



**SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
Wednesday, April 16, 2014 at 6:00 p.m.
St. Anne Secondary School
1200 Oakwood Dr., SS #3, Belle River, ON**

REVISED

A G E N D A

1. Call To Order
2. Opening Prayer
3. Recording of Attendance
4. Approval of Agenda
5. Disclosure of Interest - Pursuant to the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act.
6. Communications:
Report: Director of Education's Report on the Accommodation Review Study for the Tecumseh Area, including St. Gregory, St. Peter, and St. Pius X Catholic Elementary Schools (P. Picard) 1-9
7. Delegations:
Delegations Regarding Accommodation Review Committee's and Director of Education's Report on the Accommodation Review Study for the Tecumseh Area, including St. Gregory, St. Peter, and St. Pius X Catholic Elementary Schools
 - i) Students, Kyle and Calder Chinnery from St. Gregory School to speak about student concerns regarding the Director's report.
 - ii) Community Representative, Jacques Anctil to speak about enrolment, student achievement and preserving Catholic Education.
 - iii) Town of Tecumseh Mayor, Gary McNamara to present information in support of a deferral of the recommendation to close St. Gregory Catholic Elementary school in June 2014.
 - iv) Parents, Heather Mullins and Danielle Chinnery from St. Gregory school to discuss the Director's recommendations to place portables at St. Pius School.
 - v) Parent, Mike Rohrer to speak to the Director's recommendation to close St. Gregory School and suggest working with community partners, including the Town of Tecumseh.
 - vi) St. William Catholic Elementary School Council Member, Jennifer Kehoe to represent the St. William School Council which rejects the Tecumseh ARC recommendation to include St. William in a boundary review.

- vii) Parent, William Altenhof from St. Gregory school to speak on the topic “Benefits and Impact of Right-Sized Schools to Students, Schools, the Board and Community”.
- viii) Parent, Phil Baluyot from St. Gregory school to speak on Enrolment Estimations and Projected Population Growth for the Tecumseh (St. Clair Beach) area related to the information provided in the Director of Education’s report.
- ix) Parent, Luciano Carlone from St. Gregory school to request financial data to support the Director of Education’s recommendation on the Accommodation Review study for the Tecumseh area.
- x) Parent, Maria McCann from St. Gregory school to speak on the importance of Catholic Education and the possibility of French Immersion programs within the School Board.
- xi) Parent, Cynthia Villella from St. Gregory school to express concerns about the safety of increased bussing and traffic if the ST. Gregory students attend St. Pius Catholic Elementary school.
- xii) Parent, Don Rodzik from St. Gregory school to express concern over the potential closure of St. Gregory school as a taxpayer and parent.
- xiii) Community Member, Paul Bistany to express concerns over the closure of St. Gregory school.

8. Closing Prayer

9. Adjournment

Barbara Holland
Board Chairperson

Paul A. Picard
Director of Education



1325 California Avenue
Windsor, ON N9B 3Y6
CHAIRPERSON: Barbara Holland
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: Paul A. Picard

**Special Board
Meeting Date:**
April 16, 2014

BOARD REPORT

Public **In-Camera**
PRESENTED FOR: Information Approval
PRESENTED BY: Senior Administration
SUBMITTED BY: Paul A. Picard, Director of Education
SUBJECT: Director of Education's Report on the Accommodation Review Study for the Tecumseh Area, including St. Gregory, St. Peter, and St. Pius X Catholic Elementary Schools

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board receive as information the Director's Report on the accommodation review study for the Tecumseh Area, including St. Gregory, St. Peter, and St. Pius X Catholic Elementary Schools; and

That the Board receive public input concerning the Director's Report, and the matters that are addressed in it and in the Accommodation Review Committee's (ARC's) Report.

SYNOPSIS:

The work of the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC), established by Ministry of Education Supervisor Norbert Hartmann on May 28, 2013, to study, report and make recommendations on future pupil accommodation options for the Tecumseh Area, including St. Gregory, St. Peter, and St. Pius Catholic Elementary Schools has been completed. The Committee submitted its final report to the Director of Education on March 5, 2014 and to the Board as information on March 25, 2014. Pursuant to Board Procedure Pr A: 05 Pupil Accommodation Review, the Director is required to review the recommendations of the ARC and to report to the Board on the results of the public consultation process, with analysis and recommendations. The Board will hold a special meeting to receive the Director's report and to receive public input concerning the Director's report, and the matters addressed in it and in the Accommodation Review Committee's Report.

