

Arthur Henderson Public School Modified Accommodation Review Public Meeting

Location: Arthur Henderson Public School Gym

Date: Thursday, January 26th, 2017

Time: 7:00 pm

AGENDA

- 1. Welcome/Introductions**
Superintendent Marcy Bell
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- 2. Capital Plan/PowerPoint**
Superintendent Marcy Bell
 - Process to date – PowerPoint shared
 - Initial staff report
 - School information profile
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- 3. Opportunity for Input/Feedback**
 - **Community Member:** Looking here at this package and going back to the slide – very little money put into this building – why haven't we put money in every year over the last 5 years – could have been spread out – now it is 8 000 000 – now we have to bus 20 minutes away and if there is a snow storm parents have to go pick up little children – if we all let our houses go they would be like this too– if we managed the infrastructure and where these students go prior we wouldn't be in this position – the Board has been playing this game for 15 years because this school has been let go for the last 15 years -numbers are the same as before so why?
Response: As shared in the PowerPoint, there has been a Capital Plan since 2006 which did look at our buildings/utilization and a plan for Central Algoma – to access funding and support we need to look at utilization and prohibitive to repair and how to consolidate – this has been part of capital plan which has been shared/communicated
 - **Community Member:** What did CASS cost (addition)?
 - **Response:** I don't have the exact cost; however, it was less than \$6 000 000 – I will confirm this figure and share
 - **Staff:** Was it more or less? (gym was for the 7/8) Won't the cost be greater to build at the new site than repair here? Irritates me – we are

still working in this building – boilers are so old – no heat during times I worked here – always just trying to fix problem – this has all been pre-planned to shut us down

- **Response:** It was less – the 7/8 gym as part of the 7-12 transition – as stated, the addition was less than \$6 000 000 – when a building is prohibitive to repair – in this case critical -

- **Community Member:** Is there a plan to close all small schools in the province?
- **Response:** The Ministry is looking at its aging facilities and to build new schools, are looking for consolidation to optimize funding

- **Community Member:** Southern Ontario is very different than small northern Ontario schools – these schools are the hub of the community – programs are better in the smaller schools and the programs are not better in the larger schools

- **Community Member:** If we maintain the building so far this wouldn't be happening
- **Response:** Board is not able to support the costs to repair all small schools that are prohibitive to repair – Ministry does not support these costs

- **Community Member:** In small communities where I went to school teachers knew me and I wasn't put on a bus for 1 hour a day – individual needs can be met in a smaller school not in a bigger school
- **Response:** Combining Arthur Henderson and Central Algoma Elementary School would be around 180 students which would still be a smaller school – this was Arthur Henderson's population in the past and many have shared their experiences – there has been significant decline in population within Central Algoma

- **Community Member:** the ministry tells us that if a student travels more than 10 to 20 minutes on a bus they are more stressed and don't have a very good educational career – we build a super school but we not be able to teach any students because they can't learn due to the length of the bus ride
- **Response:** there would be a 10-15 minute increase in bussing time – bringing these populations together will support programming – more resources – eliminate triple grades – as mentioned, not a super school – 180 students – housed at a JK-12 site but JK-6 area is separate – its own

area – main office/classrooms/gym – don't see 7/8s and 9-12s – Principal Viita shared separation and small school feel to JK-6 area

- **Community Member:** So we create a school without an education – students will be in trouble their entire life – the research tells us this
- **Community Member:** Take 10 more minutes to load kids here will have to go 140 km an hour to get to school in the time so that only takes a few minutes
- **Parent:** \$8 000 000 to repair – we don't need a school this big so it would be cheaper because we don't have that many students – there is an allowance for a special pavement – we don't need that in the country
- **Response:** the Ministry will not support funding a small JK-6 school of 60 students on this site – need to ensure all schools have things such as accessibility etc.
- **Parent:** Whether they go to Thessalon or Desbarats it will be 45 minutes long – will they need to catch the bus earlier – already get up at 6:30 in the morning – that's a lot for a kid
- **Response:** there would be a 10-15 minute increase in bussing time – we will work closely with the bussing company to optimize bussing routes and ensure we minimize the bussing times as much as possible
- **Staff:** Kids are on the bus longer and they have a hot lunch here – will they have one after a longer bus ride and would they have time to eat it – not just a juice box or a cheese string – if bus rides are lengthened what will the breakfast be for them at the other school
- **Parent –** Our kids are on the bus early – they are hungry when they get to school and need to have a breakfast – if it is a longer bus ride will need a breakfast as they will be hungry
- **Response:** all of our schools have nutrition/breakfast programs – we will be reviewing current programs and based on student needs, take all things into consideration
- **Parent:** I live here now-used to live in Ottawa – we wanted to live in a small community so our kids will have a short ride and have a school in the community – the length of time on the bus is very hard on little kids – even an extra 15 minutes – I am apprehensive to have my kids be on a two-way highway to get to Desbarats or to Thessalon – I feel that this will

be a huge hit to the Bruce Mines community if we close the school – will not be a place for young families to come

