

REPORT TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Revised – May 26, 2008

Paul Wubben, Director of Education

SUBJECT: Accommodation Review Report – South Sarnia Catholic Schools

PREPARED BY: Philip McMillan, Superintendent of Education

BACKGROUND:

On September 25, 2007 the St. Clair Catholic District School Board approved the establishment of an Accommodation Review Committee for the Catholic elementary schools in south Sarnia.

The members of the Accommodation Review Committee are as follows:

Philip McMillan, Chair/Superintendent of Education
Reverend James M. Higgins, Episcopal Vicar Sarnia Deanery
Sandra Kameka, Chair, St. Benedict Catholic School Community Council
Mat Madere, St. Benedict Catholic School Community Council
Yvonne Round, St. Benedict Catholic School Community Council
Dawn Genovy, Chair, St. Margaret Catholic School Community Council
Catherine Peckham, St. Margaret Catholic School Community Council
Anne Green, St. Margaret Catholic School Community Council
Christine Bouffard, Chair, St. Peter Catholic School Community Council
Janet Chynces, St. Peter Catholic School Community Council
Tracey Perks-Whitson, St. Peter Catholic School Community Council
Kelly Curry, Chair, St. Therese Catholic School Community Council
Tracey Duke, St. Therese Catholic School Community Council
Michael Caverly, St. Therese Catholic School Community Council

Resource:

Kevin Cannon, Principal, St. Benedict Catholic School
Elena Pagotto, Principal and Len Fera, Principal, St. Margaret Catholic School
Anna Giuliani, Principal, St. Peter Catholic School
Anita Cairns, Principal, St. Therese Catholic School

Five meetings were scheduled for the ARC with the following topics for discussion:

February 5, 2008 at St. Therese Catholic School – Understanding the Problem
March 4, 2008 at St. Margaret Catholic School – Evaluating the Schools from Different Perspectives
April 1, 2008 at St. Benedict Catholic School – Considering the Possibilities
April 29, 2008 at St. Peter Catholic School – Making the Recommendation
May 20, 2008 at St. Patrick’s Catholic High School – Confirming the Recommendation

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

All four south Sarnia Catholic elementary schools are under-capacity according to the Ministry of Education On the Ground Capacity rating. By 2012, fully one half of the pupil places are projected to be empty among the four school communities.

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SUMMARY OF KEY INFORMATION:

- The On the Ground Capacity (OTG – a ministry measure of the occupancy of a school building) of the four south Sarnia schools as of September 2007 was below the 80% funding threshold set by the Ministry of Education. It was 79.3% for St. Benedict; 48.4% for St. Margaret; 57.8% for St. Peter and 66.7% for St. Therese.
- By 2012, the OTG will decline even further to 56.5% for St. Benedict; 41.0% for St. Margaret; 53.7% for St. Peter and 49.2% for St. Therese.
- In 1999, there were six schools in south Sarnia with a combined enrolment of 1,525.0 FTE. Combined enrolment in the four schools that remain, is currently at 942 FTE, with 20 vacant classrooms among the four schools.
- St. Benedict sits on a 5.02 acre site; St. Margaret sits on 3.66 acres; St. Peter on 2.34 acres; and St. Therese on 5.23 acres.
- St. Benedict was built in 1956 with additions in 1959, 1960, 1963 and 1970; St. Margaret was built in 1959 with additions in 1962 and 1969; St. Peter was built in 1948 with additions in 1952, 1954, 1964 and 1969; and St. Therese was built in 1954 with additions in 1958, 1961, 1965, 1970 and 1979.

Further information can be found in the various reports and meeting notes for the ARC meetings. All are available on the Board's website at www.st-clair.net

SCHOOL VALUATION:

The Accommodation Review Committee toured all four south Sarnia Catholic elementary schools on two occasions – March 4, 2008 and April 29, 2008. A tour of two London schools was also arranged, with six of the 12 members of the ARC participating on April 9, 2008.

The ARC members used the School Valuation Instrument to make an assessment of each of the south Sarnia schools. At its meeting of April 29, 2008, the ARC confirmed the following values for each school:

Category	Total Value	St. Benedict	St. Margaret	St. Peter	St. Therese
Value to the Student	45	40	40	40	40
Value to the School Board	25	15	15	10	20
Value to the Community	20	18	13	10	20
Value to the Local Economy	10	5	5	5	5
Total	100	78	73	65	85

The comparison of the four schools using the instrument showed that St. Benedict and St. Therese were the first two choices are future sites in South Sarnia.

CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES:

The ARC considered how many schools were needed to serve the students of south Sarnia. The ARC concluded that two new schools are needed and that the preferred locations are St. Benedict Catholic Elementary and St. Therese Catholic Elementary.

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RECOMMENDATION:

The Accommodation Review Committee recommends that the four school communities of St. Benedict, St. Margaret, St. Peter and St. Therese Catholic schools be consolidated into two new Catholic school communities; that two new schools be built on the St. Benedict and St. Therese sites; and that the St. Margaret and St. Peter sites be closed. It is also recommended that Indian Road, running north/south be the boundary line between the proposed new sites of St. Benedict and St. Therese Catholic Schools. The area east of Modeland Road will be designated as part of the boundary area for St. Anne Catholic School.