



“The Niagara Catholic District School Board, through the charisms of faith, social justice, support and leadership, nurtures an enriching Catholic learning community for all to reach their full potential and become living witnesses of Christ.”

MINUTES

**Saint Michael Catholic and Saint Paul Catholic Elementary and Secondary
Family of Schools**

Ad Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee

Loretto Catholic Elementary School, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic
Elementary School
and Father Hennepin Catholic Elementary School

**November 10, 2016
7:00 p.m.**

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Minutes of Ad Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee Meeting for the Saint Michael Catholic and Saint Paul Catholic Elementary and Secondary Family of Schools of November 10, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. at Loretto Catholic Elementary School.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Trustee Nieuwesteeg.

A. ROUTINE MATTERS

1. Opening Prayer

The opening prayer was led by Ted Farrell, Superintendent of Education.

2. Roll Call and Attendance

Committee Members		Present	Excused	Absent
Kathy Burtnik	Trustee	x		
Frank Fera	Trustee		x	
Ed Nieuwesteeg	Trustee	x		

Resources to Committee		Present	Excused	Absent
Ted Farrell	Superintendent of Education	x		
Scott Whitwell	Controller of Facilities Services	x		
Kathy Levinski	Manager of Facilities Services	x		
Mary Gallardi	Recording Secretary	x		
Antonio Cardamone	Principal - Loretto Catholic		x	

Resources to Committee		Present	Excused	Absent
Amanda Cybula	Principal - Father Hennepin		X	
Elizabeth Davey	Principal - Our Lady of Mount Carmel	X		
CSC Chair/Co-Chair	Loretto Catholic			X
CSC Chair/Co-Chair	Father Hennepin			X
CSC Chair/Co-Chair	Our Lady of Mount Carmel	X		

The following staff were also in attendance:

Mark Lefebvre, Family of Schools Superintendent of Education; Christopher Moscato, Vice-Principal, Loretto Catholic Elementary School; Ken Griepsma, Principal, Saint Michael Catholic High School.

10 members of the public also attended and signed the attendance to the meeting.

B. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Superintendent Farrell presented the Terms of Reference for information. It was noted that the Terms of Reference initially suggested to “consider the impact of moving the French Immersion Program from Notre Dame.” Following public consultation on the issue, the decision was that the program would remain at Notre Dame Catholic Elementary School.

C. MEETING SCHEDULE

Superintendent Farrell presented the Meeting Schedule for information.

D. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Kathy Levinski and Superintendent Farrell provided background information pertaining to the identified schools in the Attendance Area Review from the June 21, 2016 Board Report: Father Hennepin Catholic Elementary School, Loretto Catholic Elementary School and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Elementary School.

The current boundaries map for each school were shared in addition to the potential students living in each elementary school boundary.

A catchment summary for Loretto Catholic, Father Hennepin and Our Lady of Mount Carmel was provided showing potential students who are currently attending a Niagara Catholic school. Also included was information on out of boundary students.

Enrolment Projections were reviewed for each of the three schools.

An Education Development Charge, which is used to purchase land and develop school sites, was reviewed as it relates to south Niagara Falls.

An Education Development Charge is available to the Board to purchase land and develop the site.

Kathy Levinski reviewed the areas that are being planned for development in south Niagara Falls:

- The Garner South Plan has approximately 2700 units approved by the city of Niagara Falls. The area is projected to result in close to 400 students attending a Niagara Catholic Elementary School.
- The Oldfield subdivision was reviewed. The area is currently split between Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Elementary School and Father Hennepin Catholic Elementary School.
- Thundering Waters is in the early planning stages and will ultimately affect enrolment in both the Father Hennepin and Our Lady of Mount Carmel boundary areas.

E. ATTENDANCE AREA OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Option 1 – Status Quo

Vice-Principal Moscato presented the current issues at Loretto Catholic;
Principal Davey presented the current issues at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Elementary School;
Superintendent Farrell presented the current issues at Father Hennepin Catholic Elementary School;

Kathy Levinski spoke about the child care program at Loretto and Father Hennepin. Kathy encouraged parents to sign up and let your needs be known with respect to before and after child care.

