



DUFFERIN PEEL CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

**CENTRAL ERIN MILLS
PUPIL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW**

**PUBLIC MEETING # 1
February 7, 2008
7:00 pm**

**Approved Minutes of the Central Erin Mills Pupil Accommodation Review, Public Meeting # 1,
Tuesday, February 7, 2008, 7:00 pm, at St. Aloysius Gonzaga Secondary School**

Attendance:	Blessed Trinity	37		
	Divine Mercy	18		
	Our Lady of Mercy	16		
	St. Joseph Streetsville	12		
	St. Rose of Lima	65		
	Other	9	Total:	157

- 1) **Introductions and Opening Prayer** – M. Prospero
- 2) **Background Information** – T. Munn
- 3) **Accommodation Review Committee (ARC)**
In consultation with legal counsel, the Trustees are requested to not attend the Public Meetings.
- 4) **Neighbourhood Overview**
Larger schools would provide more varied programs, have more peers, more specialized teachers, more extracurricular activities (more teachers on staff). Smaller schools would have the possibility of triple grades in one classroom. Staff could be divided between different schools (e.g., ESL, FSL, Librarians, etc.). Special services staff would spend a fraction of time in the smaller schools.
- 5) **Accommodation Information**
The Options were explained, along with maps of the area, by Thane Munn.
- 7) **Next Steps**
Next Public Meeting # 2 – Tuesday, February 19, 2008 – 7:00 pm – St. Aloysius Gonzaga Secondary School
Public Meeting # 3 - March 4, 2008 – and Public Meeting # 4 – April 8, 2008 – 7:00 pm – St. Aloysius Gonzaga
The Accommodation Review Committee will be meeting after Public Meeting # 2 to study the questions posed by the community.
- 8) **Question Period**
Parent – Blessed Trinity
 - **Does the total number at Blessed Trinity include host areas?**
No
 - **What schools are modules?**
St. Rose of Lima, Blessed Trinity and Our Lady of Mercy are modular.

- **Which schools are owned by the Board?**
All schools are owned by the Board.
- **Why is St. Elizabeth Seton not included in this area when it is a feeder school to St. Aloysius Gonzaga?**
St. Elizabeth Seton is north of Britannia. The Board cannot do all schools with declining enrolment.
- **What about the Catholic presence in the community south of Eglinton Avenue?**
All schools are declining in enrolment. It would not be feasible to move a larger school (Divine Mercy, Our Lady of Mercy, St. Joseph Streetsville) to Blessed Trinity or St. Rose of Lima. In the next six years or so, St. Joseph Streetsville could be looked at due to its declining enrolment.
- **Has the Board considered consolidating Credit Valley Public School and Blessed Trinity as St. Cecilia's in Brampton?**
No. Credit Valley only goes to Grade 5 or 6. Putting them together would not be a Catholic school.
- **What about transportation for students from Blessed Trinity to Divine Mercy?**
The transportation criteria was explained. The Board will look at putting the transportation boundary details on the map to show the grade distances.
- **What is the rationale for sending Blessed Trinity and St. Rose of Lima to Our Lady of Mercy? Doesn't seem to make sense geographically.**
The Committee is looking at the Options.

Parent - Our Lady of Mercy (one child in Extended French at St. Therese of the Child Jesus)

- **The Extended French classes from St. Rose of Lima were moved to St. Therese of the Child Jesus, has it been considered?**
The Extended French boundaries are much larger than the school boundaries. Moving the specialized programs has not been discussed yet. St. Therese of the Child Jesus has reached its maximum number of students in the Extended French.
- **Why is St. Joseph Streetsville considered if it is in the St. Joseph Parish and not in Merciful Redeemer Parish?**
All the schools involved belong to Merciful Redeemer except St. Joseph Streetsville. The Board does not set the Parish boundaries.

