



“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 28, 2016
7:00 p.m.**

SAINT MICHAEL CATHOLIC HIGH 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 28, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. at Saint Michael Catholic High 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	Administrator 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.

Fifteen members of the public also attended and signed in to the meeting.

B. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Superintendent Farrell reviewed 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 reviewed 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 students who are currently attending a Niagara Catholic school.

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. The areas of development in south Niagara Falls were reviewed: Garner South Oldfield Estates, and Thundering Waters.

E. ATTENDANCE AREA OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Superintendent Farrell and Kathy Levinski reviewed the Attendance Area Options presented at the Public Meeting on November 9th, 2016 at Loretto Catholic Elementary School and the Public Meeting on November 10th, 2016 at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Elementary School.

Option 1

Status Quo

Option 2

Area E1 to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Elementary School

Option 3

Areas E1 + E2 (A&B) to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Elementary School

Option 4

Areas E1 + E2B to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Elementary School

Option 5

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

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 Catholic Elementary School

Option 7

Open Option Discussion

Superintendent Farrell explained that feedback for each of Options 1-6, and the suggestions received as part of the Open Option Discussion at each of the Public Meetings.

Feedback from the two Public Meetings included:

1. Consideration of options to deal with current and potential out of boundary students to Loretto Catholic.
2. Consideration of including areas other than E1, in Loretto Catholic.
3. Having parents volunteer to have their children attend Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Elementary School who reside within the Loretto Catholic Elementary School boundary and be provided transportation.
4. Building an addition at Loretto Catholic Elementary School to accommodate students.
5. The Committee should not restrict consideration to the options in isolation but should look at combining options to achieve the desired effect on enrolment at the schools.

The feedback was used by Board Staff to prepare additional attendance area options to be considered. Options 8-12 were presented at the Committee Meeting on November 15th, 2016 for consideration.

Option 8

Return Out of Boundary Students from Garner South to Our Lady of Mount Carmel

The Committee determined that the option of returning students to their home school lacked sensitivity for the underlying basis of the application for out of boundary status due to child care needs and other family situations. The Committee also decided that it was not fair to isolate students from one neighbourhood.

Option 9

Students bussed greater than 1.6 km from from E1 & E2B to Our Lady of Mount Carmel

The Committee noted that this option minimized the effect on students in the walking boundary of Loretto Catholic. It was recommended that this option be presented to the public in combination with immediate restriction of out of boundary students. Grandfathering of current Grade 7 students, affected by the boundary change, at Loretto Catholic should be considered.

Option 10

Students bussed greater than 1.6 km from E1 & E2B + return out of boundary students to Our Lady of Mount Carmel

The Committee noted that this option minimized the effect on students in the walking boundary of Loretto Catholic, similar to Option 9. However, it was decided that this option not be considered given that it restricted its focus to students from one neighbourhood and did not give due consideration to the unique circumstances that precipitated the request for out of boundary status to Loretto Catholic.

Option 11

Students bussed greater than 1.6 km from E1 & E2B + return all out of boundary students to home schools

The Committee noted that this option minimized the effect on students in the walking boundary of Loretto Catholic, similar to Option 9. However, it was decided that this option not be considered given that it did not give due consideration to the unique circumstances that precipitated the request for out of boundary status to Loretto Catholic.

Option 12

Build 7 classroom addition to Loretto Catholic

The Committee noted that while this option puts more students in the building it does not address the overcrowding issue. There will continue to be pressure as students try to access the gym, library and washrooms. Parking will continue to be an issue. There would be a reduction to the available square footage of asphalt and grass play space for children.

An application to fund the construction of an addition would require that the Board still address underutilization at both Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Father Hennepin Catholic Elementary Schools. If approved, it is likely that an addition would not be completed for at least 3 years. Enrolment pressure would continue in the interim.

The construction of an addition to Loretto Catholic would delay the need for construction of new school in the Garner South area, which is projected to have sufficient enrolment for its own school, approximately 400 students.

The Committee decided that although this option would reduce the on the ground capacity issues at Loretto Catholic it was not in the best interest of the school over the the long term and was not to be considered.

The Options provided the basis for Options 13-16 to be presented at the next Public Meeting for feedback at Saint Michael Catholic High School on Monday, November 28th, 2016.

F. COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Superintendent Farrell presented the following recommendations by the Committee:

Option 13 – Area of change from Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic to Father Hennepin Catholic Elementary School

No questions or comments on this option. Superintendent Farrell indicated that given families have not moved into the Oldfield Estates area and the transportation efficiencies that could be realized with bus runs that this option should be considered realized with the following options.

