

YORK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Report To: Board of Trustees
Report From: Director of Education
Date: February 16, 2010
Re: **Thornhill (Markham) Accommodation Review
(St. Anthony, St. Michael and St. René Goupil-St. Luke)**

Executive Summary:

At the October 7, 2008 Board meeting, Trustees approved a recommendation to initiate an Accommodation Review process for the Thornhill (Markham) community of schools which included St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School, St. Michael Catholic Academy and St. René Goupil-St. Luke Catholic Elementary School.

On December 11, 2008 the Thornhill Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) was fully constituted. The ARC included parents, principals, teachers, non-teaching staff and parish representatives from all three schools. Their task was to develop accommodation solutions to address various enrolment and facility issues within the Thornhill Markham area. Specifically the ARC's School Valuation Report identifies their mandate as:

The Mandate of the ARC was to review the current situation in Thornhill (which included declining enrolment and two prohibitive to repair faculties) and develop an accommodation option which would ensure suitable and equitable learning environments for all students.

The Thornhill Accommodation Review Committee met over a 7 month period, and held 14 working meetings and 4 public community meetings. On June 19, 2009 two reports were submitted to the Director of Education, the ARC's School Valuation Report and a School Valuation Report – Minority Report. Both reports outline the ARC process and specific recommendations for the Board to consider regarding accommodation and program issues in the Thornhill Markham community.

This report provides an overview of the Thornhill Accommodation review process and evaluates the various recommendations from stakeholders. This report also provides specific recommendations from a staff perspective after consideration of the data and input received in accordance with the Board's accommodation principles.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The proposed staff recommendations are as follows:

1. That a replacement school of 425-450 pupil places be approved for St. Michael Catholic Academy.

2. That the new St. Michael Catholic Academy school have a target opening date of no later than September 2012, (see report for timing rationale).
3. That St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School undergo renovations to lower the schools FCI consistent with Ministry PTR guidelines, the extent of which will be determined subject to funding availability, with a phase one target of the summer of 2011.
4. That the budget for St. Anthony renovations be determined once appropriate cost estimates are available for the proposed replacement school.
5. That subject to a separate consultation process with PACE parents, the P.A.C.E Program currently at St. Anthony C.E.S. be relocated to an alternate location.
6. That St. René Goupil-St. Luke C.E.S be recommended to the Ministry of Education as a YEAR 2 candidate for the Early Learning Program (Full Time Kindergarten) and consideration will be given to enhanced programming.
7. That any student residing within the Thornhill (Markham) Area be given first priority to enrolment in the ARTS program at St. Michael Catholic Academy via an early registration process.

Background:

On October 7, 2008 Trustees approved a recommendation to initiate an Accommodation Review process for the Thornhill (Markham) community of schools. At that time the purpose of the accommodation review was described as:

“Conducting an Accommodation Review in Thornhill Markham will allow the Board and the community to explore alternatives to enhancing the long term learning environment for students in the area.”

BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

From the Regular Board Meeting of Tuesday, October 7th, 2008

“Trustees approved a recommendation to initiate an Accommodation Review process for the Thornhill (Markham) area, involving the following elementary schools: St. Anthony, St. Rene Goupil-St. Luke and St. Michael Catholic Academy. The identification of a Review Area does not imply that the schools are necessarily being considered for closure or consolidation. Various options will be considered in order to ensure an ongoing suitable and equitable range of learning opportunities for students in the Review area. The process will invite public participation and take at least one year to complete, in accordance with Ministry guidelines and Board Policy. It is anticipated that any accommodation changes resulting from the ARC (Accommodation Review Committee) would begin to be implemented in the 2010-11 school year – to allow adequate time to complete the process, including extensive consultation and any transitional planning that may be required. ARC information materials, along with any pertinent updates, will be posted on the Board website at www.ycdsb.ca”

The Thornhill Accommodation Review Committee (ARC), which included parents, principals, teachers, non-teaching staff and parish representatives from all three schools, was fully constituted on December 11, 2008. The mandate of the ARC was to review the current situation in Thornhill and develop an accommodation option which would ensure suitable and equitable learning environments for all students, while consistently being aware of best education practices.

The result of the 7 month long consultation process, consisting of 14 working meetings and 4 public community meetings, is the Thornhill Elementary Schools Accommodation Review Committee School Valuation Report dated June 19, 2009. The report itself is condensed into 25 pages, and summarizes the process, the review; analysis of options, the development of a recommendation, and additional considerations the Committee recommends the Board review. The report represents the views of the majority of the 21 voting members (based on a two-thirds majority).

The appendices of the Thornhill Elementary Schools Accommodation Review Committee School Valuation Report include all information, data, and presentations provided to the ARC, as well as all questions received and responded to by the ARC throughout the process. The intent of providing this full appendix is to ensure transparency through the decision making process and to provide all interested parties with the complete information that the ARC considered in developing the recommendation.

In addition to the Thornhill ARC's School Valuation Report, an additional report has been provided through the School Valuation Report - Minority Report. This report proposes alternative recommendations and was authored by two members of the Thornhill ARC representing the St. Anthony community. It should be noted that the balance of the Thornhill ARC members did not have an opportunity to review and provide input to the Minority Report.

