

**Members/:**

**Trustees** J. Ascough (Student Trustee)  
E. Crawford – via teleconference  
L. French  
W. Garrod  
D. Jackson – via videoconference  
T. Mahoney  
K. McGregor - via videoconference  
P. Murray  
A. Ross  
S. Ruttan (Chair)  
W. Sanderson (Student Trustee)

**Officials:** M. Babcock, Supervising Principal  
P. Babin, Superintendent of Business Services  
R. Bailey, Facilitator  
K. Burra, Superintendent of Education  
C. Downie, Planning Officer  
B. Fraser-Stiff, Superintendent of Education - regrets  
D. Fowler, Manager of Facility Services  
S. Gillam, Supervising Principal  
A. Labrie, Superintendent of Human Resources  
A. McDonnell, Supervising Principal  
A. MacLeod, Manager of IT & Planning  
J. Silver, Supervising Principal  
D. Rantz, Director of Education

**Recorder:** L. Strange, Records Management Coordinator

**Approval of Agenda**

*MOVED BY: Trustee French, seconded by Trustee Ross, that the agenda, as presented, be approved. Carried.*

**Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

No declarations were made.

**Chair's Report**

Chair Murray stated:

"Good evening and welcome to everyone who has joined us tonight. My name is Paula Murray and I am the Chair of the Limestone District School Board of Trustees. I would like to remind everyone that this is a regular meeting of the School Enrolment School Capacity Committee of the Whole Board, where Trustees will receive two reports. The first report is the Initial Staff Report Regarding Yarker Family School & Odessa Public School. The second item is an Administrative Report on Consultation with the Algonquin Lakeshore Catholic District School Board concerning a joint use facility on Wolfe Island. We understand that discussing the potential consolidation or closure of a school may be anxious for the school communities involved.

As we get started, I would like to ensure everyone is aware of the process and protocols for tonight's meeting. I also want to ensure there is no confusion or misunderstanding about what will occur tonight.

This meeting is not designed to receive public input or is it a meeting where Trustees will be making a final decision about closing a school.

The purpose of tonight's meeting is for Trustees to officially receive the Initial Senior Staff Report in accordance with Board Policy #15: Pupil Accommodation Review and the Ministry of Education Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline.

It is the responsibility of Senior Staff to review the pupil accommodation across our school district, provide Trustees with background information, and to provide an accommodation option.

Trustees will not be discussing the report or its recommendations in any great detail tonight. Any questions coming forward tonight from Trustees would be limited to questions requesting clarification.

The role of tonight's committee meeting is to make a recommendation, then that would be considered for approval by the Committee of the Whole Board of Trustees at the next regular meeting which is scheduled for Oct. 19.

Much time and effort has been put into the Initial Staff Report. I would like to thank the Director and Senior Staff for their thoughtful and dedicated support in moving this process forward.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I am grateful for the careful consideration of all options that keep students at the forefront and will certainly help Trustees with our future decisions.

As for tonight's agenda, I would like to remind guests about the process going forward. I would ask for everyone's respect, patience and cooperation in allowing us to conduct our meeting and complete the business on the agenda without interruption.

We will now move on to the presentation of the Senior Staff Reports – first the report regarding Yarker Family School & Odessa Public School.”

**Director’s Comments**

Director Rantz stated:

“I would like to reiterate the Chair’s comments that the Long Term Accommodation Plan represents staff’s obligation under the Ministry Policy to bring the Board of Trustees a report outlining accommodation issues. The reports that are being presented tonight need to be viewed in the context of the whole board.

It is our responsibility to provide equitable programming for all of our students in LDSB. The schools discussed tonight are parts of the whole.

We recognize that our schools have wonderful histories and important places in our communities and the conversation around any possible school closures is a really difficult and emotional one.

Tonight you vote to look at each situation further and if a Program Accommodation Review is initiated, there will be opportunities to hear feedback from the public. If we stop here, we don’t ever hear from the public.”

**Action Items:**

**1. Initial Staff Report Regarding Yarker Family School & Odessa Public School**

R. Bailey presented the initial staff report regarding the Yarker Family school and Odessa Public School.

The Limestone Board is in the implementation of the new Ministry of Education Guidelines regarding *Community Planning and Partnership* and *Pupil Accommodation Review*.

This Initial Staff Report has some similarities and several key differences from Accommodation Staff Reports that were received by Trustees in the past.

As noted in the Observation section of the Administrative Report the Staff reviewed the Long Term Accommodation Plan produced by Ameresco and given the recommendation to “*establish a Pupil Accommodation Review in 2016-17 involving Yarker Family School and Odessa Public School, with a view to close Yarker FS and redirect pupils to Odessa P.S.*” elected to study the school situation in greater detail and ultimately to produce an Initial Staff Report.

