



Lucille Kyle, Chair of the Board
Mandy Savery-Whiteway, Director of Education

**Student Enrolment/School Capacity Committee
PUBLIC AGENDA**

**Monday, May 8, 2017 – 3:30 p.m.
Board Committee Room, Education Centre**

Section	Item	Report No.	Resp.
A	Call to Order		
	Approval of agenda		
	Approval of minutes - April 10, 2017		
	April 26, 2017		
	Business arising from the minutes		
B	Recommendations		
	None		
C	Information		
	Belleville Accommodation Review Final Report	C-1	M. Savery-Whiteway K. Horrigan
	Prince Edward Accommodation Review Final Report	C-2	M. Savery-Whiteway K. Horrigan
D	Correspondence		
	None		

Adjournment

Next meeting – Tuesday, May 23, 2017 – 3:30 p.m.

Trustees: T. Biniaris, M. Brant, J. Bray (Vice-chair), J. Cobb (Chair), B. Danes, M. Hall, D. Inch, L. Kyle, D. Patterson, J. Williams



**STUDENT ENROLMENT/SCHOOL CAPACITY COMMITTEE (SE/SCC)
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

**April 10, 2017
DRAFT**

Present: T. Biniaris, M. Brant, J. Bray, J. Cobb, B. Danes, M. Hall, L. Kyle, D. Patterson,
J. Williams

Regrets: D. Inch

Resource: L. Andrews, C. DeMille, K. Donnell, T. FitzGibbon, K. Horrigan, K. MacQuarrie, N. Pfeiffer,
C. Portt, M. Savery-Whiteway

Minutes: C. Reid, Administrative Assistant

Call to order

Chair Cobb called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Approval of agenda

Moved: B. Danes

Seconded: M. Hall

That the agenda be approved.

Carried

Approval of minutes

Moved: M. Hall

Seconded: J. Williams

That the minutes of the March 20, 2017 meeting be approved.

Carried

Business arising from the minutes

None

Recommendations

None

Information

Centre Hastings Area Accommodation Review Final Report

Director Savery-Whiteway referred to Report No. C-1 and stated that senior administration has undertaken the accommodation review process in Centre Hastings with a focus on what is best for student programming and well-being, with commitment to the process, with a genuine and thorough gathering and consideration of input through the accommodation review committee, through the public meetings and through input received via email and other correspondence and with a view to the responsibility that the board has to manage and apply public funds to public education.

She noted the board has consistently gone back to the guiding principles outlined in Board Policy 15, which are:

- Student achievement and well-being;
- Effective stewardship of school board resources;
- Student curriculum and program needs, as well as funding and renewal needs to drive facility planning;
- Upgrades to the condition of facilities to occur where feasible;
- The board will comply with Ministry of Education guidelines for school consolidation and closure decisions; and
- The board will exemplify open decision-making, board oversight and public participation in capital planning.

Director Savery-Whiteway acknowledged the communities in Centre Hastings for their commitment to public education and to the accommodation review process. The input received was invaluable as we considered the many factors that led to this final recommendation.

Elementary enrolment in the Centre Hastings school group has declined over 30% and secondary enrolment has declined by approximately 19% since 2001. Enrolment is expected to continue to decrease in both elementary and secondary up to 2028-2029. There are currently 517 surplus student spaces. To date, there has been no change to the configuration of schools or to school structure at Madoc Township Public School, Madoc Public School or Centre Hastings Secondary School to address these declines. As staff work through projected enrolments for the 2017-2018 school year the projections are showing a decrease in enrolment at Madoc Township Public School from 121 this year to 107 for next year, an increase at Madoc Public School from 379 this year to 397 for next year and a decrease at Centre Hastings Secondary School from 558 this year to 549 next year.

Maintaining strong, equitable programming for students is now a challenge that must be addressed. As numbers decrease, so will the number of staff and the ability to explore new opportunities for students. Change is hard and school consolidation is charged with emotion. It does not mean that we should not plan forward for the future of our students and our schools. The senior team has taken this work seriously and believes that this final recommendation incorporates input from the community. Staff have diligently considered all students from K to 12 and how to provide the programs and services for each student to achieve success. Throughout the process, the board has followed the guidelines outlined by the Ministry of Education and senior administration is presenting a plan that is fiscally responsible.

