

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

Date: February 17, 2010

Location: Dawn-Euphemia Elementary School

Present: Committee Members: Gayle Stucke, Director of Education, David Doey, Superintendent of Education, Brad Holmes, Principal, Dresden Area Central School, Michael Pishl, Parent Representative, Dresden Area C.S., 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., Ann Balkwill, Principal, Zone Township Central School, Rob Lee, Principal, Lambton-Kent Composite School, Barbara McCaughrin, Parent Representative, Lambton-Kent C.S., Lynda Weese, Community Representative, Lambton-Kent C.S., Emery Huszka, Municipal Representative Township of Dawn-Euphemia

Resource Personnel: Lorie Vandeschoot, Planning and Reporting Officer, Marsha Coyne, Senior Planner - Municipality of Chatham-Kent, Janet Doyle, Recorder

Trustees: Carmen McGregor, David Goldsmith

Regrets: Jodi Robb, Parent Representative, Zone Twp. C.S., Darren Carther, Community Representative, Thamesville Area C.S. Jackie Beatty, Community Representative, Zone Twp. C.S.

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"> All in attendance were welcomed. It was encouraging to see such a packed gymnasium. 	
Mandate of the Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) analyzes School Information Profiles, considers alternatives and makes recommendations that meet the educational and accommodation objectives of the Lambton Kent District School Board. Throughout the process, the ARC consults with community members and provides opportunity for input into the analysis. <p>Members were invited to have clarifications about the mandate. There were none.</p>	

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<p>Review of Record of Action (RoA) from January 27, 2010 ARC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was agreed to revise Emily Faflak's comments under "Out of Boundary Students" to reflect her intent, and the revised January 27, 2010 Record of Action will be posted as such on the Board's website. • The Committee had no additions or changes to the School Information Profiles • Gayle introduced Marsha Coyne, Senior Planner for the Municipality of Chatham-Kent. Marsha commented on the 'Value to the Local Economy' section for the Lambton-Kent C.S. School Information Profile. Additions are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If Lambton-Kent C.S. were to close, it would impact the Municipality's ability to attract employment opportunities and manufacturing industries. ○ Closing Lambton-Kent would have an impact on the local businesses that currently employ students and rely on them for casual help. ○ The Municipality has a significant investment in infrastructure such as roads, sewers and parks. Closure of any school would have an impact on the value of the property or the ability to attract and retain families in the community, thus impacting the Municipality's ability to recover these costs. 	<p>Revise School Information Profiles – J. Doyle</p>
<p>Board Website Updates</p>	<p>Questions and answers posted on the Board's website were reviewed. Committee members are encouraged to check the Board website weekly.</p>	
<p>Request for Specific Population Data</p>	<p>In response to a request from Emery Huszka, Lorie Vandeschoot presented numerical data relative to students living in the catchment area for each school vs. those actually attending. Data included 2007, 2008 and 2009 figures as well as projections through to 2011. 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.</p>	

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	<p>Emery asked what the Board is doing to attract students. Gayle responded that declining enrolment is an issue across the Board. This Board does not have staff or budget allocated to student recruitment. We do everything we can to demonstrate that we have good schools. "Learning Matters" is distributed once a year to promote the good things that are happening. School principals promote their schools in many ways including contacts with local media.</p>	
<p>Feedback From Visit to Goderich Schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two bus trips were organized in order that committee members, parents, students and teachers could look at a JK-6 school and a Grade 7-12 school. • Brad Holmes added that participants had the opportunity to talk to both a parent group and a teacher group. One of the questions our parents had was the exposure of Grade 7/8 students to high school students. They learned that this was not an issue. Students were asked if there were more bullying incidents than when they were in elementary school. Students responded that there were actually less, as students in Grades 11 and 12 have no interest in the younger students. The amount of student interaction in the building was minimal. • Ann Balkwill was impressed that we were able to empower younger kids. Suspension rate decreased and attendance increased. Students spoke to the ability access computer, science labs, etc • At the elementary school, students in Grade 6 expressed that they were the 'top dogs' now, as they had new responsibilities. The Grade 7 and 8 students in the secondary school felt special as well. • If additional interest is expressed in another trip, we would bring a group to us and provide students, parents, teachers as well as principals an open forum for discussion. • Scott Sproule questioned if all the Grade 7 and 8 students joined together in a secondary school, there would have to be some thought as to what teams would they play. • Emery Huszka said that he was impressed with the Goderich project. He further stated that all of his concerns hadn't been resolved. There's basically a Grade 7/8 school within a school. The 7/8 students have use of the cafeteria, they wouldn't play on the same teams as the secondary students, there would be no intermingling at dances, only at Remembrance Day services. 	

