

SCHOOL TRANSITION INFORMATION SESSION
(Ancaster Senior / Fessenden)

Monday, December 10, 2018
6:30 pm

Ancaster Senior
295 Nakoma Road, Ancaster

Attendance- 60 Public

HWDSB Resource Staff – Transitions Support Michael Prendergast, Superintendent Jane Macpherson, Mark Taylor, David Anderson, Jenny Seto Vanderlip, Laura Subonovich, Caitlin Evans

Trustees – Chair of the Board, Trustee Wards 11 & 12 Alex Johnstone

Recording Secretary – Michele Lambie

6:35 pm Start Up

Welcome and Introductions

Superintendent Jane Macpherson shared the Land Acknowledgement and introduced Michael Prendergast former Superintendent/current role of Transitions Support; Chair/Trustee Alex Johnstone; David Anderson, Mark Taylor and Principals.

There are many transitions taking place across our family of schools. Currently there are (3) projects: Beverly site, C.H. Bray site, and Ancaster Senior. All of these projects are interconnected and when we move students there are ripple effects.

Purpose of the School Transition Information Session

- The purpose of this public meeting is to provide information on the preliminary plans and next steps of the transition process
- This is an important opportunity for the school communities to voice their concerns during a question and answer period
- Questions raised at this meeting, that the Board members are not able to address, will be taken away for further follow up

Board Decision

- As part of the Ancaster Accommodation Review, the Board of Trustees approved the closure of Fessenden, Queen's Rangers, pending Ministry of Education funding for (2) new JK-8 elementary schools on the CH Bray and Rousseau sites, as well as an addition at Ancaster Senior
- In March of this year, our Board received Ministry of Education funding for a \$3,702,489 addition to Ancaster Senior
- As part of the transition plan, Ancaster Senior and Fessenden will close at the end of June 2019
- The addition at Ancaster Senior will create a JK-8 school, and this school will be named in accordance with the HWDSB Naming Policy

Transitions

- While all of the Ancaster transitions are taking place, both buildings will be used and the school will preside over (2) campuses (Fessenden and Ancaster Senior)
- **Fessenden campus** will become dual track for Grades 1-5
- **Ancaster Senior campus** will be FDK, and Grades 6-8
- *Ancaster Senior addition* will include (4) FDK rooms and (3) classrooms
- Renovations to align with Ministry standards: Art, Science, Music and Learning Commons rooms

Slide Presentation

- Michael Prendergast presented slides that reviewed: School Renewal process; Map of the Ancaster/Copetown Transitions; Projected enrollments; Transitions; Construction/facility highlights
- Maps included in the presentation display the new school boundaries and the coordination of school closure and consolidation planned for Ancaster over the months/years ahead

School Renewal

- Process: Ministry funding - design, receive regulatory approvals and permits, tendered within budget (Time period: can take up to 18 months)
- Construction (Time period: 12-16 months)
- Ministry does not always approve all proposals
- In most cases, building a new school requires moving students to another location, short term solutions are needed
- Board is always looking for ways to minimize transitions for students and acknowledges short term relocations are necessary and will work with their communities

Projected Enrollments

- The combined enrollment for Ancaster Senior and Fessenden is anticipated at 850 students, which is 96% capacity

School Transition Committees

- Parents and community input is essential and this is achieved through the creation of the Transition Committee, beginning in January 2019
- The purpose of this Transition Committee is to formulate a plan at the school level to ease transitions

Question & Answer

Q1. In regards to technology, will this be shared between the (2) campuses?

A1. Each campus will have their own resources

Q2. Will staff and Administration be shared between the (2) campuses?

A.2. No, there will be a dedicated staff and Administration for each campus. However, there will be opportunities created for staff collaboration, sharing knowledge/learning and teaching practices between the (2) campuses which will be beneficial to all students. Students will have the advantage of becoming familiar and recognizing staff from both campuses as the buildings are in close proximity for interactions, which will be beneficial in preparing children for the future school amalgamation. The Administration team is based on student enrolment and will be determined in January 2019.

Q3. Will the organization of classes be established as two separate sites, or as one school?

A3. Once all of the transitions are complete, school organization will be for one school.

Q4. Will there be split classes/grades between the two campuses?

