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February 9, 2016 for
Delegation Meeting Date:
February 25, 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 Leamington Area, including Cardinal Carter Catholic Secondary School and Queen of Peace and St. Louis Catholic Elementary Schools**

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board receive as information the Final Staff Report on the accommodation review study for the Leamington area, including Cardinal Carter Catholic Secondary School and Queen of Peace and St. Louis 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, St. Louis Catholic Elementary School shall become a JK to 6 school, continuing to offer dual track French Immersion, with consolidation of the JK to 6 student population within the current Queen of Peace and St. Louis Catholic Elementary School boundaries being accommodated at the St. Louis 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 the St. Louis site or, if failing to obtain SCC funding, a further report be submitted to the Board regarding alternatives; and

That effective September 2016, a middle school be established to accommodate the grades 7 and 8 student population within the current Queen of Peace and St. Louis boundaries, said middle school to be initially located in the short term at the Queen of Peace site and ultimately relocated to the Cardinal Carter Catholic Secondary School site, upon completion of an addition and renovations, as may be required, at Cardinal Carter; 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 accommodate a middle school; or if failing to obtain funding, a further report be submitted to the Board regarding alternatives; and

That effective upon the relocation of the middle school from the Queen of Peace site, Queen of Peace Catholic Elementary School be closed and deemed surplus to the Board's future needs, pursuant to Section 194 (3) (a) of the Education Act.

SYNOPSIS:

An accommodation review study of the Leamington 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 Leamington 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 Leamington 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, Queen of Peace shall become a JK to 6 school, continuing to offer dual track French Immersion, with consolidation of the JK to 6 student population within the current Queen of Peace and St. Louis boundaries being accommodated at the Queen of Peace site; The Board apply to the Ministry of Education through the School Consolidation Capital (SCC) Program, for funding for the construction of an addition to support the consolidation; or if failing to obtain funding, the Board dedicate capital reserves to the installation of two portables at the Queen of Peace site; and

That effective September 2016, a middle school be established at the Cardinal Carter Catholic Secondary School site, to accommodate the grades 7 and 8 student population within the current Queen of Peace and St. Louis boundaries; The Board apply to the Ministry of Education through the School Consolidation Capital (SCC) Program, for capital for a retrofit at Cardinal Carter to accommodate a middle school; or if failing to obtain funding, the Board dedicate capital reserves to retrofit Cardinal Carter; and

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

At a public meeting on January 25, 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:

The Leamington school communities were actively involved in the consultation process. There was a large crowd at the public meeting, with four delegations presenting and fourteen members from the community publicly addressing Administration with questions and suggestions. Board Administration received valuable and insightful feedback through professional and respectful presentations from the community. Written submissions have also been received by Administration throughout the process and are attached with this report.

Presentations from the Delegations:

- Marianne Baeini, Chairperson of St. Louis Catholic School Advisory Council and Francine Mastronardi, Chairperson of Queen of Peace Catholic School Advisory Council stood united as representatives of their respective school communities to express their agreement with Administration's recommendation for the creation of a middle school, indicating that they believed that "the recommendation is indeed the best option for our students and will provide the greatest opportunity for growing education in the Catholic Faith in the Leamington and surrounding communities". The presenters acknowledged that there are a few families in the schools that disagree with continuing with the recommendation. Both presenters had toured the Board's Central Park Athletics and Corpus Christi Middle School and F.J. Brennan Catholic Secondary School facilities and indicated that they saw the potential for what the middle school model could offer to Leamington students. The presentation included numerous recommendations and questions for clarification that are set out in their written submission (attached).
- Audrey Fittler, operator for Audrey's Clubhouse Latchkey and Early Learning Centre indicated that she currently operates a very successful before and after school child care and latchkey program at St.Louis, which is relied upon by numerous families in the community. The centre works in conjunction with various support agencies, creating a community hub. Ms.Fittler asked that should the Board decide to disrupt the existing St. Louis community hub that similar services be provided at the JK to 6 location (Ms. Fittler's submission is attached).
- Ms. Fittler presented as a joint delegation with Marianne Baeini, Chairperson of St. Louis Catholic School Advisory Council. In her presentation, Ms. Baeini addressed the three pillars of the Board's vision: student well being, academic achievement, and Board financial viability and sustainability, to support her suggestion for a revised recommendation to locate the JK to 6 consolidated dual track French Immersion school at the St. Louis site rather than the Queen of Peace site (Ms. Baeini's submission is attached).
- Francine Mastronardi, Chairperson of Queen of Peace and Patricia Amaral, Vice-Chair of Queen of Peace Catholic School Advisory Council expressed their agreement with Board Administration's initial recommendation to locate the consolidated JK to 6 school at the Queen of Peace site. The delegates noted numerous attributes of the facility, including space availability and proximity to Cardinal Carter and other community partners, that they felt made Queen of Peace the preferred site (Delegations' written submission is attached).
- Derek Thachuk, Holy Name Elementary Catholic School Advisory Council Member indicated that his children attend Holy Name Elementary School in Essex. Mr. Thachuk expressed concern for the low rate of retention from Holy Name to Cardinal Carter and

