



# Haldimand East Elementary Schools Accommodation Review Committee

April 29, 2015 – 7:00 PM  
Thompson Creek Elementary School - Gymnasium

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## MEETING NOTES

### Committee Members 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, **Alison Cooke**—Principal, Rainham Central 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, **Todd Smith**—Parent, Thompson Creek Elementary School, **Bernie Corbett**—Municipal Councillor, Haldimand County, **Mark Gibson**—Cayuga and District Chamber of Commerce.

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

B. Doyle, Chair of the Committee, welcomed those present to the second meeting of the Haldimand East Elementary Accommodation Review Committee meeting.

Meeting notes, from the March 11, 2015, meeting were accepted as circulated.

Other Board members recognized as in attendance were: Carol Ann Sloat—Chair of the Board, Rita Collver—Trustee, David Dean—Vice-Chair of the Board, Alex Felsky—Trustee, and Karen Sandy—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.

### 2. Review of Completed School Profile Templates

J. White, Principal—J.L. Mitchener P.S., provided an overview of commonalities between the six schools under review. The commonalities, under the governance of the Ministry of Education and Grand Erie District School Board, include:

- instruction grades taught: JK – 8 including full-day combined Junior and Senior Kindergarten
- Ontario curriculum content and literacy/numeracy requirements

- all schools teach the arts, science, social studies and physical education/health
- French language instruction in grades 4 to 8
- staffing parameters and formula (staffing allocations determined annually based on total student enrolment)
- technology in the classrooms (implementation through the Grand Erie educational technology initiative--classrooms equipped with netbooks/tablets/projectors and whiteboards)
- daily student physical education expectations
- 'Safe Welcome' and 'Safe Arrival' procedures
- system-wide policies, procedures, protocols and expectations

A review of the components of the School Profile specific to J.L. Mitchener was then provided.

The principals of the remaining five schools commented on their School Profiles highlighting areas of uniqueness to each school.

Questions from Committee Members:

Q What is the difference between a gymnasium and an auditorium?

A An auditorium has a stage and tiered seating, a gymnasium is more of a multi-purpose space.

Q How much of a challenge to school access is the Dunnville bridge?

A No concerns have been identified with the bridge.

Q What is happening with regard to the large hamlet area near Grandview Central school?

A This is a key development area in the community.

Q If an Early Years Centre is located at a school, what does that mean to a school? Does it affect enrolment? Are there other associated effects on the community?

A The Centre provides employment. For example, there are 8 employees at the Fairview Avenue centre. Early Years Centres provide support services to families in the community such as new baby weigh-ins, and mom and tot programs.

Q How are Early Year Centres funded?

A Funding is provided by the Ministry of Education. Facilities are provided by Grand Erie, however, the Board does not provide funding for, nor receive any funds from, these centres.

### 3. Presentation of School Capacities and Options

J. Gunn, Superintendent of Business, reviewed capacity figures and demographic statistics for each school as well as summary figures for all schools. Note - classrooms used for alternate purposes, e.g., nutrition programs, are not calculated as 'pupil loaded'. The combined available capacity, including existing portable classrooms and non-loaded space, is 1982. Current enrolment is 1433.

Overall Utilization	Surplus Pupil Spaces Excluding Portables	% Excluding Portables	% Including Portables
2015 (Current)	480	74.9%	72.3%
5 Year Projected	536	72.0%	69.5%
10 Year Projected	553	71.1%	68.6%

Five options for surplus space reduction were presented. The accommodation review process requires options be prepared by Board staff. It was noted that the options presented are not an exclusive list of those available or those which may be considered.

Initial Options for Consideration (Effective September 1, 2016):

- 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*

External programs (e.g., nutrition/Early Years Centres) and portable classroom relocations required for each option were identified. The school boundary change, required in Options 4 and 5, were also reviewed.

Questions from Committee Members:

Q How is capacity determined?

A The Ministry of Education sets the formulas and capital asset utilization software is used to calculate capacity. The formulas calculate capacity by taking the numbers for each type of room (regular classroom, special education, etc.), and multiplying those numbers by an assigned 'pupil loading' figure.

Q Are children in the Haldimand East area, who attend schools other than Grand Erie schools, included in these figures?

A No. Only Grand Erie students are included.

Q Do the new boundaries proposed in Option 5 align with secondary boundaries?

A They do not. Currently Grandview Central P.S. feeds into Dunnville Secondary School. If the boundary were to be split, determination of which secondary school the students would attend would need to occur. The secondary catchment areas could also potentially be amended.

Q What would it take to not close a school?

A It would take a significant amount of Board resources not to close any school. The Ministry of Education funding formula has changed over the last number of years. In previous years, the province provided top-up amounts for unused utilization. This funding has decreased significantly. If no school were closed, the Board would need to find the financial resources elsewhere in the system.