- **Community Member:** This process has been a long term death to Bruce Mines and the school Board does not care about that
- **Response:** we understand the concerns of the community but also need to ensure we are providing the best education/programming in the best facilities – triple grades and aging facilities won't attract families either – brand new facilities/programming at Central Algoma and in the future, a new school in Thessalon

- **Community Member:** I am hearing that programming is more important than our children – what about the medical effects, medical health, mental health – do we have compensation for that? If these are not in place in a school they are not hard to find in small schools.
- **Response:** it is not just about the programming but also the supports we can put in place – access to resources such as Special Education Resource Teachers, EAs, counselling supports, other resources when there is a larger population – at this site access to resources already on site

- **Community Member:** We all know it is a done deal – you are asking what we need to do for our kids to make it successful – it is going to happen whether we like it or not – that is what I'm hearing
- **Response:** the recommendation of Senior Administration is to close Arthur Henderson and move students to Central Algoma/Thessalon; however, the final decision is made by the Board of Trustees based on the ARC process and input/feedback from community consultation – as shared in presentation, the Board of Trustees can approve recommendation, modify the recommendation or approve a different outcome

- **Parent:** When will it happen?
- **Response:** If the Board approves the recommendation, as outlined in the initial staff report, this would be 2018 – if approved, there would have to be a request to the Ministry for capital funding, the project would be tendered and then construction of the addition to CAES – earliest it would likely be is January 2018 but could be later depending on all of the process

- **Parent:** I understand that the school was built in 1946 – schools are changing – I have 3 kids – want the appropriate education for them – want whatever is best for them – it is bad that it is happening for the community but we need to do what is best for our kids
- **Parent:** What happened to enrollment?
- **Response:** as shared in the capital plan, there has been significant downward decline over the past 10 years – not just Central Algoma
- **Parent:** We've accepted our fate that the school is closing – boundaries staying the same and not moving in the middle of the year are my issues – they have gotten used to their teachers and have their friends and they get confused and stressed if you move them in the middle of the year – my daughter is already stressed about going to a new school
- **Parent:** There aren't enough classrooms to accommodate us there – building 2 classrooms isn't enough – they would have to move our kids in two different places
- **Response:** the proposed addition would include 4 classrooms
- **Parent:** If move in January that is two moves in one year – can we enroll in the new school in September instead of start here (JK)
- **Response:** this would have to be brought forth for consideration and would depend on enrollment – currently unable to house all JK-3s on site
- **Staff:** the recommendation is to close the school – are we allowed to say “no”
- **Response:** as shared, the recommendation of Senior Administration is to close Arthur Henderson and move students to Central Algoma/Thessalon; however, the final decision is made by the Board of Trustees based on the ARC process and input/feedback from community consultation – the public meeting is an opportunity for input/feedback
- **Community Member:** Make this clear to everyone – stop fooling these people into thinking they have a say in this - this decision was made 20 years ago – stop misleading and being facetious that they have a say – we have been managing this way for 20 years – don't tell me that you're not going to move them in January and mix up the 3 grades – how do you see this working?
- **Response:** if the closure is approved and there is a January transition, we would not reorganize and affect the two school populations/students – it wouldn't make sense in January 2018 to split up classes and put students

with new teachers – this would not be the best for student well-being and for the transition

- **Parent:** My daughter is super social and would have a hard time adjusting – my son starting JK in January – want what is best for our children – moving in January is not it – opposed to moving in January
- **Parent:** My JK child is to start here and get used to routines and then in January his bus changes and routines change but is still a big transition for January – want it to be September – if they are going to start this year in September at Arthur Henderson then let us stay the year – need a fresh start in September
- **Parent:** The drop off/ transfer point for CASS is here at the school – I’m assuming that the board will not maintain a parking lot – will transfer point change places or stay here? If you have kids in grades 4,5,6 and also in JK, SK, 1,2,3 and potentially with boundaries changes our children will be in two different schools or our 4,5,6 have to move – we don’t want that – there is an option to take all of the families from Arthur Henderson to go to CAES?
- **Response:** we are looking for input with respect to boundaries – should these be changed? We need your input – as well, we would want to look at situations such as this to ensure that there is a smooth transition for families – would need to understand individual situations if this was the case
- **Parent:** Will there be split grades at CAES? How many students in JK-8?
- **Response:** there would not be triple grades as there would be approximately 180 JK-6 students and there are approximately 170 7/8 students – this year there is a straight 4, 5 and 6 based on numbers – organization depends on the numbers – this consolidation would eliminate triple grades
- **Parent:** boundaries – Thessalon has split classes do they not? – we were sold on the idea that our kids would have straight grades if they moved to CAES so do we have the option to go to the school with straight grades – will we have the option to go either way to Thessalon or CAES – buses come down my road to get the high school students so won’t they pick up my kids?
- **Response:** parents can always make an ‘Out of Boundary’ request but parents are responsible – if there is room in class, then approved – this consultation involves feedback/input into the boundaries – Thessalon

and CAES will be similar in size – both will have split classes and depending on numbers in each grade, could have straight but varies from year to year

