



**HASTINGS AND PRINCE EDWARD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY
ACCOMMODATION REVIEW COMMITTEE
PUBLIC MEETING NOTES
April 20, 2017**

MEMBERS		
Chair: Laina Andrews, Superintendent of Education		
C.M.L. Snider School Lisa Burke, Parent Gracie Burris, Student Maureena Courtney, Teacher Jim Dunlop, Community Kristina Kelly, Non-teaching Anne Longston, Community Mal Nurse, Parent Selena Prinzen, School Council Jennifer Slater, Principal	Kente Public School Shelly Christmas, Parent Jenny Craig, Non-teaching Julia Egas, Student Melissa Flower, Teacher Shelby Laird-Bush, Parent Janice Maynard, Community Kerri Lee Roy, School Council Stephanie Taylor-Harvey, Principal Evelyn Wilson, Community	Pinecrest Memorial Elementary School Sherrilee Bell, Teacher Philip Bender, Community Mackenzie Best-Hagerman, Community Jasper Gilbert, Student Wendy Lavender, Parent Steve Kinney, School Council Kim Myderwyk, Principal TJ Slatter, Parent Barb Vancleaf, Non-teaching
Queen Elizabeth School Victoria Carroll, Parent Sherry Harrison, Non-teaching Julie Hymus, Teacher (absent) Sarah Johnson, Student Tim Johnson, Community Mathew Kopamees, Community JJ Syer, Parent Paul Pickard, Principal Amanda Whiten, School Council	Sophiasburgh Central School Shawna Brady, Teacher Anna Brisley, Student Jennifer Byford, Parent Clay Byford, Community Mike Farrell, Parent Todd Foster, Community Jennifer Houghton, School Council Kelly Lowe, Non-teaching Rob McFadden, Principal	Prince Edward Collegiate Institute Chris Bakker, Non-teaching Ms. Johnson, Community Monica Lindsay, Student Dave MacKay, Community Darren McFarlane, Principal Shelley McFarland, Parent Heather Munroe, Teacher Steph Roth, School Council Kim Stacey, Parent
Trustees	Chair, Lucille Kyle, North Hastings Vice Chair, Dave Patterson, Belleville/Thurlow Trustee, Dwayne Inch, South Prince Edward Trustee, Jennifer Cobb, North Prince Edward Trustee, Jim Williams, Sidney /Frankford Trustee, Mike Brant, Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory	
Resource/Other Staff Attendees	Administrative Assistant, Linda MacDonald Communications Officer, Kerry Donnell Director of Education, Mandy Savery-Whiteway Manager of Planning, Kim Horrigan Superintendent, Cathy Portt Superintendent, Nick Pfeiffer Superintendent, Trish FitzGibbon	

The meeting commenced at 6:30 p.m.

Welcome and introductions

Laina Andrews, Superintendent of Education for the Prince Edward County group of schools, welcomed members of the public to the meeting and introduced trustees, resource staff, and school administration. Laina acknowledged all members of the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) from C.M.L. Snider School, Kente Public School, Pinecrest Memorial Elementary School, Queen Elizabeth School, Sophiasburgh Central School and Prince Edward Collegiate Institute and their respective communities for bringing forth many considerations.

Superintendent Andrews noted that the purpose of the meeting was for the public to share their thoughts and ideas on the initial recommendation put forth to the board of trustees. The Ministry of Education Guide to Pupil Accommodation Reviews, that dictates our process on this, is designed to receive input from both the Accommodation Review Committee (that has completed their work over two meetings) and from the greater public through these meetings and through delegations that may be brought forth to the School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee Meeting of the board on May 25, 2017.

Copies of the following documents were provided:

- PEC ARC Public meeting #2 – Agenda
- PEC ARC Recommendation & Rationale Overview
- PEC ARC Consolidated Recommendation Analysis

Kim Horrigan, Manager of Planning spoke to:

1. **The Accommodation Review Process and Initial Recommendations as approved by the Board of Trustees Nov 21, 2016 to initial the accommodation review process, which is –**

Consolidate students from Pinecrest Memorial Elementary School and Queen Elizabeth Picton School to PECl for September 2017. Consolidate students from Sophiasburgh Central School to PECl for September 2018. Consolidate C.M.L. Snider School and Kente Public School and seek Ministry of Education funding/approval to build a new K-8 elementary school on the C.M.L. property or in Wellington for September 2020. Explore opportunities for community partnerships aligned with the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan priorities. Kim also noted, the accommodation review process requires boards to put forward concrete proposals, in the form of initial staff recommendations. These should not be interpreted as pre-determined outcomes, but rather as a means to ensure focused engagement.