Parent – St. Rose of Lima

- **The original date for school closure was September, 2009. Why was it accelerated to September, 2008?**
Decision was made by the St. Rose of Lima School Council. They delegated the Board in the fall to have it changed to September, 2008.
- **How can one or two people make this decision, would like it changed to September, 2009**
It was clarified that the parents delegated the Board to have the closure accelerated to September, 2008. The Board did not make the decision to change this date. The Committee can still make recommendation to change the timeline.

St. Rose of Lima neighbour

- **Moved to the St. Rose of Lima area because of its reputation. Disappointed that this meeting has to take place. Closing schools is not a solution. One concern is the lack of parent involvement on the committee (biased) to represent the public point of view.**
Parents on the ARC were asked to stand.
- **Would like to walk their children to school. Sharpest declines show as Our Lady of Mercy, Divine Mercy and St. Joseph**
Blessed Trinity and St. Rose of Lima enrolments have been declining for some time. If the two schools are , then it will eventually have to be moved if by 2012 if it doesn't meet the criteria (over 250 / over 50%).
- **What happens to the school / land once a school is closed? What happens to the taxes?**
Board has to decide to close the school first. If there is no need for Board use, then the Planning Department goes through a disposal process. Letters are sent to the Peel Board and the French Board, then to the governments, etc. This process alone would take 6-8 months. If no one has use for the school, the Board may decide to sell.

Parent – St. Rose of Lima

- **Five year projections – seems small. Homes are about 23 years old. Children are already in higher grades. Older people are moving out and younger people are moving in. Can't assume that all Catholics moving in will be attending the Catholic school.**
2006 census data was referred to. Neighbourhood shows a steady decline in younger families. What is going out is not coming in.
- **Gifted, Extended French programs are declining, is the Board accepting defeat?**
No, Trustees have asked staff to find out what other programs can be offered to attract students back from private/public schools, i.e., French Immersion, pilot programs

Grade 7 students - Blessed Trinity

- **Going into Grade 8 in September, 2008. How do you get the transportation numbers?**
Transportation Department calculates the shortest distance by roads and sidewalks. Grade 7 and 8 is 3.2 km. Grade 9 is 4.8 km. As students get older, they become more streetwise, more mature, responsible and can follow directions.
- **Can we rely on the Empty Seat Policy?**
Schools will look at the Empty Seat Policy in October.

Parent – Our Lady of Mercy

- **Are all schools built in the Churchill Meadows area?**
There were four elementary/secondary schools slated to be built in Churchill Meadows. All but one elementary school has been built. This school is currently on hold as enrolment numbers have been declining.

Parent – St. Rose of Lima (has 3 children at this school)

- **Quality of education has not been discussed. St. Rose of Lima is one of the top schools in the EQAO testing. Have they been taken into consideration? Why close the school?**
Grade 6 scores – students from Gifted and Extended French were included
Grade 3 scores – at level of most schools in the Board
EQAO scores are part of information that is collected.
- **How is ARC initiated?**
The Board follows Ministry guidelines. Board appoints Principals of schools involved, School Councils, Parish representatives, Board staff and teachers appointed by their union (OECTA).
- **When will Kindergarten be going to a full day?**
The Board is looking at 2010. Board has not heard anything from the Ministry since it's announcement about full-time kindergarten.
- **I attended the last School Council meeting – no support for expediting the timelines. Concerns about the distance for young girls would have to walk.**
Rules re walking distance apply Boardwide.
- **No Catholic school representation south of Eglinton.**
Street is not the boundary, school is and the parish would be

Parent – St. Joseph / St. Rose of Lima Extended French

- **Found the coloured maps very helpful. Would like to see the transportation distances marked on the maps. What would the transportation costs be?**
Staff will see what they can do regarding transportation distances on the maps. Will look into seeing what costs would be.
- **Would like ARC to rank their recommendations for the next meeting.**
ARC will be working on the Options and will bring forward to the February 19 meeting.
- **Extended French / Gifted bussing?**
Students in Extended French and Gifted are already being bussed. No extra cost. St. Rose of Lima students would all be bussed because of Erin Mills Parkway (70 km).