BACKGROUND COMMENTS:

On May 28, 2013, Supervisor Hartmann approved proceeding with the establishment of an Accommodation Review Committee to lead a public consultation process in studying, reporting and making recommendations on future accommodation options for the Tecumseh Area, including St. Gregory, St. Peter, and St. Pius Catholic Elementary Schools.

At the first Committee meeting on September 11, 2013, Administration provided to ARC members a background information package and a customized School Information Profile for each school in the study to support them in their mandate. The background information package and profiles are attached as appendices to this report.

At the first Committee meeting, the ARC was also provided a copy of the Committee's Terms of Reference, as detailed within Administrative Procedure Pr A: 05 Pupil Accommodation.

Upon review of the minutes of all Committee and public consultation meetings (which are attached as appendices), it is evident that the Committee has been diligent in following its mandate to conduct a comprehensive and thorough public study. The Committee conducted four public consultation meetings, pursuant to its Terms of Reference. The Committee also invited the community to provide written input to the Director of Education. Written input received, as well as Administration's responses to Committee or community inquiries were attached as appendices to the minutes of the meetings.

Senior Administration has carefully considered the ARC's Report delivered to the Director of Education on March 5, 2014, as well as the minutes and appendices reflecting input from the communities.

The Enrolment Projections and Demographic Trends Report of December 9, 2013, prepared for the Board by Watson and Associates, Economists Limited, which was shared with the Committee, was helpful in informing both the Committee's and Administration's recommendations.

The Board initially presented the ARC with the following two options for consideration in the study.

- Consolidate St. Gregory at St. Pius; St. Peter status quo;
- Consolidate St. Gregory, St. Pius and St. Peter in a new elementary school at a central location, to be determined, with consideration for renovations at the former St. Anne High School site on Arbour Street.

As set out within the ARC Report, the Committee considered the "Save Our School" campaign organized by the St. Gregory's community, which began at the outset of the study. As indicated by the Committee, the mobilization of the community in support of maintaining status quo was persuasive and included representatives from the Tecumseh ARC school communities, town council and residents of the areas served by the Tecumseh ARC schools with or without children currently attending the schools.

Beginning in mid November, the Board received countless emails with the following petition:

Whereas, the ARC process is underway which contemplates the closure of St. Gregory School, and;

Whereas, the suggested closure would be detrimental to students, and;

Whereas, higher enrollment will occur due to residential developments within the St. Gregory Boundary in excess of 200 residential units and;

Whereas, higher enrollment will occur due to forthcoming full funding of Sr. & Jr. Kindergarten, and;

Whereas there is potential increased enrollment due to the forthcoming closure of D.M. Eagle, and;

Whereas, the school children of Flanders and Russell Woods area are bused 8 kilometers to St. Williams in Emeryville which is at capacity and these area former was part of the St. Gregory boundary, and;

Whereas, your proposal to close St. Gregory School would result in ALL our young children being bused to a Mega-School which would require a multi-million dollar expenditure; Accordingly, I strongly oppose the closure of St. Gregory School and request that the ARC process be suspended until an analysis about potential boundary shifts to include Flanders Field and Russell Woods development and future enrollment and the impact of full funding JK & SK be analyzed.

As the ARC proceeded through the consultation process towards completing its report, countless emails were received by the Board (Trustees and Administration), with the following common message:

I support the Tecumseh ARC recommendation to Maintain Status quo for St. Gregory, St. Pius and St. Peter and encourage the Board to undertake a boundary review in the Tecumseh and surrounding areas and/or explore shared services with the community to enhance unused space. I am requesting that this be the only recommendation from the Tecumseh ARC to be in the report to be presented to the Director. I strongly oppose the Tecumseh ARC recommendation to consolidate St. Gregory at St. Pius. I am requesting that the recommendation to consolidate St. Gregory at St. Pius be removed from the report to be presented to the Director.

The ARC considered all input received from the communities, and completed an analysis that included reasons why the communities did not support the options presented by Administration; as well as the reasons why the communities supported only the status quo option. The ARC's report reflected community input and an analysis of each option as to its value to the Board, the community, the local economy, and first and foremost, students.

The ARC's full report has been submitted to the Board as information and includes the following recommendation:

Maintain Status Quo for St. Gregory, St. Pius, and St. Peter and Encourage the Board to Undertake a Boundary Review in the Tecumseh and Surrounding Areas. Explore Shared Services within the Community to Enhance Unused Space.

With the following supplementary recommendation:

The Committee also recommends further investigation, consultation and study to explore French Immersion (including dual track) at one, some, or all of the Tecumseh ARC schools.

