

HASTINGS AND PRINCE EDWARD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Response to Request for Administrative Review

PINECREST MEMORIAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. A Pupil Accommodation Review has been requested by parents of Pinecrest Memorial Elementary School (the “Petitioners”), a school under the jurisdiction of the Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board, which was subject a Pupil Accommodation Review of schools in Prince Edward County.
2. The Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board respectfully submits that the Prince Edward County area Pupil Accommodation Review was appropriately conducted, in accordance with Board Policy No. 15 “*Student Enrolment/School Capacity: Pupil Accommodation Review*” (the “Policy”), attached as **Appendix 1**.
3. The Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board (the “Board”) respectfully submits that the Ministry of Education should **not** conduct an Administrative Review of the Prince Edward County area Pupil Accommodation Review.
4. On June 19, 2017, the Board of Trustees approved the recommendation from its Student Enrolment/School Capacity Committee (SE/SC Committee) to
 - consolidate Pinecrest Memorial Elementary School (Pinecrest) and Queen Elizabeth School (QE) at the Queen Elizabeth School site for grades Kindergarten to 6 effective September 2017;
 - move grades 7 and 8 of Pinecrest and QE to Prince Edward Collegiate Institute (PECI) effective September 2017; and
 - effective September 2018 consolidate QE and PECI at the PECI site creating a K-12 school

Outlining the above, at **Appendix 2**, is a copy of Board Report No.B-4, June 19, 2017 from the Director of Education to the Board of Trustees.

BACKGROUND

5. In 2015, the Board retained Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. (“Watson”) to review the Board’s enrolment and demographic trends, age and condition of facilities, and funding, to

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provide recommendations with respect to accommodation. Watson delivered its Long Term Capital Study and Recommendations Report on November 9, 2015.¹

6. In October 2016, following a significant public consultation, which included information shared with families through a series of bulletins and resource documents posted on the Board's website, on its schools' websites, shared in newsletters, communicated to parent involvement committees and distributed through social media, the Board of Trustees approved a Long-Term Capital Plan.
7. On November 21, 2016, in accordance with the Board's Policy, the Senior Administration of the Board delivered to the SE/SC Committee (a committee of the whole board of trustees) a report recommending that the Board conduct an accommodation review of six schools in Prince Edward County: C.M.L. Snider School, Kente Public School, Pinecrest Memorial Elementary School, Prince Edward Collegiate Institute, Queen Elizabeth School and Sophiasburgh Central School (collectively the "Prince Edward County Schools") for the following reasons:
 - the group of schools will experience an adverse impact on learning opportunities for students due to declining enrolment;
 - reorganization involving the schools will enhance program and learning opportunities for students; and
 - one or more of the schools is experiencing higher building maintenance or renewal expenses than the average for the system and/or is in need of major capital improvements.²
8. The Board Administration's Report to the SE/SC Committee dated November 21, 2016 (the "Initial Report") identified the process of public consultation undertaken prior to the Board's approval of the Long-Term Capital Plan, as well as details regarding capital planning and pupil accommodation issues such as:
 - renewal needs for the Prince Edward County Schools over the next five years would be approximately \$33.5 million dollars;
 - there were 674 surplus secondary student spaces at PECL; and
 - there were 1098 surplus elementary student spaces among the five Prince Edward County elementary schools

¹ http://www.hpedsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/arc/watson_report_nov15.pdf

² http://www.hpedsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/arc/public_B-3_InitialRecommendationReportPrinceEdwardCountyNov1816KH.pdf

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Attached as **Appendix 3** is a copy of the Initial Report.