Comments/Input/Feedback:

Josie Cuviallo, Loretto:

I also attended last night's meeting and I have spoken with neighbours that have experienced going back and forth between Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Loretto. In 2012, why were we not told that you would bus our children to Our Lady of Mount Carmel? Now my child is in grade 5 we will have to uproot our children. Is there something we can do to allow our children to stay at Loretto and the new ones coming into the area have them bussed to the other schools? Why now are we going to have these children moved and upset them?

Superintendent Farrell:

We do have tremendous pressure at Loretto Catholic and the effect of adding students was foreseeable. However, for every 3 students coming into Loretto Catholic there are 2 going out. Principal Cardamone and Vice-Principal Moscato have indicated that it is a very safe school. As far as grandfathering, we are taking all the suggestions and meeting again as a committee on Tuesday to discuss all suggestions and options.

Trustee Burtnik:

Just for clarity, when you mention my area, does your area get transportation right now or is it a walking zone?

Josie CuvIELLO, Loretto:

Yes they are getting transportation. I'm in that E1 or Charnwood area. What I'm saying is that, in 2012, if they said we are almost at capacity and recommended we go to Our Lady of Mount Carmel or else come a few years you will have to change schools I would not have done that to my son or daughter, that is not in my children's best interest. I do receive a bus but I'm saying that the kids that were already there received a bus to Loretto and mine could have received one to Our Lady of Mount Carmel. I would not have minded that. The issue is the fact that now they are in the higher grades and you want to change boundaries.

Trustee Burtnik:

I understand, I'm looking for clarity on your suggestion so that we can take it into consideration.

Josie CuvIELLO, Loretto:

I know it doesn't sound right but it doesn't sound right to me to move children from one school that is booming to other schools that are not as full in order to fill them up so that we can build a new school in another area. What I'm saying is having kids that are going to Loretto Catholic now bussed to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, sounds a little silly. To have two buses going to two different schools is silly. I just feel everything can develop around you and you can see Loretto students that will be going to the new school.

Trustee Burtnik:

Thank you for the clarity.

Superintendent Farrell:

You mentioned area E1. We are getting to the areas now for those of you who did not attend last night.

Option 2 – Area E1 to Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Superintendent Farrell presented Option 2.

Comments/Input/Feedback:

Unnamed Speaker, Loretto:

Do you have detailed maps with the streets that are affected that include the street names?

Superintendent Farrell:

The E1 area includes Lundy's Lane, Montrose, Westwood, Charnwood, Kalar Road.

Trustee Burtnik:

Because no decision has been made your child may or may not be affected.

Alexandria Attree, Loretto:

So what they are telling you is not set in stone. The reason we are here is to hear all the options and we make suggestions that they take back to the Committee meeting which we are allowed to go to. They can then sit down and say this is what was said by the parents and discuss what the options are and figure out what is the best solution. There are six options and then you can make a seventh option. This is probably what happened in 2012 they took feedback and went from there. One beautiful thing about Niagara Catholic is that they work with us, So this is the thing, we don't need to get upset, they are saying there is a school in need that needs relief and there are two other schools that give the relief. Please come to the meetings because they need to hear you.

Charles Baker, Loretto:

My son is diagnosed with autism and he has transition issues. Part of the reason we kept our son at Loretto was because of the Boys and Girls Club and he has been successful on the bus. Transitions can be huge for him. Parents are worried about our kids being able to adapt or adjust to our needs. Kids will surprise us. They adapt better than we do. They have new students in different classes every year and they adapt. The school and the classroom teachers adapt and make things work. We need to focus a lot less on whether we can adapt and more on what the schools can offer and what the board can offer. I live in Imagine and it's a two minute drive. With respect to special needs at the Catholic Board do they have the model at other schools? Will the services be same for these kids? Are these issues at the Catholic Board identical or similar to the public board? You take in non-catholic and out of boundary students we needed permission for both for our child. Are these things that you would stop granting acceptance for by restricting those?