Background:

The Accommodation Review Process:

The Ministry of Education Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines, released October 31, 2006, outlined the requirements for all school boards' *Accommodation Review Policy*. The purpose of the guidelines is to provide direction to school boards to ensure that when a school board is making decisions regarding the future of a school or schools, that that decision is made with the full involvement of an informed local community, taking into consideration a variety of factors where the success of the student is paramount. The guidelines identify a number of specific requirements such as a School Valuation Framework, a minimum of 4 public meetings and a prescribed minimum timeline which are to be reflected in a board's respective policy.

On April 9, 2008 the Ministry of Education provided "planning approval" for the Thornhill (Markham) review area in the amount of \$9,179,522 to address the facility conditions for students attending St. Anthony C.E.S and St. Michael Catholic Academy. On December 4, 2008, the Ministry of Education announced top-up funding to accommodate the future implementation of Full Day Learning for Four- and Five-year olds (FD45), and a capital funding benchmark increase of 7 per cent to reflect higher construction costs including the implementation of green standards. This top-up resulted in a total project budget of \$10,844,994. This potential funding was subject to the Board completing a Pupil Accommodation Review and final Ministry of Education approval of the resulting accommodation solution.

On June 17, 2008 the Board approved Pupil Accommodation Review Policy 713 which outlines the purpose of a Pupil Accommodation Review as:

“The York Catholic District School Board recognizes its responsibility to provide effective and appropriate accommodation for the pupils of the Board. In keeping with this obligation, the Board, staff and members of our Catholic Learning Community must consistently be aware of best education practices, assess the effectiveness of current situations, and make appropriate decisions to ensure suitable and equitable learning environments for all students. There may be times when it is appropriate to consider consolidation of schools or programs, closure of a school(s) or relocation of a major program in order to provide an optimum learning opportunity.”

On October 7, 2008 Trustees approved a recommendation to initiate an Accommodation Review process for the Thornhill (Markham) area, involving St. Anthony C.E.S, St. Michael CA, and St. René Goupil-St. Luke C.E.S.

Consistent with Board Policy 713, the ARC held 4 public meetings and 14 working meetings, as well as taking a school tour, between November 2008 and June 2009. The committee was made up of the principal, one teaching staff, one non-teaching staff, and three parents (including the Catholic school council chair) from each affected school, as well as a Parish representative from both of the local Parishes. The committee was chaired by Patricia Preston, Associate Director Leading Learners, and the ARC Secretary was Andy DiSebastiano, Superintendent of Education for the Thornhill (Markham) area. An invitation was also extended to the municipal councilor and the Markham Board of Trade, who chose not to participate in the process. By unanimous vote the ARC co-opted area Trustee, Carol Cotton and to assist the ARC throughout the process were Board staff and a facilitator from Watson and Associates.

The ARC was constituted by 21 voting members and 2 non-voting. From the period commencing November 20, 2008 to June 4, 2009, the ARC members worked together reviewing data, discussing issues, evaluating existing schools, considering of public input and critiquing options.

The final product of their work is reflected in the School Valuation Report and its appendices. The Thornhill ARC's School Valuation Report recommendations were supported by a vote of 15-4 with 19 of the 21 ARC voting members present.

In addition to the ARC's report, an additional report has been provided through a Minority Report. This report proposes alternative recommendations for Trustee consideration and was authored by two members of the Thornhill ARC representing the St. Anthony community. It should be noted that since the report was submitted directly to the ARC secretary after the ARC's final meeting, the balance of the ARC members did not have an opportunity to review and provide input to the Minority Report.

Both the ARC report and Minority report were received on June 19, 2009.

As outlined in the ARC and Minority Reports, the Mandate of the ARC was to study the existing situation in Thornhill, and given the potential availability of funding, develop a recommended accommodation option that would best serve the students of Thornhill, ensuring a suitable and equitable learning environment for all. The details regarding the public meetings, resources available to the Committee and the role of community input are outlined within the School Valuation and Minority Reports which are attached as an appendix to this report. The entire ARC back up material has been provided on a CD.

The flow chart in Appendix I illustrates the timing and process followed starting with the first public meeting in February 2009.

Ministry of Education Approval Process

As previously highlighted there is a potential 10.8 Million dollars for the Thornhill Markham area to address the Prohibitive to Repair status of St. Michael Academy and St. Anthony. The original “Planning Approval” specified the requirement for an Accommodation Review and for the Board to provide a final accommodation solution to the Ministry before final “Funding Approval” would be awarded.

At various times throughout the Accommodation Review process there has been some dialogue with the Ministry of Education officials to clarify parameters and considerations for approval of accommodation solutions. The final recommendation of this staff report is consistent with the current Ministry position on the appropriate application of the potential funding.