9. The Initial Report contained the Administration's Initial Recommendation for the purpose of public consultation, namely:
 - Close Pinecrest Memorial Elementary School and Queen Elizabeth School and consolidate students at Prince Edward Collegiate Institute for September 2017;
 - Close Sophiasburg Central School and move students to Prince Edward Collegiate Institute for September 2018
 - Close 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. Snider property or in Wellington for September 2020
 - Explore opportunities for community partnerships aligned with the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan
10. The Initial Report recommended consolidation of C.M.L. Snider School and Kente Public School; however, as a result of the consultation process this recommendation did not move forward to the Board of Trustees for consideration in June 2017.
11. On November 21, 2016 the Board passed a motion approving an Accommodation Review for the Prince Edward County Schools.
12. On November 23, 2016, the Director delivered a letter to families and students of affected schools to advise that the Board of Trustees approved Accommodation Reviews in three regions of the Board, including Prince Edward County. The Director's letter enclosed a one-page summary of the options being considered in the Accommodation Reviews as well as a complete timeline for all anticipated steps in the process, from November 2016 to June 2017. The Director's letter was also made available on the Board's website.³ On the same date, the Director of Education forwarded correspondence to municipal and community partners advising of the Accommodation Review process for the Prince Edward County Schools.
13. Throughout the Accommodation Review process the Board's website was routinely updated to include new information to the dedicated webpages for the three Accommodation Reviews being undertaken. This process created a centralized bank of all of the information regarding the Accommodation Reviews, including notices and links to

³ http://www.hpedsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/arc/arc_parent_letter_arc_schools_nov16.pdf

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relevant documents and resources. Screen shots of the relevant Board webpages are attached at **Appendix 4**.

14. An Accommodation Review Committee (the “ARC”) was struck with members from each school community, including students, parents, school council members, community representatives, teaching and non-teaching representatives, for the purpose of providing feedback regarding the Administration’s Initial Recommendation. On January 25, 2017 there was an orientation meeting for the ARC at PECEI, which was open to the public⁴. The identification of ARC members was posted on the Board’s website together with information regarding the ARC’s role.⁵
15. On Wednesday, February 1, 2017 at 6:30pm, the first Public Meeting was held, in PECEI’s gymnasium. Families and students were provided notice of the meeting by way of social media, the Board’s website, school websites and local media. The meeting notes and the power point presentation from the meeting were both made available on the Board’s website.⁶
16. On February 16, 2017 and March 29, 2017 the ARC held working group meetings, the notes from which were made available on the Board’s website.⁷
17. For its working group meetings, the ARC had available to it:
 - Capital Planning Forecasts for each of the schools under review;
 - Census Population Data;
 - Report of the Expert Panel on Capital Standards;
 - Recommendation and Rationale Overview
 - Draft floor plans for PECEI;
 - Transportation data;
 - Information regarding the potential financial implications of consolidation;

⁴ Orientation Presentation, http://www.hpedsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/arc/pec_arc_orientation_jan17.pdf;
Notes: http://www.hpedsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/arc/PrinceEdwardCountyARC_02_01_17_notes.pdf

⁵ Notes: http://www.hpedsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/arc/PrinceEdwardCountyARC_02_01_17_notes.pdf;
Presentation: http://www.hpedsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/arc/pec_arc_orientation_jan17.pdf

⁶ Notes: http://www.hpedsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/arc/PrinceEdwardCountyARC_02_01_17_notes.pdf;
Presentation: http://www.hpedsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/arc/pec_arc_public_meeting1_feb17.pdf

⁷ http://www.hpedsb.on.ca/board/board-resources/accommodation-reviews/#ert_pane1-3

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- Correspondence from local businesses, municipal and provincial government and community members;
 - Updated Prince Edward County Accommodation Review Question and Answers; and
 - School Information Profiles for each school being reviewed by the ARC, which contained information such as:
 - the programs, grades and extra-curricular offerings;
 - building and property size;
 - pupil capacity, enrolment, utilization rate, surplus capacity;
 - dates of construction and additions/renovations (if any);
 - school site map, attendance boundary and zoning map;
 - instructional room summary and school staffing;
 - facility condition index, summary of recent facility improvements and costs; renewal needs and costs; and accessibility; and
 - transportation needs for existing students.⁸
18. The ARC identified and prepared rationales for several alternative options to those presented by Board Administration. They included the following:
- relocating the grade 7 and 8 students to PECE beginning September 2017;
 - expansion of the catchment area for Sophiasburg and developing it as a community hub;
 - re-alignment of the catchments for C.M.L. Snider, Kente; and
 - seeking funding for a new school for the students at C.M.L Snider, Kente and Massassaga Rednersville Public School (which had not been identified as part of the AR process).
19. The Board reviewed the feedback from the public consultations and the ARC to identify common themes and messages, which included issues regarding:
- green space,
 - community,
 - programming for students with special needs,
 - supporting rural schools,
 - timing and student transitions,
 - staff transitions,

