

**CHATHAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
PUPIL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW PUBLIC MEETING #1
MINUTES / RECORD OF ACTION**

Date: December 1, 2016

Location: John N. Given Public School, 92 Churchill Street, Chatham, Ontario, N7L 3T5

Present: Resource Personnel: Jim Costello, Director of Education, Gary Girardi, Superintendent of Education – Capital Planning and Accommodation, Brian McKay, Superintendent of Business, Joy Badder, Superintendent of Education – Program: Leading and Learning, Dave Doey, Superintendent of Education – Program: Special Education, Mary Lynn Anderson, Principal, McNaughton Avenue Public School, Darlene Penney, Principal, Tecumseh Public School, Mike Sereda, Moderator, Kent Orr, Chatham-Kent Lambton Administrative School Services (CLASS), Jaime Gudrie, Recorder

Regrets: Daphne Zondag, Principal, John N. Given Public School

Note: This document is not a verbatim transcript. Questions and answers have been paraphrased for the sake of clarity and brevity

Item	Discussion	Action/Responsibility
Welcome	<p>Mike Sereda welcomed the audience to the Chatham Elementary Schools Accommodation Review Public Meeting #1. He explained that the Lambton Kent District School Board (LKDSB) contracted him to be the Moderator of the Public Meetings, and introduced Director Costello, Superintendent McKay, Superintendent Girardi, Superintendent Badder, Superintendent Doey, Principal Penney, and Principal Anderson. Trustees in attendance were Trustee Campbell, Trustee Dodman, Trustee Fletcher and Trustee Sasseville.</p> <p>Mike Sereda remarked that the meeting was the first of two Public Meetings to discuss the proposed consolidation of John N. Given Public School Kindergarten to Grade 8 English Language Program at Tecumseh Public School and the relocation of the John N. Given Public School Grade 7 and 8 French Immersion Program to McNaughton Avenue Public School.</p> <p>Members of the audience were told that the LKDSB wanted to hear from them</p>	

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	<p>and answer any questions or address any concerns they may have.</p> <p>He explained that during the question period, if information was not readily available it would be posted onto the Accommodation Review website for the Chatham Elementary Schools under the “Frequently Asked Questions” section. The meeting could run longer than the 8 p.m. end time if the audience had more questions. He noted that there were no delegation requests submitted for the meeting.</p> <p>Mike Sereda said that the LKDSB appreciated the audience’s cooperation in ensuring this is an equitable process.</p>	
<p>Overview of Orientation Session – October 27, 2016</p>	<p>Superintendent Girardi provided an overview of the Orientation Session held on October 27, 2016. The Agenda and Record of Action from the Orientation Session are posted on the LKDSB website.</p> <p>The purpose of the Orientation Meeting was to discuss the Pupil Accommodation Review process and the purpose of the Public Meeting was to allow for public questions and delegations.</p>	
<p>Initial Staff Report Presentation</p>	<p>Director Costello provided an overview on the Pupil Accommodation Review Process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Initial Staff Report recommendation is a part of the annual Pupil Accommodation Report, both of which are posted on the LKDSB website. • The Board’s recommendation to consolidate John N. Given Public School Kindergarten to Grade 8 English Language Program at Tecumseh Public School and relocate the John N. Given Public School Grade 7 and 8 French Immersion (FI) Program to McNaughton Avenue Public School is one of two consolidations currently recommended for review by the Board, but is part of a much broader picture of ongoing challenges facing the LKDSB. • The proposed consolidations are necessary and are based on two factors – the LKDSB’s declining enrolment and - as a result - decreased funding and its impact on the LKDSB and its ability to provide the quality of programs in all of its schools for its students. • In April 2015 the Ministry of Education changed its formula for Grants for Student Needs, which caused decreased funding. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LKDSB contains some of the oldest schools in the province. • Administration believes there is a strong argument to apply for funding to improve Tecumseh Public School. Recently the Ministry of Education awarded the LKDSB \$14 million in provincial funding to improve LKDSB consolidated schools as a result of accommodation reviews completed in the spring of 2016. • John N. Given Public School and Tecumseh Public School buildings are of similar age, both are below enrolment capacity and the two schools are 700 meters apart. • Tecumseh Public School can accommodate all of the English Language Program students from John N. Given Public School. • The recommendation is an opportunity to relocate Grade 7 and 8 French Immersion (FI) Program students from John N. Given Public School to McNaughton Avenue Public School, which will keep all FI students at one school in Chatham and consolidate FI supports into one site. • The LKDSB has experience in Pupil Accommodation Reviews as the Board has closed 14 elementary schools, 3 secondary schools and 1 Adult Education Centre since amalgamation into one school board in 1998. • Through Pupil Accommodation Reviews the LKDSB has learned that not many people enjoy having their school named for closure and/or consolidation. The LKDSB has learned that students can adapt quickly to their new schools. • The recommendations are not indictments or criticisms of LKDSB schools or the students and staff who work there every day. Administration values all LKDSB schools and has worked hard to keep them open and thriving over the years. • Administration knows these schools well, are proud of them all, and recognize the unique qualities of all three. <p>Director Costello remarked that in spite of those feelings and observations, recommendations are made that are objective and data-driven. Inside the cloud of shrinking funding and declining enrolment the LKDSB has a silver lining of opportunity to consolidate and improve LKDSB schools and reshape the LKDSB for the future.</p> <p>Superintendent Girardi presented an overview of the Initial Staff Report. Superintendent McKay presented the financial information contained in the Initial Staff Report. This presentation is posted on the LKDSB website.</p>	

