

HWDSB

Accommodation Strategy Advisory Meeting

Thursday January 11 2024

6:00 p.m. Waterdown Secondary School

In Attendance:

Nicole Lee	Superintendent of Student Achievement
Graeme Noble	Trustee Ward 15
Steven Yull	Principal Allan A. Greenleaf
Matthew Reid	Vice Principal Allan A. Greenleaf
Matthew Lingard	Allan A. Greenleaf School Council
Glen Spry	Allan A. Greenleaf School Council
Kristi Keery Bishop	Principal Balaclava
Nancy Kucic	Principal Flamborough Centre
Leah Young	Flamborough Centre School Council
Angela Devall	Flamborough Centre School Council
Josie Dalley	Principal Guy B. Brown
Lindsey Sheahan	Vice Principal Guy B. Brown
Priyanka Arora	Guy B. Brown School Council
Kelly Korkerus	Guy B. Brown School Council
Susete Bloom	Principal Mary Hopkins
Paula Thomas	Acting Vice-Principal Mary Hopkins
Carley Casey	Mary Hopkins School Council
Mohamed Khamis	Mary Hopkins School Council
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, members of the Advisory Committee were identified, and the agenda was reviewed.

Mandate, Policy and Procedures and Purpose of Meeting:

Superintendent Lee reviewed the mandate for the Advisory Panel and the mandate of the Resource staff supporting the panel. The Policy and Procedure that guides the Boundary Review Advisory Panel Meetings and Public Meeting were highlighted and Superintendent Lee confirmed the purpose of the meeting as the Panel looks to alleviate the additional pressures for Mary Hopkins and Flamborough Centre due to growth in the area through a short-term accommodation strategy for Waterdown.

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Background, Long-Term Strategy and Timelines:

Ellen Warling provided background information pertaining to the Waterdown Accommodation Strategy and advised that the Board of Trustees approved an expansion of the number of schools involved in the Accommodation Strategy on December 4th, 2023, to the 5 schools participating in the Advisory meeting.

The Long-Term Strategy of a new school south of Highway 5 was shared and the anticipated timelines, should the Ministry of Education approve the Capital Priorities submission of October 20, 2023, was outlined.

School Details:

Staff reviewed a map identifying the 5 schools involved in the Accommodation Strategy and provided basic key information regarding each of the schools including the school organization, site size, capacity and school facility demographics.

Mary Hopkins School Council Member requested that it be noted that the school is beginning HVAC renovation, and the small gym space is expected to be used for class space.

Original Proposed Short-Term Strategy, Map identifying New Students and Projected Waterdown School Enrolments Projected for 2026:

Staff reviewed the original Proposed Strategy which was put forward in November 2023 identifying the geography of the “new English students” impacted and the Waterdown School Enrolments projected for 2026 while highlighting the task of finding accommodations for these students until the new school is built in 2027.

Guiding Principles:

The guiding principles to be considered to support the Advisory group’s work were shared, ranked and discussed.

Trustee Noble asked that the principles also speak to ensuring that a minimum standard of learning is maintained, and a panel member requested the guiding principles ensure equitable access to education programming and equal opportunity for physical education.

Enrolment, Projections and Scenarios:

The projected enrolment for the years 2024 to 2026 were reviewed with regards to the number of students south of Highway 5 for grades JK to Grade 8 who are to be directed away from Mary Hopkins and the number of Grade 6 to 8 French Immersion Students from the Mary Hopkins/Flamborough Centre catchment.

An overview of 6 Scenarios for consideration was provided with a notation that Scenarios 1-3 would only impact new students to HWDSB while Scenarios 4-6 offered variations of students

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impacted. Each of the 6 Scenarios were presented, their impact on all 5 schools identified, the impact on portables involved highlighted and a matrix regarding the guiding principles reviewed.

Discussion:

Q- Why is there not a scenario where all new students attend Balaclava?

R- That can be considered as a scenario.

Q- Noted that the key information regarding each of the 5 schools did not reflect that parking at Mary Hopkins has not been adjusted in response to the last 4 portables placed at the school. Principal Bloom indicated 25 staff members are parking on the street each day.

R- Staff acknowledged that many HWDSB schools have parking challenges and indicated this process is unable to address current staff parking concerns.

Q- How would impact on Grade 7 and 8 students be addressed?

R- Implementing the moves regarding Grade 7 and 8 students would be decided with families in conversations outside this process and anticipate phased moves.

Q- Trustee Noble recommend that a Guiding Principle should be that the solution decided upon be as simple a solution as possible.

R- Noted that no scenarios will include a change of boundary for any of the 5 schools. Accommodation Strategy is to be Temporary in nature and when staff start moving lines on a map there is both direct and indirect impact on all students. Past practice identified the need to focus on cohorts, grades, classes and programs to minimize the impact. Look to avoid splitting classes and cohorts.

Q- Can HWDSB look at moving FI from Mary Hopkins?

R- FI is a choice. An unknown number of families may chose to leave FI and remain at Mary Hopkins if FI moved.

