



Haldimand East Elementary Schools Accommodation Review Committee

June 4, 2015 – 7:00 PM
Grandview Central Public School - Gymnasium

MEETING NOTES

In Attendance:

Brian Doyle (Chair)—Trustee, **James Richardson**—Trustee, **Brenda Blancher**—Superintendent of Education, **Dave Peters**—ETFO, **Nancy Hondula**—CUPE, **Deborah Warner**—Principal, Anna Melick Memorial School, **Marion Kline**—Principal, Fairview Avenue Public School, **David Gervais**—Principal, Grandview Central Public School, **Julie White**—Principal, J.L. Mitchener Public School, **Charlotte Morphet**—Principal, Thompson Creek Elementary School, **Madeleine Jobb**—Parent, Anna Melick Memorial School, **Danielle Lipson**—Parent, Fairview Avenue Public School, **Mike Black**—Parent, Grandview Central Public School, **Mandie Cowan**—Parent, J.L. Mitchener Public School, **Melony Cooper**—Parent, Rainham Central School, **Bernie Corbett**, Municipal Councillor, Haldimand County.

Absent/Regrets:

Alison Cooke—Principal, Rainham Central School, **Mark Gibson**—Cayuga and District Chamber of Commerce, **Todd Smith**—Parent, Thompson Creek Elementary School.

1. Welcome and Introductions

B. Doyle, Chair of the Committee, welcomed those present to the third meeting of the Haldimand East Elementary Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) meeting.

Other Board members recognized as in attendance: Carol Ann Sloat—Chair of the Board, Rita Collver—Trustee, David Dean—Vice-Chair of the Board, John Harris—Trustee.

John Forbeck, Director of Education, and Grand Erie District School Board Administrative staff: Jamie Gunn—Superintendent of Business, Shawn McKillop—Manager of Communications and Community Relations, and Elaine Roberts—Recording Secretary, were in attendance to provide resource to the Committee.

The meeting notes, from April 29, 2015, meeting were accepted as circulated.

Committee members and the audience present were reminded that all information considered and presented to the ARC will be posted on the Grand Erie website at www.granderie.ca. Questions regarding the process should be submitted by email to: info@granderie.ca.

2. Presentation of Data/Information Requested

2.1 Development Project – Student Growth/Yield Data, J. Gunn

J. Gunn presented statistics with respect to the average pupil yield from new Haldimand County residential developments (based on 2011 census data). The school aged population as a percentage of occupied private dwellings is:

- .32 elementary students per dwelling
- .20 secondary students per dwelling

Of the school aged population, Grand Erie District School Board attracts 63% of elementary students and 72% of secondary students.

Yield calculations per dwelling for new residential developments in Haldimand County are: elementary .20 students (.32 x 63%), and secondary .14 students per dwelling (.20 x 72%).

It takes a development of 230 new single family residences to fill two (2) elementary classrooms.

Haldimand County has issued an average of 98 building permits annually for new housing over the last five years.

Grand Erie planning staff regularly consult with all municipal planning departments including Haldimand County. Information on all development applications is received and tracked to understand the potential impact of future accommodation needs.

Questions from Committee Members:

- Q Were Council approved development projects the only projects considered, or were future, anticipated or other projects included as well?
- A Grand Erie receives information on development plans in many various stages of application and approval from the County planner. These were all considered.

3. Getting Started with the Work of the Accommodation Review Committee, J. Forbeck

J. Forbeck gave a recap of the purpose and process of accommodation reviews. Work completed to date includes: confirmation of the school valuation/profile template format at the first meeting on March 11, 2015, and sharing of completed school profiles, demographic information, and initial options for consideration at the second meeting held on April 29, 2015.

The ARC is currently in the Community Review stage. During this stage of the deliberations, the ARC may add additional options and/or eliminate options. The Committee may request information/data from Senior Administration, and request and receive information from potential community partners for consideration. All requests for information must be agreed upon by committee decision. A recommendation for every school in the review area must be

identified. Also during this stage, the ARC will organize a meeting to hear delegations from the community.

