



Special Meeting of the Board

(Board By-Laws S. 6.3.3)

**Wednesday, February 15, 2017 ♦ 7:00 p.m.
Boardroom**

Members: Rick Petrella (Chair), Dan Dignard (Vice Chair), Cliff Casey, Bill Chopp, Carol Luciani, Bonnie McKinnon, Rosalin Dubois (Student Trustee)

Senior Administration:

Chris N. Roehrig (Director of Education & Secretary), Thomas R. Grice (Superintendent of Business & Treasurer), Patrick Daly, Michelle Shypula and Leslie Telfer (Superintendents of Education)

1. Opening Business

1.1 Opening Prayer

1.2 Attendance

1.3 Approval of the Agenda

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1.4 Declaration of Interest

2. Committee and Staff Reports

2.1 Pupil Accommodation Review: Norfolk County – Final Staff Report
Presenter: Chris N. Roehrig, Director of Education & Secretary

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3. Adjournment

REPORT TO THE BRANT HALDIMAND NORFOLK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Prepared by: Chris Roehrig, Director of Education & Secretary
Presented to: Board of Trustees
Submitted on: February 15, 2017
Submitted by: Chris Roehrig, Director of Education & Secretary

PUPIL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW – NORFOLK COUNTY FINAL STAFF REPORT

Public Session

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In October 2006, the Ministry of Education issued the *Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline*, which outlined procedures that school boards must abide by when school closures are being considered. The Guideline was revised by the Ministry and re-issued in June 2009, March 2011, and revised once more in March 2015. In accordance with the most recent guideline, the Board revised its *Pupil Accommodation Review Policy and Administrative Procedures* to include Terms of Reference that describe the Accommodation Review Committee's (ARC) mandate as well as a School Information Profile. The Board of Trustees approved the revised Pupil Accommodation Review Policy and Administrative Procedures on October 27, 2015.

In May 2016, staff of Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. presented a Long-Term Capital Plan to the Board, which outlined demographic trends, enrolment projections and observations for all schools within the jurisdiction of the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board (BHNCD SB).

This Final Staff Report is a requirement of the Ministry of Education's *Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline* and the Board's *Pupil Accommodation Review Policy and Administrative Procedures*. This report outlines the background information and pupil accommodation options developed by both Board staff and the ARC. It also includes a Community Consultation section that contains feedback from the ARC and any public consultations, as well as any relevant information obtained from municipalities and other community partners prior to and during the pupil accommodation review. This report details the work completed by the ARC and Board staff throughout the entire accommodation review process.

On September 27, 2016, the Board of Trustees approved the commencement of a Pupil Accommodation Review (PAR) in Norfolk County. For the purpose of the PAR, the Norfolk County review area was approved to include the following schools: Our Lady of La Salette School, St. Frances Cabrini School and St. Bernard of Clairvaux School.

An Accommodation Review Committee (ARC), which included one parent/guardian representative from each of the schools under review, chosen by their respective Catholic School Advisory Council (CSAC), one teaching representative from each school under review and one community member with no child/ward currently attending BHNCD SB schools from each of the three schools was fully constituted on October 11, 2016. The ARC also had resource support available to provide information, when requested, or to provide expertise not already within the ARC.

The ARC was to review the current situation in Our Lady of La Salette School, St. Frances Cabrini School and St. Bernard of Clairvaux School and develop accommodation options, which would ensure suitable learning environments for all students.

As of September 2015, the Board was operating at 80% of its permanent capacity in the elementary panel and 100% of its permanent capacity in the secondary panel. Assuming no accommodation changes are implemented (i.e., status quo), overall, elementary enrolment is projected to increase to 7,140 students from 6,331 students (a 13% increase from existing figures) by the end of the 15-year forecast period (2015-16 to 2029-30). Secondary enrolment is projected to decline to 3,308 students by 2029-30 from 3,396 students, which represents a 3% decrease. By the end of the forecast period, the elementary panel is projected to have approximately 749 surplus spaces and the secondary panel will have approximately 94 surplus spaces.

Table 1 below details elementary enrolment, surplus space and utilization where the utilization rate is the school's (or group of schools) enrolment relative to their On-The-Ground Capacity (OTG) capacity for each of the geographic areas of the Board.

Table 1

Based upon the Watson & Associates Long-Term Capital Plan Demographic Trends, Enrolment Projections and Observations Report May 2016

Review Area	OTG	2015-16 Enrolment	Surplus Space	Utilization	2029-30 Enrolment	Surplus Space	Utilization
Brant County	1,027	782	245	.76	881	146	.86
Brantford	3,692	3,151	541	.85	3,942	-250	1.07
Haldimand County	1,270	885	385	.69	951	319	.75
Norfolk County	1,900	1,513	387	.80	1,366	534	.72
Total	7,889	6,331	1,558	.80	7,140	749	.91

For Norfolk County Schools, the OTG capacity is 1,900 students, which represents the available student spaces within the schools. The enrolment on September 2015 for these schools was 1,513 students. The overall excess capacity of student space in Norfolk County is 387 spaces. This represents an 80% utilization rate. Over the 15-year forecast period, beginning in 2015-16, the utilization rate of Norfolk County schools is anticipated to decline to 72%; representing 534 available spaces in elementary schools within Norfolk County.

Looking specifically at the three schools within the PAR, Our Lady of La Salette School, St. Frances Cabrini School and St. Bernard of Clairvaux School, the OTG for the three schools equals 665 students. The actual enrolment in these schools at September 2016 totals 459 students; resulting in a utilization rate of 69% (See Table 2).

Table 2

Based upon the Watson & Associates Long-Term Capital Plan Demographic Trends, Enrolment Projections and Observations Report May 2016

Program	2016-17 Watson Projected	2016-17 Actual	2019-20 Watson Projected	2022-23 Watson Projected	2025-26 Watson Projected
Our Lady of La Salette School Total Enrolment:	69	52	61	57	57
OTG: 187 Utilization:	.37	.28	.33	.30	.30
Excess Capacity:	118	135	126	130	130
St. Bernard of Clairvaux School Total Enrolment:	168	160	162	173	175
OTG: 210 Utilization:	.80	.76	.77	.82	.83
Excess Capacity:	42	50	48	37	35
St. Frances Cabrini School Total Enrolment:	242	247	255	258	247
OTG: 268 Utilization	.90	.92	.95	.96	.92
Excess Capacity:	26	21	13	10	21
Total Schools Combined Enrolment	479	459	478	488	479
OTG: 665 Utilization	.72	.69	.72	.73	.72
Excess Capacity	186	206	187	177	186

OTG - On the Ground School Capacity

Table 3.8.8 from the Watson & Associates Long-Term Capital Plan, Demographic Trends, Enrolment Projections and Observations Report, shows a list of the Facility Condition Index (FCI) of each of the Norfolk schools. It also lists the percentage of Full Operational Cost that the Board receives for each school listed.

The FCI examines the cost of renewal needs, which in the case of the Watson Report is ten years, against the cost of replacing the facility. If the FCI is above 65%, the Ministry of Education typically considers the facility *prohibitive to repair*.