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School Information Profiles	<p>An overview of the School Information Profile (SIP) for John N. Given Public School, McNaughton Avenue Public School, and Tecumseh Public School were provided. The full documents can be found on the LKDSB website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendent Badder presented the SIP for John N. Given Public School on behalf of Principal Zondag. • Principal Anderson presented the SIP for McNaughton Avenue Public School. • Principal Penney presented the SIP for Tecumseh Public School. 	
Questions from the Public	<p>Question: A community member asked what will happen with the summer school program currently held at John N. Given Public School which is in a central location for the students.</p> <p>Response: Director Costello responded that the Summer Literacy Program is a Ministry sponsored learning opportunity. There is one located in Sarnia and one in Chatham. The Chatham program was previously held at Tecumseh Public School and was recently moved to John N. Given Public School. It could be repositioned to Tecumseh Public School, which is 700 meters from John N. Given Public School.</p> <p>Follow-up Comment: A community member commented that students will have to walk across McNaughton Avenue Public School, which is a busy street with no crossing guards.</p> <p>Response: Director Costello responded that there are students that currently attend Tecumseh Public School and cross McNaughton Avenue.</p> <p>Question: A community member asked if there will be more supervision on the playground at Tecumseh Public School considering that the yard is much bigger than John N. Given Public School.</p> <p>Response: Superintendent Girardi responded that if the process moves forward Administration would have to discuss how to accommodate the students in the school yard. Administration would work with the principal and the community and make a plan to keep the students safe. The teaching staff in the building are determined by the number of kids, so there will be more teachers.</p>	

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	<p>Question: A community member asked if the teachers will be from John N. Given Public School.</p> <p>Response: Superintendent Girardi explained that the teaching staff members from John N. Given Public School and Tecumseh Public School would be brought together.</p> <p>Comment: A community member commented that there are locks on a couple of the gates at John N. Given Public School, so people can't just walk back and forth on the playground.</p> <p>Response: Principal Penney responded that the FDK area is fenced in, and the playground is only fenced in on one side. There are staff members in the playground supervising.</p> <p>Question: A community member asked if it would be considered to have a more secured playground, as anyone could get on the property and it is a bigger space.</p> <p>Response: Principal Penney responded that the playground is well supervised and will continue to be. All teachers carry walkie-talkies and their job is to be diligent and ensure there are no strangers on the playground.</p> <p>Superintendent Girardi commented that keeping students safe is a priority.</p> <p>Question: A parent from Tecumseh Public School commented that the Tecumseh Public School Parent Association submitted a letter to the Board regarding some thoughts on upgrades to the school to better accommodate the students. This included asphalt expansion and air conditioning. She asked what the timeline would be on these changes, how priorities like that would be decided, and if improvements will roll out by September.</p> <p>Response: Superintendent McKay thanked the group for their letter, and explained that Administration is working with an architect on Tecumseh Public School to see what it could look like. It would need renovations for four FDK rooms, new asphalt, including assessing the busing and parking areas, air conditioning and mechanical heating upgrades. The architects will also look at traffic flow on the site. He explained that a timeline is difficult, as the building</p>	

