

Greater Essex County District School Board
2015 PROGRAM AND ACCOMMODATION REVIEW
Report of a Committee Meeting held on
Monday, May 25, 2015 at 5:00 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, Kim Laframboise and Mary Lippert, parents

Harrow DHS: John Konopaski, Staff Rep, Bill Parr (arrived at 5:37) and Sheri Dzudovich, parents

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

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

Western SS: Alison Oldfield, Staff Rep, Valerie Cormier, Robin Trepanier (arrived at 5:42)

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

Regrets: Mary Edwards, Melissa McIntyre

Facilitator: Superintendent, Todd Awender

Recorder: Lynne Hornby

There were no observers in the audience

1. Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 5:07 p.m. by Mr. Orawski thanking everyone for their attendance and Alison Oldfield for stepping in to help organize the room/dinner in Principal McIntyre's absence.

The order of the agenda order was modified in order to deal with item 5 first.

2. Review of notes of committee meeting of April 30

The notes of the April 30 meeting have been circulated to the committee. Changes are noted below. The notes will be posted to the website.

Business Arising:

Via Superintendent Awender, Superintendent McLaughlin provided clarification on previous information she had supplied regarding class sizes as outlined in the OSSTF Collective Agreement that had been previously referenced by a community member. Superintendent Awender read the clarification on her behalf:

"Superintendent Awender had shared the excerpt from the Secondary School Teacher Collective Agreement early in the process which outlined class sizes. I extend my sincere apologies for the information I provided which contradicted the clauses specific to the class sizes at Western for students not IPRC'd into the Adaptive Basic Program. Also, I regret any confusion this may have caused."

3. Debrief – Community meeting of May 12

The sequence of events for submission of the PARC report and trustee voting was again clarified. Once the PARC has submitted its report to trustees on June 2, it will be posted on the Board website for a period of 60 days. During that time, Senior Administration will review the report and formulate recommendations that will be voted on by trustees following the 60 day period. Administration is planning to present recommendations to trustees at the regular meeting of the Board on September 15 and a final vote will take place at a special meeting of the Board on October 13.

4. Community Input since April 30

One piece of input has been received via the parc email box since April 30. It was distributed. Community input is updated on the website periodically.

5. Determine Final report and Presentation at June 2 Board meeting

The committee was reminded that the scenarios will be presented to the Board on June 2. As Ms. Richards will be unable to attend the meeting, Ms. Thrasher and Mr. Orawski will be presenting on behalf of the committee.

A motion was brought forward to remove scenario 3.

Lengthy discussion took place. Some members were a little surprised by this proposal at such a late date and voiced concerns that they felt like the committee sounds rather foolish making major changes at this point in the process. It's unfair to communities when they have heard at the final Community meeting what they believe to be the final scenarios.

Another committee member voiced that they have heard a lot of Community input that appears not to be in favour of scenario 3. We have heard community input that is not in favour of consolidating schools.

At the point in the meeting when the vote was about to take place, it was requested of the Chair that voting be stalled until all voting members had arrived. The motion was tabled until all committee members were present.

Further discussion ensued. A community member noted that if we refer to the original mandate of the trustees, the committee has been charged to look at some type of school consolidations. Scenario 3 represents somewhat of a consolidation between General Amherst and Western and another between Kingsville and Harrow.

Another committee member noted that if we don't move forward with this scenario, then the opportunity to provide input will no longer be available. School consolidations are going to happen whether we have input or not. Isn't it better to provide some input? It was felt that scenario 3 provides the most realistic situation.

Again, the Chair requested that everyone respect one another's opinions and not make people feel uncomfortable, just because their opinion differs from yours.

A community member thought that scenario 3 ought to be removed in order to force administration's hands to make a decision. By leaving only scenarios 1 and 2, trustees will make the final decisions. Administration needs to step up and make some decisions, not the PARC.

A parent stated that the committee is representative of the communities they serve and the communities we have heard from are not in favour of any school closures.

B. Parr and R. Trepanier had been absent for the discussion leading up to the vote. They arrived as the vote was being taken and so participated.

A vote was taken and it carried. Scenario 3 is removed

Further discussion took place. It was strongly felt by some that the last 5 months have been wasted. The mandate set out in the Trustee motion creating a PARC is not being met.

A motion was brought forward to present a status quo report.

A vote was taken and it was defeated.

Superintendent Awender again explained to the committee that other boards in the province have presented a majority and minority report, when consensus has not been reached. He noted that it is almost impossible to get everyone to agree when several different communities are involved. A majority/minority report allows those who do not support the majority report to present a minority report and have their voices heard.

A motion was put on the floor to present both a majority and a minority report.

A vote was taken and it was defeated.

The writing committee was once more reminded that both the report and powerpoint presentation must be sent electronically to L. Hornby by midday on Wednesday May 27. Trustees have recently requested to review any powerpoint presentations ahead of time.

A community member had feedback to share as to how she felt the process could be improved. The Superintendent noted that any feedback should be forwarded to L. Hornby. New Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines have been released by the Ministry of Education and so now Boards are to develop their own policy based on the Guidelines.

Further discussion ensued and several felt that the mandate of the committee was to make recommendations, not scenarios. It was pointed out that the language was changed to reflect the word "scenario" by consensus.

It was clarified that that trustees will direct questions and clarifications to the committee and in particular those presenting, not Board Administration. This is the Committee's report and so it is up to the members to provide answers and clarifications.

6. Questions and clarifications

Questions were answered in general discussion throughout the meeting as noted.

7. Adjournment at 6:10 p.m.