



**WINDSOR-ESSEX CATHOLIC  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

1325 California Avenue  
Windsor, ON N9B 3Y6  
CHAIRPERSON: Barbara Holland  
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: Paul A. Picard

**Special Board  
Meeting Date:  
April 5, 2016**

## **BOARD REPORT**

**Public**  **In-Camera**

**PRESENTED FOR:** Information  Approval

**PRESENTED BY:** Senior Administration

**SUBMITTED BY:** Paul A. Picard, Director of Education

**SUBJECT:** **Final Staff Report on the Accommodation Review Study for the Amherstburg area, including St. Bernard and Stella Maris Catholic Elementary Schools**

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the Board receive as information the Final Staff Report on the accommodation review study for the Amherstburg area, including St. Bernard and Stella Maris Catholic Elementary Schools; and**

**That the Board receive public input concerning the Final Staff Report, including the final recommendation presented by Board Administration as follows:**

**That effective September 2016, the St. Bernard Catholic Elementary School Community be consolidated with the Stella Maris Catholic School Community at the Stella Maris site, with students to be accommodated in the short term through the use of portables, as may be required; and**

**That the Board apply to the Ministry of Education through the School Consolidation Capital (SCC) Program for funding for the construction of an addition and renovations, as may be required, to support the consolidation at Stella Maris or, if failing to obtain SCC funding, a further report be submitted to the Board regarding alternatives; and**

**That effective June 2016, St. Bernard Catholic Elementary School be closed and deemed surplus to the Board's future needs, pursuant to Section 194 (3) (a) of the Education Act.**

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### **SYNOPSIS:**

An accommodation review study of the Amherstburg area has been completed in accordance with the Board's modified pupil accommodation review process. Board Administration has prepared this final report for submission to the Board of Trustees as information, and for the purpose of allowing members of the public to provide feedback on the report through public

delegations, prior to a final decision on the accommodation review scheduled to take place at the Board's public meeting of April 5, 2016.

**BACKGROUND COMMENTS:**

On November 24, 2015, the Board of Trustees approved proceeding with a modified accommodation review process to address the challenges facing the Amherstburg area schools as a result of declining enrolment. To respond to these challenges, through the public consultation process, the Board invited the community to provide input in the development of an optimal accommodation option for students in Amherstburg that would support the delivery of the highest quality Catholic education programs and services.

Based on the rationale detailed within the Initial Staff Report presented to the Board on November 24, 2015, Board Administration presented the following initial recommendation for consideration in the accommodation review study:

*That effective September 2016, the St. Bernard Catholic Elementary School Community be consolidated with the Stella Maris Catholic School Community at the Stella Maris site; The Board apply to the Ministry of Education through the School Consolidation Capital (SCC) Program, for capital for the construction of an addition to support the consolidation; or if failing to obtain funding, the Board dedicate capital reserves for the installation of a port-a-pack at the Stella Maris site; and*

*That St. Bernard Catholic Elementary School be closed effective June 2016, and be deemed surplus to the Board's future needs, pursuant to Section 194 (3) (a) of the Education Act.*

At a public meeting on January 20, 2016, Board Administration invited community input on the Initial Staff Report, the initial recommendation, as well as the school information profiles, which had been prepared by Administration and presented to the community to provide an understanding and familiarity with the facilities under review.

**Report on Public Consultation:**

Although notification of the public meeting was forwarded well in advance through letters sent home, a web site posting, and synovoice messages, few community members were in attendance. One delegate presented her concerns and suggestions with respect to accessibility for the Board's students with special needs.

**Presentation from the Delegation:**

- Angela Kelly, a parent whose two daughters had attended St. Bernard school, indicated that her family had been instrumental in addressing accessibility issues at St. Bernard. She questioned what was available in that regard at Stella Maris. She inquired as to whether the equipment from St. Bernard would be transferred to Stella Maris. She also questioned whether portables were to be utilized, and if they would be accessible to all students? Ms. Kelly also suggested the purchase of iPads for the educational advantage of students with cognitive or physical challenges.

