

Report To Board

FROM: Gayle Stucke, Director of Education

DATE: June 22, 2010

SUBJECT: Pupil Accommodation Report for the Ridgetown Area of Schools

The Mission and Belief Statements of the Board focus on student achievement and well being. It is the responsibility of the Lambton Kent District School Board to provide quality education equitably across the district in as cost effective a way as possible. The optimal use of all available resources is intended to achieve these goals. Determination of a school's viability must give consideration to educational value for students as well as monetary affordability for the Board.

The purpose of the final Pupil Accommodation Report is to summarize all information compiled through the Accommodation Review process as well as any additional pertinent data that has been presented or researched in the intervening months. Recommendations regarding changes in pupil accommodation status, including the timelines for implementation are made based on all available information in accordance with Ministry of Education Guidelines, Provincial funding and Policies of the Lambton Kent District School Board.

"It is the policy of the Lambton Kent District School Board to operate and maintain its schools as effectively and efficiently as possible to support student achievement while exploring all opportunities to enhance the learning environment." –P-AD-106-09.

At the October 13, 2009 Board Meeting, Trustees approved the following recommendation: "That the Board approve the commencement of an Accommodation Review Process and the establishment of an Accommodation Review Committee" for the following Areas of Schools:

Petrolia Area of Schools, including Hillcrest Public School, Queen Elizabeth II Public School, Lambton Centennial Public School and Lambton Central Collegiate Vocational Institute;

Dresden Area of Schools, including Lambton Kent Composite School, Dresden Area Central School, Dawn-Euphemia School, Thamesville Area Central School and Zone Township Central School;

Ridgetown Family of Schools, including Ridgetown District High School, Ridgetown Public School and Ridgeview Moravian Elementary School.

In accordance with Regulation No.:R-AD-106-09-Pupil Accommodation/School Closure the following Accommodation Review Committee Meetings were held in a public forum in schools within each study area:

Petrolia Area of Schools – 4 Meetings held on November 12, 2009; January 7, 2010; February 4, 2010; March 4, 2010

Dresden Area of Schools – 5 Meetings held on November 16, 2009; January 27, 2010; February 17, 2010 (rescheduled from February 10); March 3, 2010; March 31, 2010

Ridgetown Area of Schools – 4 Meetings held on November 23, 2009; January 25, 2010; February 24, 2010 (rescheduled from February 22); March 29, 2010

Accommodation Review Committee Reports for each of the study areas were presented by parent members at the April 13, 2010 Regular Board Meeting. Trustees received the written Reports in advance of the meeting and had an opportunity to ask questions for clarification.

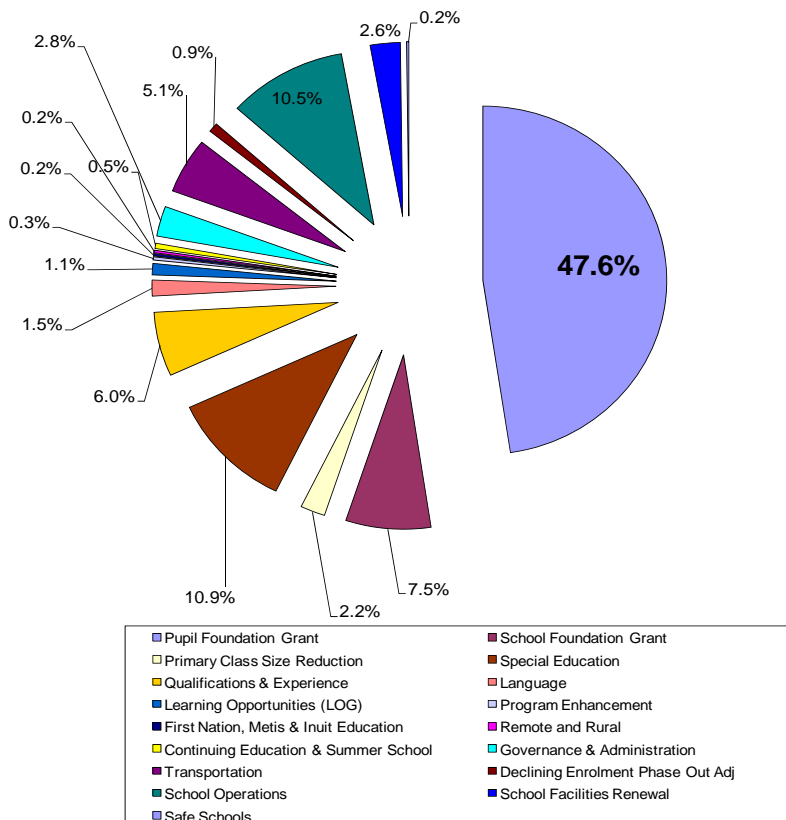
Administration's Response to the Accommodation Review Committee Reports was presented at the April 27, 2010 Regular Board Meeting held at Lambton Kent Composite School. Members of the public had the opportunity to request a ten minute delegation at Board Meetings on May 11, May 25, June 8 and June 22.