Option 14 – Status Quo at Loretto Catholic and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Elementary Schools with no consideration of new out of boundary requests at Loretto Catholic

This option does not result in any boundary changes, grandfathers out of boundary students currently attending Loretto Catholic but does not permit future students from outside the Loretto boundary to attend the school.

Charla Mannell - Loretto:

Regarding the out of boundary students that are grandfathered, would younger siblings who are beginning school be permitted to come to Loretto Catholic?

Superintendent Farrell:

The way this is written there would be no new students admitted from outside the Loretto Catholic boundary. Students who are currently attending the school would be allowed to remain. The younger sibling would be required to attend the home school.

Charla Mannell:

Do you take case by case scenarios because I know there are other students that are out of bounds to Loretto that live in other areas and don't go to their home schools? I'm on the border of Welland and Niagara Falls. I pay taxes to Niagara Falls but my school board is suppose to be Welland, so it doesn't make sense to me, I'm kind of a different case, so that is why I am wondering why do you say home school?

Superintendent Farrell:

We have students attending Loretto Catholic who based on their address should be attending other schools. It is the home address that determines the home school. So if the home address where the family lived was in, the St. Mary area, for example, then the younger sibling would go to St. Mary and the older sibling would be permitted to remain at Loretto Catholic.

There is no dispute that there is overcrowding at Loretto Catholic. With the out of boundary condition families would need to make a decision as to what was more important; to keep their child at Loretto Catholic or to have the siblings together at the home school.

Option 15 – Area of change from Loretto Catholic to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic School (part of E1 and part of E2) and

- **No new out of boundary requests will be considered**
- **Current Grade 7 students will be grandfathered**

This option removes some of the enrolment pressure from Loretto Catholic from within the boundary and removes future enrolment pressure due to out of boundary students.

Charles Baker - Loretto:

Two questions for consideration: Aside from ELKP, is there an obligation for the Board to provide bus service? So if you didn't offer bus service at all to anyone over ELKP, how could that affect enrolment at Loretto? So basically if you walked or could walk, when moving into the Garner South area it is an understanding that you drive your children because they don't qualify for bussing, we provide our own transportation. So that's question one.

My second question deals with child care, or no child care, at Our Lady of Mount Carmel School. The reason, if I am not mistaken, is because there wasn't enough interest by the parents in that school for those services. At what point would you determine whether or not there is enough of a demand to make that available. How much of an effect would that have?

Kathy Levinski:

Thank you for that question. We have been working since the committee was struck on making childcare available at Our Lady of Mount Carmel. In the past, there has not been sufficient interest when we put out the surveys. There is childcare available for Our Lady of Mount Carmel students but it is provided at Father Hennepin and students are transported back and forth. We are working hard to get childcare right in Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Typically, for before and after school care, providers need fifteen children before and fifteen children after school. The number of children needs to be consistent for financial viability. The providers are not for profit organizations.

Charles Baker:

I know that the Board sends out a survey which parents may, or may not, look at. If childcare service was actually offered families would take advantage of it. If you were to

send out the survey demanding a yes or no response, it might help you to get them to give you an answer. So in other words, get them to give you an answer and what percentage is responding?

Kathy Levinski:

That is a good question. Right now we ask parents to sign up on the Region's Onelist, which is a childcare survey. In the past, we have had to provide the results of our surveys to the Ministry of Education. We don't have to do that this year in the same way, but we are going to survey those schools that do not have childcare yet to gauge interest. Regardless, we are working with the Regional Director of Children's Services to get childcare services at Our Lady of Mount Carmel, at least before and after school.

Charles Baker:

My last question is with respect to childcare. Part of the reason we took my son to Loretto was because of the YMCA Daycare which is in the building. Even the childcare providers are quite full. There aren't enough room for the providers which means that they get spread out to different classrooms. If you limit the access to childcare at Loretto Catholic, that will create an overflow that might help force parents to find alternative care for their children at Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The issue with Loretto has to do with the enrolment pressures. It is a very full before and after school program. Are we able to limit the number of classrooms we make available to the childcare providers?

Kathy Levinski:

That is not something we have done in the past.

Superintendent Farrell:

The Board is obligated by our policy to provide transportation to students Grade 1-8 who live more than 1.6 km from the school and are within the school boundary.

