

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

Wednesday, May 30, 2012 at 4:30 p.m.

Report of a committee meeting held in the library at Kingsville DHS



Attendance: Pat Masson, Jarrod Omstead, Barb Denotter, Kingsville DHS; Mona Renaud, Debbie Burgess, Lisa Bradt, Kerry Kraus, Kingsville PS; Matthew Capel-Cure, Gillian Carter, Terri Barrette, Jack Miner PS; Bill Cervini, Melisa Cziraky, Helen Andrade, Melanie Burns, Ruthven PS; : John van Wingerden, Community Representative; Paul Antaya

Regrets: MaryCatherine Langlois

Chairperson: Elliott Dunlop, Community Representative

Facilitator: Terry Lyons

Recorder: Lynne Hornby

There were 12 observers in the audience.

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.

1. Call to Order and Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 4:35 p.m. by Chairperson Dunlop thanking everyone for their attendance and Principal Masson for once more hosting the meeting.

2. Review of minutes of May 7

The minutes of the May 7 meeting have been circulated to the committee. There being no changes, they are now posted to the Board website under the PARC icon.

3. Debrief – Community meeting of May 16

A parent made an incorrect comment regarding the daycare at Ruthven. The principal provided the Recording Secretary with the correct information which was included in the minutes of the meeting.

It was noted that a strong contingent was obviously opposed to the closure of Ruthven, as well as those who were opposed to a 7-12 grade restructuring.

Superintendent Lyons suggested that the committee might want to discuss the meeting in small groups, and then as a committee at large. After a period of time, the committee regrouped and a speaker was nominated at each table. Some of the comments were:

A committee member felt that a JK-12 school may not a good recommendation as it is probably unlikely to happen. Other PARCS are asking for something similar, it is pie in the sky. It is a waste of a recommendation.

Ruthven is not on either of the other recommendations; some feel that Ruthven is being disregarded. Some other options also met the mandate and so some of those disregarded should be revisited, i.e. Options 5, 11 and 12. Other members of the committee felt that these three options (along with all those eliminated) were discussed in great detail before they were rejected by the committee.

Someone asked why all the recommendations would be taking effect at Kingsville Public and Jack Miner as geographically these schools are all on one side of town. Transportation will be an expense.

Queen of Peace is becoming a French Immersion school and we want to remain competitive and provide choices to all. Some parents may want to send their students to Ruthven.

It was clarified that MD Bennie would be closer for those families than Ruthven; it would be the home school rather than applying for out of district attendance at Ruthven. The separate board is making accommodations for a period of time for their current students who do not choose French Immersion.

Why are other PARC studies going forward with more recommendations that are very different in content from each other, for example in the Herman family?

It was clarified that the Herman PARC is farther behind this community and they are going to define some of their recommendations based on common ground tomorrow at their final committee meeting.

Another committee member added that the Herman PARC is recommending some boundary changes; why can't a boundary change be implemented to send more students to Ruthven?

The committee was told it is difficult to make comparisons. The issues facing the Herman PARC are very different from those in this community. McCallum, where the FI program is housed, cannot accommodate its own students and their eastern boundary has already been adjusted. That is why there are considering a western boundary adjustment. Boundary adjustments where there is declining enrolment and empty student spaces in the Kingsville family would be shifting difficulties from one school to another and not solving the family of schools' issues.

There is no set mandate for determining recommendations.

Someone was impressed with the meeting and the committee heard the heartfelt comments from Ruthven parents. Other communities showed empathy. This person was happy that the Ruthven parents valued their school but wanted Ruthven families to know all the things they valued were also valued at all the other schools in the family. It was felt that at the fourth community meeting cost savings should be clarified in more detail.

Everyone appreciates every parent who talks about all the things they enjoy. It is the same at every school, every parent could say the same for their school.

The community seemed to express concern at the loss of some small school status. We all understand that status quo is not an option. All of the draft recommendations provide for larger schools but they will still be small schools by definition of school size.

Transportation costs can be determined only generally; the consortium will always make the best efficiencies but routes are drawn as determinations are finalized.

A lot of concerns were heard about grades 7 and 8 transitioning to the high school. It is necessary to clarify at the next meeting that if some group of students don't relocate to the high school, the community will be in a situation where they could lose it. It appeared paramount to the community to maintain its high school.