Superintendent Farrell:

As far as students with special needs, we provide a similar model at each of our schools which is based on student need. As students migrate from school to school those needs are examined on a school by school basis annually so that students receive the same level of service. We cannot promise the same Educational Assistant but we do promise the same quality of education.

As far as whether the pressure is identical at the other board, we have ten portables at Loretto and there is one at Kate S. Durdan. Similar enrolment pressure but not to the same extent. At Forestview there are at least five portables. Niagara Falls is the place to be. Families want to move here.

In regard to your out of boundary comment and religion, the request is based on the unique needs that the family presents in meeting with the Principal. Following that meeting, with the support of the Principal the request and that is passed on to Superintendent Lefebvre. On a go-forward basis, we can look at the out of boundary.

Angela Lubocki, Loretto:

I have 2 children in E1 and they walk to and from school every day. They are too close to get a bus and now are you are saying we are too far from Loretto to stay? There are other kids in that area that take a bus.

Superintendent Farrell:

Is the suggestion that we isolate E1 to include only the bussed students?

Angela Lubocki, Loretto:

I'm just saying that we are so close and moving them would affect child care. We live in that area because we love the school, one child is in Grade 8 and another in Grade 5. Not to mention that my parents moved into the neighbourhood. They are so close.

Trustee Burtnik:

We have broken it down on that map to show what the impact would be. The suggestion is that the the walkers stay at Loretto so that they won't be bussed. We have it down and will look into that that suggestion.

Angie Bertone, Loretto:

I'm in the same area as Angela and my kids walk as well. It just seems to me that it looks like it's just in with the new out with the old, so the kids living on the old side get shipped out. Why can't the new kids coming in be bussed out as they won't be affected as opposed to our kids being uprooted? Mine are going into Grade 8 and Grade 5, to have to them move is very upsetting. They are very happy at Loretto.

Trustee Nieuwesteeg:

Valid consideration. Please keep in mind the options being presented tonight are not a final list of options. We could have had seven or eight options. Nothing is etched in stone. This is not an easy process to go through and any time a child is affected and parents are upset we are concerned. We are not trying to solve a problem at the expense of your child or someone else's child.

We are trying to alleviate the issues at all schools. If I said to you we are leaving it status quo and there are going to be 900 kids a Loretto in the next three years, your children would not be any better served by us allowing that problem to continue to grow. We are going to look at a full range of options, bussing, taking kids, potential walkers, bussers, out of boundary students, exceptions and we are going to look at all of those things. This is an open process. We do this because that is what Niagara Catholic does. We try our very best to do our best for all kids that are affected by this decision. Unfortunately it is a fact of life and we have to deal with it. Your patience and understanding as we go through this process is greatly appreciated.

Charles Baker, Loretto:

With new subdivisions coming in, in terms are the pressure on the builders, is there an obligation that requires that if you want to keep building here then you need to build a new school? Is there a projected date for a new school to be built?

Trustee Nieuwesteeg:

Are you referring to the Education Development Charge that homeowners will have to pay in new developments? That is part of what we as a Board implemented in June, 2015 with the idea that as the population increased in these areas there will be a need for a new school. There is no current timeline as we first have to demonstrate to the Ministry of Education that we have balanced the enrolment across the neighbouring schools. The Ministry will not consider a request until we balance it out. No specific timeline. We have to get our ducks in a row.

Trustee Burtnik:

Can I just get clarity with the statement that was made, out with the old, in with the new. What area are you referring to?

Angie Bertone:

The Charnwood area in E1 are older homes.

Trustee Burtnik:

So E1 in your mind is the old?

Angie Bertone:

It's a more established neighbourhood.

Option 3 – Areas E1 + E2 (A&B) to Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Superintendent Farrell presented Option 3.

Comments/Input/Feedback:

Alexandria Attree, Loretto:

For this particular option, instead of doing all of E1 and E2, why don't you do it so you include only those students who currently receive a bus. Take all the bussers from E1 and E2 and allow them to bus to Our Lady of Mount Carmel and allow the walkers in E1 and E2 to continue to go to Loretto?

Superintendent Farrell:

Very reasonable suggestion.

Trustee Nieuwesteeg:

As we move through you will see another option that addresses the point that you just addressed.

