

GREATER ESSEX COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 13, 2016

TO: The Chairperson and Trustees of the
Board of Education

FROM: E. Kelly
Director of Education

T. Awender
Superintendent of Education

SUBJECT: Program Accommodation Review – Initial Staff Report

PURPOSE:

As required by the Ministry of Education, the purpose of this Initial Staff Report is to recommend for approval, to the Board of Trustees, the commencement of a Program Accommodation Review in the Leamington area. This Accommodation Review will specifically involve recommendation(s) that will affect the following five elementary schools:

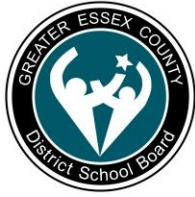
- Gore Hill Public School
- Margaret D. Bennie Public School
- Mill Street Public School
- Mt. Carmel-Blytheswood Public School
- Queen Elizabeth Public School

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT THE BOARD APPROVE THE IMMEDIATE COMMENCEMENT OF A STANDARD PROGRAM ACCOMMODATION REVIEW THAT INCLUDES GORE HILL PS, MARGARET D. BENNIE PS, MILL STREET PS, MT. CARMEL-BLYTHESWOOD PS, AND QUEEN ELIZABETH PS, AS SET OUT IN THE PROGRAM ACCOMMODATION REVIEW – INITIAL STAFF REPORT, DATED DECEMBER 13, 2016.

BACKGROUND:

On March 26, 2015 the Ministry of Education released the new Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline (PARG) and Community Planning and Partnership Guideline (CPPG). On January 19, 2016 the Board of Trustees approved the new Program Accommodation Review and Community Planning and Partnership Policies and Regulations reflecting the changes of the new guidelines, after consultation had taken place with the community. The approval of the before mentioned Policies and Regulations permits the Board of Trustees to consider and approve the commencement of a Program Accommodation Review.



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A Long Term Accommodation Report was provided to the Board at the November 15, 2016 Board meeting. Enrolment projections, capacity issues, program needs, the identification of capital issues, etc. are outlined below. Areas that are identified as under capacity, having a high Facility Condition Index (FCI), and having high renewal needs require a reduction in pupil places which would entail a Program Accommodation Review.

Summary of Accommodation Issues

i. Enrolment and Utilization

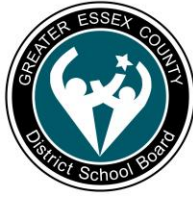
Figure 1 outlines the current and projected enrolment and utilization for the five elementary schools mentioned above in the Leamington area grouping of schools. The total enrolment of the five schools is approximately 1419 students and there is an expected decline over the next decade. The On the Ground (OTG) capacity of the five schools is 1833. Overall, there is an excess of 414 student places operating with a utilization rate of 77%.

Figure 1: Enrolment and Utilization (Sept. 26, 2016)

School	OTG Capacity	2016		2021		2026	
		Enrolment	Utilization %	Enrolment	Utilization %	Enrolment	Utilization %
Gore Hill	338	223	66%	216	64%	213	63%
M.D. Bennie	291	262	90%	252	87%	229	79%
Mill Street	280	221	79%	179	64%	172	61%
Mt. Carmel-Blytheswood	351	219	62%	202	58%	197	56%
Queen Elizabeth	573	494	86%	460	80%	437	76%
TOTAL	1833	1419	77%	1309	71%	1248	68%

ii. Facility Condition

Figure 2 outlines the facility condition and some operational costs associated with the five elementary schools involved in this proposed program accommodation review. It must be noted that additions were added to some of the schools at various times over the years. Also, Mill Street PS has a ten room portapak that has 230 temporary spaces that are not factored in the OTG, FCI or 5-year renewal. Further, the Facility Condition Index (FCI) is the renewal requirement of the facility divided by the replacement cost, multiplied by 100. According to industry standards, a FCI of less than 5% is “good”, between 5-10% is “fair”, between 10-30% is “poor”, and greater than 30% is crucial.



