



“The Niagara Catholic District School Board, through the charisms of faith, social justice, support and leadership, nurtures an enriching Catholic learning community for all to reach their full potential and become living witnesses of Christ.”

APPROVED MINUTES

St. Catharines Elementary and Secondary Family of Schools

Ad Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee Meeting

Michael J. Brennan Catholic, St. James Catholic, Assumption Catholic, St. Alfred Catholic, St. Ann Catholic, Canadian Martyrs Catholic and Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Elementary Schools

October 9, 2013

7:30 p.m.

ST. JAMES CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Minutes of Ad Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee Meeting for the St. Catharines Elementary and Secondary Family of Schools of October 9, 2013 at 7:30 p.m. at St. James Catholic Elementary School.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Superintendent Baldasaro

1. Opening Prayer: Yolanda Baldasaro, Family of Schools Superintendent

The opening prayer was led by Yolanda Baldasaro, Family of Schools Superintendent

Committee Members		Present	Excused	Absent
Rhianon Burkholder	Trustee/Chair	✓		
Kathy Burtnik	Trustee	✓		
Maurice Charbonneau	Trustee	✓		

Resources to Committee		Present	Excused	Absent
John Crocco	Director of Education	✓		
Yolanda Baldasaro	Superintendent of Education/Secretary	✓		
Scott Whitwell	Controller of Facilities Services	✓		
Kathy Levinski	Manager of Facilities Services	✓		
Tina DiFrancesco	Recording Secretary	✓		

The following staff were in attendance:

Carmela D’Andrea, Principal, Michael J. Brennan Catholic; Glenda Hillier, Principal, St. James Catholic; Victoria Wegelin, Principal, St. Ann Catholic; Clare Tofano, Principal, Assumption Catholic; Branka Jones, Principal (Acting), Our Lady of Fatima Catholic; Alan Creelman, Principal, Canadian Martyrs Catholic; Maria Solomon, Vice-Principal, Canadian Martyrs Catholic.

Members of the public registered their attendance via sign in sheet.

2. Welcome: Rhianon Burkholder, Trustee – Chair of St. Catharines Ad Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee

Trustee Burkholder welcomed and thanked everyone for attending. Members of the audience were informed of the upcoming meetings regarding the process towards the recommendation from the Ad Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee.

Trustee Burkholder stated that the Committee will bring forth recommendations to the Committee of the Whole in December. The Committee of the Whole will bring recommendations to the December 17th Board meeting for the consideration of eight trustees. Trustee Burkholder encouraged parents/guardians to attend all public meetings and all ideas are welcomed.

Trustee Burkholder stated that the Ad Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee is a committee made up of two area trustees for St. Catharines, Kathy Burtnik, Maurice Charbonneau and Rhianon Burkholder, who is the Chair of the Ad Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee and Trustee for Thorold. Information and options come from staff, who act as resources to the Committee: Superintendent Baldasaro, Scott Whitwell, Controller of Facilities Services, Kathy Levinski, Manager of Facilities Services, Tina DiFrancesco, Administrative Assistant to Superintendent Baldasaro and John Crocco, Director of Education.

Trustee Burkholder stated that it is important to know that no decision or recommendation has been made at this point. The final recommendation will be determined at the November 18th Committee Meeting at Saint Francis Catholic Secondary School. Once the Board has made a decision this information will be communicated to families affected.

Trustee Burkholder stated if parents have questions about their individual situation that they can speak to Committee members after the meeting.

3. Terms of Reference: Rhianon Burkholder

Trustee Burkholder presented the Terms of Reference for information.

4. Meeting Schedule: Rhianon Burkholder

Trustee Burkholder presented the meeting schedule and encouraged everyone to attend to bring forth their ideas.

5. Background: Kathy Burtnik, Trustee – Chair of the Niagara Catholic District School Board

Realities

- *St. James Catholic Elementary School*
- *Early Learning Kindergarten Program*
- *French Immersion*

- *Grandfathering*
- *Attendance Area Policy 301.3*
- *Committee Considerations*

Trustee Burtnik reviewed the current realities that exist as part of the Attendance Area Review process. The first reality is the closing of Michael J. Brennan, initiated from the declining enrollment. The motion to close Michael J. Brennan Catholic Elementary school included grandfathering, whereby those students and their siblings affected at the time by the closing of Michael J. Brennan had the right of attendance at St. James. However, if through this attendance area review that boundaries are adjusted, students fall outside of boundary, there would be no right of transportation for these students. Trustee Burtnik stated that the Board has to make decisions that are fair and balanced for everyone.