Table 3.8.8 depicts the facility condition, renewal and projected operations cost funding for each school within this review area.

Table 3.8.8 Condition and Renewal by School

Based upon the Watson & Associates Long-Term Capital Plan Demographic Trends, Enrolment Projections and Observations Report, May 2016

School	Facility Replacement Value	10-Year Renewal Costs	Facility Condition Index	% of Full Operational Costs (2017-18)
Our Lady of Fatima School	\$3,908,050	\$1,844,704	47%	100%
Our Lady of La Salette School	\$5,183,020	\$3,413,814	66%	38%
Sacred Heart School	\$6,574,190	\$3,403,352	52%	100%
St. Bernard of Clairvaux School	\$5,564,520	\$2,934,837	53%	100%
St. Cecilia's School	\$5,266,170	\$2,049,421	39%	100%
St. Frances Cabrini School	\$6,281,990	\$2,889,517	46%	92%
St. Joseph's School	\$9,135,310	\$4,166,092	46%	99%
St. Michael's School	\$4,545,530	\$2,209,078	49%	100%
Review Area Total	\$46,458,780	\$22,910,815	49%	93%
Board-Wide Elementary Total	\$186,670,750	\$71,412,101	38%	86%

The table above is based upon student enrolment at Our Lady of La Salette School of 69 students as projected for 2016-17. Applying the actual 2016-17 enrolment would alter the Our Lady of La Salette School % of Full Operational Cost to equal 28%.

With respect to costs and benefits, in general, Board staff have thoroughly reviewed costs on a per-pupil basis in comparison to other schools of the Board and in comparison to the Board average per pupil cost. The per pupil cost for the schools within the PAR are shown on Pages 57 and 58 of the October 11, 2016 Working Committee Agenda package as part of the School Information Profiles (SIP). In the case of Our Lady of La Salette School, using enrolment at September 2016, the Per Pupil Cost is \$13,108. The Board average per pupil cost is \$7,368. The differential is \$5,740 on a per pupil basis. This higher cost differential is directly related to lower student enrolment at Our Lady of La Salette School.

Please note that the figures above do not include transportation costs. In addition, minor variances in school support staff have been excluded as well as overhead costs, which would normally be distributed to all schools on a per pupil basis.

Looking at Cost Savings to the Board and to the Ministry of Education, the following items typically represent savings that may be realized through school closure:

- Principal salary, including benefits.
- Custodian salary, including benefits.
- Secretary salary, including benefits.
- Teacher salary, including benefits (if applicable).
- Operating Costs such as heat, hydro, water (if applicable).
- Maintenance and Contractual Services, such as grass, snow, supplies, services, insurance.
- Future School Renewal Needs.
- Future Capital Needs.

It should be noted that in addition to costs associated with a school, there are also revenue losses for under-utilized, non-isolated space (when a school is within ten kilometres of another elementary school). For these schools, top-up operations and renewal funding is eliminated.

OPERATIONS FUNDING ANALYSIS – OUR LADY OF LA SALETTE SCHOOL

The Operations Grant is used to support the costs of operating and maintaining the Board's facilities. Operating costs include items such as heating, lighting and cleaning of school facilities. The Operations Grant is based on a per pupil benchmark, which means the Board receives funding for each student enrolled at that school.

Historically, the Operations Grant had a *top-up* component associated with it, which was applied to schools that were under-utilized or that were considered rural by way of postal code identifiers. Beginning in 2015-16, the Ministry of Education changed the grant structure for operations funding and has removed the *top-up* component for all schools; except those identified as isolated (based on geographic distance requirements). In essence, the new grant structure has eliminated funding for under-utilized space in schools that are not isolated.

Under the old funding structure, and based on its postal code, Our Lady of La Salette School was identified as a *rural* school, and as such, received 100% of its Operation grant. Based on 2015-16 enrolment figures, the operations funding would have totaled approximately \$147,000 annually. Under the new funding structure, which is phasing-in the removal of top-up funding over three years, Our Lady of La Salette School will receive an Operation Grant, which is consistent with its utilization rate. Under the new isolated / enhanced school requirements, Our Lady of La Salette School is no longer identified as an isolated school as it is situated within ten kilometres of the next closest elementary school.

Based on 2015-16 Funding Model	2015-16 OTG	2015-16 ADE	2015-16 Utilization	Operations No Top-up	Total Operations	Maximum Operations	% of Maximum
Our Lady of La Salette School	187	81	44%	\$64,083	\$147,198	\$147,198	100%
Based on 2017-18 Funding Model	2017-18 OTG	2017-18 ADE	2017-18 Utilization	Operations No Top-up	Total Operations	Maximum Operations	% of Maximum
Our Lady of La Salette School	187	52	28%	\$42,561	\$42,561	\$153,057	28%

This means that if Our Lady of La Salette School would have been eligible to receive 100% of its Operations funding, the entitlement based on 2017-18 enrolments and funding benchmarks would total approximately \$153,000 per year. However, because operations funding for Our Lady of La Salette School will be consistent with utilization, the school is projected to receive approximately \$42,500 per year in Operations funding, which amounts to approximately 28% of what its maximum entitlement would have been. The resultant loss in revenue after the three-year phase-in period will be approximately \$110,500 per year.

Other grants that are being phased-out over the next several years include the Rural and Small Community allocation and the Declining Enrolment Adjustment grants. Additionally, funding for staff such as principals and vice-principals is also changing. Under the old funding rules, regular schools with Average Daily Enrolment (ADE) above 50 students were entitled to one full-time principal. With the funding changes, a regular school must have an ADE enrolment of 150 students, or greater, to be eligible for a full-time principal. In the case of Our Lady of La Salette School, this means that the principal will be funded at 35% (52/150) of what would have been received under the old funding model.

On April 5, 2016, the Board scheduled a meeting at Holy Trinity Catholic High School and invited a range of community partners, including child care providers, municipalities, school boards, colleges and universities, public health boards, local health integration networks and children’s mental health centres, to discuss under-utilized space needs in Norfolk County and those specifically at Our Lady of La Salette School. The partner response was low and of the community partners in attendance (YMCA Western Ontario and Haldimand-Norfolk Reach); none expressed an interest in space at Our Lady of La Salette School. Prior to the writing of the Initial Staff Report, the Board did not receive relevant information from Norfolk County or the municipal government regarding under-utilized space needs in their jurisdiction. As well, the Board did not receive relevant information from Norfolk County prior to the writing of the Final Staff Report.

DEVELOPMENTS:

Over the course of four Working Committee Meetings (two located at Holy Trinity Catholic High School and two at Our Lady of La Salette School), three public meetings (one located at Holy Trinity Catholic High School and two at Our Lady of La Salette School), a community partner meeting, as well as countless hours spent reviewing background information, Board staff and the ARC developed a total of eight possible accommodation options.

