

Ministry of Education

Office of the ADM  
Capital and Business Support  
Division  
900 Bay Street  
20th Floor, Mowat Block  
Toronto ON M7A 1L2

Ministère de l'Éducation

Bureau du sous-ministre adjoint  
Division du soutien aux immobilisations et  
aux affaires  
900, rue Bay  
20<sup>e</sup> étage, Edifice Mowat  
Toronto ON M7A 1L2



September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Dear Ms. \_\_\_\_\_

**Re: Request for an Administrative Review of the Prince Edward County Pupil Accommodation Review (PAR)**

This letter is in response to your request for an Administrative Review of the Prince Edward County PAR undertaken by the Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board ("the board"), which included Pinecrest Memorial Elementary School ("Pinecrest").

Due to the importance of accommodation decisions to students, families and communities, we share your desire that accommodation review processes follow the policies developed and approved by local school boards and that community members have the opportunity to form opinions and to have them presented and understood. However, based on the ministry's review of your administrative review request package, the ministry has decided not to appoint a facilitator in this case.

When reviewing an administrative review request, the ministry gathers documentation to identify whether requirements of a board's accommodation review policy were met during the board's pupil accommodation review process. The ministry also assesses whether the documentation indicates that the steps taken by a board were sufficient and reasonable within the context of a public consultation.

In your petition, you state:

1. That the board failed to provide relevant or accurate material regarding the rationale for the closure of Pinecrest, including data on transportation ride times, programming enhancements, facility plans, or student safety.

2. That the board did not provide answers to questions regarding how student transportation would be handled or impacted should the recommendation become finalized.
3. That the board did not produce a finalized version of the transition plan for students in schools that would be closing.
4. That the board did not provide within the School Information Profile ("SIP") an adequate Instructional Profile for the new consolidated school as prescribed in the ministry's Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline ("PARG").

I will take this opportunity to address each of the points that you have raised.

Regarding the first item, you indicate that the board did not provide relevant or accurate information regarding transportation times, programming enhancements, facility plans, student safety, or financial rationale for the closure of Pinecrest. The board responded that they have provided the Accommodation Review Committee ("ARC") with all of the information required for them to make informed decisions regarding the development of recommended options. The information provided includes:

- SIPs for each school;
- Capital Planning Forecasts for each school;
- Condition Assessment Reports for each school; and
- Transportation Ride Times.

The ministry finds that the board provided the information listed above during ARC Working Meetings in a manner that allowed for discussion and clarification of the data. The board-provided information encompasses all of the disputed deficiencies in this item. The ministry is satisfied that the board adhered to its PAR policy regarding this item.

The second item indicates that the board did not provide answers to repeatedly-asked questions regarding student transportation impacts should the recommended option take place. It also indicates that the information provided indicated bus ride times of "0". The board responded that all details regarding student transportation were identified and provided to the ARC members. Information regarding transportation was produced by the Tri-Board Student Transportation Services and was given to the ARC members during an ARC Working Meeting. The data showed that changes to transportation costs, ride lengths, and routes for students of Pinecrest and Prince Edward CI were negligible. When no change was anticipated, a "0" was put into the chart.

As you have stated, there were multiple questions regarding student transportation. Many questions about student transportation were asked prior to the March 29th Working Meeting. The board did not yet have the data produced by their bus service provider, prompting them to defer the questions until they had the appropriate data. The ministry does not consider the deferral of questions to a later date as evidence that the

board evaded questions. The “0” denoted in the data indicates that there is no change in the ride times, and does not indicate absent or inaccurate data. The ministry is satisfied that the board adhered to its PAR policy regarding this item.

The third item indicates that the board did not provide a finalized version of the transition plan for students in schools that would be closed. The board asserts that it has complied with its PAR policy regarding the provision of a transition plan. The Transition Plan was developed in consultation with the ARC and was included in the Final Staff Report. A separate transition plan was developed by the Special Education Advisory Committee as well.

The transition plan was not finalized before the end of the PAR process. However, under the board’s PAR policy, it is not required for the board to produce a finalized version of the transition plan before the end of the PAR. The board’s PAR policy states that the transition plan should be prepared in consultation with parents/guardians and staff. Meeting minutes from second ARC working meeting indicate that the ARC members worked on transition planning development. The ministry is satisfied that the board adhered to its PAR policy regarding this item.

The final item indicates that the board did not provide an Instruction Profile in the SIP for the proposed consolidated school. The board asserts that the SIPs for schools included in the PAR contain Instruction Profiles that fulfill all the requirements set out in the PARG. Additionally, the Final Staff Report indicates that programming enhancements could be made by creating a larger school through consolidation. The board states that the specific staffing of the larger school could only be shared once planning for a particular school year takes place.

The ministry finds that the board has provided adequate SIPs for schools included in the PAR. Additionally, the ministry finds that the board is not required to produce a SIP for a proposed school. Determining staffing and programming for an accommodation option before the end of the PAR would be premature, as this information would likely change over the course of the ministry’s Capital Approvals process. The ministry is satisfied that the board adhered to its PAR policy regarding this item.

I appreciate the level of engagement that members of the Pinecrest school community have shown through this process. I encourage parents and guardians of students to remain involved as the Hastings and Prince Edward DSB continues to support the successful transition of students during the new school year. The continued involvement of parents and guardians will help to ensure that the needs of all the students involved in this review are met.

Should you have further questions, please contact Jacqueline Chan, Policy and Issues Analyst, Capital Policy Branch, Ministry of Education at 416-325-2961.

Sincerely,

Joshua Paul  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Capital and Business Support Division

CC: Mandy Savery-Whiteway, Director of Education, Hastings and Prince Edward District  
School Board

Denis Chartrand, Regional Manager, Ottawa Regional Office, Ministry of Education