In response to Ms. Kelly's presentation and her insightful concern for the Board's students with special needs, Administration advised that the Board takes seriously its obligation to support its students with special needs. The Board has historically overspent in the special education envelope because of its commitment to hold inclusive education as a priority. The Board will continue to support students with special needs.

The Principal of Stella Maris School indicated that the front door of the facility has been made accessible. There is a washroom in the junior section of the school to accommodate one of the students and the primary area has a larger and accessible washroom for students with wheelchairs.

With respect to the use of portables, typically, any portables that are installed by the Board are equipped with stairs. However, if there are students accessing the portables that require ramps for accessibility, such ramps are provided accordingly.

Should the Board make the decision to consolidate St. Bernard and Stella Maris, Administration will hold individual family meetings to discuss transitioning students who require special education programming. Consistent with previous school consolidations, Administration and special education personnel will meet with individual families to ensure that a transition plan is developed and implemented allowing the student full inclusion in the school community, with the necessary resources specific to meet student needs and success.

### **Report on Information Received from the Municipality**

Board Administration attended a meeting at the Town of Amherstburg Town Hall on November 9, 2015 with the town representatives led by the Chief Administrative Officer. The Board presented background information respecting the Amherstburg Accommodation Review including general area demographics, school capacities, current and forecasted enrolments, school utilization, boundary maps, student distribution and transportation statistics, community use of schools data, facility and site information and potential accommodation options. The Town provided information with respect to current and potential development. Further discussion centred on the Provincial initiative promoting community hubs and the interest for such arrangements that may exist in the area. Attendees agreed with continuing to exchange information as the review process progressed.

### **Rationale for Final Recommendation**

For the reasons set out in the Initial Staff Report, Administration's final recommendation remains substantially the same as the initial recommendation submitted for community consultation.

### **Proposed Plan – Final Recommendation**

Based on current enrolment numbers and forecasts, 4 additional classrooms would be required at Stella Maris to accommodate the combined JK to 6 student populations of St. Bernard and Stella Maris. In order to facilitate the consolidation of the two schools for September 2016, this additional classroom space would be provided through the use of portables. The Board would apply for funding approval from the Ministry of Education to proceed with the construction of a permanent addition and renovations to Stella Maris with the intent of having the work completed for start of school in September 2017. St. Bernard would be closed and deemed surplus to the Board's needs effective June 2016.

### **Presentations from the Trustee Delegation Meeting held on February 29, 2016:**

Frank Cleminson, Parent of children attending Stella Maris Catholic Elementary School thanked Trustees for the opportunity to speak and stated his main focus is on the students' needs and to find the best solution should Trustees decide to close St. Bernard school.

John Miceli, Community Member and Chief Administrative Officer for the Town of Amherstburg. On behalf of the Town of Amherstburg, Mr. Miceli questioned the Board's rationale in the Final Staff recommendation to consolidate St. Bernard to Stella Maris. Mr. Miceli prefers the consolidation of schools at the St. Bernard site.

Mr. Miceli provided the following perceived challenges in the areas of:

- Transportation, bus bays and increased travel time;
- The missed opportunity to utilize a 30 acre municipal park across from St. Bernard;
- St. Bernard is more centrally located in the municipality and the primary settlement area, thus minimizing the impact on municipal road infrastructure and better equipped to handle the Town's future growth patterns;
- The Town receives parking complaints on the streets surrounding Stella Maris;
- Limited options for site expansions at Stella Maris, specifically as it relates to the addition of permanent classrooms;
- Smaller parking area, and smaller gymnasium at Stella Maris as well as limited opportunities for on-site and on-street parking;
- Future growth in the primary settlement area of the municipality is divided fairly evenly between the north and the south. However, due to infrastructure challenges, the south is better positioned for growth;
- The Town has major developments in the south which include Hunt Club Creek Subdivision (draft plan approved) at 800 homes and Smith Subdivision (preliminary planning phases) with 600 homes;
- Stella Maris located in the "Fraserville Area" under the Town's Nuisance Mosquito Program.

