



Date: 2017 01 17

**Subject: PUPIL/SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW:
Initial Staff Report – Blind River Public School**

1.0 Background

The Algoma District School Board's (ADSB) recent capital planning dates back to 2003 when ADSB undertook an assessment of all 63 schools and other facilities with the resulting profiles prepared and posted to the ADSB website. The Ministry directed that facility data be entered into a School Facilities Information System (SFIS) database in 2005 and required that Board staff develop a corresponding draft capital plan. This initial draft capital plan was submitted to the Ministry in April 2006 with a public release in late 2006. In subsequent years, the capital plan is annually revised by Senior Administration to determine and confirm capital priorities as well as identify schools that ought to be reviewed through the Accommodation Review Process.

The capital planning process recognizes the significance of ensuring quality programs as well as the fiscal responsibility of right-sizing the organization as the population of students change within the communities of the Board. Declining enrolment of school-aged children over the past decade, coupled with an aging infrastructure, requires planning to maintain effective programming while maximizing the enrolment capacity of schools. This planning will ensure the Board's ability to maintain facilities while continuing to offer high quality learning environments for all students well into the future.

On June 14, 2016, at its regular Board meeting, the Board approved the placement of Blind River Public School on 'Under Review Status':

"It is recommended that Blind River Public School be placed on "Under Review Status." The review would focus on the possibility of school closure, accommodating the JK-8 program and students currently housed at Blind River Public School in a JK-12 school on the W.C. Eaket Secondary School site.

Following the Board's approval for the review, the Director informed the school stakeholders that their school was identified as "Under Review Status" and was being reviewed for closure.

2.0 Summary of Accommodation Issue

With declining enrolment occurring over the years in Northern Ontario, there is the need to review the potential for operating within consolidated spaces. With recent consolidations in Chapleau, Hornepayne and the Central Algoma areas of the Board, it has resulted in JK-12 facilities within these areas. Due to space in schools being underutilized, it is felt it is time to conduct an accommodation review to assess the possibility of students in a JK-12 setting on the W.C. Eaket High School site for the 2018-19 school year. Capital investment would be required to create spaces within the school conducive to JK-8 classrooms.

3.0 Standard Pupil Accommodation Process

This accommodation review will require a “Standard Accommodation Review” process. This involves establishing an ARC Committee, consultation with the local community and preparing a final staff report to the Board of Trustees.

For more details of the process, please refer to Policy 5.01 – Pupil and School Accommodation Review Policy.

4.0 Recommended Option for Consideration

In order to provide better programming and a better learning environment for students at other sites within the Board, the option for consideration would be to close Blind River Public School and transition existing students into a JK-12 site on the W.C. Eaket High School site. This would allow the Board to submit a proposal to the Ministry of Education to request Capital funding for the renovation to the high school to accommodate the students and if approved, could result in the students at Blind River Public School, transitioning to a JK-12 site in 2018 based on the timing of the construction project. The Board will develop a transition plan for all students of Blind River Public School to ensure a smooth transition to their new school which will include the review of boundaries and transportation.

Please see the School Information Profile (SIP – Attachment B.1 #5) for the school which is provided with this initial staff report and posted on the Board’s website. The rationale for this recommendation is based on the following facts from the SIP:

Blind River Public School was constructed in 1928. The Facility Condition Index (FCI) for Blind River is 79%. The Ministry of Education considers an FCI of 65% or greater to be in critical condition. The FCI is used for long-term planning and maintenance of buildings. The higher the number of repairs that are needed in a school, the higher the FCI. The FCI is calculated by comparing the cost of repairs to a school compared to the cost of replacing the building. The higher the FCI, the less likely funding would be available to repair or replace a building.

Over the next five years, Blind River Public School would require \$9,858,182 worth of renovations and upgrades. The entire building could be replaced for \$12,449,220. School Boards require Ministry approval to spend \$1,000,000 or more on capital projects – something not usually supported for Prohibitive to Repair structures, especially when capacity is available to accommodate students in neighbouring schools.

Grade Enrolment	JK	SK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	TOTAL
Oct 31 2010	7	15	16	10	17	17	13	19	25	30	169
Oct 31 2011	18	10	19	18	10	19	20	13	27	26	180
Oct 31 2012	16	19	17	18	26	14	22	24	20	32	208
Oct 31 2013	17	22	17	18	18	26	15	21	23	21	198
Oct 31 2014	20	18	22	16	18	19	26	14	21	27	201
Oct 31 2015	14	15	21	20	16	18	23	23	14	23	187
Oct 31 2016	8	14	16	20	14	17	22	23	22	16	172

In addition to the FCI summary and enrolment history at the school, Senior Administration wishes to emphasize the following considerations:

- The rationale for consolidation is also based on ensuring the sustainability of quality programming opportunities as well as continued access to the personnel and resources required to support student needs in the receiving schools.
- A larger school population will provide students:
 - expanded leadership and social opportunities;
 - increased access to special education and other support services
 - increased opportunities for co-curricular and extra-curricular programming.
 - Increased access to education opportunities (i.e. reach ahead courses, shops, larger gyms, etc.)
- A transition plan would be implemented to facilitate a supportive transition of the students and families involved from the existing school to the receiving school.

5.0 Conclusion

As part of this initial staff report, the option identified in the report is to consider the consolidation of Blind River Public School students within a JK-12 setting on the W.C. Eaket High School site.