Charles Baker:

Okay so you can't say we are not offering bus services to Loretto and if you are going to be bussed we are going to bus you to Our Lady of Mount Carmel?

Superintendent Farrell:

All school boards deal with temporary capacity issues with portables before looking at adjusting attendance areas. These options that we have presented reduce the number of portables at Loretto Catholic but if students live within 1.6 km of the school they would walk. Students who live within the 1.6 km boundary of the school would be entitled to receive transportation to Loretto. If we adjust boundaries, and move students from Loretto Catholic to Our Lady of Mount Carmel they would receive transportation to Our Lady of Mount Carmel. School boundaries and Board policy determine bus transportation. Part of our mandate is to reduce enrolment pressure at Loretto Catholic which would increase the number of students bussed to Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

Charles Baker:

Can you create a dual boundary, like a boundary A and boundary B. So boundary A, this is the walking boundary and boundary B these are your boundaries and if you don't bus to Loretto you bus to Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Basically what I am saying is that we don't bus to Loretto, take out bussing all together, except for the ELKP. Any busses in the current boundary should have students transported to Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

Superintendent Farrell:

Every school within the board does have a walking boundary and a bus boundary. Any movement of the boundary from Loretto Catholic would result in more students who would be bussed to Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

More than 70% of the students who reside within the Loretto Catholic boundary are walkers. Many of the areas that we investigated in looking at potential boundary changes, such as W3/W4 and E3/E4, are within 1.6 km of the school. In these areas students can walk to the school. The Committee has tried to minimize the effect of boundary changes to students within the walking boundary of Loretto Catholic.

Kevin Olesen - Loretto:

Of the 95 of the students of the 610 population are out of boundary, do you have numbers on what percentage of them use the before and after school daycare? I assume that is the number one draw for Loretto students.

Kathy Levinski:

No we do not have that information. The childcare provider is unable to tell us who is out of bounds and who is within the boundaries.

Kevin Olesen:

I appreciate the answer, I guess what I was trying to do is flush out some kind of response as to why they are attending Loretto from out of boundary, excluding childcare reasons

Superintendent Farrell:

We have a process for admission as an out of boundary student that we follow at each of the schools in Niagara Catholic. Every family has a story and every parent acts in what they feel is the best interest of their child, especially at a time when they are moving into the area. Some families have moved in and their children have attended Loretto from out of bounds and their children have had a very good experience at Loretto, despite the overcrowding. There has been good word of mouth in the neighbourhood due to the care and attention that students receive at the school. Other out of boundary parents have moved into the area and have applied to Loretto Catholic because they want their child to have that same experience. Every out of boundary application is thoughtfully considered. There is an out of boundary form that needs to be completed, they meet with the Principal and with the Principal's support it is then provided to Superintendent Lefebvre to have that student approved. There are times when families and children are not admitted. Every family situation is considered individually due to unique circumstances

As far as the 95 students attending Loretto Catholic from out of bounds, it is not fair for us to say the enrolment pressure at the school is due solely to the 95 students. If you recall on the boundary map shown earlier, the school would be near capacity solely with students west of Kalar. There is enrolment pressure at the school from within the boundary.

Charles Baker:

What are the capacity of the schools just outside of these three schools boundaries? Are they at capacity or below? Like if you were to add, like go further than just these three schools, like what are the capacities just further up.

Superintendent Farrell:

The nearest school, Cardinal Newman is full. St Mary is nearly full. As we go further north to St. Vincent dePaul there is some space.

A note on bussing, looking at this proposal, we have no students on the bus for longer than 20 minutes.

Josie CuvIELLO - Loretto:

My children and I are part of area E1. It is nice that you have considered current grade 7 students at Loretto. There was a letter sent home in October about the attendance areas that said you could transfer children to Father Hennepin and Our Lady of Mount Carmel and later on in the future you would have a new school built. I'm just wondering when you are going to consider my children's feelings caused by being brought back and forth between Loretto & Carmel due to the section of growth?

Superintendent Farrell:

Our intention is to minimize the movement of students with boundary changes. Once students are moved to Our Lady of Mount Carmel that would become their home school through to graduation. Our intent is not to return students to Loretto if a new school is built, which would be a few years down the road.

Josie CuvIELLO:

I am just wondering later on, as the population around McLeod and Kalar increases and a new school is built in the future, what children will be filling that school? Will they be students from Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Father Hennepin?