- **Parent:** If boundaries are changed will my children who are already going to CAES have to move too?
- **Response:** we want to support smooth transitions – and eliminate the moves for students/parents – if there was a change, this would be in going forward and we sometimes look at ‘grandfathering’ in such situations

- **Parent:** I think we don’t move the boundary at all – it will separate all of friends and community

- **Parent:** My SK and Grade 3 kids already have a 50 minute bus ride and they are not stressed and are well educated

- **Community Member:** I’m scared – wish I was here when all of the ARC started – we are losing a sense of community – kids used to walk to the library, museum, pick up garbage and walk in the town – they can’t go for a walk on the highway at CAES
- **Response:** we need to understand what activities are important to students/school that need to be maintained and look at how to support these within the new school community

- **Community Member:** It won’t be a community school

- **Parent:** My sister’s kids would go to Thessalon and mine to CAES so want them in the same school

- **Parent:** Is there a Before and After program at CAES?
- **Response:** there isn’t currently – only offered at Thessalon and Echo Bay but would be something we could explore if there is interest

- **Community Member:** I have a question – I think you (Marcy) should share with everyone in the room your contact information – about 50/50 in favor of moving – if shared your contact info they would talk to you about it – I don’t have a dog in the fight – we lost their arena and now the school – this is a death of the community – instead of moving everything to CASS why not moving it here – can’t be worried about programs - the

board has not even thought about an After school program at CAES – If I had kids here I would bus them to French Immersion in the school instead of going to CASS

- **Response:** I am more than willing to share my contact information and will place my business cards at the exit for those interested
- **Staff:** The new area where they will build at CAES is right in the middle of the playground and will take away green space and playground
- **Response:** 130 acres of land at Central Algoma JK-12 – large field area for JK-6 students to play - CAES Principal Viita confirmed the playground/space and that the addition would not affect this area which has new playground equipment
- **Parent:** I like that the secretary knows my first name and I will miss my little school – the secretary knows my name and my number and recognizes my voice when I call – the support staff and the teacher are so good and I want that to continue – I know all of the parents and kids in my child’s classroom – don’t know if it is even possible for this to happen at a new school – it is not about programming – it is about family – sad because I don’t know 75% of the families at the new school
- **Response:** reiterate that this would still be a small school of 180 students – which is the size that our Central Algoma schools were in the past – many have shared their experiences in these schools and this would have been the enrollment at these times – we’ve had significant decline – combining these schools today would be similar to our schools 15-25 years ago
- **Parent:** I don’t think we care about size – it is about the community and keeping the school here
- **Parent:** How do we not know there will be more kids in the future to keep CAES open? Added up the kids from grade 8 to here – how do we know we won’t have the numbers we had in the past to fill this school again
- **Response:** this has been an ongoing trend over the past 10 years – while we all hope that there is an increase in our communities – the trend does not indicate this
- **Parent:** We don’t have the Annex anymore and those students are gone
- **Parent:** \$6 000 000 to build the school this size or if not, what size of school will that amount of money build? We don’t even know what that would build?

- **Response:** \$6 000 000 would build something comparable to this school but the issue is capital funding – the Ministry would not support funding a new school for 60 students – access to funding happens when consolidation is explored – as well – funding dollars are not provided to repair buildings which have been deemed prohibitive to repair
- **Community Member:** The school board numbers for cost don't add up
- **Parent:** What happens if 10 years down the road the numbers start going up? You are building for the kids we have right now – what if it increases in the future?
- **Response:** if in the future there was a sudden increase, then we would work with the Ministry
- **Community Member:** What was the capacity of CASS in its prime
- **Response:** 900-950 – currently there are approximately 300 9-12s, 165 7-8s in the CASS building and then there is the JK-6 addition which has 120 students
- **Staff:** I have staffing concerns – there are 2 separate buildings at CAES and a lot sick kids – what happens if a child is sick and there is only one caretaker first thing in morning and he is out shoveling snow – want to know why there is not have a full time caretaker for JK-6 school - Perry is the only caretaker and a part-time carestaff fill in to clean during the day – need staffing to reflect the numbers – need more cleaning staff in that building – all the figuring is done on size of school not numbers of kids
- **Response:** Principal Viita shared that she assists and things are taken care of during the day – also discussed that staffing is assessed every year depending on the school and needs – with transition, things such as carestaff will be reviewed depending on number of classrooms and space
- **Parent:** I have a JK student who struggles with his eyesight – this small school makes me feel more comfortable with him moving around – he will be that much further away from home in the new school and he is so little - a bigger place will cause more difficulty for him to get around – will he have enough support there like here due to numbers?
- **Response:** with combined population, ability to access more resources/ support – currently Mr. Iozzo is responsible for administration and also serves as the SERT – at Central Algoma Elementary, there is a SERT and that is his only focus – consolidation provide access to resources/ supports

