

FACILITY: Arthur Henderson Public School

DATE: February 16, 2017

INTRODUCTION

In June 2016, the Algoma District School Board approved placing Arthur Henderson Public School under accommodation review.

Arthur Henderson Public School previously went through the accommodation review committee (ARC) process which resulted in a recommendation in the Final Board Report of 2014 to keep the school open as a JK-6 facility with the following condition:

Senior administration may consider moving a division within a school without entering a formal accommodation review process, when the enrolment in the grade(s), or programs constitutes less than 50% of the enrolment of the school. Additionally, senior administration could move forward and consolidate a division (i.e. Jr. Division), should they feel the numbers are too low and students in JTPC (currently CAES) and AHPS would be better served by consolidating a group of students.

Senior administration worked through the 2016-2017 organization process and determined that five of the eight classes between Arthur Henderson Public School and Central Algoma Elementary School would be in a triple grade situation. Based on the previous ARC condition, senior administration brought forth a recommendation to the Board on June 14, 2016 to relocate the Grade 4-6 cohorts from Arthur Henderson Public School to Central Algoma Elementary School for September 2016, to improve programming by eliminating the triple grades at both sites.

In November 2016, the Board approved a modified accommodation review due to two factors: the distance to nearby existing elementary schools, Central Algoma Elementary School (14.8 km to the east) and Thessalon Elementary School (18.8 km to the west); and the facility utilization rate of 37.5% for the JK-3 student population. Subject to the findings of the modified accommodation review, the possibility would exist for application to the Ministry of Education for funding the construction of an addition to Central Algoma Elementary School.