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	<p>needs electrical and boiler upgrades prior to air conditioning, so it may take a couple of summers to complete the work. The grant application is due in July and then it takes three to four months for the Ministry to notify boards if they are successful in obtaining funding. The Board is interested in hearing the community's comments or concerns if the work on the building takes a couple of years to be completed. The second floor of the building is a concern in hot weather.</p> <p>Comment: A parent from Tecumseh Public School suggested that other alternatives for air conditioning be looked at, like portable air conditioning units. She said that this issue could be discussed at Working Meeting #1.</p> <p>Response: Superintendent McKay said that Administration is willing to look at any of those alternatives and there is an architect that is working with the Board. The architects will attend one of the Working Meetings in order to obtain feedback from the committee on what the site might look like.</p> <p>Question: A community member asked how the students will be transitioned into a school that they are not familiar with.</p> <p>Response: Superintendent Girardi responded that the transition of students is very important. If the recommendation goes through there would be a Transition Committee created, which is made up of administrators, staff, students, parents, and community members from each school. For example, the Wyoming Area Schools Transition Committee meets on a regular basis and plans for their upcoming transition. They have incorporated days where the students get together at the new site. The Transition Committee decides what needs to be done to make the students feel comfortable and to make the school an inclusive place for all students and families.</p> <p>Question: A parent from John N. Given Public School commented that John N. Given Public School offers a Before and After School program, extra reading help, and a snack program, which has become a social thing for the students. She asked if those programs will be offered at Tecumseh Public School.</p> <p>Response: Principal Penney responded that Tecumseh Public School has a Daycare and a Before and After School program on site, and there is a snack program at the school where students can access food throughout the day. She explained that there are a lot of leadership programs at the school, and student</p>	

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	<p>leaders replenish the snack bins and work with staff.</p> <p>Superintendent Girardi remarked that in the Great Lakes Secondary School transition process, the two schools decided which traditions would be kept from each school and which would be combined in order to do what is best for their school.</p> <p>Question: A parent from John N. Given Public School asked what would happen if she didn't want to send her son to Tecumseh Public School, and if there could be a vote for a zoning change.</p> <p>Response: Superintendent Girardi responded that zones have to be voted on by Trustees so there would have to be a recommendation in the Final Staff Report to change zones. There are out of boundary students in the Board, but there must be room in the school and parents must apply every year. He commented that parents have to decide what is best for their children. That being said Administration believes that an environment can be created that would be inclusive of both schools for all students.</p> <p>Comment: A parent from John N. Given commented that she agreed that change is a good thing and there will be more tax dollars for the Board to put into education, which is a great thing.</p> <p>Director Costello asked the parent if she is concerned that the school will be too big.</p> <p>Comment: The parent responded that she is concerned with moving her son from a small school to a big school and what effects it will have on her son.</p> <p>Response: Director Costello responded that McNaughton Avenue Public School has approximately 700 students, and Indian Creek Road Public School has almost 500 students. These schools have more staff and supervision, and also have great things happening in the school.</p> <p>Principal Anderson commented that if you talk to the McNaughton Avenue Public School students they would tell you that size has nothing to do with the culture of the school. School size doesn't change the class size since there are Ministry mandated class size caps. There are just more classrooms when there are more kids. The culture of a school is dependent on many things but not the size.</p>	