Manager of Planning, Kim Horrigan provided an overview of the content of the report as well as the included appendices. She reviewed the final staff recommendation, as contained in the report, as follows:

1. Effective September 2017, consolidate Madoc Township Public and Madoc Public School at the Madoc Public School site;
2. Effective September 2017, relocate Grade 7 and 8 students from Madoc Public School to Centre Hastings Secondary School, creating a Grade 7-12 school;
3. Centre Hastings Secondary School and Madoc Public School be consolidated pending submission of a business case to the Ministry of Education and approval of funding to build a new K-12 school located in the Madoc area and with consultation with the municipality regarding location options and plans to enhance greenspace for the K-12 school;
4. Should a business case for a new K-12 school not be approved by the Ministry of Education, Madoc Public School be consolidated with Centre Hastings Secondary School as K-12 school, pending Ministry of Education approval for an addition and/or renovations at Centre Hastings Secondary School and then demolish Madoc Public School to create green space for the K-12 school; and
5. Continue to explore opportunities for community partnerships for the consolidated school that are aligned with the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan priorities.

Kim Horrigan reviewed the next steps in the process, noting that the Board of Trustees will make the final decision on June 19, 2017 after giving consideration to several sources of information and feedback. On April 26, 2017 the Student Enrolment/School Committee will meet to receive public delegations. A form is available online for anyone wishing to make a delegation at that meeting. On May 23, 2017, the Student Enrolment/School Capacity Committee will prepare a final recommendation to be presented to the Board on June 19, 2017 for decision.

Discussion/clarification items included:

- The purpose of today's meeting is to receive the report. As part of process, it is a requirement to present the report to trustees for information and discussion. Trustees will prepare a recommendation to bring forward to Board for approval. At that time, the Board can amend, approve or reject the recommendation.
- The projected 2017-2018 enrolment numbers provided by Director Savery-Whiteway in her opening remarks are based on a process currently being conducted to determine enrolment projections for next year. As requested, Superintendent Pfeiffer will provide this information to trustees.
- Amounts for renewal needs as shown on page 23 of the report for the years 2017-2022 come from a Ministry of Education database. Staff have provided a year-by-year renewal needs report to the Accommodation Review Committee which is contained as one of the appendices provided in the report.

- Concerns regarding the fact that no dates are being provided for the proposed new school build. The board has been highly successful in submitting business cases in the past because staff pay close attention to the criteria the Ministry is looking for. The Ministry works on a cycle that generally occurs in July and in late fall/early winter. It takes a significant period of time before boards hear back from the Ministry so it is difficult for us to give specific dates in the recommendation. The board will need to be strategic about its submission to ensure that the best business case is submitted to support the request.
- Concern regarding closing the only school in the Municipality of Centre Hastings.
- Minister of Education visits to school board around the province will be occurring. The public will be notified of the visits and it is anticipated that trustees, senior staff and members of the public will be invited to attend. These meetings are related to the March 6, 2017 letter with a view to plan going forward. These meetings will not impact the current ARC processes.

Director Savery-Whiteway stated that this final report is presented to the committee with the best thinking and recommendation based on the consideration of many factors. The board will continue to be faced with declining enrolment and when you have students who deserve the very best programming these difficult recommendations must be considered.

Correspondence

None

The Student Enrolment/School Capacity Committee public meeting adjourned at 3:57 p.m.



Hastings and Prince Edward
District School Board

**STUDENT ENROLMENT/SCHOOL CAPACITY COMMITTEE (SE/SCC)
PUBLIC MEETING FOR DELEGATIONS
CENTRE HASTINGS AREA ACCOMMODATION REVIEW
MINUTES
April 26, 2017
DRAFT**

Present: T. Biniaris, M. Brant, J. Cobb, B. Danes, M. Hall, D. Inch, L. Kyle, D. Patterson,
J. Williams

Regrets: J. Bray

Resource: C. DeMille, K. Donnell, T. FitzGibbon, K. Horrigan, C. Portt, M. Savery-Whiteway

Minutes: J. Kezar, Administrative Assistant

Call to order

Chair Cobb called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Approval of agenda

Moved: B. Danes

Seconded: M. Hall

That the agenda be approved.

Carried

Opening remarks

Chair Cobb reviewed the agenda and shared revisions to the delegations/presentation list, noting that Kari Kramp would speak for Brittany Gray (who was unable to attend), and a withdrawal by Jessica Sheppard and Randi Lyn Sheppard. Delegations were limited to a 10-minute maximum to ensure all speakers were provided an opportunity to present. It was noted that Superintendents Pfeiffer and Andrews were not able to attend the meeting as they were out of town, and Trustee Bray sent regrets as he was away on business.

Chair Cobb noted that the Student Enrolment/School Capacity Meeting (SE/SCC) minutes would be part of the final package to inform trustees, in preparation of the SE/SCC meeting on May 23, 2017. Chair Cobb stated that the purpose of the meeting was to listen to all delegations and presentations, with no feedback being provided. She encouraged presenters to leave copies of their presentations/speaking notes with Julie Kezar.

