

HWDSB

Accommodation Strategy Advisory Meeting

Thursday November 16, 2023

6:00 p.m.

Mary Hopkins Elementary School

In Attendance:

Matthew Gerard	Associate Director of Business Services
Nicole Lee	Superintendent of Student Achievement
Graeme Noble	Trustee Ward 15
Nancy Kucic	Principal Flamborough Centre
Leah Young	Flamborough Centre School Council Chair
Angela Devall	Flamborough Centre School Council Member
Susete Bloom	Principal Mary Hopkins
Paula Thomas	Acting Vice-Principal Mary Hopkins
Carley Casey	Mary Hopkins School Council Chair
Mohamed Khamis	Mary Hopkins School Council Vice Chair
David Anderson	Senior Manager
Robert Fex	Senior Planner
Ellen Warling	Manager, Planning Accommodation and Rentals
Kathleen Hussey	Executive Assistant to Superintendent of Student Achievement

Welcome and Introductions:

Superintendent Lee welcomed all, and members of the Advisory Committee introduced themselves. The agenda was reviewed.

Boundary Review Procedure:

Superintendent Lee shared information regarding what a Boundary Review is highlighting the Guiding Principles involved in conducting a Boundary Review as well as the Guiding Principles specific to Elementary schools. Details of the Policy and Procedure presented included the make up of the Advisory panel, the meetings required and the content of both the Advisory and Public meeting.

Projected Timelines:

The projected timelines for the Temporary Accommodation Strategy process were shared with the Advisory panel, identifying Board of Trustee approval was received May 8, 2023, with the intent to Report to the Board of Trustees for final decision in January or February 2024 and implementation for September 2024. Advisory Panel meetings will be held November 16th and December 14th and the Public Meeting November 30th.

HWDSB

The Strategy:

Robert Fex presented the purpose of the temporary accommodation strategy, and information regarding the long-term accommodation strategy advising that HWDSB has submitted a 3rd Capital Priorities submission to the Ministry of Education on October 20, 2023 for a new school south of Highway 5. Approval decisions are anticipated in early 2024 and if successful that would mean a high probability of a new school opening for Fall 2027.

The area history, pertinent developments and the area identifying students impacted were provided utilizing maps.

The Strategy shared indicated that *in 2024-2025 only new students in the English Program JK-5 that live south of Highway 5 will go to Flamborough Centre noting that new students with siblings currently existing at Mary Hopkins can request an exemption to attend Mary Hopkins (Exemptions must cease once Mary Hopkins requires additional portables)*

Enrolments, Projections, Capacities and Utilizations:

Robert Fex presented Enrolment Projections for Flamborough Centre and Mary Hopkins in three scenarios; no change, change but with no new portables and change with new portables. Enrolment Projection Highlights were shared emphasizing the resulting utilization percentage impacting each school.

Outreach to Planning to date:

Questions and suggestions received through Planning@hwdsb.on.ca were presented and addressed with a focus on; exemptions with limits, school and grade assignments continuing in the structure already known to the community, balance of enrolment and not shifting enrolment pressures to additional schools. Projections through to 2036 for Allan A Greenleaf and Guy B Brown were shared.

Outreach regarding traffic concerns were acknowledged noting staff have attended at Flamborough Centre for observation and HWSTS has been engaged regarding potential solutions.

It was confirmed that an in person public meeting process will proceed with meeting materials made available following Advisory meeting #1 and the public meeting and families are encouraged to utilize the Engage site to provide feedback.

Addressing Objectives, Implementation, and the role of the Transition Committee:

In summary staff discussed the strategy as it applies to addressing the short-term accommodation requirements of ensuring a better balance of the enrolments between Flamborough Centre and Mary Hopkins. Outlining the implementation, Board staff indicated that the Strategy be proposed to commence September 2024 with a Transition committee formed after Board approval. The purpose of the Transition Committee and topics of discussion

HWDSB

were identified. The process for the Public Meeting was presented and staff advised that revisions may be available for the meeting and that they will work with Research and Analytics to determine the most effective meeting type for gathering community voice.

Round Table and Questions and Comments:

Q- What is different this time with regards to Capital Priorities Submission?

R- The evidence of need is there. Numbers have only increased since previous submissions.

Q- Can we consider siblings go to Flamborough instead?

R- Flamborough is the 6.7 and 8 school for Mary Hopkins. Would have to examine on a case-by-case basis. Caution that we do not lose the control of the balance between the two schools.

Q- Could collective decisions be made?

R- May require that a communication go out. Perhaps a Survey could be utilized so that parents could share their intent regarding movement of siblings. Only beneficial if response is good otherwise cannot glean information from small number of individuals. Must ensure there is a way to ensure balance.

Note: The Report to Trustees will have to include a firm statement so that there is a complete understanding of what September will look like well in advance.

Q- Could all French Immersion all grades be housed at Flamborough Centre with FI not at Mary Hopkins?

R- Staff will take away the French Immersion piece while noting that it would not be reasonable for shift of all pressure.

Note: The Strategy suggests the addition of approximately 50 students to Flamborough Centre.

Q- Is it possible that School Councils put out a request that families utilize Planning @ and Engage. Participation rates of surveys can be problematic.

R to Q- Can sibling scenarios be visited in Public Meeting and can an alternative to Engage be identified as parents are reporting they do not like the forum.

R- Sibling Scenarios can be put in the presentation for the Public Meeting. This is challenging however, as not knowing the families means we will not know which families have new children entering the system in the next 3 years. Assumptions will have to be made.