In Section 3, at the bottom of page 1, of the Initial Staff Report outlines the Goals on which the Staff focused when studying the information that was gathered. Highlights of the information reviewed are found in the body of the report and further details are outlined in the School Information Profiles attached as Appendix A and B.

Low enrolment and underutilization of Yarker Family School are viewed as the key

issues. Section 4 of the report and the SIP for Yarker Family School (starting on Appendix A page 11) provides data concerning enrolment at the school.

Of note is that in 2015-16 the enrolment was 36 students, of which 11 students were from out of boundary. The 25 in boundary students, represented about 45% of the JK to Gr 3 students in the catchment area that attended an LDSB school. Of the 31 JK to Gr 3 students in the catchment area attending another LDSB school, 12 attended Odessa P.S. Presently the enrolment at Yarker F.S. is 26.

The facility utilization ranges from about 50% in 2015-16 to 35% presently.

The enrolment at the school is accommodated in two classes, a JK to Grade 1 and a Grade 2-3. Further decline in enrolment could place this 2 class organization in jeopardy. In considering other possible options, such as boundary changes, information about the context of the school was reviewed. As can be seen Yarker Family School is relatively close to 5 other LDSB schools. With the exception of Harrowsmith P.S. all of the other schools are underutilized, so to take students from those schools would increase their utilization issue.

Harrowsmith P.S. is 105% utilized, which in this case means about 15 students over the school's on the ground (OTG) capacity. The map of the schools shows that the eastern boundary of the Yarker F.S. catchment area is approximately 6 km from Harrowsmith P.S. Moving the eastern boundary in order to capture at least 25 JK to Grade 3 students would place the boundary within about 3 km of Harrowsmith P.S. In capturing these students within the boundary there is no guarantee that the students would choose to attend Yarker Family School. Other issues with a boundary change option are also listed in the report, as well as the value to the Board of maintaining a high utilization rate at Harrowsmith P.S.

Given that the Yarker F.S. catchment area is contained within the Grade 4 to 8 catchment area for Odessa P.S. it was decided that the best location for the students from Yarker F.S. to be accommodated was at Odessa P.S.

Additional information about the Instructional Profile of the schools is located in Section 8 of the Initial Staff Report as well as in Appendix A page 10 and Appendix B page 12.

The highlights of the Facility Profile are outlined in section 9 of the Report and greater detail is provided in the School Information Profile. There are no key issues with the facility however, to reduce the Board's liability relative to renewal need costs and eliminate operating costs is always a positive for the Board and the Ministry of Education.

Section 11 of the Report provides the Transportation information provided by Tri-Board Transportation. Busing the JK to Grade 3 students to Odessa P.S. from the Yarker P.S. catchment area will increase the ride time for most students. This will no doubt be an issue raised at the review committee. However, the ride times would be within a reasonable amount of time relative to that of other LDSB JK to Grade 3 students in the rural areas. The average ride times for the Grade 4 to 8 students to Odessa P.S. from the Yarker F.S. catchment area is 26 to 30 minutes. If the Yarker F.S. students were consolidated with the students in Odessa P.S. Tri-Board has indicated that one bus would be eliminated.

Prior to considering a pupil accommodation review the Board's LTAP must be shared

with the Board's Municipal and Community Partners. This was done at the first Annual Community Planning and Partnership Meeting on September 8<sup>th</sup>. Comments from the representatives from Stone Mills Township, are noted on page 7 of the Report. The decision of the Board relative to the approval to establish a Pupil Accommodation Review and a copy of the Initial Staff Report will be forwarded to the municipality and other partners. As well, a meeting to discuss the ISR and receive feedback from the municipality will be arranged prior to the development of the Final Staff Report.

One of the key mandated responsibilities of the Initial Staff Report is to present a preferred option to address the issues and provide a rationale. Section 13 outlines the preferred staff option on pg. 8:

- *That the present catchment area of the Yarker Family School be included with the Odessa Public School catchment area and the JK-Grade 3 students consolidated into Odessa Public School;*
- *That the consolidation of the Yarker Family School students into Odessa Public School commence in September 2018; and*
- *That the Yarker Family School be closed and declared surplus to the Board in the fall of 2018.*

This option addresses the low enrolment and significant underutilization of Yarker Family School and meets the goals set out at the beginning of the report.

In considering the value to the student and the value to the Board the Staff believes that the option will:

*Maintain or improve the curricular, extra curricular and social opportunities for the students by exposing them to:*

- a more focused curricular experience;
- a wider variety of extra curricular opportunities;
- a wider range of staff talents and interests;
- a larger cohort base from which to select friends;
- a wider age group of students for assistance and modelling; and
- the opportunity to join their siblings and unite the family in one elementary school.

