



Report to Board of Trustees

Re: Final Administrative Report for the West London Review Area

December 8, 2008

Background

On May 26, 2008, the Board of Trustees passed a resolution directing Administration to establish an Accommodation Review Advisory Committee (ARAC) to study boundary change options and make recommendations to Trustees for Jean Vanier, St. Jude, St. Thomas More, Notre Dame, St. George, and St. Theresa elementary schools, no later than December 8, 2008. The West London ARAC was established and Administration circulated a Preliminary Administrative Report on October 6, 2008 for comment and input. The report outlined the accommodation issues at the West London review area schools and offered possible boundary options. The ARAC held a public meeting held at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic High School on October 28, 2008. The community made presentations to the Committee, and asked questions of clarification.

On November 11, 2008, the West London ARAC convened a working meeting to discuss the Preliminary Administrative Report, the presentations made at the public meeting, and the written input received from stakeholders. At this meeting, the West London ARAC decided not to recommend any changes for St. Theresa's attendance boundary. The committee did recommend boundary changes for Notre Dame and St. George, as described in Option 1 in the Preliminary Administrative Report with modifications.

Discussion

As stated in the Preliminary Administrative Report, by 2012/13 there will be sufficient space to accommodate all students within the West London review area in permanent accommodation without the need for portables at Notre Dame, St. George, and St. Theresa. Administration is concerned that no changes are being recommended by the West London ARAC for St. Theresa. The current and future over-enrolment at this school is not being addressed, and portables will be required for the foreseeable future, even though enrolment will decline in subsequent years. Administration recognizes that the accommodation issues at St. George are more critical at this time compared to St. Theresa. For the short term, it is not anticipated that an accommodation emergency is imminent at St. Theresa if no changes are made for September 2009. Notwithstanding, enrolment at St. Theresa must be carefully monitored on a yearly basis to ensure that the school can adequately accommodate enrolment over the next few years. It is important to note that over-enrolment places additional pressures upon ancillary areas of the school which were not designed to accommodate such enrolment levels; such as the library resource centre and general purpose rooms. It is also important to note that St. Jude will remain under-utilized as a result of not implementing boundary changes with St. Theresa.

In addition, the condition of the Board's aging portable inventory continues to be a serious concern as most portables are well past their expected life cycle. The cost to maintain these portables increases yearly, and has become a serious drain on the Board's limited School Renewal (SR) budget. This is of particular concern now as the Ministry recently announced a reduction to the Board's SR grants of just under \$600,000.

Administration supports the recommendations of the ARAC with respect to the geographic changes to the attendance boundary between Notre Dame and St. Thomas More, and between St. George and Jean Vanier. Administration is concerned, however, about the various grandfathering components of the ARAC's recommendations for Notre Dame and St. George students, as follows.

- Grandfathering of both current Grade 6 and Grade 7 students;
- Grandfathering of the siblings of the above-noted students.

Option 1, as described in the Preliminary Administrative Report, would redirect all JK to Grade 8 students residing within the defined areas, affecting approximately 72.5 Notre Dame students and 42.5 St. George students for September 2009. In doing so, no portables would be required at Notre Dame and St. George for September 2009. If all current Grade 6 and 7 students and their siblings currently attending Notre Dame chose to remain at their school of attendance for September 2009, the total number of affected Notre Dame students would be reduced by one-third (i.e. from 72.5 to 46 students). The total number of affected St. George students would be reduced by one-sixth (i.e. from 43 to 35.5 students). While it would have a minimal effect for St. George, this would result in the need for at least one portable, possibly two, to remain at Notre Dame for the 2009/10 school year.

Administration cannot support granting the option to siblings of affected Grade 6 and 7 students to remain at St. George and Notre Dame. The "grandfathering" of siblings is problematic to administer and ultimately results in delaying the benefits of the boundary change. It is also important to note that the youngest of eligible grandfathered siblings attending Notre Dame is currently in Junior Kindergarten. This means that the grandfathering of siblings would continue for at least 9 years.

It has not been the practice of the Board to grandfather siblings. It causes confusion for school Principals and administrators in determining which families are eligible to attend their school. As well, families who abide by the boundary change and attend the new school become frustrated and cannot understand why certain other families have been allowed to stay at their former school of attendance.

Administration does support granting the option to current Grade 7 students attending St. George and Notre Dame to remain at their current school of attendance for the 2009/10 school year, without transportation. This is consistent with the Board's previous practice, which would allow senior students to finish at their current school of attendance. This would also have a minimal effect on enrolment at St. George (1 student), and at Notre Dame (12 students).

Recommendation

Administration recommends:

1. That Administrative Option 1 be implemented, modified as follows:

- a) *That no action be taken with respect to the attendance boundary for St. Theresa;*
- b) *That all Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8 students residing south of Oxford Street West, east of Wonderland Road, north of the CN Railway, and west of the Thames River be directed to attend St. Thomas More, effective September 2009 (Map 1 attached);*
- c) *That all Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8 students residing in the North Talbot Community Plan Area, described as south of Southdale Road, east of Colonel Talbot Road, north of Pack Road, and west of Bostwick Road, be directed to attend Jean Vanier, effective September 2009 (Map 1 attached);*
- d) *That all Grade 7 students currently attending Notre Dame and St. George, who reside within the areas described above, be granted the option to remain at their respective school of attendance for the 2009/10 school year, without transportation, and that they notify Notre Dame School and St. George School of their attendance intentions for September 2009 no later than March 1, 2009.*

Map 1

