



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

**Date:** January 23, 2013

**Location:** D.A. Gordon Public School

**Present:** Committee Members: Gayle Stucke, ARC Facilitator, Joy Badder, Superintendent of Education, Rob Lee, Principal, Wallaceburg District Secondary School, Jim Hazzard, Community Representative, Wallaceburg District Secondary School, Suzette Jacobs, First Nation Representative, Wallaceburg District Secondary School, Chris Coyle, Principal, A.A. Wright Public School, David Gough, Parent Representative, A.A. Wright Public School, Lisa Findlater, Community Representative, A.A. Wright Public School, Ben Hazzard, Principal, D.A.Gordon Public School, Lori Turner, Parent Representative, D.A.Gordon Public School, Jane McGee, Community Representative, D.A.Gordon Public School, Todd Tiffin, Principal, H.W. Burgess Public School, Heidi Benedict, Parent Representative, H.W. Burgess Public School, Brenda Mann, Principal, Riverview Central School, Lisa Bicum, Parent Representative Riverview Central School, Bob Murphy, Community Representative, Riverview Central School, Ryan Jacques, Municipal Representative, Municipality of Chatham-Kent, Darrell Randell, Municipal Representative, St. Clair Township.

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

**Regrets:** Sheldon Parsons, Ava Williams, Harvey Gamble, Stephanie Gilbert, Sandi Vennettilli

*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>• Gayle Stucke welcomed everyone and introduced the Trustees in attendance, Ian Cryer, Dave Macko, Scott McKinlay and Carmen McGregor.</li> <li>• Gayle introduced Andy Scheibli, Manager of Plant and Maintenance.</li> </ul>	
Review of Record of Action from the Jan.9 ARC Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The committee agreed the ROA from Jan 9<sup>th</sup> meeting was accurate.</li> <li>• Joy Badder indicated that Director Costello followed up with the Director from the St. Clair Catholic District School Board and there was no interest in pursuing a partnership in sharing school facilities.</li> </ul>	
Business Arising from the Jan 9 ARC Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operational Maintenance and Capital costs for each school will be presented in Item 6.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrolment and Staffing Preview for JK-6 and 7/8 Model will be presented in Item 7.</li> <li>• WIFN elementary school enrolment data has not been provided.</li> <li>• Gayle indicated that there have been no questions posted on the ARC Board website since the last meeting held January 9, 2013.</li> </ul>	
<p>Goderich and Ridgetown Tour Feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately 50 people from Wallaceburg community attended ARC tours in Goderich on January 14 and Ridgetown on January 16 to see first hand the JK-6 elementary school and 7/8 within a high school model. Community reps, parents, teachers, students and Board administration participated.</li> <li>• Noah Labonte, Gr 7 student at D.A.Gordon shared that he had visited Goderich and was very impressed and enthusiastic about the experience. He felt the model having the 7 &amp; 8's in high school provided a greater educational experience; more sports opportunities and improved behavior and attitudes among the students. He spoke with several Gr 7 &amp; 8 students attending the Goderich high school and they indicated that behavior and attitudes among the students had improved and that there was very little interaction between the 2 groups of students in the high school setting.</li> <li>• Gr 11 WDSS representative, Shane Outridge visited the Ridgetown model. He met and spoke with Gr 6 students from Naahii Ridge in the JK-6 school and was impressed that they boasted of more leadership responsibilities provided to them as senior students. Shane stated that the Gr 7 &amp; 8's were described as a school within a school and that the Gr 7 &amp; 8 classrooms were separate but students also experienced the secondary school atmosphere. Shane was very impressed and excited about the transition and encouraged the ARC to go forward with the model.</li> <li>• Addie Bicum, Gr 8 Riverview student agreed with Noah and Shane. She felt very positive about the experience and indicated that students are excited and look forward to this opportunity in the Wallaceburg area.</li> <li>• Jim Hazzard shared that he attended both tours and went into both trips "neutral". He shared positive feedback from a Gr 8 student conducting the tour in Goderich. When he went to the Ridgetown tour, he asked students to share any downside or issues, but everyone he spoke to including those who were initially concerned about the change, indicated once the model had been implemented, they were extremely pleased. Jim reiterated he could find no downside to the model.</li> <li>• David Gough attended the Ridgetown tour and spoke to the Principal at RDHS. He said the high school came ahead with new science labs, and extra Ministry funding to invest in the buildings and programs. Schools gain financially with greater enrolment and additional funding made available.</li> <li>• Bob Murphy, attended the Goderich tour and anticipated some negatives,</li> </ul>	