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<p>Delegation: Mr. Dan Wallace, Dawn-Euphemia Support Our School Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Power Point presented many factors supporting Dawn-Euphemia as a viable school. The presentation is attached. 	
<p>Identifying Issues/ Brainstorming</p>	<p>The Committee was asked to consider the challenges, from a student/teacher/principal perspective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stuart Kiar spoke positively about his experience with his children attending DACS and L-KCS, adding that he wouldn't want his children in a larger school. • Lynda Weese added that in a larger school, teachers have more opportunity to share/exchange teaching strategies. • Scott Sproule indicated that he is satisfied with the size of the schools that his children attend (Thamesville, Lambton-Kent). • Emily Faflak added that in a small school, there are only a certain number of friends students can have. They acquire the skills to deal with others appropriately, and carry this with them when they attend secondary school. Parents of children in a small school get together when an issue arises, and are able to help their children resolve it. • Mary Lynn Anderson said that there are challenges to both a large school and a small school. From a staff perspective, in a small school, there will always be split grades, sometimes siblings can't be separated, and that's not always in the best interest of the students. At other times, there are personality conflicts, and students may have the same teacher for a number of years in a row. In a small school, teacher and staff resources are stretched; e.g., supervision, coaching and club activities. • Ann Balkwill expressed that transportation is a concern. Currently, there are students on the bus for 45 minutes; school consolidation would make the ride much longer. • Gayle advised that the Board would have to consider transportation factors if there were to be a school consolidation. • Wilma Sonneveld-Wright noted that from an administrative point of view, when she is doing planning, there are challenges to meet supervision requirements – with a small staff, careful planning is required in order to meet contractual obligations. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lynda Weese asked if empty classrooms in school buildings pose a problem relative to funding. Gayle responded that the government provides top-up funding to 20%, and if two small schools were consolidated, the Board could lose that. If you keep a school open with a lot of empty space, you are still paying for heat, etc. There is a newly released Ministry Memo, “Encouraging Facility Partnerships”, which encourages schools to seek community partnerships on a cost-recovery basis. • Emery Huszka said that we have an expensive system, and that wages are a large part. • Emery Huszka added that if you look at this community where folks are living on a small income, I think we have good usage of our schools. A number of years ago, the township here attempted to work out an arrangement to make a public library and a school library. It’s a different day, but those options were thought of. Maybe an innovative committee could be struck to determine how to get kids back into our schools. • Gayle responded that the challenge of finding good partnerships is offering good programs that will attract kids. The Board would welcome partnerships; however, that would not necessarily attract more students. • Emery suggested that courses in other languages be offered; e.g., Spanish. • Gayle advised that system-wide these aren’t the Board’s only small schools. We have fifty-four elementary school buildings with a declining and disproportionate number of students. That is a strain on our people resources – fewer students but the same number of sites. Fewer school sites would enhanced our ability to provide the number of principals and vice-principals required. <p>The Committee was asked to think further about challenges of declining enrolment in each of the schools in our study, and no others were suggested.</p>	<p>Ministry Memo: Encouraging Facility Partnerships to be discussed at next meeting - G. Stucke</p>
<p>Consideration of Alternatives/Options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee was asked to put forward any scenarios that they considered worthy of investigation or consideration (if you were a consultant coming in to solve problems, are there any scenarios that you would suggest investigating/considering?) 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barb McCaughrin suggested the idea of paid partnerships, such as the possibility of a museum being put into the high school. • Lynda Weese wondered if the Lambton Kent District School Board and the St. Clair Catholic District School Board would be willing to get together and provide education in one building. • Brad Holmes added that Brooke Central offers religious instruction to catholic students at lunch hour, and this works well. • Emily Faflak stated that if Petrolia is at capacity, we are 10 minutes away, and Centennial is in the middle. Would it not be preferable to change the boundaries? Moving the bus boundary to Oil Springs Line is inexpensive. There could be a partnership between the Dresden ARC and the Petrolia ARC. • Emery Huszka stated that we've had successful foreign exchange programs. Is there an opportunity to explore a rural partnership with a rural area elsewhere, thereby encouraging international students? 	<p>Meet with Director of St. Clair Catholic District School Board – G. Stucke</p>
