



LIMESTONE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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MINTUES

Special Community Planning and Partnership Meeting

January 23, 2017

Limestone District School Board

Presents:

- B. Lowry, Mayor, Loyalist Township & Warden of County of L&A
- L. Keech, CAO/Clerk County of Lennox & Addington
- S. Paul, Director, Community & Development Services, County of L&A
- B. Brooks, CAO/Municipal Clerk, Township of Stone Mills
- D. Davison, Councillor, Township of Stone Mills
- M. Embury, Councillor, Township of Stone Mills
- W. Lalonde, Councillor, Township of Stone Mills
- D. Rantz, Director, LDSB
- R. Bailey, PARC Facilitator, LDSB
- D. Fowler, Manager, Facility Services, LDSB
- C. Downie, Planning Officer, LDSB
- K. Smith, Communications Officer, LDSB
- C. Grant, Recorder

1. Welcome

D. Rantz – Director

Director Rantz welcomed everyone to the meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to obtain feedback from the municipality representatives concerning the *Initial Staff Report Regarding Yarker Family School & Odessa Public School*. This is a follow-up meeting to the Community Planning and Partnership meeting, which took place on September 8, 2016. At this meeting, Ruth Bailey, PARC Facilitator would present information concerning the initial staff report and also share the Board's long-term accommodation plan and hear feedback on the plans. Director Rantz recognized it is a difficult topic for parents and communities and she thanked the representatives for their support and their support for their constituents. Director Rantz shared that the bulk of her career was in the rural community and she stated she recognized the importance schools play in communities. The realities of declining enrolment and lack of funding, yet still supplying the best education experience for all our students is difficult. The Board's goal is to reach 100 percent school capacity as much as possible. Schools are needed across our district and the Board needs to balance financial responsibility and provide quality programming to our students. The Board is committed to finding a Limestone solution yet make sure the plan works for all communities in our district.

2. Introductions

Attendees introduced themselves.

3. Purpose of the Meeting

- The purpose of the meeting is to share information concerning the *Initial Staff Report Regarding Yarker Family School & Odessa Public School*;
- To provide the Municipal Representatives with an opportunity to offer feedback on the Report;
- To review the next set of potential accommodation projects outlined in the Long-Term Accommodation Plan and
- To provide the Municipal Representatives with an opportunity to offer feedback on the next set of potential accommodation projects.

4. Overview of the Initial Staff Report Recommendations R. Bailey – Facilitator

Facilitator Bailey stated Yarker Family School was identified as a school with low enrolment and facility utilization rates now and into the projected future. The school is in good condition and a safe environment for students and staff; however, somewhere in the Board we must reduce our number of schools. Ameresco was hired to have an outside view of our Board and provide a resource document. Both Yarker and Odessa have excellent programs. By moving students to Odessa, the result will be reduced costs for teacher, support staff and custodial support as well as transportation. She reviewed the provided handout concerning declining enrolment at Yarker Family School over the years. In 2015, the Yarker FS catchment had a population of 72 children ages 4-8. Thirty-six students were enrolled at Yarker FS with only 25 students from the Yarker catchment and 11 students out of catchment. Fifty-six students (77.8%) in this area attended LDSB schools. The remaining students attended schools in other boards, private schools or were home-schooled. Only 34.76% of the students attended Yarker FS. In other words, the parents of about two-thirds of the students are choosing to send their child somewhere else – and this trend has continued in 2016.

Prior to 2014, the students were housed in two classrooms and a portable. With the provincial implementation of Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) programs, the Board had to decide whether to initiate a program at Yarker Family School. Given the requirement for space at facilities set out by the province in order to operate an FDK program, the Board was required to apply for this program and an addition at Yarker FS by October 28, 2011. In the fall of 2011, the 5-year historic enrolment trends and the projections indicated that the addition of a Kindergarten room was warranted. The capacity of Yarker FS increased in 2014 when the FDK addition opened.