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	<p>however concluded it was a “thriving environment”. He characterized students as having greater confidence, and saw collaboration among the students and teachers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jim Hazzard shared comments from JK-6 schools, stating that staff and students could focus on curriculum better. Grade 5 &amp; 6 students had more leadership responsibilities in a JK-6 school.</li> <li>• Gayle indicated that during each of the tours that Gr 6 students were happy to be the “top dogs” and staff noted an increase in maturity levels.</li> </ul>	
Ridgetown Transition Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Todd Tiffin, as former Principal of Ridgetown P.S. 3 years ago, shared his experience when it was involved in the consolidation of 2 Ridgetown schools and transitioning the 7/8’s to RDHS. He stated at that time there were concerns presented that 7/8’s would have too much access with secondary students. Another concern was recess and location for the 7/8’s. These issues were all addressed. Play areas were constructed at RDHS for recess activity. School sports were improved with more students and better facilities. Gr 8 graduation was still made available maintaining traditions from both former schools.</li> </ul> <p>Todd stated that a Transition Committee played a key role to plan for a smooth transition. Several sub committees were formed to involve all stakeholders, including parents, teachers, students and community members. There was a great collaboration involving open houses, joint school council meetings, pow wows, shared PD events with staff and joint field trips from both schools.</p> <p>There was a grad committee, as well as a memorabilia committee, and everyone felt comfortable and had a voice in helping to ensure a smooth transition for students and staff. A naming committee also provided input from all stakeholders.</p> <p>Todd stated that it is not an easy process to close a school, and can be very emotional; however it was recognized to be the best decision for students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ben Hazzard stated that as former VP at RDHS that his primary responsibility was to provide support and guidance to the Gr 7/8 students. Elementary staff teach the Gr 7/8’s at the high school setting. Ben reiterated that the safety and security aspect of Gr 7 &amp; 8’s was key. In the high school setting there was a separate physical structure, separate washroom facilities, as well as different start and dismissal times.</li> </ul> <p>Ben added that Gr 9 to 12 students reported there was little difference for them.</p>	

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	<p>There are distinct boundaries established for Gr 7/8 areas. All Gr 7/8 students were surveyed and indicated that they felt completely safe in the high school setting.</p> <p>Once the Gr 9-12 students were dismissed, the Gr 7/8's had the opportunity to use the entire facility such as the fitness room, science labs, tech areas and gymnasium. A highlight for Gr 7 &amp; 8's was having their own lockers.</p> <p>Ben stated that there was community support.</p> <p>A survey conducted in June indicated that Gr 7 &amp; 8 students felt safe, enjoyed making new friends and found older students friendly and helpful. Any interaction with seniors was controlled with those students demonstrating leadership skills.</p> <p>Interaction between elementary and secondary teachers was both formal &amp; informal with positive collaboration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joy Badder spoke to the Program advantages to the model. From a Ministry standpoint, JK-6 is a natural focus, while student success is a Grade 7-10 focus. JK-6 is easier to target and focus on specific age groups when providing accommodations, curriculum resources and professional learning for teachers. With the addition of more students and teachers there are fewer split grades with the ability for more collaboration and sharing of resources and assessments.</li> </ul>	
Operational Maintenance and Capital Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lorie Vandeschoot provided a Power Point presentation prepared by the Plant and Business departments, which projected the Operational Maintenance and Capital reports for each of the 4 Wallaceburg feeder schools.</li> <li>Question: Can the same information be provided for WDSS costs? Answer: There is no comparison between elementary and secondary school costs, however that information can be brought to the next meeting.</li> <li>Question: What is the revenue per pupil? Answer: The GSN (grants for students needs) provides approximately \$12,000. per student.</li> </ul>	<p>Will bring WDSS costs to next meeting for information</p> <p>Confirm revenue per pupil</p>
Enrolment and Staffing Preview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lorie Vandeschoot provided enrolment projections for the 4 Wallaceburg feeder schools over a 5 year period</li> <li>Joy Badder indicated that the vacant spaces created at Riverview would allow for the possibility for the expansion and enhancement of the current Best Start Hub.</li> <li>Question: Do WDSS stats include WIFN students? Answer: Yes the projections include WIFN as well as enrolment projections</li> </ul>	