Trustee Burtnik stated that St. James is one of the last schools to have Early Learning Kindergarten Program (ELKP) classes. Next year 2014/2015 is the last year, whereby every school in Ontario will have ELKP.

The Board is bound by policy and has an Attendance Area Policy 301.3, stating that we cannot transport students that reside outside of an attendance area boundary.

Trustee Burtnik stated that there are three options for review. Initially there were fifteen options that the Committee had considered over the last two public committee meetings. The minutes, maps and options are all posted on the Board website. Trustee Burtnik stated that the Committee is not remotely close to making a decision and the Committee is charged at looking at attendance area reviews for a number of St. Catharines area schools, being fiscally responsible and keeping a focus of where schools are at. Trustee Burtnik stated that should your address be affected by a boundary change your children will be offered an exceptional Catholic Education in another Niagara Catholic school.

Trustee Burtnik introduced Yolanda Baldasaro to present the three options for consideration.

6. Options for Consideration: Yolanda Baldasaro
Scott Whitwell – Controller of Facilities Services
Kathy Levinski – Manager of Facilities Services

Superintendent Baldasaro acknowledged Scott Whitwell and Kathy Levinski who are resources to the Committee, as well as Principals, Vice-Principals of the identified schools and Rob Berketo of the Niagara Student Transportation Services (NSTS) who were in attendance.

Superintendent Baldasaro stated that the projections included data related to the French Immersion Program at Our Lady of Fatima.

Option 4: Current Boundaries

Option 8B: Revised boundaries between St. James, St. Ann, Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Elementary Schools plus revised boundaries with Our Lady of Fatima and Assumption Catholic Elementary School plus revised boundaries with St. Alfred and Canadian Martyrs Catholic Elementary Schools

Option 10: Revised boundaries between St. James, St. Ann and Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Elementary Schools plus revised boundaries with Our Lady of Fatima and Assumption Catholic Elementary School

Superintendent Baldasaro and Kathy Levinski presented the three potential attendance area options for consideration: Option 4, Option 8B and Option 10. Data included the current and revised boundaries, building utilization information and school areas of change for the St. Catharines Attendance Area Review identified schools.

Option 11: Ideas, Comments/Input/Feedback

Trustee Burkholder encouraged members of the audience to offer ideas and suggestions for feedback.

7. **Comments/Input/Feedback**

Carol Boccia:

How do you figure out the numbers years from now?

Kathy Levinski:

We use a demographer from Watson and Associates who has worked for the Board for a number of years and is very familiar with the Niagara Region. He projects the number of students, using birth rates and statistics and he incorporates them into a projection for the Board. He takes the number of places available at a particular school and looks at enrollment and we compare it with utilization moving forward so we can tell when we need portables, when we are running out of space and when we have too many surplus spaces.

Danuela Freel:

I want to understand. I'm a parent at St. James. So when we are grandfathered in, no matter which option is going to be chosen, my kids will be going to St. James, right?

Trustee Burkholder:

It's whether transportation will be provided. Current children and their siblings will be grandfathered.

Danuela Freel:

If I'm not in St. James bounds, we will still be going to this school. Correct?

Superintendent Baldasaro:

Clarification: Board motion of January 2012 states that any student and their siblings registered of as February 1st, 2012, as Trustee Burtnik had mentioned when she spoke about the piece about grandfathering under current realities, will have the right or be able to attend St. James.

Danuela Freel:

What happens to the students that are at St. James that will be in the new bounds? Do they leave the school in September 2014?

Superintendent Baldasaro:

Grandfathering: As of February 1st, 2012, students and their siblings who were registered at that time have the right or the ability to attend St. James no matter where the boundary is determined. The only thing to consider is that if a student lives outside of the new attendance area for St. James, transportation, according to our Board policy, is not provided. But students also have the option to attend the school in their new attendance area.

