

**REPORT OF THE AREA STUDY COMMITTEE**

2008 May 07

Oxford Study Area 1

<p><b>VOTING MEMBERS</b>  <b>In Attendance:</b>  Rob Dempsey, Sweaburg Central PS,  Citizen Representative  Rob Harris, East Oxford Central PS,  Citizen Representative  Councillor Jay Heaman, Municipal Leader,  Township of South-West Oxford  Bob Jakeman, Business Representative  Randy Silverthorne, Sweaburg Central PS,  School Council Representative  Ronnie Zivcic, East Oxford Central PS,  School Council Representative</p>	<p><b>ADMINISTRATION AND OTHERS</b>  Linda Baker, Principal, East Oxford/Sweaburg Central PS  Lynne Griffith-Jones, Superintendent of Education  Graham Hart, Trustee  Cindy Jantos, Vice-Principal, East Oxford/Sweaburg Central PS  Bill Tucker, Director of Education</p>
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**1. WELCOME**

Welcome and introductions occurred.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

The Agenda was approved as printed with a motion to defer item 5.b), Committee Recommendations discussion to follow item 9, Questions/Comments from Members.

**3. CHAIRPERSON’S REMARKS**

Trustee Hart reminded the committee that within 30 days after the posting of the ARC recommendation a public input session will be held wherein members of the community have an opportunity to comment on the ARC’s recommendation. Following this, the committee has an opportunity to change or revise their recommendation. The TVDSB will receive a recommendation to dissolve the ARC. The ARC’s recommendations will be forwarded to the Capital Planning Advisory Committee and will be tabled with the Board for a period of 60 days. Members of the public can request public input at a Board meeting within those 60 days.

**4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the 2008 March 05 were approved as printed.

**5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**a) Class Size Based on Projections**

The Class Size (based on TVDSB projections) document was reviewed and discussed. With the staffing process this year, East Oxford declared 2.58 teachers surplus therefore staffing would remain the same if schools were combined. No classroom teacher savings would be recognized. The committee agreed to use the class size projection numbers for consideration with their recommendation.

The vice principal duties at Sweaburg Public School include opening the school in the morning, supervising bus arrival and departure, supervising students while out on the yard prior to the start of the school day and providing prep coverage.

Currently, remedial coverage at Sweaburg is provided by one of the teachers or the principal. The committee commented that it is their hope, with the influx of more students, there would be additional remedial help.

**b) Committee Recommendations**

Trustee Hart and the committee agreed to consider items 6, 7, 8 and 9 before addressing item 5.b).

The committee turned down senior administrations' recommendation at a previous meeting. Where do we go from here? Discussion occurred.

Rob Dempsey stated the committee agreed that Sweaburg Public School should remain open and would like the opportunity to explore partnerships and the community use of schools. He requested more time for the committee to evaluate the study results. The goal is to make Sweaburg a long-term, sustainable school and he doesn't believe this can be done in one month's time.

In the same vein, Jay Heaman requested due process with respect to the study and suggested a two-fold recommendation. Sweaburg should remain open as a viable school and secondly, to delay the ARC process so that community input into the study can be assessed.

Trustee Hart expressed regret that governments do not work together with schools boards in partnerships. He agreed that this is the kind of thing that should have occurred five years ago but whenever you start is the best time.

The ARC process timelines were once again reviewed. It would probably be late Fall before the Board would be able to render a decision on Oxford Study 1's recommendations. This would allow sufficient time for study results to be analyzed and for the committee and community to request an opportunity for public presentation to the Board. It was understood that study results will not be available for the next meeting scheduled on June 04.

After much discussion, the committee agreed to the following recommendations:

**THAT Sweaburg Public School remain open as a viable school in Sweaburg.**

**THAT the Board provide to the Sweaburg community an opportunity to present results of The Township of South West Oxford and Sweaburg Public School Partnership Study prepared by the Township of South-West Oxford. (see Appendix A)**

**THAT the Board receive the Township of South-West Oxford's Draft Resolution and consider future partnerships across the district. (see Appendix B)**

**THAT should Thames Valley District School Board vote against the Accommodation Study Committee's recommendations and consolidate East Oxford and Sweaburg Public Schools, the Board's administration will discuss with the community issues pertaining to program enhancements, transportation, facility upgrades and, student programming and supports, including additional washrooms, emergency exits in the gymnasium, and reconfiguration of the main office to allow for enhanced security.**

Trustee Stewart indicated to the committee that they may also include recommendations or criticisms on the ARC process itself.

**c) Transportation Reconciliation**

Additional information was provided to the committee regarding reconciliation of the post-valuation template and the average bus ride to school (minutes). Discussion occurred. It was agreed that the number of minutes the student will ride on the bus will increase the average bus ride to 35 minutes and many exceeding 50 minutes. The committee indicates this is unacceptable.

## **6. COMMENTS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

### **School Council Representatives**

none

### **Citizen Representatives**

Rob Dempsey questioned an Oxford County proposal, sent some time ago to Sweaburg Public School, seeking interest within the Sweaburg community regarding an Ontario Early Years program. He indicated that a teacher at the school said there wasn't any interest. Director Tucker indicated the proposal should have been sent to administration, not the school. For clarification purposes, he further added that the Board is quite open and interested in partnerships. The Board currently has partnerships with St. Thomas, City of London, Ministry of Children's Services, etc. That's where the impact is, where the learning begins, with kids before they reach Grade 1.

### **Municipal Leader**

Jay Heaman introduced and addressed two documents developed by the Township of South-West Oxford — The Township of South West Oxford & Sweaburg Public School Partnership Study (Appendix A) and a Draft Resolution (Appendix B). The Draft Resolution was crafted by a Township of South-West Oxford clerk and Bill Tucker. Both documents were presented to the Board's Chairs Committee and was well received. In addition, the Study was addressed today by the local newspaper and radio station. It was felt that a good job was done of capturing the essence.

