

**Greater Essex County District School Board
PROGRAM AND ACCOMMODATION REVIEW
FORSTER FAMILY AND CENTURY SCHOOLS
Community Meeting # 4**

Monday, June 4, 2012 at 5:30 p.m.

Report of a meeting held at General Brock Public School



THAT THE SUPERINTENDENT RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCOMMODATIONS CONDUCTS A PARC STUDY OF THE FORSTER FAMILY OF SCHOOLS AND INCLUDE CENTURY DUE TO ITS GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION TO:

- i. ADDRESS CAPACITY ISSUES AND AGING INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS WITHIN THE FORSTER FAMILY OF SCHOOLS
- ii. CONTINUE OUR INVESTIGATION FOR A PERMANENT FRENCH IMMERSION SITE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH BOARD DIRECTION FROM THE SOUTH WINDSOR PARC.

Present: There were approximately 33 persons in the audience including the committee.

Regrets: Sharon Pyke, Superintendent of Special Education and Area Superintendent Century Secondary School, Patti Oshar, Principal, Benson Public School; Michelle Landry, Teacher, Benson Public School

Facilitator: Terry Lyons, Superintendent of Education

Recorder: Lisa Scherer, Administrative Assistant to Area Superintendent

1. Call to Order and Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Superintendent Lyons.

2. Introductions

Warren Kennedy, Director of Education; John Howitt, Area Superintendent Forster Family; Helga Bailey, Chairperson; Kim McKinley, Trustee; Shelley Harding-Smith, Trustee; Al Cook, Manager of Facility Services and Giuliana Hinchliffe, Coordinator of Engineering, Rachel Oliverio, Diversity Officer

3. Background

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

The committee will present their final recommendation which will be presented at a special meeting of the Board on Monday, June 25, 2012.

Should anyone be uncomfortable asking questions in public, we have provided cards to be completed and we will endeavour to reply promptly or you can visit the Board website.

4. 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
- Four public meetings, thus being the fourth
- The committee writes a report and submits the recommendations to the Director of Education
- The committee presents the report to Trustees at a public meeting and then the report will be posted on the Board's website for sixty days

- The Director of Education analyses the committee reports and submits recommendations to Trustees
- Trustees vote and make the final decision

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

A powerpoint presentation of the PARC Committee's draft recommendations.
Please see the attachment.

6. Review of Timelines

- Special Board Meeting Monday, June 25, 2012 at 5:30 p.m. Board Office, 451 Park St West

8. Questions relating to the process

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

Q- What are the implications for these recommendations of the May 17 letter from Deputy Education Minister George Zegarac to school Boards, reportedly warning them not to enter agreements with financial commitments past August 2013?

R-The letter dated May 17th doesn't pertain to capital investments. Any capital investments or any business cases have to be sent to the Ministry, so the Ministry would be well aware. It refers to making outside agreements with other organizations not directly through the Ministry.

C- I have two children one at Marlborough who will be going into the AB program and one who currently attends Century in the AB program. I brought this up at the last meeting we can't put these students out at Western because I'm going to have to go to the expense to move because I can't have my children out at Western when I do not have a vehicle to go out there should there be a problem. It doesn't matter that you are throwing the AB student out to the wolves and it's not fair to them. This is something you guys have to think about because not every parent has a car and not every parent will be able to get to their kids if there is a problem.

R- Option red is a situation where AB students would be transitioned to Western but in Option Blue the students remain at Century.

C-Either way it's not acceptable to me that you are putting students out there just because they have learning disability and learning exceptionalities. Oh, there is another school out in the county so we are going to throw them out there. Why don't you leave the programs where they are in the city so people can get to them? That's not fair everyone is just throwing these students to the wolves.

R-Option blue AB students are remaining at Century and Forster is closing and consolidating at the Century site so the AB students would remain at Century in this recommendation.

C-Well then let's do that.

Q- Option red directs most of the Century students out of district, how does the committee feel it contributes to establishing a robust high school population in the west end?

R-The committee has spent a lot of time debating that question. The rationale behind that was the fact that in a JK-12 school offering locally developed courses. The AB students would be transitioned to Western. Why would we bus students from the east end of the city to offer locally

developed courses which they could also have the opportunity to in their homeschools. That is why instead of busing the Century students across the city for a lot of them they would be allowed to get the same program at their local school.

