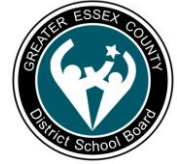


# Greater Essex County District School Board PROGRAM AND ACCOMMODATION REVIEW KINGVILLE FAMILY OF SCHOOLS

Thursday, June 7, 2012 at 7 p.m.

Report of a community meeting held at Migration Hall, Kingsville



THAT THE SUPERINTENDENT RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCOMMODATIONS CONDUCTS A PARC STUDY OF THE KINGVILLE FAMILY OF SCHOOLS TO:

- i. REDUCE THE NUMBER OF EMPTY STUDENT SPACES
- ii. IMPROVE THE UTILIZATION RATES WITHIN THE FAMILY OF SCHOOLS.

There were approximately 145 persons in the audience including the committee.

**Facilitator:** Terry Lyons, Superintendent of Education

**Recorder:** Melissa LeBoeuf

## 1. Call to Order and Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Superintendent Lyons.

## 2. Introductions

Several introductions were made including Trustees McKinley; Trustee Harding-Smith and Vice-Chairperson Taves; Warren Kennedy, Director of Education; Giuliana Hinchliffe, Coordinator of Engineering; and Al Cook, Manager of Facility Services. Superintendent Lyons noted that regrets were given by Trustee Lovell, Trustee Burgess, Trustee Bailey and Trustee Howe-Buckler as they are attending their OPSBA AGM. Trustees will be provided with a video copy of this meeting.

## 3. Background and Review of Process

- A committee is formed with representation from every school participating in the PARC
- The PARC committee has regular meetings to review data and determine recommendations
- This evening's meeting is the fourth public meeting
- This committee has worked extremely hard so far on behalf of the communities
- This committee works in an advisory role, and is not a decision making body
- The committee writes a report and submits the recommendations to the Director of Education
- The committee presents their report at a Board meeting, on June 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.
- The Director of Education analyses the committee reports and submits recommendations to Trustees, probably in November
- Trustees vote and make the final decision

## 5. Presentation of the Program and Accommodation Review Committee's (PARC) final recommendations

A powerpoint of the PARC Committee presentation is attached.

The committee outlined their common philosophy that was used as a basis for developing the recommendations, and how it was developed. There was a review of the data used, for the benefit of those members of the audience who were not in attendance at the previous three meetings.

It was noted that Pelee Island is one of only a few schools in the province that receives special funding and so the data relating to that school was not considered when developing recommendations.

## 6. Review of timeline

Committee presents at regular meeting of the Board on June 19 at 7 p.m.

## 7. Presentations:

Patti Hayes, on behalf of Taras Natyshak, MPP – Essex.

Presentation attached – appendix 1

## 8. Questions and Collection of input

Superintendent Lyons stated that this is a public forum and minutes will be kept and then posted on the board website.

Should anyone be uncomfortable asking questions in public, we have provided cards to be completed which will be appended to the minutes on the board website.

Please be respectful of others during public meetings and refrain from making derogatory remarks about other schools and students.

### Kingsville Public School parent and teacher:

Noted that he liked the original option C the committee presented at the third Community meeting. It has all of the advantages as option 1 presented this evening. It provides an opportunity for team teaching and collaboration that you don't necessarily get at a small school. It is forward thinking and progressive. It has a stronger community focus with all K-6 students in Jack Miner. It would provide a seamless transition from grade 8 to grade 9. It saves \$8 million dollars. In either scenario K-12 or Jack Miner K-6 provide more opportunities for students (ie more sports, plays etc.). It is hoped that the committee review option C again as it would benefit all students from Kingsville PS, Ruthven and Jack Miner.

### Ruthven Parent:

The proposal of a K-6 school is devastating. Research from John Hopkins University shows that students in a K-8 schools demonstrate higher levels of academic achievement, have higher rates of attendance, and have better social and emotional outcomes. Parent strongly feels that the board needs to stay away from a structural change. Grade 7 and 8 students are leaders in the schools and class helpers which better prepares them for secondary school. Removing them from the current grade structure is detrimental. Parent referenced minutes from the May 3, 2011 board meeting where it was stated that: Bellewood's proposed changes allow the school to return to a K-8 grade structure. Parent noted that moving the grade 7 and 8 students into the high school is a short term solution with a large sacrifice. What price are parents willing to pay to buy another five years to save the high school?