Note: Panel member offered that parents do not like Engage. Concerned they will not use it as the intended tool.

HWDSB

Q- What are the specifics of concerns around siblings at different schools?

R- Logistics #1. Bell times are one hour apart. Very difficult to co-ordinate. Driving and parking at both locations also a challenge.

Q- Are there any plans to support the physical buildings in anticipation of continued increase in enrolment and current stress on resources?

R- Process of adding water closets at Mary Hopkins beginning over the winter break.

Note: staff stressed that the Strategy is very much intended to be a temporary short-term solution. Ministry expects to see enrolment pressures prior to giving consideration for new schools.

Q- Why is Allan A Greenleaf not being considered? The new development not even beginning to be sold until 2024. Bell time is the same as Mary Hopkins and they have one unused portable.

R- It is not the development south of highway 5 that is being considered. Staff are considering the status of several developments. Staff can provide a list.

Q- Could Allan A Greenleaf be considered as they have a gym with a partition which would allow more students access to gym time. Very limited at both Flamborough and Mary Hopkins. 15 classes with a small gym at Flamborough and 29 classes with 1 gym at Mary Hopkins.

R- At present Trustees approved Accommodation Strategy involving Mary Hopkins and Flamborough. Requesting that another school be considered would restart the process. 2 weeks notice at a minimum would be needed to add new school communities to the process. That would move the public meeting to January and delay the Report to the Board. The Process includes consideration for staffing timelines and the need to honour Collective Agreements with staffing occurring at the end of February early March. Essentially it would result in the process taking another year.

R- Mary Hopkins School Council offers that they feel Mary Hopkins does not have another year.

R- Staff indicates that collectively they will take this question back.

Note: Staff clarified that the focus is the presentation in front of us now and the timelines that have been highlighted. There is always the possibility to re-engage after the initial Strategy is put in place. The first step is in addressing this Strategy. This process is not intended to solve other issues being identified at the schools.

R- Mary Hopkins School Council indicates that they were hopeful the Strategy would alleviate their issues, but it will not.

Q- What if the Ministry comes forward with a legislated requirement regarding the septic?

HWDSB

R- Staff have engaged engineers to assist with any requirement to provide either updates or changes to the existing infrastructure. No known issues are present, but staff recognize that a Building Permit application for additional portables may require further investigation surrounding the existing septic tank and bed.

Q- Can there be an evaluation of bell times?

R- There is no anticipated change in Bell times.

Concern raised around traffic concerns at Flamborough.

R- Staff advised that they are engaging with HWSTS on solutions. Waves of buses could be an option. Ideally they are anticipating 2 routes. Currently there are 40 empty spaces on one bus. HWSTS has not completed a full review. Will be completed for the public meeting or a representative from HWSTS will attend.

Concern raised of impact on Flamborough given they rely on septic and well. Enrolment at the school has increased every year for last 5 years putting septic system over the threshold. Indicate parents have been in contact with Ministry regarding the septic system. Shared that an Environment Assessment needs to happen. Can take about a year but Board could apply for an emergency review.

R- Staff have engaged engineers to assist with any requirement to provide either updates or changes to the existing infrastructure. No known issues are present, but staff recognize that a Building Permit application for additional portables may require further investigation surrounding the existing septic tank and bed. Staff also shared that the new well is functioning as intended but appreciated the feedback around pressure concerns and will investigate.

Parents indicate that they have correspondence with Ministry of Environment and Conservation and indicate that they will share with staff.

Staff confirms that they too speak with staff regularly. Note that there can be challenges with well water and that it is not uncommon to be on bottled water. Changes have been made and staff are hoping to see improvement.

Concern raised re waterflow at Flamborough.

R- Staff acknowledge this was raised last year, facilities was brought in and rectified. Will have facilities rereview if issue has returned.

Note: Staff indicates that the projections are for there to be 50 new students to Flamborough under suggested Strategy.

HWDSB

Suggestion made that HWDSB starts moving students to a number of schools to spread out the numbers.

Staff advised that would require starting the entire process again and noted the impact that would have on timelines. Acknowledged that the Strategy suggested is the best in this situation. A short-term solution needs to occur. Staff indicated that they will try to provide with responses that are food for thought.

Concerns raised by Flamborough School Council that they feel need to be addressed before considering additional student capacity include; parking, bus situation, safety, parking for staff, number of portables.

R- With regards to questions around portables staff clarified that a Permit for the City is required and a portable cannot be placed without adequate water closets, based on the Building Code. Staff also committed to confirming the number of portables at Guy B Brown noting that not every site can accommodate the same number of portables.

Q- Request that the presentation at the Public meeting include a couple slides for what they anticipate the long term will look like.

R- Staff confirmed.

Staff reinforcing that families utilize Engage for submitting feedback. School Council representatives again indicated they feel that staff cannot rely on Engage as some people do not like it and will not use it. 3rd option required. Staff advised that Superintendent Goodacre looking into it (PIC). Staff will also reach out to Research and Analytics to determine options.

Q- Will parking lot be expanded for staff?

R- Believe that the minimum requirement is that there be 1.25 spaces per classroom but here are slight differences across the system. Staff will verify.

Q- Is cost a concern?

R- The Capital Priorities process lags behind which presents challenges. The Ministry funding model requires students to be present in the system before providing capital funds for a new school. As a necessity for HWDSB a Temporary Accommodation Line will cover it.

Conclusion:

Superintendent Lee adjourned the meeting at 7:37 p.m. thanking the Committee for their participation, suggestions and sharing of concerns.