

**PETROLIA CONSULTATION SESSION #1  
RECORD OF ACTION**

**Date:** November 25, 2010

**Location:** Hillcrest Public School

**Present:** Jim Costello, Director of Education, Bert Phills, Superintendent of Education, Ron Andruchow, Superintendent of Education, Mike Gilfoyle, Superintendent of Education

Resource Personnel: Lorie Vandeschoot, Planning & Reporting Officer, Jane Kovar, Recorder

Trustees: Scott McKinlay, Chair, Carmen McGregor,

**Regrets:** Ruth Kohut, Principal Hillcrest P.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"> <li>• Director Costello introduced himself as Director and facilitator of the Petrolia Consultation process. He welcomed and thanked everyone for attending and introduced Bert Phills, Superintendent of Education, Ron Andruchow, Superintendent of Business, Todd Hayward, Principal of Queen Elizabeth II P.S. and Lorie Vandeschoot, Planning Officer for the Board. He also thanked Principal Ruth Kohut for hosting the consultation at Hillcrest, and indicated that she sent her regrets as she was unable to attend the meeting. Director Costello also recognized Mike Gilfoyle, Superintendent of Human Resources and Board Trustees in attendance, Trustee Scott McKinlay and Trustee and Chair Carmen McGregor.</li> <li>• Director Costello indicated that we are here as result from the June 22, 2010 Board Report regarding the Pupil Accommodation Report for the Petrolia Area of Schools, which recommended that the Board hold public consultation meetings with the Petrolia community during the fall of 2010, in conjunction with the French Immersion District Review to seek input on the remaining options. He also indicated that the purpose of the meeting was to have members of the Board here to consult and obtain public input on the two options listed, in order to find the best outcome for Petrolia given population growth.</li> <li>• French Immersion program plays a key role in the delivery of program and distribution of students in the two Petrolia elementary schools. Further study of a JK-8 single track French Immersion program at the smaller school and JK-8</li> </ul>	

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	<p>regular program at the larger school could meet both the goal of ongoing improvements in student achievement and accommodation needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Lambton Kent District School Board conducted a French Immersion Program Review during the past year and into the fall 2010. An interim report was presented to Trustees for information at the November 9, 2010 Board Meeting. Senior Administration was planning to bring a final report to Trustees on November 23, 2010 based on the recommended next steps contained in this report.</li> </ul> <p>The source of concern for Senior Administration was data which indicated a significant French Immersion funding shortfall for the 2009/2010 school year. This data was based on French Immersion class vacancy rates and resulting costs of staffing. Analysis of the recently validated 2010/2011 student enrolment data has revealed that the Board's French Immersion vacancy rate has declined this fall and is in fact changing significantly year to year. Attrition rates within grades 4 to 8 classes remain a concern.</p> <p>Accordingly, Senior Administration will not be making any recommendations to the Board of Trustees regarding French Immersion at the November 23, Board Meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director Costello indicated that the Petrolia vacancy rate (Hillcrest and Queen Elizabeth combined) went from 25% to 9%.</li> <li>• Director Costello recognized that the Petrolia community is upset over the French Immersion program review, however Board Administration was obligated to provide the report to the community prior to consultation sessions regarding the two recommendations passed by the Board. The French Immersion report clearly indicated that the concern of the FI program is not regarding achievement, but with attrition rates and the decrease in class sizes in grades 4 – 8, and associated costs. He also stated, that during the review there was no specific targeting between rural and urban FI schools. Current Board Trustees felt that they should deal with issues as the FI report was conducted during their term.</li> </ul>	
<p>Review of Process and Board Motion from June 22, 2010 Board Meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director Costello indicated that during the Petrolia ARC process, five options were discussed, with consensus being reached among committee members to bring forth the option to build additions to accommodate growth at both Hillcrest and Queen Elizabeth public schools to the Board of Trustees on April 13, 2010.</li> <li>• Director Stucke and the Superintendent of Business had an opportunity to present the rationale for adding capacity to the schools in Petrolia in a meeting with staff from the Finance Department of the Ministry. Ministry of Education</li> </ul>	