⁸ http://www.hpedsb.on.ca/board/board-resources/accommodation-reviews/#ert_pane1-3

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- transportation time,
 - programming options, and
 - K-12 school model
20. Over the course of their working group meetings, the ARC members discussed and synthesized feedback and data into a Consolidated Recommendation Analysis Template for the Board of Trustees to consider, which identified positive and negative aspects of the Initial Recommendation, including additional implications and considerations, as well as alternative options and their rationales. Board Administrative staff also developed a draft Transition Plan with consultation from the ARC. All of these documents were made available to the public on the Board's website.
21. In addition to the dedicated webpage, the Board also established an email address for members of the public to submit questions, provide feedback to the Board and obtain further information. A Prince Edward County Accommodation Review Question and Answer Chart (identifying questions from the public and the administration's answers) was created, updated regularly and made available on the webpage, attached as **Appendix 5**.
22. On April 20, 2017, at 6:30pm, the second Public Meeting was held, in PECl's gymnasium. Members of the public were able to provide feedback regarding the proposals being considered by the ARC. The agenda and notes from the meeting were posted on the Board's Website and contained details regarding the public opinions shared during the meeting.⁹
23. On Monday, May 8, 2017, the SE/SC Committee met and was provided with the Prince Edward County Area Accommodation Review Final Report (the Final Report)¹⁰ by Senior Administration, which contained a recommended outcome.¹¹ The agenda from that meeting¹² as well as the Final Report were posted on the Boards website. The Final Report included not only the data and analysis previously compiled by the Senior Administration, but also summaries of the public feedback, an updated Prince Edward County Accommodation Review Question and Answer sheet compiling the questions submitted to the Board over the course of the process and the correspondence received by

⁹ Agenda: http://www.hpedsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/arc/agenda_public_meeting2_pec_apr17.pdf; Notes: http://www.hpedsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/arc/PrinceEdwardCountyARC_04_20_17_notes.pdf

¹⁰ http://www.hpedsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/arc/public_C-2_PrinceEdwardAccommodationReviewFinalReport.pdf

¹¹ Final Report, p. 5

¹² http://www.hpedsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/arc/SESC_05_08_17_publicagenda.pdf

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letter and electronic mail from the public, local businesses and municipal and provincial governments. A copy of the Final Report is attached as **Appendix 6**.

24. On Monday, May 29, 2017, the SE/SC Committee held a meeting for public delegations.¹³
25. On Monday, June 12, 2017 the SE/SC Committee met in public to consider the final recommendations for decision by the Board of Trustees, attached as **Appendix 7**.
26. On Monday, June 19, 2017, the Board of Trustees held a public meeting to make a decision. Board Report No. B-4, dated June 19, 2017, attached as **Appendix 2**, identifies the 4 recommendations made and approved by the Board of Trustees, as follows:

According to Policy 15: Student Enrolment/ School Capacity: Pupil Accommodation Review, the Student Enrolment/School Capacity Committee (SE/SCC) was required to review the final report from administration and public input and prepare its recommendation to the Board. The recommendations are based on the final report and recommendations from administration, and feedback compiled from the public delegation. The SE/SCC had the discretion to approve the recommendations(s) as presented by administration or to recommend a different outcome. At its meeting on June 12, 2017, the SE/SCC prepared the following recommendations for Board consideration.

Recommendation #1

Moved: D. Patterson
Seconded: L. Kyle

That Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board approve Sophiasburgh Central School to remain open subject to conditions one to three (1-3) below:

1. That all agreements relative to establishing “The Sophiasburgh Opportunity” a Community Hub at Sophiasburgh Central School are signed in accord with the Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board’s Administrative Procedure 570, version October, 2015;
2. Signed contractual agreement(s) with the Sophiasburgh Community hub and The County of Prince Edward fund sourcing and governance building stakeholders are required, by no later than April 30, 2018;
3. Student population sustainability, to ensure program viability must be part of the ongoing contractual consideration;

Should by May 1, 2018, signed contractual agreement(s) are not realized, for the establishment of a financially viable community hub at Sophiasburgh Central School; then the students from Sophiasburgh Central School are consolidated with students at Prince Edward Collegiate Institute (PECI) for September, 2018, as contained in Board Report No. B-4, dated June 19, 2017.