2. **Review of the Accommodation Review Process to Date**

The ARC acted as the official conduit for information shared between the school board and the affected school communities during the accommodation review. The ARC reviewed and provided feedback on accommodation option(s) presented by school board administration and provided other accommodations options, with supporting rationale, for Board consideration.

Laina Andrews, Superintendent of Education, reviewed the purpose and summarized the consolidated Recommendation Analysis, noting ARC reviewed the information provided. The group completed the Recommendation Analysis Template, over the course of two working group meetings. The group identified Pros/Cons of the initial recommendation; possible implications or additional considerations; possible options with rationale; and questions or requests for information. A number of possible options were presented, which will be considered in the preparation of the final report.

Public Feedback on the Initial Accommodation Recommendation

The following feedback was noted:

Speaker #1 – Evelyn Wilson (notes submitted)

Representing Kente and Massassaga-Rednersville school, Ms. Wilson stated it is an oversight that Massassaga-Rednersville was not included in the ARC. She said they are disappointed in this process and that most documents were not provided prior to the ARC meetings, so there was not enough time to review and make decisions. She was concerned about the meeting process at working meetings, and feels this process has created divisions between schools.

Only a partial transportation plan was provided for review and bus times too long. Ms. Wilson stated that she believed it would cost \$300,000 to get from top of county to Wellington. Over 1 million to 1.5 million for extra buses. This is excessive. “How do you expect us to provide recommendations when the board does not have their ducks lined up?”

Ms. Wilson asked why were the ARCs not given the documentation and recommendation to make appropriate decisions. She noted the County is vast and a very different demographic area. She suggested closing Massassaga-Rednersville and put them in Kente? Look at the whole picture instead of just what's on paper.

Ms. Wilson asked where the June 19th Public Board meeting is being held and feel that the board room is not going to be big enough and asked that it be hosted where everyone will be able to attend.

Speaker #2 – Charles Pascal (notes submitted)

Mr. Pascal said the board is feeling the squeeze of balancing books and the speed in which Queen's Park is asking us to complete this process. The commodity that is missing is time. Trustees are making the decision on June 19th. We are concerned about the absence of trustees at these meetings. All should be here. It is not fair to Director and Superintendents if they are not present. Projections in county cannot be captured by old data. Demographics are changing for the better. School space is a tremendous opportunity. Space provided for innovation is remarkable in the county. This process is not looking at good community development. One indicator as a society, if we choose only one, should be how long it takes a third grader to get to school on a daily basis. Rural Ontario should be looked at different than larger areas.

Speaker #3 – Mike Miron – (notes submitted)

Mr. Miron inquired as to who really makes the decisions? He stated he asked someone he knew in the Liberal party, and they indicated that it is up to the local Board. He spoke to the catchment areas provided in the submission. He is concerned about the bus ride of 2 hours and 45 min per day, for his grandson to travel to school. He also suggested between Kente and Massassaga-Rednersville, if you close one, you will have a completely full school. Therefore, leave Kente open. Mr. Miron stated Wellington is a senior's development. Children will not be coming to this area. Rural Secondary schools have a dropout rate of over 50% higher than intercity schools. Again suggesting to leave Kente open.

Speaker #4 – Paul Boyd (no notes submitted)

Mr Boyd stated the reasons for closing schools should be about saving our children rather than money. He reviewed the number of managers at board level and indicated the schools are getting less and less and the administration is growing. He said don't close schools, educate the children and don't have them on buses for lengthy periods. Mr. Boyd suggested voting for trustees that will put children first.

Speaker #5 – Gord Hanley (no notes submitted)

Mr. Hanley stated he has worked for the HPEDSB for 30 years, indicating it is sad but something needs to be done. He would like to see something done with busing. Years ago students were bused together from K- 12. He thinks we should go back to that to save on busing costs. He mentioned that he has witnessed buses carrying 17 children when it can carry 72 passengers. He believes that we can change this to save costs. He said “the Mayor is not here and I believe that we would not have had this meeting tonight if our local council did a better job of bringing in development.”