Director Savery-Whiteway welcomed attendees to the meeting and noted the importance of receiving input from the public, as part of the Accommodation Review process. Two public meetings have occurred in Centre Hastings on January 18, 2017 and March 22, 2017. Director Savery-Whiteway thanked members of the Centre Hastings community for their hard work, insight, input, and dedication to public education. She shared that as part of the Accommodation Review process, senior administration is required to provide a final report which has been completed. The public then has an additional opportunity for feedback on the final recommendation through the public delegation process. As noted by Chair Cobb, the delegation information will be compiled and added to the final report for trustees, on May 23, 2017 when they prepare the final recommendation.

**Delegations/presentations related to the
Centre Hastings Area Accommodation Review Final Report**

A-1: Amy Beaton

Amy Beaton, parent representative on the Madoc Township Public School (MTPS) Accommodation Review Committee (ARC), thanked trustees for the opportunity to speak, and shared the following:

- The purpose of the Accommodation Review was to recommend changes that support more equitable access to program offerings, enriched program offerings wherever possible, continued capacity to deliver special education programs, and optimization of resources; which the final report does not support.
- MTPS currently serves students to the North of Highway 7 to Gilmour (which includes Weslemkoon Lake Road). By closing MTPS, it would severely restrict access to a public elementary school for students in the northern boundary area (see map on page 38 of final report).
- Students of MTPS are already offered enriched programs. It has not been proven by the senior administration team that MTPS students will have access to any enriched program offerings if transferred to MPS.
- MTPS students have a very high level of success, and are ranked number 1 by the Fraser Institute in the Quinte region. MTPS is ranked 367/2900 elementary schools in Ontario, as validated by Mr. Bruce Rodrigues, Deputy Minister of Education and former CEO of EQAO. MTPS is a highly effective school, which provides a safe and orderly environment, a climate of high expectations for student success, and a focus on high levels of student achievement.
- Parental involvement is strong at MTPS, which is also evident by a strong parent council who fundraise for trips, special events, playground equipment, and technology in the classroom when funds are not provided by the board.
- 2017-2018 projected enrolment of elementary students is 10,249 which is an increase from 2016-2017 revised estimates of 10,172. Live births are increasing in Centre Hastings, according to Holly Ockenden, Research Assistant, BORN Ontario, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (see page 72 of final report). A reference was also made to page 13 of the final report, that Total Population Census Data released by Statistics Canada in February, 2017 is not broken down demographically; therefore, it is not relevant or supportive to the theory that the Madoc Township area of school-aged children is declining.
- Projected enrolment numbers this year in Centre Hastings and in particular, MTPS, are low due to the uncertainty of the outcome of the ARC. Some parents are waiting to register their children, once they know which elementary school will be open. As well, parents are looking at alternate options of schooling such as homeschooling or attending a school in the Catholic Board. Over 20 families will not be sending their children to MPS.
- Returning Grade 7 and 8 students to MTPS will bring the school almost back to capacity. This suggestion was ignored by senior administration, when the final report was completed.
- An excess of 6,000 pupil places exist in HPEDSB schools. MTPS does not greatly impact empty pupil space in the board; however, CHSS greatly impacts empty pupil places. Therefore, in the event the final recommendation is passed, adding Grade 7 and 8 students to CHSS will not greatly impact empty pupil places as there will still be approximately 400 empty pupil places.
- Projected Grants for Student Needs for 2017-2018 for HPEDSB are increasing.
- MTPS is the youngest of the 3 schools in the Centre Hastings Accommodation Review area.
- Renewal needs costs were reviewed (CHSS \$15 million, MPS \$4.3 million, MTPS \$2.4 million) with MTPS being the lowest.
- CHSS has been approved to replace exterior windows for the east wing on the first and second floors, and a roof replacement for a total cost of \$616,974.00. With CHSS only being at 55% capacity, the school contributes to almost 8% of empty pupil places, and is the oldest school with \$15 million of renewal needs. It was questioned whether these costs lend well to efforts to optimize resources and manage underutilized school space.
- The Facility Condition Index (FCI) is the lowest for MTPS (45%) and is below HPEDSB's average of 48%.
- It would be more financially responsible to consolidate CHSS and MPS, and leave MTPS as a Kindergarten to Grade 8 school. This was the first recommendation of the ARC, which was ignored by the senior administration team.
- MTPS has high student achievement and well-being, the lowest renewal needs, the lowest FCI, is the youngest school, and the only elementary school expected to increase in enrolment.