**Written Submissions received:**

Two (2) written submissions were received and forwarded to Trustees.

*Darren Clark, a Parent of two children that attend St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School inquired on the current boundaries for St. Joseph, St. Bernard and Stella Maris.*

The Board understands the community concerns with regards to the St. Joseph Elementary school boundaries but during the Amherstburg Accommodation Review study boundary adjustments will not be considered until the consolidation of the two schools is completed.

The Board is well aware that St. Joseph does have the capacity to receive additional students and moving forward, boundary adjustments will be addressed.

*Barb Souliere, Community member inquired on the cost to transport students to Stella Maris.* A cost analysis is provided on page 7 question 2.

**Public Questions/Concerns Presented at the Trustee Delegation Meeting held on February 29, 2016 (with response from Administration):**

*a. "Will the current start time at Stella Maris school remain the same for September 2016?"*

Start times for all schools are determined as part of the establishment of bus routes for any given school year. Through the Windsor-Essex Student Transportation Services (WESTS), the four area school boards work jointly to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the system. With school consolidations in recent years, there have been changes to school start times, as a result. Once the Board of Trustees considers and approves any school consolidations for the upcoming school year, then WESTS will apply these consolidations in its routing development for 2016-17, through which start bell times will be established. Therefore, the Stella Maris start bell time may change for September 2016 and may change from year-to-year in the future, as well.

*b. "Location of portables and anticipated duration?"*

Preliminary assessment would point to the location of 4 individual portables at the south end of the existing Stella Maris school building along Williams Avenue as per the attached drawing (Appendix A). WECDSB already has sufficient inventory of portables that could be readily moved to Stella Maris to provide temporary accommodation.

With respect to the duration for the portables to be utilized, this is dependent on the provision of funding by the Ministry of Education for the construction of a permanent 4 classroom addition and interior renovations to the existing Stella Maris building. Given Ministry timing constraints for funding requests, WECDSB has already made submission to the Ministry of Education for this permanent addition. If the Board of Trustees formally approves the consolidation at Stella Maris on April 5, 2016, Board administration would submit the Board resolution to the Ministry by April 6, 2016, which is the final outstanding requirement for the funding request. An announcement from the Ministry would be expected thereafter. If the Ministry does not approve WECDSB's request in this round of funding, Board administration would report back to the Board with potential funding alternatives.

Town of Amherstburg's perceived challenges:

*c. "Address bus bay issue at Stella Maris."*

Only 1 additional bus would be required pursuant to a consolidation of St. Bernard students at Stella Maris. WECDSB would propose to join the two existing bus bays on William St. with an extension between them to accommodate the additional bus as shown on the attached drawing.

*d. "Parking complaints around Stella Maris school."*

WECDSB would propose to establish a formal Kiss and Ride area at the school and to expand the parking area for use by school staff and visitors. A preliminary design option is shown on the attached drawing.

*e. "Limited options for site expansion at Stella Maris."*

At 5.14 acres, Stella Maris is comparable to many elementary school sites in the system and certainly has more than ample space to accommodate student enrolments above and beyond the resultant enrolment from a consolidation of Stella Maris and St. Bernard.

Preliminary design has confirmed that the site has more than enough area to accommodate a 4 classroom addition, while still leaving an extremely large play area for students.

*f. "Smaller parking area, and smaller gymnasium at Stella Maris as well as limited opportunities for on-site and on-street parking."*

The existing parking areas consist of 30 spaces at Stella Maris and 40 spaces at St. Bernard. As noted above, WECDSB would propose to establish a Kiss and Ride area at Stella Maris with an expanded parking area.

The existing gymnasiums consist of 2,625 sq. ft. at Stella Maris and 2,950 sq. ft. at St. Bernard. The difference is an area of approximately 18ft. by 18ft. square or about one third of a typical classroom. This is not deemed to be a significant difference.