suggested an additional recommendation be considered to address this issue, including the possible establishment of a task force composed of Board and community representatives to study and develop means of increasing enrolment to Cardinal Carter from all possible feeder schools. (Mr. Thachuk's submission is attached).

Questions/Concerns Presented at the Public Meeting (with response from Administration):

"How soon will parents, staff and students be able to see the proposed layouts for the middle school and high school once the ARC has been voted on in April? Will the community have a say in how the school will look?"

If the Board grants approval in April to an ARC option that requires construction, it will likely be the fall before a proposed layout is available for review. Board Administration would provide a copy of the drawings to the Principal for review and comment and the Principal will engage the school community to solicit input. However, it is noted that the Ministry of Education provides limited capital funding for projects which only permits the construction of relatively basic spaces. This allows for limited flexibility in design.

"Will the board policy banning smoking areas at Cardinal Carter be enforced?" Parents have voiced their concern of an unofficial smoking area located next to the school."

School administration has been in conversation with the Town of Leamington and the Health Unit and will continue to consider the concern.

"What will the capacity of the new middle school be?"

The Board will submit its current and projected enrolments to the Ministry of Education along with a recommendation with respect to the proposed capacity. The Ministry will ultimately determine the capacity to be constructed through the amount of funding it chooses to approve. The Ministry will not consider enrolments from surrounding areas that are not within the proposed boundaries of the middle school, unless these areas are also approved to be brought into the middle school boundaries through the accommodation review.

"Since St. John de Brebeuf is close to capacity will their grade 7 & 8s be added to the family feeder schools for the new middle school? Will busing be provided?"

Students from the Board's schools and those from other boards are welcome to attend the middle school. Busing will be considered based on a number of factors, including the number of students from the school. Transportation is shared among the various boards. A determination will need to be made at a later date when specifics are known.

"How will French immersion be incorporated in the middle school?"

French Immersion dual track will continue to be offered to students enrolled in both the middle school (gradual expansion) and secondary school at Cardinal Carter. For September 2016, the French Immersion track will have students enrolled from JK to grade 5. Within the next few years, the French Immersion program will expand to grades 7 and 8. French Immersion courses will be determined based on student enrollment and Ministry requirements.

"Depending on what school is open, will the Board offer day care services for school aged children as well as for infants and toddlers?"

Having heard that this type of childcare is important to this community, Administration will recommend that the Board consider offering this service at the consolidated JK to 6 facility.

"How would recess be conducted at a middle school? I would not want my children to miss out on some of those "regular" grade school opportunities."

In referring to the Corpus Christi model, students have two 5 minute nutrition breaks: one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Students have a lunch break in which activities, clubs and groups are organized. The time also provides opportunities for community partners to collaborate with students. They may have access to the outdoors at this time as well. The Board

could consider a recommendation that the integrity/activities of a grade 8 year be maintained regardless of the location at a middle school.

“If I am considering registering my child in JK this coming September in the St. Louis District, how do I make an informed decision without knowing what is going on?”

Families may register either at St. Louis or Queen of Peace, dependent upon current boundaries. Principals at both schools welcome all families to tour both facilities. Regardless of which facility would be selected for the JK to 6 site, an Integration Committee would be established to assist in the development of transition plans. The plans would include provision for the smooth transition for all students and their families. Kindergarten students registering at either facility would enter into a JK to 6 school that has fully equipped classrooms supportive of the unique requirements of early learners.