5. Invited Municipal Representative Offered Feedback

D. Davison, Councillor, Township of Stone Mills

Councillor Davison stated that in 2011 and earlier, Yarker FS was over-capacity, then it declined. When a business would see a decline, they would question why. Was this because Grade 4 was removed from the school in 2014 and a room added? In his opinion, students should get the basics to succeed in school – reading, writing and arithmetic. He stated that the municipalities have not had the opportunity to explore other options other than closing the school. He stated there should be an opportunity for a more meaningful discussion and that did not happen. The municipalities understand budgeting processes however, he was not sure if the right options were being pursued. He felt they have not had the opportunity to question everything in the guideline including boundaries. The boundaries are very tight in this

community. His personal opinion is that the policy to build mega schools may not be the right policy. The Board should be looking at reducing the size of Odessa PS and then maybe this school would have better EQAO results. The EQAO list states Yarker as number one out of 43 schools (in reading) and Odessa is number 38, which could be why parents send their children to other schools.

According to the Ameresco report, Yarker FS has a facility use at 20% and Odessa PS has a facility use at 41%. The solution to improving Odessa PS may not be adding a handful of students. Odessa is 13 kms from Yarker. Harrowsmith and Newburgh Public Schools are closer. He questioned if all of the data had been reviewed.

The Yarker FS site has a library, that is a partnership between the Township of Stone Mills, the County of Lennox & Addington and the Limestone District School Board. The library has the third largest circulation in the county's library system and it is well used. A number of people from Frontenac County pay extra to become a library member. This partnership should be looked at more extensively.

Councillor Davison stated again that the township has asked for meetings with Board staff and have not had a response to do so. All schools in Stone Mills are in a better state of repair than what Ameresco states in the report.

Councillor Embury, Township of Stone Mills

Councillor Embury viewed a program on TVO called *The Agenda with Steve Paikin* – topic *An Education for All* in which Trustee French stated that school boards should not look at any individual facility. She asked that the Board review all the schools in the Township of Stone Mills as a whole. She referred to the EQAO report where Yarker FS has had a greater outcome in EQAO testing (1 out of 43) (in reading) and Odessa PS is 38th on the list. She questioned that if she had children attending Yarker FS, would she send them to Odessa PS.

Facilitator Bailey stated that the curriculum is the same across the province. Testing results depend on many factors that influence the students' performance. Class size is one influencing factor. Yarker students have enjoyed smaller class sizes but being able to provide small classes of 11 and 15 students is not sustainable. If the Board used the funding formula for teacher vs class ratio, Yarker FS this year should only have one teacher assigned to the school for a combined class of JK to Grade 3 students. This would be an unsafe situation having only one teacher in the school. The Board does not have class sizes of 11 and 15 at any other of its schools except some remote schools. Odessa PS draws from a larger area and the population is more diverse. A student achieving well in one school would be expected to perform equally as well in another school environment.

Councillor Embury stated that busing is a concern for many parents. Students would spend much more time on a bus and could be subjected to bullying on the bus. Lengthy time on a bus would have a negative impact on a student's health with less time for physical fitness and lower mental capacity. Ameresco did not consider this point. She mentions that on a TVO program there was talk about 10 km ministry guideline to the next school.

Director Rantz clarified that it is difficult for EQAO to compare results from a school with low enrolment to a school with a larger enrolment. EQAO does not release results on small schools, as they are not relevant to the overall results. It is also difficult to compare

results across a school board and emphasized that teaching and learning is stellar across all of our schools.

Councillor Lalonde, Township of Stone Mills

Councillor Lalonde stated that the removal of Grade 4 from Yarker FS is not reflected in the declining enrolment information and could be added back to the school. Also, the Yarker FS catchment area currently has 42 properties for sale. Young families could be the purchaser of some of these homes, therefore enrolment could grow.

Facilitator Bailey responded by stating that the Grade 4 curriculum changes significantly for Grade 4 students. It would be challenging to continue with classes of two or three grades with the inclusion of Grade 4.

Director Rantz stated Grades JK-3 are considered Primary grades while Grades 4-6 are Intermediate. EQAO is a primary assessment – not a Grade 3 assessment. Teachers in these divisions work together to provide programming. She would not want many grades in the same classroom with Grade 4 students.