Timeline of Meetings

Meeting	Action	Date / Location	Time
Community Partner Consultation Meeting		Tuesday, April 5, 2016 Holy Trinity Catholic High School	4:00 pm
Working Committee Meeting #1	1st Working Committee Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Pupil Accommodation Policy and Procedures • Mandate of the Accommodation Review Committee • Terms of Reference for the Accommodation Review 	Tuesday, October 11, 2016 Holy Trinity Catholic High School	5:30 pm
Public Meeting #1	1st Accommodation Review Committee Public Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Pupil Accommodation Policy and Procedures • Role of the ARC • Operation of the ARC • Pupil Accommodation Review – Norfolk County Initial Staff Report and School Information Profile • Receiving Public Input • Issues to be Addressed 	Wednesday, November 9, 2016 Holy Trinity Catholic High School	7:00 pm

Working Committee Meeting #2	2nd Working Committee Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Pupil Accommodation Policy and Procedures • Role of the ARC • Operation of the ARC • Pupil Accommodation Review – Norfolk County Initial Staff Report and School Information 	Wednesday, November 23, 2016 Holy Trinity Catholic High School	5:30 pm
Working Committee Meeting #3	3rd Working Committee Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the Minutes from Working Committee Meeting #1 • Presentation and Review of Questions Arising from the Working Committee Meeting of October 11, 2016 and Public Meeting #1 – November 9, 2016 • Accommodation Review Options • Additional Working Committee Meetings 	Monday, December 12, 2016 Our Lady of La Salette School	6:00 pm
Public Meeting #2	Public Meeting #2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the Minutes from Public Meeting #1 • Presentation • Meetings Held to Date • Review of the Initial Staff Report • Review of Initial Accommodation Options • Review of Final Accommodation Options 	Wednesday, January 18, 2017 Our Lady of La Salette School	7:00 pm
Working Committee Meeting #4	4th Working Committee Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the Minutes from Working Committee Meeting #3 • Response to <i>For the ARC Committee</i> – December 12, 2016 • Draft Final Staff Report • Response to <i>Notes for January 18, 2017 ARC Meeting</i> • Response to ARC Public Meeting – January 18, 2017 	Wednesday, January 25, 2017 Our Lady of La Salette School	6:00 pm
Final Public Meeting	Final Public Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the Minutes from Public Meeting #2 • Presentation of Draft Final Staff Report • Review of Delegation to the Board Process • Review of Questions Arising from the Public Meeting #2 of January 18, 2017 	Wednesday, February 1, 2017 Our Lady of La Salette School	7:00 pm

Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees	Delivery of Final Staff Report to Board of Trustees for Receipt	Wednesday, February 15, 2017 Catholic Education Centre	7:00 pm
Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees	Public Delegation	Thursday, March 2, 2017 Catholic Education Centre	6:00 pm
Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees	Delivery of Final Staff Report to Board of Trustees for Approval. Notice of Decision by Trustees on School Accommodation Review	Thursday March 23, 2017 Catholic Education Centre	7:00 pm

The following table lists the eight possible accommodation options developed within the PAR with discussions on the options taking place at Working Committee Meetings #2 and #3 and Public Meeting #2.

Option	
1	Our Lady of La Salette School closes and all students from Our Lady of La Salette School are accommodated at St. Frances Cabrini School
2	Our Lady of La Salette School closes and all students from Our Lady of La Salette School are accommodated at St. Bernard of Clairvaux School
3	Our Lady of La Salette School closes and the existing boundary is split between St. Frances Cabrini School and St. Bernard of Clairvaux School
4	Our Lady of La Salette School closes and the existing Our Lady of La Salette School student population is permitted to attend either St. Frances Cabrini School or St. Bernard of Clairvaux School with no change to existing boundaries
5	St. Frances Cabrini School to become a Primary / Junior (ELKP – Grade 5) School and Our Lady of La Salette School to become an Intermediate (Grade 6 – Grade 8) School
6	A moratorium for the Accommodation Review Process
7	A moratorium until the Ministry makes a decision regarding rural schools
8	Our Lady of La Salette School to become a French Immersion School for Norfolk County

As a result of conversations between Board staff and the ARC at Working Committee Meeting #3 on December 12, 2016, Options 4 and Option 5 were eliminated. Further, Options 6, 7 and 8 were consolidated into one option regarding a moratorium on the accommodation review process. The rationale for the consolidated option was that decisions regarding government direction on rural schools, French Immersion being offered at Our Lady of La Salette School and the time needed to attract additional partners that could lease space at Our Lady of La Salette School could be made during the time that the moratorium would be in effect.

The resulting options are presented individually below.

Option # 1

Our Lady of La Salette School Closes and All Students from Our Lady of La Salette School Are Accommodated at St. Frances Cabrini School

The Board would consider requests for students to enroll at St. Bernard of Clairvaux School. In this situation, transportation would be grandfathered for existing Our Lady of La Salette School students and any current siblings, between 0-4 years of age, for the balance of their elementary academic career. The grandfathering of siblings would affect seven students from five families, should these families choose to attend St. Bernard of Clairvaux School.

Assuming that all students chose to attend St. Frances Cabrini School and no grandfathering occurs, the following table depicts the utilization and excess capacity at St. Frances Cabrini School.

Based upon the Watson & Associates Long-Term Capital Plan Demographic Trends, Enrolment Projections and Observations Report, May 2016

Program	2016-17 Watson Projected	2016-17 Actual	2019-20 Watson Projected	2022-23 Watson Projected	2025-26 Watson Projected
St. Frances Cabrini School Total Enrolment:	311	299	316	315	304
OTG: 268 Utilization	1.16	1.11	1.18	1.18	1.13
Excess Capacity:	-43	-31	-48	-47	-36

In this Option, a two-room addition would be required at St. Frances Cabrini School. It should be noted that the table above was created using Watson & Associates projections. In 2016-17, the Watson & Associates projections for Our Lady of La Salette School will be greater than the actual enrolment, which is 17 students less than projected. This will result in the excess capacity data in all other years being overstated.

Projected Transportation Impact

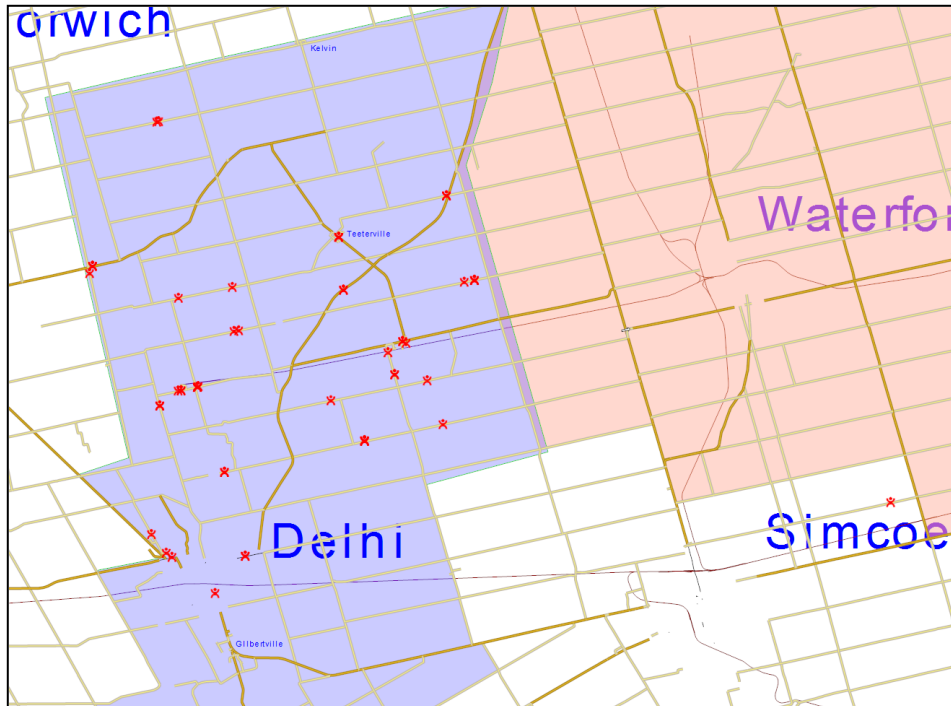
Current Ride Times (am and pm) for Our Lady of La Salette School Students