### Ruthven Parents:

Parent stated that she is not in favour of the recommendations. Ruthven parents do not agree with the philosophy of the committee. It does not reflect the philosophy of the Ruthven community as a whole. It was noted that the recommendations are short sighted. It was suggested that the money already approved for a rebuild of Leamington DSS be used to build a new high school more centrally located and transition Kingsville PS dual track to Jack Miner with an addition and make a slight boundary adjustment for Ruthven PS. There are many advantages to this recommendation such as cost savings with the closure of Kingsville DHS which has the highest renewal needs.

Closing Ruthven does not have a large enough savings. There would be more extra-curricular activities with more students in the high school. The new facility would attract more students. High school students are better suited for a longer bus ride. Also, this recommendation disrupts fewer families. The slight boundary adjustment for Ruthven would only need to include 20 families to increase the utilization rate to 85%. Kingsville PS students would only move 3 KM rather than 6 KM for the Ruthven students. This recommendation meets the board mandate by improving utilization rates and reduces the number of empty spaces. The parents noted that the PARC committee has worked hard however the Ruthven parents have lost trust and are putting their trust into the Trustees. Ruthven parents do have a strong voice and we do deserve to be heard.

**Ruthven student:**

**Appendix 2**

**Parent at Ruthven and teacher:**

It is detrimental to close Ruthven. With the same common philosophy to keep the high school open the Ruthven community needs to keep the elementary school open to keep it a viable community. It is a meeting place for people in the community. If the school is closed it will take away the heart of the community. The school accounts for 80% of the circulation of books at the local library. The value of property will decrease. As a grade 7 and 8 teacher my focus is building and teaching the whole child. The grade 7 and 8 students need the opportunity to make and become role models in the school. They need to be reading buddies and lunch monitors.

Q – What will happen to the grade 7 and 8 clubs and athletics if these students are moved to the high school?

A – There are a number of schools throughout the province that are going through grade restructuring. Going into the future we will have to look at things differently.

Q - Are there any studies of having a K-12 school in rural areas?

A - Superintendents have visited a K-12 school in rural Wiarton. There are a number of K-12 schools in Northern boards. It is becoming more common.

**Jack Miner parent and teacher at KDHS:**

Q – It was questioned how all of the teams would be accommodated with respect to practice time and location.

A – There would be two gyms – the main gym at the high school as well as the gym at Migration Hall. The population would be just over 600 students. The facility is built for 900 students. At one time KDHS enrolment was at 1100. There is no challenge to utilize the space.

Q – What would be the land requirement to build a new K – 12 school?

A – The average land required for a secondary school is 15 acres and 5 acres for elementary. The land required would depend on the number of students. There is currently 14 acres at Kingsville DHS.

**Community member and former teacher:**

There has been a lot of concern expressed with the grade 7 and 8 students going into the high school. One would hope that staff would be reactive enough to make a strong and educational environment for all of the students. One would hope that the board would provide the staff necessary to make that happen. There are huge advantages for the grade 7 and 8 students.

Q – Has anyone determined the cost of infrastructure (ie sewers etc.) associated with a rebuild on the Jack Miner site.

A – This would have to be looked at.

**Parent from Leamington:**

Support the amalgamation of Kingsville District HS and Leamington DSS. It would keep the community together, not pit them against one another. The students would not be affected by a super school concept. The two recommendations put forth by the committee are unrealistic and self-serving. I would never allow my child to be subjected to a high school experience at the age of 12. They are still forming their ideas and their bodies. It is a great injustice to all. Kingsville and Leamington are intertwined – together we could and would be strong. The children are here to teach us a lesson and I suggest we start listening.

**Parent from Jack Miner:**

Q - It was questioned if there was any research or data collected from when the grade 8 students from Harrow moved into the high school.

A – There was no data collected.