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	<p>staff acknowledged that additional classrooms will be required to accommodate current and future students; however, there was no support for the proposal of building a new school or building additions on two schools in the same community. Financial restraint was the clear theme of the discussion and it was evident that throughout the province only the most efficient capital proposals would be considered. This realization caused staff to give further attention to other options.</p> <p>An option not considered by the Accommodation Review Committee has since that time been explored by staff. The entire JK-8 French Immersion Program could be offered at Queen Elizabeth II with regular program offered at both Petrolia schools for students JK-8. This is the model that existed prior to the Blending of the schools following the 1999 Petrolia Community Consolidation study. It would require a change of boundaries and upon study of that possibility it was recognized that the growth in Petrolia school aged population has actually been in the westerly part of the community rather than in the Hillcrest area. Possible boundary divisions seem impractical as many students would require transportation to Hillcrest for their entire elementary school career in order to meet its capacity. It would create a situation not unlike that which was faced ten years ago.</p> <p>A viable option to the Hillcrest Public School over capacity issue, from both program and economic perspectives, would be a change in the delivery model of French Immersion. Many Boards across the province have French Immersion programs in schools designated solely to that program. These are called single track schools. There are curriculum, staffing and financial reasons to support that model. The Program Department has determined from provincial and international research that there are significant advantages to a single track French Immersion organization both from a language acquisition and learning point of view.</p> <p>There are important accommodation reasons for consolidation of French Immersion sites, particularly in areas where these programs have low enrolment. If there were to be a consolidation of French Immersion programs into fewer sites, particularly in areas where these programs have low enrolment, greater supports could be provided in terms of resources, including staff, special education and libraries. In a single track school, the students would continue to have the same division of French and English instruction as mandated by the Ministry of Education.</p> <p>While there is no definitive best solution with the many options considered, it is</p>	