The five initial options presented at the April 29, 2015, meeting were displayed and reviewed.

Option 1: Close Anna Melick M.S. and assign students to Thompson Creek E.S.
Resulting surplus capacity - 389

Option 2: Close Grandview Central P.S. and assign students to Fairview Avenue P.S.
Resulting surplus capacity - 400

Option 3: Close Anna Melick M.S. and assign students to Thompson Creek E.S.
and Close Grandview Central P.S. and assign students to Fairview Avenue P.S.
Resulting surplus capacity - 236

Option 4: Close Anna Melick M.S. and assign students to Thompson Creek E.S.
and Close Grandview Central P.S. and assign students to Fairview Avenue P.S. and Rainham Central P.S.
Resulting surplus capacity - 190

Option 5: Close Anna Melick M.S. and assign students to Thompson Creek E.S.
and Assign a portion of current Thompson Creek catchment to J.L. Mitchener P.S.
and Close Grandview Central P.S. and assign students to Fairview Avenue and Rainham Central P.S.
Resulting surplus capacity - 144

Comments/Discussion by Committee Members:

- Alignment of schools should focus around local communities and facilities in those communities such as arenas, libraries and high schools
- Due to the funding changes implemented by the Ministry of Education, and the high surplus student capacity, there simply isn't funding to keep all the Haldimand schools open
- Preferences for keeping schools together vs. splitting schools was raised and discussed. No one school would be able to accommodate another full school without changes being required (i.e., adding portables, staffing changes, etc.)
- Members were asked to consider if they were comfortable moving students to portables
- It was suggested that the County be asked to consider attaching a new library to J.L. Mitchener, and to include this an option for consideration
- Student yield from new developments could be further investigated with respect to:
 - how many of the 98 new homes are on the west side of the river?
 - yield numbers for new homes being built on Cross Street near Thompson Creek and Fairview Avenue schools
- Historically, there has been an effort to keep the Dunnville schools and community together. Therefore, perhaps, J.L. Mitchener and Rainham Central schools should be removed from this process
- The Board included J.L. Mitchener and Rainham Central schools when it called for the ARC following a review of data in a report to the Board's Quality Accommodations Committee. The intent of their inclusion was to ensure a full and fair assessment of accommodation in all schools in Haldimand East was conducted

- A new 10 kilometre funding rule has been implemented since the last accommodation review. Schools are funded based on student enrolment. In the past, the province provided top-up for schools operating at less than full capacity. The top-up now applies only to schools located 10 kilometres or further away by road from any other school (elementary or secondary). A capacity of 85% or higher is required for sufficient funding to be received to operate a school and to cover all expenses including staffing, utilities, etc. Only Rainham Central meets the 10 kilometre funding requirement. There is a school within 10 kilometres of Anna Melick school
- The traditional boundaries for Dunnville Secondary School did not include J.L. Mitchener and Rainham Central. The ARC might look at the capacity figures to determine if the 85% target would be met if only Anna Melick or Grandview Central schools were closed
- For Haldimand County to consider attaching a public library to J.L. Mitchener, the ARC would need to make a recommendation for the Board to make a resolution to the County. Initial discussions at the County however could be started
- The resulting surplus capacities in Options 1 & 2 remain above 300 students. Closing a larger school may be a better option. Dunnville Secondary School could then, potentially, be moved to Thompson Creek
- If Anna Melick school closes, parents might feel it is in their children's best interest to move them to a neighbouring school operated by the Niagara Board
- Niagara schools are an option to parents but not to the Board. The Ministry of Education sets Board boundaries. If students go to Niagara it would reduce Grand Erie's enrolment more. This review is to address and consider options for underutilized space within Grand Erie schools
- The ramifications of losing students to other Boards is a consideration at any time
- The Niagara Board does not have to accept these students as municipal funding from these residences does not go to them. Parents would also be responsible for their children's transportation. Secondary programs and other support programs all need to be considered by parents
- Bussing times and costs should be considered in the options proposed
- In the U.S., they have scorecards for schools. Walking to school could be a category on such a scorecard. Having a scorecard for each school would be helpful in making these decisions

Proposed Additional Options:

The ARC discussed, reviewed and revised a list of additional options during the meeting. It was agreed, by consensus, that the following 5 options be added to the 5 initial options presented at the April 29, 2015 meeting.

