



**Facility:** Sir James Dunn Public School

**ARC Committee Members:**

- Chair / School Council Representative – Robin Maj
- Community Member – Amanda Gauthier
- Municipal Member – Mayor Ron Rody
- Principal – Petar Kusic
- Staff member – Patty Bernath
- Superintendent of Education – Joe Maurice

**Date:** May 15, 2017

---

**Introduction:**

On June 14, 2016, the Algoma District School Board approved identifying Sir James Dunn Public School as “Under Review Status”. The review would focus on the possibility of school closure, accommodating the JK to 8 program and students currently housed at Sir James Dunn Public School as a JK-12 facility on the Michipicoten High School site.

The Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) was approved by the Board on January 17, 2017, and within a week a written invitation was sent to the Municipality of Wawa to meet and discuss the option presented by the Board. While a meeting was not scheduled, the Municipality did provide written correspondence on June 21, 2016 after the first Board resolution, and Mayor Ron Rody was part of the ARC.

The Sir James Dunn Public School ARC held Public Meetings on March 1, 2017 and May 1, 2017. Minutes were taken at each meeting and are available on the ADSB website [www.adsb.on.ca](http://www.adsb.on.ca). ARC timelines were shared at both meetings. The community was notified of all public meetings in advance and reminders were sent out to school community members through advertising and flyers. In addition to school-based communication, meetings were advertised in local media, through radio advertisements, and on the school board website. A sign-in record of attendance was documented at each of the public meetings. Between the public meetings, some members of the ARC held a consultation meeting with staff members at Sir James Dunn Public School on March 28, 2017, and Superintendent Joe Maurice met with staff at Michipicoten High School on May 1, 2017. In addition, one member of the ARC toured the JK-12 site at Central Algoma and Greenwood Public School in Sault Ste. Marie. Information gathered from the two staff meetings and the school tours was shared with the ARC and also with the public during the final public meeting.

Throughout the public meetings, information was shared with regards to the Accommodation Review policy and process. At the first meeting, the initial Sir James Dunn Public School staff report and school information profile were shared which included the facility and instructional profile. Enrolment trends and projections were shared and facility discussion was supported by Superintendent of Business Joe Santa Maria and the Manager of the Plant Department, David Steele. The ARC sought public input regarding recommendations that could be included in the final staff report. At the final public meeting on May 1, 2017 the Accommodation Review Committee discussed its recommendation for Sir James Dunn Public School.

## **Reflections on the Accommodation Review Process:**

1. In addition to members of the ARC and representatives from the Algoma District School Board, 23 members of the public were in attendance at the first public meeting and 17 members of the public were in attendance at the second public meeting.
2. The Principal utilized a variety of approaches to advertise the public meetings within the school and promote parent attendance.
3. The process allowed input from the community, municipality, staff and parents.
4. As per the accommodation review process and current Board Policy 5.01, a minimum of two public meetings must be facilitated and the meeting dates were held on March 1, 2017 and May 1, 2017.

## **Community Consultation:**

Outlined below are the main points of feedback brought forward through the community consultation process:

- **Community:** The feedback included frustration and concern that the community could have another abandoned building if the JK-8 program relocates. Some concern was also expressed about the number of different school boards operating schools in Wawa, including English Public, English Catholic, French Public and French Catholic, dividing up a small number of students. Some expressed concern that Sir James Dunn was not provided with enough support to compete against the other schools, in areas such as French Immersion options and day cares. If the relocation to the JK-12 site at Michipicoten occurs, many agreed that they hoped the building could still serve another use within the community.
- **Buildings:** The community expressed the following concerns in relocating from the current Sir James Dunn building to the Michipicoten High School building as a JK-12 facility: they were leaving a building that was in better condition, and moving into a building that appears to need more maintenance work and upgrading; some questioned why we could not relocate the 9-12 program at Michipicoten High School into the current Sir James Dunn building as a JK-12 facility; if the relocation to the Michipicoten site occurs, community feedback indicated that the site would need renovations and upgrades to ensure student safety, and to clean up the overall look of the building – both inside and outside; in addition, the need for natural light and air flow in the classrooms at the JK-12 site was also shared.
- **Future Growth:** Concern was expressed that if the community grows in the future with the development of new mines, there may not be enough room in a JK-12 facility at Michipicoten to accommodate the enrolment growth.
- **Outdoor Space:** The community expressed concern over the loss of the playground equipment, basketball courts and baseball diamond if students are relocated to the Michipicoten High School site. In addition, concern over student safety was expressed because of the lack of fencing around the field at Michipicoten and the amount of traffic on adjacent Churchill Avenue.
- **Buses and Car Traffic:** Concern was expressed that if the move is made to the Michipicoten site, with the adjacent Ecole Saint-Joseph site, the area will be very busy with busses and car traffic in the morning and at the end of the school day. The community wanted assurances that a plan would be in place to ensure safe arrivals and departures for students.
- **Day Care:** The community expressed an interest in exploring the potential for a day care at the JK-12 site. It was noted that 40 new babies are on the way in the community, and the Ecole Saint-Joseph

