced, so that each school is able to realize the Ministry utilization funding threshold.

If this cannot be achieved, administration believes, that with the assistance of an integration committee composed of representatives from St. John the Evangelist and St. John the Baptist, the school communities could be brought together at the St. John the Baptist facility in September 2013, where the quality programming currently available at both of these schools could be blended to benefit students.

Value to the Community and to the Local Economy

Administration certainly appreciates the community concern for the potential loss of a school in these rural communities, however the recommendations suggested attempt to mitigate these concerns by keeping students together in any move. The alternative locations suggested have a close proximity to a Catholic church to foster an active community/church/school partnership.

Value to the Board

The Board is in a position where it must reduce its deficit. If Our Lady of Annunciation can be accommodated in a new facility, this would address the Board’s concerns for operating and maintenance expenses, as well as renewal needs of the aging building.

Should the Board determine that a boundary review could balance enrolment to ensure all schools in the Belle River/Essex and Lakeshore area meet the Ministry utilization funding threshold, the concern for accumulating cost deficit may be addressed for this area.

Despite the fact that St. John Evangelist was not scheduled for a Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program until Phase 5 of the Ministry’s implementation process in September 2014, to encourage increased enrolment for the school, the Board expended funds from its existing budget to initiate the program in September 2011, without the addition of special Ministry funding. That program will continue in the 2012-2013 year and the Board is hopeful that it will assist in promoting enrolment. The program will now be funded by the Ministry as

it has been brought forward by the Board into Phase 3 of the Ministry's Full Day Kindergarten implementation process.

If increased enrolment cannot be realized, St. John the Evangelist's move to St. John the Baptist in September 2013, could assist the Board in assuring that all schools remaining open in the area are operating with full Ministry funding. St. John the Baptist has a projected enrolment for September 2012 of 398 students in a facility with an on the ground capacity of 555, leaving 157 vacant pupil places. St. John the Evangelist has a projected enrolment of 156. Should these numbers remain fairly static through to 2013, the students at St. John the Evangelist could be accommodated at St. John the Baptist without the need for an addition.

Should St. John the Evangelist close in September 2013, a merged school community at St. John the Baptist, in addition to the savings of the operation, maintenance, and renewal expenses for the St. John the Evangelist site, would result in the annual savings of 4.5 teaching staff salaries (\$389,916), 0.5 custodial salary (\$24,367), and 0.33 Learning Commons Specialist salary (\$13,320). Savings in employee benefit costs would be incremental to these salary savings. These savings would be slightly offset by additional transportation costs of approximately \$5,000 annually. The Board could also realize proceeds from the possible sale of the St. John the Evangelist 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: As detailed within Administration recommendations

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