“I am concerned with the congestion in the Queen of Peace area. There is a public school, Leamington District High School, Cardinal Carter, drop-off traffic, etc. The St. Louis area is less congested, being more on its own.”

Should the JK to 6 school be located at the Queen of Peace site, the Board would plan bus transportation and bell times that would assist in alleviating traffic congestion. The Board would also consult with the Town of Leamington to ensure safety.

“A concern was raised that the Board’s decision to locate the French Immersion Program at Queen of Peace had a negative impact on enrolment at Queen of Peace and a corresponding positive increasing impact on enrolment at St. Louis.”

Administration understands that some families may have chosen the English program over the French Immersion program at Queen of Peace. However, the issue in this study is not so much whether one school is more underutilized than the other. The challenge is created when both facilities combined have 234 empty pupil spaces, with an additional 205 empty spaces at Cardinal Carter.

“Can those students who presently are in grades 7 and 8 at Holy Name and in Kingsville feeder schools be bused to Cardinal Carter?”

The Board works in conjunction with Windsor Essex Student Transportation Services. This would depend upon a number of considerations, including numbers of students, location, compatibility with existing routes, etc.

“There is not enough recruitment going on in Cardinal Carter’s feeder schools. Why do we not do that and have to go through this process?”

There are a number of transition activities, and community events that promote Cardinal Carter. The distance and commute for some of these students keeps them closer to home. The Board will continue to provide parents and students reasons why the bus ride is worth it ... Cardinal Carter is worth it. These school consolidations allow the Board to focus funding on specialized programming, rather than the operation of empty buildings. Specialized Programming and quality Catholic education will attract students.

“St. Louis offers LatchKey, before and after school programs. I have to work 3 days a week at 6:30 a.m. Will that be incorporated with this recommendation? Early morning Latchkey is needed.”

As stated above, having heard that this type of child care is important to this community, Administration will recommend that the Board consider offering this service at the consolidated JK to 6 facility.

“My son is going into grade 8 next year. Will he be bused with his sister in grade 11? Will they finish school at the same time? Will they take the same bus and start at the same time?”

The middle school and secondary school day looks different based on Ministry requirements. They would start at different times. Busing is shared with three other boards. Corpus Christi accommodates students who arrive early with a study location.

“Will grade 8 students still get to go to Muskoka?”

Yes.

“Has the Board considered the possibility of losing students to the public system?”

The Board must always consider this possibility, but it cannot stop the Board as a Catholic school system from doing the right thing for students. As a system the Board must adjust to changes in demographics and focus spending away from operating empty buildings and into creative, quality, specialized programming for students that support faith development and student achievement. The Board has to trust that people, who believe in Catholic education, will continue with Catholic Education. Through these accommodation studies and in making these difficult decisions, the system becomes more efficient, with an increased ability to offer something better.

“Would middle school students require uniforms? Is there dress down days?”

Students at Corpus Christi wear uniforms. The Board assists families who find this to be a financial challenge. Uniforms would be discussed at transition meetings. There is a Uniform Committee at the Board level as well. Yes, there would be dress down days if uniforms were adopted.

“Considering the difference in funds available at the two schools and the diminished provincial funding, as well as the fact that there is a fair amount of accommodation reviews going on and a new high school in Windsor, what happens if the resources dry up?”

The Board builds its budget through a consultation process. This accommodation review process allows the Board to hear what is important to this community. With that information the Board can prioritize spending. The Ministry has asked all Boards to look at consolidations as a means of focusing funds on student achievement. The Ministry has cut top up funding and has offered capital consolidation funding as incentives. This Board has approved this accommodation study as a result of this Ministry directive and will forward a business case to the Ministry based on what it hears from this community.

“What happens if the middle school is a success and there becomes accommodation issues at Cardinal Carter? Would one of the facilities have to be reopened?”

Any recommendation will consider projections and the possibility for growth. The Board would not foresee reopening a closed facility.

“What happens to the teachers in these schools? Do they lose their jobs?”

This is not a case of teachers losing their jobs. A teacher may lose his or her location or assignment. In the past the Board has worked with the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA), believing in the importance of consistency and to make the transition easier. With specialized programming the Board can attract students and this could result in more teaching positions.

“I have a son who requires learning support. Is that still available to him?”

Yes, there will be a transition plan with the appropriate team members. The Board will ensure the necessary supports are in place. It is done seamlessly and there is experience from Corpus Christi.