Representatives of the Petrolia Accommodation Review Committee and the Dawn-Euphemia Support Our School Committee made presentations at the Regular Board Meeting on June 8, 2010.

FINANCIAL:

Education Funding Background:

School Boards are funded through the Ministry of Education - Grants for Student Needs (GSN) Funding Model. A school board's revenue is dependent on student enrolment, benchmark parameters, and in some of the grants a base level of funding is provided that may also be supplemented with an enrolment component. The grants in the education funding formula fall into three broad categories – Foundation Grants, Special Purposes Grant and the Pupil Accommodation Grant. For the 2009/2010 school year, the contribution of each grant allocation for the Board is illustrated in the following pie chart.



The Pupil Foundation Grant is a per-pupil allocation that supports the components of a classroom education including teachers and classroom resources. The School Foundation Grant has both school site and per-pupil parts to fund in-school administration.

The Pupil Accommodation Grant is comprised of the school operations and facilities renewal components, which provide funding to operate and maintain schools.

The remaining thirteen special purpose grants noted in the above pie chart, provide funding to support specialized programs & services ranging from special education needs to student transportation.

Declining Enrolment Funding Impact:

For as long as declining enrolment in Lambton Kent continues at a significant rate, areas where financial challenges are created from this enrolment pressure will need to be addressed. The strategies to address any loss of funding must include:

- seeking efficiencies in board operations and,
- changes in school accommodation that ensures the board provides the best possible programs for its students in a fiscally responsible manner.

The Ministry provides to Boards in declining enrolment, a "Declining Enrolment Adjustment grant". The Declining Enrolment adjustment grant phases out funding support by providing boards with a 3 year time period to adjust their cost structures in response to declines in enrolment.

In the future, the extent of financial support from this grant is likely to be changed. The Ministry Declining Enrolment Report of February 2009, recommends that this funding be adjusted to reinforce its purpose as short-term transitional funding, by providing most of the support over a shorter period so that school boards have a stronger incentive to make adjustments. If this recommendation is implemented, a board's ability to maintain status quo would be restricted.

Other Ministry of Education School Facility Initiatives:

- a. Best Start Daycare Facilities - The communities of Chatham-Kent and Lambton were a demonstration pilot project that resulted in about \$6.7M Dollars invested in constructing full day care hub facilities or before/after school programs at 20 elementary school sites.
- b. Primary Class Size - In the 2007-08 school year the Ministry program to lower JK to Gr. 3 class sizes to a maximum cap of 20 students was fully implemented. During the 4 year phased-in implementation, \$4.2M in operational funding and \$4M in capital project funding has been provided.
- c. Good Places to Learn - The Ministry of Education provided 4 stages of this funding to be used to repair school buildings, totaling \$30M. No further stages or commitment of this funding have been announced.
- d. Prohibitive to Repair - \$8.8M dollars, provided for the consolidation and replacement of the two oldest elementary schools in the City of Sarnia.
- e. Energy Efficient Schools Funding - \$5.8M dollars, to reduce energy consumption.
- f. Full Day Early Learning Program - \$1.7M dollars. In the fall of 2009 the Ministry of Education provided the first phase of funding approval to support the implementation of Full Day 4&5 year old learners.
- g. Ontario Disabilities Act - No funding currently provided, board allocates \$50,000/year from existing funds.

**DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE LAMBTON KENT DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD:
Summary of Enrolment Decline from October 31, 2008 to October 31, 2009:**

	October 31, 2008 Actuals		October 31, 2009 Actuals		Enrolment Decline	
	F.T.E.	Total Students	F.T.E	Total Students	F.T.E.	Total Students
Elementary	14,267.00	15,679	14,044.50	15,469	222.50	210
Secondary	9,574.17	9,632	9,261.25	9,305	312.92	327

Note: October 31, 2009 enrolment numbers will be averaged with March 31, 2010 enrolment numbers to determine the Average Daily Enrolment (A.D.E.). Grants are calculated on the Average Daily Enrolment for the full school year.

