

**Meeting of the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC)  
Minutes of Public Meeting #2  
November 27, 2013  
George Vanier Catholic School, Combermere**

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**1. Welcome & Prayer**

At 7:10 p.m., Peter Adam, ARC Chair, welcomed 76 members of the public to the second of four public meetings scheduled for the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) in the Madawaska Valley.

The group joined together in the Board prayer.

**2. Introductions**

The Arc Chair acknowledged the presence of three trustees at the meeting. He then introduced the twelve members of the ARC Committee and the three resource members. It was noted that the ARC Chair and the ARC Secretary are non-voting members of the ARC Committee.

Committee Members Present:

Peter Adam	ARC CHAIR/Superintendent of Education
Mary Lynn Schauer	ARC Secretary/Superintendent of Business Services
Randy Bissonnette	Principal Representative
Christina Brown	Principal Representative
Tracey Pecarski	Teacher Representative
Father Mervin Coulas	Community Representative
Bobbie Jean Kuehl	Parent Representative – St. Andrew’s
Tracy Glofcheskie	Parent Representative – George Vanier
Constance Bersan	Parent Representative – St. Mary’s
Judy Hartwig	Parent Representative – St. Casimir’s

Committee Members sending regrets:

Tracy Murray	Parent Representative – St. John Bosco
Sharon Yandernoll	Non-Teaching Representative

Resource Members Present:

Lygia Dallip	Facilitator, via teleconference
Ivan Johnson	Manager of Plant Services
Linda Arsenault	Recording Secretary

The ARC Chair reminded the community members and the ARC Committee members to sign in.

**3. Review purpose, mandate and process of the ARC**

Five Catholic schools are under review: St. Andrew’s, Killaloe; St. John Bosco, Barry’s Bay; St. Casimir’s Round Lake; St. Mary’s, Wilno and George Vanier, Combermere. The ARC Chair stated that the Accommodation Review public meetings have been scheduled to review challenges facing these schools, to provide an overview of the ARC process, and most importantly, to seek community input during the ARC process.

The Accommodation Review Process:

- ✓ The process follows the Terms of Reference issued by the Ministry of Education.
- ✓ During the 120 day process, 10 committee working meetings and 4 public meetings have been scheduled. The process is now 50% complete.
- ✓ All Meetings are open to the public.

ARC Recommendations:

- ✓ In February 2014, the Committee will present a report containing the ARC Recommendation to the Director of Education, which will then be forwarded to the Board of Trustees.
- ✓ The Board of Trustees will also receive a report from Senior Administration with their recommendations.
- ✓ The Board of Trustees will make the final decision.

**4. Accommodation Options**

The purpose of the public meeting tonight is to review three proposed Accommodation Options. It was noted by the ARC Chair that the three items to be presented are options, not decisions. Input is requested from the community on these options, or alternate accommodation options suggested by the group.

Each option is to be considered within the framework of the Terms of Reference (TOR):

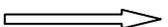
- ✓ Declining Enrolment which may limit a student’s education and social opportunity;
- ✓ Physical Condition of the School which may impact the quality of the learning environment and financial resources of the Board;
- ✓ Surplus instruction space within a school or group of schools;
- ✓ Absence of instructional space.

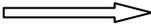
Each option needs to be analyzed keeping in mind the best educational and social interest of the students and the community.

**(a) ADMINISTRATION STAFF PROPOSED ACCOMMODATION OPTION**

**1. 5 SCHOOL COMMUNITIES TO 3 SCHOOL COMMUNITIES**

St. Casimir’s Catholic School            **ST. ANDREW’S CATHOLIC SCHOOL**  
St. Andrew’s Catholic School

St. John Bosco Catholic School            **ST. JOHN BOSCO CATHOLIC SCHOOL**  
St. Mary’s Catholic School

George Vanier Catholic School            **STATUS QUO**

IMPLICATIONS OF STAFF PROPOSED ACCOMMODATION OPTION:

<b>Enrolment</b>	Based on current enrolment, historical trends, Statistics Canada and birth rate data, the 2016-2017 projected enrolment would be at 56% of school capacity, with 44% surplus space.
<b>Programming</b>	Based on current data, this option will result in a reduction of multiple grades, with more students assigned to classes of their own cohort.
<b>Building</b>	Surplus space at St. Andrew’s will be reduced to 28%, and surplus space at St. John Bosco would be reduced to 12%.
<b>Transportation</b>	Average ride times (a.m. and p.m.) would increase by 4.5 minutes for St. Casimir’s students. Total ride times (a.m. and p.m.) for St. Mary’s students would increase from 19.5 to 48 minutes on average.