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Figure 2: Facility Condition and Operational Cost

School	Construction	2016 FCI	5-Year Renewal \$	Operational Cost \$	AODA Compliance
Gore Hill	1954	29%	\$2,240,963	\$172,677	Yes
M.D. Bennie	1959	27%	\$1,947,425	\$201,520	Yes
Mill Street	1967	36%	\$2,665,950	\$259,314	Yes
Mt. Carmel- Blytheswood	1952	20%	\$1,578,150	\$200,176	Yes
Queen Elizabeth	1955	16%	\$1,831,935	\$316,216	Yes

Past Actions to Address Accommodation and Capital Issues

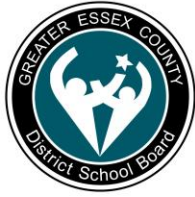
In order to address the program, facility and utilization pressures experienced in the group of schools, a number of actions have taken place in the past. Additions to Gore Hill (1962/64/95), MD Bennie (1993), Mill Street (1970), Mt. Carmel-Blytheswood (59/67/2002), and Queen Elizabeth (1966/91/92/2012) were completed. Further, Mill Street at one point was over-capacity and to alleviate the extreme pressure, a ten room temporary portapak was added. Although Queen Elizabeth is under-capacity, it houses three portables due to the specialized programs at the school that have fewer students occupying a classroom. Mt. Carmel-Blytheswood had a ten classroom addition constructed to accommodate the students transitioning from the former Blytheswood school that has since been sold. Boundary adjustments were made between Mill Street and Gore Hill and Gore Hill had a new addition in 1995. MD Bennie required two portables for some time, which are no longer necessary and have been removed.

Over the years there has been a significant decline in enrolment in the area. Program opportunities such as English as a Second Language were established in Mill Street and Queen Elizabeth PS. Specialized programming for children with exceptionalities has been established, and growing to accommodate our students in their home school district. The Ontario Early Years (OEY) program exists at Mill Street, while Queen Elizabeth houses a Parent and Family Literacy Center (PFLC).

All the schools in the Leamington area are open boundary schools. There are many students attending out of district at many of the schools in this area.

Proposed Accommodation Options Recommended

As outlined, the prominent pressures facing this group of schools are the number of excess pupil places, the low school enrolments, the facility condition and renewal costs associated specifically with all the schools in this review. The following proposed options represent solutions that align with the Board's strategic priorities for the effective and responsible use of resources to be directed at programming that meet student needs.



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- 1) Mill Street PS close effective June 2017 and be declared surplus to the Board's needs. Students currently in the Mill Street PS catchment area who are on and north of Talbot Street West will transition to Mt. Carmel-Blytheswood PS and the remaining students currently in the Mill Street PS catchment area south of Talbot Street West will transition to Queen Elizabeth PS effective September 2017. The boundary will be adjusted accordingly.
- 2) The Board will submit a School Consolidation Capital (SCC) business case to the Ministry of Education for a 550 pupil place new school building. Upon Ministry approval, this new JK-8 school construction would be a consolidation of the Gore Hill PS and MD Bennie PS student populations, on the MD Bennie site. Upon construction of the new school, Gore Hill PS would be closed and declared surplus to the Board's needs, and the students would transition into the new building. The boundaries would be adjusted accordingly.
- 3) A phased-in dual track French Immersion JK program at Gore Hill PS begin for September 2017. Each year thereafter, a French Immersion grade level program will be added. If the Ministry approves the previous recommendation, the French Immersion program would continue to exist in the newly built consolidated school. The boundaries for FI would encompass the entire Leamington family of schools.
- 4) If the proposed accommodation option #1, above, is approved, the Board will then pursue capital funding from the Ministry of Education and upon approval;

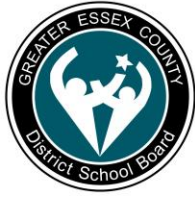
Priority 1

The construction of a new consolidated Queen Elizabeth PS; or

Priority 2

The construction of a five room addition to the newly consolidated Queen Elizabeth PS.

- 5) The final proposed part of the options involves boundary adjustments for September 2017. The students currently attending these five schools as of the 2016-2017 school year will be granted a limited exception, without transportation, to remain at the respective school until grade 8, if at the same address. Any new registrations or JK students from September 2017 and forward will adhere to the new boundaries which are as follows:
 - i) The current MD Bennie PS boundary that is north of the tracks will become part of the Mt. Carmel-Blytheswood PS boundary.



