

ARC MEETING NOTES
Tuesday, April 1, 2008
St. Benedict Catholic School, Sarnia
Revised: April 10, 2008

Chair: Philip McMillan, Superintendent of Education

Recording Secretaries: Tina Smith & Cathy Calvert

TIME	ITEM
7:04 p.m.	<p>Opening Prayer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Philip McMillan, Superintendent of Education, opened the third meeting of the South Sarnia ARC with prayer.
7:05 p.m.	<p>Welcome/Opening Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philip McMillan, Superintendent of Education introduced himself as Chair of the meeting and acknowledged the Trustees and Board Staff in attendance. ▪ Philip McMillan asked the members of the ARC to introduce themselves. ▪ The Chair then introduced the attending Trustees, Board staff and Randy Wilson, Architect. ▪ A brief overview was then given regarding the reason for the ARC committee meetings. Policy 7.4 gives mandate issue of excess capacity in the four school communities. ▪ Tonight we will look at the possibilities and, as an ARC committee, attempt to come to consensus on the best option for south Sarnia. ▪ Ministry of Education guidelines and Board Policy relative to the Accommodation Review Process were reviewed.
7:10 p.m.	<p>Rules of Order</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mandated to meet minimum of 4 times we have decided to have 5 meetings in south Sarnia. Because of the additional meeting, all agenda items will be covered, although perhaps not in the pre-announced order. ▪ An agenda for each meeting will be followed and will be used for order in the meeting. ▪ The Chair's role is to ensure that the agenda is followed, Rules of Order are met and for clarification of any points. ▪ The role of the ARC is to consider the evidence and to suggest ways in which the problem should be dealt with. ▪ All meetings, deliberations and decisions by the ARC will be done in public. ▪ All meeting notes will be posted on the Board website. This is the third of five meetings. ▪ The final decision rests with the elected Trustees of the Board who will consider the recommendations of the ARC and any recommendations from the Director of Education at the June Board meetings. ▪ All meetings will be public. It is a prerequisite of the appeal process that those wishing to appeal must demonstrate that they have attended meetings; therefore, attendance is being recorded. <p>Attendance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All attendees were asked to register their attendance at the beginning of each meeting. ▪ It is a prerequisite of the appeal process that those wishing to appeal must demonstrate that they have attended meetings.

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	<p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Only adults (voting age) will be permitted to address the ARC or ask questions. ▪ Microphones are available to those who wish to ask questions at appropriate times during the meeting. ▪ For the benefit of the audience and those taking notes please state your name and your relationship to the process. ▪ The Chair will determine the order of questions. ▪ A maximum of one hour will be devoted to the question period. If questions remain at the conclusion of the meeting, the Chair will close the meeting and invite those with questions to submit their question(s) in writing. The questions will be answered at the next ARC meeting and may be posted on the website. <p>Notes of the meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Notes will be taken by two recording secretaries and will be placed on the web shortly after the meeting. These are not minutes. <p>Protocols</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All ARC meetings will be held in public, at least one meeting in each of the schools involved in the process. ▪ Of the five Sarnia meetings one will be held in each school involved in the ARC process with the last meeting being held at St. Patrick’s Catholic High School. ▪ The meeting falls under the direction of the Chair and the Chair will maintain order during the meetings. ▪ Anyone who is hearing impaired should please notify the Chair two weeks in advance of the meeting and accommodations will be made.
7:20 p.m.	<p>Presentation of the March 4, 2008 notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The notes of the March 4, 2008 meeting were presented by the Chair. ▪ They are posted on the Board website. ▪ The chart for enrolment as of October 31, 2007, and the projected enrolment as of October 31, 2012, was reviewed. • The On The Ground Capacity (OTG) with current enrolment, as well as, projected enrolment for 2012 for each school were reviewed. • Questions and answers from the second ARC meeting are included in the ARC package for tonight and are posted on our Board website. <p>Questions arising from the previous meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None.
7:30 p.m.	<p>Presentation of the information requested by the ARC</p>

