



# MINUTES

## William Merrifield VC Public School Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) Meeting #4



Location: William Merrifield VC Public School  
Date: Tuesday, January 20, 2015  
Time: 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

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Present: **Sherri Dean** (Parent and Chair of the Committee), **Carol Lucio** (Principal), **Elena Palazzi** (Teacher), **Joe Maurice** (Superintendent), **Don McConnell** (Municipal Representative), **Ruby Blue** (Community members)

Public Attendance: 14

**(1) Introduction of ARC Committee (5 min)** Meeting started at 7:00 with Sherri Dean introducing the committee

**(2) Accommodation Review Committee Final Report - Recommendations**

Mr. Maurice reviewed the purpose of the meeting, which is to present our final draft recommendation to the public and to provide time for questions and feedback. Before proceeding with the ARC Recommendations, Mr. Maurice reviewed the highlights of the previous ARC Public Meetings. In particular, the second public meeting in October focused on the condition of the school and included Dave Ervin from the Plant Department presenting where William Merrifield would require renovations and upgrades to remain open. In the third meeting in November, the ARC presented its draft recommendation to close William Merrifield and move the students to Isabel Fletcher or to Isabel Fletcher and Greenwood. Since that meeting, the ARC has reviewed the existing enrolment by grade for HM Robbins, Isabel Fletcher and Greenwood Public School. In addition, the ARC reviewed projections of what enrolment by grade would look like with various scenarios of students from William Merrifield moving to those three schools in September 2015. The ARC also looked at neighbourhoods surrounding these three schools in terms of areas of residential growth. Prior to arriving at a final recommendation, the ARC toured the three schools. As a result of this work, the ARC revised its recommendation.

Mr. Maurice, assisted by Mrs. Lucio, presented a PowerPoint providing an overview of the William Merrifield ARC Final Recommendation. This included:

(1) Close William Merrifield VC Public School and move students to neighbouring schools commencing in September 2015. Reasons provided for this recommendation included:

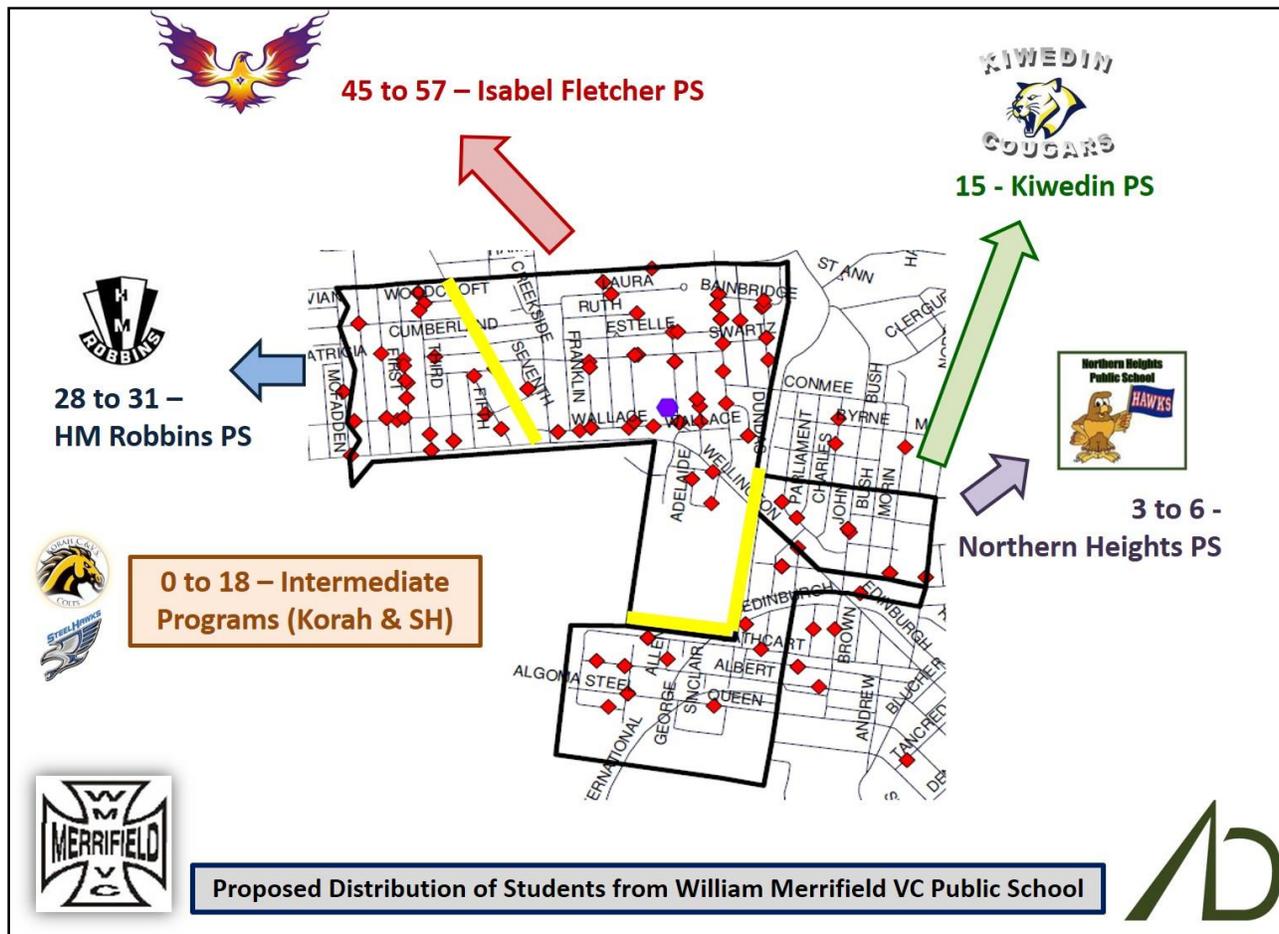
- Prohibitive to Repair (PTR) - high Facility Condition Index (FCI) **(81.93%)**
  - Building requires extensive renovations and upgrades (roof, electrical, plumbing, gas lines, heating system [boilers and radiators], driveway, entrances, windows)
- Low occupancy at William Merrifield **(129 students, 43.9%)**
- Space available in neighbouring schools **(space for 351+ students, within 4.1 km)**
- Extracurricular opportunities available in neighbouring schools
- Greater opportunities for staff collaboration to support student learning