*g. "The south end of Amherstburg is better positioned for growth."*

While the south end of the Town may be better positioned for growth, neither Stella Maris nor St. Bernard is of sufficient distance from this area, that would preclude students residing in the area in the future from being bused.

*h. "Mosquito issue near Stella Maris."*

It is WECDSB's understanding that, under Provincial legislation and associated regulations, mosquito control falls within the responsibility of the local Medical Officer of Health and the local municipality. It is the expectation of WECDSB that it would be advised by one or both of these authorities of the existence of a bona fide concern with respect to mosquitoes in the Town of Amherstburg, along with measures that would be taken by these authorities to address the concern. To date, no formal concern has been expressed by either the Medical Officer of Health or by the Town of Amherstburg that would result in any action being taken by the Medical Officer of Health or by the Town of Amherstburg to address a concern.

**Trustee Questions/Concerns Presented at the Trustee Delegation held on February 29, 2016 (with response from Administration)**

**1. Rationale for installing portables in September instead of students remaining at home school until construction is completed. (i.e. potential savings)**

The rationale for moving students in September 2016 is to immediately obtain the benefits of the improved programming and from the cost savings identified in the recommendation to consolidate the two schools.

The annual cost savings, pursuant to alternative consolidations at either Stella Maris or St. Bernard, have been estimated as follows:

**NET ANNUAL COST SAVINGS AND COST AVOIDANCE  
PURSUANT TO ALTERNATIVE CONSOLIDATIONS  
IN THE TOWN OF AMHERSTBURG**

Item	Estimated Annual Savings for Consolidation at Stella Maris (\$)	Estimated Annual Savings for Consolidation at St. Bernard (\$)
Annual Staffing and Operational Cost Savings of Implementation <sup>1</sup>	1,154,393	1,154,393
Annual Cost Avoidance by Foregoing 5-Year Facility Renewal Needs at School to be Closed <sup>2</sup>	699,401	389,732
<b>Total Annual Savings and Cost Avoidance</b>	<b>1,853,794</b>	<b>1,544,125</b>
Annual Increase in Busing Costs <sup>3</sup>	42,000	5,500
Annual Loss of Grant for Student Needs Revenue <sup>4</sup>	335,607	335,607
Annualized Capital Cost for Additions, Renovations and Site Work <sup>5</sup>	123,092	131,469
<b>Total Net Annual Savings and Cost Avoidance</b>	<b>1,353,095</b>	<b>1,071,549</b>

- Notes:
1. Calculation of savings is provided in the attached breakdown (Appendix B).
  2. Cost avoidance is calculated by dividing the 5-year renewal needs of \$1,948,662 for Stella Maris and \$3,497,005 for St. Bernard by 5 years to arrive at an annual impact.
  3. Busing costs are detailed subsequently in this document.
  4. Loss of grant revenue is provided in the attached breakdown (Appendix B).
  5. Capital costs have been developed by Sfera Architects and amount to \$2,143,429 for Stella Maris and \$2,289,280.73 for St. Bernard. The annualized costs provided assume a 25 year life span for the improvements and a 3% inflation rate.

At an estimated net annual savings and cost avoidance of \$1,353,095 Stella Maris has a \$281,546 annual cost savings advantage over St. Bernard, which is at \$1,071,549.

The present value of annual savings of \$281,546 over a 25 year period at a 3% interest rate is \$4,902,602.

**2. Many students will be bused. How will that financially impact the Board?**

In applying the recommendation for a consolidation of St. Bernard at the Stella Maris site as a JK to Grade 8 elementary school, it is estimated that 1 additional bus would be required at an annual cost of \$42,000, which includes both operating and capital costs.

In the event that approval is given to instead consolidate Stella Maris at the St. Bernard site as a JK to Grade 8 elementary school, it is estimated that no additional buses would be required, but there would be an increased annual cost of \$5,500 to reflect the increased usage by WECD SB on multi-routed buses.