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- Philip outlined that at the last meeting the ARC decided that all four schools remaining open was not a reasonable option as the board would have to forego the 4.2 million dollars as outlined by the Ministry of Education.
- The ARC unanimously rejected this option.
- Philip outlined another option discussed - having three schools remain open and closing one. This was not a worthwhile option because it was a short-term solution, which would require another closure in the near future and would not meet the goal of having schools filled to 80% capacity.
- The ARC unanimously rejected this option.
- The remaining two options which the ARC needs to decide upon are:
 - Two schools stay open and two schools close
 - Close all four schools and open a new school
- The ARC will need to consider how best to serve the students, the board and the community, whether it is by one school or two.
- A discussion of specific things the ARC and the Principals would like to see included in the remaining school(s), either new school(s) or retrofitted school(s) was then established.

- The list of “must haves” developed were:
 - Teacher resource/work room.
 - Second kitchen (preferably off the gym) to be used for community use, parent preparation of student lunches, snack/breakfast program, etc.
 - Double gym with a working partition.
 - A school entrance that is welcoming to parents and visitors, and administration offices which have a sight line to the main door.
 - Air conditioning.
 - Research/Library/Resource room for students.
 - Best Start facilities.
 - Bus Lanes (off the road) and separate parent/student drop off area.
 - Large JK and SK classrooms with their own washrooms/water fountains.
 - Adequate green space and pave area for outdoor play including sufficient shaded area.
 - Electrical loading sufficient in each classroom (i.e. computer access) for current and future use
 - Class size capped 24 -25 for senior grades as well as junior
 - Staffing resources, curriculum E.A. office space for behavioural accommodation
 - Sound fields in all classrooms
 - Accommodate special needs i.e. accessibility, washrooms
 - White Boards in all classrooms
 - Greening of retrofit or new school.
 - Chapel
 - Performance space i.e. stage

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- Facility must accommodate good curriculum growth.
- Medical room with privacy and close to main office for monitoring.
- Placement of outside doors and design of building for security and safety.

- Randy Wilson, Architect, was introduced to the ARC by Philip McMillan.
- Randy is to assist the ARC, to answer questions regarding the two options under consideration.
 - Randy stated that all “must haves” on the ARC list are easier to accommodate in a new school, as you are starting from scratch.
 - In order to accommodate the “must haves” in a retrofitted school(s), there are some constraints due to the existing shell and site footprint of the school.
 - Problems associated with retrofitting:
 - Starting with existing shell.
 - Existing footprint on site.
 - Creating adequate bus lanes can be difficult to plan on existing school site.
 - Ventilation or air condition is difficult in a retrofitted school.
 - Must deal with existing supporting walls, pillars, etc.
 - Office space and location may need to be determined by existing structure.
 - Can retrofit existing buildings with technology.
 - Sustainability will require considerable thought to accommodate in a retrofit.
 - Chapel can be accommodated in a retrofit.
 - Best Start can be accommodated in a retrofit but can be difficult.
 - Medical room with desired access, privacy, facilities and desired location may not be available in retrofit.
 - Exits and entrances to schools and safety issues in schools can be complicated and expensive in retrofitted schools.

- Timelines and the impact of new construction or retrofitting:
 - Building a new school will require 12 – 14 months of construction, depending on size of school.
 - Retrofit can take about the same amount of time and can be more difficult due to the disruption of students, staff and parents.
 - Four to eight months of design work may be required for either retrofit or new school.
 - Design can be more difficult for a retrofit and may take longer to accomplish good solution due to the constraints of the existing building.
 - 20 – 24 months for completion of the project either new school or retrofit.