Superintendent Farrell:

Earlier a map was shown that used dots to depict where students lived in south Niagara Falls in the different catchment areas. The map that showed the Garner South area had several dots depicting the anticipated 400 students who will be attending a Niagara Catholic school. Discussions of boundaries are premature but it is reasonable to anticipate that the majority of these students would come from the Garner South development, which is currently in the Our Lady of Mount Carmel boundary.

Trustee Nieuwesteeg:

Some of the parents express that we are doing this because we want to build a new school in Niagara South. We can't just do that. We need to realign the enrolment in all our schools to fill up the vacant seats. Some parents have said that Loretto is a great school and we don't want you to move any of our kids. The reality is, do you want the enrolment up to 800 students at a school only built for 400? There are issues with the washroom facilities and other issues. We need to realign enrolment before we can even make an application to the Ministry for a new school. For us to even suggest that we are going to change boundaries if and when the new school is built, that is so far down the road right now. That can't be part of our committee's mandate right now or the way we think. What we are here for now is to reduce the enrolment pressure at Loretto Catholic. I think all of you parents understand that.

Josie CuvIELLO:

I'm not disagreeing with that. I just disagree that my children have to go to another school after they have been at Loretto for the last seven years.

Trustee Nieuwesteeg:

I completely understand what you are saying. One of the things I have said many times is that this is not an easy thing for us to do. I thank all of you parents as this is a difficult process to go through. You are emotionally involved and we get that. We don't like to uproot children and move them to different schools, that is not what we do as a school board; however, we do realize that we have some difficult decisions to make, we make them because they are the right thing to do.

Every student in our school board has a story. One thing that we pride ourselves on is that we do look at each child. A lot of these kids that have been given out of boundary status are because their grandmother lives close to the school and they provide day care. Those are the types of things we are not going to overlook. In the broader picture, we need to look the 600 plus kids at Loretto who are in a school that was built for less than 400. We are not servicing these kids and the parents of our children with such an overcrowded situation. We know that but we want to do it in a very humane, very sensitive way and that is all we are trying to accomplish right now.

Superintendent Farrell:

Any movement of students would be based on a strong transition plan involving principals and teachers.

Charles Baker

This is more of a comment, I think. My son is in grade 2 and has difficulty with transitions. My wife and I have been extremely surprised at how well he transitioned in going from the school to Y daycare and being bussed to the Boys and Girls Club. He's adjusted to being with different people and different teachers. As a parent of a child with autism, I'm more worried than my kid is. Our kids will probably transition a lot better than we think they will. There are supports in all of the schools, more gym time, more room, and more availability to washrooms. I need to look at that; he has done very well. We need to give our kids more credit.

Trustee Fera:

There is a growing concern with the number of portables at Loretto and I'm sure that the parents that are here tonight if you have a child in a portable at Loretto you must be concerned about it. These children have to line up to go to bathroom, half their recess is probably gone by the time they get there. Building a new school in the south end will alleviate the growing population and will get rid of those portable classrooms. All students should be and will be housed in the main building. The only possible way to receive funds for a new school from the Ministry of Education is to fill up the empty classrooms at Our Lady of Mount Carmel. It's as simple as that. I know a lot of parents are upset, but we are in a tough situation here and have to make these decisions.

I'll just give you an example. When I was Principal, years ago at Cardinal Newman School, we had 10 portables at that time. The Ministry does not give you funds for the projected number of students. They give you funds for the actual number that you have. A year or two down the road, when a school goes from 400 to 600 students we are left no option but to bring in portables. So when I was Principal at Cardinal Newman, in order to alleviate the enrolment pressure and reduce our portables, the Board took 150 students from the school and had them attend Notre Dame. That was the solution to that problem. This would not be the first time that we have had to move students from one school to another. I hope you can understand that.

Trustee Nieuwesteeg:

For those of you not familiar with Father Hennepin and Our Lady of Mount Carmel, they are two wonderful school facilities. Our Lady of Mount Carmel has two gymnasiums. There are a lot of pluses to that school community as well as the Father Hennepin school community. It is not a situation where children are being moved from Loretto to a substandard facility; that is not at all the case. When your children ultimately have to be moved we want you to know they will be well cared for and that there will be a very, very strong transition plan in place. As I mentioned at an earlier meeting, when we closed St. Joseph School in Niagara Falls, the kids from there went to either St. Mary, Father Hennepin or St. Patrick. Three different school communities. There was a welcome ceremony for students that was part of a very, very strong transition plan. I think it went very smooth and this is coming from a school that at one time we actually had added a gymnasium onto. Ten years later because of the shifting enrolment we had to close the school. That's demographics. That's what we are dealing with. I want you to understand that for any students that may be affected by boundary changes that there will be a very strong transition plan put in place so that your children will feel welcome and secure in their new school environment. I want you to know they are going to facilities in our board that we are very proud of.