“My family decided to relocate from the St. Mary Catholic Elementary School area last year. My children are now attending Queen of Peace. I believe in my heart that Queen of Peace is the best site because of its location and provides the best place for everyone to grow – its proximity to the high school and the church. I urge that the site be determined by the components of the site.”

Administration acknowledges that both of these schools offer quality programming and have great value to students and to the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board. The most difficult aspect of this recommendation was choosing either Queen of Peace or St. Louis for

closure. The recommendation was presented after weighing numerous factors which considered value to students and value to the Board.

“If the recommendation goes through, as a parent of a child with special needs, we need to ensure that the resources are there to support these students.”

The Board is committed to an inclusive model of education and will provide all necessary supports for students with special needs to ensure their success and well being.

Report on Information Received from the Municipality

Board Administration attended a meeting at the Town of Leamington Town Hall on December 8, 2015 with the town representatives led by the Director of Development Services. The Board presented background information respecting the Leamington 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, which appeared to be primarily in the east end of the Town proper. 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.

Board Administration’s Final Recommendation – Changes to Initial Report

Board Administration has amended its initial Accommodation recommendation as follows:

- Where the initial recommendation was to consolidate the JK to 6 students at Queen of Peace, Administration’s final recommendation is for the consolidation of the JK to 6 school at St. Louis;
- That effective September 2016, a middle school be established to accommodate the grades 7 and 8 student population within the current Queen of Peace and St. Louis boundaries, said middle school to be initially located in the short term at the Queen of Peace site and ultimately relocated to the Cardinal Carter Catholic Secondary School site, upon completion of an addition and renovations, as may be required, at Cardinal Carter; and
- That effective upon the relocation of the middle school from the Queen of Peace site, Queen of Peace Catholic Elementary School be closed and deemed surplus to the Board’s future needs, pursuant to Section 194 (3) (a) of the Education Act.

Rational for Final Recommendation

Although Administration is able to strongly recommend both the grades 7 to 12 model at Cardinal Carter and the JK to 6 model as a means of offering quality specialized programming for students in Leamington, similar to that offered to students in Riverside, and potentially to students in the West end of Windsor, the more challenging aspect to formulating an accommodation option for the Leamington area is the selection of the appropriate facility to accommodate the JK to 6 school.

As was so well represented by the Queen of Peace and St. Louis communities, both of these schools are valuable to the system and provide quality Catholic education to students in Leamington. However to realign spending into specialized, expanded programming in the face of declining enrolment, one of the facilities must be closed.

Administration’s initial recommendation for locating the JK to 6 school at Queen of Peace was based on the value of the “campus” model, with the thought that this would further enhance

shared programming between elementary and secondary and would result in least disruption for families.

Although the “campus” model is seen as having value, having heard from both communities, having consulted with the Municipality, and having further studied the capacity and condition of the facilities, administration believes that on the balance of all input received, St. Louis would be the better facility to accommodate the JK to 6 school in Leamington. Although weighing a number of considerations, Administration notes the following in particular:

- St. Louis is a community hub, offering established childcare services very much valued by the community, with working relationships with Children First, Children Aides Society, John McGivney Children’s Centre, and the Windsor Essex County Health Unit.
- The Queen of Peace facility will require greater capital expenditure to address larger renewal needs and has a significantly higher Facility Condition Index.
- The Queen of Peace facility appears to be the less energy efficient facility with higher energy costs per student.
- The St. Louis building is the larger of the two facilities (square footage), with both schools having ample site area for future expansion.
- The Queen of Peace facility has higher property value for possible sale, subject to *regulation 444/98 of the Education Act*.

Proposed Plan – Final Recommendation

Based on current enrolment numbers and forecasts, it appears that no additional classrooms would be required at St. Louis to accommodate the combined JK to 6 student populations of St. Louis and Queen of Peace. In order to facilitate the consolidation of the two schools for September 2016, any additional classroom space that may become necessary 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 as may be necessary and renovations to St. Louis with the intent of having the work completed for start of school in September 2017.

In the short term commencing in September 2016, grade 7 and 8 students from both Queen of Peace and St. Louis would be accommodated at the Queen of Peace facility. In order to ultimately accommodate all grade 7 and 8 students from Queen of Peace and St. Louis at Cardinal Carter, the construction of a gymnasium would be required at Cardinal Carter, as well as interior renovations to the existing facility. The Board would apply for funding approval from the Ministry of Education to proceed with these improvements with the intent of having the work completed for start of school in September 2017. Queen of Peace would be closed and deemed surplus to the Board’s needs upon the relocation of the middle school from the Queen of Peace site.