In September 2009, enrolment in ten of our elementary schools within the LKDSB had dropped below 175.0 F.T.E. and three of our secondary schools had enrolment below 375.0 F.T.E.

Birth Rate Trends:

The birth rate in Chatham-Kent and Sarnia-Lambton is showing more stability than in years past, when decline was evident each year. In 2008, there were 118 more births than in 2007. Identifying trends in the number of births in each of our school attendance areas provides us with indicators of long-term changes to the population distribution for our schools. The number of births will be used as a basis for projecting future enrolment trends. The number of births this year indicates the number of JK/SK children that will be eligible to enrol in our schools in 4 or 5 years.

Change in 3 Year Average of Births			Actual Number of Births by Year					
Change in 3 Year Avg.	Recent 3 Yr. Avg. 2006-2008	Earlier 3 Yr. Avg. 2003-2005	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Increase of 100 Births 4% Increase	2,332	2,232	2,400	2,282	2,315	2,239	2,275	2,182

Change in School Aged Population Each Year:

Each year, the age distribution of school-aged children within the Lambton Kent District School Board changes. Children are born, children move in and out of the area, and children graduate from the school system. The importance of identifying changes in age distribution is to determine the degree to which a change in population will influence current and future enrolment projections. Although the birth rate in 2008 increased, the overall school-aged population has declined by 2.0%.

Population Change Since Last Year in Chatham-Kent and Sarnia-Lambton				
Age 1 to 4	Age 5 to 8	Age 9 to 12	Age 13 to 16	Total Population Change (%)
-0.4%	-0.9%	-2.9%	-3.3%	-2.0%

Full Day Learning:

The implementation of full day learning in September 2010 will have an impact on the capacity and spaces available in our elementary schools. In September 2010, the Lambton Kent District School Board will have 19 classes offering full day learning in eight school sites. Each year, additional full day learning classes will be added, with full implementation planned for 2015. The full day learning will mean our junior and senior kindergarten students will be attending on a daily basis, doubling the number of classrooms required to offer program to our 4 and 5 years old. This also will increase their FTE from .50 to 1.00 for grant purposes.

Enrolment and Projections

Ridgetown Family of Schools, including Ridgetown District High School, Ridgetown Public School and Ridgeview Moravian Elementary School

ENROLMENT HISTORY AND PROJECTIONS - RIDGETOWN PUBLIC											
Capacity 256	Oct. 2004	Oct. 2005	Oct. 2006	Oct. 2007	Oct. 2008	Oct. 2009	Proj. 2010	Proj. 2011	Proj. 2012	Proj. 2013	Proj. 2014
JK	20	20	13	18	16	11	16	12	14	13	14
SK	16	24	22	15	17	16	11	18	13	16	15
GR.1	19	16	20	25	12	15	17	13	18	14	16
GR.2	29	18	14	24	31	11	14	18	13	18	14
GR.3	18	32	16	13	17	29	11	13	18	13	18
GR.4	12	19	34	18	13	13	29	10	13	17	13
GR.5	34	12	19	32	18	13	13	29	10	13	17
GR.6	21	36	14	21	32	16	12	12	29	11	13
GR.7	25	21	35	15	18	28	16	13	12	29	11
GR.8	31	24	23	34	17	19	28	16	13	12	28
SPEC.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	225	222	210	215	191	171	167	154	153	156	159
F.T.E.	207.00	200.00	192.50	198.50	174.50	157.50	153.50	139.00	139.50	141.50	144.50
%Full	77.38%	74.77%	71.96%	74.21%	68.16%	61.52%	59.96%	54.30%	54.49%	55.27%	56.45%

ENROLMENT HISTORY AND PROJECTIONS - RIDGEVIEW MORAVIAN E.S.											
Capacity 363	Oct. 2004	Oct. 2005	Oct. 2006	Oct. 2007	Oct. 2008	Oct. 2009	Proj. 2010	Proj. 2011	Proj. 2012	Proj. 2013	Proj. 2013
JK	18	18	18	13	17	8	18	15	15	16	16
SK	26	21	26	19	14	16	10	19	16	17	19
GR.1	27	41	32	35	29	19	25	18	29	24	27
GR.2	34	23	37	32	28	28	18	25	18	29	24
GR.3	42	35	22	35	36	25	29	19	25	17	29
GR.4	33	38	36	22	32	35	25	29	19	25	17
GR.5	34	38	38	36	21	32	35	26	29	19	25
GR.6	32	33	35	33	30	21	33	35	27	29	19
GR.7	44	31	36	35	31	31	21	32	34	27	28
GR.8	46	47	38	32	34	31	30	20	32	34	27
SPEC.	9	10	11	11	7	5	6	6	5	5	5
Totals	345	335	329	303	279	251	250	244	249	242	236
F.T.E.	323.00	315.50	307.00	287.00	263.50	239.00	236.00	227.00	233.50	225.50	218.50
%Full	81.36%	79.47%	77.33%	79.06%	72.59%	65.84%	65.01%	62.53%	64.33%	62.12%	60.19%

