

ARC MEETING NOTES

Tuesday, January 11, 2011
St. Michael Catholic School, Turnerville

TIME	ITEM
7:03 pm	<p>Welcome/Opening Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deb Crawford, Superintendent of Education, introduced herself as Chair of the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) and welcomed everyone to the committee's second meeting.
7:04 pm	<p>Opening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mrs. Crawford led an opening prayer.
	<p>Introductions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mrs. Crawford introduced members of the ARC, along with Trustees and Board staff in attendance. ▪ Ministry of Education guidelines and Board policy, as it relates to the accommodation review process, were reviewed. ▪ The question before the ARC, "How do we best address the problem of vacant space in our school?" was restated.
	<p>Rules of Order</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All meetings will begin at 7:00 pm at St. Michael Catholic School, Turnerville. ▪ Accurate attendance records are important and therefore all in attendance are asked to register on the sign-in sheet at the doors. ▪ An agenda will be provided for each meeting. ▪ The role of the Chair is to ensure that the agenda is followed, Rules of Order are met and all questions are answered. ▪ The role of the ARC is to consider the facts and to make recommendation(s) to the Board of Trustees. ▪ All meetings, deliberations and recommendations of the ARC will be in public. ▪ All meeting notes will be posted on the board website within ten working days. This is the second of four meetings. ▪ There will be a question period in which members of the audience can address the ARC, or members of Board administration. Individuals will have registered their attendance prior to asking their question. ▪ 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. ▪ 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. <p>Attendance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All attendees will be asked to register their attendance at the beginning of each meeting. <p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Microphones are available to those who wish to ask questions at appropriate times during the meeting. ▪ For the benefit of the audience and the recording secretaries, questioners should begin by stating their name and relationship to the process. ▪ The Chair will determine the order of questions.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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 ask audience members to submit their question(s) in writing. The question(s) along with the answer(s) will be posted on the Board 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 website within 10 working days of the meeting. These are not minutes; however, for an accurate record of each meeting an audio recording is being produced. <p>Protocols</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All ARC meetings will be held in public. ▪ If an appeal is to occur, those wishing to appeal must be able to demonstrate that they were in attendance. All audience members should register their presence on the sign-in sheets located outside the meeting room. ▪ The meeting falls under the direction of the Chair and the Chair shall 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.
	<p>ARC Mandate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The purpose of this ARC is to consider the issue of excess pupil places at St. Michael Catholic School, Turnerville, caused by declining enrolment. ▪ The decline has impacted program, extra-curricular activities, budget, staffing, transportation, and facility management. ▪ The ARC is mandated to make viable recommendation(s) to the Board with respect to the future of St. Michael, and with regard to the current students, transportation, boundaries and the site. <p>Committee Mandate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As directed by Board policy, the written recommendations of the ARC will be delivered to the Director of Education, who will make them known to the Board of Trustees at a public meeting. ▪ The ARC is mandated to consider the problem, not just from the perspective of 2010-2011 but through 2015-2016 because another ARC cannot be established for this review area for another five years. Thus the ARC must have “the long view”. While the ARC’s establishment was triggered by the present circumstances, the future must be a primary component in considering the actions the ARC will recommend. ▪ The ARC is encouraged, but not required, to come to consensus with respect to its recommendation(s). ▪ The ARC will meet a minimum of four times and will follow the timelines outlined in Board policy. ▪ The Trustees will give the ARC’s recommendations due consideration and they will decide on a course of action that best serves the needs of the Board.
<p>7:13 pm</p>	<p>Impact on Safety and Co-curricular (<i>Presentation by Shirley Churchill, Principal of St. Michael Catholic School.</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mrs. Churchill presented her report, which can be viewed by clicking on report. <p>Questions from ARC Members Cathie Vanek Question: Were there any junior teams this year?</p>