Component	0-15 Minutes	16-30 Minutes	31-45 Minutes	46-60 Minutes	61-75 Minutes	> 75 Minutes
AM	2	12	10	10	5	0
Noon	0	0	0	0	0	0
PM	11	5	14	5	6	0
Total	13	17	24	15	11	0

Projected Future Ride Times (am and pm) for Our Lady of La Salette School Students to St. Frances Cabrini School

Component	0-15 Minutes	16-30 Minutes	31-45 Minutes	46-60 Minutes	61-75 Minutes	> 75 Minutes
AM	4	15	13	6	0	0
Noon	0	0	0	0	0	0
PM	4	17	13	6	0	0
Total	8	32	26	12	0	0

This option would necessitate the addition of a mini-bus to the existing compliment serving Our Lady of La Salette School students to St. Frances Cabrini School.



Option # 2

Our Lady of La Salette School Closes and All Students from Our Lady of La Salette School Are Accommodated at St. Bernard of Clairvaux School

The Board would consider requests for students to enroll at St. Frances Cabrini School. In this situation, transportation would be grandfathered for existing Our Lady of La Salette School students and any current siblings between 0-4 years of age, for the balance of their elementary academic career. The grandfathering of siblings affects seven students from five families, should these families choose to attend St. Frances Cabrini School.

Based upon the Watson & Associates Long-Term Capital Plan Demographic Trends, Enrolment Projections and Observations Report, May 2016

Program	2016-17 Watson Projected	2016-17 Actual	2019-20 Watson Projected	2022-23 Watson Projected	2025-26 Watson Projected
St. Bernard of Clairvaux School Total Enrolment:	237	212	223	230	232
OTG: 210 Utilization:	1.13	1.00	1.06	1.10	1.10
Excess Capacity:	-27	-2	-13	-20	-22

In this Option, a one-room, or possibly, two-room addition would be required at St. Bernard of Clairvaux School.

It should be noted that the table above was created using Watson & Associates projections. In 2016-17, the Watson & Associates projections for Our Lady of La Salette School will be greater than the actual enrolment, which is 17 students less than projected. This will result in the excess capacity data in all other years being overstated.

Projected Transportation Impact

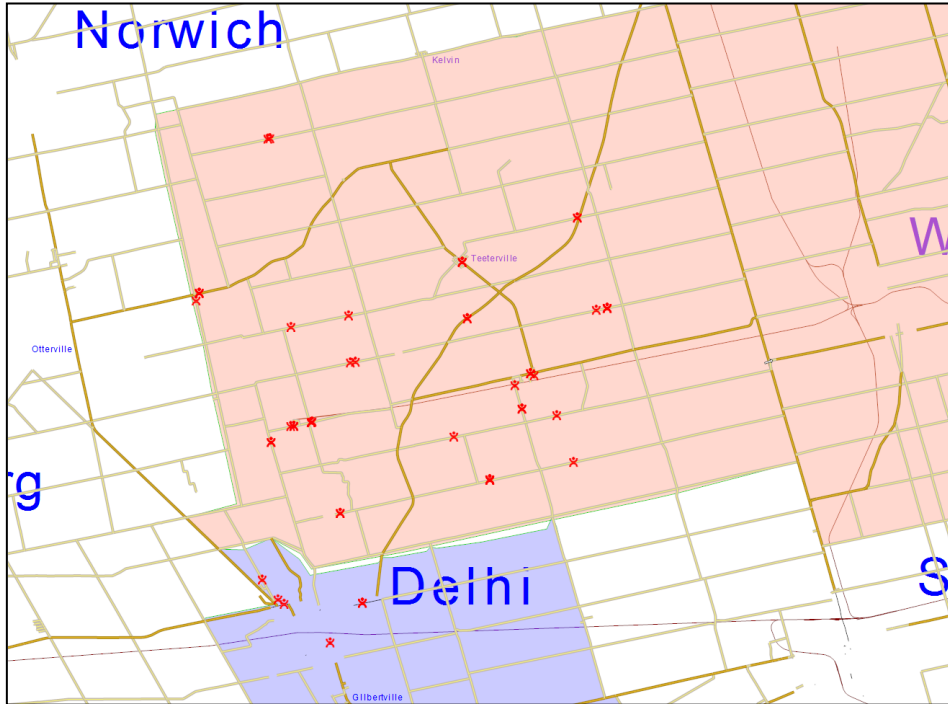
Current Ride Times (am and pm) for Our Lady of La Salette School Students

Component	0-15 Minutes	16-30 Minutes	31-45 Minutes	46-60 Minutes	61-75 Minutes	> 75 Minutes
AM	2	12	10	10	5	0
Noon	0	0	0	0	0	0
PM	11	5	14	5	6	0
Total	13	17	24	15	11	0

Projected Future Ride Times (am and pm) for Our Lady of La Salette School Students to St. Bernard of Clairvaux School

Component	0-15 Minutes	16-30 Minutes	31-45 Minutes	46-60 Minutes	61-75 Minutes	> 75 Minutes
AM	1	16	15	6	2	0
Noon	0	0	0	0	0	0
PM	1	11	18	12	0	0
Total	2	27	33	18	2	0

This option would necessitate the addition of a mini-bus to the existing compliment of busses serving Our Lady of La Salette School students.



Option # 3

Our Lady of La Salette School Closes and the Existing Boundary is Split between St. Frances Cabrini School and St. Bernard of Clairvaux School

This option resulted in 24 students being accommodated at St. Bernard of Clairvaux School and 28 students being accommodated at St. Frances Cabrini School; based on current year enrolment. Enrolment was proportionately extrapolated in all other years.

Based upon the Watson & Associates Long-Term Capital Plan Demographic Trends, Enrolment Projections and Observations Report, May 2016

Program	2016-17 Watson Projected	2016-17 Actual	2019-20 Watson Projected	2022-23 Watson Projected	2025-26 Watson Projected
St. Bernard of Clairvaux School Total Enrolment:	200	184	190	199	201
OTG: 210 Utilization:	.95	.88	.90	.95	.96
Excess Capacity:	10	26	20	11	9
St. Frances Cabrini School Total Enrolment:	279	275	288	289	278
OTG: 268 Utilization	1.04	1.03	1.07	1.08	1.04
Excess Capacity:	-11	-7	-20	-21	-10

In this Option, a one-room addition would be required at St. Frances Cabrini School. Consideration for an additional Early Learning Kindergarten Program classroom would also require review.