A4. No, the Board will keep grades together. Fessenden site will be Grades 1 – 5 and the ASPS site will have K and Grades 6-8. Each child will attend their homeroom at one site.

Q5. How long will this model be used? And what are the effects on enrolment?

A.5. Over the next couple of years, when schools are being closed and new schools are built. At this time, we do not have a date for when all of the Ancaster transitions will be completed as construction projects are just beginning. In regards to enrolment, our Accommodations and Planning department's research projections confirm that as students will not be feeding into Ancaster Senior, consequently the enrolment will level off. With the investment of the addition to Ancaster Senior, this will satisfy our future enrolment requirements for building the new capacity.

Q6. During this transition period, will schools be open for Out-of-Catchment?

A6. No, schools will be closed to Out-of-Catchment during the construction period.

Q7. Any updates on Rousseau?

A7. Rousseau is a funding priority, and the Board will re-apply at the end of this year. The Board's strategy for revitalization at Rousseau remains unchanged and will continue to advocate for a new school with our vision of a state-of-the art facility located at the current site. The Board is optimistic and will inform the public once notification has been received.

Q8. What will transportation look like during this transition period?

A8. There will be buses that go to both campuses as currently happens already. Scheduling of buses will be determined in February 2019. However, it is important to note that Transportation is currently under review across the district, investigating ways to maximize the buses/drivers, to minimize the strains that the provincial driver shortage is having upon our families and schools. Consequently, the Board and HWSTS are examining Bell Times across the Board, as it is a key factor that directly impacts bus pickup/drop off, in order to avoid duplication and reduce student ride times. Also, hoping for more provincial solutions and sharing of buses with other Boards.

Q9. Will the use of uniforms in the senior grades continue? How will this be determined with the new school having JK-8?

A9. Uniforms will be an important topic to be discussed with the Transition Committee. This committee will have a major role in determining how it will be structured with the primary/intermediate grades, it should be the decision to continue with this practice for the senior students or not.

Q10. Parent concerns of too many transitions for JK/SK students, having to attend different campuses as they advance to the next grade level.

A10. Administration and staff will focus on working diligently in preparing students for transitioning, to ensure safety and their emotional well-being. Should parents have specific concerns with their child(ren), they are encouraged to contact the Principal to discuss strategies to put supports in place for a smooth transition. Also, Principals can utilize our Board resources for further assistance, including social work. This will be a priority of the Transition Committee to establish a plan of action a plan and activities (e.g. Open Houses, joint 'play dates', etc.) to help alleviate children and parent's concerns before, during and after the transitioning period.

Q11. Parents voiced concerns with FDK friendships, in relation to the effects of being moved to an Intermediate/ Senior student environment.

A11. Administration will mitigate these concerns through class organization that will be based upon learning abilities, while being mindful of the importance of nurturing friendships. For the senior students, having primary students in the same building will provide many leadership opportunities (e.g. Reading Buddies) that will be encouraged and promoted by the staff. In regards to the building and outdoor space, the kindergarten children will have their own entrance, fenced in play areas, and self-contained washrooms in their classrooms.

Q12. Will there be Before/After care?

A12. Yes, Before/After care will remain the same as it currently exists now.

Q13. Will Bell Times remain the same? And how soon will be notified if they are changing?

A13. Bell times are predominately determined by Transportation. However, the school Administration will make contributions to the decision making, including recommendations from the Transition Committee. Parents will be notified well in advance should Bell Times change being respectful of families' schedules, before/after care, as well as daycare establishments.

Q14. How will Bell Times be managed in regards to Nutrition Breaks for both campuses? Will students be playing outside at the same time?

A14. This is a school based decision that is determined by the number of students that may include rotating Nutrition Breaks. The Administration at both campuses will co-ordinate their Nutrition Breaks to effectively manage the number of students outside at a time, to ensure safety and staff supervision.

Q15. How will students be kept safe during the construction period?

A15. Student and staff safety is a priority. The Superintendent's office and school Administrations will be working closely with our Facilities department to manage the construction areas and the use of heavy equipment vehicles during and after school hours, with consideration of student walkers, and keeping the community safe.

Q16. How is the Transition Committee membership determined? What is the process?