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	<p>acknowledged that additional classroom space is required in Petrolia to accommodate the current and future students of the Lambton Kent District School Board residing in that community. There continue to be concerns contributing to lack of confidence in the earlier recommendations to build additions at both Hillcrest and Queen Elizabeth II Public Schools.</p> <p>After consulting with the Ministry on capital funding options, administration was advised that they were not supportive of building additions on 2 schools and Board Administration needed to modify the recommendations. The June 22, 2010 Board Report indicated that in conjunction with public consultation meetings the Board seek input on the remaining options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. A boundary change to convert Hillcrest Public School to a JK-8 regular program facility and Queen Elizabeth II Public School a dual track JK-8 regular program and French Immersion school</li> <li>ii. A reorganization of program delivery to offer JK-8 French Immersion in a single track model at Hillcrest Public School with Queen Elizabeth II offering regular JK-8 program</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In addition, there was a recommendation “that the Board develop a proposal for an addition on Queen Elizabeth II Public School; and that the Board move the gymnasium project for this school in the major capital priority plan from position #17 to position #1”.</li> <li>• Director Costello indicated that the purpose of the consultation is to consult and listen with the Petrolia community on the above two options, to obtain the Public’s thoughts and to share the same with the Board of Trustees, when making further recommendations to the Board. The Board recognizes there is growth in the Petrolia area, and has a responsibility to effectively align programs in the area.</li> </ul>	
<p>Review of Capital Improvements to Schools and Ministry of Education Potential Capital Funding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using a Powerpoint presentation, Superintendent of Business Ron Andruchow, reviewed the Board funding and Ministry capital request process.</li> <li>• Major capital upgrades completed in the Petrolia Area over the past 10 years indicated a total of \$ 2,161,000.</li> <li>• Ministry capital funding initiatives were detailed including the funding implementation for Full Day JK/K Programs which are being implemented throughout the District, with full implementation being complete by 2015.</li> <li>• Preliminary budget estimates for the additions to both the Queen Elizabeth II and Hillcrest schools has been projected at \$ 6.2M dollars. This budget estimate would be updated when schematic plans outlining the scope of the proposed additions are developed. Superintendent Andruchow reviewed the various funding options and combinations the Board may pursue.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superintendent Andruchow also stated that a new gym addition at Queen Elizabeth II has been on the Board's Capital project priority submission made to the Ministry was ranked as priority #17, but is now ranked as priority #1.</li> <li>• A question was asked about projecting how long maintenance upgrades would last? Superintendent Andruchow indicated 20-30 years</li> <li>• A question was asked regarding the classroom portables removed from Queen Elizabeth school which were never replaced. Superintendent Andruchow indicated that the entire school enrolment could be accommodated in the existing building and therefore negated the need for the portable wing at Queen Elizabeth school.</li> </ul>	
October 31, 2010 Enrolment Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lorie Vandeschoot provided a power point presentation illustrating enrolment history and projections for both Hillcrest and Queen Elizabeth II schools.</li> <li>• October 31, 2010 enrolment and class organizations for both school locations were depicted.</li> <li>• A request was made that the enrolment data be posted on the board website prior to the next consultation. Director Costello indicated that could be accommodated.</li> </ul>	L. Vandeschoot to post enrolment data on board website.
Pros and Cons of Option 1	<p>PRO'S</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only requires addition at one school</li> <li>• Greater probability of Ministry providing funding for additional classrooms at one location</li> <li>• Full Day Kindergarten may provide for renovations/additions at Queen Elizabeth II site</li> </ul> <p>CON'S</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 121 FI Hillcrest students would be transferred to Queen Elizabeth II school</li> <li>• A percentage of Queen Elizabeth students would need to be transferred to Hillcrest</li> </ul>	
Pros and Cons of Option 2	<p>PRO'S</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numbers fit</li> <li>• Fewer students dropping out in upper grades</li> </ul> <p>CON'S</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May not have number register if single track</li> <li>• Students leaving program would affect neighbouring schools</li> <li>• Form of segregation</li> <li>• Socialization and integration of students</li> </ul>	