- Ms. Beaton questioned the reason(s) for closing MTPS, including possible capital renewal backlogs, creative ways to secure more funding, and possibly bolster applications for funding.
- Last year, only 1 in 5 capital applications were funded, with 80% being denied. HPEDSB is making a decision to close a school prior to funding approvals for a new build, additions, renovations and retrofits.
- How does the final recommendation support the board's core purpose and priorities and how is the recommendation considered a smart transition plan to get to a sustainable future state, with no date in sight? Dates are provided in the other 2 ARCs, with dates of September, 2020 for a new build. Why did the Centre Hastings Area final recommendation receive no date/commitment for a new build? If a new build is in the future for Centre Hastings, then why not submit a business case first, before moving students? With the uncertainty of funding, will the Ministry of Education approve funding for a new build, with HPEDSB's limited accumulated surplus balance? Would the Ministry fund the entire build? There are too many uncertainties, and the facts are required.
- The writer(s) of the final recommendation forgot their first priority – the students.
- There has been an enormous amount of feedback from the community of Centre Hastings during the Accommodation Review process. They have received the initial recommendation and supporting rationale, have thought about it, analyzed it, and rejected it. Members have provided meaningful feedback, and the facts state that MTPS students succeed in their current environment.
- MTPS students are prepared and empowered for the possibilities of today and tomorrow. Consideration was requested in reconfiguring MTPS to a Kindergarten to Grade 8 school, and consolidating MPS and CHSS.

A-2: Brittany Gray (absent) Kari Kramp

It was noted that Brittany Gray was unable to attend the meeting, and Kari Kramp spoke in her place. Ms. Kramp thanked members for the opportunity to present, and shared the following:

- Based on the revised recommendation, the responsible vote by trustees should be no.
- The information, as presented and in response to feedback related to a new build, lacks timelines.
- There have been no adjustments made to significant spending.
- A business case is necessary to present.
- A lack of timelines implies a lack of commitment and accountability.
- The board's decision to spend \$400,000 for new windows and a new roof at CHSS, supports the perception that input from the community is not being heard.
- How many people have taken the time to contact trustees with excitement?
- Trustees have an obligation to consider community input as this recommendation, without further modification, is not acceptable.

A-3: Denise Gray

Denise Gray introduced herself as a resident of Madoc Township, and thanked members of the ARC and trustees for the time and dedication into the process. She shared the following:

- The current recommendation is a band aid, and not a solution which will cost tax payers millions.
- She described the area of Madoc Township as a small community where people know each other. Composition of the ARCs were mainly members who were affiliated with HPEDSB - parent representatives were employees, community members were teachers, and parents were liaisons.
- Ms. Gray was skeptical that the process was set up to fail, mostly by the province. The board should have stood up for their students and communities and expressed concern to the provincial government that the plan wouldn't work, but instead chose to share a flawed plan.
- Ms. Gray was unable to attend the April 10, 2017 meeting and was shocked by the final report. Members were assured the process meant something, that the decision was not made, and that all of their comments, concerns and suggestions were going to be considered. If this was the case, why is this the same proposal that was put forward in November, 2016 except buried in 164 pages of repetitive, useless information?
- Inaccuracies were contained in the final report received by trustees on April 10, 2017, including on page 19, the utilization at MTPS will increase by approximately 11%, leaving a utilization rate of almost 75% (Watson Report, page 100). This 75% utilization rate does not include Grade 7 and 8 students. By changing MTPS to a Kindergarten to Grade 8 school, it would greatly increase expected utilization rates and fill empty pupil places. Reference was made to page 124 of the final report.

