

Greater Essex County District School Board
2015 PROGRAM AND ACCOMMODATION REVIEW
Report of a Committee Meeting held on
Monday, February 23, 2015 at 5:30 p.m.
In the library of Western Secondary School



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 and Kim Laframboise, parents

Harrow DHS: John Konopaski, Staff Rep, Bill Parr and Sheri Dzudovich, parents

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

Kingsville DHS: Dina Salinitri, Principal, Chris Clements, Staff Rep, Michelle Hedge and Bill Orawski, parents

Western SS: Melissa McIntyre, Principal, Alison Oldfield, Staff Rep, Robin Trepanier and Valerie Cormier, parents

Community Reps: Elaine Mailloux, Barry Mannell, Mary MacLauchlan, Pat Catton

Coordinator of Engineering, G Hinchliffe: Public Relations Officer, S. Scantlebury

Regrets: Mary Edwards

Facilitator: Superintendent, Todd Awender

Recorder: Lynne Hornby

There were three observers in the audience

1. Call to Order and Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 5.33 p.m. by Chairperson Orawski thanking everyone for their attendance and Principal MacIntyre for hosting the meeting. Everyone was seated in working groups.

It was determined that we will continue to provide a light dinner at each committee meeting.

Mr. Orawski felt that it is important to focus on the significant agenda items in order to move the committee forward. He also noted that he wants to ensure that the committee continues to respect each other and each other's opinions. It is difficult not to get bogged down by emotions.

2. Review of minutes

The minutes of the February 9 meeting have been circulated to the committee and posted to the Board website under the PARC icon. A slight change was made to correct the meeting commencement time. The file copy will be amended.

3. Community input to date and Information responses

No further input has been received.

Ms. G. Hinchliffe, Coordinator of Engineering, re Room summaries spoke regarding room summaries.

A handout was distributed. Ms. Hinchliffe provided the background as to how data is input and updated to generate the summary.

The Western SS floor plan was used as an example. Space type determines OTG and is a function of the actual space and associated amenities only, regardless of how the space is actually used. The Ministry rates the space from the submitted information and defines the parameters of each space type and

usually is purpose-built space. The board is also required to submit “current use” which determines the Functional Capacity (FC) of the space and is different from the OTG. OTG is what that space can be used for, not what the school chooses to use it for (FC).

The SFIS defines the OTG and this is used to determine capacity and funding; it doesn't deal with teacher-pupil ratios. SFIS clearly defines space type.

What dictates spec. ed. room rather than size?

The Ministry of Education determines one special education room per school, weighted it as spec. ed. rooms with an OTG and FC of 9. We have very few spec. ed. rooms, e.g. Southwood's rooms are rated at 9 because it is purpose built space for physically challenged students. EDHS has 2 purpose built rooms for the same type of students.

During new school construction, a special education room is designed which had access to handicap washroom facilities in the room or immediately adjacent to the space, running water and is used exclusively for STEPS/GAINS. LDSS has some rooms that are 680, 690 but they are considered classrooms because they are used as such.

Room summaries for this particular group of schools are posted on the Board's website

4. Review of School Information Profiles to Date and Presentation of School Information Profiles at Second Community Meeting – how?

A draft powerpoint template was distributed for review and input. There was brief discussion. The three presenters decided to meet with the Facilitator at the end of the meeting discuss how to present at the upcoming Community meeting.

5. Format for Community Meeting at Harrow DHS on March 2

Superintendent Awender reviewed the format for the upcoming community meeting.

6. Review of ideas from working groups

Each idea developed at the last meeting was reviewed; advantages and disadvantages were charted.

Keep every school in every community all as new JK-grade 12.

WSS becomes a trade school, possibly funded by industry

Advantages:

Every community maintains a school

If industry funds WSS as a trade school, there would be some cost savings

Potential for less combined grades in some schools

Possible retention of students for secondary if they are already in the building

Potential for transportation savings

With federation agreements, potential for elementary/secondary teachers' collaboration

Potential for more specialized teaching in the elementary schools

Enhanced leadership opportunities – co-op opportunities

Reduced Facility costs

Disadvantages:

- Loss of spec. ed. program at WSS
- Increased cost of renovating “home” schools to accommodate WSS students
- Increased costs for transporting students to the trade programs at WSS
- Closes elementary schools
- Would elementary students fit into retrofitted space? – related facility costs
- Timelines – this is a long term solution leading to new schools

Close all 4 high schools; build a mega school equidistant from each community.

Transition all students to the new mega school.

Advantages:

- Every community is treated in the same manner
- Enhanced programming
- Decrease in operating costs
- Consolidation of schools

Disadvantages:

- Increased transportation costs
- Potential loss of students to coterminous board
- Logistics – potential loss of co-op opportunities etc if the school is not in town
- Doesn't solve elementary school renewal costs
- Poor parent involvement (as is experienced currently at WSS) if the school is in a remote location rather than a town
- Less sports teams opportunities
- Less leadership opportunities
- Economic impact on communities

Consolidation of KDHS and HDHS school populations in one building. Both schools close.

Grade 7 and 8s transition back to Harrow Elementary School.