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	<p>Question: A parent from John N. Given commented that with more kids walking and extra buses a concern that has been brought up is traffic on McNaughton Avenue. There is one cross walk near the tennis courts but then there is a distance between the lights. The parent asked what is being looked at to address this issue.</p> <p>Response: Director Costello responded that the LKDSB has a good relationship with the Municipality of Chatham-Kent. He noted that Mayor Randy Hope was in attendance. On the issue of cross walks and student safety the Board is always willing to have a conversation with the Municipality. It is an issue that the LKDSB pays a lot of attention to and will do anything to increase student safety.</p> <p>Kent Orr, from CLASS, remarked that there were a couple of comments on increased bus traffic, but the number of buses will not increase. CLASS has looked at various crossing and traffic options, and any students beyond the 1.6 km walk distance are eligible for busing.</p> <p>Comment: Mayor Randy Hope remarked that he was in attendance in order to understand the conversation. He commented on the corridor of McNaughton Avenue, which contains McNaughton Avenue Public School, Chatham Kent Secondary School and Tecumseh Public School, and said that the Municipality will be looking at different avenues and working with the school boards to mitigate the circumstances to make people feel comfortable. He said that it is not an argument on whose responsibility it is, and explained that it is our responsibility as a community, and the Municipality wants to pay attention to the traffic flow.</p> <p>Comment: A community member commented that she was concerned with the traffic and parking lot at Tecumseh Public School, as she has grandchildren at John N. Given Public School and Tecumseh Public School. She explained that she has tried to park, and walk across two lanes of traffic on McNaughton Avenue Public School and it is almost impossible. Now with more students and more parents dropping children off, the Board would need to complete major renovations in the parking lots to deal with the traffic flow. She also remarked that there are no sidewalks in the Baldoon subdivision, and that maintenance of sidewalks are an ongoing concern, especially in the winter.</p> <p>Response: Director Costello responded that an example of the Board's</p>	

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	<p>response can be found at McNaughton Avenue Public School. In the past Principal Anderson made the Board aware that there wasn't enough parking so the Board created some parking. At Tecumseh Public School, the asphalt could be extended back to the area near the tennis courts if needed. If the additional students requires the Board to increase the parking lot it is possible as this is LKDSB property.</p> <p>Comment: A community member commented that the problem isn't the parking as much as getting in and out of the parking lot.</p> <p>Response: Director Costello responded that the Board is open to suggestions, and the Board will listen and will work with people who are experienced in this area, and will redesign the area if needed.</p> <p>Superintendent McKay explained that it is not only about expanding the parking lot, but about traffic flow. The architects will listen to the community and make design recommendations.</p> <p>Principal Penney commented that the school spends a lot of time reaching out to parents to suggest they walk with their children to school as this is a healthy lifestyle choice. Staff members at the school do a lot of work to keep students safe.</p> <p>Superintendent Girardi remarked that there are schools in the LKDSB where traffic routines have changed after they have been evaluated. In the Wyoming Area, for example, traffic was a concern from the community. The architects assigned developed a plan to accommodate the increase of parents dropping off students. With the size of the Tecumseh Public School site parking lot we would ask the architects to assist us with alleviating traffic concerns.</p>	
Next Meeting	<p>Working Meeting #1 for the Pupil Accommodation Review Committee Members will be held on January 19, 2017 at the Chatham Regional Education Centre. This meeting is open to the public to observe.</p> <p>Public Meeting #2 for the Chatham Area Pupil Accommodation Review will be held on February 23, 2017 at 6 p.m. at Tecumseh Public School. Requests for delegations must be submitted by February 14, 2017 at 4 p.m. Information about submitting a request to delegate is available on the LKDSB website.</p>	

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Adjournment	Mike Sereda thanked everyone for participating in the discussion and remarked that the LKDSB appreciated the public's comments and questions. The meeting was adjourned at 7:23 p.m.	