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	<p>Answer: No, at this time we do not have enough students or coaches to have junior teams.</p>
<p>7:15 pm</p>	<p>Impact on Program (<i>Presentation by Carol Ann Bélanger, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Catholic Curriculum</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mrs. Bélanger presented her report, which can be viewed by clicking on report. <p>Questions from ARC Members</p> <p>Mrs. Vanek Question: Regarding the draft number of only 2 teachers next year, we have had a triple grade the last two years, could we actually have 4 grades in one class? Answer: Yes. In Ontario, this has been done in the past; however, it is very difficult to have 4 grades in one classroom.</p> <p>Mrs. Vanek Question: Have there been triple grades in the intermediate/senior classes in Ontario? Could any information be provided from these schools to the committee? Answer: Mrs. Crawford answered that in Ontario this has been done in remote areas. The students are effectively taught in these schools; however, it requires a lot of planning and preparation. She said the Ministry of Education could be contacted to receive information from the boards that have triple intermediate/senior classes.</p> <p>Mrs. Vanek Question: Regarding students being effectively taught, how are the students' EQAO scores in these remote schools? Answer: Mrs. Crawford answered that there are many other considerations for the remote boards in these situations, which are not comparable to St. Michael. Mr. Wubben commented that EQAO scores in those situations are completely irrelevant. Pelee Island is an example of a school with grades 1-8. Their EQAO scores are not relied upon, because the small number of students makes the data statistically unreliable. Ms. Bélanger noted that it is more important to consider EQAO scores not year by year; rather, over time for a single student, such as comparing the students' Grade 3 results with their Grade 6 results.</p> <p>Ellen Jennen Question: Regarding students who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), how would that be addressed in a triple grade situation? Answer: Ms. Belanger stated that every effort would be put forward in a triple grade to try and meet the needs of the student in the class; however, with the extra expectations of the students in the other grades, it would be quite difficult.</p> <p>Wendy Vercauteren Question: The one slide addressed the breakdown for each class this year and next year, is there a cap for the intermediate grades? Answer: Mrs. Churchill said that, although 26 is slightly above the provincial average of 24.75, there is no cap for intermediate grades.</p>

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	<p>Mrs. Vanek Question: The slide shows the draft numbers for next year, which is basically what we will have. From a principal's perspective, what does that mean? Will students no longer have recess because no one is available to supervise? Answer: Mrs. Churchill responded that she supervises quite often. In that situation, she would ensure students are safe both inside and outside. The playground area would have to be reduced for safe supervision. However, the ARC speaks for not only this year, but for the next 5 years. So looking ahead, it will become increasingly difficult.</p> <p>Mrs. Vanek Question: As a principal you can supervise, however principals are away for meetings and professional development; therefore, you cannot always be there to offer supervision. Answer: Mrs. Crawford answered that students need recess, they need to be outdoors, and the Board would see that this can still happen. Ms. Bélanger further commented that another factor to consider is with only 2 teachers, there would be limited activities that could be offered for the students.</p>
<p>7:27 pm</p>	<p>Financial Considerations – Staffing, Facilities, Transportation (<i>Presentation by Jim McKenzie, Associate Director</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mr. McKenzie presented his report, which can be viewed by clicking on report. <p>Questions from ARC Members</p> <p>Mrs. Jennen Question: The ReCAPP data you presented shows within the coming five years, close to \$1 million in renovations will need to be made. That is a lot of money for our building in only five years. Can you explain that? Answer: As an example, there may be a need to replace the heating system. That one item alone will amount to between \$300,000 and \$400,000; therefore, \$1 million adds up very quickly. A report can be generated which lists the items that could need replacing. That doesn't mean everything on the list must be done in five years, but ReCAPP is a realistic guide as to major expenditures that are coming.</p> <p>Colleen Janssens Question: Could that list be obtained and given to our committee? Answer: Yes, staff can provide that list to the committee. The totals may change, as the report for the ReCAPP data that was used tonight was prepared last fall. The report you receive will be more current.</p> <p>Wendy Vercauteren Question: Since the list and total is budgeted over 5 years, could the list show the dates of when items are forecast to need replacement? Answer: Yes, the dates are provided with the items on the list.</p> <p>Mrs. Vanek</p>