Mr. Hanley also noted wanted to recognize Ms. Andrews and “Say one Nice Thing”. He noted that Ms. Andrews has recognized the custodial staff for setting up the meetings. She has come into our school and met with support staff and spent time with secretaries and custodial staff.

Speaker #6 – Jenna Empey (notes provided)

As a parent Ms. Empey feels unnecessary bus rides and lack of green space is not in the best interest of our students. She suggested to promote food choices – running a business that can teach students about agriculture. She spoke to supporting Sophiasburgh through accessing kitchen space at the school.

Speaker #7 – Brian Yott - (no notes submitted)

Mr. Yott said we should not be looking to close any schools, at 70% of utilization. (referring to numbers handed out at last meeting). He feels it would be sensible to look at closing Massassaga-Rednersville, as those students end up going to Kente anyway. As Kente is on municipal water and in good shape, he feels it does not make sense to close. Mr. Yott is also concerned about the length of bus times being too long for smaller children. He expressed on behalf of parents of Ameliasburg that they do not intend to move their children to Belleville or Trenton.

Speaker #8 – Kristie Fabian (no notes submitted)

Ms. Fabian is concerned about what is going to happen with small child attending at PECl. She pointed out that twice they have been given different numbers for school capacity. She is concerned about the chaos of possible delays. Ms. Fabian worries PECl may end up filled to capacity, hearing about a new subdivision coming into Picton.

She spoke about green space and how our children have been raised based on nature and being outside. (rural community). Ms. Fabian expressed a concern with loss of partnership with Hub. She stated “You are not giving us enough time to find options for the before and after school childcare.” She pointed out that older students will be on the bus with smaller children. She does not want her 4 year old on a bus with teenagers.

Speaker #9 – William Cobban (notes submitted)

Mr. Cobban stated that he is alarmed with what is going on with review process and feels it is setting one school against another. He worries CML could get caught in the crossfire. He stated, looking at Queen’s Park, both parties are totally against the accommodation reviews. We could be going through this and a year from this, the whole thing could be shut down. He is concerned there could be some irreversible damage to the current Wellington school and a year from now the decision could be changed resulting in irreversible consequences.

Mr. Cobban stated the reality is not a lot of kids will be coming down from Kente. It doesn’t make sense to build a new school. With a bit of money the current CML could be refinished. As it currently holds 400 students, we could refinish, to hold projections of an additional 50 students.

Our school is part of the community. It is the centre of the community. We have the numbers, we have the location and we have history and tradition. Mr. Cobban noted the school was built in 1922 and he reviewed tremendous community efforts to build this school. He feels this structure represents what our forefathers wanted for the children. They were committed to the community and we should honour what they did and continue it. Let's not make quick decisions that we may regret later.

Speaker #10 – Heather Ford - (no notes submitted)

Ms. Ford suggested a volunteer organization, for food to share that collects produce from farmers and cook meals in Wellington and Picton to show support for Sophiasburgh as a community hub.

Speaker #11 – Mike Farrell - (notes submitted)

Mr. Farrell stated the alternative proposal is not getting the coverage they expected. He indicated some negative impacts are: too long bus rides and lack of green space. He is also concerned about the impact on communities of closing rural schools, as a lot of young families are moving to the Sophiasburgh area. He noted Sophiasburg has the lowest facility cost. He is concerned about the increased enrolment and overcrowding at Prince Edward Collegiate.

Mr. Farrell said the sub-group is focusing on developing partnerships and that we should be considering a community hub. He stated they have been approached for before and after child care. He also indicated we have a need and an opportunity for a food sector – community food initiatives are encouraging to use food prep space. Shared commercial kitchen. He pointed out that there are several interests in local clubs and partnerships for shared commercial space. Mr. Farrell proposed exciting and innovative ways to enhance student learning, such as a food and education centre.

Speaker #12 – Ranata Claudii (no notes submitted)

From National farms union – notes support for Mike Farrell

Speaker #13 – Susan Davies (notes submitted)

Ms. Davies expressed concern about the incredibly short timeline, and that it is unrealistic regardless of the decision. She asked to put a halt to this experiment to create the first K-12 in the district. She pointed out that PECl is an old building and needs a lot of work that will not be completed in 60 days. We need more time. Timeline is incredulous. She fears losing students to other boards and wants everyone to consider some alternatives.

