



Accommodation Review Committee Meeting

A meeting of the Accommodation Review Committee was held on May 30, 2007 at 6:30 p.m. at the Waterloo Region Catholic Education Centre.

**Committee
Members
Present:**

Rick Boisvert (Principal – St. Nicholas CES), Maureen Sutherland (Parent – St. Paul’s), Fr. Charles Fedy (Pastor – St. Agatha Parish), Brian Page (City of Kitchener), Judy Nairn (Trustee – WCDSB), Roger Lawler (Director of Education), Dave Bennett (Senior Manager of Facilities – WCDSB / Committee Chair), Joseph Gowing (Trustee – WCDSB), Bill Strauss (Mayor – Woolwich Township), Mark Whaley (Councillor – City of Waterloo), Louise Ervin (Trustee – WCDSB), Heather Cullen (Superintendent – WCDSB),

Recording secretary:

Lindsay Reinhardt (Planner – WCDSB)

Regrets:

Roger Farwell (The Walter Fedy Partnership), Chuck Williams (Principal – St. Luke CES), John Shewchuk (Senior Manager, Public Affairs – WCDSB),

Next Meetings:

This was the final meeting.

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer:

The meeting opened at 6:40 p.m. with the Lord’s Prayer.

2. Introduction

Dave Bennett began the meeting by explaining that the current valuation framework reflects the comments from the last meeting as well as input received in a separate meeting involving Heather Cullen, Chuck Williams, Rick Boisvert, Dave Bennett and Lindsay Reinhardt.

3. Discussion

The committee was asked to pay particular attention to the Value to the Board section as it was not been discussed in full detail at previous meetings. Also, the committee was asked to indicate whether the questions under “quality of the learning environment” the Value to Student section regarding listing the strengths and challenges of the schools should remain in the framework. The committee agreed that there is no concern over leaving these questions in the generic framework.

Under the Value to Board section, the committee was asked whether the costs related to special education transportation should be included in the framework as these transportation costs are directly related to the specific needs of the students. Judy Nairn thought that this could be removed but there should be a question about the accessibility of the school and about special technology. Dave Bennett indicated that the accessibility of the facility is evaluated under the Value to Student section. Technologies would be transferable and directly related to the student and not the school.

Roger Lawler explained that the cost of transportation is calculated by taking the board-wide cost of transportation per pupil and multiplied by the number of transported pupils at the school. It is difficult to calculate the exact cost of transportation for each school because there are split runs; a bus may complete a route and drop of students at school A and then continue on another run for a different school. It is difficult to separate the costs for each school in those situations. Judy Nairn thought that having the cost of transportation by school, even though it is calculated using a board-wide average is helpful for comparison purposes. Roger Lawler suggested that we eliminate the cost of

special education transportation and leave the other transportation costs. Dave Bennett suggested that we eliminate the cost of transportation section and include transportation-related costs under the cost to operate section.

Fr. Charles Fedy suggested adding a question about whether additional transportation costs would be incurred if the school were to close. Dave Bennett said that that is evaluated when the various scenarios are evaluated. This framework is strictly for data collection.

Roger Lawler thought that, along with the revenue generated from community use, there should be something included about the government grant that reduces user fees for certain groups. Dave Bennett mentioned that under the value to community section there is a question regarding the amount of hours used by different types of groups. There could be something added under cost to operate regarding actual fees and revenue to the board. Bill Strauss questioned the sustainability of the community use grant and Dave Bennett suspects that it's fairly sustainable, however it may change if a new government is elected.

Brian Page asked whether the number of designated accessible parking spaces could be changed to a ratio to classrooms or pupils to make it more meaningful.

Brian Page thought that there should be something included about whether a safety audit has been recently completed for the creative play structure. Dave Bennett replied that yearly safety inspections are completed. An external agency completes these inspections every 2 years and board personnel complete them for the years that aren't covered by external agencies.

Brian Page thought that the zoning of the school property and the potential re-sale value be included in the section examining the ability of the site to have an after-use. The school board could get input about the reuse from the local planning board. Dave Bennett agreed that the current zoning could be added but did not agree with including the re-sale value. The point of the section is to get an idea of the suitability of the facility for other uses. To include a value may skew the offers when trying to sell. Roger Lawler reminded the committee that there is no guarantee that the school will not be purchased for \$1 by another school board. Fr. Charles Fedy thought that it may be perceived negatively if the school with the highest re-sale value is the school that closes. Dave Bennett told the committee that the money received from the sale of a school property goes into a reserve used to pay for new schools and additions.

Louise Ervin asked who the framework would be completed by in a review. Dave Bennett responded that the local ARC, which will have a similar composition as this committee, will complete the framework. They will have staff support in order to understand and complete technical information.

Roger Lawler asked if each ARC member will rank the sections or if the ranks will be determined by consensus. Dave Bennett said that the method still needs to be determined. One possibility would be to have each member assign a weighting to each section and then they would discuss and come to an agreement.

Judy Nairn questioned whether there would be a summary for the outcome of the framework for comparison purposes. Dave Bennett informed that a report would be generated based on the responses in the framework. The report would also include other information such as mapping.

Judy Nairn pointed out that this framework collects key information and would be a benefit to complete this for all schools, not just the schools going through an accommodation review. This may have a valid application across the system. Maureen Sutherland agreed and indicated that school councils may offer more honest information without the threat of a closure. Rick Boisvert indicated that principals have to complete an evaluation every 5 years and this could be completed in that timeframe. Roger Lawler suggested that safety audits could also be completed in this timeframe.

Roger Lawler asked if this framework will be completed for each option. Dave Bennett responded that this is for collecting existing data. Another report will be generated to compare options and it will include comments from public meetings.

Roger Lawler informed the committee that the board policy will be passed in June and the administrative procedures memo will be changed to say that an accommodation review must follow the accommodation review policy. Dave Bennett indicated that the most significant change to the memo is that the process for a boundary review and the closure process will be separated. The timelines will commence when staff take a report to Trustees for approval to begin the accommodation process. Judy Nairn asked if this framework will be used for boundary reviews as well.

Dave Bennett said that it will only be used for a closure process. Boundary reviews will examine balancing enrolment, transportation costs, safe walking routes, etc. Roger Lawler pointed out that in the short past all boundary changes have been the result of a closure. Dave Bennett indicated that there will be more boundary reviews without closures in the near future.

Rick Boisvert suggested that school be selected in order to test the framework. Dave Bennett said that in order to do a test that at least two schools would have to be done in order to compare the outcome. As there is little time left in the school year this would be difficult to complete. However, anticipating a review in the fall, data collection for several schools will begin over the summer.

Dave Bennett reminded the committee that the scoring will be used to compare and will not be a decision. Maureen Sutherland thought that the information generated by the framework will paint a clear picture about each school regardless of the scores. People may not like the information but at least it will make sense. Judy Nairn likes that the framework attempts to remove emotion from the process. This will help decisions to be made based on the facts.

Dave Bennett and Roger Lawler thanked everyone for participating in this process. They're input has been very helpful in creating the generic valuation framework. A final copy will be circulated to committee members. If there needs to be changes made once the document is in use, the committee may be called together again to revise if necessary.

4. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.