- Philip then asked the ARC to consider the two options available. A list of the positives and negatives for each group of stakeholders:

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One School Option

Student Perspective

Positive	Negative
New/retrofitted school possible less disruption	Big school
Safe, clean environment	Less opportunity to be on school team/possibility of having two teams for each sport
No triple grades and reduced double grades	Possibility of recesses being split – students may not play with friends same grade from other classes
Proper JK and SK rooms	Greater number of portable structures
	Less school yard for more students
	No alternate site for curriculum & fresh start for some students

Board Perspective

Positive	Negative
Lower maintenance costs, energy costs etc. than two buildings	Concerns by public regarding school size and possible disaffection or disassociation
Beneficial to staff – new/retrofitted building	Concerns regarding the challenges of building a sense of community in a large school
Accessible for staff – in keeping with our inclusive philosophy	Debt
Economic advantages with respect to improving the efficient use of itinerant teachers and support staff i.e. Phys. Ed., French, Speech Pathologists, Social Workers	
Less work for board staff during demolition and construction phases	
Less opportunity for public disgruntlement when there is one school	
Opportunity for resources from four schools to be pooled, reduction of cost	
Easier to establish retention strategies to the high	

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schools	
Reduced staffing needs	

One School Option - Continued

Community Perspective

Positive	Negative
New school more cost effective than retrofit	Four gyms to one
New/retrofitted gym	Four school yards to one
	Increased transportation i.e. buses
	Traffic significantly higher with 750-900 students
	Noise/traffic/dirt during construction

Local Economy Perspective

Positive	Negative
New/retrofitted school can be an attraction for people to locate in south Sarnia	Only one school in the community may cause some other areas in south Sarnia to be less attractive to families relocating.
	Potential of 3 empty schools in the neighbourhoods

Two School Option

Student Perspective

Positive	Negative
Alternate site for curriculum & fresh start for some students	Two boundaries in south Sarnia
No triple grades	Students and families could be dislocated
Twice as many chances to make a school team as with one school	
New/retrofitted gym	
Proper JK and SK rooms	
Size is more in keeping with what parents are used to	
Reduced transportation costs	

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Two School Option - Continued

Board Perspective

Positive	Negative
Lower maintenance costs than four schools, but more than one school	Cost of going into debt – public/taxpayer perspective
Safer/cleaner facility	Some efficiency lost by dispersing itinerant and support staff between two rather than one site.
Accessible – in keeping with our inclusive philosophy	
Bussing costs lower than one school	

Community Perspective

Positive	Negative
Two new/retrofitted schools	Two construction sites
Two new/retrofitted gym	Two sites with increased transportation
Two school yards to use	

Local Economy Perspective

Positive	Negative
Two new/retrofitted schools can be an attraction for people to locate in south Sarnia	Loss of identity

- Jim McKenzie, Associate Director, Corporate Services and Treasurer, and Randy Wilson, Architect, spoke about the financial elements as they pertain to both the board and the Ministry and we will consider the “New School” implications and the “Retrofit School” implications.

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	New School	Retrofit School
	<p>What would be the cost of one new large school? Randy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 10-12 million construction costs only. ▪ More “bang for the buck” in a new school. ▪ Cautioned ARC that this is not all about dollars and cents it is about students, programming and community. 	<p>What are the costs of retrofitting a school? Randy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Could be very major retrofit which would make like a new school and would have less cost than building a new school ▪ Range of renovations determines cost.
	<p>What would be the cost of two new smaller schools? Randy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Total cost would be four to five million more than one large school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪
	<p>Is it financially possibly to build a new school(s)? Jim</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is possible. ▪ Steps to go through with Ministry re: Board debt. ▪ The Ministry is now very “hands on” with Capital projects. ▪ The Ministry will not make a decision to support or not to support a single school model as opposed to a two school model as that is a Board decision. They are concerned only with the debt load. 	<p>Is it financially possible to retrofit with our must and nice to have included? Jim</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is possible.
	<p>New School or retrofit is one easier to present to the Ministry? Jim</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We must provide business plan which will support whichever option we decide to go with. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A discussion was held to discuss whether the ARC supports the concept of one or two schools in south Sarnia. ▪ The ARC was reminded that they are not making the final decision but rather a recommendation to the Board. ▪ A show of hands produced the following results: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One school - 6 ▪ Two school - 4 	

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- Undecided – 1
- Absent – 1

- A suggestion was made by Paul Wubben, Director of Education, suggesting that perhaps the ARC committee might want to visit a “large school” in another board to assist them in making their decision. The ARC members are to communicate their wish to do this through their school principal.