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	<p>Question: Are the ride time limits set in place? Answer: Yes, the ride times are in place and are directed by Board policy. Especially in this area, where schools are close, ride times are well within the limits. At the secondary level, the ride time cap is 75 minutes; however, there are circumstances in some areas, such as in the northern reaches of the district with students attending St. Christopher in Sarnia, where exceptions need to be made because it's just not possible to cover the geography within the ride time limit. But we do our best for both elementary and secondary to abide by the policy.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">7:52 pm</p>	<p>Boundaries (<i>Presentation by Karen Dolson, Manager of Planning Services</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mrs. Dolson presented her report, which is available by clicking on report. <p>Questions from ARC Members</p> <p>Mrs. Vanek Question: Do the numbers and the maps reflect the Grade 8 students? Answer: No, the Grade 8 students are not included on the maps. The maps reflect what would need to be considered for next year.</p> <p>Mrs. Jennen Question: Could a recommendation be made for transportation to keep the students together? Answer: Yes.</p> <p>Mrs. Janssens Question: Were the boundaries ever changed at previous accommodation reviews? Answer: Yes, every school consolidation requires permanent changes to the boundaries; however, the Board has in the past approved recommendations to keep students together, in specific situations. That would mean permanent boundaries may only apply to future students, or students in particular grades.</p> <p>Mrs. Vercauteren Question: Is there enough room in all the bordering schools to keep all the students together? And can we receive that information? Answer: Not every school can accommodate all 39 students, but some of the schools can. This information can be provided.</p> <p>Mrs. Vanek Question: If we wanted to keep the students together, can the information be provided at the next meeting to show which schools can accommodate all the students, and what their ride times would be? Answer: Yes, that information can be provided. Not all of the ride times for each of the bordering schools can be prepared, due to the tremendous volume of work that would entail. However, if the committee puts forward suggestions for a couple of schools that are viable solutions, reports can be generated that will provide the information requested.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">8:10 pm</p>	<p>Recommendation from the Director of Education (<i>Presentation by Paul Wubben, Director of Education</i>)</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Director explained the process to the ARC. ▪ There was consensus from the committee that the Director present his recommendation tonight. ▪ Mr. Wubben commented that St. Michael is a great school, but there are many factors to consider. Given that enrolment is projected to continue to decline, that a further accommodation review cannot be revisited for five years, and that there are perfectly viable schools in the surrounding area, the Director’s recommendation to the Board will be that St. Michael, Turnerville be closed at the end of June 2011. ▪ Mr. Wubben further stated he will take the committee’s recommendation to the Board, whatever that recommendation is. <p>Mrs. Vanek Question: Based on the timelines given from the ministry, the recommendation to the Trustees occurs on June 29, 2011. Regardless of the recommendation, how can any changes be made when there is only 1 day left in the school year? Would the school effectively close as of June 30, 2011? Answer: Yes. This is an unusual circumstance, because the student numbers are so low. I think in this case, if the Director and the ARC were to make the same recommendation for closure, we could make a rather safe assumption that Trustees would support that. It is important to note that, although the final decision does rest with the Board of Trustees, the ARC does hold some political sway with Trustees and Trustees will also know that the recommendation is being made in the best interests of the students and the community.</p>
<p>8:14 pm</p>	<p>Agenda for February</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mrs. Crawford asked committee members to consider the goals that they want to achieve for the students and families of St. Michael Catholic School. These goals should assist them in asking questions and assist them in setting the agenda for the February 8, 2011 meeting. ▪ The ARC committee agreed that the main goal was to have the students remain together at another Catholic school. <p>Questions from ARC Members Mrs. Vanek Question: Colleen Janssens stated that one goal would be for the students to remain together in the same school if St. Michael were to close. Should we not lay out the options as to what all the possibilities are, the issues, the pros/cons, consider bus times, where families live? Answer: Mrs. Crawford answered that the committee should come back to a starting point. They should consider the mandate of the ARC and what they are going to recommend regarding the issue of excess pupil places caused by declining enrolment.</p> <p>Mrs. Janssens Question: Although not necessarily in agreement with the recommendation, can things be laid out ahead of time? Can the committee see what the schools and ride times would look like? Answer: Mrs. Crawford asked members to consider the question that is central to the ARC mandate? What is the viable option for the school? Mrs. Churchill commented that there are only 7 students projected to be at the school by 2014-2015,</p>

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and that is only if all families remain. This is a five year decision that needs to be made. Mrs. Crawford responded that considering the ongoing declining enrolment, what is the viable option? Once a recommendation is reached, goals can be set, and strategies can be developed to meet these goals. If a goal was identified as assuring that the students had the opportunity to remain together, the committee would need further information on ride times. Mrs. Crawford asked the committee how they felt about the Director's recommendation.

Mrs. Jennen

Question: Is the ARC Committee reaching a turning point?