Q- Why weren't more scenarios provided to address the current Mary Hopkins issues?

R- This process is intended to be a Temporary accommodation and a 3-year solution. Focus was not on moving portables from Mary Hopkins.

Concern raised regarding washrooms, gymnasium and library space at Mary Hopkins.

Concern raised that in moving Grades 5-8 to Guy B Brown they would be blowing up the school with intermediate students.

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Notion raised that younger/smaller students have less impact on space challenges.

Council member shared understanding that portables do not impact the level of education a student receives.

Q- Is there a possibility of obtaining funds from the Ministry of Education to expand existing schools?

R- The hope is that the new building will address the needs. The new school will include a boundary review and HWDSB anticipates capacity then being equal to enrolment. Noted that permanent boundaries for schools consider different entities including geographical features when being established.

Q- What is the hope for tonight's meeting?

R- Intention is to take a number of scenarios out to the public for consideration and feedback.

Mary Hopkins Council indicates that they want to look at a scenario that addresses Mary Hopkins current concerns.

Q- Who makes the final decision?

R- Next step is to obtain public and Advisory Committee feedback. After the feedback is received staff will put together a report that will be brought to the Finance and Facilities Committee. A final report with recommendations will be shared with Trustees at a Board meeting for final approval.

Comment made that it sounds like a purely subjective decision. Would like further information including the plan for 2027-2028.

Q- Has the guiding criteria been given percentage weighting?

R- No as there are many different thoughts on priorities that make some of the guiding principles more significant or less significant based on various circumstances.

Q- Appears that Scenario 6 is clearly where the decision falls. All other scenarios have too many negatives. What happens to Scenario 6 in 2027 2028 when the new school opens?

R- The new school is to be FDK to Grade 8 with a capacity of 500 students. There will not be French Immersion programming. The boundary for the new school is a separate process.

Q- Request made that Scenario #1 be removed from the Public Meeting citing septic, well, parking and safety issues.

R- Staff indicated they would take the request back for consideration.

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Q- Has staff utilized studies from other areas that answer questions regarding gaps that exist?

R- The Facility Team is exceptionally experienced and take many factors into consideration in the process.

Q- What happens in 3 years? Concern that things may end up worse. What is the light at the end of the tunnel in 3 years?

R- The FDK to Grade 8 is expected to grow. Noted that there are schools shrinking due to the move to high school. The process is trying to focus on the students now with the 3-year plan.

Q- Is the greenspace being considered as consideration is being given to adding portables at schools? Feel that outside time is non-negotiable.

R- It is a factor that is considered with all of the school sites.

Q- Concern that underforecasting is a pattern of behaviour which has resulted in the current challenges.

R- The 3rd Capital Priorities submission has been made to the Ministry of Education in response to our enrolment exceeding capacity in Waterdown. The HWDSB submission is competing with 72 Boards across the province.

Q- Noting that this concerns the Waterdown community as a whole, question as to whether as part of resource management HWDSB is having conversations with the Catholic Board about additional resources? States the high school is under capacity. Catholic is over capacity. Is the community as a whole aware of the significant concern? Are there additional resources available?

R- Fundraising cannot be used for Facility capital construction. Trustee Noble further advised that legislation impacts the ability to accept resources indicating risk and liability as factors. Trustee Noble also advised that he understands that there has been movement with the City, indicating that there was a Public Meeting held and that he was assured the City would expedite processing once the Capital Priorities submission is approved.

Mentioned that from a community perspective once there is approval the community can also push for action.

Q- Can a combined virtual/ in person program be implemented as an option to alleviate numbers?

R- The Ministry offers Remote which must involve 100% Remote participation.

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Q- Can the high school which is 500 under capacity be used for Grade 7 and 8 students?

R- Staff indicated that they can take the suggestion back for review. It was further noted that Waterdown Secondary school is not involved in this Temporary Accommodation review process. Historically Trustees have not supported a 7-12 or 8-12 model. Also noted that utilizing the Secondary School to satisfy the enrolment pressures in Waterdown could potentially jeopardize the submission to the Ministry for the new Elementary school.

Trustee Noble advised that if this is to be considered there will not be a fix for September 2024 and indicated that he could take this to the Board of Trustees for consideration if it is decided that a strategy for September is not wanted.

Q- Request made that Guiding Principles include impact on current students.

Staff advised that shifts will be made based on the feedback received from the panel at today's meeting.

Public Meeting:

Superintendent Lee and staff from Facilities advised that staff would take back all feedback received from the Advisory Panel meeting. Assured members that staff are listening, and that the presentation will be updated for the Public Meeting. The Advisory Committee will be advised of any changes prior to the Public Meeting and staff committed to providing any changes to the scenarios.

Trustee Noble suggested that it may be worthwhile to include some of the scenarios that have not moved forward and staff shared that they will look at providing scenarios that were not considered along with the reasons why.

Conclusion:

Superintendent Lee adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m. thanking the Committee for their participation, suggestions and sharing of concerns.