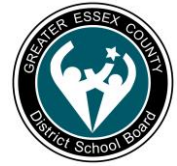


Greater Essex County District School Board
2015 PROGRAM AND ACCOMMODATION REVIEW
Report of a Committee Meeting held on
Thursday, April 30, 2015 at 5:30 p.m.
in the library of Western SS



At the December 9, 2014, regular meeting of the Board, Trustees approved the following recommendation regarding General Amherst HS, Harrow DHS, Harrow PS, Kingsville DHS and Western SS,

THAT THE SUPERINTENDENT RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCOMMODATIONS FACILITATES AN ACCOMMODATION REVIEW OF GENERAL AMHERST HIGH SCHOOL, KINGSVILLE DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL, WESTERN SECONDARY SCHOOL, HARROW DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL AND HARROW PUBLIC SCHOOL, TO ADDRESS CAPACITY ISSUES.

Present:

General Amherst HS: Hazel Keefner, Principal, Amy Soucie, Staff Rep, Mary Lippert, parent

Harrow DHS: Mary Edwards, Principal, Bill Parr and Sheri Dzudovich, parent

Harrow PS: Michelle Sprague-Keane, Principal, Teri Gorick, Staff Rep, Rebecca Robinson, Trudy Richards, parents

Kingsville DHS: Michelle Hedge and Bill Orawski, parents

Western SS: Melissa McIntyre, Principal, Valerie Cormier and Robin Trepanier, parents

Community Reps: Barry Mannell, Elaine Mailloux, Mary MacLauchlan

Regrets: Kim Laframboise, Pat Catton, John Konopaski, Dina Salinitri, Chris Clements, Alison Oldfield, Mary Lippert, Mary Edwards

Facilitator: Superintendent, Todd Awender

Recorder: Lynne Hornby

There were 4 observers in the audience

1. Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 5:40 p.m. by Chairperson Orawski thanking everyone for their attendance and Principal McIntyre for once again hosting the meeting.

2. Review of notes of committee meeting of April 20

As requested at the last committee meeting, the notes of the April 20 meeting were circulated to the committee and they were afforded some time to review them. Corrections will be made and the notes will be posted.

Business Arising:

Clarifications re: community hubs

From the April 20 meeting notes "She added that the Board can charge \$6 per sq foot per month to rent the space so its lots of money coming in rather than going out. Lots of revenue for the Board."

Information has been clarified by the Board's Business Department:

The Community Planning and Partnerships Guideline - March 2015 was just recently released is still in its infancy stage. The Board expects to update its Community Planning and Partnership Policy in the Fall, based on the Guideline. Items that will be considered in the policy include the items below (as noted in the Guideline):

- The Ministry recognizes that available space is not the only criteria for selecting schools for partnerships. Boards will also consider issues related to student safety, the board's student achievement and pupil accommodation strategies (including those that may result in school consolidations and closures), zoning and site use restrictions, facility condition, the configuration of space and the ability to separate the space used by partners from the space used by students, among other factors.
- Boards are not expected to take on additional costs to support facility partnerships.
- On a cost-recovery basis, the fees charged to partners should cover the operations and capital cost, including administrative costs and property taxes (if applicable), to the board of the space occupied by the partner. Additional costs to perform minor renovations to protect student safety, provide appropriate

washrooms, and otherwise make the space suitable for use by facility partners should be borne by the partners.

It was clarified that as an educational establishment, the Board does not currently pay property taxes. Should a business be accommodated in a board facility under the auspices of a community hub partner, then there is the possibility that the Board's assessment could change and property taxes would be applied accordingly.

3. Community Input to date and Information Responses since April 20 to April 30

Input received via the parc email box was distributed. A period of time was allocated for review. It was noted that the website is updated periodically. Trustees will receive printed copies.

4. Review of draft of Final report and presentation for May 12 community meeting

Discussion ensued in an attempt to arrive at the final recommendations to be presented at the May 12 community meeting. It was explained that it is not necessary to bring forward a motion and/or vote unless the intent of the recommendation is changed. Modifying the language of a motion, so long as the intent is not changed, is acceptable without voting.

