



## Meeting Notes

### 1. **Welcome and Introduction**

W. Baker, Facilitator of the Committee, welcomed Committee members and those present in the audience to the second meeting of the South East Norfolk Elementary Accommodation Review Committee.

#### **In Attendance:**

##### **Committee Members**

**W. Baker** (Facilitator) – Superintendent of Education, **Rita Collver** – Trustee, **John Harris** – Trustee, **Krista Kitchen** – Parent Representative, Elgin Avenue Public School, **Melissa Mummery** – Parent Representative, Lakewood Elementary, **Jessica Smith** – Parent Representative, Lynndale Heights Public School, **Tara Beerepoot** – Parent Representative, Walsh Public School, **Christine Oliveira** – Parent Representative, West Lynn Public School.

##### **Resource Staff**

**Brenda Blancher** - Director of Education, **Samantha Nicholson** – Principal, Elgin Avenue Public School, **Lori Rodgers** – Principal, Lakewood Elementary, **William Valoppi** – Principal, Lynndale Heights Public School, **Dirk Matthys** – Principal, Walsh Public School, **Dianne Lefler** – Principal, West Lynn Public School, **Jamie Gunn** – Superintendent of Business, **Michelle Le Dressay** – Planning Officer, **Shawn McKillop** – Manager of Communications and Community Relations, Philip Kuckyt – Manager of Transportation, and **Wendy Slaven** – Recording Secretary.

##### **Other Grand Erie Trustees in Attendance**

David Dean, Brian Doyle, Carol Ann Sloat

### 2. **Meeting Notes – Mar. 22/16**

Notes from the March 22, 2016, meeting are posted at [www.granderie.ca](http://www.granderie.ca). Requests for information from the March 22 meeting, along with requests sent to [info@granderie.ca](mailto:info@granderie.ca), were shared.

### 3. **Information Requests from Mar. 22/16 Meeting**

Submitted questions and requests were addressed and presented by W. Baker, J. Gunn and P. Kuckyt. These are available online at [www.granderie.ca](http://www.granderie.ca).

### 4. **Questions from ARC Members**

*(C – Comment, Q – Question, R – Response)*

Q If you considered closing Elgin, you said 216 Elgin students would be assigned to West Lynn, but there are only 138 listed in the diagram.

R We would have to add 138 pupil places to accommodate them.

Q Is there any possibility of having 2 separate French Immersion programs in 2 schools?

R Yes, that is an option that has been mentioned several times during these ARC discussions.

Q Is it a guarantee that one school will be closing in this area?

R That is a Trustee decision. They have to look at presented options. If an option existed that didn't involve closing a school, the Trustees would undoubtedly consider it.

- Q If plans did change, and West Lynn did not close, would Elgin still be renovated to some degree?
- R That would be part of the decision left to the Trustees. If Elgin remained open, and there was an accessibility issue at Elgin, it would be addressed.
- Q Has the location of the 3 Special Education programs been considered? Would they be moved?
- R The Board's Spec Ed department has a process for establishing and locating self-contained Special Education classes. The ARC doesn't have the authority to just move these classes.
- Q Would Elgin qualify for a fulltime Vice Principal or still be shared?
- R Allotments of administration time are made according to a process. If the numbers warranted an increase in admin time at any school, that change might result.
- Q If schools closed, how would teachers be allocated?
- R In general terms, teachers follow the students. In addition, some programs have to be protected (French, Library, Special Education). Finally, allocation of teachers has to adhere to collective agreement provisions, where seniority is a major consideration.
- Q If a student is currently attending as out of attendance area student, would they be grandfathered in?
- R. Out of Attendance Area requests are reviewed every year – the notion of grandfathering students would be a Trustee decision.
- Q Parents don't feel the statistics by Stats Canada are current enough, regarding the number of students lost to French Catholic School Board. Can the Board get more up to date numbers of population and take a closer look?
- R This is the population statistic from the last census. The next set of data will be in 4 years. We know the general population trend. There is nothing more current.
- C Have 2 separate French Immersion programs - JK-3 at one location and 4-8 at another. Would like to know numbers of students from other programs: uprooting classes of kids and their teachers – is it overwhelming for teachers, staff, principals to supervise at one location? Not suggesting it's not a great idea.
- R This is a viable option for Trustees to consider, however the plan, if there were two FI programs, would be for both to eventually be JK-8 models.
- Q Could data will be provided on a scenario of French Immersion leaving Walsh, Self-Contained classes moving to Walsh from other Norfolk schools, and changing Walsh boundary to maintain English program.  
Note: the following comments represent the views of the principals.
- R It would depend on the profile of classes that come in and on the non-teaching staff supports that would be involved. It's worthy of lengthy discussion, a viable option.
- R It's a good plan to consider - staff follow students so they would be supported.
- R We try to place special education students as close to home school as possible – it would be a last resort moving them from one end of the county to another.
- R It is a benefit to have special education classes in any school, a joy to see them – this would be a segregated school – we want them in our school.
- R The students bring joy, we would welcome another special education class. Moving to one facility would set us back 40-50 years.
- R We do not currently have a special needs class in the school – we would certainly welcome one.