It should be noted that the table above was created using Watson & Associates projections. In 2016-17, the Watson & Associates projections for Our Lady of La Salette School will be greater than the actual enrolment, which is 17 students less than projected. This will result in the excess capacity data in all other years being overstated.

Projected Transportation Impact

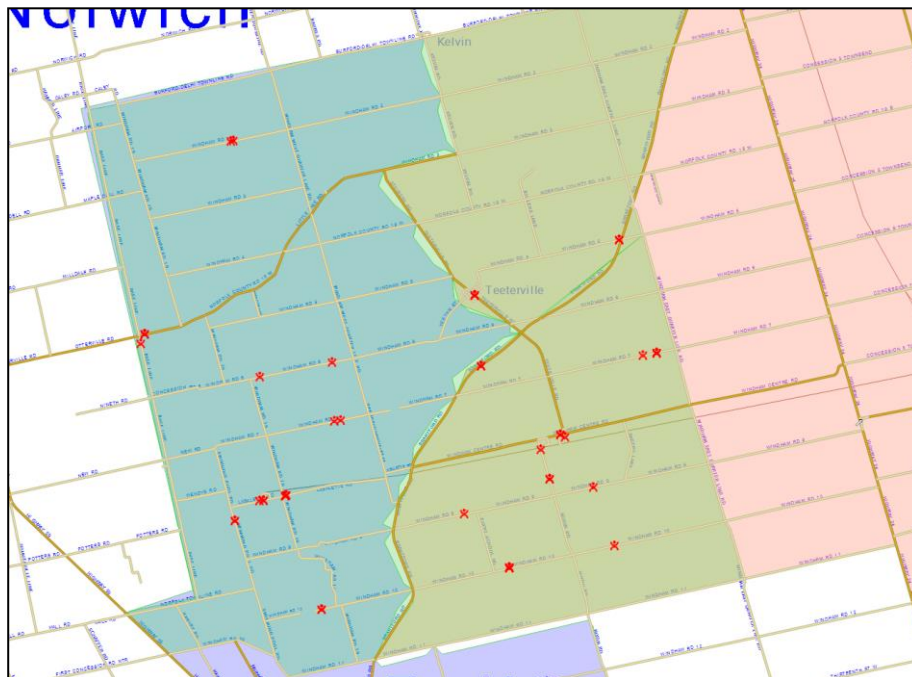
Current Ride Times (am and pm) for Our Lady of La Salette School Students

Component	0-15 Minutes	16-30 Minutes	31-45 Minutes	46-60 Minutes	61-75 Minutes	> 75 Minutes
AM	2	12	10	10	5	0
Noon	0	0	0	0	0	0
PM	11	5	14	5	6	0
Total	13	17	24	15	11	0

Projected Future Ride Times (am and pm) for Our Lady of La Salette School Students to St. Frances Cabrini and St. Bernard of Clairvaux Schools

Component	0-15 Minutes	16-30 Minutes	31-45 Minutes	46-60 Minutes	61-75 Minutes	> 75 Minutes
AM	4	18	11	7	0	0
Noon	0	0	0	0	0	0
PM	6	13	17	6	0	0
Total	10	31	28	13	0	0

This option would necessitate the addition of a mini-bus to the existing compliment of busses serving Our Lady of La Salette School students to St. Frances Cabrini and St. Bernard of Clairvaux Schools.



Option # 4

A Two-Year Moratorium for the Accommodation Review Process

Our Lady of La Salette School remains open. Status quo.

Option #4 has been consolidated from the original Options 6, 7 and 8 as presented at Working Meeting #3. The rationale for the consolidation was that decisions regarding government direction on rural schools, decisions regarding French Immersion being offered at Our Lady of La Salette School or the time needed to attract additional partners who might lease space at Our Lady of La Salette School could be pursued during the time that the moratorium would be in effect.

The ARC felt that with a time moratorium in effect, Norfolk County parents could be surveyed to determine interest levels, should a French Immersion Program be offered at Our Lady of La Salette School, in addition to the French Immersion Program, which has been established at St. Joseph's School in Simcoe.

The ARC felt that while the moratorium was in effect, additional direction may be forthcoming from the Government concerning keeping schools in rural communities open and that it may be possible to attract a community partner to utilize space within the building, such as a licensed daycare.

Considerations:

- Typically, when considering a Dual Track School (English and French Immersion instruction) a robust English stream of students already exists in the school. For example, the Board currently has one Dual Track French Immersion School in Brantford, which is offering programming in both French and English Kindergarten to Grade 8. There is an enrolment variance of approximately 40 students. This school continues to have robust enrolment in both English and French classrooms. Historical data reveals that students continue to register in both French Immersion and English programs. Our Lady of La Salette School does not have sufficient enrolment in the English stream to support the French Immersion model.
- By offering French Immersion in a larger school like St. Joseph's School, where there exists a large English stream of student enrolment, parents are given a choice between enrolling their children in an English program or a French program. Often, an English classroom collapses and it is replaced with a French classroom.
- French Immersion Schools usually add one grade per year and the process takes at least eight years to establish the program in all grades.
- A French Immersion School offers parental choice for their child's education; however, if the students that are attracted to the French Immersion School are not new to the system, this solution does not solve the enrolment issue as students are coming from other schools within the system; potentially weakening the enrolment at these other schools.
- When selecting a French Immersion school location, centrality of location, the length of time students would be travelling by bus and the cost of bussing, should be considered.
- As per Ministry of Education [Memorandum 2016:B19, Request for School Consolidation Capital Funding Submissions](#), dated December 1, 2016, which deals with funding provisions for school consolidations, there is no mention to exclude rural schools when undertaking a Pupil Accommodation Review (PAR) or making a school consolidation capital request.

Community Consultations

As per the Ministry of Education *Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline*, March 2015, school boards must ensure that individuals from the school(s) under review and individuals from the broader community are invited to participate in the pupil accommodation review consultation. This participation has been achieved in a number of ways in the current PAR. The Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) was established with representation, which included one parent/guardian representative from each of the schools under review, chosen by their respective Catholic School Advisory Council (CSAC), one teaching representative from each school under review and one community member with no child/ward currently attending BHNCD SB schools from each of the three schools. These individuals became conduits between the school, the community at large and the discussions taking place at meetings of the PAR. Questions were posed and statements were read during Working Committee Meetings, which originated from ARC members as well as the larger school community. During Public Meetings, questions were posed and statements were read, which originated directly from the larger school community. Refer to the hyperlinked agenda documents found on Pages 6 and 7 of this report within the *Timelines for Meetings*.