<p>Questions From the Public</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment – Robin Powers, Dawn-Euphemia parent If the school closes, and students are transferred to Dresden and Alvinston, my concern is that this would see Bothwell over capacity as well. Our bus has over two dozen students. Lorie Vandeschoot's presentation shows that Zone has availability for students, but this would put them at capacity. The Appendix to the School Profile also shows an expected increase of JK/SK students plus the influx that the principal expects; that would put them over capacity as well. The two schools side by side on the eastern border would be over capacity. • Response Gayle Stucke indicated that there is no option on the table to close the school. Lorie showed a map that indicated the distribution of children at Dawn-Euphemia, and there were a few near Brooke, and a few near Bothwell. We would never over-crowd a school – we'd look at schools that have space. Lorie Vandeschoot added that we'd look at the number of students in each area to see how they would affect enrolment at other schools. She will provide a visual explanation of where each child would go if there were a re-assignment. 	<p>Brooke Capacity is 386. Based on September enrolment of 309.50 FTE, the building capacity is 80.18% full, with 76.50 vacant spaces. - L. Vandeschoot</p> <p>L. Vandeschoot</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment – Murray Sharp, Community Resident • Mr. Sharp spoke in support of retaining Dawn-Euphemia School. He spoke as a retired teacher, a director of the National Farmers' Union in Lambton County, and a concerned community member. He challenged the Board to look at the bigger picture, not just the local area. • Question - Jennifer Stephenson, Parent What if French Immersion was put here? People are currently bussing their children into town just for that. Petrolia is over populated, where kids are sitting in portables. I don't want my kids going in to town, and I want them to stay in a rural school. • Response Gayle responded that most of the children in French Immersion come from within the town. • Question - Marilyn Whiting, Grandparent Mrs. Whiting related her experiences of going from a one-room school house to a large high school. She was concerned about long bus rides for young children. With Petrolia overcrowded, some of those students could be bussed to Centennial, and some Centennial students bussed to Dawn-Euphemia. • Response Gayle responded that because Lambton Centennial also has declining enrolment and excess space, that school community is looking to gain students and not lose any. • Question - Karen Wilbur, Parent My children started school at McNaughton Ave. Public School in Chatham. We moved here knowing that we'd face possible closure some day. What I found here is that my kids are receiving an excellent education. This school is serving the kids well. Split grades haven't been a challenge to me. The issue of Grade 7 and 8s going to secondary school and having no contact with the Grades 9 to 12 students is fine with me, but what happens on the bus? • Response Until just recently, we had K-12 students on the same bus. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment – Scott Wilgen, Resident There are agricultural businesses in our community. Perhaps they could use a classroom to introduce kids to agricultural businesses, and to educate parents and Grade 7 and 8 students about agricultural markets. • Response This brings us back to opportunities for partnerships; e.g., if an accountant expressed an interest in having an office in a school. • Question – Robin Powers, Parent I have two children using resources for occupational and physical therapy. There are instances when additional support is needed. What happens if the school closes? • Response Similar supports are available to children in all schools. • Question – Joanne Gander, Parent JK and SK are promoted as being a split grade. Would that be the same for the Grades 7 and 8 students going to Lambton-Kent Composite School? I have children going to Petrolia, so if I end up with two in Petrolia, one in Dresden, and another in another in an elementary school, it makes it difficult. How are the teacher unions managed in Goderich? Are secondary school teachers teaching Grade 7 and 8 students (e.g., in the tech labs)? • Response In Goderich, elementary teachers teach elementary students; secondary teachers teach secondary students. It is like a school within a school, and the unions are totally separate. Science labs and the gymnasium were shared. It was felt to be advantageous for the elementary students to have access to specialized facilities. 	
<p>Questions From Committee Members</p>	<p>Emily Faflak asked questions given to her by Dawn-Euphemia parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The word ‘viable’ comes up. Why is our school not considered viable when our students are doing well in standardized testing? • Gayle responded that there has been no determination that Dawn-Euphemia is not viable. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does the review only happen over one year? • Gayle responded that the timelines are based on Ministry guidelines, and could be extended. 	
Next Steps	The Committee was encouraged to share the information (challenges, information from the delegation, scenarios for solution) with those they represent.	
Dates of Future Meetings (timelines, proposed locations)	<p>March 31, 2010 – Thamesville Area Central School - 6:30 p.m. – school tour 7:00 p.m. – ARC Meeting</p> <p>Next meeting, possible options will be summarized, and additional options can be brought forward. The task of the Committee will be to consider all the options in order to make recommendation to the Board. The timeline is: April 7 - tentative date for an additional ARC meeting if needed. April 13 – ARC report to Board. April 27 – Administration recommendation to Board. June 22 – Trustee decision.</p> <p>There are opportunities to bring delegations to Board.</p> <p>Emily Faflak requested that the Ontario Federation of Agriculture position on the possibility of school closure be included in the Record of Action.</p>	Attach to Record of Action - J. Doyle
Adjournment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m. 	