Note: after input from the principals, the ARC members decided not to ask resource staff to collect data on this scenario.

Q Has consideration been given to expanding Walsh, adding an addition?

R The challenge is adding excess pupil places when there already over 500 are not filled.

Q Has there been any consideration given to Mr. Bradfield's proposal?

R That will be for the Trustees to consider - part of proposal would depend on other decision-making bodies.

The following statement was read by Lakewood Elementary Parent Representative, M. Mummery

I would like to speak as a parent who has been through a school closure in the not too distant past. I have 3 girls in Lakewood who are in grade 2, 4 and 5 and a 3 year old who starts this September. Those of us in Port Dover recently went through the ARC process and as a result of the recommendations we not only lost a beloved elementary school when Doverwood closed, but also our only High School, the heart of a small community. I personally attended both of those schools as did my husband so it was a blow not only as parents of small children but also as a part of our history. I say this so you know I understand, as do many in Port Dover, what you are going through with the proposals we are faced with in this Accommodation Review.

One of the things we wanted to avoid in our case was the "us vs them" perspective and that's a hard one. In our case it was (in our eyes) Waterford High School or PDCS and now it appears as though it's an Elgin vs West Lynn concern - that's just what I was hearing from the community comments last meeting. And depending on the French Immersion program, perhaps a concern for Walsh... With the numbers facing us and the excess pupil places, though no one likes what those numbers are telling us, there is a problem. I would just like to encourage everyone to try and support each other because no matter what we all have one thing in common and that is that we are all parents who care very much for our children, their education and social well-being.

When we were discussing the Port Dover issues at the ARC we had very much the same social concerns for our students, that they will be sports rivals, have different circles of friends and then be bussed off to "their" school where they would be outsiders and parents would feel unwelcome to get involved. That getting to their part time jobs or to and from for sports and clubs would be a great challenge, and kids that had walked would now be on long bus rides. My kids would have walked to Doverwood but are bussed to Lakewood. And as for moving somewhere to specifically attend a school, I am very familiar with that in my business and it sure doesn't help encourage families to move to a town with no high school. But they do because our elementary school is amazing and they are willing to deal with the bus ride for high school. Families adapt.

And you know what? Kids that have always gone to school with each other sometimes make each other feel like outsiders and are sometimes sports rivals. Kids that live in the area of their school have a hard time getting to and from sports or making it to their part time jobs. A fellow parent has 2 kids that get on the bus at 7:34 and arrive at 8:25. A 50 minute bus ride and they are currently in our catchment area...

Once all options have been explored and the Trustees have made what they feel is the best decision based on the alternatives we've all discussed, my advice is to do your best to make the best of it. For your kids especially. You may be upset and frustrated, as we all were, and that's completely normal. But I hope that parents can adjust as well as our kids all do. Get to know the new parents in your school community and invite them in, make your

school as great as possible and get involved. As adults we could learn a few things from our kids in that respect. There is help available, communicate your concerns in a positive way and that help will come.

