

# Arthur Henderson Public School Modified Accommodation Review: Second Public Meeting

**Location: Arthur Henderson Public School Gym**

**Date: Thursday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017**

**Time: 7:00 pm**

## AGENDA

### 1. Welcome/Introductions

**Superintendent Central Algoma Family of Schools: Marcy Bell**

**Superintendent of Business: Joe Santa Maria**

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### 2. Capital Plan/PowerPoint

**Superintendent Central Algoma Family of Schools: Marcy Bell**

**Superintendent of Business: Joe Santa Maria**

- Process to date – PowerPoint shared
  - Initial staff report
  - School information profile
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### 3. Opportunity for Input/Feedback

- **Community Member:** Can we say no to this accommodation?
- **Response:** It's never easy to face school closures, trust me when we say we understand how you must feel, it's very emotional, stressful. Trustees know this as well and are sensitive to your cause but we have to face reality. School closures are in Southern Ontario and everywhere else not only here.
- **Parent:** Where do you get that bigger schools offer better programming? Would increasing staffing be an option?
- **Response:** You may not be able to see it as an opportunity but when we make recommendations to the Board we look at greater funding to sustain everyone's best interests. Example: Chapleau – gained \$5 million, Hornepayne as well. Amenities are greater – technology increases, building itself, staffing support services offered all increase due to increased funding by consolidation.
- **Community Member:** 6 million to upgrade property, 8 million to build new. Would it not make sense to build new here and have TPS move here instead of closing this

building and moving to CASS? Had some money been spent over time ... we wouldn't be having this discussion. If this school closes, people won't move here thereby, losing a major hub/population and property values decline as well.

- **Parent:** I feel the same way. What happens to families if that happens? I don't know what I would do!
- **Response:** We didn't spend money over the years because we get 6 million in capital funding/year for all 43 of our schools. Each year we're splitting hairs on where we spend that throughout the entire board.
- **Community Member:** At the end of the day, you didn't spend money here; that money went somewhere else and now you come here and tell us we're closing anyway. You're going to do what you want. There's definite decline in property value - people are going to lose out.
- **Response:** I'm sorry for that but we try to do the best we can with what we have.
  
- **Staff:** When students were removed from this building, did we lose the funding for those students to CASS? Part of the issue with the physical plant/school itself is because the money wasn't there due to taking those students away, right?
- **Response:** Indirectly, yes.
  
- **Parent:** When the process first started, why wasn't it ever considered that Johnson Tarbutt and other schools come to us? One super school in a community that has a partial town feeling. The answer was that Desbarats didn't want to. Now, when we voice our opinion you're not listening. How come we weren't considered? We're only asking a little and didn't get it.
- **Response:** I want to believe that they (Desbarats) wanted to protect what they have in that community as well but all I can say is that we knew the CASS site would be favourable due to its enrolment and the great things that are going on with an attached 7/8 piece to high school. As far as research goes with transitions of kids we know it the less transition the better. High school kids are role models and we thought it would be effective and viable. Unless there was a boom in economic development keeping this school would be costly. Water close to CASS. The site itself lends itself to a lot of opportunities that far surpass the viability of keeping all these smaller sites open. Also have to remember that Thessalon Public School busses students from great distance as well – almost to Iron Bridge – this would be an issue if looking at bussing from that area to Bruce Mines.
  
- **Community Member:** You're talking about communities losing their school - people who are feeding you're big beautiful school aren't going to be there anymore because people aren't going to move here so eventually you're losing out anyway.

- **Response:** tough decisions about funding every year. When we lose students we lose funding which hurts your communities (smaller businesses) within etc. Parameters are given to us.
- **Staff:** What about our user groups. What's going to happen to them? Christmas Craft show, best start hub, karate, what happens?
- **Response:** We don't get much funding to sustain those user groups. They might have to look at other buildings to house their groups somewhere else within the community, I don't have an easy answer.
- **Community Member:** Did they ever think about scaling a building down instead of closing the whole thing?
- **Response:** We have to recognize that most of the things within this wouldn't have been possible without the capital gains plans in the past. They won't entertain the idea of being creative with your building – demo part of it, closing a wing etc. It doesn't work that way - Ministry recommends to us what they are giving money for and for where.
- **Parent:** Kids that are there now are currently fighting for gym time. When adding more kids, how are they all going to get their gym times?
- **Response:** The gym is able to accommodate all students. Creative ways with the staff to do so, splitting the gym to house 2 gym times, combining classes, as well as the Mezzanine which has been equipped with fitness/workout equipment and the secondary fitness room for intermediate students which frees up gym space
- **Community Member:** Added the fact that they are beginning to utilize the high school gym as well now so that more students/classes are able to capture the full experience.
- **Community Member:** What is going to happen to the building itself?
- **Response:** There is a process through application to either  
Demo or  
Community interested in its use/request for properties application  
Will be a reasonable \$ amount to sell. Ministry wants you to sell in for a fair market value. Different for each community depending on its demand and economic status.
- **Community Member:** I'm sure you have a plan. You must be thinking of what to do with this. The community wouldn't want it because not worth it due to how much it takes to repair.
- **Response:** It then goes to next stage in the pecking order.
- **Community Member:** Is there some policy of who can bid on the land?