ENROLMENT HISTORY AND PROJECTIONS - RIDGETOWN D.H.S.											
Capacity 609	Oct. 2004	Oct. 2005	Oct. 2006	Oct. 2007	Oct. 2008	Oct. 2009	Proj. 2010	Proj. 2011	Proj. 2012	Proj. 2013	Proj. 2014
Gr. 9	70	88	69	70	79	50	60	70	56	48	57
Gr. 10	57	76	87	75	72	77	53	62	73	58	48
Gr. 11	69	56	73	80	73	70	76	51	60	70	56
Gr. 12	87	93	77	81	100	99	91	96	68	77	87
SPEC.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	283	313	306	306	324	296	280	279	257	253	248
F.T.E.	280.25	304.25	291.75	302.89	319.03	296.00	278.50	278.00	257.00	252.50	248.00
%Full	46.02%	49.96%	47.91%	49.74%	52.39%	48.60%	45.73%	45.65%	42.20%	41.46%	40.72%

It was recognized by the members of the Ridgetown Accommodation Review Committee that a consolidation of its two elementary schools, both facing serious past and projected future declining enrolment, would provide an enhanced learning environment for its students. There was also a strong community commitment to keep a high school in Ridgetown for its students and the students of the neighbouring Delaware Nation at Moraviantown, and the community of Highgate. Administration supports both of these objectives given the educational and financial considerations reviewed.

Having considered all options discussed during the Review it is believed that the consolidation of the two elementary schools into one JK-6 school and combining intermediate grades 7 and 8 with the secondary school would provide the best learning opportunity for students and be the most economically viable solution for the Board.

DATA BASED ON 2011-12 ENROLMENT PROJECTIONS

Consolidation of Schools JK-Grade 6				Grade 7/8 Program at RDHS	
GRADE	RPS	RMES	TOTAL	GRADE	TOTAL
JK	12	15	27	GR. 7	45
SK	18	19	37	GR. 8	36
GR.1	13	18	31	GR. 9	70
GR.2	18	25	43	GR. 10	62
GR.3	13	19	32	GR. 11	51
GR.4	10	29	39	GR. 12	96
GR.5	29	26	55	SP.ED.	0
GR.6	12	35	47	TOTALS	360
SP.ED.	0	6	6		
TOTALS	125	192	317		

For the past seven years, there has been discussion about the advantages of reorganization of the schools in Ridgetown into a JK-6 and 7-12 model. Several public boards have had success with this grade configuration since the early years of amalgamations and today we have many more boards throughout Ontario introducing the model. Ottawa Catholic School Board has organized its schools JK-6 and 7-12 for more than a decade, and the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board has recently determined that all schools in its jurisdiction will move to that model beginning with a number of schools currently under construction.

There are obvious accommodation reasons to consolidate elementary schools and maximize the capacity of the well equipped high schools. Secondary school enrolment increased in many cases as students out of boundary and from coterminous boards selected the program deemed to be superior to the traditional school organization. There were students who opted to attend another school, but significantly more students were gained than lost.

Business Aspects of the Ridgetown ARC Recommendations

The primary cost elements of operating these schools are as follows:

- o Administration staff - Principal & Secretarial
- o Teachers, Resource staff & Educational Assistants
- o Classroom teaching materials & furnishings
- o Custodial staff
- o Utilities - Gas, Electricity, Water, Communications
- o Grounds keeping - garbage collection, grass cutting & yard maintenance, snow removal
- o Custodial & Housekeeping supplies
- o Maintenance supplies & services
- o Capital Building Upgrade and Improvement projects

Financial Impact of the Consolidation

As noted in the earlier general section of the Report, the education grant model provides board funding in large part based on the overall student enrolment of the board. Therefore the enrolment based funding is not dependent on the number of school sites operated by the board.

