

REPORT OF THE AREA STUDY COMMITTEE

February 20, 2008

Elgin Study Area 2 - Homedale French Immersion / Wellington Street

<p>VOTING MEMBERS</p> <p>School Council: Homedale - Janet MacFarlane Wellington Street - Deanna Guernsey</p> <p>Citizens for French Immersion: Homedale - Stephanie Mitchener Wellington St. - Boris Georgijev</p> <p>Business: Paul Nicli</p> <p>Municipal Leaders: City of St. Thomas - Heather Chapman</p>	<p>ADMINISTRATION AND OTHERS</p> <p>Tracy Grant, Trustee and Chair of Area Review Committee Barry Wagner, Superintendent of Education Céline Bourbonnais-MacDonald, Superintendent of Education Karen Wilkinson, Superintendent of Education Cynthia Bain - ARC Assistant</p> <p>Principals: Wellington St. P.S. - Heather Coughlin Homedale Sr. Elem. P.S. - Jane Hanbuch.</p>
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1. Welcome

Trustee Tracy Grant, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone. Filling in for Jane Parker, ARC Assistant, was Cynthia Bain, Administrative Assistant to Superintendent of Education Karen Wilkinson.

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda. Moved by J. MacFarlane. Carried.

3. Chairperson’s Remarks

The Chair thanked all the Committee members for the time and energy expended on behalf of our students. She has spoken with the M.P.P. about the work the Committee has been doing. It is hoped the draft recommendation can be finalized this evening. All the hard work of the Committee is appreciated.

3.1 Questions arising from Committee Members

Do we have an idea of where the French Immersion students are?
The Chair circulated a scattermap outlining this information.

During a combined School Council meeting of Wellington St. and Homedale Public Schools, questions were raised regarding busing and the safety of walkers.
Principal J. Hanbuch indicated that next year the busing system currently in place would continue to be used. One of the concerns was the splitting up of families. One idea might be to start the day at Homedale a little earlier, end earlier, buses would then go to Wellington and pick up students. This would also cut down on traffic at the front of the school.

The question of safety in the front of the school was raised.

Executive Superintendent of Operations Services, Karen Dalton, had indicated that this is municipal property and that there is a need for the City and the Board to work together. The City is very supportive and willing to work co-operatively with the School Board to ensure that the front of the school is safe for parents and children. Dave White was the contact for the City.

Questions were raised regarding the DC Program.

Superintendent Wilkinson indicated that a Developmental Centre will be located in the new Mitchell Hepburn P.S. opening in September, 2008. The Forest Park Developmental Class will also move to Mitchell Hepburn P.S. Plans are not yet finalized.

The question was asked about accommodating future JK - SK students.

The Ministry is waiting until a study is completed to see what type of program would be offered to students. It is making no commitment at this time. It has been left in the hands of Dr. Pascal. The report will not be released until 2010. The Ministry is looking at different models such as differentiated staffing, etc. Kevin Bushell, Facility Services Manager, had indicated previously that when the addition to Homedale is put on, there will be the potential to be able to accommodate increased numbers.

4. Approval of the Minutes of the January 16th, 2008 Meeting

D. Guernsey asked for clarification of Item No. 5 - Question 9 - *"The total square footage at Homedale is 32,578 as indicated on the template. Based on 406 students, building would require 42,386 SF. A 8000 SF addition is being proposed."* It was asked if whether the portables have been taken into consideration; and whether the actual school footage is 29,000 sq. ft. Clarification will be sought through communication with Kevin Bushell, Facility Services Manager.

D. Guernsey requested clarification under Item No. 8 - Science Labs - *"Superintendent Wilkinson suggested that with the new curriculum, as part of the design process, the committee may want to review existing science classroom space and remove equipment from the current science labs in order to make better use of the classroom space."* J. Hanbuch indicated that, due to curriculum changes their school had been visited by the Science Co-ordinators. They have determined that the majority of the equipment should be moved to the high school level.

Motion to approve the minutes of the January 16, 2008 meeting. Moved by D. Guernsey. Carried.

5. Business Arising from the Minutes of January 16TH, 2008

5.1 Response re: Homedale OTG

In the minutes of the January 16, 2008 Accommodation Review Study Committee, Elgin Study Area 2, Item No. 5 - Question 9 - *"... In the valuation post-template, the OTG reflects 420. Committee members requested confirmation of the OTG and what square footage this OTG is based on. This item for clarification has been forward to Kevin Bushell and information will be made available to the committee when received."* The proposed OTG of 420 reflects current projections (based upon body count, not FTE) and current programming.

6. Comments from Committee Members

H. Chapman indicated the municipality will work collaboratively with the School Board. The Council takes the issue of the safety of students at all schools very seriously. Council does have a concern about what will happen to the Wellington St. School once it is closed.

7. Public Input Session

Chairperson Grant stated that no requests were received from individuals or groups to make presentations at this meeting. Correspondence was received from a parent regarding transition issues. Superintendent Wilkinson will initially respond to the parent's correspondence prior to it being referred to the Design and/or Transition Committee for consideration. Traffic and safety concerns will be important issues to be addressed.

8. New Business

8.1 Development of Draft Recommendation

The draft recommendation was reviewed. B. Wagner indicated that the template used is one common to all the Area Review Committees. The content is unique to the Elgin Study Area 2 Accommodation Review Committee.

