

**ACCOMMODATION REVIEW COMMITTEE  
RECORD OF ACTION  
DRESDEN AREA SCHOOLS**

**Date:** March 3, 2010

**Location:** Lambton-Kent Composite School

**Present:** Committee Members: Gayle Stucke, Director of Education, David Doey, Superintendent of Education, Brad Holmes, Principal, Dresden Area Central School, Stuart Kiar, Community Representative, Dresden Area C.S., Mary Lynn Anderson, Principal, Dawn-Euphemia School, Emily Faflak, Parent Representative, Dawn-Euphemia School, Audrey Wagner, Community Rep., Dawn-Euphemia School, Wilma Sonneveld-Wright, Principal, Thamesville Area Central School, Scott Sproule, Parent Representative, Thamesville Area C.S., Darren Carther, Community Representative, Thamesville Area C.S., Ann Balkwill, Principal, Zone Township Central School, Jodi Robb, Parent Representative, Zone Twp. C.S., Rob Lee, Principal, Lambton-Kent Composite School, Lynda Weese, Community Representative, Lambton-Kent C.S., Emery Huszka, Municipal Representative Township of Dawn-Euphemia

Resource Personnel: Joy Badder, Superintendent of Education, Lorie Vandeschoot, Planning and Reporting Officer, Trish Johnston, Recorder

Trustees: Randy Campbell, Ruth Ann Dodman, Scott McKinlay,

**Regrets:** Barbara McCaughrin, Parent Representative, Lambton-Kent C.S., Michael Pishl, Parent Representative, Dresden Area C.S., Jackie Beatty, Community Representative, Zone Twp. C.S., Marsha Coyne, Senior Planner - Municipality of Chatham-Kent,

*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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All in attendance were welcomed.</li> </ul>	
Purpose of the Additional Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The purpose of the additional Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) Meeting was explained. Following the February 17 ARC Meeting, emails were shared among the ARC Members indicating items that needed to be discussed and options to be considered. A number of scenarios were shared. ARC Members agreed that there was a need for an additional meeting prior to the meeting scheduled for March 31.</li> </ul>	

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Review of Record of Action (RoA) from February 17, 2010 ARC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two additions were made to the RoA from February 17, 2010. The capacity of Brooke Central School was clarified. Brooke Capacity is 386. Based on September enrolment of 309.50 FTE, the building capacity is 80.18% full, with 76.50 vacant spaces. The capacity quoted in the October 2009 Accommodation Report does not include the addition to the school.</li> <li>The population data section was also revised to read - Factors impacting the difference in figures could include students attending other schools in our District for program reasons (Special Education, French Immersion), attending catholic or private schools, or being home schooled. Another factor is the movement of families in or out of the school catchment area.</li> </ul>	<b>The revised RoA will be posted on the web site.</b>
Input from Teachers – Survey	Gayle Stucke advised that some school boards have teachers on their ARCs to obtain direct input. Our Board decided not to include them as members of the ARC. This decision was supported by the local federation leaders. Principals were asked to informally survey their teachers about the pros and cons of working in small schools. A summary of points submitted was shared and will be attached to the ROA.	
Scenarios Submitted by Members/ Brainstorming	<p>Gayle explained that the items listed on the Agenda under Options for Further Consideration should have been listed under Scenarios Submitted by Members/Brainstorming. Ten scenarios were submitted by various Committee Members. The Committee Members responsible for submitting the options were asked to provide their rationale. The options were then placed in one of the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possible Scenarios</li> <li>Developing Partnerships</li> <li>Increasing Student Enrolment</li> </ul>	
1. <i>Status Quo</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members supported further consideration of this option.</li> </ul>	<b>Agreed to look at option.</b>
2. <i>Boundary Changes from Lambton Centennial School to Dawn-Euphemia School</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emily Faflak spoke to this option and felt it would solve the problem for the least amount of money and that it was the simplest solution to solve the problems for this area and the Petrolia area.</li> <li>Members supported further consideration of this option.</li> </ul>	<b>Agreed to look at option.</b>
3. <i>Explore Partners</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A number of partnership options were suggested.</li> <li>Gayle spoke to the Director of the St. Clair Catholic District School Board about potential partnerships and he confirmed that their Board is still not</li> </ul>	