*Maximize the use of Board and Ministry of Education resources – staff, facilities and transportation by:*

- reducing the number of staff required;
- reduce the utility and other costs of operating the schools;
- improving the utilization of the schools; and
- reducing the number of buses needed.

*Reduce the financial liability of the Board and the Ontario Ministry of Education by:*

- reducing the renewal needs amount; and
- selling of the building.

The purpose of the Initial Staff Report is to:

- provide Trustees with background information on the accommodation situation at Yarker Family School and Odessa Public School;
- to provide an accommodation option, and

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- to seek School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee of the Whole Board (SE/SCC) approval to conduct a Pupil Accommodation Review for Yarker Family School and Odessa Public School.

**Next Steps:**

If approval to conduct a Pupil Accommodation Review concerning Yarker Family School and Odessa P. S. is granted the key next steps are:

- In compliance with Board Policy 15, a Pupil Accommodation Review Committee (PARC) will be established (October);
- The PAR Committee will hold a minimum of 4 working meetings (early November to late March)
- There will be two PARC public meetings (End of November & early March)
- One meeting, and more, if needed, will be held with the affected municipality and community partners (December - January);
- Presentation of the Final Staff Report to SE/SCC on April 24, 2017;
- SE/SCC meeting on May 9, 2017 to hear delegations and consider reports and communication received;
- SE/SCC meeting on May 17, 2017 to further consider reports and communication received and make a recommendation to be considered at the regular Board meeting, May 17, 2017.

Trustee Ross inquired about what other options were looked at beside the Harrowsmith boundary change. R. Bailey responded that the review also looked at possible partnerships to utilize the surplus space in the building. While this could meet the Board's financial needs if an organization was able to pay a fair rental amount, it would still not meet the student needs, ie programming, extra-curriculars and social well-being.

Trustee Garrod thanked the gallery for coming out to show support for the Yarker Family School community.

Trustee Garrod further inquired how the public feedback would be received. The PARC (Pupil Accommodation Review Committee) would receive the input during the review through a variety of means, including public consultations. The final report would include all of the public feedback received during the process.

In response to a question about the library currently housed in the Yarker Family School site Superintendent Babin stated that the agreement has an exit provision if needed. The LDSB would have to follow the Ministry process for disposal of school sites, and would also have to have further discussions with the Municipality of Stone Mills should the Board make a decision to close the school.

In response to a question about potential cost savings due to the closure of the school Superintendent Babin stated that Section 10 of the report deals with this area. In addition to operational cost savings, there would be additional savings in staffing and transportation.

Student Trustee Sanderson joined the meeting at 5:05 pm.

Trustee Mahoney requested a detailed report on costs savings, not an aggregate amount.

Trustee Jackson inquired if the municipalities of Stone Mills or Lennox & Addington have provided long term growth projections or plans for new residential builds in the area. Superintendent Babin stated that none had been shared at this time.

It was clarified that Yarker Family School was not the only school identified for possible closure in the Board's LTAP, and that at present there are four schools with under 50% utilization.

Yarker Family School is unique in that it offers the chance to move the students to another school where they would be with family members and neighbours.

Trustee French stated that due to her experience as a Trustee and her involvement in previous Accommodation Reviews she has faith in the accuracy of the enrolment projections. Past data of a similar nature has proved to be very reliable.

Trustee French further stated that starting the accommodation review process will allow the Board to review in-depth the data presented in the LTAP. She offered her support for the recommendation to begin the review process.

Trustee Garrod read the following statement:

"The role of the Board is to provide the best educational programs and opportunities for our students.

The Limestone District School Board has been doing that by providing French immersion & early immersion, the challenge program, Focus programs, and support for small schools, Yarker being an example.

The opportunities are determined by the budget, and can we afford to fund the program.

The province, which funds school boards, is pushing for school closures by removing the top-up funding for schools with low enrolment.

As a Trustee I have a number of responsibilities, two of which are representing my community and the fiscal responsibility of the Board.

Every school is connected: overstaffing in one school may mean understaffing in another.

I do not believe politics should be involved in education. Our mandate is clear to provide the best educational opportunities possible for our students.

Today is not about deciding to close a school. I will always vote in favour of a review of our schools. All of them in my area, or out of my area.

This provides a real evaluation of our Board resources and how they are being used.

When it comes time to vote on actual school closures or consolidation my vote will be cast on an individual basis."

Trustee Mahoney echoed the sentiments of Trustee Garrod. He stated that the Board is restricted by the process from the Ministry. He further stated he is always looking for the

best interest of students and parents, and will definitely be listening to the public input.