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- ii) The current Queen Elizabeth PS boundary that is west of Erie Street (including the west side of the street) will become part of the MD Bennie PS boundary.
 - iii) The current Queen Elizabeth PS boundary that includes Antonio Street up to and including Talbot Street West will become part of the Gore Hill PS boundary.
- 6) The principals of the schools, in consultation with their school councils, work with Senior Administration to implement and communicate the changes.

Accommodation Impacts

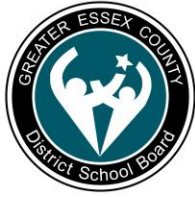
As noted, the proposed options previously outlined would result in an effective and responsible utilization of facilities and resources. Figure 3 assumes the above options commence September 2017.

Figure 3: Option Recommended Outcome - Enrolment and Utilization

School	OTG Capacity	2017		2021		2026	
		Enrolment	Utilization %	Enrolment	Utilization %	Enrolment	Utilization %
MD Bennie / Gore Hill	550	562	102%	546	99%	517	94%
Mt. Carmel Blytheswood	351	309	88%	289	82%	279	79%
Queen Elizabeth	530	510	96%	474	89%	452	85%
TOTAL	1431	1381	97%	1309	91%	1248	87%

Program Impacts

All five schools involved are English track JK-8 schools that provide programming based on the Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum. The consolidation of the schools previously mentioned, along with the boundary changes, will maintain programming and more equally distribute the student populations, while providing the potential benefits of a larger school population. A dual track French Immersion program would be implemented in one school to provide this opportunity for the students in the Leamington area, who currently have access to FI in the Kingsville area. As witnessed in the past, schools with smaller populations often have a greater chance of combined classes and a reduced availability of extracurricular activities and after school programs. Larger school populations provide more responsible and efficient staffing allocations, the additional staff support for the extracurricular activities and after school



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programs, and the opportunity for teachers to work together to enhance their teaching practice through Professional Learning Communities and co-planning with grade equivalent colleagues.

Transportation Impacts

Preliminary analysis provided by Transportation has indicated that nearly 90% of the Gore Hill students are bussed. A proposed consolidated Gore Hill and MD Bennie would not have an increase in bussing. With the other changes, all the students north of Talbot Street West are currently bussed. With the boundary change, there would not be an increase as they would continue to be bussed to Mt. Carmel-Blytheswood. In both cases there could be potential to increase the capacity of the current busses and actually decrease the number of busses on the street. The boundary change with Antonio Street being re-directed to Gore Hill will not increase bussing as the students will continue to be bussed. The boundary change re-directing the student from Queen Elizabeth to MD Bennie will actually create two fewer busses on the street seeing they will not be eligible for transportation. This analysis is based on current addresses of students, current program related transportation arrangements, board policy, and current bus sharing and tiering arrangements. It is possible that further savings could arise through a review of bell time changes which would result in run sharing/tiering opportunities on current school vehicles servicing these schools.

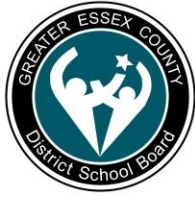
Funding

Funding for the proposed recommendation of the consolidation of Gore Hill and MD Bennie into a new building would be based on a School Consolidation Capital (SCC) business case submission to the Ministry of Education. A childcare addition to the new build would also be included in the business case. The proposed capital investment required would be approximately \$15 million. In the event funding is not immediately received, the intent would be to remain status quo, except for the implementation of the FI program, while continuing to submit a business case through the annual Ministry of Education capital priority submission cycle.

Funding for the proposed recommendation of the boundary change and consolidation of Mill Street into a new Queen Elizabeth building, or addition as outlined previously, would be based on a SCC business case submission to the Ministry of Education. A childcare addition to the new build or addition would also be included in the business case. The proposed capital investment required would be approximately \$15 million for a new build, and approximately \$2 million for an addition. There could be a potential, if funding is not received immediately, to add portables to the site depending on the enrolment and specialized programs at that time.

