

Report To Board

FROM: Gayle Stucke, Director of Education

DATE: September 23, 2008

SUBJECT: Administration's Response to the Report Submitted by the Devine Street Public School Accommodation Review Committee

The October, 2007 Pupil Accommodation Report recommended "That the Board approve the intention to commence an Accommodation Review of Devine Street Public School". Trustees unanimously supported the Recommendation. There was immediate community interest in the much discussed possibility of consolidating two of the Board's oldest public schools, Johnston Memorial and Devine Street, into one modern building to serve the children and families of Sarnia's core area.

In December, 2007 the Ministry of Education announced an allocation of \$7.2 million in funding for a new school providing the Board followed through with the Accommodation Review process for the closure of Devine Street Public School.

That process began with the establishment of an Accommodation Review Committee consisting of parents, Trustees, the Principal, a student, a community representative and the Director of Education. The School Council Chair of Devine Street Public School was selected to act as Chair of this committee. Five public meetings were held in the library of the school between November 26, 2007 and May 6, 2008. Attendance from the public ranged from 9 to 16 participants with the majority being interested members of the Johnston Memorial School Community.

The Committee reported to the Board at a public meeting on May 27, 2008 with three Recommendations supporting the closure of Devine Street Public School and the consolidation of its students with the students of Johnston Memorial Public School into a new school on the current Johnston Memorial site. (Appendix A)

The Pupil Accommodation/School Closure Regulations of the Lambton Kent District School Board outline timelines in the process that provide for 60 days between the Report from the Accommodation Review Committee and a decision being made by the Board. During this time the Director and other Board Administration will consider the Recommendations and give consideration of any new information that may be received. It is an opportunity for parents or any member of the public to write to Trustees or come to Board Meetings to support or challenge the Recommendations of the Committee.

The Administration is required to provide a Response to the Report in September which allows time for public response prior to the final Recommendation being presented to the Board in October.

There have been no Delegations to Board on this matter and no correspondence has been received by the Director. Informal feedback from parents and school staff has been positive with many advantages to the consolidation being cited. There would appear to be strong school and public support for the Recommendations of the Accommodation Review Committee.

The Administration of the Lambton Kent District School Board supports the Recommendations of the Devine Street Public School Accommodation Committee as presented in its Report of May 27, 2008. The report is attached.

The following recommendations will be presented for approval at the October 14, 2008 Regular Board Meeting. If public delegations are received to present to Board on October 14, the report for approval would be presented to Trustees on October 28. If no requests to address the Board are received the report will be presented on October 14.

Recommendation #1

"That the Board approve the closure of Devine Street Public School."

Recommendation #2

"That the Board approve the consolidation of Devine Street School and Johnston Memorial School into a new school on the current Johnston Memorial site."

Recommendation #3

"That the Board approve that the dates of closure and consolidation be dependent on the final recommendations of the Planning Committee for Johnston/Devine School Consolidation."

Recommendation #4

"The process of disposing of the Devine Street School property commence immediately following the closure of the school."

RECOMMENDATION:

"That the Board receive Administration's response to the report submitted by the Devine Street Public School Accommodation Review Committee."

Report of Devine Street Public School Accommodation Review Committee

BACKGROUND

- October 24, 2006 the Lambton Kent District School Board approved that the Board place Devine Street Public School and Johnston Memorial Public School “Under Review” for consolidation into a new school to be built within the same neighbourhoods, pending approval and necessary funding for this project by the Ministry of Education by August 31, 2007.
- October 23, 2007 the Lambton Kent District School Board approved the intention to commence an Accommodation Review for Devine Street Public School.
- November 13, 2007 the Lambton Kent District School Board approved the establishment of an Accommodation Review Committee for Devine Street Public School.

Members of the Accommodation Review Committee:

Gabrielle Nelson, Grade 7 student from Devine Street Public School
Kathy Kerrigan, School Chair Devine Street Public School
Katherine Baker, Parent from Devine Street Public School Community
Gavin Armstrong, Community Member
Yvette Gilfoyle, Principal, Devine Street Public School
Isabell Carter, Trustee
Elizabeth Hudie, Trustee
Carmen McGregor, Trustee
Gayle Stucke, Director of Education
Resource: Liz Rogers, Planning Officer, LKDSB
Recorder: Paula Taylor, Administrative Assistant

Member of City Council, Aamjiwnaang representation, and Devine Street Public School Staff Members were invited to participate but declined.

- **Communication of Meetings**
 - **Advertisement of meetings** – Radio, TV, School newsletters.
Principal went around the neighbourhood to personally invite the community.
 - **Invited Guests** – Mike Schnarre (City Planning), Mike Caraher (ReMax), Ron Andruchow (Superintendent of Business - LKDSB)
- **Meeting to Customize the Valuation Template – November 26, 2007**
- **Public Meeting Dates**

January 22, 2008	public attendance 9 participants
February 5, 2008	public attendance 6 participants
April 1, 2008	public attendance 16 participants
May 6, 2008	public attendance 9 participants

Report of Devine Street Public School Accommodation Review Committee (cont'd)

- **Appendix A** - Records of Action
- **Appendix B** - Valuation Template

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:

Committee consensus was reached on the following recommendations:

- 1) The Accommodation Review Committee recommends the closure of Devine Street Public School as of June 2009.
- 2) To consolidate Devine Street Public School students and Johnston Memorial Public School students into a new school on the current Johnston Memorial site.
- 3) The Board give priority and pursue all options in finding a new use for the Devine property to avoid the property and building remaining vacant or unused for an extended period of time. Consideration should be given to demolition and planting of green space if required.