Option 16 – Area of change from Loretto Catholic to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic School (part of W1/part of E1 & part of E2) and

- **No new out of boundary requests will be considered**
- **Current Grade 7 students will be grandfathered**

This option provides greater relief due to enrolment pressure at Loretto Catholic from within the existing boundary and removes future enrolment pressure due to out of boundary students.

No questions or comments on this option.

G. OTHER

Berta Nasic - Loretto:

Just a little background, we are from the Garner South area, and when we built our home the builder showed us Loretto and the public school and where a new school would be built. They never even showed us Our Lady of Mount Carmel or told us that was the school the children should attend. So Loretto was the school we thought our children would be going to from day one. Have you spoken to the builder so that when buyers come to the area they will know about Carmel? I think that is a big issue.

Kathy Levinski:

Thank you, I have spoken with the developer and I will certainly speak to the developer again.

Berta Nasic:

Just one more thing. It doesn't affect me but the whole no grandfathering of siblings, any parent would agree that it's not beneficial for them to have the siblings continue at Loretto.

Superintendent Farrell:

The options we have presented attempt to address enrolment pressure at Loretto Catholic. We have heard concerns from out of bounds families about not permitting their children to continue at the school. What we have presented requires that parents/families make the decision as to what is more important to their family, to have their child continue at Loretto or to have all the siblings together at Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

Trustee Nieuwesteeg:

The whole issue of grandfathering hasn't been finalized. We haven't finalized anything yet. Nothing has been decided. We have another Public Meeting coming up on December 14th. We are sensitive to the needs of parents who may have two children at two different schools, such as parent teacher interviews. When the final recommendation comes down please rest assured all those things will have been taken into consideration.

Sandra Elia - Loretto:

Now there are 16 options? Or are just the new options up for grabs?

Superintendent Farrell:

Staff started with six that were brought to the Committee and discussed. The initial six options were then presented at the two Public Meetings. Staff incorporated the feedback from these meetings and then designed four additional options (Options 8-12) for the

Committee. The Committee revised these options and recommended that Options 13-16 be presented for Public Input at tonight's meeting. We are down to these four options.

Sandra Elia:

I have one child left going into Grade 8 next year, so this it seems like we are okay, like this won't affect me.

Superintendent Farrell:

No final decision has been made yet but two of Options 15 and 16, that changes the Loretto Catholic boundaries, permit current Grade 7 students remain.

Angela Cacerb:

I don't understand. If we recognize that there is an enrolment problem and the status quo doesn't address the issue, why suggest it as an option?

Superintendent Farrell:

Status quo is an option in terms of the physical boundaries but Option 14 would through board motion would not permit students attend Loretto Catholic from out of bounds.

Angela Cacerb:

I don't think it shouldn't be considered an option anymore.

Trustee Nieuwesteeg:

It was presented as an option tonight because of input we received from the public at previous meetings. It is something we have to present.

Josie CuvIELLO - Loretto:

Just wondering, when Saint Michael Catholic High School moved here, I had one sister in Grade 9 going into Gr 10 and they allowed her to continue to go here and then changed the boundaries. Just wondering if that is it still an option that if children are here now stay?

Superintendent Farrell:

The options presented tonight include Students in Grade 7 staying so they could graduate at Loretto Catholic. In options 15 and 16 current Grade 7 students would be grandfathered. Students below Grade 7 would be required to attend Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

Josie CuvIELLO:

So is Option 14 still on the table for consideration?

Superintendent Farrell:

We are taking all of the input from tonight and discussing it at the next Committee Meeting on December 6th. The Committee will then make recommendations for the next Public Meeting on December 14th for input.

Trustee Nieuwesteeg:

Committee Meetings are open to the public. If you have other input or anything further to tonight's meeting you can email us at NFAAR@ncdsb.com. The plan is to bring our recommendation to the Board in January to make a decision to take effect September, 2017.

Jim Karagiannis - Loretto:

At best, with all your options we are still overpopulated at Loretto.