- Page 23 identified total building renewal costs for CHSS, MPS, and MTPS from 2017 to 2022. This information was not made available to the ARCs, as the original recommendation was based on 2011-2015 renewal needs. Would the vote on November 21, 2016 to initiate the Accommodation Review have been different, if the 2017-2022 numbers were used? She stated that this was a major flaw and did nothing to address public confidence.
- The final recommendation stated “Should a business case for a new K-12 school not be approved by the Ministry of Education, Madoc Public School be consolidated with Centre Hastings Secondary School as K-12 school, pending Ministry of Education approval for an addition and/or renovations at Centre Hastings Secondary School and then demolish Madoc Public School to create green space for the K-12 School”. In any case moving forward, MPS is going to be demolished eventually according to these recommendations.
- MTPS does not require \$2.4 million in renewal needs which has been proven. The reduction in operating costs on page 23 states the board will save \$366,000; however, in the first year, operating cost savings will be below that shown. If the board is truly going to put forward a plan for a new build in the community, does this make sense to uproot students and cause chaos in the community for \$366,000? Why would the board consider keeping MPS open now, and invest millions of dollars into a school that is going to be demolished in the next few years?
- MTPS covers all areas of concerns for the communities. It has adequate green space, suitable play structures, a building that has all renovations completed, plenty of parking, and isn't a bussing disaster like MPS which poses a safety concern. As well, MTPS is the highest rated school in HPEDSB for EQAO testing. Where is the senior administration rationale?
- In the 164 page document, there was no mention of a transition plan for children in JK to Grade 2. She referenced the recent Mathletes Program held at MPS, noting that her niece (who is in Grade 7) stated it was awful as they were stuffed in the library and when they went out for recess, there was nothing to do.
- The ARCs have spent countless hours doing the job of board staff. They presented two alternate recommendations that were fiscally responsible, addressed empty space at CHSS, found multiple errors in the original proposal, and requested additional information that was not provided. At the end of the process, all 3 schools agreed that MTPS should not close.
- Senior administration has failed to present a case that supports their proposal. It certainly does not justify sacrificing children's education, health, and well-being for something that is simply not thought out.
- Trustees were addressed by focusing on the word trust, in that the public is confident that they will make the right decision as taxpayers, and more importantly for the students.

A-4: Randy Gray

Randy Gray, shared the following information.

- Since the trading of information and ideas has been completed, the proposal put forth is the same as last November. This process is all about the cheque book and not community input, and the 164 page final report doesn't support fiscal responsibility.
- The definition of pernicious was shared as “having a willful, harmful effect in a subtle way, damaging even destructive, bad, hurtful, adverse, unfavourable” .. the list went on. Mr. Gray stated it took him awhile to find the right word to describe the Architectural and Site Condition Assessment document, which he now describes as pernicious. A total of 19 discrepancies, mistruths, lies were found. If this document was properly vetted by Superintendent Pfeiffer, members would not be here today.
- Trustee Patterson questioned why it took so long to get information to the public at the last public board meeting, which was a valid question. The director replied that they needed to review and vet all information and ensure it's correct before being released. It is unfortunate that the superintendent didn't follow her lead, and that elected officials should have been provided proper information to make an informed decision.
- The roof, windows, heating system and plumbing fixtures were referenced at MTPS, and he questioned if the superintendent forgot that this work had already been completed? Now that all of the major upgrades have been completed, they want to close the school. Is this fiscally responsible?
- EQAO testing matters. Why would the board want to close the highest rated school in HPEDSB and also Limestone District School Board and move the students to one of the lowest ranking schools? MTPS should be a beacon for success on how to do things right, not how to close it down.

- A visual was presented, regarding the large amount of green space at MTPS. A full sheet of green Bristol board represented the current green space at Madoc Township Public School. A dime placed on the Bristol board represented the amount of green space at MPS for JK to Grade 3 students. He referenced taking his grandson to MPS, and noted that he might have to go to school there in the future. His grandson asked where he would be able to play soccer. Mr. Gray had to tell him that there was not space to play soccer until he got to Grade 3.
- There will be 9 school days after the decision is made, which is not an appropriate amount of time for transitions, but is equivalent to a fire drill. It's like the school is on fire, and the board is fighting with a garden hose. Also, there was no mention of transitions in the final report for students in JK to Grade 2.
- Trustees have heard and will hear more about the millions of dollars the board's present proposal will cost. The \$330,000 savings if they close MTPS, doesn't include the tens of thousands of dollars already spent on the process, and the eventual tear down of MPS in the near future.
- MTPS is number 1 in EQAO testing, so why are MTPS students the sacrificial lambs for mismanaged funds?
- A dime was handed to each trustee. Trustees were asked that when they sit down to enjoy their morning coffee or tea, that they ask whether this is what they would want for their daughter, son, niece, nephew or grandchild, especially when asked "Where we gonna play soccer?" Trustees were asked to think of this, every time they saw a dime. A dime cannot even make a phone call anymore. Trustees were encouraged trustees to make the right call.