- Option 6 - Close Thompson Creek Elementary School
- Option 7 - Close Fairview Avenue Public School
- Option 8 - Close J.L. Mitchener Public School
- Option 9 - Close both Anna Melick Memorial School and Rainham Central Public School
- Option 10 - Reassign the catchment area which extends to Yaremy & Sutor Roads to Dunnville area schools and remove Rainham Central PS and J.L. Mitchener PS from the review

Resulting surplus capacity figures for the additional options will be determined and these figures will be provided at the next meeting.

Chair, Brian Doyle, thanked the committee for its work this school year. No meetings will be held during the summer break. ARC members were asked to give further consideration to all the proposed options, and to consider additional options they may wish to bring forward in the fall.

4. Questions/Comments from the Audience/Community

- C The options under consideration require much more thought. The Dunnville community is 50% urban and 50% rural. It is important to maintain this area's rural heritage.
- C The statistics given are from 2011. All but one of the class photos in the hallway at Grandview Central show classes larger than the data suggests. Updated data is needed.
- Q Could consideration be given to moving grade 7 and 8 students to secondary schools to enable them to access specialized programs (shop, etc.) which they have had limited access to since the senior public schools closed during the 1990's?
- A Yes, however, this would result in even lower elementary numbers which doesn't help to address the elementary surplus capacity situation.
- C Fairview Avenue PS is the only 'in-town' school and the only school where students can walk to school. It should not be closed.
- C Grandview Central was up for closure was in 1988. It seems the boundaries are always moved to take students away from the school and not to it. We want to know what the County is doing to make Dunnville a more attractive community to families with children and to attract industry. If nothing is done, the school is certain to be closed or involved in another review again in the very near future.
- C The Dunnville area is repeatedly targeted. Why not include all of Haldimand including the schools in the north and west. Enough damage has already been done to the Dunnville community.
- C Some families move to the Anna Melick area specifically because they don't want their children to attend urban schools.
- Q How will continued new development on the west side of Dunnville be addressed? If there is further development, how will it be accommodated?
- A Staff will address this at the next meeting.
- C Bussing students to Rainham Central will not be a welcome option for many families. We need to know how much time students will spend each day on a bus.
- C We went down this road 5 years ago when we closed Central Public School. It was suggested then that further schools should have been closed. If we must close another

school, the newest school Thompson Creek, should be kept open. Let's move forward and not backwards.

Q Can the ARC obtain and review enrolment figures for 2015-2016 before making its recommendations?

A Yes. Once the options are narrowed down, updated enrolment statistics will be reviewed.

C Option 5 not only splits schools, it splits communities.

Q How did we get here again? We understood that there would not be a new review for a least 5 years?

A The trigger came from an update to the Board from the Quality Accommodations Committee. Too few surplus spaces were removed during the previous ARC, and anticipated growth in the community just wasn't realized.

Q If this review had been anticipated, why was an addition built on to Rainham Central just a year ago?

A Additions built at a number of Grand Erie schools recently are related to the opening of Full-Day Kindergarten classrooms. The Full-Day Kindergarten program has increased student enrolment.

5. Other Business

51. Requests for Information

Requests were received from the Committee for the following information:

- transportation times and costs for all options
- enrolment data and capacity calculations for 2015-2016 (when available)

6. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held at Fairview Avenue Public School on Thursday, September 24, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.