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<p>Questions / Comments from the Public</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="489 175 1480 386"> <p>• <b>Question</b> - Would Dawn Euphemia school be impacted with any decisions regarding the Petrolia Consultation?  Response – Director Costello indicated that the Dawn Euphemia school was included in the Dresden ARC process.  <b>Comment</b> – If attrition in the FI program is a concern, speaker felt that a single track school would be the best route to go. Less disruption for students to move or relocate schools</p> </li> <li data-bbox="489 423 1480 756"> <p>• <b>Question</b> – Do FI students receive extra funding from the Ministry?  Response – Superintendent Andruchow indicated that the Board receives a language grant for FI students, which is used to hire teachers and to implement program and resources. There are no funds available for capital expenditures.  <b>Comment</b> – Understand that the Town of Petrolia was approached to share capital expenditures and stated she was disappointed that the town of Wyoming was not also asked to contribute dollars for funding.  Response – Director Costello indicated that a representative of the Town of Petrolia had recently invested in a new community centre and library, thus precluding a financial investment in the local schools. To his knowledge, no other community had been approached to invest funding dollars.</p> </li> <li data-bbox="489 794 1480 1005"> <p>• <b>Question</b> – Regarding the attrition issue, what factors are involved? Suggested that perhaps families/students could be asked when leaving the FI program their reason for doing so.  Response – Director Costello indicated that primarily, when students are enrolled it is at a young age, and primarily a parent decision. One theory is that as the student gets older, he/she becomes part of the decision to leave the FI program. The Board has not conducted any surveying of students in the past.</p> </li> <li data-bbox="489 1042 1480 1188"> <p>• <b>Question</b> – How are our Board’s attrition rates compared to other Boards?  Response – Director Costello indicated that there is not a consistent entry level for FI across the Province, which makes it difficult to compare statistics. Combining FI classes to maintain class sizes and to staff efficiently, a single track school in theory may avoid attrition issues.</p> </li> <li data-bbox="489 1226 1480 1404"> <p>• <b>Comment</b> - Students should be surveyed or included in this decision process as they would be impacted.  Response – Director Costello stated that most parents enroll their children, as education and program decisions are primarily a parent decision. He agreed that perhaps the Board could survey the Intermediate (Grade 7/8) students on their thoughts regarding the two options.</p> </li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="491 175 1495 542"> <p>• <b>Comment</b> – Speaker thanked the Board Administration for coming out to Petrolia for the consultation. Parent wanted to clarify that his daughter who is in the Gr 8 FI class of 6 students at QE has had no students withdraw from the FI program to attend an English class, but that the families have moved out of the Petrolia area. Believes that the Board has put fear in the Petrolia community that the FI program may be taken away and that enrolment may now decline. He favours Option 1, a dual track school. Response – Director Costello indicated that when conducting the FI Review process, it was not the Board's intention to scare parents or to take away the program. Program reviews are conducted regularly to determine feasibility and to provide suggestions to improve program implementation. He stated that any plans for a future FI review will definitely involve parents.</p> </li> <li data-bbox="491 574 1367 602"> <p>• <b>Comment</b> – A Hillcrest JK F.I. Parent shared her experience this year.</p> </li> <li data-bbox="491 634 1495 818"> <p>• <b>Comment</b> – Speaker suggested a 3<sup>rd</sup> Option - Construction of new “Super School” which would have least impact on students. Response – Director Costello stated that building a new school to consolidate the two elementary schools would be the best solution for the community, however the Board needs to be fiscally responsible when submitting a request, as only the most efficient capital proposals would be considered by the Ministry.</p> </li> <li data-bbox="491 850 1495 1154"> <p>• <b>Question</b> – What is the timeline from the Ministry on the Super School Option? Response – Superintendent Andruchow stated that Hillcrest school was built in the 70's and is still considered a fairly new building by Ministry standards. Therefore the proposal for the construction of a building to replace it would most likely not be considered. While the Board just recently consolidated two schools in Sarnia (Devine and Johnson Memorial) both buildings were quite old and requiring substantial capital and maintenance upgrades. Devine and Johnson P.S. were replaced under the Ministry's Prohibitive to Repair Initiative. Ministry funding for the construction of a new facility could be a lengthy timeline and could take up to 5 years.</p> </li> <li data-bbox="491 1187 1472 1312"> <p>• <b>Comment</b> - Don Seymour – Municipal Representative Town of Petrolia and QE Parent Challenged Trustees indicating it was an election year and that they need to lobby the government for funding regarding the needs for this community.</p> </li> <li data-bbox="491 1344 1444 1430"> <p>• <b>Comment</b> – Prefers Option 1, dual track has more benefits, may involve boundary changes, and believes that siblings should be allowed to attend the same school, regardless if they are in FI or not.</p> </li> </ul>	

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	<p>Response – Director Costello stated that allowing siblings to attend in regular program often creates difficulty in adhering to Ministry primary class sizes (caps), as well, it draws student enrolment from other schools in the district which may contribute to capacity concerns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Comment</b> – Speaker discussed both options with children who presently are in the FI program, and they did not support a single track school. Favoured Option 1.</li> <li>• <b>Comment</b> – Speaker favoured Option 2. A single track school may initially have a decline in enrolment, but feels that once in place, the system would adjust. This option would address attrition concerns, and would be least disruptive for FI students.</li> <li>• <b>Comment</b> – Speaker did not support either option. Concerned that if there is another FI review and the program is removed, children will be moved again. In favour of Option 3, construction of a super school. Response – Director Costello indicated that submitting a recommendation for the construction of one super school has an element of risk, that the Ministry may deny any funding. He stated that in the event the French Immersion program were to be removed in the future, that any student enrolled in the program would be “grandfathered” and therefore allowed to complete the program. Projected enrolments for the Petrolia area were reviewed and determined to be healthy for the next 5 years.</li> <li>• <b>Question</b> – Speaker asked if a recommendation for the construction of a super school were proposed and the Ministry turned it down, what options would the Petrolia community be left with? Response – Director Costello indicated the community would be left in a “status quo” position. The Board would like to address the enrolment concerns in the Petrolia area. The Lambton Kent District School Board operates and maintains its schools as effectively and efficiently as possible to support student achievement while exploring all opportunities to enhance the learning environment.</li> <li>• <b>Comment</b> - Would prefer Option 3, a super school. Other options involve boundary changes, which would shift students between schools and affect children. If not a super school option, she would support a single track school.</li> <li>• <b>Comment</b> – As a teacher of FI students, would prefer Option 2. A single track school would provide more benefits for students, as there would be more</li> </ul>	

