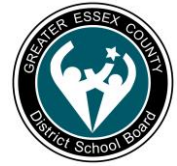


**Greater Essex County District School Board**  
**2016-2017 PROGRAM AND ACCOMMODATION REVIEW**  
**Report of the Committee Meeting**  
**Thursday, March 2, 2017 at 3:45 p.m.**  
**Gore Hill Public School**

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At the December 13, 2016 regular meeting of the Board, Trustees approved the following recommendation regarding Gore Hill PS, Margaret D Bennie PS, Mill Street PS, Mt. Carmel-Blytheswood PS, and Queen Elizabeth PS:

**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.**

**Present:**

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>Gore Hill PS:</u>           | Bill Cervini, Principal, Christine Williams, Staff Rep, Donna Stickles, Parent   |
| <u>MD Bennie PS:</u>           | Patti Oshar, Principal, Karen Koestler, Staff Rep, Erika Junge Bachmeier, Parent |
| <u>Mill Street PS:</u>         | Michelle Sprague-Keane, Principal, Greg Dobson, Staff Rep, Joanna Zeiter, Parent |
| <u>Mt. Carmel-Blytheswood:</u> | Kim Pool-Oleynik, Principal, Becky Bunn, Staff Rep, Annie Froese, Parent         |
| <u>Queen Elizabeth PS:</u>     | Helen Dean, Principal, Chris MacLeod, Staff Rep, Nikki Barry, Parent             |
| <u>Community Rep:</u>          | Nicole Dupuis  |
| <b>Chair:</b>                  | Superintendent Todd Awender  |
| <b>Recorder:</b>               | Christine Breshamer  |

- 1. Tour of Gore Hill (optional – 3:45-4:00pm)**  
The Committee took a brief tour of the grounds of Gore Hill.
- 2. Call to Order**  
The meeting was called to order at 4:12 p.m. by Chair Awender thanking everyone for their attendance and Principal Cervini for hosting the meeting. Introductions were made. Everyone was seated in working groups.
- 3. Review of notes of orientation meeting of January 26, 2017**  
The report of the January 26 meeting have been circulated to the committee and posted to the Board website under the Student Accommodations icon. There were no changes and no questions generated from the report.
- 4. Review Committee/Community input to date and Information Responses**  
We have received several pieces of community input which was shared with the committee. Community input received is posted on the Board website under the Student Accommodations icon, Community input link and will be updated, from time to time.
- 5. Debrief - Community meeting of February 9, 2017**  
The consensus of the committee is that the focus groups were well received.

Q: By the next committee meeting at the end of March, will we know the final recommendations?  
No. The process is ever evolving. Input will continue to be received throughout the process through email, at our next community meeting and through delegations at the Board meetings. The final recommendations will not be in place until June 8<sup>th</sup>.

A Committee member asked about the possibility of changing East Mersea's boundaries. Superintendent Awender reiterated to the Committee that all ideas should be brought forward for consideration. He informed the committee that a boundary study is warranted if 50% or more of a school population is affected. The Committee requested black and white maps be provided at the next meeting for the purposes of reviewing and developing boundaries.

**Action:** Send East Mersea's Information Sheet from the Long Term Accommodation Report to the Committee to review capacity.

At the previous community meeting it was brought to the attention of the group that potentially the formal process may be intimidating to various cultures. As a result, there was discussion on how to better include the Low german mennonite population in this process. Superintendent Awender asked for ideas as to some type of forum in which the Low german culture would feel more comfortable so they could be more involved.

Consensus of the Committee was to be consistent in providing information and gathering input from all groups. The Committee felt that having a SWIS worker present at the community meeting for oral translation as well as scribing purposes for the Question/Input cards would be beneficial. Superintendent Awender agreed to contact the SWIS worker for the Leamington area to discuss possibilities for communication.

## 6. Discussion to develop Guiding Considerations

Superintendent Awender collected input from the committee to develop guiding considerations.

The Committee came up with the following guiding considerations:

- aging infrastructure/higher renewal needs
- transportation costs
- empty space/utilization rates
- operating costs
- staffing efficiencies/collaboration within staff
- consolidations – make a good business case to present to Ministry
- combined classes
- equipment costs
- more extra-curricular opportunities – on the other hand, there is more competition which creates less opportunity for individual students
- selling surplus properties
- new builds bring community revitalization
- limited amount of student change and moves
- Bring communities together/new experiences and friends

**7. Working groups:**

Superintendent Awender reviewed the current recommendations with the Committee. The Committee then broke into working groups to brainstorm possible ideas for recommendations.

**8. Group Discussion of small group ideas**

Ideas were collected to be discussed further at the next meeting.

