



LIMESTONE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee Of the Whole Board Meeting

Monday, June 5, 2017 at 6:00 pm

Limestone Education Centre

Agenda

Approval of Agenda

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Action Items

1. Administration Report - Summary of Pupil Accommodation Review Regarding Yarker Family School & Odessa Public School (Appended.)

Other Business

Next Scheduled Meeting Date

Wednesday, October 4, 2017 – Limestone Education Centre

Adjournment

Limestone District School Board

Administrative Report



Report To: The School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee of the Whole Board

From: Debra Rantz, Director of Education
Paul Babin, Superintendent of Business Services

Subject: **Summary of Pupil Accommodation Review Regarding Yarker Family School and Odessa Public School**

Date: June 5, 2017

Objective:

To provide Trustees with a summary of the Pupil Accommodation Review Regarding Yarker Family School and Odessa Public School.

History/Background:

The Initial Staff Report Concerning the Pupil Accommodation Review Regarding Yarker Family School and Odessa Public School was presented at the School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee of the Whole Board (SE/SCC) on September 28, 2016. The Trustees approved the initiation of the review at the October 19, 2016 Board Meeting.

The Pupil Accommodation Review Committee (PARC) was formed and met on five occasions for working meetings starting on November 2, 2016. The PARC section of the review process ended on April 11, 2017 with the submission of the Pupil Accommodation Review Committee: Final Report.

Public feedback was received through two public meetings, November 30, 2016 and March 7, 2017, and an on-line survey and written communications.

The Final Staff Report Regarding Yarker Family School and Odessa Public School was presented to the SE/SCC on April 24, 2017, and on May 9, 2017, the SE/SCC received presentations and reports from 17 delegations.

Observations/Analysis:

The accommodation issues identified concerning Yarker Family School were low enrolment and facility utilization with the key concern focusing on programming. Given the low enrolment, the school staff must be supported by other schools in the Board and is on the cusp of becoming a one-classroom school for JK to Grade 3 students. As well, since the school's enrolment has declined since 2014 to a stage where in October 2016, approximately 75% of the age 4 to 8 children in the community did not attend Yarker Family School it would appear that the school, for many reasons, is not meeting the needs of the community.

The Pupil Accommodation Review Committee: Final Report presented four options to address the low enrolment and/or low utilization at Yarker Family School:

- Expand the school population to Grade 5, changing the bus boundary with Newburgh Public School and Harrowsmith Public School and enforce Administrative Procedure 305 – Student Transfer;
- Provide enriched programming, focused on Indigenous, agricultural and outdoor education;
- Lease space for a Community Sharing Centre; and
- Provide French Immersion Programming.

The Final Staff Report provided comments related to each of these options as well as a fifth option to keep Yarker Family School open due to current changes in political climate. (*Final Staff Report pg. 13-20*)

Concern was raised with regard to the transportation of the students from Yarker Family School to Odessa Public School. Using information from Tri-Board Student Transportation Services, it was demonstrated in the Final Staff Report that if the Yarker Family School students were re-directed to Odessa Public School the transportation ride times would increase for some students and decrease for others, with the range of the average ride times being similar to current times (*Final Staff Report pg 8*).

- The goals outlined in the Initial Staff Report in reviewing the schools and bringing forward an option were to maintain or improve the curricular, extra curricular and social opportunities for the students;
- Maximize the use of Board and Ministry of Education resources – staff, facilities (reduce unused space) and transportation; and
- Reduce the financial liability of the Board and the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Senior Staff believes that Yarker Family School is a unique situation requiring immediate attention. Some of the reasons include the following (*April 24, 2017 SE/SCC minutes pg 4*):

- This is the smallest JK to Grade 3 school in the province;
- It is not highly-supported by the community;
- We are heading quickly to a one-room schoolhouse - JK, K, 1, 2 and 3;
- Other small schools in our Board are “supported” schools who receive funding to maintain these unique classroom organizations (extra funding for being remote/isolated.) Yarker does not receive such funding;
- Even if population fluctuates up or down, the JK to Grade 3 model is not desirable when we have other viable options for students. In this case, these students will join their siblings and peers in the school they will be attending in Grade 4;
- That the solutions brought forward by the PARC are not viable and would have negative ramifications for staffing, enrolment, transportation and programming;
- If Trustees do not make the decision to close this school, we cannot initiate another PARC to include this school for five years.

Recommendations:

1. That the School Enrolment/School Capacity Committee of the Whole Board (SE/SCC) receive this Administrative Report and (Booklet 3) containing the Final Staff Report, Minutes from the SE/SCC meetings of April 24, 2017 and May 9, 2017, and May 9, 2017 delegation presentations and written feedback from the community from April 8, 2017 to May 31, 2017.

2. That the SE/SCC recommend that the Board approve the following:
 - 2.1 That the present catchment area of the Yarker Family School be included with the Odessa Public School catchment area and the JK to Grade 3 students consolidated into Odessa Public School;
 - 2.2 That the consolidation of the Yarker Family School students into Odessa Public School commence in September 2018; and
 - 2.3 That the Yarker Family School be closed, and declared surplus to the Board in the fall of 2018.

This report was reviewed by:



Paul Babin
Superintendent of Business Services



Debra Rantz
Director of Education