6. Overview of the Next Set of Potential Accommodation Projects *R. Bailey*

Facilitator Bailey reiterated that the Ameresco report is only a report and not a decision made by the Board. She shared the next set of potential accommodation projects below:

Project	Schools Involved	Overview Description
Project 3: Kingston – Centre (Consultation)	LCVI Calvin Park P.S. Rideau P.S. Winston Churchill P.S.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular JK-6 English program students from Rideau P.S. to be directed to Winston Churchill P.S. Redirect Grade 7 to 12 students from the Rideau P.S. and Winston Churchill P.S. catchment areas to Calvin Park P.S. and LCVI
Project 4: Kingston - West (PAR)	Collins Bay P.S. Lancaster Drive P.S. Fairfield E.S.	Close Collins Bay P.S. and redirect the students to Lancaster Drive P.S. and Fairfield P.S.
Project 5: Greater Napanee & Stone Mills Township (PAR)	NDSS Centreville P.S. Enterprise P.S. Newburg P.S. Southview P.S. Tamworth E.S. The Prince Charles S.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redirect Grade 7 & 8 students from the elementary schools to NDSS Close Centreville P.S., Enterprise P.S., Newburg P.S., Selby P.S. and Tamworth E.S. and build a new school on the Centreville P.S. site. Some students to be re-directed to The Prince Charles S. Redirect students living south of the Napanee River to Southview P.S.

Staff are currently gathering and updating enrolment, facility and financial information at this time. Staff will then review the data this fall; discuss issues relative to the schools and review goals; discuss possible options to meet the issues and goals; decide on the projects, options and recommendations to bring forward to the Board; and write and revise the reports. The goal is to maintain programming, best use of staff and facilities and reduce costs for the Board and Ministry. The Board knows that it will not be able to keep all schools open due to lack of funding and enrolment decline. Project 3 does not require a PAR as it does not affect more than 50 percent of the student population.

Senior staff will review boundaries and various data and bring forward their recommendations to the Board.

Councillor Lalonde, Township of Stone Mills

Councillor Lalonde wanted to share with the group, highlights of rural communities from a report released by the University of Guelph, *Rural Schools and Educational Reform: Should We Keep Rural Schools Open?*. The report says that rural is seldom mentioned in policymaking. It talks about a highly urbanized culture and disregard to rural areas, that do not seem to be important. The trend is to build larger schools and create larger boards. Do larger schools provide more programming opportunities? Most students rarely utilize opportunities. Smaller schools educate better. Does a community lose its economic viability? Schools are essential to maintain property values as well as social distinction and cultural viability. Her personal opinion, smaller schools communicate more effectively to their parent community. Instruction is geared to the individual needs of a student. Smaller schoolers are safer because everyone knows one another and there is a sense of community. Parents are more likely to be involved in a smaller school although she is not sure if this holds true in the Limestone Board. Teachers form teacher-teams and integrate subject matter more effectively. Smaller schools have a greater emphasis on learning related to the outside world.

A second report discusses the health and wellness of rural Canada. It was funded by the federal government and identified essential skills in Canada. It addressed strengthening rural Canada by investment in education, and that this investment in rural Canada was an investment in social and economic well-being. Ameresco does not reflect this.

A school is not a building but a community, recognized by governments and the Limestone District School Board and should be embraced. She urged the Board to take more time with this difficult situation. If families are looking for quality, then Yarker has it. Students will not find enrichment on a school bus or a sense of community.

Facilitator Bailey stated she has the above-mentioned reports and would review them again. She reiterated that the Board could not afford to maintain all schools in the Board. Every community will say the same thing when it is their turn to be involved in a PARC. This meeting was an opportunity for the municipal representatives to tell the Board what other ideas they had going forward.

Councillor Davison, Township of Stone Mills

Councillor Davison stated that he does not share the view that closing smaller schools is the correct answer. Boards and their partners should have a two-way dialogue where all options should be considered. There is some growth in some areas in the Township of Stone Mills. It is a bedroom community for Kingston. The two subdivisions they have on draft approval are not going away. The Board does not understand the mentality of rural communities. People tend to stay in their community.

The Township of Stone Mills passed a motion supporting a moratorium, by the province, on the Accommodation Review Process and asked that the Limestone District School Board post-pone this PAR until more information is received. Council believes the information that Ameresco has provided is not accurate or is misleading. He asked that the Board support this moratorium.

Councillor Davison stated he did not come prepared to discuss Project 5 but made a general statement questioning who drew up this information in relation to all of the schools of the Board. He would like a two-way dialogue and requested that this information be left with them to share and discuss. He would compile their notes and comments and send them to the Board.