Danuela Freel:

The children that are at St. James out of bounds for the new bounds, will they have to move or do they get to stay at St. James?

Superintendent Baldasaro:

As of February 1st, 2012, students and their siblings who were registered at that time at both schools, Michael J. Brennan and St. James will be able to attend St. James. It does not preclude the fact that throughout this process a boundary adjustment may need to happen. Once the attendance areas are determined, even though students are grandfathered to attend St. James, they may lie outside of the new attendance area for St. James. Transportation would not be provided as per Board policy for these students. Or students/families can choose to attend the school in their new attendance area.

Kim Kryzanowski:

Bussing will be a problem for me and I'm not sure if I am sold on St. Ann's. So if we don't qualify for St. James, then we also have the option to switch to the public board. Just letting you know that other people have that option too.

Trustee Burtnik:

Every parent will make the best decision for their families. It is our hope that you certainly will have more value in Catholic Education and what it can offer your child. All I ask is for you to go and look at the value of those school communities. It will be equal value to what you are already receiving. We understand that there will be an inherent risk that parents will make that choice, however at least give it a chance. If you are affected it is our prayer that you value something that is intrinsically special about Catholic Education.

Marion Battersby:

No matter what the changes, if kids go to Fatima now they currently go to Holy Cross, so if they get moved over is there room at Saint Francis? Has the high school capacity been considered?

Trustee Burtnik:

There is minimal transfer in the scenarios between secondary schools. When they reach secondary school, they always have the option to apply for out of boundary on a case by case basis.

Jody Brusutti:

Out of curiosity is there ever a consideration of an option if out of bounds, could a parent pay privately for the bus services? Could that be an option for people?

Superintendent Baldasaro:

Under the Education Act, there is no option for parents to pay a fee for transportation. That particular option does not exist.

Danuela Freel:

When do the new bounds come in effect?

Trustee Burkholder:

September 2014, if there is a change. I have to be very clear that we are a long way from making those decisions. On November 18th this committee will make the recommendation publicly, then it has to go to the Committee of the Whole and all eight trustees will have the discussion and then the recommendation moves to the Board.

Superintendent Baldasaro:

Timelines for the recommendation for the December Board meeting were put in place in time for February registration.

Vanessa Levay:

The whole point is overcapacity, student ratio, and space. When you talk about on the ground capacity, is that physical space or is that taking into consideration looking at student ratios, numbers, portables and all those factors? How do you determine that?

Kathy Levinski:

On the ground capacity is the number of students that fit in a school. The Ministry of Education gives us that information. For example, ELKP rooms are 26. We load them to 26 pupils in a classroom and for Grades 1 to 8 we load at 23 students. We add up the number of spaces. St. James for example, after the construction will have 259 spaces made up of 9 classrooms and 2 ELKP classrooms.

Vanessa Levay:

How does it get monitored when people do apply for out of bounds and registration? What if people aren't telling the truth? How is that monitored/checked?

Trustee Burkholder:

We have to trust that everyone is telling the truth.

Superintendent Baldasaro:

Schools have a registration process. We have individuals at our schools, Principals and Secretaries who are experts at the process. There is a registration form to be completed. Registrants can be checked against the assessment roll with regards to where the family lives. We also use NSTS to check address eligibility for transportation.

Trustee Burtnik informed the audience that information regarding all meetings is posted on the Board website. Trustee Burtnik informed the audience that questions can be emailed to the committee members individually and encouraged everyone to please participate fully in the process to help the Committee make an informed decision.

Trustee Burkholder asked if there were any other questions and commented that the meeting schedule is available and all information is posted on the Board website. Questions involving specific individual concerns could be asked to Committee members after tonight's presentation.

Trustee Burkholder thanked everyone for attending.

8. Future Action

The next St. Catharines Ad Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee meeting will take place October 23, 2013 at 5:30 p.m. in the Father Kenneth Burns csc Boardroom, Catholic Education Centre.

9. Adjournment

Moved by Trustee Burtnik

THAT the Ad Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee Meeting for the St. Catharines Elementary and Secondary Family of Schools of October 9, 2013 be adjourned.

CARRIED

This meeting was adjourned at 8:45p.m.