Community Planning and Partnerships

On April 14, 2016 invitations were sent to municipalities and community partners to attend a public meeting in keeping with the new Community Planning and Partnership Guideline.



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On April 26, 2016 an information session was held to provide municipalities and community partners an opportunity to review the list of schools with available space in which a community partnership could be considered.

On July 6, 2016 invitations were sent to municipalities and community partners to attend a second public meeting in keeping with the Community Planning and Partnership Guideline. On August 16, 2016 a second information session was held to provide municipalities and community partners an opportunity to review the list of schools with available space in which a community partnership could be considered, while also providing an overview of the current state of the GECDSB with respect to surplus space, the aging infrastructure, and the fiscal responsibility of the Board.

Of the five schools listed in the subject review area, Gore Hill PS was identified as having available space for a potential community partnership. The public meeting was advertised through the local media, an email notification to the entities listed in the guideline, written letters, phone calls, while it continues to remain on the Board's website.

It must also be noted that funding related to community hubs was recently announced in October, 2016. This funding is to be used to make minor retrofits to available space in schools for community hub space and to improve the accessibility of schools in order to allow greater opportunities for use by community partners that provide services or supports that satisfy the requirements of section 234 of the *Education Act*. Those requirements can be generalized as promoting the care and/or development of children (emotional, social or physical) or promoting student success.

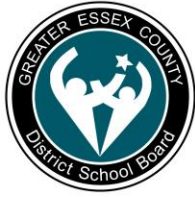
As noted in the Ministry of Education memorandum 2016:B18, Community Hubs Capital Funding: Minor Retrofits and Accessibility:

School boards are encouraged to work with their community partners to explore mutually advantageous opportunities to share space in schools that would benefit both the board and the broader community as explained in the *Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline*. The Ministry recognizes that in many cases, when a community partner is prepared to occupy available school space in an operating school, some minor retrofits may be required to allow the partner to operate most effectively in the space.

Optional Modified Accommodation Review

The optional modified program and accommodation review process may be undertaken where two or more of the criteria set out in the newly approved GECDSB Program and Accommodation Review Regulation apply to one or more school(s) within a group of schools.

- Utilization rates less than 75% are Gore Hill (66%), Mt. Carmel-Blytheswood (62%)



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- FCI greater than 30% is Mill Street (36%)
- All schools less than 10 km. Mt. Carmel-Blytheswood to Mill Street (4.8km), Mill Street to Queen Elizabeth (1.5km), MD Bennie to Gore Hill (3.5km), Queen Elizabeth to MD Bennie (1.9km), Queen Elizabeth to Gore Hill (3.8km)
- 5-year renewal \$ needed for major capital investment for Gore Hill (\$2.24 million), Mill Street (\$2.67 million)

Optional Modified Timelines

Date	Event
December 13, 2016	Trustee Approval to conduct an Accommodation Review
February 9, 2017	Public Meeting
February 27, 2017	Final Staff Report is posted and Trustees receive a copy
March 21, 2017	Final Staff Report is presented at Board Meeting and Trustees hear public delegations
April 18, 2017	Final decision of Trustees at Board Meeting

Proposed Timelines

The following timelines are for the proposed recommended **standard** accommodation review as set out in the GECDSB Policy and Regulation, which are consistent with the Ministry of Education guidelines:

Date	Event
December 13, 2016	Trustee Approval to conduct an Accommodation Review
February 9, 2017	First Public Meeting
April 20, 2017	Final Public Meeting
May 5, 2017	Final Staff Report is posted and Trustees receive a copy
May 24, 2017 (special meeting)	Final Staff Report is presented at Board Meeting and Trustees hear public delegations
June 8, 2017 (special meeting)	Final decision of Trustees at Board Meeting

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT THE BOARD APPROVE THE IMMEDIATE COMMENCEMENT OF A STANDARD PROGRAM ACCOMMODATION REVIEW THAT INCLUDES GORE HILL PS, M.D. BENNIE PS, MILL STREET PS, MT. CARMEL-BLYTHESWOOD PS AND QUEEN ELIZABETH PS, AS SET OUT IN THE PROGRAM ACCOMMODATION REVIEW – INITIAL STAFF REPORT, DATED DECEMBER 13, 2016.