A-5: Holly Kormann

Holly Kormann thanked trustees for the opportunity to speak, and shared the following:

- Reference was made to the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan and Mission, noting that educational experiences can't be inclusive if 2 schools (who are both doing well) are combined together. She referred to EQAO scores, and MTPS being rated as the highest school in HPEDSB and in the top 12% in Ontario. Students will have a 50% less chance of making sports teams, being involved in committee/school events due to limited spaces available.
- Reference was made to the Strategic Priorities and Goals:
 - Achieving Excellence & Equity
 - Spoke of the need for CHSS to become a destination of choice for teenagers, with the creation of new specialized programs. Programs could include business and agriculture (which are not provided in any HPEDSB secondary school) as well as the current construction program.
 - Learning & Leadership
 - Closing a school and shuffling staff and students does not implement a renewed succession planning process for school and system leaders. Sending the Grade 7 and 8 students to CHSS does not address the problem of declining enrolment at CHSS.
 - Public Confidence
 - The final report and initial recommendation does not ensure effective management of all resources (human, financial, environmental), and feels like it was thrown together overnight. The schools, community, and townships were at the board's disposal but the board chose not to use them to their advantage. A lack of leadership skills being used.
 - Well-Being
 - Stated there is too much under this category to begin to touch, and that it ties back into public confidence.
- Overall, there has been no accountability with questions being posed and answers not being provided, reference to policies and procedure to deflect questions, and failure to instill confidence through actions. Errors and discrepancies have been provided throughout the process, the public has been left to do the research and due diligence to properly educate themselves without being paid, and presentations have been made to mislead the public. MTPS should not be penalized at the expense of senior administration not doing their job.
- MPS should remain as is, Grade 7 and 8 students should be returned back to MTPS, and a wing of CHSS should be demolished. Work to increase enrolment and offer top-notch programming at all schools should be a focus. A positive example is offering French Immersion at MPS, with a re-evaluation in five years for a possible new build.

- With the funding increase per student and the additional allotment for rural students, financials are still an issue. Cut-backs to administrative staff should be considered.
- Trustees can give back board confidence in doing the right thing, while following the Strategic Plan and 8 Character Attributes, as the fate of MTPS rests in the hands of trustees.

A-6: Daryl Kramp

Daryl Kramp thanked trustees for the opportunity to offer some brief comments, as follows:

- Acknowledged the amazing presentations, and noted the commonality of the community and the concerns shared by all, as well as the huge challenges facing trustees.
- The board proposal now is the same as the proposal presented before the opportunity for public input and ARC review commenced, with three potential take aways:
 1. Public input has no bearing or impact;
 2. The tremendous and comprehensive work done by the ARC has been ignored, or
 3. Under pressure from the province and administration, an internal decision has already been made and this exercise is merely a cover for a pre-determined outcome. Mr. Kramp shared that he would love to be proven wrong on this assumption.
- Have other ARCs presented an alternative recommendation plan, and if so, has HPEDSB accepted any recommendation?
- Trustees were asked to seriously consider their responsibility and listen to and reflect upon the public's engagement in the process. They need to question the board proposal given numerous instances of financial inaccuracies or outdated information regarding operating and capital cost estimates. These include cost estimates and projections for projects already complete, and an explanation of the five-year capital expenditure plan, which on page 23 of the report is \$21.7 million and elsewhere \$17.3 million.
- Deficiencies in student interests were identified, detrimental impacts on public safety and community, and significant unnecessary expenses to the taxpayer were identified. Many questions and few satisfactory answers.
- Trustees have a responsibility to take these and many other concerns from their communities into consideration. Pressures related to cutbacks of provincial funding such as the Remote and Rural Declining Adjustment and top-up Funding Grant (decline of \$3.1 million or 41% over the past three years) was acknowledged as being significant to the board. Deteriorating and declining enrolment presents significant challenges; however, the way forward is not to waste taxpayers' money on a band aid fix, particularly by front end loading capital expenditures.
- Trustees need to put a hold on immediate changes and go back to the drawing board to create a workable, long-term solution. Trustees were asked to do the right thing for students, communities, and the taxpayers. Any project worth doing, is worth doing right. Trustees were asked to be responsible to those in their community who have entrusted them with this responsibility.

A-7: Louise Lightfoot

Louise Lightfoot shared the following information:

- Referenced statistics related to sexual harassment of children in schools, and concerns with moving the Grade 7 and 8 students to CHSS.
- Younger students should not be in the same school with older students as there is increased potential for abuse. Children must be protected.
- Money shouldn't be a factor when it comes to student safety. Many families from Madoc Township don't want to leave their school.
- MTPS should remain open and the Grade 7 and 8 students be returned back to MTPS.

A-8: Owen Lightfoot

Owen Lightfoot shared the following information:

- Expressed appreciation to Daryl Kramp for supporting the community, and for speaking from the heart.
- Frustrations were shared with the process including how ARC members were positioned at the working group meetings, how public attendees couldn't hear discussions, that inaccurate information was provided, and that information was not made available after numerous requests.
- Stated that in his opinion, the decision has already been made. Are psych assessments or behavioural analysis being completed to see how students cope?
- Has the board investigated international students as an alternate solution to closing schools.