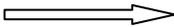
**(b) ARC PROPOSED ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS**

**1. STATUS QUO (all schools stay open)**

IMPLICATIONS OF ARC PROPOSED ACCOMMODATION OPTION:

<b>Enrolment</b>	By 2016-2017, a total of 297 students would be using only 42% of building capacity, with 58% surplus space.
<b>Programming</b>	Multiple quadruple classes would be inevitable in smaller schools.
<b>Building</b>	By 2016-2017, 58% of classroom space will be surplus.
<b>Transportation</b>	No change.

**2. 5 SCHOOL COMMUNITIES TO 2 SCHOOL COMMUNITIES**

St. Casimir’s Catholic School  
 St. Mary’s Catholic School       **ST. ANDREW’S CATHOLIC SCHOOL**  
 St. Andrew’s Catholic School

St. John Bosco Catholic School       **ST. JOHN BOSCO CATHOLIC SCHOOL**  
 George Vanier Catholic School

IMPLICATIONS OF ARC PROPOSED ACCOMMODATION OPTION #2:

<b>Enrolment</b>	By 2016-2017, an enrolment of 297 students would use 73% of school capacity, with only 27% surplus space.
<b>Programming</b>	Quadruple classes would be eliminated, with double or single grade classrooms at both remaining schools.
<b>Building</b>	By 2016-2017, surplus space at St. Andrew’s would be 17% and St. John Bosco at only 2%.
<b>Transportation</b>	Average ride times (a.m. and p.m.) for George Vanier students would increase by 37 minutes. St. Mary’s students would have an overall increase of 11.4 minutes on average (a.m. and p.m.), and St. Casimir’s students would have 4.5 added (a.m. and p.m.).

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**5. Next Steps?**

The next Working Meeting of the ARC Committee will take place at St. Casimir’s on Wednesday, December 4<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. The public is welcome to share feedback with the Committee by the following methods: ARC phone line, e-mail, regular mail, or on the comment sheets provided at this meeting. Agendas, minutes of meetings, and presentation material can be found on the ARC link on the Board website.

**NEXT PUBLIC MEETING:**

Public Meeting #3 will be held on Wednesday, December 18, 2013 at 7:00 pm at St. Andrew’s Catholic School in Killaloe. The last public meeting will take place on January 22, 2014 also at St. Andrew’s in Killaloe.

**6. Community Questions and Comments**

NAME/ SCHOOL AREA	QUESTION/COMMENT	RESPONSE BY ARC CHAIR
<p><b>Margaret Maika (George Vanier)</b></p>	<p>Who makes the final decision as to what will happen, and when will that decision be made?</p> <p>The process is moving too fast. Why not take a five-year plan approach to fully research the implications of closing schools.</p>	<p><i>A decision will be made at the end of the ARC process in February 2014.</i></p> <p><i>The Board of Trustees issued a resolution to establish the ARC in May 2013.</i></p>
<p><b>Elaine Schweig (George Vanier)</b></p>	<p>The Terms of Reference is missing the value to the student. A student cannot be taken from their community without a negative impact. A small school provides a better education for the students of this community.</p> <p>As a teacher of 38 years, she noted the Ministry of Education refers to children as “units”.</p>	<p><i>The Terms of Reference (TOR) document is a requirement of the Ministry of Education’s Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline. It is intended to be applied to any ARC within the Board’s jurisdiction.</i></p> <p><i>Individual ARCs cannot change the TOR.</i></p>
<p><b>David Tesluk (George Vanier)</b></p>	<p>The projections used to make the three options shows a conflict in numbers. The data is skewed, and the percentages shown are based on erroneous data.</p>	<p><i>Some of the data used is current year (2013-2014) information, while other data used to make projections (2014-2017) and beyond is based on previous year trends and future projections.</i></p>

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<p><b>Pam McNichol (St. Casimir's)</b></p>	<p>Why were these 5 schools chosen, and are they the only schools being looked at now?</p> <p>Is closing the schools inevitable, or can the decision be deferred to provide ample time for transition?</p> <p>Is the timeline for decommissioning of a school legislated?</p>	<p><i>All 5 schools in the Madawaska family of schools are being reviewed. The area is experiencing a serious decline in enrolment, and has three smaller schools. No other areas are being considered at this time.</i></p> <p><i>This could be a consideration of the ARC Committee.</i></p> <p><i>The ARC will present recommendations to the Board. Once the Board of Trustees makes a decision, it is up to the individual Board to decide timing of consolidation and closures. The Ministry of Education has guidelines once a school is declared surplus to the Board's needs.</i></p>
<p><b>Kerrie Voldock (George Vanier)</b></p>	<p>Has the ARC considered combining George Vanier and St. Mary's Wilno at the George Vanier site?</p>	<p><i>The ARC has not made that proposal, but will note this suggestion.</i></p>
<p><b>Mary Ann McCrea (George Vanier)</b></p>	<p>Can the Board start a home school initiative to allow use of facilities, teacher support, and make up teams for sports?</p> <p>Can the Board compromise on policy and attendance?</p> <p>Can the school be used for alternatives such as adult education, and can there be some PR to draw home schooled children to the school?</p>	<p><i>The Ministry of Education's Policy and Program Memorandum 131 dictates that parents have a right to home school their children.</i></p> <p><i>Students have to register at the school for attendance, and are allowed by the Ministry to register for a partial day. Curriculum is bound by Ministry of Education guidelines.</i></p> <p><i>This was noted.</i></p>
<p><b>Ally Hudder (George Vanier)</b></p>	<p>How many young families are in the area?</p>	<p><i>A school is certainly a draw for the community.</i></p>

