

ARC Meeting – Tuesday, February 19, 2008
St. Anne Catholic School, Blenheim

This document is not a verbatim transcript. Questions and answers have been paraphrased for the sake of clarity and brevity.

Questions from the Floor

Question: How can we prepare our children for the consolidation of the schools?

Answer: This is a unique situation. Although, we have gone through many school consolidations/closings in the past, those experiences are not applicable to this case. Our Blenheim parents have children in both schools and are familiar with both schools. The transition to St. Anne will be made as seamlessly as possible. Parents need to remain positive and in turn their children will be receptive to the plan. There will be a stepping stone approach used to consolidate the two schools and primary students will be given a full orientation to the new building.

Question: What will happen to the empty school facility after consolidation?

Answer: There is a process set up by the Ministry which must be followed. The vacated facility will be offered for purchase to other public sector groups, including co-terminus boards and the municipality. If no interest is expressed the Ministry will then sign off and the Board will be able to sell the property publicly.

Question: Will the Best Start program currently housed at St. Mary move to St. Anne upon consolidation?

Answer: The Best Start program will indeed move upon consolidation to St. Anne.

Comment: It doesn't seem financially responsible to add space to a school when enrolment is declining.

Response: The enrolment numbers show that enrolment in 2012 will be 322 which is the exact capacity of St. Anne. It will be more financially responsible to operate at optimum capacity in one building with one principal, one secretary, and fewer custodial staff and to construct a small addition to accommodate Best Start.

Question: Do these meetings need to continue as this is not a very contentious issue and it seems that we have consensus on consolidation of the schools at St. Anne?

Answer: The four public meetings are a requirement by legislation. The Board is attempting to keep them short and succinct.

Question: Picking up children at both schools is very congested. Will this issue be taken under consideration during the consolidation process?

Answer: This is something that will be considered as we go forward looking at the consolidated site; i.e. bus loading, staff parking, parent drop off. Safety of the students is paramount.