At this time, the number of recommendations moving forward is not of concern. More importantly, the community is looking for direction from this committee. By presenting recommendations that suggest in isolation the closure of each school, the committee is abdicating its responsibility. It is very challenging for parents if there is no real direction from the committee. It is preferable that the committee has a common voice, there should be some sort of commonality.

The Board will make its own recommendations based on research, and they will not necessarily be similar to the Committee's.

As we move forward this evening, the Superintendent again cautioned committee members to keep an open mind for the whole community not just their own school community.

Someone felt that the only way to keep the high school open is to put a group of students in there. It would not be his favourite choice but we have to act for the community. They want a high school. Our philosophy was not to split school communities. If we decide to start splitting schools then we are going against our own philosophy that has been developed by consensus.

It was again clarified that French and English students are not separated in dual track schools; programming may be different but they are together on playground. They are one school community.

Some had raise the issue of gym time at the high school at the community meeting and the comment was made that they don't have enough gym time now.

The principal clarified that this is incorrect, some of the reasons may be that healthy living (part of they physical education program) it is taught in a classroom; dance, yoga pilates etc also are taught in a smaller setting such as a classroom. Migration Hall is also used for gym and other curriculum. A double gym can

accommodated 900 students, but the standard would be to use half the space. Kingsville DHS currently enjoys the luxury of using the whole gym due to low enrolment. In the secondary panel, the trend is towards personal fitness, yoga, pilates etc. All these options do not require physical gym space.

Some school communities will be separated if we are taking 7s and 8s out. It could happen that a student going into 7 would be separated from siblings. This was discussed by the committee but all 7s and 8s would be together,

In a 7-12 grade restructuring it is most likely busing would be in conjunction with K-6 students.

The community of Ruthven is going to lose its school, so it was felt by them that we will be splitting the community.

4. Examination of new community input to date

Superintendent Lyons distributed and reviewed community input received via the PARC e-mail box.

The committee was given some time to review the package. Superintendent Lyons advised that June 7 is the final community meeting and a committee member noted that rationale for decisions would be given at that time.

It was noted that Mr. Vida had a question about historical data. The Superintendent noted that we addressed this with him at the Community meeting. It is in the minutes. We use census data along with projections based on pupil yield and data from our consultant.

A list of 20 questions was submitted at the end of the day on May 29. The majority are questions for which a transition committee would make decisions.

Mandy Morris quotes Dalton McGinty's comments about closing schools and a committee member felt they were really true words.

More time was provided for the committee to read the input during dinner before final recommendations were determined.

5. Decision on final recommendations

The committee reconvened at 5:50 p.m. after a 20 minute break.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION "A"

BUILD A JK-12 DUAL TRACK SCHOOL FOR ALL STUDENTS WITHIN THE KINGSVILLE FAMILY

Discussion:

Many believed this is the best solution for the future of our students and we need to move forward with what the committee believes in.

One person was apprehensive about whether it would really happen and still feels it is a waste of a recommendation. It was noted that Administration cannot give an accurate answers about Ministry reactions, but if we take the renewal needs of all these schools (approx. \$22m) the savings are significant. Costs for land acquisition etc would have to be worked out as part of the business case submitted to the Ministry.

A committee member felt that a K-12 school provides limited opportunities for sports and other teams.

Someone else felt that we are just going from what we know, but there may be opportunities for other teams that aren't available in small schools now; there would be a breadth of opportunity for students to be involved in new activities. There would be a larger teacher population from which to draw volunteer coaches etc.

If this recommendation moves forward, we may need an intermediate step, so adding another recommendation might be a good idea. Many in the community are against a grade 7-12 restructuring so, if we close Ruthven and move the entire community to Jack Miner, leave Kingsville PS as is and leave Kingsville DHS knowing it is under capacity as an interim.

Someone said that in a large school students will miss out on the opportunity to be on teams and in a small school there are more opportunities. This was countered; in a large school you can run inter murals. There may be more volunteer teachers at a large school.

Just because we have always done something a certain way doesn't mean change is not possible.

There appears to be confusion about grade restructuring for a 7-12 school, it is up to the committee as a group to make certain that the community is provided with the facts about how such a school would operate.

It seemed that the parents' main concern is that the grade 7 and 8s would not part of the elementary panel and seem to be afraid of what their students will lose, they aren't focusing on the gains to be had. They say there will

be no leaders but a teacher who had taught in a K-6 school noted that the grade 6 students step up to be the leaders in such a setting.