A committee member pointed out that the phrase regarding a school only being in a PARC once every 7 years was omitted. Another member countered that an email had been sent to the committee following the last meeting, with a suggestion as to how that might be included in the report, as policy development is outside of the scope of a PARC committee.

The phrase will be included in the report:

"Please note that the Committee has also suggested that the Board take under consideration when reviewing its Policy, that no school may be reviewed in a PARC more than once every 7 years."

Mr. Parr wanted his comments noted in the minutes and doesn't want to see a one page executive summary of what has taken place at past meetings. He is frustrated. He said he is a business man himself and has to make tough decisions. The trustees need to make some tough decisions. The board is in a competitive situation. He wanted to know what the Board is doing to entice students. He said not closing schools in rural communities will entice people to the Board. The Board needs to look at how they can work with the unions to better program for students. Initiating a JK-12 school in Harrow, provides opportunities for unions to work together. This committee has been mandated to develop creative solutions to the Board's concerns and he feels that is just what they are doing. It was pointed out to him that teaching assignments are not part of this committee's mandate.

A parent interjected that she has been in touch with the OSSTF local president who advised that the Board has never approached him about cross-panel teaching. He would be more than happy to discuss such a possibility.

The committee discussed at some length the advantages/disadvantages for each recommendation. A suggestion was made that the committee should attempt to consolidate them to possibly three each. It was felt that some recommendations warranted advantages than others and three would not be enough to illustrate their merit.

It was felt that a number of points made were opinions rather than advantages/disadvantages and aren't supported by all members. The importance of consistency was stressed. One committee member stated that none of the advantages/disadvantages should be used as they were not determined by the

committee. The Superintendent clarified that he had provided some merely as a starting point. They could be used or discarded, whatever the group felt comfortable doing. Other committee members believed that they had provided input into their development.

In reply to a question about the success of Westview, a principal provided data for the school's first semester LDCC pass rates which shows that the school's 'pass' rate meets or exceeds LDCC pass rates for the board as a whole.

A community rep. wanted to discuss the use of the word "recommendation." He was uncomfortable using that word and was supported by some other committee members. Following discussion, most of the committee agreed to an alternative suggestion to use the term, "scenario."

A member suggested that the committee take another look at the scenarios and make some changes and maybe introduce other scenarios. It was countered that up to this point, after several meetings, the groups have not been able to agree at any one time on any scenario and that is why there are three scenarios moving forward.

The suggestion was not supported.

The committee then discussed the fact that the first paragraph under the conclusion which discusses the fact that all group members could not collectively agree on the final three scenarios will be placed at the beginning of the report.

There was some concern that under scenario 3, Some WSS students can not physically be accommodated in General Amherst. It was noted that physical changes are often necessary to accommodate certain programs, e.g. physical changes had to be made at Riverside when the STEPS program became located at that site. The board does not place physically restricted students into a school that is not accessible.

In reply to the apprehensions of some parents about their children no longer being in a segregated setting like Western, trends in Ontario show a move toward integrating students into the home schools. In recent years, more community schools are seeing an increase in the amount of LDCC course offerings. Trends across the province are showing that parents are interested in their special education students being accommodated in the community schools. It is a false assumption to say these students *need* to be at Western. Each year the contingent in home schools is growing. Every school in the Board has had an increase in LDCC classes this past year.

A parent shared her own personal story regarding her child's transition to high school two years ago when she was discouraged from sending him to the home school. In reply, she was told that there are more LDCC course offerings in the home schools now than there were even two years ago. Staff members are gaining more experience each year. Today, the conversation between that parent and the principal might be very different; we have more supports in the home schools and we are getting better at offering LDC courses in the home schools. The committee was cautioned against sending the wrong message that a student will perish if they don't attend Western. Whenever students are moved to a new location, aligned support staff generally move, too.