As mentioned earlier, on April 5, 2016, the Board invited a range of community partners including child care providers, municipalities, school boards, colleges and universities, public health boards, local health integration networks and children's mental health centres to discuss under-utilized space needs in Norfolk County and those specifically at Our Lady of La Salette School. The partner response was low and of the community partners in attendance (YMCA Western Ontario and Haldimand-Norfolk Reach), none expressed an interest in space at Our Lady of La Salette School. Prior to the writing of the Initial Staff Report, the Board did not receive relevant information from Norfolk County nor from the municipal government regarding under-utilized space needs in their jurisdiction. When Norfolk County staff were contacted requesting comment on the Initial Staff Report, they advised the Board of a pending application for a small development in the southwest area of Waterford, but did not have any comment on either St. Frances Cabrini School, Our Lady of La Salette School or the recommended option within the Initial Staff Report. The Board did not receive any comment from the two community partners who attended the Community Consultation Meeting on April 5, 2016 with respect to the recommendation within the Initial Staff Report.

Board staff were made aware, via an email from a parent of Our Lady of La Salette School, that the Mayor of Norfolk County had written to Premier Kathleen Wynne with a concern for rural schools in rural communities. The Norfolk County Council approved a resolution on December 13, 2016, urging the Minister of Education to rewrite the Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline (PARG) to take into consideration community and economic value considerations of rural communities, provide a more democratic process and, until such time as the PARG is rewritten, that the Province place a moratorium on more rural school closures. A similar letter was provided by Bruce Grey County to the Premier on December 2, 2016.

Three Public Meetings were held as part of the PAR schedule of meetings. Public Meeting #1 was held on November 9, 2016 at Holy Trinity Catholic High School and was well attended by members of the public and from Our Lady of La Salette School. The [Agenda](#) and [Minutes](#) containing responses to questions can be found on the BHNCD SB website. Public Meeting #2 was held on January 18, 2017 at Our Lady of La Salette School and, again, a large turnout of members involved in the local school community attended. The [Agenda](#) and [Minutes](#) containing responses to questions can also be found on the BHNCD SB website. Members of the public attended each of the Working Committee Meetings #2 through #4. A Final Public Meeting was held on February 1, 2017 at Our Lady of La Salette School. During the Final Public Meeting, numerous statements were given by members of the public. The written statements are included as Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.

The majority of public input focused on Option 4; whereby a two-year moratorium would be placed on the PAR, and Our Lady of La Salette School would remain open, status quo in the meantime.

In addition to the reasons given within the PAR by the Working Committee regarding a moratorium on the process (refer to Option #4, Page 14 above), a submission to the Board requesting a moratorium be put in place was provided by a parent and the moratorium request excerpt is included below:

- *New data is available from the Census (released spring 2017) and facility condition assessments from the Ministry (Our Lady of La Salette School is scheduled to be reviewed in 2017). This will provide up-to-date information for decision-making.*
- *This would allow time for the Board to make a long-term plan for Norfolk County Catholic schools.*
- *Time for the Ministry to correct flaws in the funding model and PARG.*
- *Time for the Board and Trustees to gather research on the effects on students of school consolidation. If the current models persist, there will be more PARs and likely more consolidations. The effects on students are important and relevant to the discussion.*
- *Allow time for the Board and Trustees to consider a broader plan that addresses the under-utilization in Norfolk Schools. The reality of declining enrollment is that schools may have to close. Perhaps a school is no longer located close to where students live. Maybe a new school is needed in an area with new population growth. These decisions are more well informed when reviews are done on a broader basis.*
- *Cost saving measures could be implemented during the moratorium: the loss in top-up funding totals roughly \$100,000. This difference could be partially recovered by use of a part-time custodian, part-time principal or by allocating the principal's salary to the other Board responsibilities already in her portfolio (ARC Meeting #3, Page 25), shared teachers, etc.*

As a result of the discussions at Working Committee Meeting #3, a survey was sent home with each individual student of Our Lady of La Salette School for their parents to complete regarding the four options, as presented in this report (Appendix 1). The surveys were returned and tabulated with the results shown in the table below:

Option		Individual Student Survey Results
1	Our Lady of La Salette School closes and all students from Our Lady of La Salette School are accommodated at St. Frances Cabrini School. The Board would consider requests for students to enroll at St. Bernard of Clairvaux School in Waterford. Transportation would be grandfathered for existing Our Lady of La Salette School students and any current siblings for the balance of their elementary academic career.	0
2	Our Lady of La Salette School closes and all students from Our Lady of La Salette School are accommodated at St. Bernard of Clairvaux School in Waterford. The Board would consider requests for students to enroll at St. Frances of Cabrini School in Delhi. Transportation would be grandfathered for existing Our Lady of La Salette School students and any current siblings for the balance of their elementary academic career.	0
3	Our Lady of La Salette School closes and the existing boundary is split between St. Frances Cabrini School and St. Bernard of Clairvaux School.	3

4	Request a two-year moratorium to provide time to create a plan in an attempt to increase enrolment and, through a cost recovery model, possibly utilize more physical space at Our Lady of La Salette School.	29
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It should be noted that 32 of 37 possible surveys were returned.

With respect to the additional survey question regarding where parents would send their child(ren) should Our Lady of La Salette School close, parents chose to send 21 children to St. Frances Cabrini School in Delhi, 12 children to St. Bernard of Clairvaux School in Waterford and 17 children to Other School.

Final Public Input

Members of the public are provided a final opportunity for consultation and feedback on the PAR and the Final Staff Report, during a Public Delegation to the Board of Trustees, which has been scheduled on Thursday, March 2, 2017 at 6:00 p.m.

Staff Considerations and Options

School board staff are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the Board is fiscally prudent in making recommendations that will affect the system as a whole. They reviewed and considered all information gathered throughout the PAR process. They considered the reduction of pupil places, student impact, keeping school communities together, the location of schools to each other, site and building configuration; including constraints and the ability to accommodate additions and/or portables, age of building and Facility Condition Indexes (FCI) and any boundary change(s) that may be required as a result of the option recommended to the trustees.

Based on the preceding, staff in consultation with the ARC presented four options to reflect the feedback received from the community:

Recommendation

Staff are recommending Option 3, which includes the closure of Our Lady of La Salette School. The existing Our Lady of La Salette School boundary will be split between St. Frances Cabrini School and St. Bernard of Clairvaux School. Board staff are recommending this option to the Board of Trustees. This recommended option serves to benefit the students of Our Lady of La Salette School and the Board in the following ways:

- It reduces the number of grade combinations for curriculum delivery.
- It provides greater student access to extra-curricular activities and events.
- It provides students with greater access to a broader range of peer relationships.
- It provides students with increased opportunity to be exposed to different teachers and teaching styles.
- It provides a solution to the under-utilization of student space at Our Lady of La Salette School.
- It provides funding to the Board such that revenue grants are being maximized.

Survey results suggest that transferring all the Our Lady of La Salette School students to one school is not a desire of the parents should Our Lady of La Salette School be closed.

The following table depicts the forecast utilization and excess capacity of both St. Bernard of Clairvaux School and St. Frances Cabrini School; should the 33 students indicating their choice within the survey attend the school chosen.