Superintendent Lyons added that the reality is that we know what we know based on our experiences.

Change creates fear. Again, status quo is not a possibility, some pro-active changes need to take place. It was strongly suspected that if the community had to choose, they would prefer to keep their high school rather than lose it. At the community meeting no one suggested closing the high school in order to maintain the elementary school status.

A motion was introduced to move forward with this recommendation. A vote was called and it CARRIED.

The Committee determined to MOVE FORWARD WITH RECOMMENDATION (A).

The committee moved on to discuss recommendation B

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION "B"

ALL GRADE 7 & 8'S TO KDHS; KPS REMAINS DUAL TRACK JK-6 WITH DEMOLITION OF "OLD SECTION";
CLOSE RPS AND TRANSITION JK-6 STUDENTS TO JMPS

Discussion:

This option meets the common philosophy and reduces empty student spaces.

If the old portion of Kingsville PS is demolished, FDK monies could be used for tear down costs but it would not affect the FDK renovations.. Approximate tear down costs are \$180,000, FDK monies can be utilized only for FDK.

Demolishing the old part of the school reduces renewal costs by \$2-3m

This option is almost cost neutral.

The ETFO VP's letter regarding the removal of asbestos was referenced.

Superintendent Lyons responded that the last thing the board would ever do would be to endanger children's lives. We are in the business of protecting children. A committee member noted that asbestos removal is strictly regulated.

A motion was introduced to move forward with this recommendation. A vote was called and it CARRIED.

The Committee determined to MOVE FORWARD WITH RECOMMENDATION (B).

Draft recommendation C was debated.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION "C"

ALL GRADE 7 & 8'S TO KDHS; ALL JK-6 STUDENTS TO JMPS WITH AN ADDITION BUILT; CLOSE RPS AND KPS

Discussion:

Someone felt it is over zealous to recommend the closure of two schools and it seems a fairly expensive solution.

It negates option A.

Opposite opinion is that this has the most cost savings.

The condition of Jack Miner and surrounding property has a lot to offer. It is not however attached to a specific community.

Closing two schools offers increased cost savings.

We keep talking about communities. The fact is that the community is not Kingsville, not Ruthven, there is no Gosfield. There is no longer any Kingsville or Ruthven alone. They are one municipality. Within 2 years the school would become the community. Wherever students are relocated, it would become the community no matter what. The students will make it the community, as far as they are concerned, they already have a community. We aren't considering that students from all three elementary schools play hockey, soccer, take dance class, are at each other's birthday parties and they are already comfortable with each other.

We heard from the CAO of the town of Kingsville and a developer. Closing two schools might be a mistake, if everything happens that they say is going to happen it may not be a good idea to close two schools.

Developments can be on line for a long time, the new developments are factored into our projection numbers.

Demographic of that growth is an important piece, it would appear that much if the growth is in the over 55 category.

A motion was introduced to move forward with this recommendation. A vote was called and it WAS DEFEATED.

The Committee determined to ELIMINATE RECOMMENDATION (C).

At the community presentation the committee must outline the reasons why this was defeated and is not moving forward

A Committee member wondered if we could demolish part of Kingsville DHS and leave the secondary and elementary school grade structure as is.

Option D. (new)

Demolish part of Kingsville DHS (would increase utilization rate). Close Kingsville PS. French and English students split between Ruthven and Jack Miner

Discussion:

Doesn't fit with common philosophy

A motion was introduced to move forward with this recommendation. A vote was called and it WAS DEFEATED.

The Committee determined to ELIMINATE NEW RECOMMENDATION (D).

Option E. (new)

Demolition of a portion of Kingsville DHS, demolish old part of Kingsville PS, close Ruthven and transition to Jack Miner

Discussion:

Would not be enough space for the 7 and 8 students to stay at Kingsville PS.

Would be very difficult to remove ten classrooms at the high school based on layout of the school; every hallway has some specialty eg science labs, tech shops, and it would require the removal of a whole hallway thus losing some specialty areas

We should be making decisions based on what we feel is the best decision for this family of schools, not what we feel trustees are looking for.

The committee was reminded that status quo is not an option. The committee needs to provide to trustees input on common ground for the whole community.

A motion was introduced to move forward with this recommendation. A vote was called and it WAS DEFEATED.