The report and the recommendations have been of great assistance to Administration in the development of the following analysis and recommendations presented for further community input:

THE CHALLENGES FACED BY THE TECUMSEH FAMILY OF SCHOOLS AND THE SYSTEM:

As indicated in Administration's Report to the Board on March 25, 2014, the Board continues to face the following budget pressures and challenges:

- The Board is projected to graduate 1,097 more students at the end of 2014-15 than the number of students projected to be enrolled in JK during the year. It is evident from the data that the downward trend in enrolment is projected to continue year-over-year. If the projected Junior Kindergarten enrolment for 2014-15 stays fixed for each year into the future and no other factors change, the Board would decline to a nominal enrolment of 12,600 in 2027-28, a drop of 7,674 pupils or 38%.
- 63% of WECDSB's elementary schools are using less than 85% of the available space.
- There is currently excess capacity of 4,364 spaces or 18% across WECDSB's entire system. This represents an approximate equivalent of 10 average-sized elementary schools that would have to close for the Board to address this excess capacity.
- Schools with excess capacity are still subject to the same fixed costs of school operations, such as utilities and maintenance. Because space is underutilized however, the schools do not receive enough per-pupil funding through basic foundation grants to cover these fixed costs. To address this problem, the Ministry, in 2013-14, provides boards with top-up funding in the School Facility Operations and Renewal Grants. In 2013-14, the top-up increases the Board's revenue for up to 15% of the excess capacity. For example, a school with a utilization rate of 60% would be treated as if it were operating at 75%; a school with a utilization rate of 80% would be treated as if it were operating at 95%; and schools over 85% utilization are fully topped up (i.e. treated as if they are operating at 100%). Any school operating under 85% utilization is not generating full school operations and renewal grant funding. Therefore the Board is not maximizing the funding it could be allocated, which is causing a continuing budget pressure.
- In the 2013-14 Revised Budget Estimates, 11% (almost \$2.5M) of WECDSB's total school operations and school renewal funding is dedicated to funding empty spaces. Across the province, this figure is 13% or \$300M, an amount which, if fewer empty pupil places existed, could be freed up by the Ministry to provide program enhancements that would lead to increased student achievement.

In its announcement of March 27, 2014, respecting Grants for Student Needs Funding and Regulations for the 2014-15 school year, the Ministry of Education, acknowledging the costs to the Education system of operating underutilized school spaces, reported on the School Board Efficiencies and Modernization (SBEM) Initiative, which was introduced in the 2013 Provincial Budget. This initiative includes changes to the top-up funding for underutilized schools. Under the new initiative, an underutilized school facility, at a utilization of over 65 percent, will receive 15% top up funding, but only to a maximum of 95% of capacity funding. Schools at or below 65 percent utilization, will be provided with top-up funding that recognizes only 10% of their excess capacity. The Ministry estimates this will result in a savings of \$42.4 million to the education system, which it has committed to reinvesting a portion towards assisting boards with the capital costs of new schools, retrofits and additions to support consolidations.

With these changes effective in 2014-15, the cost for the Board of continuing to operate underutilized schools, will be increasing.

TECUMSEH FAMILY OF SCHOOLS:

Secondary School	Site and Building Size Acres/Sq ft	Current Enrolment	OTG/ Utilization %	Original Construction Date	10 Year Renewal/ FCI %	Enrolment forecast 15 year
St. Gregory	6.70/ 30,698.6	316.5	403/ 79%	1958	\$3,926,084 48.6%	423
St. Peter	11.96/ 30,774.0	351	362/ 97%	1961	\$2,495,825 34.7%	623
St. Pius	5.03/ 58,125.1	496.5	653/ 76%	1956	\$2,080,053 17.1%	496

With current utilization rates, neither St. Gregory nor St. Pius will receive full operations and renewal grant funding for 2013-2014 (both falling short of the 2013-2014, 85% threshold for full top up funding).

St. Peter is currently receiving full funding, and after a forecast low in enrolment in year 6 (2018), is expected to experience a gradual increase, with a more marked increase beginning in year 11, to a forecasted 623 students by 2027.

With the Ministry's SBEM initiative, effective 2014-15, and with consideration for the 15 year enrolment projections for St. Gregory and St. Pius, both schools are forecast to continue to operate into the immediate future, without receiving full operations and renewal grant funding as follows:

Although St. Gregory, after an initial decline in enrolment, is forecast to experience a gradual increase in enrolment beginning in year 6 (2018), the school is not forecast to reach capacity until Year 14 (2026).

St. Pius is forecast to experience declining enrolment through year 11 (2023), with lows approaching the 65% utilization threshold, with a gradual increase beginning in year 12 (2024) to return only to current enrolment numbers by year 15 (2027).

