

Report to the Director of Education

Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board

June 27, 2008

Re: DIXIE SHOREFRONT ACCOMODATION REVIEW COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

PURPOSE

To report to the Board of Trustees recommendations of the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) on school closures in the Dixie Shorefront Accommodation Review Area.

BACKGROUND

Dixie Shorefront Elementary Schools Under Review

Queen of Heaven

St. Dominic

St. Edmund

St. James

St. Timothy

Dixie Shorefront ARC Members

Elizabeth McGuire, Chairperson, Superintendent of Schools

John Melito, Superintendent of Planning and Operations

Thane Munn, Senior Planner, Planning Department

Rosemary Rock-Vincent,/ Mike Derry/Gerry Callender, Principals, St. James

Cheryl Cauduro, Principal, Queen of Heaven

Deirdre Furlong, Principal, St. Edmund

Deirdre Kinsella-Biss, Principal, St. Dominic

Robert Romanet, Principal, St. Timothy

Ernie Arduini, Teacher Representative, Queen of Heaven

Lucio Marcantonio, Parish Representative, St. Dominic

Amy Moher, Teacher Representative, St. Edmund

Emily Irvine, Planner, City of Mississauga

Harry Tideman, School Council Chair, Delegate, St. James

Victoria Coste-Ramsay, School Council Chair, Queen of Heaven

Carol Klafuric, School Council Chair, St. Dominic

LeeAnn McBain, School Council Co-Chair, St. Edmund

Eric Landman, School Council Co-Chair, St. Edmund

Delfina Santos, School Council Chair, St. Timothy

C. Lecanda, Parish Representative, St. Catherine of Siena

Betty Biss, Parish Representative, St. Mary Star of the Sea

Barb Oleksak, Parish Representative, St. Patrick

BACKGROUND CONTINUED

In accordance with Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board (DPCDSB) Policy based on Ministry of Education Guidelines, the ARC was initially provided a reference binder relating to Pupil Accommodation Review, such as Guidelines and Policies, School Valuation Frameworks and Accommodation Options. At various stages throughout the process Board staff supplied additional information for consideration as requested by Committee Members and/or members of the public.

The ARC held seven (7) Committee Meetings and four (4) Public Meetings as listed below.

DIXIE-SHOREFRONT ACCOMODATION REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETINGS

ARC Meeting #1 - Thursday, October 4, 2007
ARC Meeting #2 - Thursday, October 25, 2007
ARC Meeting #3 - Wednesday, November 21, 2007
ARC Meeting #4 - Wednesday, February 27, 2008
ARC Meeting #5 - Wednesday, April 30, 2008
ARC Meeting #6 - Monday, May 12, 2008
ARC Meeting #7 - Monday, June 16, 2008

DIXIE-SHOREFRONT ACCOMODATION REVIEW PUBLIC MEETINGS

Public Meeting #1 - Tuesday, February 5, 2008
Public Meeting #2 - Tuesday, April 1, 2008
Public Meeting #3 - Tuesday, May 6, 2008
Public Meeting #4 - Thursday, May 22, 2008

Committee meetings were focused on arriving at a final recommendation by evaluating relevant information, discussing public input, eliminating accommodation options deemed unworthy of further consideration and refining those options still under consideration.

Public meetings were used to educate the community on the Accommodation Review process; to report remaining options under consideration and the various implications surrounding those options, e.g. student movement, staffing, programming, transportation, financial, etc. and to garner public input for consideration at upcoming ARC meetings.

Detailed information, Minutes of Meetings (Committee and Public) and supplied Public Meeting handouts may be reviewed on the DPCDSB website at the following address: <http://w3.dpcdsb.org/CEC/About+Us/Departments/PLN/Dixie+Shorefront+Review+Area.htm>

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation was unanimous within the ARC and was clearly articulated at the final public meeting.

It is the opinion of the Committee that it is in the best interest of our students, families, staff, affected communities, DPCDSB and Catholic education in general that either St. Dominic or St. James remain open by way of consolidating the students and staff at either the existing St. Dominic or St. James facility.

The committee believes this recommendation ensures viable, long-term representation of Catholic elementary education in the affected geographic area, while recognizing and addressing the public's strong desire to ensure the entire student community affected by way of school closure remains intact.

Final recommendation from Dixie Shorefront Accommodation Committee:

Close St. Dominic and move to St. James

OR

Close St. James and move St. Dominic

In making their decision, the Committee would ask the Board of Trustees to consider the immense negative impact on the representation and accessibility of Catholic education in the affected area, should they decide to close both St. Dominic and St. James.

Given that the decision to eliminate all but the remaining two accommodation options was not arrived at until the ARC meeting of May 12, 2008, it is the opinion of the Committee that Trustees consider the specific PROs and CONs of each option as presented by representatives of the St. Dominic and St. James communities during the "delegation" phase of the Accommodation Review process, in the Fall of 2008.

We do, however, believe it appropriate to allow the following comments from representatives of the St. Dominic and St. James communities:

A Message from the St. Dominic Community:

There are three areas that are critically important to our community: the relationship with our church, our site and our academic achievements. The great relationship that has been established over the last 50 years with our namesake church, St. Dominic Parish, and our students is very important to the children's Catholic spiritual bond. Moving 250 children to another parish will negatively impact this relationship. Our large site/property and green space is something that is extremely valued as it provides a large and safe area for our children to play and exercise. The acreage at St. Dominic School is not something that should be given up without serious evaluation. It is a site that can easily accommodate St. James students and requires no immediate costs due to consolidation. Our central location within the community is important as it enables 83%

of our student population to walk to school which results in very limited bussing needs as compared to many other schools in the review process. Lastly, the parents in our community feel that St. Dominic has achieved significant academic excellence and was recognized in the Fraser Institute report as a result of our “significantly above Board average” EQAO scores. This should be factored into the decision. As well, St. Dominic School has recently received the designation of “Schools on the Move: Lighthouse program”. (A Ministry of Education run program that celebrates, connects and rewards schools that are making significant and sustained progress in student achievement.) We have a very successful learning environment and feel that uprooting our 250 children is not the right decision.

A Message from the St. James Community:

The St. James Community strongly believes that maintaining a Catholic education presence in the “Port Credit” area is vital to our children, our community, DPCDSB and the state of Catholic education itself. It is our fear that diminishing community-based representation serves the interests of those who seek the demise of publicly funded Catholic education.

Despite its population, due in part to inequitable boundaries and persistent uncertainty surrounding its future throughout the past several years, St. James has maintained a solid reputation for excellence in academic achievement (see EQAOs) and the provision of quality student life by way of a dedicated staff and actively involved parent group.

Newly expanded and renovated in 1994, the St. James facility is in located in a safe, welcoming, close-knit community, just minutes from both St. Mary Star of The Sea and St. Dominic parishes. The school’s capacity of 276 is sufficient to house both St. James and St. Dominic students well into the future.

The St. James community requests only that Dufferin-Peel Board of Trustees consider all factors in making an unbiased and fiscally responsible decision that will afford the Port Credit area a viable, long-term home for Catholic education.

IN CLOSING

The Dixie Shorefront Accommodation Review Committee respectfully requests that the Dufferin-Peel Board of Trustees heed our recommendation to reduce the impact of consolidation in this area and to champion the cause of Catholic education by choosing to continue access and representation through St. Dominic or St. James elementary school.

Prepared by

Carol Klafuric, School Council Chair, St. Dominic
Lucio Marcantonio, Parish Representative, St. Dominic
Harry Tideman, ARC Representative, St. James

Submitted by

Dixie/Shorefront ARC Committee