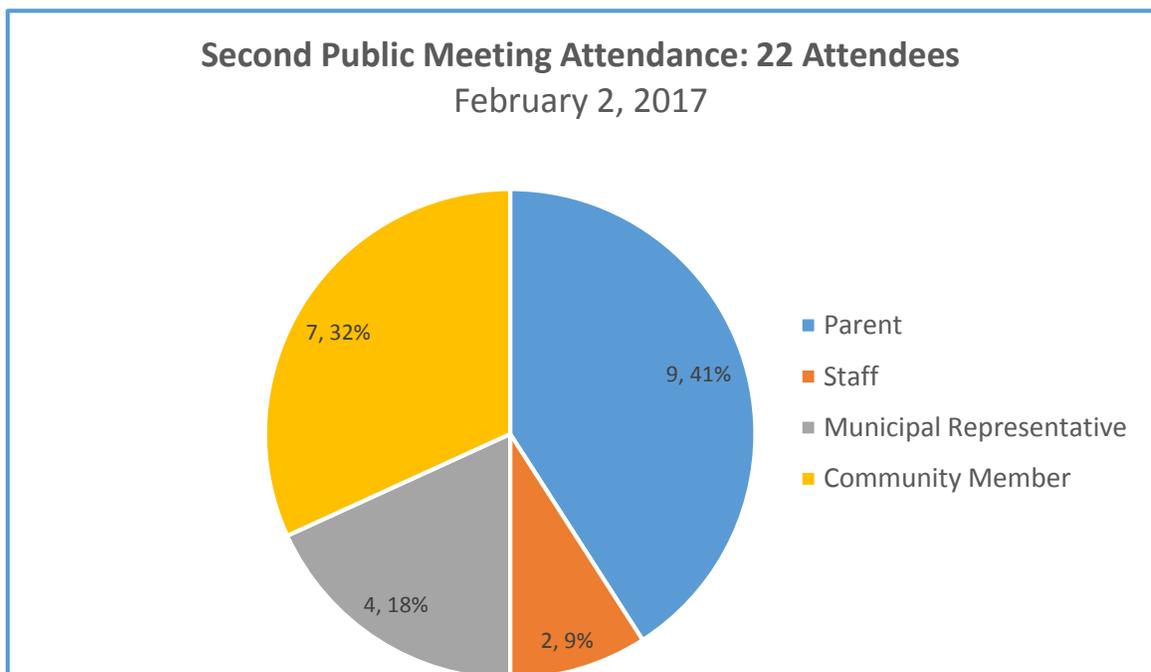
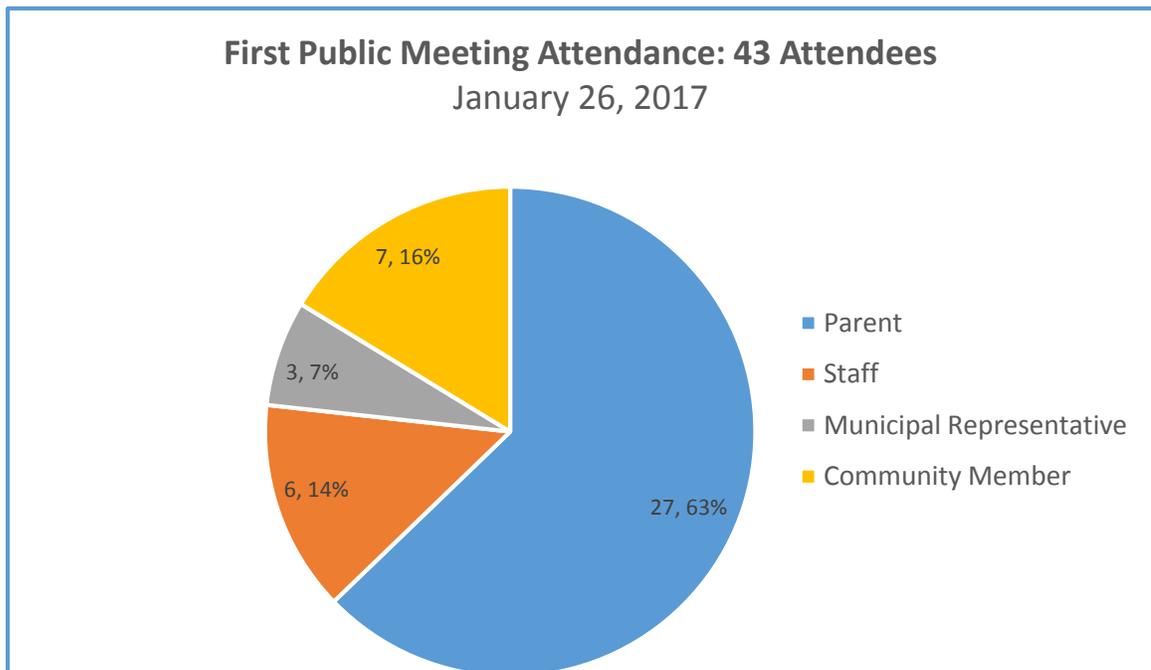
A public meeting was scheduled on January 26, 2017, followed by a second public meeting on February 2, 2017. The community was notified of all public meetings via the board's SynreVoice messaging system to each student household (phone and email), local media, radio and the school board website. Attendance of all present at the public meetings was recorded and included whether the participant was a parent, staff, municipal representative or community member. Agendas and minutes of meetings were posted on the board website.

At the public meetings, information was shared with regards to the modified accommodation review consultation process. The Arthur Henderson initial staff report and school information profile were shared which included the facility and instructional profile. Enrollment figures and projections, as well as bussing times and boundaries were communicated during this community consultation as well.

Public input was sought regarding recommendations that could be included in the final report. A meeting was also facilitated on January 26, 2017 with the mayors of the Town of Bruce Mines and the Township of Plummer Additional to gather input from the affected municipalities.

REFLECTIONS ON THE MODIFIED ACCOMMODATION REVIEW PROCESS

1) Public meeting attendance and representation are presented in the charts below:



There are currently 61 students at Arthur Henderson Public School which represent 47 families and 24 of the 47 (51%) families participated in at least one of the public meetings. The following table summarizes the grades of those students whose parents attended the public meetings.