A16. School letters will go home in early January, to define the roles and required participants that comprise the Transition Committee. Members are Principals/Vice-Principals of the transitioning schools, including their teaching staff, parents, School Council Chairs, student reps, and the Superintendent. Although their number of members is limited, these Transition Committee meetings are open for the public to attend to lend their voice, share concerns and contribute ideas. Typically, the Committee meets on a monthly basis prior to the school transition and after.

Q17. How will traffic be managed with the increased population at both campuses? Currently, many parents drive their children to school and street congestion is a major safety concern.

A17. This will be managed in co-ordination with the City, by-law officers, Facility department, school Administration and staff, with recommendations from the Transition Committee for planning strategies to assist with the flow of buses and traffic for student safety.

Q18. When can we expect for the Ancaster Senior renovations to be completed?

A.18. Timelines expectations are for the construction to begin in spring (March/April after the frost), and to be completed for September 2019 start-up. However, as construction is dependent on weather, this must also be a consideration should there be delays.

Q19. What are the long term plans for the Fessenden property?

A19. The Board does not have plans for this property at this time.

Q20. What can we expect for the new school model in terms of staff and resources?

A20. Parents can expect a renovated school that encompasses all of the teaching talents from both campuses, including a qualified Music teacher; a state-of-the-art facility that meets Ministry standards; and upon inventory of both campuses' existing viable resources/equipment, where there are gaps new purchases will be requisitioned.

Q21. Will the practice of a rotary schedule continue with Grades 7 and 8?

A21. At this point, we are not anticipating much of a change to the intermediate/senior schedule, however we cannot assume the format on how this will look for the new model, as this is an Administration school based decision.

Q22. Due to unforeseen construction delays, could there be a mid-year move?

A22. Typically the Board does not do mid-year moves. Normal past practice is the end of the term, such as a January start-up versus November. With the unique advantage of the close proximity of the campuses this is a viable option if required. However, the main focus is that the Board demands that the building be 100 percent complete before occupancy. Every school transition is different and therefore a typical outcome cannot be predicted.

Q23. Will there be portables at the campuses?

A23. Yes, there will be portables during this transition stage, however as part of our planning process, our goal is to reduce the number of portables and they will be removed as they are not needed.

Q24. Will there be any more Boundary changes?

A24. No, there will be no changes to the Ancaster boundaries, nor will programs be moved. Boundaries have already been established through the decision of the Board of Trustees

Ancaster Boundary Review process. There are no current plans to do any further boundary reviews in Ancaster at this time.

Q25. Will Rousseau be French Immersion?

A25. This will depend on Ministry funding. Ministry changes are affected by the new government's mandates.

Q26. Are there plans for a second school for French Immersion in Ancaster?

A26. No, there are no plans, and this will not impact our secondary strategy.

Q27. What happens if French Immersion grows?

A27. Presently, the enrolment projections conclude that this is not an issue. The Board reviews and collects enrollment data during the month of January.

Q28. Is the Ancaster Senior addition based on the assumption Rousseau funding being approved by the Ministry? What happens if the Ministry declines funding?

A28. The Board's plan is to continue with the intention to have a second site for French Immersion. At this point there are no plans to expand, and therefore the Board would look for other options in our existing facilities. Should this become an issue the Board would work with Facilities, and this would be communicated to the families, including a plan moving forward.

Next Steps

- The goal of the Board is to minimize the disruption to both schools by remaining open until the construction phase is complete, while seeking positive solutions so that students feel supported and safe during this transition period
- Your questions and concerns will be taken back to the Board, and unanswered questions will be followed up for further information
- In January, families can expect to receive communication, in the form of letters that will be posted on your school's website
- Information regarding the formation of the Transition Committee that serve to support the transition of students, staff and families involved in school relocation/consolidation, including on how parents can become involved in this important process
- Transition Committee information can be found on the HWDSB's website: <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/about/school-renewal/transition-committees/>
- Please visit the Construction Updates section on the HWDSB's website for updates and more information about school consolidation plans: <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/about/school-renewal/construction/>
- If you have further questions and concerns, please contact your school's Administration



- Minutes from this evening's School Information Session will be posted on the Board's website

8:35 pm Closing