

St. Catharines Accommodation Review Committee Terms of Reference

Rationale for the St Catharines ARC

The key reason for the establishment of a St. Catharines ARC is a result of the School Capacities, Enrolment Trends, Attendance Area Boundaries and Building Utilization 2013 – Phase Two Report.

At the Public Session of the Board Meeting on April 23, 2013 a Motion was made that the Niagara Catholic District School Board approve that an Accommodation Review Committee be established to review St. Christopher Catholic Elementary School and St. Theresa Catholic Elementary School and that Senior Staff bring a report to the Committee of the Whole no later than January 2014.

The following is an excerpt from Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. Long Term Accommodation Resource Document dated April 3, 2013:

St. Christopher

- St. Christopher has the 3rd smallest capacity in St. Catharines with a total of 190 permanent spaces available; however, enrolments far exceed this capacity and are expected to continually rise over the next 15 years.
- Currently, there are 221 students enrolled at St. Christopher. Short term projections expect an increase of more than 60 students or approximately 27% by 2016/17. A large increase of 100 students is anticipated between 2016/17 and 2021/22 an increase of more than 35%. A slight decline in the longer term results in approximately 334 students enrolled by 2026/27.
- Subsequently, St. Christopher will be over capacity by more than 144 students, or more than a 175% utilization rate by 2026/27. This is an increase of more than 60% in utilization rates in 2011/12 at approximately 116%.
- **The facility is projected to have a deficit of space for the duration of the forecast, term with mid to long term projected utilization rates at St. Christopher over 175%.**
- **To accommodate current and future enrolments, St. Christopher may require an addition, portables or a boundary adjustment.**
- **Currently, St. Christopher has 2 portables - at least 4 additional portables would be required to accommodate projected enrolment, resulting in at least 6 portables onsite and more than 40% of enrolment accommodated in temporary space.**
- **It is recommended that an addition be constructed at this school and that the Board apply for MOE funding through a capital priorities business case. This study should also explore possible accommodation options in conjunction with St. Theresa.**

St. Theresa

- Enrolments at St. Theresa are expected to increase slightly by 6.8% by the end of the projection term.
- Short term increases are expected to be approximately 4.4%, with additional increases of 2% and 0.6% in the mid and longer term projections, respectively.
- Utilization rates are currently 73% and are expected to increase to 76% in the short term, 77% in the mid-term and 78% in the long term projections.
- While utilization rates will steadily increase, St. Theresa will still have a surplus of almost 50 spaces available by the end of the forecast term.

- **The facility is projected to have available space for the duration of the forecast term.**
- **This school should be studied in conjunction with the recommendation for an addition at St. Christopher.**

Mandate

The mandate of the St. Catharines Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) is to assess and study each of the two (2) identified schools involved on the basis of the school's value to students, the board, the community and the local economy according to specific criteria that are equally applied to all schools involved in the accommodation review. The ARC will weigh the value of the school(s) to the student above the other factors to be assessed. A final St. Catharines ARC report is to be submitted by Senior Staff to the Committee of the Whole by March 2014 providing recommendations on a range of accommodation for these two schools.

The process for the St. Catharines Accommodation Review Committee is transparent, with open dialogue and multiple opportunities for community consultation and input. The targeted outcome will be recommendations for efficient, long term solutions to continue to provide excellence in Catholic education for our students, parents and the community of St. Catharines.

Guiding Principles of the St. Catharines ARC

Based on Ministry of Education and Board Policy 701.2, the guiding principles of the St. Catharines ARC are;

1. Committee members speak as a committee for both schools as "our schools"
2. Target outcome is to enhance learning environment for students
3. Open, honest, direct and transparent process and information
4. Range of options to be considered for school(s) and efficiencies for the Board
5. All meetings are open to the public
6. Specific public meetings will provide ample opportunities for community input / consultation with the ARC committee
7. Information, data, facts, statistics provided to the ARC as required and requested
8. Decisions reached by consensus

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9. Meetings will last up to two (2) hours unless extended by consensus of the committee
10. Committee members unable to attend three (3) ARC meetings will be requested to have their membership re-assigned

ARC School Consideration

- a) School or group of schools unable to provide a suitable and equitable range of learning opportunities for students
- b) School or group of schools has or will experience an adverse impact on learning opportunities for students due to declining enrolment
- c) Reorganization involving a school or group of schools could enhance program and learning opportunities for students
- d) Teaching / learning spaces are not suitable to provide the programs needed to serve the community and retrofitting may be cost prohibitive
- e) Under normal staffing allocation practices, it would be necessary to assign three grades to one class in one or more of the schools
- f) One or more of the schools is experiencing higher building maintenance expenses than the average for the system and / or is in need of major capital improvements
- g) In one or more of the schools there are safety and / or environmental concerns attached to the building, the school site or its locality
- h) The consolidation of the schools is in the best interest of the overall school system
- i) It has been no less than five (5) years since the inception of a study of the school by an Accommodation Review Committee

Range of Factors to Consider

- a) Enrolment and demographics key to overall operating and capital funding
- b) Growth areas overshadowed by declining enrolment / surplus space
- c) Maintain the schools and to continue to monitor them
- d) Reorganize the schools, their programs or their grade structures
- e) Major program relocation with respect to one or more the schools
- f) New school construction or additions to existing schools
- g) Use of portables
- h) Change of boundaries of the school
- i) Consolidation or closure of a school(s)
- j) Others as determined by the ARC

Community Input and Consultation

While Working Committee Meetings are open to the public, only ARC members are eligible to participate in committee discussions. The required four (4) Public Meetings are scheduled to share information and to seek input from the community.