¹³ http://www.hpedsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/arc/RequestforDelegationStudentEnrolment_SchoolCapacityCommittee2.pdf

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Recommendation #2

Moved: D. Inch
Seconded: D. Patterson

That Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board approve the consolidation of students from Pinecrest Memorial Elementary School and Queen Elizabeth School (Picton) at the Queen Elizabeth School (Picton) site effective September 2017 to form a Kindergarten to Grade 6 school, as contained in Board Report No. B-4, dated June 19, 2017;

Recommendation #3

Moved: D. Inch
Seconded: D. Patterson

That Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board approve effective

September 2017, relocating Grade 7 and 8 students from Pinecrest Memorial Elementary School, and Queen Elizabeth School (Picton) to Prince Edward Collegiate Institute, creating a Grade 7-12 school, as contained in Board Report No. B-4, dated June 19, 2017.

Recommendation #4

Moved: D. Inch
Seconded: D. Patterson

That Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board approve consolidating students from Queen Elizabeth School (Picton) and Prince Edward Collegiate Institute at Prince Edward Collegiate Institute creating a Kindergarten to Grade 12 School, effective September 2018, as contained in Board Report No. B-4, dated June 19, 2017.¹⁴

27. On Tuesday, June 20, 2017, the Board published on its website Bulletin #9 *Long-Term Capital & Accommodation Planning: Decisions have been made, now what?*, which summarized the final decisions of the Board of Trustees, including with respect to QE and Pinecrest.¹⁵ Bulletin #9 was also sent to all schools to distribute to their school communities.

BOARD RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

28. The Petitioners allege that the Board failed to follow its Policy in four (4) ways. The allegations are reproduced below followed by the Board's response.

(1) The ARC will be provided with information and support materials necessary to carry out its mandate; Policy 15, Section 7

¹⁴ Board Report No. B-4, June 19, 2017, refer to pages 19-21 in the link below
http://www.hpedsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/boardmeetings/PBM06_19_17AgendaPackage.pdf

¹⁵ http://www.hpedsb.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/arc/capital_planning_bulletin_9.pdf

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29. The Petitioners allege:

The board's policy state (Policy 15, Section 7): The ARC will be provided with information and support materials necessary to carry out its mandate. The board failed to provide relevant or accurate material regarding the financial rationale for closure, transportation times, programming enhancements, a facility plan, or answers regarding safety.

30. The Board submits that the ARC was provided with all required information to make an informed and considered decision regarding the recommendations for school consolidation/closure. The following documents were provided to the ARC.

31. **Capital Planning Forecasts** for each of the schools, attached as **Appendix 8**, containing information regarding funding necessary for each renewal and non-renewal operational need;

32. **Condition Assessment Reports** for each school, attached as **Appendix 9**, containing information regarding mechanical, electrical, architectural and site condition information

33. **Transportation Ride Times** for each school, attached as **Appendix 10**, were provided.

34. **School Information Profiles** for each of the schools, attached as **Appendix 11**, containing information regarding:

- the programs, grades and extra-curricular offerings;
- building and property size;
- pupil capacity, enrolment, utilization rate, surplus capacity;
- dates of construction and additions/renovations (if any);
- school site map, attendance boundary and zoning map;
- instructional room summary and school staffing;
- facility condition index, summary of recent facility improvements and costs; renewal needs and costs; and accessibility; and
- transportation needs for existing students.

(2) Policy 15, s.6(b)(v)

35. The Petitioners allege:

The board's policy states (Policy 15, Section 6.b.v.): The options must address the following: how student transportation would be affected if changes take place. After repeatedly being asked by the community for how busing would be handled, there are still no answers to date regarding length of time for bus rides for young children. Documents were produced with times rated at 0.