Q- What I mean is right now one of the problems with the highs schools in the west end is that their enrolment is too low and it seems to me that the red solution doesn't do anything to address the low enrolment of high school students.

R- There was a lot of consideration and discussion about that and the committee thinks by offering a new building and having a new facility as well as dual track French Immersion that is going to be an attractive option for people. Possibly retaining more students in the public board that have transitioned to other school boards or schools in the past. The committee thinks that it will bring those students back into the public system or keep them in the public system.

Q- If the new school offers French Immersion in the high school level will administration consider recommending that the students at Ecole Bellewood graduate to the program instead of being sent out to the already overcrowded Sandwich Secondary program?

R- I wouldn't call Sandwich Secondary overcrowded right now. That is beyond the scope of what we would be doing at this point with this committee. I wouldn't think you would be changing boundaries again for Ecole Bellewood that has just recently gone through an active PARC process. I don't think that would happen immediately but that could be a conversation for the transition committee.

Q- I understand that a K-12 building on the Marlborough site would leave too little room for athletic facilities. Does the committee propose students there use the athletic facilities at the abandoned Forster site?

R- Depending on the size of the building and the design of the building for sure that would have to be a consideration since there is an existing field across from Foster which is within a five minute walk.

Q- When was the last time the Board accepted a PARC recommendation to relocate four to six hundred students from a school community with no representation in the committee?

R- I want to refer to the fact that was a mandate in the South Windsor PARC for the Board to continue to find a permanent location for French Immersion. The other aspect is that it has always been a temporary location at the Giles Campus and we build numerous schools in terms of housing students at Giles Campus there hasn't always been a PARC study completed.

C- I don't mean that as criticism of the PARC at all but it sounds like your answer is never.

R - No I can't speak to that. I can't say that it has been never. In this situation I wouldn't necessarily say we can debate about the PARC involvement in terms where would the PARC involvement be would it be true representation since the staff for Giles Campus is not even assigned yet. There is no staff there to represent only the principal has been identified. There are number of challenges the Herman PARC also made recommendations with reference to the Giles Campus, which would you want to sit on the Forster PARC or the Herman PARC. Part of the process is whenever a school is brought into a PARC that information is provided to all those students affected. I also consider this input. Don't forget the PARC committee has worked extremely hard to

meet the mandates and also provide an opportunity for students who live on the west end to have an option for French Immersion.

Q- You mentioned that both the Herman PARC and this PARC were tasked or at least ended up discussing the Giles Campus even though it is not set up yet. I can only say as a parent at Giles Campus and a member of the transition committee that is helping the students transition from Ecole Bellewood to Giles Campus we thought it would be better to wait until Giles Campus has been set up and established, so then we can play a role in the decision making process where the students are going to end up. Can you please explain what the hurry is and what the downside would have been to waiting till this September before you struck a committee that was going to figure where four hundred students were going to end up?

R- As the Superintendent of Accommodations that recommendation to find a permanent site was not part of the South Windsor PARC that recommendation actually came from Trustees that night given me a directive to continue to look for a permanent site for French Immersion. I wouldn't say urgency but it came to the fore front that it's something we needed to do. I heard over and over in the South Windsor PARC "How long are we going to be at Giles?", "Give me a number on how long we are going to be there?" so part of what we did was continued to look at it. Even in these recommendations I don't want to lose site of the fact that these are recommendation which are going to be suggested to Trustees and if anyone of these recommendations goes forward it's a minimal five year implementation to construct a new building. I wouldn't necessary say it's an emergency situation but it is a situation the committee needed to take a look at. As a facilitator and an advisor I provide as much information to a PARC committee as I can. I can't steer the PARC committee and in the end I never know what the recommendations are going to be. The committee can choose to follow the mandate or they can choose not to follow the mandate. At the end of the day they are an advisory body to Trustees and I can't always predict what the PARC committee is going to do.

C- My daughter will be going into Grade 5 so I don't expect either these recommendations to affect her. I'm really talking about what is best for all the students on the west end. I care about the west end. I want to see a good strong high school. I want to see all the schools provide the best possible education for all the kids.

9. Closing Comments and Adjournment

Superintendent Lyons reminded the audience information pertaining to the PARC can be located at www.publicboard.ca. and encouraged the audience to attend the special meeting of the Board on Wednesday, June 20th, 2012 at 5:30 p.m. at the Board Office.

There being no further questions, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.