1st ARC Public Meeting – Thursday, October 10, 2013

- At the first public meeting, the ARC will describe its mandate, outline the pupil accommodation review, and give the public a briefing on the data and issues to be addressed. The ARC will also describe how the Generic School Valuation Framework has been customized. The ARC will receive the community input.

2nd ARC Public Meeting – Thursday, November 7, 2013

- At the second public meeting, the ARC will present its draft school specific, valuation reports under the customized School Valuation Framework for the two schools under consideration to the public and receive community input.

3rd ARC Public Meeting – Thursday, December 5, 2013

- At the third public meeting, the ARC will receive community input on the accommodation options to be considered and will receive community input.

4th ARC Public Meeting – Thursday, January 30, 2013

- At the fourth public meeting, the ARC will present its draft School Valuation Report to the public and will receive community input. The ARC may make changes to the report based on feedback at the meeting.

ARC School Valuation Report

The School Valuation Report from the St. Catharines ARC to the Director of Education will address the points outlined in Board Policy (701.2 – Section 2.6) as summarized in these Terms of Reference along with any additional points as determined by the ARC.

Customizing the Generic School Valuation Framework Guidelines

The Niagara Catholic Generic School Valuation Framework template was designed based on Ministry of Education templates and best practices as part of the information gathering process to determine a range of best options for the final report. The template has been edited for use within Niagara Catholic Accommodation Review Committees and vetted through Administrative Council twice, the Regional Catholic School Council and Trustees of the Niagara Catholic District School Board. Following the vetting process, it was added to Board Policy 701.2 – Closure of Schools / Accommodation Review Policy.

Guiding Principles of the School Valuation Framework

1. Items can be added under each category – student, school board, community and local economy but not removed from the template.
2. The ARC will complete the valuations for each school using the same template and scoring rubric.

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3. Both elementary schools will be viewed together.
4. To objectively score both schools, the St. Catharines ARC will develop an objective rubric for each category to determine a credible weighted score for each category.
5. Scoring is used as part of the information gathering process to determine a range of best options for the final report.
6. The value to the Student has the highest weighed value.
7. Weighed values cannot be altered on the template.
8. Detailed Committee discussion and community input will be held prior to final scores being determined by the committee.

Task

To assist the ARC in completing a customized School Valuation Framework to be used for each of the two (2) schools, members of the St. Catharines ARC will be divided into sub-committees to focus on each of the four evaluation criteria.

Catholic School Council Chairs – Value to the Student

Principals – Value to the School Board

Parish Priests/Municipal Councillor/Business Community – Value to the Community / Economy

Members of the sub-committee will:

- a) Review the current criteria to determine if any additional criteria are required
- b) Using the draft rubric for each area, will determine objective scoring rubrics for each area
- c) Share conclusions regarding each of the four evaluations, and any additions and the scoring rubric with all members of the ARC committee
- d) Select one (1) member to speak to the evaluation criteria and the draft rubric scoring at the first public meeting

The final report will provide recommendations to the Director of Education for consideration in the Staff report to the Committee of the Whole

The School Valuation Report will ensure that the following is addressed;

- a) The implications for the program for students both in the school(s) under consideration for consolidation, closure or program relocation and in the school(s) where programs may be affected
- b) The effects of consolidation, closure or program relocation on the following:
 - i. Attendance area defined for the schools
 - ii. Attendance at other schools
 - iii. The need and extent of bussing

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- c) The financial effects of consolidating or not consolidating school(s), including any capital implications
- d) Revenue implications as a result of the consolidation, closure or program relocation
- e) Savings expected to be achieved as a result of the consolidation, closure or program relocation
 - i. School operations (heating, lighting, cleaning, routine maintenance)
 - ii. Expenditures to address school renewal issues which will no longer be required
- f) Additional expenditures, if any, at schools which will accommodate students displaced as a result of consolidation, closure or program relocation decision taken by the board
 - i. School operations (heating, lighting, cleaning, routine maintenance)
 - ii. School administration
 - iii. School renewal
 - iv. Transportation
 - v. Net savings / costs associated with teaching staff, paraprofessionals, student transportation
 - vi. Possible alternative use or disposition of an empty building

St. Catharines ARC Report Goals

1. Continue to provide excellence in Catholic Education
2. Continue to provide the highest quality of learning opportunities for all students
3. Provide the best range of options / recommendations for consideration
4. Ensure efficient use of system resources and facilities
5. Provide long-term accommodation recommendations
6. Provide recommendations for revised attendance boundaries if required