- **Response:** Yes. Policy 444-98.
- **Parent:** Reiterated concerns: Length of bus time JK-3, 15-17 minutes one way but it's a lot for our little ones. They are up earlier, breakfast already an issue. Will this cost the school board more because now you have to organize 2 buses to go to the same place? Another concern—Breakfast program? Students need nutrition to think. Is the new school going to support such a program?
- **Response:** Breakfast program at Central Algoma Elementary School but we will need to discuss/consider all these types of things during the transition
- **Parent:** Concern: Staff may suggest student is adjusting well at school but not at home disrupting home life.
- **Parent:** We don't want to move in the middle of year. We don't want that. Can we please just stay here until September 2018? You owe us this much. Part way through the year. Another concern is that a JK coming in September will not even adjust to Arthur Henderson... then they have to move in January. Not good for them.
- **Response:** Reality is if we are allowed to do so we would consider delaying the move until September 2018 if we can. Transportation: Work with our providers to indicate a viable/effective solution to the transportation – Steve Fratesi. Prevent delays. Average of 15 minutes one way.
- **Parent:** Take note of January move we don't want to segregate students between the two schools, it's not fair on them. Also the previous parent's point about the bus, correct me if I'm wrong... are we the only community who has a transfer point we might need to consider the most efficient way possible for our children.
- **Response:** We will do that.
- **Parent:** Do they get to move with their teachers if move in September of 2018?
- **Response:** Too early to determine that at this point.
- **Parent:** Maybe it's better to move in January because they do move with their teacher in of September 2018.
- **Community Member:** You're saying you're trying to find the most cost effective measure to transportation but the fact is we don't want our child transferring there to get to school... just make it happen one way our tax \$ matter.
- **Parent:** I don't want my child to go school with high school students.

- **Response:** It's more of a small school feel. You don't even see the high school kids. You're encouraged to go anytime to view without invitation. Maybe it would be a good idea to have an open house so you can see it/feel the environment first hand.
- **Parent:** Attests to the fact that it is isolated for the most part and it does have a safe environment for the JK-6 as it is. Great how they built it.
- **Parent:** Because of that student/building divide, one disappointing factor is that students who are family (elementary-high school) who attend CASS can't even see each other throughout the day. Just the way it's built.
- **Staff:** Since our enrolment is so low, how long do you think we can go until we are not viable any longer – until we “peter out?” Right now we have the same coming in as we have going out. Can we just exhaust the school until that happens?
- **Response:** Not effective to do so. We did that at Iron Bridge and it wasn't a good thing - staff/school community becomes disheartened
- **Parent:** Is it that all the classrooms are glass? What do you do in a lock down situation?
- **Response:** Our new schools have a lot of glass for sightlines and supervision so that students can work in groups, etc... Clear plans to work around that even though we don't want to ever think of that situation occurring.
- **Parent:** Question about triple grades. Is it bad to teach triple grades when we currently have students that are at different levels/situations to begin with?
- **Response:** More challenging with triple grades – wider range - teaching to the grades/curriculum expectations for an effective education.
- **Community Member:** Do you think that some families will stop sending kids to school because of transportation lengths. I regret doing this with my daughter when I did but it was because I live way out there and it would have been difficult for transportation but not a good choice. I hope others don't do that/think the same because of this situation.
- **Response:** Long transportation routes are a reality in some cases and it's unfortunate for students but we hope in the future that will change.
- **Parent:** Attests to longer bus rides at St Joe (35-40 minutes) depending where they live on the Island, but they (families) choose to live there.
- **Response:** Boundaries? We need your input on the boundary lines as we are discussing longer bus rides – changing boundaries for students closer to Thessalon could decrease bus rides – we need your feedback.
- **Many Parents:** Keep the same boundary lines.
- **Parent:** What keeps a 4 year old in the seat on the bus for a long ride?

- **Parent:** A lot of reminders, teaching, stopping the bus, etc.
  - **Community Member:** Busses 8X safer than any other vehicles on the highway.
  - **Community Member:** Despite buses are safer than any other mode of transportation, it takes only one incident. We live in an area where travel on a highway is inevitable. We have to and it's a one lane highway. You can have the best driver, best conditions, but it could happen even with a regular passenger car.
  - **Response:** appreciate bus drivers and all they do. We highly depend on their expertise to keep our students safe and thank them.
  
  - **Staff:** When school closes are we still going to have a crossing guard
  - **Response:** Not likely as they wouldn't need to walk to the school for pick-up – they would be picked up along the way – that side
  
  - **Parent:** When are the policies put in place for determining bus cancellations due to weather.
  - **Response:** Controlled by our consortium and OPP officers. They make the call, which happens every morning to determine safety for our students.
  
  - **Parent:** When will we hear back about what's going to happen?
  - **Response:** To finish our report and submit to Trustees by March 14<sup>th</sup> for review. Final report then to be made by Board of Trustees. Will keep your Principal in the loop to inform parents during school council and by newsletters of what's happening.
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#### 4. Adjournment