Superintendent Farrell:

Yes. We will still have enrolment pressure at Loretto Catholic with all the options. The school would be full today if we use the current boundary and included everything west of Kalar Road. If we used Kalar Road as a boundary line and had students move to Our Lady of Mount Carmel we would simply be moving students from portables at Loretto to portables at Our Lady of Mount Carmel. From a long term perspective, we anticipate 400 students will be attending Niagara Catholic schools from Garner South. That area is projected to be able to sustain its own school.

Jim Karagiannis:

So the portables will still be there.

Superintendent Farrell:

Portables will still be there in the interim until we are able to longer term deal with the enrolment issues.

Jim Karagiannis - Loretto:

You talk about the other schools, just past Cardinal Newman we have St. Vincent de Paul. How is the population there?

Superintendent Farrell:

It has space.

Jim Karagiannis:

It has space so move them there.

Superintendent Farrell:

The Terms of Reference, approved by the Board this past June, requires that the Committee focus on equalizing enrolment using the three schools identified.

Trustee Nieuwesteeg:

We try to minimize disruption to school communities, as much as possible; so we don't want to disrupt seven or eight school communities due to an issue at one. In a perfect world, all 24000 students in Niagara Catholic we would say, 300 in this school and, 300 in that school. Understand that what we try to do as a committee is to minimize disruption. I agree with your point 100%. We are not going to eliminate the overcrowding at Loretto but if we can even the flow of students across the south Niagara schools, then and only then, will the Ministry consider funding for a new school in the South End. Until we demonstrate to the Ministry that we are trying to maximize capacity at our schools in the southern Niagara Falls the Ministry won't even consider it.

By the way, this is not the primary function of this committee. Our primary function is to try to alleviate the pressure at Loretto Catholic and we are doing that to our utmost best. Please understand that we are trying. With the help of parents like yourselves we are coming up with more options.

Charles Baker:

What is restricting you from looking at the other schools? No matter what option you look at by 2020 you are over capacity at all schools.

Superintendent Farrell:

What is restricting us here are the Terms of Reference set by the Board. The Committee was asked to consider these three schools and try to do the best you can to equalize enrolment.

Charles Baker:

Can you go back to Board and ask them to change the mandate to increase the area?

Superintendent Farrell:

In restricting our focus to these three schools, we keep students together when they come here to Saint Michael. Each of the schools in the Review are associated with this high school. If we include schools in north Niagara Falls some students might need to attend a different high school. With these three schools we don't end up with additional transition issues where you have students growing up with one set of friends for ten years then going off to a different high school. Niagara Catholic is not unique in facing challenges due to declining enrolment.

Charles Baker:

I don't know if you can ask this question, but how many of the families currently within this community are actively practicing the Catholic faith. I'm not Catholic and so in terms of where my kid goes it doesn't so much matter. I don't think it matters where my child will go for high school. I am from Toronto and we could choose which of the five high schools we wanted to go to. Don't know if that would alleviate or even make it an option.

Superintendent Farrell:

We believe in Catholic Education and we hope that families that are sending our children to us feel the same and are going to be committed and continue with Niagara Catholic. Loretto has been very successful with that to the point of over capacity. We are trying to do the best we can with the mandate that was provided to us.

Jim Karagiannis:

Behind Garner Road, the old sugar plant, across Lundy's Lane, where are students going to go?

Superintendent Farrell:

Cardinal Newman is their home school.

Jim Karagiannis:

Do you guys take care of high schools? Are we addressing St. Michael?

Superintendent Farrell:

Our long term plan is on our board website for you to look at. We are projecting that St. Michael's will be full in the future, but we not to the point of over capacity.

Jim Karagiannis:

All those kids will be going to one high school.

Ken Griepsma:

Cardinal Newman is associated with Saint Paul. Students attending Cardinal Newman will be going to Saint Paul.

Trustee Nieuwesteeg:

It's a problem. We knew when we we built Saint Michael and needed portables almost immediately, as Trustee Fera stated, it's the way the Ministry funds school boards. We monitor the enrolment and do the best we can with the Ministry Funding. The kids from the south schools will be well accommodated at Saint Michael.

H. FUTURE ACTION

Superintendent Farrell outlined upcoming meeting dates and highlighted the upcoming Public Meeting on December 14th dedicated to receiving public input. Committee Meetings are also open for the public to attend on December 6th and following the Public Meeting on December 14th, 2016.

I. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Trustee Nieuwesteeg

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 28, 2016 be adjourned.

CARRIED

This meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.