Q Is there a number that is acceptable across Grand Erie for total capacity?

A 80-85% capacity is optimum.

Q Can you explain the cost of portables?

A Portable costs include utilities (heat, hydro), maintenance and caretaker services. Adding a portable costs less than adding a permanent structure. Each elementary student is recognized as requiring a certain amount of square footage. Funding is provided by the number of students/enrolment. Grand Erie prefers to use portables for temporary accommodation rather than longer term.

Q When the secondary accommodations review was being conducted, partnerships in the community were considered. Are partnerships being considered for the elementary schools?

A Partnerships and shared services could be considered. Some partnerships are in place presently, however, they are not paying partners. Partnerships with organizations who both require the space and are willing to pay for overhead would need to be found. The number of types of partnerships suitable for elementary schools is smaller than that for secondary schools.

Q What would the cost be to add permanent space at an existing school?

A The average single classroom cost is about \$450,000. The Ministry of Education provides capital funding where a need has been identified. That is a separate and different process. We are currently looking at a plan to reduce existing surplus capacity.

Q Whose responsibility is it to look for partnerships?

A The Board had identified a budget of \$40,000 and will be initiating an RFP process to seek partnerships. The Ministry of Education has also allocated funding in the amount of \$43,000 towards this.

Q Are assets/property values considered in the costs and savings calculations? Some properties may be worth more than others. Will those figures be factored in?

A No. The Board focuses on gaps between the operating budget and capacity. In considering property values, it would mean looking at major repairs and maintenance costs for those properties in coming years as well. The present value of the properties themselves is not considered.

Q Are subdivisions being developed near schools considered?

A Yes. Communication with town planning departments occurs regularly. If the Committee desires, community development growth and estimates can be brought back. The yield from new developments, unless they are very large is relatively low (e.g., 75 new homes may yield 10-14 elementary students).

Q What options are available for relocation of the Early Years Centres?

A There would be a variety of options available to maintain the existing programs. In a previous review, the Board worked with EYC staff to examine options available to them. This would be done again to determine where these centres could best be relocated.

Q Could an addition be built onto a school to accommodate the external programs enabling them to stay in their current communities?

A – If it were the direction of the Accommodation Review Committee and the Board of Trustees, an application for capital funding could be made to the Ministry of Education. A business case identifying the rationale behind this would need to be prepared. External use may not meet the Ministry's requirements for capital approval to a school board.

#### 4. Other Business

##### 4.1 Requests for Information

A request was received from the Committee for the following information:

- student growth/yield data for development projects in school catchment areas

#### 5. Questions/Comments From the Audience/Community

Q It appears that portable space will be required. What are the differences in cost between portables, multiple unit 'Portapaks' and permanent structures?

A The approximate cost for a permanent classroom is \$450,000. New portables cost about \$80,000. Portapaks are similar in cost to portables.

C It has been indicated that 'value to the student' is Grand Erie's main focus and concern. I don't feel that splitting grades 7 and 8 from the lower grades is good value to students.

C We wouldn't want our children to be in portables long-term. There are health concerns connected with portables.

Q – In terms of real estate, Central School was closed and the school and land sold, did our schools benefit from that closure? Where would the money have gone? Do we know how much Grand Erie sold the property for?

A When schools are sold, the money goes back into the capital fund of the board which is controlled by the Ministry of Education. When a board requests and applies for a new project, those funds are looked at before any new or additional funding is received from the province. The money received from closed schools goes towards future capital projects within the board.

C I don't feel there are many viable options for the Early Years Centre in the Anna Melick M.S. community.

C We went through this process a few years ago and many of us felt there should have been a different outcome. We encourage this committee to make the tough decisions that need to be made at this time.

Q Will the number of students currently enrolled in grades 6, 7 and 8 be taken into consideration?

A Yes. Accommodation and options for students in all grades will be taken into consideration.

Q Has the board split the school enrolment between two schools as a result of any other school closures?

A Windham, Joseph Brant and Townsend schools, which were organized as senior public schools, were closed. The students who attended those schools rejoined their feeder schools.

Q How firm is the 2016 timeline?

A The timeline is determined by the time needed once an option or options have been selected to allow for planning (transportation, support services, etc.) and notification to the communities to occur.

C Consideration needs to be given to the overwhelming response from the audience and community. Additional utilization and partnerships should be found for the affected schools. I am aware, from my 19 years as a municipal councillor and as a local businessman, that half the population live in the four townships surrounding urban Dunnville. To close two rural schools in the area would be unconscionable from the human-side of education.

#### **6. Next Meeting Date**

**The next meeting will be held at Grandview Central Public School on Thursday, June 4, 2015 at 7:00 pm.**

#### **7. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.