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36. The Board submits that transportation details were identified. The Transportation Ride Times document (see **Appendix 10**) and the Final Report (**Appendix 6**) indicated that changes to transportation costs, ride lengths, and routes for the students of Pinecrest and PECE were determined to be negligible. Ride times were expressed as minimum and maximum estimated times, and in many cases there was no change anticipated. When no change was anticipated "0" was indicated in the chart.

(3) Transition planning; Policy 15, Section 11

37. The Petitioners allege:

The board's policy states (Policy 15, section 11): Transition Planning- It is important that the transitions of students and staff into their new school is achieved in a way that is positive and supportive for the students and parents/guardians of the respective school communities. The transition of students should be carried out in consultation with parents/guardians and staff. The result was that no finalized transition plan was ever produced. Too little time was allowed to complete this task as far as we are aware.

38. The Board submits that it complied with its obligations in part 11 of the Policy. A Transition Plan was developed in consultation with the ARC and contained in the Final Report, a copy is included in **Appendix 6**. As well, a transition plan was received from the Board's Special Education Advisory Committee, attached as **Appendix 12**. The Transition Plan would not and could not be finalized until the decision of the Board of Trustees was made on June 19, 2017.

(4) Ministry of Education Pupil Accommodation Guideline

39. The Petitioners allege:

The ministry's guide (appendix A) states there is to be an Instructional Profile. The HPESB has not incorporated that information into their Pupil Accommodation Review. Therefore we have no knowledge of how the new school will be staffed or exactly what the "enhanced programmes (sic) would be".

40. The Board submits that Student Information Profiles for each school under consideration were provided to the ARC and posted on the Board's Website attached as **Appendix 11**, containing information regarding:

- the programs, grades and extra-curricular offerings;
- building and property size;
- pupil capacity, enrolment, utilization rate, surplus capacity;

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- dates of construction and additions/renovations (if any);
 - school site map, attendance boundary and zoning map;
 - instructional room summary and school staffing;
 - facility condition index, summary of recent facility improvements and costs; renewal needs and costs; and accessibility; and
41. In addition, the Final Report (Appendix 6) noted that programming enhancements would be made possible with school consolidations by creating a larger school body in a larger school building with more facilities and with more staff available to provide a greater range of curriculum and extra-curricular options. The Board submits that the specific staffing and programming details could only be shared once planning for a particular school year takes place.

CONCLUSION

42. A Pupil Accommodation Review has been requested by parents of Pinecrest Memorial Elementary School, which was subject a Pupil Accommodation Review of schools in Prince Edward County by the Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board.
43. The Petitioners allege that the Board failed to follow its Policy in four (4) ways:
- The Petitioners allege the Board failed to provide relevant or accurate material pursuant to **Policy 15, Section 7**;
 - The Petitioners allege that the Board failed to provide transportation information as required pursuant to **Policy 15, s.6(b)(v)**;
 - The Petitioners allege that the Board failed to provide a Transition Plan as required pursuant to **Policy 15, Section 11**;
 - The Petitioners allege that the Board failed to provide school profiles in accordance with the Ministry Guidelines.
44. The Board respectfully submits that it provided all of the materials required pursuant to its Policy and expected pursuant to the Ministry of Education Guideline, including, but not limited to: Capital Planning Forecasts, Condition Assessment Reports, Transportation Ride Times Report, Transition Plan and School Information Profiles.
45. In addition, the Final Report (Appendix 6) provided detailed information to the community and Board of Trustees about the issues of importance to the community, their questions and the answers to those questions.

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46. **The Board respectfully submits that the Prince Edward County area Pupil Accommodation Review was appropriately conducted, in accordance with Board Policy No. 15 “*Student Enrolment/School Capacity: Pupil Accommodation Review*” (the “Policy”).**

47. **The Board respectfully submits that the Ministry of Education should *not* conduct an Administrative Review of the Prince Edward County area Pupil Accommodation Review.**

48. The Board respectfully submits that the process instituted and followed by the Board met the requirements of its Policy and ensured community consultation before a decision of the Board of Trustees was made.