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	interested in sharing a facility at this time.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lynda Weese spoke to the idea of approaching the Mennonite Community to bring students into the secondary school. Dave Doey advised that they are working on a partnership with the Mennonite Central Committee to develop some outreach programs. Members supported further consideration of this partnership through the Mennonite Central Committee.</li> <li>• Elementary Mennonite students attend classes located in an old school in Bothwell and could be approached to move into one of our schools.</li> </ul>	<b>Agreed to look at option.</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Partners – A memo from the Ministry of Education was shared on encouraging facility partnerships.</li> <li>• It was suggested that perhaps a Heritage Resource Centre could be located in a school library. The Board currently rents space to day cares on a cost recovery basis for \$7.00 a square foot.</li> </ul>	
4. <i>Grade 7 to 12 School at LKCS</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This option would reflect the set up of the schools in Goderich that some members of the ARC visited. It was suggested that if this option was considered, that the Dawn-Euphemia School not be part of the option because their students attend LCCVI and LKCS for secondary school. All the pros and cons would be discussed if this was an option the ARC Members wanted to pursue further.</li> <li>• Emery Huszka wanted it noted that there is a perception by some in the Dawn-Euphemia community that in the past, closure studies have not invited public input. This is the cause of a continued distrust by some.</li> <li>• Support to pursue this option further at this time was not expressed.</li> </ul>	
5. <i>JK to 12 School in Dresden</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emily Faflak commented that this option would reduce the cost of running one building and no one would lose their school. The schools would be amalgamated in one building at the LKCS location.</li> <li>• Brad Holmes stated that his school council would not support this option. Lorie Vandeschoot provided enrolment figures - 330 DAC, 359 LKCS – 689 for 2011/12 and the capacity rating for LKCS is 714. LKCS would probably need an addition to accommodate the elementary classes.</li> <li>• It was noted that there is currently a JK to Grade 12 school in Tecumseh.</li> <li>• In response to a question wondering if the Board was expecting to receive funding for more programs similar to Best Start with the implementation of ELP, Joy Badder advised that the Board has not been</li> </ul>	<b>Agreed to look option</b>

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	<p>told that it would be extending the Best Start program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members supported further consideration of this option.</li> </ul>	
<p>6. <i>School Closures of one or more Elementary Schools</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jodi Robb stated that she does not support closing a school but felt ARC Members should consider all options. Support was expressed for more information on the impact of closing each school, including the high school.</li> <li>Gayle confirmed that Trustees would absolutely consider a closure in the area but there has been no decision or conclusion that there would be a closure.</li> <li>Gayle reconfirmed the mandate of the ARC which was to make recommendations to Trustees and Administration at the first meeting in April. The report to Trustees from the ARC would include the pros and cons considered by the ARC Members and the ARC's recommendation. The Trustees are the decision makers.</li> <li>Stuart Kiar restated that the ARC would recommend to Administration and Trustees and then Administration would make a report to the Trustees/Board containing recommendations that maybe the same as the ARC's or different. Gayle suggested ARC members attend the Board Meetings and asked that someone on the ARC present the report to the Board on April 13.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Agreed to look at option of closing each school including the high school.</b></p>
<p>7. <i>Sharing of Administration</i></p>	<p>The sharing of principals between schools was done in the past when schools were 'twinned'. This is a sustainability strategy for maintaining the status quo.</p>	
<p>8. <i>Community Committees to Keep More Students in Local Schools</i></p>	<p>This idea is a sustainability strategy for maintaining the status quo. It was noted that the schools need to become proactive and educate their communities.</p>	
<p>9. <i>International Student Program</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emery Huszka provided an explanation for suggesting that the Board seek out a country to partner with to bring international students into LKCS. There are a number of Spanish speaking people in the community. He suggested the development of a residence for the students to attract them and the cultivation of a relationship to supplement our needs and give them something they need. He suggested offering Spanish and Low German. He commented on the economic potential.</li> </ul>	<p><b>As a possible method of increasing enrolment, the idea of providing linguistic opportunities will be pursued. Consideration will be given to offer parents the opportunity to learn English</b></p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rob Lee commented on the perception that smaller secondary schools do not have enough choices for students and that this perception can hurt the schools. He confirmed that LKCS offers all the courses that students need to pursue whatever pathway they desire. Students must acquire 18 compulsory credits and 12 elective credits, all of which they can obtain at LKCS. A lot of good things are going on at LKCS.</li> <li>• As a possible method of increasing enrolment, the idea of providing linguistic opportunities will be pursued.</li> <li>• Consideration will be given to offer parents the opportunity to learn English</li> </ul>	
<p><i>10. Jk to 6 School at Dawn-Euphemia and 7 &amp; 8 at Dresden Area Central School</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emily Faflak put forth this idea in response to the concerns expressed about grade 7 and 8 students being in the high school. It was suggested as a way of creating a JK to grade 6 school at Dawn-Euphemia and a grade 7 &amp; 8 school at DAC.</li> <li>• ARC Members agreed not to pursue this option.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brad Holmes commented that he felt that a couple of the scenarios would not be acceptable to Dresden residents, namely the JK to 12 school and the closure of the high school, when the option of placing the grade 7 &amp; 8 students in the secondary school was not being considered. He stated that he felt that the Dresden residents would want this option discussed.</li> <li>• Mary Lynn Anderson supported considering this option but with the exclusion of Dawn-Euphemia School because they have students that would attend LCCVI or LKCS. The other elementary schools are feeder schools for LKCS. It was suggested that perhaps the ELP could be introduced at one of the schools next year to increase enrolment. That could be part of the ARC's recommendation. The Early Learning Program, day care and social services are obvious partnerships to enhance the schools.</li> <li>• Members supported further consideration of the option of placing grade 7 and 8 students at LKCS with the exclusion of Dawn-Euphemia School students.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Agreed to look at the option of placing the grade 7 and 8 students at LKCS without Dawn-Euphemia School students.</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jodi Robb questioned if it was possible to look at the boundaries for all the schools. Gayle confirmed that it was possible but that she felt it was a non-starter because all areas are experiencing declining enrolment.</li> <li>• Could the ARC ask the Board to review its policy on allowing students to attend schools other than their home school as a possible method of</li> </ul>	