Option 4 – Areas E1 + E2B to Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Comments/Input/Feedback:

No questions on this scenario

Option 5 – All Out of Boundary Students Attending Loretto Catholic Returned to Home Schools

Comments/Input/Feedback:

Alexandria Attree, Loretto:

The last grandfather option makes sense but you have to consider, my one daughter is in grade 3 and other in grade 1 one would be affected, you would have to add in siblings to the policy. If it is going to keep going up and up and up, it will affect them. My one daughter does not like change, the ones in ELKP will be fine. They will make new friends.

Superintendent Farrell:

We always consider how difficult this is for the children and parents. Any move would include a solid transition plan for students. For students coming into new schools and meeting strangers, the strangers will quickly become friends.

Alexandria Attree, Loretto:

It's not like my children will be affected by this as we live in another area, so my kids may be going to a new school with new friends; but people that live in these 3 areas will probably have friends that will be going to a new school as well. It is an option that, as a parent, I would consider.

Option 6 - Students bussed greater than 1.6 km from Loretto Catholic in areas W1 + E1 + E2 (A&B) to Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Comments/Input/Feedback:

No questions on this scenario

Option 7 – Open Option Discussion

Comments/Input/Feedback:

Alexandria Attree, Loretto:

I think it should be if you are within walking distance you should stay and if you are bussed you go to Our Lady of Mount Carmel. If you are out of bounds and already going to Loretto Catholic you get grandfathered in but if you are new then you go to Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

Trustee Nieuwesteeg:

At the end of the day when you look at all these options it will probably be a hybrid, I think. It won't just be one option. Everything is on the table.

Charles Baker, Loretto:

What is the capacity at Saint Michael Catholic High School? What is the projected enrolment at the high school?

Trustee Nieuwesteeg:

I'll direct that to Mr. Griepsma.

Principal Griepsma:

I'm new to the school, don't have raw numbers in front of me but will bring to the next meeting.

Charles Baker, Loretto:

Okay. I guess why I am asking is because among the 3 schools what is the percentage of students in those 3 schools do Grade 7 and 8 students represent? Is there space there to move them to a middle school. I've only known Loretto and what Loretto offers. I think a lot of the families from Loretto don't know what the other schools offer like the two periods of gym here and music. Why do I think this is the lesser of the schools? If I knew what this school offered I would be more likely to say ok I'll drive the extra five minutes or he can take an extra ten minutes on the bus.

Trustee Nieuwesteeg:

Thank you for that point. There will be a very strong transition plan for any student that moves. Open Houses are an opportunity to see what each school offers. We had St. Joseph, Niagara Falls close and the students there were sent to three different schools. There was a very strong transition plan. We don't want parents to feel that their child will land on the doorstep of a different school and be lost.

Charles Baker, Loretto:

I know my kid will adapt. I think parents need to understand that this is what we have to do in order to have our kids better served. This point needs to be made. That message needs to be addressed. As a parent I understand that.

Trustee Nieuwesteeg:

I like the point that kids will adapt; kids seem to adapt better than the parents do. These kids are very resilient. Parents sweat all the details for all the right reasons but I think once the kids get to their new school they will adapt.

Vice-Principal, Moscato:

Loretto does have instrumental music at the school delivered by an itinerant arts teacher. Music is just not taught in a designated room.

Tanya Fusco, Father Hennepin:

When I was a student this happened to myself and I started at one school and got shipped away in grade 2 and I think I turned out fine. For parents it's a lot harder to adapt.

Alexandria Attree, Loretto:

We actually belong to St. Vincent de Paul. Is there a comparison chart to let all parents know what all schools offer? Is there an ability to know how many times a week students get physed? Is there a chapel? etc. This was an eye opener to me when you compared the schools.

Superintendent Farrell:

Be assured that each of our of our 49 elementary schools is excellent.

Trustee Burtnik:

In every one of our Catholic Elementary schools whether it has 600 students or 100 the students are blessed by the staff that lead it. I would be hesitant to start comparing our schools. As far as the special education and programming you wouldn't know the difference between schools in St. Catharines, Thorold, Grimsby, any school in Niagara Falls. It is all Niagara Catholic. We care about kids first and their Catholic Education.