site currently hosts three day care programs (Infant, Toddler, Preschool), in addition to before and after school programs.

- Safety Concerns: A number of concerns over safety at the Michipicoten site were expressed. In particular, if the Michipicoten site was to become a JK-12 facility, and continue to house community partners, such as Confederation College, the community expressed concern over the safety of students and staff if doors are left unlocked, as members of the public could pass without security from the College area into the JK-12 school. Similar sentiments were expressed over any potential future partners that might share the site as a community hub. In addition, the Michipicoten building has many more outside doors in comparison to the Sir James Dunn building and these doors are not always locked, and currently do not have entrance cameras. As outlined earlier, concern was expressed over playground safety because Churchill Avenue is a busy road and there currently is no fencing between the playground and the road. The number of washrooms available at the Michipicoten site also raised concerns with respect to whether or not elementary and secondary washrooms would be separate and if there would be enough washrooms for both panels, including accessible washrooms. Staff at Sir James Dunn also wanted to ensure that the current system of “fire lights” in addition to fire bells also be replicated at the JK-12 site to accommodate the needs of a deaf student.
- Shared Facilities – If there is a move to a JK-12 facility, some questioned if there would be adequate gym time for both the elementary and secondary programs – both in terms of curriculum use during instructional hours, and extracurricular use after hours and during student breaks (e.g. nutrition breaks and lunch). In addition, feedback included the need to ensure adequate elementary and secondary access to library resources and computer labs.
- Transition: If there is a move to a JK-12 facility, there was an interest in ensuring that the staff currently housed at Sir James Dunn and Michipicoten have opportunities to work and develop as a team prior to the move. In addition, the community wanted to ensure that students would not move until work was completed in the construction area, and wanted to delay any move until the start of the next school year, rather than mid-year.
- Administration: The community would like to ensure that there is an administration team with a Principal and Vice-Principal on-site.
- Further Consultation: If the decision is made to relocate to a JK-12 facility on the Michipicoten High School site, the community has expressed an interest in continued consultation throughout the process, including input from both the elementary and secondary school communities into the renovations at Michipicoten, and further discussion about program options within the JK-12 facility.
- Partnership with Michipicoten First Nation: If the relocation moves forward, interest was expressed in not only maintaining the current cultural lodge at Michipicoten High School, but also including a cultural room within the JK-12 building as well. In addition, some wanted to ensure that the new Native Language program continued at the JK-12 site, with expanded opportunities for secondary students. In addition, the community expressed an interest in reaching out to Michipicoten First Nation in future consultations regarding the potential renovations and program options and potential community partnerships at the JK-12 site.
- Sir James Dunn Identity: Feedback was provided that if the relocation occurs, there is interest in maintaining or finding a way to honour the history and tradition of Sir James Dunn in the community.
- Messaging / Media: Feedback indicated that there is still miscommunication in the community where many believe the Sir James Dunn building is in very poor condition, or that as a result of the ARC, Sir James Dunn will close in 2 years, and there will be no JK-8 English public school after that time.

Many believe that this is further impacting new JK enrolment. The community would like this process and any changes to be messaged in a positive way as a new beginning, and that this will be a community hub of JK-12 education in Wawa. As a hub, the community is interested in program opportunities at the new site that would attract students to our school and be competitive with the other school options in the community. In addition, the preference was expressed to use the term “relocating” rather than referring to “closing” Sir James Dunn.