The Committee determined to ELIMINATE NEW RECOMMENDATION (E).

Option F (new)

Close Kingsville PS, all grade 7 and 8 students from all three elementary schools transition to high school; Kingsville PS French Immersion/English track to either Jack Miner PS or Ruthven. Jack Miner PS and Ruthven become grade K-6 schools

Discussion:

When discussed previously, the committee did not want to split schools; Kingsville PS would be split 3 ways. Families would be separated.

Transportation costs?

40-50 elementary students is a full bus. Efficiencies are based on routes. Kingsville PS and Ruthven have similar transportation percentages. Kingsville, having more students, transportation costs would be higher. Until decisions are made and routes are designed, exact costs cannot be provided. Our Board is part of a transportation consortium. Buses are used for all four boards. Transportation will always find the most economical route no matter who is bused.

A committee member felt that the less recommendations, the better. The committee appears focused and following a particular direction.

Someone still had concerns about the first recommendation and wondered why a third option could not be added

We have already voted not to move forward with option 11.

Once we determined the common philosophy we have made some solid decisions, and we are now opening up our common philosophy.

We have to consider the community input in our decision making.

A motion was introduced to consider moving forward with this recommendation. A vote was called and it WAS TIED.

The mover noted that if it is agreed, as a group, that this strays from the common philosophy, it would be removed from the floor.

It was again stressed that it is difficult for people to understand that Kingsville PS is an entire school community, it is the programming within the building that is different.

The Superintendent reviewed the framework as determined by the committee.

The committee must make decisions based on what they believe is the best decision for all, not what makes most people happy. You cannot make everyone happy. Decisions must be made based on data available that has been reviewed over the past months.

The committee was asked to discuss in a group setting, from a board perspective, which option had the most advantages. The common framework helps drive the decision making.

There was discussion at the individual tables, comparing previous options F and B.

Discussion regarding Option F:

Geographically, some felt that Ruthven is a growing community and the school is at the core of the community. There is available green space so there is potential for an expansion. There may be a possible increase in population.

A Committee member said that no matter where French Immersion students are, the parents are committed to a program rather than a school. Others felt differently.

It breaks the common philosophy (framework)

Discussion regarding Option B:

Kingsville is also a growing community. Transportation costs may be greater.

The Superintendent reminded the committee should be moving forward in the same direction with all options; not in direct conflict of each other.

A second vote was called on Option F and it WAS DEFEATED.

The Committee determined to ELIMINATE NEW RECOMMENDATION (E).

An interim plan for option A was introduced.

Close Ruthven and all students transition to Jack Miner PS; Kingsville PS and Kingsville DHS remain status quo.

Discussion:

In isolation, this does not meet the mandate but it is a temporary solution with no added costs. It does involve multiple transitions for Ruthven students.

The Superintendent felt it was not really an intermediate step, but could be construed as another recommendation entirely.

A committee member felt that by providing an interim plan we are causing more concern for parents.

A Motion was introduced to consider this recommendation. A vote was called and it was A TIE.

There was further discussion:

It was noted that the premise of a PARC is to determine common ground and provide recommendations that address the community in the best way.

There will still be declining enrolment in the secondary panel in five years and if it is not addressed, then the committee may be putting the high school in precarious situation in the future.

We only heard from unhappy people about having a grade 7-12 restructure; the majority of the community wants to maintain the high school.

A Motion was introduced to consider adding this addendum to recommendation A. A vote was called and it TIED.

There was further conversation. Some committee members felt this would add confusion for the community.

A second vote was called and it CARRIED

The Committee determined to ADD AN ADDENDUM WHICH PROVIDED AN INTERIM SOLUTION FOR RECOMMENDATION A.

6. Format for Final Community meeting June 7

The draft powerpoint was reviewed. A final copy will be distributed electronically.

7. Update on status of draft report to Board. It will be presented at a regular meeting of Board on June 19)

Report writing group has been meeting and will finalize details shortly. Copies will be shared electronically.

8. Questions and clarifications

These were addressed throughout the meeting.

A committee member requested that the committee sits together at the community meeting as decisions affecting all schools have been made by the committee as a united group.

There was a brief discussion about using Migration Hall for the final community meeting. A letter generated by the Superintendent's office which will be sent home will outline the location.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8: 35 p.m.

Distribution:

Minutes of May 7 committee meeting

Minutes of May 16 community meeting

Community input