Q – Has there been any discussion with the possibilities of having two 7-12 schools in neighbouring communities (ie Harrow and Kingsville)?

A - Harrow felt that a community high school was important so they decided to move the grade 7 and 8 students into the high school to gain efficiencies.

**Parent at Jack Miner:**

Q – Who would be the administrator for the grade 7 and 8 students?

A – That would be part of the transition committee's decision.

**Parent at Kingsville Public School and secondary teacher:**

As a secondary teacher I would welcome all students into my arms and into my classroom. I teach high school students and I think of them as my own children and treat them the same. The staff would step up. Teachers are hired to take care of students. It would happen without question. I would have no problem sending my children to any high school in this community.

**Parent and Teacher:**

Q – Would the high school be at 100% if the grade 7 and 8's attended?

A – It would be close. The current enrolment is 640 and projected to decline another 50-60 students by September 2013.

Q – How certain are you about the projections? The town has presented that the population is projected to increase and the town is investing money into the community for children.

A - We have an outside consultant that works with the town planner. The demographics show an increase but not in school age children. When looking at statistics just released the actually school age group population has decreased over 2%.

**Parent from Ruthven:**

I am protesting the process. It is unfair to a community to ask its members to be part of this process. It is pitting everyone against each other – it is unfair and unjust.

**Parent from Kingsville Public School:**

Need to keep options open. Fully support a K-12 school. Everyone wins and we become a tighter community.

**Community member and grandparent:**

Attended a big school in downtown Toronto and ended up graduating from a three room school. The most memorable was the small rural experience. The kind of experience students received comes upon proximity and familiarity with the community. Trust that the Trustees will take into account that school is about community.

Superintendent Lyons noted that this is not a rural community issue. There are two PARCs taking place in the city where there is potential school closure.

**Parent and teacher:**

Request that the committee puts together all the data around building a new school.

A – Ministry has just done a review of the board's renewal needs. This information will be presented at a public board meeting.

**Student from Kingsville Public School**

Like the idea of a K – 12 school. I have lots of great friends at Jack Miner and Ruthven and it would be cool to go to the same school.

**Student from Ruthven:**

The school community is an extended family. Teachers at the school understand me. Scared that there may not have the social time with the teachers and they won't get to know me. The kids at the school love each other. My school is amazing and no matter what happens we will stick together.

**Parent from Ruthven:**

Support the amalgamation of Kingsville DHS and Leamington DHS rather than K – 12 school. The kids are better equipped socially. The community would support a larger high school. This is not an attack on any other school. Putting Kingsville PS at Jack Miner would require infrastructure.

Superintendent Lyons noted that the business case for the Leamington rebuild has already been approved and the board is in the process of acquiring land. In order for that process to stop we would have to submit a new business case. This may not be perceived as positive in the town of Leamington.

**Parent at Ruthven:**

Q – Has there been any consideration for a boundary change for MD Bennie?

A – A boundary change is similar to a school closure. It is a very emotional process.

Q – Has there been an equal amount of energy spent on stopping the hemorrhaging of students to homeschool and the private schools?

A – Our retention rate is very high. We have more students coming into our system than leaving. Every board has transition students, but I would have to disagree that there is a hemorrhage of students from our system. There are a number of private schools that are closing and the students are coming to the public board.

**Community Member:**

It takes a village to raise a child, not a city. Concern was expressed that students would fall through the cracks if JK-8 students are put into the high school.

A – There are tremendous things happening at Tecumseh Vista. They have done a great job and there are no children falling through the cracks. It doesn't matter the size of the school it is the leader in the building. We have phenomenal teachers. It is the staff in the building that makes the difference.

**Parent and teacher:**

Don't want the committee to forget how important it is to have grade 7 and 8 students in the elementary school.

**Parent from Ruthven:**

I am a mother of four. If Ruthven closes I will consider homeschooling.

**Student at Kingsville Public School:**

I dream of going to University. A school is a family but the building is just four walls and the top priority is our education.

**8. Closing Comments and Adjournment**

**Invite everyone to come out to the board meeting on June 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.**