DEVELOPMENT IN THE TECUMSEH AREA

The municipality of Tecumseh has presented a report to the Committee with a list of current development proposals for the Town, as well as dates for anticipated development. Although Administration is encouraged by the prospect for development, particularly in that the development can potentially assist in offsetting the year to year enrolment decline, as the Board consistently graduates more students than are entering the system, there is concern that the nature and the location of the forecasted development will not generate a sufficient number of school age students registering at St. Pius and St. Gregory. The following is included in the Watson and Associates Report:

"Enrolment Expected from New Housing

The second phase of the enrolment projection methodology involves predicting housing growth in the study area and its impact on school enrolment. The residential unit forecast is used as the basis to predict future school enrolment from housing growth. Historical levels of occupancy by school aged children and by housing type provide us with factors and trends that allow us to make assumptions about how new units might produce children in the future.

From an occupancy point of view, the number of people per housing unit has been declining in practically every part of the Province over the last decade or longer. In addition, the number of school aged children per household has also been in sharp decline. New units today are not producing the same number of people or the same number of children as they have historically. Each unit in the residential forecast is multiplied by a factor to predict the number of school aged children that will come from the projected number of units.”

The Town of Tecumseh's Report indicates a potential for a total of 511 housing units; 19 of those located south of the E.C. Row Expressway, within St. Peter's boundary. As indicated in the Watson Report, the Board's average elementary yield of new students per new housing unit ranges from year to year, from a low of .129 to a high of .183. With those estimates, out of the possible 492, the Board would expect to realize only 63 to 90 new students at St. Gregory and St. Pius, out of all future housing development currently proposed by the Town for the area north of the Expressway. Even with the possibility of increased enrolment numbers with the implementation of full day kindergarten at both of the sites in September, Administration cannot foresee how the potential new housing development can fully offset declining enrolment and realize enrolment increases in both of these schools, bringing them to capacity.

BOUNDARY REVIEW

The community and the Committee have recommended that the Board consider a boundary review, including all area schools, in an attempt to balance enrolment. With the extent of declining enrolment throughout the system, Administration cannot recommend boundary review as a viable option.

In the last number of years, the Board has had to make the decision to consolidate schools or is currently involved in ARC studies that affect schools throughout its geographic jurisdiction, including the Amherstburg area, West Windsor, Central Windsor, East Windsor/Riverside, and Lakeshore. With continuous decline in the total number of students, boundary adjustments alone cannot fill each school in the system. As indicated, in the Ministry's SBEM initiative, the Board is in a position that it must look to consolidate schools where it is possible to do so, without lowering programming standards or diminishing opportunities for students.

The community has specifically recommended a boundary adjustment to include the Flanders and Russell Woods area, currently within the St. William Catholic Elementary school boundary. Presentations were made in the study indicating that in the late 1970's a boundary adjustment had been completed which took this development out of the St. Gregory boundary and moved it into the St. William boundary, to address low enrolment numbers for St. William at that time.

Although boundary adjustments were feasible at that time, when an underutilized school could be filled by drawing from another that was well over capacity, with numerous portables, that solution is not available to the Board today. St. William is currently operating at 92% utilization and not forecast for significant enrolment increase in the 15 year projection. St. John the Baptist on its east border is operating at 77% utilization; Holy Name and St. John Evangelist, to the south, are operating at 72% and 60%. There is currently a Board decision to defer the closing of St. John the Evangelist in Lakeshore to June, 2018 pending an examination of boundaries to determine whether adjustments can be made to realize full funding for St. John the Evangelist, St. John the Baptist, St. William and Holy Name Catholic Elementary schools. With these current utilization numbers, it is apparent

that adjusting the boundaries of St. Gregory to the east, will not resolve the underutilization in the area. St. William, at 92% capacity, cannot lose student population from both east and west of its boundary to fill schools in Tecumseh and Lakeshore.

The community also suggested that the Board consider boundary adjustments with St. John Vianney and L.A. Desmarais. St. John Vianney is currently involved in an ARC study in Riverside. L.A. Desmarais is in a family of schools that has already experienced closure (St. Alexander), with W.J. Langlois also currently underutilized.

FRENCH IMMERSION

The ARC also recommended that the board investigate the possibility of French Immersion (including dual track) at “one, some, or all of the Tecumseh ARC schools”. Administration does not view French Immersion in the Tecumseh area as a viable means of addressing underutilization at St. Gregory and St. Pius. There is concern that a French Immersion school at the St. Gregory or St. Pius location would be competing with the two French language schools in Tecumseh; one (Sainte Marguerite-d’Youville) located directly between St. Gregory and St. Pius; and another (Sainte Antoine) also located within the Town of Tecumseh, north of the E.C. Row Expressway. Further, establishment of either St. Gregory or St. Pius as a French Immersion School would create the risk of competition between the WECDSB’s French Immersion and English speaking programs for the same potential new registrations in the area; therefore perhaps filling one of the two schools, but at the cost of the other.