Superintendent Awender shared data on credit accumulation rates for students taking locally developed courses from 2009-10 to present for all of the GECDSD schools. There has been an improvement over this span of time.

English Grade 9	78.1% - 90.6%
English Grade 10	82.3% - 90.9%
Math Grade 9	83.3% - 93.1%
Math Grade 10	83.8% - 93.8%

Westview Freedom Academy's achievement falls within or above these credit accumulation rates following the first semester as a community school.

The data was disputed by a community member who quoted information that had been shared with her by an OSSTF executive.

A question was raised as to why it is considered advantageous to have public and separate schools in close proximity. If a separate school should close, then often the public board will pick up some of that school's enrolment. This happened at Malden Central when St. Therese closed its doors. It was warned by a parent that the reverse will happen if Harrow DHS closes.

If there is a land transfer agreement in place with the town of Amherstburg, how can we move forward? The Superintendent clarified that regardless of what a municipality may state, the Board must follow the MoE guidelines and processes regarding land purchases. We also follow the PARC process which does not factor in land transfers. Also, in reply to an inquiry about the town of Essex, the Board has been in contact with all the local municipalities and said they would be happy to meet. Town Council has not approached the Board while other municipalities have done.

A committee member made a suggestion that the report acknowledges the amount of community input that has been received. Although this is recognized on the first page of the report in paragraph 3, it will be expanded to include that the committee would encourage trustees to review the input received.

A community representative asked that the three scenarios be printed out to be available for those who want them at the community meeting.

The three revised scenarios are:

SCENARIO 1:

1. Maintain Western Secondary School as a Special Education school and expand programming
2. Implement community hubs in Amherstburg, Harrow and Kingsville
3. Maintain Harrow District High School at present location until a JK-12 build is complete
4. Build a new JK-12 school in Kingsville
5. Maintain General Amherst High School

Advantages

- schools stay in each community resulting in continued stability and allows community hub partnerships to develop with possible rental revenues for the board
- overcomes a large renewal backlog and a realization of savings on operations, utilities

and maintenance costs by consolidating schools

- maintains the status quo at Western Secondary School which meets the special needs of the students
- meets the Board's Mission Statement and all 5 goals of the Board's Strategic Plan (2011-2015)

SCENARIO 2:

1. Move Western Secondary School and transition those students to General Amherst High School as a separate program in a newly built school in Amherstburg on a board and town approved site (possible school within a school)
2. Implement community hubs in Amherstburg, Harrow and Kingsville
3. Establish a JK-12 school in Harrow
4. Build a new JK-12 school in Kingsville

Advantages

- consolidation of schools builds a stronger business case for Ministry funding for new builds
- schools stay in each community resulting in continued stability and allows community hub partnerships to develop with possible rental revenues for the board
- overcomes a large renewal backlog and a realization of savings on operations, utilities and maintenance costs by consolidating schools
- minimal decrease in transportation costs

SENARIO 3:

1. Consolidate Harrow District High School and Kingsville District High School
2. Close Harrow District High School and transition the Grade 7 and 8 students back to Harrow Public School
3. Build a new JK-12 school in Kingsville
4. Move Western Secondary School and the AB program to General Amherst High School as a fully accessible separate program
5. Allow current and future LDC students at Western Secondary School the option to return to their home schools or to attend General Amherst High School (possible school within a school)
6. Build a new high school in Amherstburg on a board and town approved site

Advantages

- consolidation of schools builds a stronger business case for Ministry funding for new builds
- maintains community schools in two of the three communities leaving two secondary schools in close proximity to coterminous board schools (strategic)
- improves efficiencies and utilization rates while decreasing the number of empty student spaces
- HDHS can be accommodated in current KDHS facility without renovation

5. Questions and clarifications

Final committee meeting date has been set for May 25. Time will need to be adjusted as 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. and the location will be moved to Western SS.

Questions were answered in general discussion throughout the meeting.

6. Adjournment at 8:27 p.m.