Parent

Was considering to move to St. Rose of Lima area because of their EQAO scores but on hearing that it will be closing, is very disappointed.

Parent – Blessed Trinity

- **Not in favour of the status quo (Option # 1). There would be a lot of split grades and fewer teachers. Son has not been in a split grade and wants to make sure he won't be.**
- **Would Extended French and Gifted classes be guaranteed to move with St. Rose of Lima?**
No, programs could be moved to other locations. Program Department will be making that decision.
- **Blessed Trinity and St. Rose of Lima to merge to leave a Catholic presence south of Eglinton. Son is in Grade 4 and having him walk to Divine Mercy – Board is not putting children's safety first. He can walk to the Public School.**
Areas will be treated the same as all areas in the Board. Crossing guards – assessment would be done by the Mississauga Traffic Safety Council and Board. No guarantees again.
- **Religion is taught at home. Some parents are sending their children to the public system. The Board should create new programs to attract students back .**
The Board is looking into creating new programs.
- **Consolidate St. Rose of Lima and Blessed Trinity, bring in new programs, then in 5 years look at it again.**

Parent – St. Rose of Lima

- **Any consideration to changing the boundaries for Blessed Trinity and St. Rose of Lima to north of Eglinton?**
Options # 3 and # 2 – merge (Our Lady of Mercy and Divine Mercy)
 - change northern boundaries of Blessed Trinity/St. Rose of Lima to Erin Centre Blvd.

Will the cost savings from school closures go to the receiving schools for upgrades?

The area north of Eglinton Avenue doesn't have many students. As to the cost savings, Divine Mercy and Our Lady of Mercy are still young while St. Joseph has been renovated. Any supplies are worked through the Superintendent and Principals as to what would be needed. Roof, windows, etc., would come from the Corporate side of the Board.

Comment - Blessed Trinity

Discussion that larger schools benefit from a lot of programs, Blessed Trinity already have the programs. Transportation of students from the Churchill Meadows area are bussed to St. Sebastian when St. Bernard of Clairvaux is closer.

The Board held Public Meetings to discuss the boundaries for St. Bernard of Clairvaux. Transportation is provided because of construction in that area.

Parent – St. Rose of Lima

- **Angry at St. Rose of Lima School Council. Parents didn't know about the meeting. Need plain language so parents can understand – Accommodation Review Committee should be School Closure.**
Notices were sent out through the schools, mail, newspapers, church bulletins and on the Board website.
- **Concerned about no Trustee representation at the meeting.**

Additional Comments:

Option # 5 – Keep a site (St. Rose) in the SE part of the family. Maintain the gifted and French programs at St. Rose. They are already amalgamated already and would maintain continuity.

Options # 6, # 9 – Place Divine Mercy at over capacity. Dufferin-Peel has always put children's safety first. As a parent I am concerned for the safety of the students at Divine Mercy at over capacity. Portables less space at recess, therefore, more kids in a smaller space. Buses and Kiss n'Ride. Congestion increase drastically therefore I am asking the ARC committee to continue to keep the safety of children in mind when making their recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

- 1) Quality of Education

- 2) Boundaries
- 3) Main vs quiet area
- 4) South of Mississauga
- 5) We did not want to expedite

St. Rose of Lima has been the “top school” (noted in the Globe and Mail, Toronto Star and other newspapers) (EQAO testing). Why would one want to close the # 1 school? Parents have accepted split classes. Teachers adapted as well. The three streams (main, French, Gifted) are working well. Why change something positive? The school is in a quiet, non-main street area, therefore minimal street congestion. Why is St. Rose of Lima’s boundary so small. You cannot compare schools as most of them have larger area, hence more homes, more students. Any change to even out boundary areas? No school, if close, Blessed Trinity and St. Rose in the south Mississauga.

- 9) The meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.