D. Guernsey noted that this ARC is a little different from other ARCs in that it is due to accommodation issues as opposed to a response to declining enrolment.

B. Georgijev enquired about trends with regard to French Immersion. Is there an increase in interest and participation in Ontario? This is not currently known. K. Wilkinson indicated that, prior to amalgamation, when transportation was not provided, there wasn't growth. Now, with transportation provided, it appears to be a growing program in Elgin. B. Georgijev asked if it was replenishment rather than growth. K. Wilkinson indicated it was more than replenishment. There was growth in this area. C. Bourbonnais-MacDonald will seek out additional information.

D. Guernsey enquired about washrooms. Will there be the appropriate number of stalls for the F.T.E.? Will there be separate bathrooms so that the JK students will not be using the same washrooms as the older students? K. Wilkinson indicated that this issue is addressed through the Design Committee. There may end up being two sets of washrooms - Primary and Junior / Intermediate. The location of students in the building is also taken into consideration, along with supervision areas. It is not always just about meeting code.

K. Wilkinson suggested that the reference to Science Labs be removed from the recommendation. It is understood that the Design Committee will determine the best use of the current classrooms / rooms in the building.

D. Guernsey indicated that the biggest priority would be a larger gymnasium. The recommendations were modified to reflect this concern.

P. Nicli indicated that the Board forecasts the number of students going into the Early Years, but does it forecast the number of students going into French Immersion? Is there a trend? C. Bourbonnais-MacDonald indicated it is difficult to project numbers for French Immersion due to a number of factors. She will ask for statistics over a five year period and will share this information with the Committee. The point was raised that we build based on current accommodations with the understanding that there could be expansion issues at some point. The projected numbers are reviewed. However, the size of a gym is based on current classroom numbers.

Questions were raised about the Extended French program. K. Wilkinson indicated Extended French would be introduced in Grade 7 first, not 7 / 8. Administration would like to survey parents but timing is a bit of a problem. The plan would be to survey all of Elgin for Extended French for

consideration for September, 2009 implementation. The minimum number of students needed would be twenty-four. This action item was added to the report under Next Steps. The Committee recognizes that the growth of the French Immersion program is creating pressures.

P. Nicli enquired whether it would be advisable to put on record the results of the 5 year trend, indicating growth. It was agreed that this was understood and would not need to be reflected in the report.

D. Guernsey enquired about whether the issue of busing should be mentioned in the report. K. Wilkinson indicated this will come out in the Design Committee. A transportation study needs to be done to see who the riders and walkers are. Other committees to be considered include a naming committee and an archiving committee.

Revisions:

The Committee approved D. Guernsey's suggestion that the following preamble be added to the paragraph immediately following the four Committee recommendations: *"Contrary to the trend towards declining enrolment across the Thames Valley District School Board, French Immersion is unique in that it is a growing program. Recommendations need to be examined in this context."*

The individual references to meeting or exceeding program standards were removed and this information was stated at the end of the paragraph referenced above: - *"In order to maximize current and future program opportunities for students and accommodate the French Immersion population, when considering the addition and renovation to Homedale, the Committee further recommends that all program spaces should meet or exceed program standards."*

The recommendations were renumbered and reworked:

Gymnasium - added - *"A minimum 6000 square foot gymnasium."*

General Arts Room - added - *"A General Arts Room is required as designated space for Music, Visual Arts, Dance and Drama."*

A separate heading was added for *Early Years Space* - *Committee members indicated that it is important that specialized facilities are available for Early Years.*

Additional classroom space was reworked to read: *"It is the expectation of the Committee that all students be accommodated within the school building. Plans for additional space should take into consideration potential expansion of the French Immersion program."*

Science Labs was deleted from the list.

The paragraph immediately following these points was moved to Summary Comments and reworked to read: *"Committee members also discussed the possibility of adjusting the OTG to 470. With the possible introduction of full time JK/SK and possible expansion of French Immersion to JK and / or Extended French, it was the recommendation of the committee to adjust the OTG during the design process to accommodate projected enrolment of 470."*

Under next steps, points a) and b) were joined to read: *Establish a Design Committee to consider both design and safety issues."*

An additional next step was added: *“Conduct a Regional Survey in Elgin for Extended French for consideration for September, 2009 implementation.”*

Under Estimated Costing Breakdown for Senior Administration’s Recommendation, the following was added - *(using OTG of 420)*

Motion by J. MacFarlane to approve amended draft recommendations.

Recorded Vote: J. MacFarlane - Yes
D. Guernsey - Yes
S. Mitchener - Yes
B. Georgijev - Yes
P. Nicli - Yes
H. Chapman - Yes

Carried.

Next Steps - the amended Draft Recommendations will be forwarded to the Committee members tomorrow by e-mail for review. The report will then be posted to the website for public review and input. This will be followed by a public input meeting after which final changes will be made if necessary. The completed ARC report will be then forwarded to the Board Administration for review before it is tabled with the Board of Trustees. To make a public presentation the ARC Public Input Form needs to be submitted by Tuesday, March 25, 2008 to Barry Wagner’s attention, c/o Jane Parker.

9. **Questions / Comments from Members**
None.

10. **Adjournment**
Motion to adjourn at 8:45 p.m. Moved by S. Mitchener. Carried

11. **Date and Time of Next Meeting**
Thursday, April 3, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. at Homedale P.S.

Tracy Grant, Chairperson
Accommodation Review Study Committee
Elgin Study Area 2