Consolidation of GAHS and WSS consolidation. At least one school closes, possibly both, if a new school is built using a “Pod” model of program delivery

The committee determined by consensus that this would not be given consideration

~~K-12 school at WSS, specializing in tech. programs; allow other high schools to use the shops as needed~~

The committee determined by consensus that this would not be given consideration

Consolidation of HDHS and KDHS –one school closes

Consolidation of WSS and GAHS - one school closes

new facility near Amherstburg arena for the consolidation of WSS and GAHS – both schools close

The committee determined by consensus to amend as above

Advantages:

- Consolidation of schools
- Enhanced programming
- Decrease in cost per student
- Decrease in operational costs
- Enhanced location

Disadvantages:

- Potential loss of students to separate board
- Potential increase in transportation costs
- Loss of community school
- Increased travel time for more students
- Potential remote location

WSS closes, transition WSS students into the Harrow DHS building;

Current HDHS boundary is revised so students transition to either KDHS or GAHS depending on address

Advantages

- Consolidation of schools

Disadvantages

- No decrease in renewal costs
- HDHS students would not be in the home school
- Facility costs
- Splitting Harrow student body – is it enough

Implement an FI program in Amherstburg. Dual track programming at both Amherstburg PS and GAHS

This option does not solve the mandate as a stand alone. A program would be built by implementation in the elementary panel first. Possible consideration in conjunction with other solutions

WSS closes: all students transition to other schools

Advantages

- Consolidation of schools
- WSS program remains intact
- Potential reduction in transportation distances
- Enhanced co-op placements for WSS students
- Opportunities for mentoring

Disadvantages

- Potential increased in transportation distance
- School within a school doesn't work
- Not all the same tech programs are possible

Close all 4 high schools; all students transition to a new facility, a newly constructed mega school with separate campuses - schools within schools – like a university campus

Advantages

- Consolidation of schools
- Provides for specialized programming
- Potential to incorporate daycare on site
- Keeps WSS intact
- Every community is treated in the same manner
- Operational costs would decrease

Disadvantages:

- Increased transportation costs
- Potential loss of students to coterminous board
- Logistics – potential loss of co-op opportunities etc if the school is not in town
- Doesn't solve elementary school issues
- Poor parent involvement if the school is in a remote location rather than a town
- Less sports teams opportunities
- Less leadership opportunities
- Economic impact on communities
- Cross curricular programming will be difficult

~~Boundary adjustment for changes to take place with Essex for Kingsville, so that the Cottam area feeds into KDHS. Gosfield North would no longer be EDHS feeder school (Doesn't solve all the other issues)~~

The committee determined by consensus that this would not be given consideration

6. Brainstorm ideas in new working groups

(In discussions with a committee individual after the adjournment of the meeting)

WSS as a spec ed school

JK -12 school in each community

Advantages:

- Every community maintains a school
- Potential for less combined grades in some schools
- Possible retention of students for secondary if they are already in the building
- Potential for transportation savings
- With federation agreements, potential for elementary/secondary teachers' collaboration
- Potential for more specialized teaching in the elementary schools
- Enhanced leadership opportunities – co-op opportunities
- Reduced Facility costs
- Maintains WSS current programs

Disadvantages:

- Costs for transporting students to WSS
- Closes elementary schools
- Would elementary students fit into retrofitted space? – related facility costs
- Timelines – this is a long term solution leading to new schools
- Building costs

A committee member felt that in determining recommendations, the following should be given consideration:

- Enhancement of programs - skilled trades, languages and sciences – how do we attract students back into our system – how?
- Does the program drive the facility of vice versa? Businesses will participate
- New facilities
- Dollar value that needs to be spend in existing facilities
- Consolidate existing facilities

A question was raised regarding the potential for the MoE to take the Board under supervision.

The Superintendent reiterated that status quo is not an option and yes, MoE supervision is always a possibility, particularly when Boards reach a certain deficit.

Programming is difficult in small secondary schools. With small student numbers, it is hard to provide optimum programming opportunities for the students.

A comment was made that money is the main driver for this current PARC. Many small schools in the province are able to provide adequate programming for students.

Different things are important to different people. Most people are passionate about their own communities.

We are here to try to maintain our communities by determining a solution that will work for all.

Tecumseh Vista Academy is doing well, they are over capacity with several portables. Fifteen years ago there was no industry in the area and then it grew rapidly. Did everyone move out there to work there and now the school is over capacity? With growth of industry and employment there is an overpopulated school. The Board should have planned better. Industry has an economic impact on our communities. If we close a school in a community we will lose industry. We need to be trying to attract industry by providing attractive programs in our schools. We should have nothing less in the new schools than we have now. Spanish is the fastest growing language along with Mandarin, the Board should bring in a Spanish curriculum and look at history – is there a trend that the board is impacting? Is the Board planning properly? Why didn't they know about all this 10 years ago??

We need to hear from development people in each of the communities.

The Board uses an outside consultant, specialized software, birth rates and census data so predictions aren't biased. Local planners are optimistic about new development. The MoE bases its decisions on actual numbers not probable or possible future enrolments.

A committee member suggested that a survey be sent to every parent in the Board to determine interest in a dual track F.I. program in every school.

7. Report writing team – volunteers

A cross sample of previous reports were provided, ranging from short to fairly lengthy.

Trudy Richards, Pat Catton, Bill Orawski and, Robin Trepanier volunteered to form the basis of the report writing team.

8. **Questions and Information Requests**

Funding per student – spec needs diagnoses

Percentage number of spec ed students coming into system

Boards don't get the same per student amount – there are funding inequities. MoE base funding on their formula

A map of the KDHS FI boundary was requested

Data request: a breakdown of WSS population by location, grade and program

9. Next steps – Community meeting March 2

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

The next meeting is at 5:30 p.m. on March 9 at 5:30 p.m.