- A discussion was held regarding the possibility of having two schools.
- One being JK-3 and the other being 4-8.
- The board has experience with JK-3 and 4-8 schools in Blenheim and the other Accommodation Review Committee in Blenheim has all but recommended the elimination of the primary, junior/intermediate concept in the Town of Blenheim.

Primary – Junior/Intermediate Schools

Positives	Negatives
One boundary	Very inconvenient for parents – interview nights, special events, school lunches
Specialized school environment	Two sets of newsletters and communication
Division and grade level meetings would be outstanding for teachers	Doctor’s appointments have to schedule pickup at two schools
Appropriate activities per age group	Volunteering becomes difficult
Convenient for parish	Siblings may not ride on the same bus i.e. splitting up families.
Age appropriate Masses	Loss of older students to take on roles of responsibility
Age appropriate plays and special events	Professional discussion between primary and junior teachers lost, issues of transition from one school to the other every year – may be a disservice to “at risk students”

Questions from ARC

- **Question:** Will there be a problem with community if we build a new large school?
- **Answer: Randy** – There are almost always concerns with new construction; however, good communication and good liaison with the surrounding community will help mitigate any negative effects from the neighbourhood.
- **Question:** If we go from 4 schools to one school will we be able to have more than one sports team?
- **Answer: Kevin Cannon & Paul Wubben** – The issue would have to go to the Standing Rules Committee to have A and B teams within the school, but this is not a huge obstacle within the schools.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question: Paul - Which one of the two scenarios would be more disruptive to students and what would the timelines would be? This could effect how many students remain in our board. • Answer: Randy: The important aspect of this is to keep the students disruption to a minimum. There will be a toll on everyone concerned. The disruption will have implication on the home life of students as well. Any renovations will be disruptive. Staff will be disrupted and it will be more difficult to meet programme expectations. The community will be disrupted as any after hours community activities will be disrupted. Disruption also covers student and staff performance.
9:30 p.m.	<p>Presentation of the agenda – April 29, 2008 – St. Peter Catholic School</p> <p>It is suggested that prior to the next meeting we meet at St. Peter Catholic Elementary School at 3:30 p.m. and tour all four schools again. This will be followed by dinner for the ARC members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Valuation instrument will be used as well as the demographics, financial information, and the school tours to make your recommendations. ▪ Presentation of discussions held at April 1, 2008 meeting. ▪ Planning and Transportation – outlining the location of students. ▪ Facilities – reviewing the impact on school facilities and the need for changes to school facilities, if any. ▪ Proposed timeline for construction and consolidation. ▪ Response from school council Chairs, Community Representatives, Parish Representatives. ▪ The draft of your Recommendation to the Board will be discussed. ▪ Because the committee did not come to consensus on which option it wishes to pursue, the agenda will be amended to consider this question. A revised agenda will be presented at the next meeting.
10:00 p.m.	<p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Please allow ten working days for all questions to be posted. <p>The Chair then thanked everyone for his or her respectful participation and closed the meeting.</p> <p>The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.</p>
	<p>Future ARC Meeting Dates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday, April 29, 2008 – St. Peter Catholic School (meet at 3:30 p.m. for school tours) • Tuesday, May 20, 2008 – St. Patrick’s Catholic High School
	<p>Future Board Meeting Dates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday, June 10, 2008 – 6:00 p.m. • Tuesday, June 17, 2008 – 6:00 p.m.

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Tuesday, June 24, 2008 – 7:00 p.m.