Answer: Mrs. Crawford replied that is an important question for the ARC. Given that a lot of information has been put forward and looking at what information is needed for the next meeting, what is the direction the committee is going to take? Mr. Wubben commented that there is no obligation to make any particular recommendation immediately. At a previous accommodation review, the committee took a road trip to visit other schools. Mr. Wubben made an offer to arrange bus transportation, so that the committee and any interested parents could visit some schools.

Mrs. Vercauteren

Question: Would the road trip take place at the next meeting or could it be arranged to take place before, so that the ARC members would be able to come to the next meeting with more information and better ideas.

Answer: Yes, the trip can be arranged in the next couple of weeks. Mrs. Crawford recommended that the committee notify parents regarding the visit.

Mrs. Vanek

Question: Can this trip be arranged for an evening as most parents work?

Answer: Yes, it can be arranged to accommodate most parents. The school principal will be on hand for the tour. Schools are open during the day for any parents who wish to go for a tour during the daytime.

- Mrs. Crawford commented that an agenda for February has not yet been set. The Director has made known his recommendation, now the committee needs to create an agenda that meets the committee members' needs and will answer their questions. All ideas put forward from the committee will be recorded on chart paper and then formatted into an agenda format and posted on the website.
- Mrs. Vanek mentioned that Good Shepherd and St. Vincent are the two main schools the committee would like to visit at that point.
- Mrs. Crawford indicated that a letter could ask parents if there are other schools they would like to visit.

Agenda items brought forward by the committee:

- Boundary options
- Transportation – ride times
- Transitioning Students (including Spec. Ed. - IEP, FM equipment)
- What will happen to the building

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- What will happen to any raised funds, donated items, memorabilia
- Formation of a Legacy Committee
- Mrs. Crawford indicated that at other accommodation reviews, sub-committees have been formed to help with transition items (funds, building)
- Mrs. Crawford asked what other information would be needed, if the committee's recommendation is not to close the school?

Mrs. Vanek

Question: If the school were to remain open, what would staffing look like? Only two teachers and a part-time principal?

Answer: Mrs. Crawford reviewed the numbers over the next few years. Next year will have 39 students; 26 in 2012-2013; 13 in 2013-2014; 7 in 2014-2015. Staffing will be reduced next year to two teachers and two classes. In the coming years it will be reduced further.

- Mrs. Jennen commented that considering this data, keeping St. Michael open is not a viable option, as it is not good for the students.
- Mrs. Janssens commented that regarding the seven students in five years, this would only be the case if all families stay at the school.
- Mrs. Vanek stated she did not realize that junior sports were not currently being offered at the school. With the numbers next year, that does not leave opportunities for the students to have any extra-curricular sports.
- Mrs. Jennen commented that she has a lot of respect for this school and it would be sad to see it go. However it is not viable to keep the school open.
- Mrs. Janssens commented that even considering the school academically and the students' friendships, it is not a viable option to keep the school open.
- The ARC committee agreed that the only viable option would be to close St. Michael Catholic School at the end of the current school year.
- There was unanimous consent among ARC members that they agreed with the Director's recommendation.
- The committee agreed to develop the February 8, 2011 meeting agenda to focus on options and questions that would need to be addressed in order to close the school.
- A list was created that outlined the ARC's concerns and questions for the next meeting – including the need to honour 50 years of excellence in Catholic Education in Chatham-Kent.
- Mrs. Crawford said the items will be formatted into an agenda and posted on the website.
- Mrs. Vanek stated that the committee would like to know what families are thinking in terms of moving the students. If a family feels it is convenient to go a certain school, the committee wants to ensure all students are transitioned, regardless of their choice. The committee wants what is best for the students.
- The ARC committee agreed to send a survey to parents in order to determine their intention re. school enrolment in September 2011, after the closure of St. Michael.

8:59 pm

Questions from the floor

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	<p>There were no questions.</p>
<p>9:00 pm</p>	<p>Closing Prayer</p> <p>The Chair thanked everyone for attending and led a closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.</p>
	<p>Future ARC Meeting Dates - All meetings will be held at St. Michael Catholic School, Turnerville, unless otherwise stated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Tuesday, February 8, 2011</i> ▪ Tuesday, March 29, 2011 ▪ ARC Recommendations will be made public: March 29, 2011 ▪ Board Meeting Dates: April 12, 2011 - Presentation of ARC report to Board of Trustees June 29, 2011 - Decision by Board of Trustees