

Report to: Lambton Kent District School Board

From: Accommodation Review Committee Dresden Family of Schools, including Lambton Kent Composite School, Dawn- Euphemia Public School, Dresden Area Central School, Thamesville Area Central School and Zone Township Central School.

Date: April 13, 2010

Subject: Recommendations from the Dresden and Area ARC

Trustees passed the following Motion at the October 13, 2009 Regular Board Meeting as part of the October Pupil Accommodation Report:

"That the Board approve the commencement of the Accommodation Review process and the establishment of an Accommodation Review Committee for the Dresden Area of Schools, including Lambton Kent Composite School, Dresden Area Central School, Dawn- Euphemia Public School, Thamesville Area Central School and Zone Township Central School.

Committee Members:

The following members were appointed to serve on the Dresden Area ARC by the Trustees of the Lambton Kent District School Board at the October 27, 2009 Regular Board Meeting:

Lambton Kent Composite School Representatives:

Principal: Rob Lee
Parent Representative: Barb McCaughrin
Community Representative: Lynda Weese

Dresden Area Central School Representatives:

Principal: Brad Holmes
Parent Representative: Michael Pishl
Community Representative: Stuart Kiar

Dawn-Euphemia Public School Representatives:

Principal: Mary Lynn Anderson
Parent Representative: Emily Faflak
Community Representative: Audrey Wagner

Thamesville Area Central School Representatives:

Principal: Wilma Sonneveld-Wright
Parent Representative: Scott Sproule
Community Representative: Darren Carther

Zone Township Central School:

Principal: Ann Balkwill
Parent Representative: Jodi Robb
Community Representative: Jackie Beatty

Municipal Representatives:

Marsha Coyne, Municipality of Chatham Kent
Emery Huszka, Township of Dawn Euphemia

Facilitators:

Gayle Stucke, Director of Education
Dave Doey, Superintendent of Education

Resource Personnel:

Lorie Vandeschoot, Planning and Reporting Officer
Janet Doyle and Trish Johnston, Records

Public Meetings:

The Dresden Area ARC held five public meetings: November 16, 2009 at Lambton Kent Composite School, January 27, 2010 at Zone Township Central School, February 17, 2010 at Dawn-Euphemia Public School, March 3, 2010 at Lambton Kent Composite and March 31, 2010 at Dresden Area Central School. Attendance of the public ranged from approximately 50 to 100 individuals across five meetings.

Additional study opportunities:

As a result of questions from ARC members and members of the public, two events were scheduled in addition to the public meetings by members:

An interactive E-Learning workshop was held simultaneously at Dresden and Ridgetown High Schools on January 19 where parents and others interested learned about courses offered on line and experienced a Virtual Classroom environment used to link students from two or more schools within the district.

In addition, members of the ARCs, along with students and teacher representatives from each of the schools in the Ridgetown and Dresden Study areas, travelled to Goderich on February 3 and 5. These visits focused on the experiences of schools that had been reorganized into JK to 6 and grade 7 to 12 settings.

Communication:

An Accommodation Review Committee resource page was created on the Lambton Kent District School Board website (www.lkdsb.net). The October 2009 Pupil Accommodation Report and Appendices were posted there as well as the Agenda, Record of Action, School Profiles, handouts and power point presentations for each meeting. A section for Questions and Answers received from the public, committee members and via email was posted in this section as well. All questions received a response within a few days and were shared with the ARC members at subsequent meetings.

Committee members shared opinions and initiated action through e-mail messages.

Meeting #1 November 16, 2009 held at Lambton Kent Composite School

- A folder of information was distributed and reviewed by the Director with the assistance of the Planning and Reporting Officer. The folder contained the following documents: Board Policy and Regulations on Pupil Accommodation/School Closure; Terms of Reference for the Accommodation Review Committee; and School Information Profiles.
- Committee members were encouraged to review the School Information Profiles in preparation for the next meeting.
- Demographic data including enrollment history and projections, birth rate trends, change in school aged population and school area catchment maps was provided and explained for each school.
- The importance of ongoing communication among the ARC and the broader school communities was stressed. Strategies discussed included: school newsletters; the LKDSB website link to ARC; School Council meetings; local media coverage; a standing agenda item providing an opportunity for questions and input from the public at every meeting; and letters or e-mail messages to committee members, Board staff or Trustees.