A committee member prepared a proposal and spreadsheet which have been attached to this report.

Close Mill Street. Also close Mount Carmel-Blytheswood since its population is declining. Bring the country students from County Rd 31 (Albuna Townline) to Hwy 77 into MD Bennie. Students east of Mersea Rd 12 down to Talbot Street can bus to East Mersea. Gore Hill stays open and has students from 77 to Mersea Rd 12, as well as its original area. Southern square that is Danforth might also fall into the Gore Hill area if numbers are needed. Queen Elizabeth picks up the Mill Students east of Erie Street. The 5th concession is very busy at that corner because of the number of semi trucks hauling mushrooms and bales of straw. Also, there is a cement factory on the Southeast corner on the eastern side of 77 that also has many trucks turning. Lastly, the prevailing winds are south west. The mushroom plant smells and the school is in a direct line for that smell. If the school is not totally air conditioned so windows can be closed and remain closed, the smell can be unbearable to say the least.

If a boundary adjustment were made using Erie Street as the dividing line (i.e., students living East and West of Erie Street N. and S., how could this change the catchment areas for Mount Carmel-Blytheswood, MD Bennie, Queen Elizabeth, Gore Hill and East Mersea? Further to this, would this new organization create consideration for a different consolidation of schools (e.g., MCB and Bennie)?

Based on the adjustments mentioned, the different areas have been broken down into smaller sections with the number of students in each section. This will hopefully help guide in any specific recommendations the Committee may formulate.

- Mill Street catchment area west of Erie and north of Talbot: 40 students
- Mill Street catchment area east of Erie and north of Talbot: 35 students
- Mt. Carmel-Blytheswood catchment area west of Erie: 88 students
- Mt. Carmel-Blytheswood catchment area east of Erie: 111 students
- Queen Elizabeth catchment area west of Erie: 75 students
- Mill Street catchment area south of Talbot: 126 students

Close Mill Street School and Gore Hill School.

The proposed boundary change of 75 Queen Elizabeth students to MD Bennie happens (west of Erie Street, north of Oak Street)

Adjust MD Bennie school boundary so all students north of Talbot Road attend Mt Carmel-Blytheswood. The proposed boundary change of 22 QEPS students on Antonio Court be cancelled to allow those 22 students to continue to live within QEPS school boundary. These students could likely transition between 3 schools in three years which is not in the best mental interest of these students. Divide the students who attend Gore Hill PS between MD Bennie and East Mersea: students who live south of Seacliff Drive could attend MD Bennie. The exact student distribution (school boundary) will

reflect school capacity of East Mersea and MD Bennie. It does not seem rational to bus students from out of town to town daily.

Queen Elizabeth will be fully utilized.

MD Bennie will be fully utilized.

Mt Carmel-Blytheswood will be more utilized.

Close school boundaries.

All students need to attend their home schools in September (with the exception of grade 8s)

A committee member stated the new purple education signs which were supplied by the Ministry to show which schools have received renewal money were on all Leamington schools except Gore Hil. It was communicated this gave the perception that the closing of Gore Hill was a foregone conclusion. Superintendent Awender told the Committee our Board received a lot of money from the Ministry to be allocated for repairs on boilers, lighting, h-vac systems, etc. Any issues pertaining to student safety take first priority. Every school has been assessed to determine renewal needs. Funding has been allocated due to priority. The Committee agreed the purpose for the signs should be better communicated to the community. The work to be done on many of our schools was determined prior to the commencement of the Accommodation Review. This information will be shared with Facility Services.

## 9. Questions

Q: With any new build, is there going to be year round schooling with air conditioning?

The Board has investigated this possibility in the past. There are many logistical pieces that go along with that idea that have been explored. Cannot say either way but most likely not at this point. The Board is always willing to explore new ideas. All new builds have air conditioning.

Q: East Mersea is still considered open boundary. A committee member expressed concern about losing families to East Mersea because of the uncertainty of the outcome of the PAR.

At the end of this PAR all schools in the Leamington family of schools will most likely be closed boundary.

Q: What is the long term plan for Leamington District SS once it is closed?

Once the students are in the Leamington District SS new build it will be deemed as surplus to the Board's needs. The Superintendent of Business will follow the appropriate policy and procedure for the process of selling buildings. It will also be sold at fair market value.

Q: Would it be sold the same as Blytheswood and Ruthven?

Yes, if there hasn't been any change to the process.

Q: Has the Board considered placing a new build on that site? Which schools would benefit from a new build being placed on that site?

This Committee can consider all ideas including adjusting boundaries. The Board has and will explore any potential sites.