- Lower FCI in neighbouring schools – school facilities and learning environments are in better condition
- (2) Encourage Grades 7-8 students to attend either the Superior Heights or Korah Intermediate Programs to minimize the number of transitions for these students in the next two years
  - (3) Zone out-of-boundary students to their home school zones
  - (4) Move Supported Learning Class to HM Robbins PS
    - 9 of the 11 students in the class reside in the West End, so the ARC felt this program should be housed in this area to minimize transportation time for the majority of students in the program.
  - (5) Move students in Kiwedin/Merrifield co-zone to Kiwedin (JK-6) and Northern Heights (7/8)
  - (6) Move students east of Korah Road to Isabel Fletcher PS
  - (7) Move students west of Korah Road to HM Robbins PS
  - (8) Outside of where to accommodate students, other recommendations included:
    - In the near future, review the school boundaries in the West End
    - Explore opportunities for a hot lunch program at Isabel Fletcher PS, where the largest number of students from William Merrifield VC Public School will be attending
    - Begin transition planning for students, families and staff as soon as decision is finalized

Mr. Maurice shared that the ARC revised its original recommendation from Greenwood to HM Robbins because of the large amount of existing, approved, and potential future residential growth in the Greenwood zone. In addition, Isabel Fletcher could not accommodate all of the students without being overcrowded. HM Robbins has available space and is in a neighbourhood with less residential growth. The ARC also determined that due to their existing enrolment, neither Kiwedin nor Northern Heights Public School is capable of absorbing large enrolment increases.

Mr. Maurice and Mrs. Lucio shared that under the ARC recommendation, students would be distributed in the following manner in September 2015:

School	Number of Students SK-Grade 6	Number of Students Grades 7 & 8	Total
HM Robbins PS	28	3	31
Isabel Fletcher PS	45	12	57
Kiwedin PS	15	0	15
Northern Heights PS	3	3	6
	91	18	109



### (3) Review Policy Around Next Steps

Mr. Maurice reviewed timelines for next steps in the process including:

- ARC Accommodation Report submitted to School Board Administration within 14 days of January 20, 2015 – anticipated to be submitted by this coming Thursday/Friday
- The Director will provide the ARC Report to trustees and the public, and will have the Report reviewed/analyzed by Board staff
- The Director will present the ARC Report to the Board, along with staff findings and recommendations to the trustees, prior to the decision of the Board – anticipated to be received by Trustees at the Board Meeting on January 27, 2015
- Based on staff findings the Director shall recommend to the Board:
  - That the school continue to operate in the present format; or
  - That the school operate under a revised format; or
  - That the school under review be closed
- A minimum notice of sixty (60) calendar days will be given to the public prior to the meeting where the trustees will vote on the recommendations – the earliest Board Meeting where this could happen is April 7, 2015
- In addition to regular Board Meetings, one special Board Meeting will be available for community members to make their views known by delegation to the Board before any decision(s) is/are made by the Board
- The Board shall decide in open session:
  - That the school continue to operate in its present format; or
  - That the school operate under a revised format; or
  - That the school under review be closed – with clear timelines

- The Director shall notify in writing the parents/guardians of the Board's decision

#### **(4) Questions from the Public –**

Mr. Maurice asked those in attendance if they had any questions or wanted to provide any feedback. There were no immediate questions, so Mr. Maurice asked what they would like to see in terms of transition plans if the Board decides to close the school.

Question – Don McConnell asked, what might transition activities look like?

Response – Transition activities could include a number of activities such as parent/family open houses in the evening, transition days at the schools where students spend a day at their new school, shadowing students in their grade level and participating in activities, invitations to activities at the new school, staff and student exchanges, Barbeques etc.

Question – Do I have to go and register my students at the new school?

Response – No. Once a final decision is made, each family will be notified of the final decision and will be notified of their new school designation. Staff at the school will look after the paperwork.

Question – What if I do not want my son to attend the new “designated” school for my neighbourhood?

Response – You would need to go through the “out of boundary” request process. Transportation is not provided if you are “out of boundary”. However, sometimes, if space is available, and you can get your son to the nearest bus stop, you may be able to access it. School staff would be available to assist parents with this form.

Question – How will staffing work? How many teachers will each school need? How many teachers will move to each school with the students?

Response – There are no definite answers as staffing will be determined by enrolment and the Collective Agreement. Teachers at Merrifield will be declared surplus. Surplus teachers are placed first into open positions, based on seniority. If students from Merrifield move to HM Robbins and Isabel Fletcher, this may open up classrooms and may create openings within those schools. As a result, some teachers may choose to go with the students, while others may seek opportunities in other schools.

Question – What will the class sizes be next year?

Response – We cannot provide a definite answer. We can only estimate now based on projected numbers. Under the Recommendations, each school would have 200 to 230 students. Depending on the grade level and where families decide to go, numbers will vary.

Question – Typically people have questions after a meeting like this. Where do we go if we have questions later on?

Response - Any future questions can be directed to Mrs. Lucio. If she is unsure, she will consult with Mr. Maurice.

#### **(5) Wrap and Adjournment –**

ARC members thanked the public for their attendance and participation in the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 7:38 pm.