Administration has considered the concerns of the community with respect to the earlier integration of these younger students into a high school setting and, as a result, is recommending the following:

- Structuring the facility so that both elementary and secondary components are run independently.
- Establishing different start and release times for the elementary and secondary students to facilitate the separation of transportation.
- Allowing supervised, controlled and monitored access by Grade 7 and 8 students to specialized programming, technologies and specialty rooms particular to a high school, including associated academies.

Administration recommends the expansion of the Board's partnership with Hockey Canada beginning in September of 2016. The first sports academy will be introduced on the ice to the grade 7 and 8 middle school and Cardinal Carter secondary school students at the nearby Leamington Kinsmen Recreation Complex. Students will learn and improve their hockey skills while expanding their learning through interactive lessons that focus on physical, mental and emotional health and well-being.

Soccer is an international sport and cultural passion that attracts a number of our local youth. Moving forward, a soccer sports academy will be considered and determined by student interest. Fulfilling student potential is a priority. Providing a variety of opportunities that encourage student growth is a commitment this Board has made to all our students.

Although athletics is an important part of student life, Cardinal Carter students have historically showcased their artistic talents, and so the Arts Academy will also be another option for students in both our secondary and middle schools.

Danceology's 15 year success rate has demonstrated how students from all areas come together to celebrate the art of movement and music. The program puts a spot light on the Board's elementary and secondary youth, teachers and community members in an inclusive environment where everyone is not only included but also celebrated. Music and dramatic arts are also areas for student development that is encouraged at Cardinal Carter. Grade 7 and 8 students will have access not only to the auditorium and equipment, but will have the advantage of learning and collaborating with staff and students who are committed to the arts.

Providing students learning opportunities and skills that will best guide them in their decision-making is what education is all about. Today's youth must identify pathways, course selections, post-secondary placements, and work opportunities prior to hands on experience. Considering Essex County is one of the richest areas of agriculture, Administration recommends that the Board expand and enrich the Agriculture High Skills Major. Students will still benefit from the programming and certification opportunities that have historically been part of the Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) but with opportunities that expand into marketing, graphic design, economics and food systems management. Experiential learning and community partnerships will allow students to learn beyond the school context, on site in wineries, greenhouses, and associated business facilities that provide thousands of local employment opportunities while supplying food products across Canada and internationally. It is an ever-expanding industry that students would be able to access within their school community.

The grade 7 and 8 students would have access to opportunities and programming at Cardinal Carter. Transition, academic and career planning between the middle school and secondary school would be even more efficient and beneficial for students. The advantages of having grade 7 and 8 students at the Cardinal Carter site involve more than just facility use: partnerships can be established for student benefit.

In the JK to 6 dual track French Immersion school at St. Louis, students will benefit from focused, age specific programming. Grade 6 students will have the opportunity to assume leadership roles in the school, and all students will benefit from a model that allows for stepped, gradual transition from elementary, to middle school, to high school. The close proximity of the elementary, middle and high school will support the sharing of resources and programming.

Administration acknowledges the concerns raised by members of the community with respect to lower retention rates of students from the feeder schools in Kingsville, Essex, Maidstone and Stoney Point transitioning to Cardinal Carter. Having seen enrolment numbers increase at F.J. Brennan High School with the establishment of Corpus Christi Middle School and the development of specialized programming at the site, Administration is confident that a similar model at Cardinal Carter will attract students. However, Administration also sees benefit in the

recommendation presented by the community to investigate retention rates and to consult with all stakeholders in identifying the issues, and in developing and implementing strategies to increase retention of students in the Leamington and surrounding area within the Catholic school system.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

As detailed within Report.

TIMELINES:

As detailed within Report.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Presenters Submissions from the Public Consultation Meeting of January 25, 2016
- Written submissions received by the Director's Office

REPORT REVIEWED BY:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	EXECUTIVE COUNCIL:	Review Date:	February 8, 2016
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	EXECUTIVE SUPERINTENDENT:	Approval Date:	February 8, 2016
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION:	Approval Date:	February 9, 2016