Q: When the recommendations are put forward to the Ministry, how are they submitted? For example, can you make the proposed new build for Queen Elizabeth option #1, the closing of Mill Street option #2, and the consolidation of Gore Hill and MD Bennie into a new build option #3?

When business cases are submitted to the Ministry they are listed in order of priority. The Ministry analyzes information and they will approve what they think best utilizes funding. The Ministry does not necessarily approve business cases in the order they are submitted. Queen Elizabeth could be first on the list, then the Gore Hill/MD Bennie consolidation next and so on. Again, they are not necessarily approved in the order submitted. It is possible that our fourth and fifth priority can be approved, while the first three are not.

Q: When a Family of Schools is looked at, has the Ministry ever approved two new builds at the same time? What about a new build and an addition?

To the best of my knowledge, two new builds at the same time has not been approved within a family of schools in our Board. The Ministry may approve consolidations as that makes for a good business case. Business cases would be submitted to the Ministry in fall 2017. Typically, we would know by the early spring 2018 what has been approved or not. If an addition received approval, it could be built by September 2018.

Q: Could an addition at Queen Elizabeth and a new build for Gore Hill/MD Bennie be done at same time?

Yes. Typically it takes nearly 3 years from the time a new build is approved before the students can move in.

#### **10. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

The next Committee meeting is at 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 29 at Mount Carmel-Blytheswood PS.

**COMMITTEE MEMBER'S PROPOSAL AND SPREADSHEET****Initial Staff Report – Concerns**

- 1) The Closure of Mill Street will
  - Create a “Domino Effect” on the Boundaries of all the Leamington Schools resulting in boundary changes for many families with very little notice. Approx 326 Children will be affected this fall of 2017 alone. Possibly more as the full affect will not be clear due to the Grandfather rule and how many families have children entering school in the next few years.
  - This plan also has the possibility of a number of students having to move schools twice in a 3 year period.
  - Moving in town kids from Mill Street district to a Country School – Mount Carmel is problematic as these children have other in town options for schools very close by. Parents with no vehicle or one vehicle would have a hard time getting to their kids if need be.
  - If you live in a Town Core, children should be able to attend an In Town Core School. This Proposal calls for immediately moving In Town Core Kids to a Country School and in 3 years moving Country Kids to an in town core school.
  - The proposed boundary change for Antonio Court is not fair considering they are being moved to Gore Hill – a school slated to close in 3 years. In 3 years it does not make sense moving them to MDB considering Queen Elizabeth is significantly closer so it's possible the boundary will be changed again.
- 2) The Closure of Mill Street so soon is problematic as this school falls under the Ministry's definition of a Community Hub. What is the plan for the Ontario Early Year Center? Access Program? It also will result in a very specialized program – The GAINS program to be moved. This is a very specialized program and not easy to move as there are many factors involved. No formal plan has been presented so far. With Queen E and MDB at or over capacity as per the Initial Staff Report it is possible that an in town core school will not be able to hold this program in the fall of 2017 and these kids would have to move to a Country School. Schools will have to be altered to house this program. This would require more of an investment and it is possible that this program may move again. GAINS program should remain within the town core and moved to the school where it can stay permanently – ideally built into the new MDB School.

[The Ontario Early Years Centre is currently under review, along with the Parenting & Family Literacy Centres across the region. A plan will be formalized in the near future. The Access program will be informed and discussions would take place if they had interest in another one of our schools.](#)
- 3) French Immersion JK Program to begin at Gore Hill and then move when consolidated to MDB. I believe the French Immersion Program will have the best chance of success at an In Town Core School that it will remain in permanently to re-assure parents knowing their

children will not move schools again. Therefore if MDB is the intended final destination for this program then start it there to begin with and leave it there.

- 4) Based on Enrolment, since over 69% of the Students attend in town Core schools, it does not make sense to have only 2 in town core schools and 2 Country Schools in the area.

Jan 2017 Enrolment numbers – all 5 schools 1448

Total Enrolment at 3 in town core schools – 999 – 69% of total enrolment

Total Enrolment at 2 Country Schools – 449 – 31% of total enrolment

**The utilization for the country schools is also significantly lower. Based on these numbers, how can closing an in town core school in June 2017 be justified?**

- 5) Closing Mill Street will cause uncertain enrolment numbers for Queen and MDB. It is possible that one school next year based on boundary changes would be well over capacity and not possible without portables and may result in certain schools being over utilized and others underutilized. See Attached Spreadsheet

**Queen Elizabeth Utilization could range anywhere from 89.5% to 106.5%**

**MDB Utilization could range anywhere from 76.3% to 109.3% .**

**Gore Hill and Mount Carmel would both still be underutilized resulting in 2 under utilized Country Schools.**

Explanation: If you include East Mersea, the numbers go to approximately 59% and 39%. Excluding Queen Elizabeth, which is nearly 500 students, the remaining 5 schools all have under 250 students. We have to look strategically at all the schools in the view versus just an individual school.