- **Community Member:** My son Nathan is at the CAES – he is not comfortable at all there – they try to do the best for him at CAES and it is not working for him
- **Response:** encourage you to reach out and discuss with Ms. Viita – sorry to hear this and we need to work together to support student transition – we need to hear from parents what will help support this and if there are individual circumstances/factors which may make this transition more difficult, we encourage parents to reach out to principal and/or me
- **Parent:** My son was in soccer this summer and he quit because he didn't mix well with the Johnson students so he won't mix well at all at the new school
- **Response:** transition will be important – we will look at events/activities to help support this team building
- **Parent:** Will there be an open house and meet and greet so parents and students can come to see the school and meet the teachers – I want to give them my name and phone number – we need transition planning – they are so much smaller and littler than the 4,5,6's that already moved there
- **Response:** we will need to look at this differently due to the age of the students – really need to hear from parents and staff to help shape what this should look like – we are committed to supporting a smooth transition
- **Parent -** What will happen to our school staff – will they move with our kids?
- **Response:** if the transition were to happen in January, the students would move over with their teacher to the new site – if it were in the new year, this would become part of the regular organization and staffing
- **Parent:** I like the small community – they are moving into a Super School - my nieces and nephews had more bullying at the new school and they don't like going to school – spending money out of our community and putting it into other communities – our community is dying – the ministry is not my community – don't want my young one travelling the highway
- **Parent:** What about St. Joseph's Island – they have smaller numbers why aren't they closing
- **Response:** the main factor with respect to St. Joseph Island would be the commute/distance to the nearest school which would be Central Algoma

Elementary- there is a long distance from one end of the Island to the other and then adding the time from the Island to CAES

- **Community Member:** For the time of the move – one question is why can't it be this September 2017 – why are looking at anything other than that?
- **Response:** there is no room to accommodate the 60 JK-3s at the Central Algoma Elementary site – additional classrooms are required
- **Staff:** Is there a chance that we can stay in this building? Has the funding been given yet? What time frame until we know that we are getting the funding? Likely that construction may not start until the end of school? So it may not be ready by January 2018. My recommendation is to still say no.
- **Response:** the recommendation is closure as the building is prohibitive to repair and there is no Ministry funding to support repairs/building a small school on this site – you can provide input to the Trustees who will make the decision – funding has not been given yet as the ARC process needs to be concluded prior to this – if approved – we would likely know by June – construction cannot start until the funding is approved and then there is the tender process
- **Parent:** Are they going to move the boundary lines for the buses?
- **Response:** boundaries is another important part of this consultation – we need to hear from you
- **Parent:** My recommendation is to not move the boundaries and keep all of these kids together – used to changing teachers not used to changing friends
- **Parent:** Do they have to go to Thessalon or Desbarats – can I have a choice? - I think this school is still usable – we can shrink it down and stay here
- **Parent:** This is a huge issue – I look around the room and these people feel that what they say doesn't matter - everyone has busy lives and you expect me to come to a meeting next week – you don't know what it took for me a lot to get here tonight
- **Response:** community consultation is part of the process and will be part of the final report – we will hold another meeting next week to ensure that people feel they've had an opportunity to be part of the process and input

- **Parent:** This was too short a notice for this meeting
 - **Response:** as discussed, we are open to holding a 2nd public meeting – let's confirm this for Thursday, February 2nd – we appreciate your assistance spreading the word – this will be advertised through media, web site, SynreVoice again

 - **Parent:** We need to community to rally around the school – only 3 families interested in coming to a meeting – a lot of support in person – worried about their education not the building

 - **Staff:** Longer bus ride means more stress – you really think that is a better education for your kids

 - **Parent:** There is not choice here – this is done deal so why do we want to provide input?
 - **Response:** the recommendation of Senior Administration is to close Arthur Henderson and move students to Central Algoma/Thessalon; however, the final decision is made by the Board of Trustees based on the ARC process and input/feedback from community consultation – as shared in presentation, the Board of Trustees can approve recommendation, modify the recommendation or approve a different outcome – as well, there are other aspects that we need your input which includes if it does move forward, what needs to be taken into consideration – boundaries, transition – we will facilitate a 2nd public meeting to ensure we have all input/feedback considered for the final report to the Board of Trustees
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4. Adjournment