This facility comparison was to demonstrate the real on the ground impact of the 160% overcapacity at Loretto Catholic. The solution to this problem in your minds shouldn't be don't do it to me, do it to someone else. We are not protecting our own self interest. We are thinking of the broader Catholic Community. Trustee Fera, Trustee Nieuwesteeg and myself, all of us up here, we are charged with finding a solution that will help us balance the enrolment in south Niagara Falls so that when the time comes we will be ready to build a new school where it needs to be and we will fill those spaces and address the enrolment pressures that way. So the goal of this isn't to build a new school. The goal of this is to make sure Loretto can continue to offer what they need to offer. That this school can be closer to the 100% or a little over. A lot of our schools are a little over and that's good news. That's the best thing that can happen to us is to have overcapacity at all of our schools and have portables because everybody wants Catholic Education.

Charles Baker, Loretto:

Would there be room at the high school for the grade 7 and 8 students and would that be the best thing for the children?

Principal Griepsma:

There are two issues with that. First, would there be room at Saint Michael based on current projections and, second, even if space was available is that the best thing to do for the children from a pedagogical or community perspective. We wouldn't even get to step two there because in step one, although there was a major addition done a couple years ago the school itself is essentially full. Projections for the growth in that area are very high for the next five to seven years. This growth will impact the high school and it is highly unlikely that we would be able to absorb these students.

Charles Baker, Loretto:

Maybe take one of the other two schools and make a middle school with the Grade 7 and 8 students. Would a middle school make a difference?

Superintendent Farrell:

That suggestion came up last night as well. One of the things articulated in the Long Term Accommodation Plan is that the preferred model for schools in Niagara Catholic has ELKP-Grade 8 for elementary and Grade 9-12 for secondary. With respect to Saint Michael, the on-the-ground capacity is for 950 students. Projections indicate that two years down the road we will be full. We currently have a lot of people moving into the area which we expect to continue. At the outset of this process, staff did consider moving Grade 7 and 8 students into Saint Michael, but it just won't work.

Charles Baker, Loretto:

There were specialized programs when I went to school. Are there any such programs in this board that might help shift students into other schools?

Superintendent Farrell:

We don't have schools that offer regional programming to attract students in the Arts, for example. We don't subscribe to that model.

Unnamed Speaker - Loretto:

Have Cardinal Newman or St. Vincent de Paul reached capacity? It's easier for me to get my kids there than to my home school.

Superintendent Farrell:

Cardinal Newman is at capacity, St. Vincent de Paul is not. As far as out of bounds, there is a process families go through, each case is considered on an individual basis.

Charles Baker, Loretto:

Financially what is the bottom line between the six options? How different are all 6 options cost wise?

Trustee Nieuwesteeg:

The biggest cost would be transportation.

Superintendent Farrell:

There are some additional costs that could be saved with a reduction in portables. They are costly to maintain due to the time for cleaners to go outside and between the rooms. As well you have a steady stream of students in the warmer weather, from the portables, going to the water fountain and students going inside to use the washrooms. This requires almost a cleaner at Loretto essentially be stationed between the water fountain and the bathroom on the first floor. As well, when we fill the schools up the per pupil cost of running the school is reduced.

Trustee Nieuwesteeg

Any other suggestions you want to make can be sent by email to nfaar@ncdsb.com. Thank you on behalf of committee and choosing Niagara Catholic for your children. Parents like you help make our schools better.

F. COMMENTS/INPUT/FEEDBACK

G. FUTURE ACTION

November 15 - Committee Meeting
 November 28 - Public Meeting at Saint Michael
 December 6 - Committee meeting
 December 14 - Public Meeting followed by Committee meeting
 January 17 - CW Meeting
 January 31 - Board Meeting

H. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Trustee Burtnik
THAT the Ad Hoc Attendance Area Review Committee Meeting for the Saint Michael Catholic and Saint Paul Catholic Elementary and Secondary Family of Schools of November 10, 2016 be adjourned.
CARRIED

This meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m.