- Shared concerns with Grade 7 and 8 students attending CHSS, and noted that he has had many discussions with families who do not agree with the recommendation and may consider home schooling.

A-9: Madoc Township Council

Carrie Smith introduced herself as a Municipal Councillor for the Township of Madoc, and shared the following:

- Rural schools are important. The closure of MTPS would strike at the heart of the community. “It takes a village to raise a child”, which means that child rearing is a community effort. What happens to the village, when the children are gone? Families don’t live in isolation, but rather as part of a community and the role of a community in the development of youth can be profound. A rural school fosters a sense of belonging to their communities and have been found to validate a local way of life, identity and traditions.
- Madoc Township is a rural municipality and the only school plays a significant role in enhancing the quality of life in their rural community. MTPS has acted as an anchor to a traditional way of life for the municipality. This is well understood, but there is limited research to understand what the closure of a rural school means to a community. It has been documented that a school closure leaves people with a diminished sense of community, a fear for the municipality’s future, and the community’s limit for potential future economic growth. The constant rural restructuring and never ending school closures are going to alter rural life in Ontario.
- The closing of the only school will affect who chooses to move into the township, as it is often a deciding factor for many families and will be a deterrent to families when choosing the community. There is a clear trend that is seeing migration of youth to urban centres – what can be done as rural municipalities to not only retain but encourage settlement within the community? Urban migration of the younger generation is putting a burden on rural communities, as is aging population and the declining birth rate. Rural schools are essential to Canada’s social, environmental and economic well-being and closing the only school will have a strong potential to limit population growth and reduce economic stability in the Township of Madoc.
- Other areas who are facing the same battle and are opposing rural school closures, are all arguing the same point focusing on the fact that there are no real cost savings and that smaller schools provide stronger levels of achievement for students, as opposed to larger schools.
- Why is there such an outdoor disparity amid elementary schools within HPEDSB? Would a new school be built with limited outdoor space? Isn’t it imperative for the board to encourage physical activity especially when children are experiencing health risks associated with sedentary lifestyles? Many have clearly articulated the importance of the playground at MTPS, which is an area used by residents as a common green space or a community hub after regular school hours. Once this area is lost, it is gone forever for the community.
- The current proposal fails to give an appropriate amount of time to celebrate MTPS being part of the community, or prepare students for this huge change. At the very least, the consolidation needs to be delayed until the 2018-2019 school year to enable appropriate transitions and facilitate required renovations. Transitions are important, and have the potential to help children understand what is happening to them and to understand how internal and external factors have an impact on their learning environment. If the recommendation is moving forward as presented, it cannot be rushed.
- A vibrant and healthy school for the municipality helps residents connect to their community and family. MTPS has provided a strong sense of community for many years and this school is a way for parents to hold onto a rural way of life.
- Nothing in the proposal, as recommended, is what is in the best interest of youth, residents and the community. Trustees need to seriously consider the option that would see the return of Grade 7 and 8 students to MTPS.
- As an elected official for the Township of Madoc, much thought and consideration must occur regarding what is best for the residents of the community much the same as trustees, who are elected representatives of the public and are community advocates for public education.
- As per the board’s figures, the estimates for the reduction in operating costs of closing MTPS is \$366,000. The 2017 education levy for the Township of Madoc alone increased by 3.12% to a total of \$405,864 allocated to English Public. This doesn’t seem fiscally responsible and is grossly unfair to taxpayers in this municipality.

- Closing MTPS is not what is best for the youth or the community. Please consider everything that has been said, the alternatives that have been presented and the dedication that has been shown to save the school. The return of MTPS to a Kindergarten to Grade 8 school can only be looked at as a good plan that is fiscally responsible and is the right thing to do for the children. MTPS is the heart and future of the community and is a symbol for growth and prosperity. The rate of return on the investment in public education in rural Ontario is worth the risk if given the chance. If rural areas are to remain vibrant and economically viable, constant restructuring has to be researched prior to implementation of recommendations.