POTENTIAL FOR JOINT USE OF AN UNDERUTILIZED FACILITY

The Ministry of Education has indicated that the changes for 2014-15 related to funding of underutilized schools, towards promoting more efficient use of school space, are also intended to “provide incentives to boards to seek out additional community partnerships, where these partnerships make sense to both the board and potential partners”. The Board has entered into these types of partnerships where they have “made sense” in specific locations, and have somewhat offset the costs of continuing to operate an underutilized school, in the short term.

The Board has had conversations with representatives from the Town of Tecumseh prior to and over the course of the study, both in relation to possible plans for the former St. Anne (North) facility as well as in relation to possible viable partnerships for shared use of the St. Gregory and/or St. Pius facility. There is no indication at this time of the possibility of a viable joint use partnership that would provide the Board anywhere near sufficient revenue to offset the costs it is currently incurring in operating empty spaces in these schools.

ADMINISTRATION’S RECOMMENDATION:

Administration has considered the concerns of the community for the option of consolidating all of the schools either at the former St. Anne site or at a central location; noting the fact that St. Peter is currently fully utilized, with a projected, eventual enrolment increase; and the benefits to students and communities in having a Catholic Elementary School located both north and south of E.C. Row Expressway. With these considerations, Administration is not recommending the consolidation of the three communities as a preferred accommodation option for the Catholic school communities in the Tecumseh area.

With consideration for the analysis summarized within this report; having reviewed the ARC report; and having heard from the Tecumseh community, Administration cannot support the ARC's "status quo" recommendation, and recommends the following for further community input:

That St. Gregory Catholic Elementary School be closed effective June, 2014, and the school community at St. Gregory be consolidated at St. Pius X Catholic Elementary School effective September, 2014, with students to be accommodated in the short term, through the use of portables; The Board apply to the Ministry of Education through the School Consolidation Capital (SCC) program, for capital for the construction of an addition to support the consolidation; and

That an Integration Committee, comprised of representatives from both the St. Gregory and St. Pius communities, be established immediately to plan for and implement the integration of the two Catholic school communities; and

That St. Peter Catholic Elementary School remain open as a JK to 8 Catholic elementary school.

St. Pius X and St. Gregory Catholic Elementary Schools are within 2 kilometres of each other, both located north of the E.C. Row Expressway. Both schools offer quality programming for students; both schools are located within quiet bordering neighbourhoods; and both are located next to large Town parks. St. Pius is the larger facility with an On the Ground Capacity (OTG) in 2013-14 of 653 available pupil spaces. Considering forecasts for 2014-2015, a consolidated school community of St. Pius/St. Gregory would see an enrolment of 823 students. With the possible rededication of the current use of rooms (in addition to 4 already closed), the Board can minimize the use of portables in the short term, pending application to the Ministry for capital funding under the new School Consolidation Capital (SCC) program for an addition to the St. Pius facility.

With the assistance of an Integration Committee comprised of representatives from both the St. Gregory and St. Pius community, Administration is confident that these Catholic communities, with very similar school profiles, can come together, where students will benefit from the best practices of each of these successful schools, with the support of the Board's Student Achievement and Learning Support Services Teams, to ensure continued quality programming for all students, within the Board's inclusive model of education. The merged school community will continue in its close relationships with Ste. Anne and Good Shepherd Parishes.

This recommendation is consistent with the Ministry of Education's School Board Efficiencies and Modernization (SBEM) initiative, in that it allows the Board to manage excess capacity and to "right-size its capital foot-print" in the Tecumseh area.

IN SUMMARY

Administration commends the ARC and the communities it represented for conducting and participating in a comprehensive and thorough public consultation study. Their input was invaluable to Administration throughout its analysis and formulation of its recommendation.

Administration's recommendation is respectfully submitted for community feedback.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

As detailed within Report

TIMELINES:

As detailed within Report

APPENDICES: All appendices to this report can be found on the Board's public website at www.wecdsb.on.ca by clicking on "Accommodation Review Committees".

REPORT REVIEWED BY:

<input type="checkbox"/>	EXECUTIVE COUNCIL:	Review Date:	--
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	EXECUTIVE SUPERINTENDENT:	Approval Date:	April 1, 2014
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION:	Approval Date:	April 1, 2014