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	<p>from other boards based on past trends. WIFN has its own elementary school JK-8.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question – Can you add capacity utilization according to enrolment data? Answer: Yes, we can provide the capacity utilization data for the next meeting.</li> <li>• Staffing implications – Preliminary review suggests this model would result in cost savings of 3 teachers.</li> </ul>	<p>Provide capacity utilization data for next meeting</p>
<p>Options for Consideration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gayle reiterated that this is a unique ARC, with the option of a JK-6 &amp; 7/8 model being brought up by members of the committee and the public during the first meeting held November 28th. She asked if there were other options for consideration. Examples of other options could be one JK-12 school, or closing 3 elementary schools and building one new JK-6 school. No interest was expressed in pursuing these two options.</li> <li>• Question: With high vacancy rate in Wallaceburg schools would the Board investigate the option of CREC and SEC Administrative offices being moved centrally to the WDSS location? Answer: Gayle stated that the location of Board office is not a mandate of this ARC. The Board regularly uses Wallaceburg schools for meetings and Professional Development activities. Location of a Board Office is the responsibility of elected trustees and a study was done at the time of amalgamation. A report prepared during amalgamation can be shared at the next ARC meeting.</li> <li>• Rob Lee stated that the Ministry's capacity data does not provide the real picture of vacant space at WDSS. For example an automotive shop could not be shared or provide space for other programs. Rob also suggested the Board's lease agreement with St. Clair College will need to be addressed in order to provide the necessary space available for grade 7 &amp; 8's.</li> <li>• Jim Hazzard stated that the committee needs to stay true to the mandate and policy of the Board: <i>"It is the policy of the Lambton Kent District School Board to operate and maintain its schools as effectively and efficiently as possible to support student achievement while exploring all opportunities to enhance the learning environment."</i> He concluded that the current model being looked at JK-6, 7-8 meets these criteria.</li> <li>• After further discussion, the ARC agreed to go forward in proposing the JK-6, 7/8 model. Input was given by several members to clarify the wording before asking for consensus.</li> <li>• The ARC agreed on the following wording: <b>To support the proposed recommendation of the school organization model of grade 7 and 8 students from the 4 WDSS feeder schools moving to WDSS as "a school within a school". The 3 elementary schools in Wallaceburg would be consolidated into 2 schools, with those schools as well as Riverview, offering program for students JK- 6.</b></li> </ul>	<p>To bring back conclusion from last Review of Board office location</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question: A request was made to provide information regarding boundaries and transportation costs if this model was to be adapted. Answer: Gayle indicated that if there was to be this change, transportation would be provided for Riverview Gr 7/8 students to WDSS. Boundaries and bus routes would be reviewed as part of the Transition process with safety always a priority with opportunities for parental input.</li> <li>• Lisa Findlater emphasized the importance of using the word proposed before taking this recommendation back to school communities</li> <li>• Ryan Jacques stated his opinion that this model would provide an opportunity and benefits for all Gr 7/8 students.</li> <li>• Gayle asked the Committee if there was consensus to support this recommendation. Without total consensus, a vote was taken. Board staff did not vote. Of 11 voting members present, 9 indicated support while 2 abstained.</li> </ul>	<p>Transportation changes and costing will be provided</p>
<p>Questions/Input from the Committee Members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was agreed to extend the meeting to 9:30 p.m. and the committee members could ask any questions after the meeting.</li> </ul>	
<p>Questions from the Public</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A former A.A. Wright school council chair, and member of committee involved with W.T.Laing closure several years ago, commented that at that time, it was recommended that D.A.Gordon be supported in the south side of the Wallaceburg community.</li> <li>• A Riverview parent made a request for additional meetings to be held at each school to make parents and community more aware.</li> <li>• Question: A parent of D.A.Gordon and WDSS students, who is supportive of this model, asked if there was consideration for a separate facility for Grades 7 &amp; 8. Answer: Gayle Stucke indicated that research on Gr 7/8 schools does not support this model.</li> <li>• Question: A parent from A.A.Wright asked how groupings would be made for Gr 7/8's entering WDSS. Answer: Gayle indicated that staff would be involved in class organizations to have a good balance of old and new classmates.</li> <li>• Question: Barb Taylor asked if the Board might at some point shift the Gr 7 &amp; 8 students back to elementary schools as had occurred a time in the past. Answer: Gayle indicated the Board is looking for a long term solution.</li> </ul>	<p>Brenda Mann indicated that the next School Council meeting at Riverview will be held Monday, February 11<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Riverview parent commented that he would like the ARC committee to consider social aspects. He did not agree that the high school setting would provide greater opportunities for leadership or sports teams. He also asked who would the 7/8 teams play? Another concern was for the parents who have younger siblings at home, who would provide leadership in that capacity?</li> </ul> <p>Answer: Gayle indicated that a larger number of Gr 7/8 students attending WDSS and a larger number of teachers could provide for more than one team in each sport. The consolidation of elementary schools with the JK-6 model would allow more structured Junior teams.</p> <p>Jim Hazzard reiterated that while most elementary gymnasiums are small, this model could provide more exposure and participation for 7/8's in larger facilities at the secondary school.</p> <p>The current Ridgetown model has Gr 7/8 students being dismissed within 5 minutes of the elementary school and students share bussing with their younger siblings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An A.A. Wright parent expressed safety concerns as current practice has Gr 7/8 students walking younger siblings to school. She also commented that there is a need to foster girls to participate in more sports in the high school setting.</li> <li>• A Gr 7 Riverview student, who attended the Goderich tour, expressed the wish to have more details and communication surrounding the ARC to be shared with the Gr 5 to 8 students. She also expressed concerns with friends being split up when entering high school.</li> </ul> <p>Answer: Gayle indicated the social and emotional support would be discussed during the transitional meetings.</p>	
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A common communication updating communities on the ARC process will be developed to increase public awareness. This will be shared with school communities and posted on the LKDSB website.</li> <li>• Parent members encouraged schools to hold communication meetings on ARC information, inviting students as well as parents and the public for input.</li> <li>• A process, including objective criteria, will be provided at the February 27<sup>th</sup> meeting to assist with the discussion of a school closure.</li> </ul>	Ben Hazzard & Rob Lee will create a communication letter to share with school communities.

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Next Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future meetings will be 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Optional school tours will take place at 6:30 p.m. for anyone interested.</li> <li>• Feb. 27, 2013 – Riverview Central School</li> <li>• March 27, 2013 - H.W. Burgess Public School</li> </ul>	
Adjournment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting was adjourned at 9:41 p.m.</li> </ul>	