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<p><b>David Tesluk (George Vanier)</b></p>	<p>Is there still an option for an individual to direct taxes to the Public or the Catholic school system?</p> <p>Did the ARC consider that closing a Catholic school will result in a shift to the Public Board school at Palmer Rapids, and reduce tax dollars coming to the Catholic School?</p>	<p><i>There is an option, but the individual has to be Catholic to assign taxes to a Catholic Board.</i></p> <p><i>Funding is driven by average daily enrolment at schools. Tax dollars are directed based on school support.</i></p>
<p><b>Wayne Giffin (George Vanier)</b></p>	<p>The Board should revert back to a one-room school house model and keep the school in the community.</p>	<p><i>This point was noted.</i></p>
<p><b>Bob Young (George Vanier)</b></p>	<p>If a decision to close George Vanier was made, parents would have the option of a long bus ride to St. John Bosco, or a shorter ride to Palmer Rapids.</p>	<p><i>This was acknowledged.</i></p>
<p><b>Alma Coffman (George Vanier)</b></p>	<p>Who owns the school buildings, and who will maintain an empty building?</p>	<p><i>The School Board owns the building. The Board will need to keep up heat, maintenance and grounds until a decision is made to declare the school surplus. There are Ministry rules and regulations on how a public building will be sold. It must be offered to co-terminus school boards first, then to municipalities.</i></p>
<p><b>Margaret Maika (George Vanier)</b></p>	<p>A longer period of time should be taken to make sure all opinions are heard.</p> <p>New ideas should be explored so this beautiful school facility can benefit children and parents. The Board has made a decision before really hearing from the community.</p>	<p><i>This point was noted.</i></p>
<p><b>Amy Lapierre (George Vanier)</b></p>	<p>The financial data needs to be considered, but what about the value of a small school to students? Students' well-being and happiness should be considered.</p> <p>Are there any post-secondary results of former students of the school?</p>	<p><i>EQAO data of the three smaller schools is embargoed and cannot be shared by the Board. The Principal may be a resource for this data.</i></p>

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<p><b>Pam McNichol (St. Casimir's)</b></p>	<p>Compassion and empathy is not seen in this room. Think of children as a gift for the community. This value cannot be put on paper. Some schools will close themselves, but for the sake of 3% or 11% children should be put first.</p>	<p><i>This point was noted.</i></p>
<p><b>Elaine Schweig (George Vanier)</b></p>	<p>There are 30 pregnant women right now in Wilno that do not show up in the projections.</p>	<p><i>This was acknowledged.</i></p>
<p><b>Veronica Yackavitch (George Vanier)</b></p>	<p>A bus ride of an hour and a half is unacceptable.</p> <p>What are the guidelines from the Ministry of Transportation regarding the length of a school bus ride?</p> <p>What is too much for a child?</p>	<p><i>This was recognized.</i></p>
<p><b>Diane Harrison (George Vanier)</b></p>	<p>Consider the power of small schools and one-room school houses. The school doesn't have to have a gym to be effective.</p>	<p><i>This comment was acknowledged.</i></p>
<p><b>Gloria Kosnaskie (George Vanier)</b></p>	<p>Children could be going from a multiple grade class size of 19 to 21 students to a single grade composed of 29 to 30 children. How will her Grade 6 and 7 students benefit from this?</p>	<p><i>The Board perspective looks at Board wide class size averages. Therefore, if small schools have lower class sizes then larger schools would have higher class sizes so that the averages meet the ministry targets.</i></p>
<p><b>David Tesluk (George Vanier)</b></p>	<p>Are home schooled children permitted to register for school on a part-time basis? Will this increase funding?</p>	<p><i>The Ministry provides proportional funding. If a student is registered for half of a day, they are funded at 50%.</i></p>

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<b>Alma Coffman (George Vanier)</b>	If a school building is closed, how much educational money will be spent on the school?	<i>The Board will maintain the structure and grounds until it has been declared surplus.</i>  <i>If the Board declares a school surplus, the Board is required to offer the facility to co-terminus boards first, then municipalities, and if no one is interested, it will go up for public sale.</i>
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The ARC Chair thanked the Community for their attendance and input into the discussion to find the best recommendation for students going forward.

The meeting ended at 8:25 p.m.