*MOTION:*

1. *That the School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee of the Whole Board (SE/SCC) receive the Initial Staff Report Regarding Yarker Family School and Odessa Public School; and*
2. *That the SE/SCC recommend that the Board approve the conducting of a Pupil Accommodation Review (PAR) for Yarker Family School and Odessa Public School to commence in the fall of 2016.*

*MOVED BY: Trustee Ruttan, seconded by Trustee French.*

Roll Call vote:

The non-binding recorded vote was as follows:

YEAS: Trustee Crawford, Trustee French, Trustee Garrod, Trustee Jackson, Trustee Mahoney, Trustee McGregor, Trustee Murray, Trustee Ross, Trustee Ruttan, Trustee Ascough, Trustee Sanderson (11)

NAYS: (0)

The binding recorded vote was as follows:

YEAS: Trustee Crawford, Trustee French, Trustee Garrod, Trustee Jackson, Trustee Mahoney, Trustee McGregor, Trustee Murray, Trustee Ross, Trustee Ruttan, (9)

NAYS: (0)

The original motion was called and Carried (9:0).

The was a five minute recess.

**2. Consultation with ALCDSB Concerning Joint Use Facility on Wolfe Island**

R. Bailey stated that Marysville P.S. is a small JK to Grade 8 school experiencing low enrolment and underutilization. Senior Staff are hoping to explore with the Algonquin & Lakeshore Catholic District School Board the possibility of a joint use facility on Wolfe Island. This action is consistent with the Long Term Accommodation Plan produced by Ameresco.

Background information is provided concerning enrolment, class organization and staffing at Marysville P.S. as well basic information about Sacred Heart Catholic School in the report. Given that the two schools are located in close proximity and that if the enrolment for Marysville P.S. is maintained or as projected declines, the sharing of facilities offers the possibility of a viable option to address the underutilization.

Due to the location on Wolfe Island there is no viable option to move boundaries.



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Enrolment is slightly up this year due to several new families having moved to the island.

Trustee Ross inquired why the previous partnership with ALCDSB ended. R. Bailey reported that the previous arrangement saw all kindergartens attending Marysville and all grade 7-8 students attending Sacred Heart. The rest of the grades went to their respective schools. When Choices at 7 was introduced in LDSB it changed the number of intermediate students attending school on the island, and the distribution of students between the schools was altered.

Trustee Garrod expressed his support of the joint-use facility and stated he thought it was an ideal model to replicate throughout the province.

Trustee Ruttan stated she was pleased to see the Outdoor Education program would not be affected.

In response to a question Director Rantz stated that the Ministry has not offered any further details about partnerships.

Trustee Ascough asked for clarification and it was explained that the proposed arrangement would be two separate schools operating in the same building.

Trustee Crawford stated that the partnership worked before and the community was in favour of the arrangement.

Trustee Jackson expressed his support of the proposal, adding that it might be an ideal location to explore a 'community hub' as even with the two schools co-located the building would still have excess space.

Director Rantz stated that school boards are expecting to hear more from the Ministry about community hubs, and that the LDSB has already expressed interest in being a pilot location.

*MOTION:*

1. *That the School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee of the Whole Board (SE/SCC) receive the Administrative Report on Consultation with ALCDSB concerning joint use facility on Wolfe Island;*

2. *That the SE/SCC recommend that the Board grant approval for the Director to write to the Director of Education of the Algonquin Lakeshore Catholic District School Board (ALCDSB) requesting a meeting(s) to explore the possibility of a joint use facility on Wolfe Island, and that the Director report back to the SE/SCC at the April 2017 meeting.*

*MOVED BY: Trustee French, seconded by Trustee Ross.*

Roll Call vote:

The non-binding recorded vote was as follows:

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YEAS: Trustee Crawford, Trustee French, Trustee Garrod, Trustee Jackson, Trustee Mahoney, Trustee McGregor, Trustee Murray, Trustee Ross, Trustee Ruttan, Trustee Ascough, Trustee Sanderson (11)

NAYS: (0)

The binding recorded vote was as follows:

YEAS: Trustee Crawford, Trustee French, Trustee Garrod, Trustee Jackson, Trustee Mahoney, Trustee McGregor, Trustee Murray, Trustee Ross, Trustee Ruttan, (8)

NAYS: (0)

The original motion was called and Carried (9:0).

**Other Business**

No other business at this time.

**Private Session**

No private session items were discussed.

**Next Meeting Date**

April 24, 2017

**Adjournment**

Chair Murray called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

*MOVED BY: Trustee Garrod, seconded by Trustee Ross, that the meeting adjourn. Carried.*

The meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.