A comparison of the cost impacts is provided as follows:

**NET ANNUAL COST IMPACT FOR BUSING  
PURSUANT TO ALTERNATIVE JK TO GRADE 8  
CONSOLIDATIONS IN THE TOWN OF AMHERSTBURG**

School	Current Annual Busing Costs (\$)	Estimated Annual Busing Costs for Consolidation at Stella Maris (\$)	Estimated Annual Busing Costs for Consolidation at St. Bernard (\$)
Stella Maris	76,288	76,288	81,788
St. Bernard	15,002	57,002	15,002
<b>Total</b>	<b>91,290</b>	<b>133,290</b>	<b>96,790</b>
<b>Cost Increase From Current</b>	---	<b>42,000</b>	<b>5,500</b>

- In considering the above costs, it is important to note the following:
  - Busing for students with special needs has not been included, as dedicated busing would remain for these students regardless of which schools are closed.
  - The costs for the recommendations and other options are estimates only based on known student data at this point in time.
  - Costing is based on the additional students that will have to be transported, assuming that all eligible students will utilize busing.
  - All additional buses are costed as if they were solo runs. Costing does not include any efficiencies that would be realized through multi-routing buses with other schools.

**3. Bus Bay access limited.**

As noted previously, only 1 additional bus would be required pursuant to a consolidation of St. Bernard students at Stella Maris. WECD SB would propose to join the two existing bus bays on William St. with an extension between them to accommodate the additional bus as shown on the attached drawing.

**4. Additional parking at Stella Maris.**

As noted previously, WECDSB would propose to establish a formal Kiss and Ride area at the school and to expand the parking area for use by school staff and visitors as shown on the attached drawing.

**5. After school programs/sports – provide transportation from event home.**

Additional elective transportation funds will be incorporated in school budgets.

**6. Will the Ontario Early Learning Years Program at St. Bernard relocate to Stella Maris?**

Previous accommodation review school closures have resulted in the relocation of the Ontario Early Learning Program. Subsequent to the decision of the Board, the necessary application will be initiated.

**7. Cost analysis of potential loss of 50 students.**

Addressed in Appendix B - Financial Summary of Proposed School Consolidation Projected for the year ended August 31, 2016.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

As detailed within Report.

**TIMELINES:**

As detailed within Report.

**APPENDICES:**

- Appendix A - Stella Maris Catholic Elementary School Site Plan
- Appendix B - Financial Summary of Proposed School Consolidation Projected for the year ended August 31, 2016

**REPORT REVIEWED BY:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	EXECUTIVE COUNCIL:	Review Date:	March 29, 2016
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	EXECUTIVE SUPERINTENDENT:	Approval Date:	March 29, 2016
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION:	Approval Date:	March 29, 2016



**Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board  
Financial Summary of Proposed School Consolidation  
Projected for the year ended August 31, 2016**

Community	<u>Amherstburg</u>		
		<u>Full-Time Equivalent</u>	<u>2015-16 Estimated Annual Cost</u>
<b>Staffing Savings</b>			
Teachers		6.50	614,991
Secretarial		1.00	41,811
Custodian		1.25	62,738
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>8.75</b>	<b>\$ 936,442</b>
Benefits			144,648
<b>TOTAL STAFFING EXPENDITURES</b>			<b>\$ 1,081,089</b>
<b>Annual Operating Costs Savings</b>			
Operating Costs Savings Per SCC Submission			\$ 66,428
Operating Costs Reduction of Losing 50 Pupils			6,876
<b>TOTAL OPERATING SAVINGS</b>			<b>\$ 73,304</b>
<b>TOTAL COST SAVINGS</b>			<b>\$ 1,154,393</b>
<b>TOTAL REVENUE LOST</b>			<b>\$ 335,607</b>
<b>TOTAL ANNUAL SAVINGS OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>			<b>\$ 818,786</b>