Meeting #2 - January 27, 2010 held at Zone Township Public School

- School Profiles were reviewed for each school with input for changes or additions made by committee members. Representatives of each school spoke in detail about their school's value to students, board, and community. It was evident that there is pride and confidence in each of the schools within the study area. The rationale for each community needing its school/s for economic viability was stressed with many of the arguments common to all four communities.

Meeting #3 – February 17, 2010 held at Dawn-Euphemia Central School

- This meeting was rescheduled from February 10 due to a snow storm.
- Dan Wallace, representing the Save our School Committee, made a Power Point presentation providing many reasons to support Dawn-Euphemia as a viable school.
- Members were asked to identify challenges facing small schools. Principals acknowledged staffing, planning and supervision issues. Parents on the committee and members of the public who spoke identified only positive factors about their small schools and disagreed with the challenges suggested.
- The following ideas were brought forward for increasing student enrollment: community or business (paid) partnerships: partnerships with the St. Clair Catholic School Board; boundary changes between Petrolia and Lambton Centennial and Dawn-Euphemia; and international student programs.

Meeting #4- March 3, 2010 at Lambton Kent Composite School

- An additional meeting was called as a result of agreement by members that there were items that needed to be discussed and options to be considered.
- Ten scenarios had been identified by various members through e-mail communications to all ARC members.
- Ideas were divided into three categories: Options; Partnerships; Increasing Enrollment
- The committee members requested further information on all five options that had been put forward including the potential closure of any one or more of the schools in the study.

Meeting #5 – March 31, 2010 held at Dresden Area Central School

- A week in advance of the meeting, ARC members received the Agenda and a summary of the options identified at the previous meeting. For each option, pertinent data was provided, including projected enrollment for the 2011-12 school year, capacity of the schools, maps where applicable, and estimated transportation costs.
- The data that had been provided with each Option was explained, followed by questions and discussion.
- The process of analyzing the pros and cons of each of the options was introduced. There was consensus that Options C, D and E could be removed from the table. This was followed by members providing rationale for Options A and B. Option B would become one of the enhancements to improve and better balance student enrollment.
- Option A would be reworded to read - Enhance all our existing community schools (including boundary reconsideration).
- The following “enhancements” were identified by the Committee: pursue boundary changes between Petrolia schools and Lambton Centennial and between Lambton Centennial and Dawn Euphemia; initiate partnerships with other education groups, municipalities and businesses; lobby for single school board in Ontario; lobby for provincial policies mandating the sharing of facilities with other school boards; establishment of school/community committees; LKDSB consider reduction of Administrative positions and costs; lobby for new funding formula; welcome immigrant population (Mennonite and others) and help in transition (adult language courses).
- Members of the public were invited to share their opinions.

Options Studied

A - Status Quo

B - Boundary Change between Dawn Euphemia and Lambton Centennial

C - JK-12 School in Dresden (consolidation of students from Dresden Area and LKCS)

D - School Closures (consideration of the possible closure of any one of the five schools)

E – Gr 7-12 at LKCS (students from Dresden Area, Thamesville and Zone)

RECOMMENDATIONS

It was the unanimous decision of the voting members of the Dresden Area of Schools Accommodation Review Committee to recommend the following:

To enhance all our existing community schools (including boundary reconsideration):

- Recommend a review of boundaries between Petrolia area schools and Dawn-Euphemia School to relocate students from Petrolia schools to Lambton Central Centennial School and Lambton Central Centennial School to Dawn-Euphemia School;
- Pursue the sharing of facilities with St. Clair Catholic District School Board and lobby for a single education system and for provincial policies to promote sharing of facilities between school boards;
- Place Vice Principals in schools and share Principals between schools (twinning);
- Establish partnerships with other education groups (for example Colleges and Universities to offer adult learning courses), pursue municipal opportunities and make buildings more community user-friendly;
- Lobby for a review of the funding formula; and
- Form Community Committees to aid in maintaining and increasing school populations and to assist in the use of excess capacity in our schools. Strategies to enhance our schools would include programs to welcome immigrant families (for example, ESL courses for parents, make school facilities such as gymnasium and shops available for use by immigrant families), developing and recommending policies to make use of facilities by community groups easier and more user-friendly (for example, insurance issues), and investigating partnering with post-secondary educational institutions to offer adult learning opportunities at our schools. These committees would work with the Board to ensure the community is aware of what is happening at the board level and to ensure that the Board is more aware of the concerns and needs of the community.