### Recommended Changes to the Initial Staff Report

- 1) Mill Street Public to remain open until a New School is built at the MDB site and an addition or new school build for Queen Elizabeth. At this time, Boundaries are adjusted accordingly between Queen E and MDB to accommodate students.
- 2) Gore Hill closes effective June 2017. The boundaries adjusted to move these students between Mount Carmel Blytheswood, East Mersea – if possible, and Queen Elizabeth, and MDB if needed.
- 3) French Immersion JK Program at MDB to begin September 2017. The boundary for FI would encompass the entire Leamington family of Schools

### **Advantages of Recommended Changes**

- Eliminates the Domino effect of boundary changes and the uncertainty as Mill Street would still be open. The only kids moving would be the population of Gore Hill (3 years earlier than expected). This would allow MDB to be able to house the French Immersion Program Long Term giving the program the best opportunity for success as the program would be within the Town Core at a Prime Location and parents would have the peace of mind to know the program will start and remain at the same school

- In 3 years the GAINS program can move, after being properly built into either Queen E or MDB resulting in only one properly planned move.
- This Plan involves **only** moving 227 Students from Gore Hill for 2017, 3 years earlier than expected as opposed to proposed boundary changes for approx 326 Students for 2017 (possibly more based on Jan 2017 enrolment numbers). Due to the short timeline involved – **Greatest Good for the Greatest amount of Students.** Eliminates the Domino effect of moving the boundaries of all schools so quickly and the enrolment uncertainty that will come with the changes. 6 months – 1 year prior to the closing of Mill Street the boundaries can be re-adjusted and plenty of time to send out letters of intent to all families to better understand the enrolment picture for the following school year. Students living within the Town Core can remain until such a time as the other 2 in town Core schools can accommodate them. This mitigates the risk of families moving to different school boards.
- Keeps 3 schools open within the town core. Enrolment numbers show that over 69% of students currently attend in town core schools so it makes sense they have more schools in the interim than Country Schools.
- Allows Mount Carmel the opportunity to increase its population and achieve maximum utilization. Many of the Gore Hill Families expressed interest that they prefer a country school with more acreage and this allows most families that prefer a Country School the opportunity to attend one.
- Keeps in Town Core Kids in an In Town Core School and as much as possible will Keep Country Kids in Country Schools.
- More Balanced Enrolment Numbers with very little uncertainty for 2017.

### **HOW THE ENROLMENT AT SCHOOLS WOULD LOOK**

- See attached Spreadsheet – more balanced and known enrolment numbers at the different schools.
- If needed some Gore Hill Boundaries can be adjusted to allow current Gore Hill Kids off Seacliff Drive between Erie St and County Road 33 to attend MDB. Not sure how many kids. So streets like Regatta etc. This would alleviate the pressure on QEPS if need be.



[illegible]

| <b>Gore Hill</b>             | <b>Initial Staff Report Boundary<br/>Changes Ranges Low to High</b> |              | <b>Proposed Change To<br/>Initial Staff Report</b> |
|------------------------------|---|--------------|--|
|                              |   |              |  |
| Januay 2017 Enrollment       | 227   | 227          | -  |
| Grade 8's Leaving            | -19   | -19          | -  |
| JK Estimation                | 20  | 20           | -  |
| Boundary Change from QEPS    | 0   | 22           | -  |
| French Immersion             | 15  | 20           | -  |
| <b>Total</b>                 | 243   | 270          | -  |
| OTG Gore Hill                | 338   | 338          | -  |
| <b>Utilization Rate</b>      | <b>71.9%</b>  | <b>79.9%</b> | -  |
| <b>Mill Street</b>           | <b>Initial Staff Report Boundary<br/>Changes Ranges Low to High</b> |              | <b>Proposed Change To<br/>Initial Staff Report</b> |
|                              |   |              |  |
| Januay 2017 Enrollment       | -   | -            | 222  |
| Grade 8's Leaving            | -   | -            | -19  |
| JK Estimation                | -   | -            | 16   |
| <b>Total</b>                 | -   | -            | <b>219</b>   |
| OTG Mount Carmel Blytheswood | -   | -            | 280  |
| <b>Utilization Rate</b>      | -   | -            | <b>78.2%</b>                                       |