The school administration funding has both a base amount tied to the school site and an enrolment component. The closure of Ridgetown Public School is estimated to save the province about \$118,000. per year as the net result of saving on school administration costs.

The overall pupil accommodation grants the Board receives to operate and maintain a school is based on enrolment with a top-up component. For schools with enrolment below capacity, there is a base top-up grant allocation for up to 20% and since these are rural designated schools, there is a rural top-up grant that provides full capacity funding. The closure of Ridgetown Public School is estimated to save the province about \$204,000. per year in total top-up funding costs. Both of the remaining 2 Ridgetown schools (Ridgetown District High School and Ridgeview Moravian Elementary School) would receive full school operating grants that includes rural top-up funding for these school sites.

Consolidation of the existing 3 schools into 2 school sites will result in an improvement in the board's financial ability to maintain the remaining 2 schools sites. The Ridgetown PS is currently one of the few remaining schools at the board still heated by a steam boiler plant. In addition to the heating plant, a section of the school roof will need to be replaced and hard surface areas require replacement. The estimated capital savings to the Board total \$1.5 Million dollars.

The science lab facilities at the Ridgetown District High School have been included as a high priority in the Board's capital plan for upgrading (\$1.2M estimate). It is recommended this project be selected next for inclusion in the 2010-11 board capital budget. It is also recommended that an asphalt surface area be installed at the high school to create an outdoor activity area for the grade 7 and 8 students at an estimated cost of \$75,000.

The Board can proceed with the sale of the Ridgetown Public School property after the school has been closed. The proceeds of the sale will be placed in a board reserve account designated to fund future capital upgrade projects. At the Ridgeview Moravian Elementary School, one future capital project need that has been noted in the board's capital forecast is the addition of a larger gymnasium space.

The estimated annual increased cost to bus the students to the consolidated school sites is \$49,500.

More important than the accommodation or financial reasons, however, is the impact such a re-organization has on a student's achievement and well being. Research from western provinces is highly supportive of JK-12 schools and secondary schools starting at grade 7 or 8. In an Ontario study, interviews with staff in 5 Ontario Boards indicate program, attendance and student participation gains. While there is no definitive evidence as to which school organization produces the best graduates, it is clear that the fewer transitions a student makes the better chance for success. Graduation rates are proven to be higher the earlier students enter high school.

Anecdotal data has been available from Avon Maitland District School Board's experience for the past 6 years with results from two schools in Stratford all supporting the model. Elementary schools in Goderich consolidated into one JK-6 campus with the grade 7 and 8 students moving into their own wing of the District High School in September 2009. A visit to those schools was described in the Dresden and Area section of this Report and it was clear that parents, students and staff who hosted the day all believed the advantages significantly outweighed any disadvantages. There were clear gains for students and benefits for staff in both schools, and initial growing pains were minimal. Initial parent concerns regarding their young adolescents entering a high school environment were proven to be unfounded in the Goderich situation as well as in other

schools studied. The facility and student timetable is set up to be a “school within a school”. Parents were pleased to see that rather than leadership opportunities of the intermediate students being lost, the involvement in extra-curricular activities was increased. Grade 6 students were proud to have become the leaders in their elementary school. Attendance was improved and behavior problems, measured by number of suspensions for the grade 7 and 8 students, were reduced.

The transition period for any consolidation is important and even more imperative when a new model of school organization is introduced. Information sessions for parents and opportunities for staff, School Councils and Delaware Nation representatives to plan together would need to be facilitated. A School Naming committee would be formed for the consolidated elementary school. Students moving into a new building, elementary or secondary facility would be provided opportunities to get to know other students and staff well before the start of the new school year. Relationships with parents and community members fostered through the Accommodation Review process would be the basis for continued consultation and decision making. Safety issues, such as, crossing guards, bus loading zones and sidewalks would be addressed with community partners during the transition period.

Recommendation #1:

“That the Board close Ridgetown Public School in June 2011 and consolidate students with Ridgeview Moravian Elementary School and to re-organize the two remaining schools into a JK-6 school at the current Ridgeview Moravian Elementary School site and a Grade 7 and 8 school within the Ridgetown District High School.”

Recommendation #2

“That the Board commit proceeds from the sale of Ridgetown Public School to the addition of a new gym at the JK-6 school.”

Note:

Trustees were provided with copies of the School Profiles for all the schools involved in the ARCs as well as copies of the Records of Action from all or the Meetings at the April 22 Board Meeting.

Members of the Public can find this information on the Board’s website www.lkdsb.net.