The Resolution will be sent to the Ministry and Association of Municipalities. Part of the process is the way funding is recognized and to raise awareness with other municipalities who may be experiencing same. But more importantly, shows the Township that they have full support of council.

The Study includes background information and a reference to the Board internet link regarding Accommodations Reviews. Bill Tucker suggested a small revision/addition be made to the Study by asking for ideas of possible partnerships that could be explored. The Study will go out on Township letterhead and will be hand delivered. All responses will go back to the Township with a due date of 2008 June 01.

### **Business Representative**

Bob Jakeman congratulated the committee and Township Council on their forward thinking with respect to the Study and Resolution venture.

## **7. PUBLIC INPUT SESSION**

- a) Individual** - none received
- b) Group** - none received
- c) Correspondence**

Trustee Hart read correspondence received from Cliff and Lynda Bartlett

## **8. NEW BUSINESS**

None

## **9. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM COMMITTEE**

Concern was expressed regarding school yard incidents at East Oxford. Principal Baker assured the group that East Oxford has a separate primary yard. Older children are allowed in this area only with an invitation from a teacher. Primary students are Kindergarten to Grade 3, Junior students are Grades 4 to 6 and Intermediates students are Grades 7 and 8.

## **10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday, 2008 June 04 - 7:00 p.m.

The Committee agreed to hold the meeting at Sweaburg United Church. The purpose of the meeting is to receive public input on the committee's recommendations and to incorporate any further changes to the recommendations.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

9:40 p.m.

**Graham Hart**  
**Study Committee Chairperson**

**Attachments:**

Appendix A - The Township of South-West Oxford & Sweaburg Public School Partnership Study

Appendix B - Draft Resolution Township of South-West Oxford

## The Township of South West Oxford & Sweaburg Public School Partnership Study

The future of Sweaburg Public School, the last remaining school in South West Oxford Township is once again up for review for closure by the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB). The school has continued in spite of the threat of closure as early as 1978. The school provides a social network for not only the students but also the entire SWOX community.

Your Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) of East Oxford & Sweaburg Public Schools, along with the support of the SW Oxford Township sees an opportunity to partner with the TVDSB to create a sustainable presence in your community. We are asking you if you support this approach, and if so, to what degree.

This building is so much more than just a school. The grounds continue to provide the community with an ice rink in the winter, practice fields, playground, and a meeting place for young and old. This facility is a place to learn, care, socialize, be active, vote, promote health, and with your help can be so much more. But this is up to you, the residents of South West Oxford Township.

To find out more about the Sweaburg and East Oxford School study, please visit <http://www.tvdsb.on.ca/areastudy/arc/oxford1.shtml>

### Your answers to the following questions are pivotal to the future of Sweaburg Public School

1. How long have you been a resident of South West Oxford Township (SWOX)?  
(Please circle one)  
  
0-5 yrs      6-10 yrs      11-15 yrs      15yrs and more
2. How important do you believe it is to have a school in our Township?  
(please rate from 0 to 5, zero being not important and 5 being very important)  
  
0      1      2      3      4      5
3. How significant was the presence of a community school in your decision to locate in SWOX?  
(please rate from 0 to 5, zero being not significant and 5 being very significant)  
  
0      1      2      3      4      5

4. Have you or any of your family attended Sweaburg Public School?

Yes No

5. In the past, have you been frustrated by the possible closing of Sweaburg Public School?

Yes No

Has this threat impacted your decision to send your child to Sweaburg Public School?

Yes No

6. Are you in favour of sharing the school facilities with the community for local services and/or events?

Yes No

7. Are you willing to support a shared arrangement between the Municipality and the School Board through the use of existing tax dollars?

Yes No

**Comments:**

**Name (optional):**

**Address (optional):**

Please mail completed survey by June 1 2008 to:  
Township of South West Oxford Attn: ARC SURVEY  
312915 Dereham Line  
R. R. # 1  
Mt. Elgin, On N0J 1N0

Alternatively, you can drop survey off at Sweaburg Daisy Mart.

**DRAFT RESOLUTION**

**Township of South-West Oxford**

**WHEREAS** there are schools in the Township of South-West Oxford that are part of the public school system and that are currently or may in the future be under review for possible closure;

**AND WHEREAS** the Council of the Corporation of the Township of South-West Oxford is concerned about the impact that the closure of these schools as centres of social, cultural and recreational activity would have on the communities in which they are situated;

**AND WHEREAS** the Council of the Corporation of the Township of South-West Oxford supports the concept that the municipal and educational sectors should work together to maintain and develop the role of schools as community hubs for social, cultural and recreational activity in addition to their traditional educational functions;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that

- 1) The Minister of Education be requested to investigate ways to promote community partnerships in the use of school facilities.
- 2) The Minister of Education be requested to review its funding policies for school facilities so that surplus school space may be used by community partners (with funding from the community partner) and the space so used not included as surplus/vacant space in the determination of occupancy rates in a way that negatively affects funding for school facilities and thereby promotes school closures.
- 3) That the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) be requested to study the development of community partnerships in the use of school facilities from the municipal perspective and look for ways to maintain and enhance the role of schools as centres for community social, cultural, recreational and other activities.
- 4) That the Council of the Township of South-West Oxford support the concept that community partnerships for the use of school facilities be developed that are:
  - a) Sustainable,
  - b) Beneficial to local communities,
  - c) And will achieve efficiencies and cost savings when considered from the perspective of the community as a whole.