Public Meeting Attendees	
Grade of Student	Number of Parents
JK	9
SK	10
1	7
2	10
3	4

- 2) The process allowed input from the community, municipalities, staff and parents.
- 3) As per the modified accommodation review process, a minimum of one public meeting must be facilitated. At the first public meeting, the feedback was that there should be a second public meeting to ensure that all community members have ample advance notice and the opportunity to participate in the community consultation. As shown in the charts above, the first public meeting had 43 people in attendance and this decreased to 22 at the second public meeting.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Outlined below are the main areas of feedback brought forth in the community consultation process:

- 1) Community – The feedback included concerns about losing their community school and the impact on the local Bruce Mines area. As well, maintaining the sense of a small school community where parents and community members feel welcome and are regularly involved in the activities of the school was reinforced. There are several school activities which are linked to the local town and there was a request to maintain these community connections.
- 2) Boundaries – The feedback at the public meetings was to maintain the current boundaries. The consensus was that moving all of the current Arthur Henderson students to Central Algoma Elementary School would help to maintain existing friendships as the school community stays together, supporting the transition for students. Parents who live on the eastern edge of the boundary (i.e. Hopper Road) expressed a desire to move to Central Algoma Elementary School even though they are geographically closer to Thessalon Public School.
- 3) Bussing – The increased length of bussing times was expressed as a concern with the move to Central Algoma Elementary School. There was a request to revisit current bussing routes to decrease travel time, as well as the current transfer point at Arthur Henderson Public School.
- 4) Breakfast Program – There is an excellent breakfast program which currently supports students at Arthur Henderson Public School. With the increased bussing times, the community reinforced the added importance for this type of nutritional program at Central Algoma Elementary School.
- 5) Gym Space - Community members want to ensure that there is adequate access for the larger JK-6 population to utilize the gymnasium at Central Algoma.

- 6) Transition – The main parent concern was with respect to when the transition of the school community would take place. If the new classroom addition was ready during the year, the parents felt that this added transition, especially for their younger, primary students would be very difficult. As well, transitioning during the year would make it difficult to build a sense of community as the Central Algoma Elementary students would already be in that environment and the Arthur Henderson students would be coming into ‘their space’. There are several challenges with a transition midway through the year. If Arthur Henderson students moved over with their existing class and teacher, then this would not support building one inclusive school environment for both communities. On the other side, if students were reorganized based on the entire school population, this would be a difficult transition for both Central Algoma and Arthur Henderson students as peers would be split up and may have a change in teacher. The consensus and recommendation of parents is that a September transition is the best decision regardless of construction completion.
- 7) Before and After Program/Day Care – The community expressed an interest in before and after programming at Central Algoma Elementary School. As well, the community expressed an interest in exploring the potential for a Day Care on the Central Algoma Elementary site as the only options for these services in Central Algoma are in the Echo Bay (west) and Thessalon (east) areas.
- 8) Building – The attendees and municipalities requested information about the process for the building once closed and if this facility could potentially be acquired and utilized for community purposes.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The parent, staff and community member participation and feedback in the modified accommodation review process is appreciated. The community acknowledges the work of the current staff at Arthur Henderson Public School. The Arthur Henderson Public School Facility Condition Index (FCI) is currently deemed extremely high or critical at 123% combined with a 37.5% utilization rate, meaning that there would be no access to Ministry Capital funding for the existing building. Moving the existing Arthur Henderson students to a larger school population, would mean that the JK-3 students would benefit from improved facilities, educational environment, access to resources and extracurricular opportunities.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Consistent with the Initial Staff Report and based on the School Information Profile feedback and public input, it is the Senior Administration recommendation that Arthur Henderson Public School be closed and the JK-3 school population be relocated to Central Algoma Elementary. This would be contingent upon the Algoma District School Board applying for and receiving Ministry of Education Capital Funding for an addition to Central Algoma Elementary School.