Speaker #14 – Jamie Caniver (no notes submitted)

The best agricultural area in Ontario, is what Mr. Caniver brought up as he spoke to an example of closing a high school and not closing any elementary school. He stated as no elementary child should be on a bus for more than 40 minutes. He believes we are too short sighted and not giving enough time to complete renovations to PECl, to accept elementary students. For example, usable green space. He stated projections are known to be wrong, and he wants this to be done right the first time.

Speaker #15 – Ryan Aldred (notes submitted)

Mr. Aldred acknowledged the difficult financial situation the board is facing. However, he said the board only recently revealed their site plan, with no mention of elementary needs. He feels there is not enough information to make a decision. Mr. Aldred inquired as to when information is going to be available? He feels 2 months is not enough time. He asked if the new Prince Edward Collegiate meets regulations and if we have a contingency plan. He indicated the board could be open to legal action if there are unforeseen delays.

Speaker #16 – Kerry-Lee Roy (no notes submitted)

Ms. Roy is a 45 year resident and asked that board focus on student's mental well-being and physical well-being.

Speaker #17 - Barb Foster (no notes submitted)

Ms. Foster acknowledged the work of ARC committee in Sophiasburgh and that small rural communities matter. She feels our communities are working against each other, when we have always worked together. She stated: several families have been part of our community and church; smaller schools are good; rural matters; and student should be educated in the community in which they live.

Speaker #18 – Patrick Howe (no notes submitted)

Mr. Howe expressed that he appreciates that the board is working hard for us. However, he feels they need more details such as: bus times, French immersion, and day care, as they all have an impact on very serious level.

He noted the board says that they are working on the details and will be sharing when they can. He pleads for more time. He feels they do not have enough time to deal with all of this on such short notice. He is also disappointed that we are not consulting with the rest of the school communities in Prince Edward County. Mr. Howe explained it is hard for us to digest - you ask us to sacrifice, but do not show sacrifice on your end? He said they would like to see communications and information more frequently.

Speaker #19 – Julie Sedak – (no notes submitted)

Julie Sedak voiced concerns about K-12 at Prince Edward Collegiate. She indicated they are disappointed and would like to see the proposal. She feels there is no innovation for the County.

Ms. Sedak spoke to safety issues: moving students into school in September and concerns about bus drop off and access to the play area. She pointed out that the play space is in the back and it's a swamp. She compared play areas of different schools and said the proposed play area is too small, with no play equipment, and no separated play area. She is also concerned about students having to cross the parking lot to get to the play area. She also noted the time it takes to get young students dressed for winter play and the 20 minute recess time.

Ms. Sedak brought forth concerns on Health and Well-Being. She feels too many negative experiences at one time can leave students vulnerable and overwhelmed. She stated drop-out rates at large schools are at a higher rate than from small schools. She feels longer busing will cause health issues.

She wants to push Liberals to use money to renovate instead. She referred to the Watson Report, and said it does not answer how the board came to its current plans. Ms. Sedak feels we are being vague as to what is going to happen regarding busing and that details are lacking in response to questions. She pointed out that the Watson report shows increases in growth in Picton and Wellington areas. She spoke to the letter from a MPP. She suggested we look at locations of other services and look at innovation of what we do with our schools instead of just closing schools. Ms. Sedak feels the plan is anti-community it is not equitable, not transparent, and has no innovation.

Speaker #20 – Janice Maynard (notes submitted)

Janice Maynard believes we should suspend decision to close Kente. She suggests a K-8 school open in the North is best decision. She feels we can correct errors with more time allowed and professional resources to make a decision. She stated they are encouraged by the Watson report that suggests

leaving Kente open. All housed in one of two existing schools. Northern County – the amalgamation of Kente and Massasaga-Rednersville.

Ms. Maynard asked that we please reconsider recommendation to trustees, as we need more time to make best decision for children in their rural communities.

Speaker #21 – Bill Roberts (read quotes from Municipal World article)

Mr. Roberts stated there is no formal evaluation of the impact on closure of small rural schools. He made reference to Ontario school closures and findings on topic of smaller rural areas. He feels this is irresponsible damage to rural communities.