Director Rantz asked that Council to review the information on Project 5 and present their thoughts on the next phase including what should the Board be considering as other options to explore. However, we know that information will need to be updated and conversations will need to occur as we go forward and as things change in communities. The Board is not committed to the Ameresco plan but Staff are required to present a report to Trustees. It is the Board Staff's responsibility to present viable options to Trustees for moving forward. Many communities have contacted her wanting her to look at other communities and not their backyard.

Having more conversations moving forward is possible, however, the Board must be true to the PARC and the mandate of the PARC as the Board is not allowed to intrude or compromise the process.

7. Invited Municipal Representatives Offer Feedback

Director Rantz cautioned holding meetings outside of the PARC process. Staff creates the Initial Report and it is not presented to the Board until it is worthy of putting forward. Staff cannot reveal the options they are considering until it is presented to Trustees. They can look at other options but cannot say what we are considering until Trustees hear the information first. If the municipalities has new factors or ideas to consider, staff need to hear this.

Councillor Davison, Township of Stone Mills

Councillor Davison was concerned this meeting was rushed and taking place at the eleventh hour.

Councillor Lalonde, Township of Stone Mills

Councillor Lalonde informed the group that the Township of Stone Mills has hired a consultant to look at the economic impact on the area should schools close. The Township would like another option to have a meeting to discuss the findings. The report is expected to be completed by mid February.

Director Rantz stated she would welcome a copy of the report and if the municipal representatives had new information to share or new ideas to present, they could send the information in a letter or an email. There is no need to request a formal meeting as staff are always available to accept new information.

B. Lowry, Mayor, Loyalist Township & Warden of County of L&A

Mayor Lowry stated the public would not be happy when they learn of the schools slated for a future PAR for Project 5. He appreciates that the Board needs to be fiscally responsible and understands the nimbyism that is communicated to the Board however, it seems that the Board is focusing on rural Ontario.

B. Brooks, CAO/Municipal Clerk, Township of Stone Mills

CAO Brooks asked why the Board did not include all the rural schools in Lennox and Addington in this PAR rather than focus only on Yarker FS. The potential of building one large school in Centreville shows that the Board is out of touch with rural communities. The children in Stone Mills must move to a school out side of their area. He questioned why there couldn't be a northern and southern school in the Township of Stone Mills? He asked what would happen if enrolment grows in Yarker over the years?

8. Wrap-Up/Adjournment

Director Rantz thanked everyone for their comments and information and looks forward to hearing from them as the Board would like to engage in two-way dialogue and hear their solutions moving forward. She recognized the difficulty of their situation and thanked them for appreciating the difficult situation for the Board. The Board really cares for all of the students and the communities and recognizes the importance communities place in the wellbeing of students.

The meeting adjourned at 11:55 am.

ADDENDUM

1. Personnel at the Limestone District School Board have reviewed their correspondence and have not located a request from Stone Mills for a meeting.
2. Enrolment records have been reviewed with respect to the removal of Grade 4 from Yarker Family School. The Board's earliest retrieved records were from 1996, and indicate that there were no Grade 4 students at the school from 1996 to 2016. The grade 4 class existed sometime prior to 1996 and was redirected to Odessa P.S. by the former Lennox and Addington County Board of Education.

The following is an excerpt from:

**The Corporation of The Township of Stone Mills
Council Minutes
December 12, 2016
6:30 PM**

10. Items for Consideration

1. Grey Highlands Request for support to a resolution requesting a moratorium on the Accommodation Review Process

Motion Number Motion Number 11-456-2016 Motioned By:

J. Wise

Seconded By: D. Davison

THAT Council instruct the CAO/Clerk to send a letter of support to Grey Highlands supporting the moratorium on the Accommodation Review Process highlighting the Township of Stone Mills concerns of the potential social and economic impacts to rural municipalities of Ontario.

FURTHER THAT a copy of the support letter be forwarded to Minister of Education, Mitzie Hunter, Premier Kathleen Wynne, Leader of the Opposition Party, Patrick Brown, MPP Randy Hillier.

CARRIED

2. Township Of Lakeshore Resolution

Motion Number Motion Number 12-456-2016 Motioned By:

K. Richmond

Seconded By: J. Wise

THAT Council instruct the CAO/Clerk to send a letter of support to the Township of Lakeshore supporting the moratorium on the Accommodation Review Process highlighting the Township of Stone Mills concerns of the potential social and economic impacts to rural municipalities of Ontario.