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	<p>helping small schools? Superintendent Doey confirmed that the Education Act gives parents the right to request to attend a school outside of the district boundaries.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emily Faflak referred to a comment made about the suggestion of a boundary change involving Lambton Centennial and that they would not be happy if they lost students. She stated that Dawn is not going to be happy either and that they do not want to look at losing their school. She stated that she felt feelings needed to be taken out of it.</li> <li>• Gayle acknowledged her concern and agreed that the boundary issue impacts both sides. Pros and cons are being developed for both studies. Trustees are going to listen and make the best decisions for the whole district.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was questioned if LKCS was situated to take advantage of a partnership with the Colleges.</li> </ul>	<p><b>This idea will be pursued.</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lynda Weese asked if options for special education students could be expanded at LKCS so they do not have to leave their home school.</li> </ul>	<p><b>This idea will be pursued.</b></p>
Options for Further Consideration	<p>Options for Further Consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Status Quo</li> <li>○ Boundary Change</li> <li>○ JK – 12 Dresden School</li> <li>○ School Closures – elementary and secondary</li> <li>○ Grade 7 to 12 School at LKCS (except for Dawn-Euphemia Students)</li> </ul>	
	<p>Explore Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Development of relationship with Mennonite Central Committee</li> <li>○ Municipal Partnership</li> <li>○ Pursue partnership with Community College at LKCS</li> </ul>	
	<p>Increasing Enrolment/Attracting Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Community School Committees</li> <li>○ Partnerships for International Students</li> <li>○ Pursue bridge building through language</li> <li>○ Continue to pursue Special Education program at LKCS</li> </ul>	
Questions From the Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Comment</b> – Karen Vankoughnett, a Dawn-Euphemia School Parent, commented that since Zone Township Central School got the Early Learning Program, they are not up for closure.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="491 212 1482 342">• <b>Comment</b> – Michael McGee, LKCS student, commented that he does not support school closures. He experienced the closure of East Sombra School and talked about the community activities lost since the school closed. He felt that a school closure does affect the community.</li> <li data-bbox="491 383 1472 480">• <b>Question</b> – Robin Powers, Dawn-Euphemia School Parent, commented that many moves are detrimental to students. She stated that the Board should consider what is best for the students not just the dollars.</li> <li data-bbox="491 521 1394 618">• <b>Response</b> All the pros and cons of the options will be considered, not just the financial impact.</li> <li data-bbox="491 659 1472 789">• <b>Comment</b> – Joanne Sanderson, Dawn-Euphemia School Parent, stated that she had big concerns when members of the ARC were still asking what the process was. The facilitator should make sure they all completely understand.</li> <li data-bbox="491 829 1472 927">• <b>Question</b> – Dan Wallace, Dawn-Euphemia School Parent, questioned if the Committee was going to consider the information in the Ministry of Education’s report from the declining enrolment work group.</li> <li data-bbox="491 967 1272 1032">• <b>Response</b> Gayle said she would look at the report with Mr. Wallace.</li> <li data-bbox="491 1073 1493 1268">• <b>Question</b> - Becky Adams, Dawn-Euphemia School Parent, commented that kids are coming home everyday asking if the school is going to close. She thinks the Board should fight for all schools and that Dawn-Euphemia is a good school. She stated that kids are on the bus now for over an hour. If the students are moved they will have a longer bus ride. The Board should consider the students.</li> <li data-bbox="491 1308 1457 1471">• <b>Response</b> Gayle encouraged Ms. Adams to talk to Principal Anderson now about the current length of the bus ride and confirmed that if a school was to close and students relocated, the transportation regulations concerning the length of bus rides would still apply.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Question</b> – Robin Powers, Dawn-Euphemia Parent, questioned what school the students would attend if the school were to close.</li>   <li>• <b>Response</b> Gayle advised that if a school were to close, it would take a year to implement the changes. Meetings would be held with parents to ask for input on new boundaries and their school of choice that was geographically reasonable. She reiterated that Brooke Central School is not over capacity.</li>   <li>• <b>Question</b> – Robin Powers, Dawn-Euphemia Parent, referred to the ARC meeting in Petrolia on March 4 and stated that in those options there is no mention of housing Dawn-Euphemia students at Lambton Centennial. She feels that they should know about this option.</li>   <li>• <b>Response</b> Gayle confirmed that this idea had been brought up at the Petrolia Area ARC Meetings. There is not a recommendation to close Dawn-Euphemia School.</li>   <p><b>Question</b> – Jason Myer, Dawn-Euphemia Parent, stated that he felt the boundary should be up to the parents of Oil Springs and not the ARC Members. He asked if the Board would entertain transporting students out of communities to rural schools for students who have needs.</p> <li>• <b>Response</b> Gayle advised that currently parents can choose to take their children to a school other than their boundary school if there is room in the receiving school and they can provide their own transportation.</li>   <li>• <b>Question</b> – Michael McGee, LKCS student, stated that he does not feel he fits in at this school fully because he came from the rural area. He questioned how would these kids react and fit in with the town kids if Dawn-Euphemia closed.</li>   <li>• <b>Response</b> Gayle noted his point and confirmed that the adjustment of students</li> </ul>	