Speaker #22 – Jake Rarose (no notes submitted)

Mr. Rarose thanked the ARC committees for the work completed with time constraints. He pointed out that recommendation is important as there are implications for families, such as time students spend on buses. He reiterated the need for community and family input. Mr. Rarose feels the time frame was not appropriate, that was too short. The ARC committees did not receive information or answers that were conducive to making decisions. He feels we need to extent this review process that reflects the whole county input.

Speaker #23 – Matti Kopamees (no notes submitted)

Matti Kopamees referred to the March 6th letter from the Ministry - Ontario Alliance against school closures report. He is concerned about the board response to this letter, with respect to process and following up with integrity. He feels we can take advantage of a potential delay. He stated they want to work together to make this work well.

Speaker #24 – Tim Johnson (notes submitted)

Mr. Johnson stated he is excited to work with board and come up with a solution. He pointed out the timelines are ridiculous given what is expected of us. He noted the February 16, 2017 meeting, provided us with answers to questions for review. However he did express concern about inconsistencies and numbers that do not add up. He feels they do not have accurate information to make decisions on. He stated that on behalf of ARCs, we have tried to work with board, but we have not had accurate information and time to make decisions. He wants to know what the plan is with regards to student's access to play area from 14 hectares in size, to only 39 hundred square meters for 650 students. He feels there is no plan. Mr. Johnson indicated they asked for supporting documentation and a plan, as well as costs. He said they have received in small portions, but some are not accurate or complete. He pointed out a 64 year old building is not designed to hold 650 elementary students. He would like to know how we are you going to accommodate 650 students for \$50,000. He stated: You cannot convert by September if you don't have a plan right now.

Speaker #25 – Victoria Carroll (notes submitted)

Victoria Carroll is requesting more time. She feels there is not enough time to develop a sense of community. She relayed that teachers are concerned about timelines, such as packing and moving, and if delayed they may not have access to packed materials for teaching.

Ms. Carroll also pointed out that students need time to meet and develop relationships. If there was more time, they could build a new culture for the school such as: staff can come together to set up committees, to learn and grow together; students could have time to be part of school clubs; to develop a sense of belonging; and to feel safe. She also expressed concern about mental health. She feels this process does not fall with this concern and that this process causes anxiety.

Speaker #26 – Sharon Lake (no notes submitted)

Sharon Lake stated she does not appreciate the timeline, as her daughter is a special needs student. She indicated there is no day care at the school and this is a concern. She suggested a volunteer community – to engage our volunteers so they can feel that they are part the school community.

Speaker #27 – Kerrin Thompsons (not notes submitted)

Kerrin Thompsons referred to a letter from Minister Hunter dated March 6, 2017. Ms. Thompsons feels the board response undermines credibility of the review process. She stated she acknowledges the process has been imposed to some degree, however she feels it would be nice to see some push back towards this process. Ms. Thompsons stated that more time and a better process will result in a better outcome. She is also concerned that not all trustees are present.

Speaker #28 – Jim Dunlop (letter submitted)

Mr. Jim Dunlop noted that the municipality accepts changes to public education in Prince Edward County are highly likely, but cannot accept the short amount of time and community and municipality engagement that has occurred. He referred to the March 6, 2017 letter from the Ministry of Education, noting both community needs and educational needs are important. The Ministry will be holding engagement meetings in the near future.

Mr Dunlop further referred to HPEDSB's response to the Ministry, noting that Prince Edward County is disappointed that the process does not take into consideration, the well-being of students in the short term and through transition phases.

Prince Edward County is asking the Province to suspend the Accommodation Review process.

Kim Horrigan spoke to next steps:

The meeting notes will be posted to the website once reviewed and finalized by senior administration.

The Student Enrolment School Capacity Committee will receive the final report May 8, 2017.

The Student Enrolment School Capacity Committee will receive delegations from members of the public for the May 25, 2017 meeting. There is a form on the board's website that is required to be completed and submitted 5 business days in advance of the meeting.

The Student Enrolment School Capacity Committee will prepare a recommendation to the Board of Trustees on June 12, 2017.

The Public Board Meeting will be held at the Education Centre on June 19, 2017, to determine accommodation recommendation.

Superintendent Andrews concluded the meeting, and thanked members of the public for attending.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.