Based upon the Watson & Associates Long-Term Capital Plan Demographic Trends, Enrolment Projections and Observations Report, May 2016

Program	2016-17 Projected from Survey	2019-20 Watson Projected	2022-23 Watson Projected	2025-26 Watson Projected
St. Bernard of Clairvaux School Total Enrolment:	172	174	185	187
OTG: 210 Utilization:	.82	.83	.88	.89
Excess Capacity:	38	36	25	23
St. Frances Cabrini School Total Enrolment:	268	276	279	268
OTG: 268 Utilization	1.00	1.03	1.04	1.00
Excess Capacity:	0	-8	-11	0

In this Option, a two-room addition would be required at St. Frances Cabrini School. In addition to regular grade enrolment, the total enrolment of Full Day Kindergarten students warrants an additional purpose built room. This would also provide appropriate space should any of the 17 students surveyed to go to an *Other School* reconsider and choose either St. Bernard of Clairvaux or St. Frances Cabrini Schools. Should this occur, the excess capacity of the respective school in the table above would change.

The survey was released in an anonymous format. As a result, the physical location of the homes of the families responding is unknown. A survey of the families will once again be required such that the actual boundary can be established between St. Frances Cabrini and St. Bernard of Clairvaux Schools. The Board would consider requests for students to enroll at either St. Frances Cabrini or St. Bernard of Clairvaux Schools, if the boundary is placed such that the family is out of bounds to the school of choice. Transportation would be grandfathered for existing Our Lady of La Salette School students and any current siblings for the balance of their elementary academic career. This school selection request would take place one time only. Should a parent wish to move their child(ren) in any following year, they would be required to do so under normal application to school and transportation procedures.

Trustees should also be aware that as of October 31 for the 2016-17 school year, there were four Grade 8 students, nine Grade 7 students and ten Grade 6 students attending Our Lady of La Salette School. Watson and Associates has provided enrolment forecasts into the future; averaging five students per year enrolling at Our Lady of La Salette School in the Junior Kindergarten level of the Full Day Kindergarten program. This indicates that the School population will increase to 53 students in 2017-18 (exclusive of any in-year enrolments) and then decrease to 49 students in 2018-19 and, once again, decrease to 44 students in 2019-20.

Funding Request for Consolidated Sites

The Ministry of Education provides a number of funding sources to address capital improvements at schools, which have recently undergone an accommodation review to eliminate surplus pupil places. These funding sources include Capital Priorities and School Consolidated Capital programs. As per Ministry of Education [Memorandum 2016:B19](#), *Request for School Consolidation Capital Funding Submissions*, the Board would be in a position to apply for funding to support projects that address a school board's excess space capacity. The timeline for submission is January 27, 2017 and the Board has submitted a funding application in support of Option 3, which requires a small addition to be built at St Frances Cabrini School. Should the Trustees not approve the recommendation on this report, or choose another option, the Ministry will be notified of the Board's intent to modify or withdraw its submission. The Ministry is aiming to make announcements regarding their School Consolidation Capital funding decisions in early spring 2017.

Timeline and Transition

As stated in the Initial Staff Report and throughout the PAR process, the proposal by staff, and subject to the Board of Trustees' approval, is to close Our Lady of La Salette School at the end of June 2017.

The Board has met all of the requirements of Policy #400.16 and the Ministry of Education *Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines*.

Should the Board approve the closure of Our Lady of La Salette School such that students would attend both St. Bernard of Clairvaux and St. Frances Cabrini Schools, a School Integration Process would be implemented. The Director, or designate, would establish an Integration Committee immediately following the final decision to close a school. The Integration Committee will plan for and implement the positive integration of students and staff affected by the consolidation into their new school environments. The Chair of the Board will appoint one trustee as the Chair of the Integration Committee and a Superintendent of Education will function as secretary and resource person. Other resource personnel may be called to assist the Integration Committee. Among other responsibilities, the Integration Committee will determine whether a school closing ceremony is appropriate. If a closing ceremony is recommended, the Committee will design the format and program. The Board will provide funds of up to \$500 for the event.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board receives the Pupil Accommodation Review – Norfolk County Final Staff Report.

TO ALL PARENTS OF OUR LADY OF LA SALETTE STUDENTS

As you may be aware, Our Lady of La Salette (OLOL) is one of three schools currently under an accommodation review. This survey is being sent to you in an attempt to collect the voice and personal choices of Our Lady of La Salette School families.

The ARC Committee has recommended solutions in an attempt to alleviate decreasing enrolment. In order for those solutions to be examined, one of our options is to request a moratorium for 2 years. During this time, we can attempt to increase enrolment at OLOL using some strategies we have come up with. Considerations include opening up a second Norfolk County French Immersion Program at OLOL or renting some school space out to childcare providers (among other things).

Board staff and the Accommodation Review Committee have come up with four viable options. We would like to hear what you think and are asking that you fill out the lower portion of this notice and return it to the school, in the envelope provided, by Monday, Dec. 19 in order to have your voice heard.

ACCOMMODATION REVIEW COMMITTEE OPTIONS

WHICH OPTION WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

- OPTION #1 – Our Lady of La Salette closes and all students from Our Lady of La Salette School are accommodated at St. Frances Cabrini School. The board would consider requests for students to enroll at St. Bernard of Clairvaux School in Waterford. Transportation would be grandfathered for existing Our Lady of La Salette School Students and any current siblings for the balance of their elementary academic career.
- OPTION #2 – Our Lady of La Salette closes and all students from Our Lady of La Salette School are accommodated at St. Bernard of Clairvaux School in Waterford. The board would consider requests for students to enroll at St. Frances of Cabrini School in Delhi. Transportation would be grandfathered for existing Our Lady of La Salette School Students and any current siblings for the balance of their elementary academic career.
- OPTION #3- Our Lady of La Salette School closes and the existing boundary is split between St. Frances Cabrini School and St. Bernard of Clairvaux School. Some students would be accommodated at St. Frances and some students would be accommodated at St. Bernard.
- OPTION #4 – Request a two-year moratorium to provide time to create a plan in an attempt to increase enrolment and, through a cost recovery model, possibly utilize more physical space at Our Lady of La Salette.

IF OUR LADY OF LA SALETTE CLOSES, WHERE WILL YOUR CHILD ATTEND SCHOOL?

- St. Frances Cabrini in Delhi
- St. Bernard of Clairvaux in Waterford
- Other: _____

Number of children in your family attending Our Lady of La Salette _____

For more information about the ARC process and to view supporting documents, please visit the Board's website: <http://www.bhncdsb.ca/page/arc-norfolk>

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- St. Frances Cabrini in Delhi
- St. Bernard of Clairvaux in Waterford
- Other: _____

Number of children in your family attending Our Lady of La Salette _____

For more information about the ARC process and to view supporting documents, please visit the Board's website: <http://www.bhncdsb.ca/page/arc-norfolk>

Linda Luciani

From: bobbiann@kwic.com
Sent: February 3, 2017 3:54 PM
To: Linda Luciani
Subject: Bobbi Ann's presentation from OLOL

Linda, following is my presentation from Wednesday evening.

Have a great weekend.

Bobbi Ann

Good evening my name is Bobbi Ann and I am the mom of Carter, a Grade six student here at OLOL, as well as Addison who is in grade 10 and a graduate of the school.