From my heart I want you to know that if your kids happen to come to Lakewood in Port Dover that they will be welcomed with more understanding than you can imagine. We brought with us our wonderful Doverwood community spirit and have grown stronger and better as we overcome bumps and bruises along the way. Lakewood staff, students and the Parent Committee will make the transition as easy as we can while respecting that it is not what you had planned. I hope that if you are one of the families that may be affected that you take the time to visit us, get to know us and let us help you through the changes. I know that we are getting new students all the time and my kids get so excited to make a new friend.

5. Questions from the Community  
(C – Comment, Q – Question, R – Response)

Q Moved 119 kids to Walsh for French Immersion – if Port Dover is big enough, move them here, move them voluntarily, or put it in West Lynn. Have 2 French Immersion schools – there will be more interest if it's local.

R During these ARC discussions, we have contemplated splitting up French Immersion students – considering West Lynn as well as Lakewood for a second site. The ARC could consider this as an option for further discussion.

C You may have more students interested in French Immersion, but they're still current students.

R The program historically does not draw from other than our own students.

Q Transportation question - what is the total number of students being transported on the bus?

R We will provide the information.

Q Elgin renovation plans showed the new area. What's the plan for existing classrooms?

R Throughout the whole school electrical and mechanical will be renewed. In individual classrooms we will look at the needs of each – flooring, ceiling, and painting in every room.

Q What happens during the transition period?

R We will have to move students from Elgin – there will be costs for portables placed somewhere for the period of the renovation.

Q Busing issue – kids will now be on bus for 55 minutes each way.

R It is one family only.

C We should not be bussing kids for an hour. They should be outside, not on a bus.

Q Thank you for considering closing Elgin rather than West Lynn. Will there be a threat with the Catholic Board introducing French Immersion? Will notes be available?

R They will be available on the website.

Q In regard to transition, can we see a model of what it would look like?

R There will be representation from all schools, administrators, transportation. Reps have the role to take information back to community. There will be lots of support.

Q Would there be additional support for students that have anxiety?

R Principals are aware of students with these needs.

- Q If French Immersion is split between 2 sites, there will be a need for more resources – would there be additional funding?  
R Clarification, this is in regard to JK-8 in 2 sites. Trustees demonstrate willingness to support the program – funding is there for students regardless of location.
- Q What was the previous screen showing?  
R This is the revised catchment area – the only change is West Lynn, now in purple.
- Q If there are not equal number of kids between schools, how do you ensure equal education?  
R There is a possibility of split classes, and allowing small cohort to go through – what is best for the students. If there is a program split, the teacher consultant works with the teacher to ensure programming. We would look at overall French Immersion population, and reports go to the Trustees to see what works best.
- Q Child in English program at Walsh. Where are the transportation route splits?  
R. Information was presented to parents after the meeting.
- Q What is the percentage, ratio between the programs?  
R In 5-10 years, when French Immersion fully extends to Gr. 8, French Immersion and English would be close to 50/50 at Walsh in 2021.
- Q If Elgin gets renovated, what would happen to students now – move for a year?  
R Yes, they would move – it would be a challenge.
- Q Has there been an environmental study done? Is there asbestos? What company would be hired?  
R It is premature for that conversation – it would be a reputable company.  
R We have an asbestos plan for every building in the Board. It is a requirement that a designated substance study is done for the Ministry of Labour, when doing extensive renovations. The goal is to remove all asbestos before starting – deal with it all the time. Plan would be developed and documented.
- C With proposed changes I would have pickup in one area and childcare in another.  
R If student can they get in bus in own area, then would have to request a courtesy bus, which may be available.

For Next Meeting:

- Requests for information will be addressed, followed by delegations.
- Delegation submissions to [wendy.slaven@granderie.ca](mailto:wendy.slaven@granderie.ca) by Monday, April 25<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 noon
- Ad will be posted in newspaper
- 10 minute maximum, be respectful to other communities
- Presentations are part of record
- Principals will assist
- Be prepared to answer questions from ARC Committee

6. Next Meeting Date

- Wednesday, April 27, 2016, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. at West Lynn Public School

Adjournment 8:44 p.m.