Randy Rowe introduced himself as a Municipal Councillor for the Township of Madoc, and shared the following:

- All in attendance share the same goal, which is to provide the best possible learning environment for children.
- The Township of Madoc does not support the current proposal because they understand that rural schools are vital to the future economic growth and cohesiveness. Children will have extended bus travel times and will be removed from their current spacious green playgrounds and profitable learning environments, as proven by outstanding EQAO results and small class sizes. Instead of looking at why it's okay to shut the doors of MTPS, why not look at why it's regrettable to do so. MTPS should be a model for other schools to learn from their practices.
- The Township of Madoc is represented by residents and council members who have, by their written proposals and presence throughout the Accommodation Review process, demonstrated the importance of their school to their community and family's welfare.
- Finances should be reallocated, and Grade 7 and 8 students should be relocated to MTPS so they can continue to do what they do best.
- The Ontario Federation of Agriculture published an article entitled "Rural Schools and Education Reform: Should We Keep Rural Schools Open?" The following points were shared:
 - Communication is easier and more efficient in schools of smaller size, in regards to administration, management and governance.
 - Opportunities exist to enter into relationships with others and therefore children and teachers truly get to know one another and respect is generated – the very foundation of education.
 - Safety and security – a smaller school means everyone knows everyone and those who do not belong are easily identified.
- MTPS has achieved all of this which is evident when you speak with any student, parent, teacher, or staff member of the school. Trustees were asked to take this into consideration when making the final decision and remember how many lives you will be affecting - present and future.

A-10: Keith-Thorr Sezaki-Lightfoot and Leif-Eyrik Sezaki-Lightfoot

Keith-Thorr Sezaki-Lightfoot and Leif-Eyrik Sezaki-Lightfoot, shared the following:

- Students in Grade 7 and 8 are too young to be with students from the high school.
- Both students had opportunities to attend other schools outside of Centre Hastings; however, chose to stay in Madoc because they felt comfortable there.

A-11: Jessica Sheppard and Randi Lyn Sheppard

Withdrawn

A-12: Wendy Spence

Wendy Spence introduced herself as the community representative for the MTPS ARC and member of the Kiwanis Club of Madoc. She shared the following:

- A trustee from Thames Valley District School Board spoke of rural closures and stated "Bigger in my eyes isn't always better. There is something to be said about rural schools. When you close a rural school, it disrupts the fabric of that community. Financial benefits should not outweigh student benefits."
- It has been proven that MTPS is the best of the three schools, and questioned if closing the school would benefit the board because the poorer schools like MPS and CHSS would receive more money. MTPS is in great shape and the board should be proud of what this rural school North of Highway 7 is accomplishing. Return the Grade 7 and 8 students back and the school will be at full capacity again.

- Community members are saying the process is a farce, that it's a done deal, and we are just wasting time. With school closures happening everywhere, the obvious thing to do is follow suit but this is wrong. As a municipality, this is not fair as MTPS is a great school, and it's time to get down to the real reason we are here. The elementary schools are not the ones hurting, but rather it's the high school. Why wasn't CHSS looked at first? Why were they not slotted for a new build? CHSS is the oldest school, is only at 55% capacity, contributes to almost 8% of the total empty pupil places in the board, and requires \$15 million of renewal needs. Why was \$600,000 worth of windows and roofing just approved to begin? This does not lend well to the board's efforts to optimize resources and manage underutilized space.
- Trustees were given false and inaccurate information, and then made a very important decision from the beginning based on inaccuracies.
- High schools are being closed across Ontario. They are building "super schools" - efficient new builds. CHSS will never be filled again with projected enrolment. By moving all 3 schools into CHSS, it is not fair to high school students, the building is not set up to be a Kindergarten to Grade 12 school, and the renovation costs would surely outweigh a new build. If something isn't done now, we will be back in 5 years giving a new build or possibly a closure, especially with declining enrolment. Save tax payers money now and give the high school a future, give the elementary students a future in a new high school. A new build will keep the kids in the community.
- If nothing is done for the high school now, then take into consideration the timelines and provide a proper transition. Student will be moving into the oldest area of CHSS, and renovations should be completed before students move in. Is there a concern of asbestos in this area, and what is the plan if the asbestos cannot be removed? Why are we even risking this? Provide a better transition time if you won't consider a new build. Children are supposed to be the first consideration and moving them into new schools on rushed timelines is not looking at their well-being.
- Trustees were asked to consider all options. A high school with the best programming is what the surrounding communities need, not a fixer-upper which is what will occur by just fixing CHSS. Students want exciting new things and they are willing to travel for it. We are losing students to better programming options in Belleville.
- Families need to have more children as enrolment is declining, but returning the Grade 7 and 8 students to MTPS will sustain this school. If the current recommendation is declined, then in 5 years a better plan can be made including a transition plan for students. In 5 years we may lose our high school – then will we get the attention of the communities? If you grew up in rural Ontario, then you know the heart and love for small schools. It's proven they work.

Chair Cobb thanked everyone for attending the meeting, and acknowledged their time and passion during the process. Minutes will be posted to the board web site, and provided to trustees in the package for review on May 23, 2017.

Recommendations

None

Information

None

Correspondence

None

The Student Enrolment/School Capacity Committee public meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.