Our school community has been given just a few months to propose options that would see the doors to this building remain open. With Christmas in the midst of this process, it has simply boiled down to roughly two months. And although short, there have been a number of questions, and ideas thrown on the table.

There are still many questions that have not been satisfied and won't be...but what is truly troubling is that any suggestion or idea that has come out of our school community has been dismissed almost immediately.

I suppose that the board and staff, when their goal is to close a school, wouldn't really find it in their best interest to be helpful. But what I would hope and what our community expects is to be treated fairly. And to this point in time, we have not been treated fairly and we certainly haven't been given enough time.

Rumours of closure with regard to OLOL started several years ago and many of us heard them but there was no word from this board – so they remained just as they were...rumours.

In hindsight, it's hard not to believe that his board started these rumours as a means to an end. What family would sign a child up at a school rumoured to be closing? I have been many places over the years and started conversations with parents who ask what school my son goes to...on more than one occasion the other parent has said, "Oh that's the school my kids are supposed to go to!"

A few years back, when enrolment at OLOL was still quite healthy, we shared a principal with Our Lady of Fatima...from a parent's perspective there was no difference in the quality of service being offered at the school. And today, when enrolment is at an all-time low, we have a full-time principal...why is that?

We have tripled grades, which I may add hasn't served us well in attracting students....and I can't help but think that a board with any business sense would have eliminated the full-time principal in order to accommodate the salary of another teacher to prevent at least one triple grade.

This board, in my opinion, has put great strain on the teachers here at the school and they have all done a fantastic job despite the very poor situation they have found themselves thrown into. If I as a parent, and all the parents and grandparents here tonight, felt that our school was inferior in any way, we would have taken them elsewhere.

We are not simple people. Some of our province's brightest people work the land, harvest the crops and help to solve some of biggest problems. You have seen the work of some of the parents and families from our school....they have done a great job pulling apart your falsified numbers. Families from our community have probably inundated your staff with the toughest questions yet that you have seen in an ARC process.

I am confident that if we are given a moratorium, that we can come up with a plan that will save OLOL and this community. The will and the knowledge is here.

This school is run efficiently. It is in good shape, costs minimal dollars to operate on an annual basis. It is my understanding that an addition on St. Frances, which is planned whether our students attend the Delhi school or not, will cost about \$1 million. We all know that's a moving target and by the time shovels are in the ground that number probably grows to about \$1.5 million which is more than 10-years operating costs at OLOL.

This seems a bit strange, perhaps even hare-brained -- much like the Ministry of Education's plan to spend almost \$1.5 billion by election time next year in order to save \$236 million. Imagine if we ran our households in this manner?

We are not against the school board making changes to St. Frances but we don't want it done at the expense of our school and students. Sadly, this process pits communities against one another. The board has heard it said that parents from OLOL will shop around for schools if you shutter these doors. Tax dollars don't have to stay with your

board and that is not a given. Rural folks know how to dig their heels in...the diocese can let you in on what happened when they pit two churches against each other.

I ask, what is the hurry? Why would you rush this process through when you are aware you are working with formulas that are flawed? Why wouldn't you wait to see what next summer's election may bring? Perhaps it will bring a new government that sees the benefit of small and rural schools.... sees the benefit of children attending school in their own community...supporting that community.

The school board is in place to represent what is best for the people it serves. You work for us and yet somehow for the past few months you have us all working for you now in what seems like a futile process.

You present numbers and say the Ministry is short-changing our rural schools. And yet, when I asked you at the first public meeting if you'd write to the Minister asking for more funding, you said "no."

If this was truly a fair process, our board should have told us upfront that this was a foregone conclusion. And if it's not a foregone conclusion then you all owe it to this community to give us more time and when we bring you valid suggestions that you actually digest them instead of spit them out.

You may want to have a look at the Bluewater board whereby an independent review of the Watson report turned up some shoddy work and findings...making schools in Chesley and Paisley look much worse on paper than they are. Funny isn't it??

Keep in mind you all represent a school board that has a slogan of Excellence in Learning...Living in Christ. Has this been a fair process, have you all been telling the truth? Have you all lived in Christ throughout this ARC?

It saddens me to hear the information Mr. Grice presented tonight done so in such a cavalier way. Formality is what it sounds like.

Trustees, you come up for re-election in 18 months...this community can organize as you have seen and we won't forget who was helpful and who wasn't. A two-year moratorium would get you through that election now wouldn't it?

CAROL
AMANDA



Dear Members of the Review Board:

The Norfolk Federation of Agriculture as part of its parent organization, OFA, represents the interests of 36,000 farm families and their farm businesses across Ontario, and more than 160,000 people that work on farms to support Ontario agriculture. We also speak indirectly for the thousands of Ontarians who live and work in rural Ontario supplying farm inputs and processing and distributing our agricultural products. We are an advocacy organization – working to ensure farm families have a sustainable future in a viable business environment. This means we work on issues that directly affecting farmers, and also issues that affect our rural communities. This means were are deeply affected by the current trend to close rural school like Our Lady of La Salette under current review.

The Norfolk Federation of Agriculture is very concerned with the status of our communities – the departure of our youth and families to opportunities in urban areas is hurting rural Norfolk and presents us all with many challenges. We are working to reverse this trend, but a necessary pre-condition for bringing families to revitalize our communities and to support the families that form our communities is a solid school system. To abuse a farm metaphor, this is a chicken and egg dilemma. However, we believe that we can revitalize our communities and, in turn, fill our schools by maintaining rural schools.

Schools are an important part of every community. But in rural Norfolk, schools play a very big role. They aren't just a place for learning. School buildings are used for community social events, local sports activities, and by service and community groups. When you close a rural school, you close it off for the entire community, not just the students.

Susan MacKenzie, spokesperson for the Ontario Alliance Against School Closures was recently quoted saying: 'We're paying a steep price to cuts in education. It is time to see beyond the boundaries of Toronto and the GTA.' The NFA agrees with the Alliance. A view beyond urban centres is essential for rural economic development and for our school system. In or view, the "steep price" Susan MacKenzie talks about has not be adequately calculated.

The Alliance and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) have both called for additional analysis of the social and economic impact of closing rural schools. We need to account for the full impact and "cost" on students and the entire community when a school closes.

Students will have to travel outside their communities, to go to larger schools in urban areas. This is a cost. The extra time spent on busses means students may not be able to

be part of after school activities, and may not be able to have part-time jobs or take on farm chores. This represents costs. Long bus rides mean our children get home late to try to complete homework on unreliable internet. This is a cost to student success. All schools depends on volunteers, and when you bus students into urban centres, you will have lost the opportunities for local volunteers to support their community.

NFA believes the review process used to determine rural schools closures is flawed. We agree with the Alliance and Association of Ontario Municipalities that the accommodation Review Committee process, and resulting guidelines, need to be redone. We also believe the funding formula must be reviewed. We recognize budgets are tight – so what if we think differently in the short term? What if school buses pick up students in towns and bring them to rural schools. The routes would be much shorter and our new rural students would realize a once in a lifetime experience!

When you close a rural school, you are closing opportunities for the entire community.

Yours truly,

Bob Vogalzung

President

Norfolk Federation of Agriculture