FURTHER THAT a copy of the support letter be forwarded to Minister of Education, Mitzie Hunter, Premier Kathleen Wynne, Leader of the Opposition Party, Patrick Brown, MPP Randy Hillier.

CARRIED

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January 23, 2017

10:00 a.m.

Initial Staff Report Regarding Yarker Family School & Odessa Public School (ISR)

Issues Identified in the ISR:

Yarker Family School was identified as a school with low enrolment and facility utilization rates now and into the projected future.

Goals in Reviewing Yarker Family School and Odessa Public School

The goals in reviewing the schools and bring forward an option were to:

- Maintain or improve the curricular, extra curricular and social opportunities for the students;
- Maximize the use of Board and Ministry of Education resources – staff, facilities (reduce unused space) and transportation; and
- Reduce the financial liability of the Board and the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Enrolment

School Year (Oct 31)	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Population Age 4-8 in Yarker FS catchment	72	68	70	73	69	73	73	71	72	72	
Enroled at Yarker FS	54	51	55	64	60	68	63	68	51	36	26
From Yarker catchment	32	24	33	42	47	55	47	48	34	25	
Out of catchment	22	27	22	22	13	13	16	20	17	11	
From Yarker catchment attending regular program at another LDSB School	29	25	18	17	14	12	17	18	22	26	
From Yarker catchment attending Fr. Im. program at another LDSB School	3	3	4	5	6	6	4	2	4	5	
Population from YFS catchment Age 4-8 attending an LDSB school	64	55	55	64	67	73	68	68	60	56	
% of Population attending an LDSB School	88.9%	80.9%	78.6%	87.7%	97.1%	100.0%	93.2%	95.8%	83.3%	77.8%	
% of Population from YFS catchment attending Yarker F.S.	44.4%	35.3%	47.1%	57.5%	68.1%	75.3%	64.4%	67.6%	47.2%	34.7%	

The age 4-8 population in the Yarker F.S. area has remained relatively constant while the population attending YFS from the area has declined from a high of 55 students in 2011 to 25 students in 2015-16 a decline of 34.5%. In 2016-17 the decline continued.

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Utilization

- Prior to 2014 the students were housed in 2 classrooms and a portable.
- With the provincial implementation of Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) programs the Board had to decide whether or not to initiate a program at Yarker Family School.
- Given the requirements for space and facilities, set out by the province in-order to operate a program the Board was required to apply for a program and an addition at Yarker F.S. by October 28, 2011.
- In the fall of 2011, the 5 year historic enrolment trends and the projections indicated that the addition of a Kindergarten room was warranted.
- The capacity of Yarker F.S. increased in 2014 when the Full Day Kindergarten addition opened.

School Year (Oct 31)	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Yarker F.S. Capacity	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	72	72	72
Portable	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Enrolment	54	51	55	64	60	68	63	68	51	36	26
Percentage Utilization	117.4%	110.9%	119.6%	139.1%	130.4%	147.8%	137.0%	147.8%	70.8%	50.0%	36.1%

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Proposed Option

The Senior Staff proposed accommodation option:

That the present catchment area of the Yarker Family School be included with the Odessa Public School catchment area and the JK-Grade 3 students consolidated into Odessa P.S.;

That the consolidation of the Yarker Family School students into Odessa Public School commence in September 2018; and

That the Yarker Family School be closed and declared surplus to the Board in the fall of 2018.

Feedback on the proposed option concerning Yarker Family School and Odessa Public School

Next set of Potential Accommodation Projects Outlined in the Long-Term Accommodation Plan

Project	Schools Involved	Overview Description
Project 3: Kingston – Centre (Consultation)	LVC Calvin Park P.S. Rideau P.S. Winston Churchill P.S.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular JK-6 English program students from Rideau P.S. to be directed to Winston Churchill P.S. Redirect Grade 7 to 12 students from the Rideau P.S. and Winston Churchill P.S. catchment areas to Calvin Park P.S. and LCVI
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At this time Staff have just started to gather and update enrolment, facility and financial data related to the schools listed in the three projects.

Staff will:

- Review the data;
- Discuss issues relative to the schools and the review goals;
- Discuss possible options to meet the issues and goals;
- Decide on the projects, options and recommendations to bring forward to the Board; and
- Write and revise the reports.

Feedback on the next set of potential accommodation projects.

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