- Program of Choice in Wawa: With the number of school options available in the community, many expressed interest in doing things at the JK-12 site to bring back some of our enrolment with the creation of an exciting education opportunity. The community expressed an interest in seeking out community partners and program options at the JK-12 site that would help to make the new site the first choice for education in Wawa, and take advantage of having JK-12 in one building to provide elementary and secondary students with opportunities that might not have been as easily accessible in the current separate building. Some discussion areas included reach ahead opportunities for elementary students, or opportunities for elementary students and staff to work with secondary facilities and staff in areas such as the tech shops. Other suggested areas included partnering with the community to create a dance studio and offer dance programs to students. Some suggested the cafeteria could be utilized to support the breakfast program, and offer hot lunches to students. Other suggestions included features like flex seating, green school elements (e.g. lighting, garden), music, STEM programs, a quiet room, and a daycare for infant, toddler and preschool. In addition to utilizing program opportunities to make the new JK-12 site the education program of choice in the community, others also provided feedback that the physical building itself needed to be renovated. In addition to upgrading the interior, ensuring safety concerns are addressed, and incorporating specific spaces (e.g. culture room, washrooms), there is an interest in upgrading the exterior of the building. In particular, the main entrance in the office area, and the second entrance used by the public when utilizing the auditorium were identified as areas that should be upgraded. The entrance way in the new French school in Dubreuville was cited as an example of how a school entrance could be appealing, and could be reflective of the community. In addition, an upgraded outside play area with facilities and equipment at the JK-12 site was also provided as a priority area to attract the community.

The Sir James Dunn Accommodation Review Committee supports the recommendation to relocate the current JK-8 elementary program at Sir James Dunn to a JK-12 facility at the Michipicoten site. However, if the relocation to a JK-12 facility at Michipicoten moves forward, the Accommodation Review Committee further recommends the following:

- Ensure ongoing consultation with both the elementary and secondary school communities on an ongoing basis throughout the renovation design process, conversations about program opportunities and discussions about potential community partnerships;
- Ensure safety concerns brought forward in the consultation process are addressed;
- Ensure shared facility upgrade concerns brought forward in the consultation process are addressed;
- Ensure substantial completion of the renovations before relocating the JK-8 students, and to avoid a mid-year move;
- Ensure we take advantage of the synergies that can develop in one JK-12 site, along with community partnerships to make this change a positive experience that creates excitement and the education program of choice within the community;
- Ensure there is positive advertising to support the change to a JK-12 site;
- Ensure the timelines identified in the ARC Terms of Reference reflect current Board policy 5.01 which was revised in 2016.
- Ensure transition activities and ongoing communication (e.g. open houses, tours) continue for parents/guardians, students and the community throughout the process up to the opening of the new JK-12 facility to reduce anxiety about the change and create excitement;
- Ensure the tradition of Sir James Dunn is honoured within the JK-12 facility;

- Ensure efforts are made to find other uses for the building within the community, and to continue to allow children to access the playground while a new owner is pursued; and
- Host the May 30, 2017 Board Meeting in Wawa so that public delegations and interested members of the public can participate in person.

### **Summary Statement:**

The Accommodation Review Committee appreciates the feedback provided by parents, staff and community members throughout this process. The community acknowledges the work of the current staff at Sir James Dunn Public School. The ARC believes that this is an opportunity to create a JK-12 community hub with enhanced program opportunities and synergies to serve the future needs of our students within the community. The ARC acknowledges that while the condition of the facility is not a major concern, enrolment is declining, and there is sufficient space in at the Michipicoten High School site to house the students and programs currently located in Sir James Dunn Public School with space for future enrolment growth and additional community partnerships such as a day care. Having a JK-12 facility at the Sir James Dunn site would require a substantial new build in the form of an addition to the building to house specialized secondary facilities such as a larger gymnasium and technology shop, and would also require extensive retrofits for other specialized spaces such as science labs and classroom kitchen facilities within the Sir James Dunn building.

### **Staff Recommendation:**

Consistent with the Initial Staff Report and based on the School Information Profile feedback and public input, it is Senior Administration's recommendation that:

- the JK-8 school population, staff and program currently housed at Sir James Dunn Public School be relocated to a JK-12 facility on the Michipicoten High School site;
- that the Algoma District School Board investigate potential community partnerships with whom space can be shared at the JK-12 site, thereby making it a desirable community hub.

It is acknowledged that these recommendations are contingent upon the Algoma District School Board applying for and receiving Ministry of Education Capital Funding for renovations to Michipicoten High School. If funding is not available, the elementary program would remain at the Sir James Dunn site subject to future considerations.