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	<p>would be a consideration if a school were to close.</p> <p>The public was reminded that questions can be submitted through the Board's web site, through ARC Members or Trustees.</p>	
Questions From Committee Members	No further questions were submitted by the ARC Members.	
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ARC Members were encouraged to share the information from the meeting with the people they represent.</li> <li>• Administration will gather the data associated with the five options agreed upon.</li> <li>• The pros and cons of the five scenarios will be discussed at the next meeting. The information will be sent to ARC Members one week prior to the March 31 Meeting.</li> <li>• The Committee will develop a recommendation to present to Board and Administration at the April 13, 2010 Board Meeting.</li> </ul>	
Date of Future Meeting	<p>Thamesville Area Central School suggested the change in location for the next meeting to accommodate more people.</p> <p>March 31, 2010 – Dresden Area Central School  6:30 p.m. – school tour  7:00 p.m. – ARC Meeting</p>	
Adjournment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The meeting adjourned at 9:09 p.m.</li> </ul>	

## Input from Teachers

March 3, 2010

### PROS

- good standards of behaviour reinforced by close links with parents and the community -a family atmosphere
- it's easier to spot strangers at small schools - security and discipline are easier to maintain
- developing relationship of trust with families through the years that have more than one child and utilizing classroom traditions to their greatest advantage
- access to community services (walking distance to library, park, etc)
- Local businesses donate time and money to help support school programs.
- Staff teamwork crosses all divisions, so greater consistency with teaching and behaviour management.
- Gym, library and computer lab—all easy to acquire—rare to have conflicts with other classes—there is always space for activities when schedules are modified
- Lots of storage phys. Ed equipment, technology, staff book room
- Easy to hold assemblies with entire student body due to size
- All students are able to participate on teams—staff make very few cuts

### CONS

- Same teachers always doing the same teams/clubs which leads to teacher burnout.
- Must look outside of own school staff for purposes of collaboration and moderation
- High level of transient students (moving in and out)
- Difficult to separate students who don't work well together, negatively influence each other.
- If a student does not have friends, there are not lots of opportunities to meet new ones.
- Yard duty /Supervision issues-Not enough teachers sometimes for all of the required supervision areas.
- Inability to network for combined activities/trips –division is too small.
- Difficult for school teams to be competitive against schools with large populations