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	<p>resources and teachers available. This could also help with attrition concern. Does not believe segregation would be a problem for students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Comment</b> – Speaker prefers Option 1. Her son would not be in favour of a single track school for socialization reasons. Also, believes that the Towns of Wyoming and Petrolia need to be re-approached to access dollars to assist with the funding problem.</li> <li>• <b>Question</b> - Has a single track school been attempted in a community this size? Response – Director Costello indicated that Sarnia has one French Immersion single track school in the St. Clair Catholic D.S.B. Superintendent Badder may be aware and able to provide this information for the next meeting.</li> <li>• <b>Comment</b> – Speaker stated it would be helpful for group to have information available on a single track school. Speaker favours a single track school as it would provide additional resources. Speaker would like to know research on towns this size, extra-curricular activities, etc. A true immersion experience. Speaker also thanked Board Administration for providing the consultation. Speaker also encouraged parents to attend the next meeting and to advocate and let their feelings be heard. Response – Director Costello suggested the Board could make contact with the groups to obtain input and information on single track schools and attrition factors. Superintendent Badder shared information at the March 4<sup>th</sup> ARC meeting in Petrolia.</li> <li>• <b>Comment</b> – Chair Carmen McGregor stated that during the Ridgetown ARC, committee members were provided the opportunity to travel to a school in Goderich to attend and speak with students and staff at a school where grade 7 and 8 students attended classes in a secondary school. This was one of the options recommended during the Ridgetown ARC process. Carmen suggested that perhaps the Superintendents could attend a single track FI school or invite parents, students or staff to the next Petrolia consultation to provide input and share their knowledge. Response – Director Costello indicated that due to the short timeline, a trip to visit a school may not be feasible, but that the Board could look into the possibility of having representation from a single track school available for the next meeting on December 9th.</li> <li>• <b>Comment</b> – Trustee McKinlay encouraged the parents of the Petrolia community to find answers and to attend the next Consultation meeting.</li> </ul>	<p>Superintendent Badder to provide feedback on single track schools.</p> <p>Director Costello will gather information.</p> <p>Director Costello to inquire about having representation or feedback available from a single track school community.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Comment</b> – Speaker indicated that the people in the community believe that a decision has already been made, and that it is difficult to encourage people to attend, when trust has been lost. Response – Director Costello indicated that Board Administration does not direct Trustees on how to vote. This consultation is an open process and the Board is asking for community input. Response – Chair Carmen McGregor stated that the Trustees have not made a decision on the recommendations brought to Board concerning the Petrolia ARC process. She strongly encouraged parents to attend the next consultation and make their thoughts known.</li> </ul>	
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Record of Action will be completed.</li> <li>• Director Costello encouraged the public in attendance to share information and to encourage Petrolia community residents to attend the next Consultation meeting.</li> </ul>	J. Kovar
Next Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• December 9, 2010, 6:30 p.m. @ Queen Elizabeth II P.S., Petrolia</li> </ul>	
Adjournment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting was adjourned at 9:02</li> </ul>	