Prohibitive to Repair Status:

As previously indicated St. Anthony and St. Michael Academy are both schools which have been identified as Prohibitive to Repair by the Ministry of Education. This Prohibitive to Repair status is a significant component of the overall accommodation options available to the Board, and therefore it is important to have a full understanding of the term and its implications. The following definition of Prohibitive to Repair (PTR) was provided to the ARC:

Designation attached to a building when the FCI (Facility Condition Index) is equal to or greater than 65%. A high FCI is indicative of the cost of repairs to the building compared to the cost to rebuild the facility. The 65% FCI threshold that results in the designation of a school as PTR was set by the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Education's Prohibitive to Repair Program evaluates schools based on the replacement cost of individual components of a building. The replacement costs of those components are then compared to an estimated cost of a new facility, based on Ministry of Education benchmarks. It is important to understand that the PTR costs reflect the cost of specific building “components” and do not include possible additional work that may be required to access that component or resulting Ontario Building Code requirements that may result in accessing certain components. As such the costs identified to calculate a school's Facility Condition Index (FCI) *should not* be considered the sole costs for the repair of individual building components.

Considerations:

The following criteria were developed with the Thornhill ARC and should be used in evaluating any option under consideration.

Board Criteria

Enhancement of Programs/Facilities	<i>Enhancements of programs through updated facilities (i.e., gym, library, science labs, etc.)</i>
School Utilization	<i>There must be minimum 85% utilization over a 10 year period for all schools. (Enrolment / Capacity = % Utilization)</i>
Site Characteristics	<i>Size, Shape, Location</i>
Transportation	<i>Minimize unnecessary busing/Maximize walking distance</i>
Funding Allocation	<i>Scenario must fit within funding allocation (budget)</i>
New Construction Pupil Places	<i>New schools are generally built with 550-600 pupil places, Additions are generally built in 2's (ie. 2 rooms of 23 pupil places). There are a maximum of 630 new pupil places</i>
Business Case submission to the Ministry of Education	<i>Final submission proposed to the Ministry of Education must be logical and must meet the intent of the funding (address the PTR needs of the community).</i>

In addition to the above noted criteria the Board has previously approved the following Accommodation Management Principles:

Basic:

Ensure viable school organizations and programs

Minimize the use of portable accommodation (both number and duration)

Minimize the use of pupil transportation

Supplemental:

Support for established communities (before new communities)

The provision of new pupil places will be considered in conjunction with any surplus capacity that exists within adjacent existing facilities

Enrolment :

Funding from the Ministry of Education anticipates the future roll out of the Full Day 4 and 5 year old program therefore all enrolment numbers within the analysis section of this report are based on **Nominal Enrolment**.

Nominal enrolment is the total number of actual students registered in the school, and no discount is made for those students who do not spend the entire day at the school (i.e. JK/SK students typically counted as ½).

The Thornhill (Markham) community has been experiencing a decline in enrolment for some time. St. Anthony has been experiencing a decline since 2005, and St. René-Goupil-St. Luke has continued to decline despite the consolidation of the two schools in 2003. The enrolment at St. Michael remains steady due to the Arts program. In 1998 St. Michael Academy for the Arts was established as an attempt to reduce the decline of enrolment within the Thornhill (Markham) community.

Declining enrolment is not unique to the Thornhill area. Provincially elementary school enrolment peaked in 2002/2003 and since that time many school boards across the province are dealing with the effects of declining enrolment.

The following chart illustrates the projected enrolment for the Thornhill Markham community, given the current schools, program offerings and known development (or redevelopment) plans.

Enrolment Projections:

Table 1: Current Situation – 2008 Nominal Enrolment Projections

School	2008 CAP	NOMINAL October 31 Enrolment																					
		Actual		% Util		2009		% Util		2010		% Util		2011		% Util		2012		% Util		2013	
St. Anthony Regular Track		179	53%	174	52%	172	51%	163	48%	148	44%	146	43%										
St. Anthony PACE		75	22%	77	23%	76	23%	78	23%	77	23%	76	23%										
St. Anthony	337	254	75%	251	74%	248	74%	241	72%	225	67%	222	66%										
St. Michael Academy		406	174%	401	172%	395	170%	392	168%	391	168%	386	166%										
St. Michael Academy	233	406	174%	401	172%	395	170%	392	168%	391	168%	386	166%										
St. René-St. Luke		187	85%	175	80%	170	78%	167	76%	177	81%	199	91%										
St. René-St. Luke	219	187	85%	175	80%	170	78%	167	76%	177	81%	199	91%										
Total	789	847	107%	827	105%	813	103%	800	101%	793	101%	807	102%										

Table 2: Historical Nominal Enrolment Projections

School	2009 CAP	Actual NOMINAL October 31 Enrolment																					
		2003		% Util		2004		% Util		2005		% Util		2006		% Util		2007		% Util		2008	
St. Anthony Regular Track		266	79%	266	79%	243	72%	220	65%	214	64%	179	53%										
St. Anthony PACE		66	20%	67	20%	72	21%	79	23%	80	24%	75	22%										
St. Anthony	337	332	99%	333	99%	315	93%	299	89%	294	87%	254	75%										
St. Michael Academy		424	182%	393	169%	416	179%	424	182%	410	176%	406	174%										
St. Michael Academy	233	424	182%	393	169%	416	179%	424	182%	410	176%	406	174%										
St. René-St. Luke		262	120%	255	116%	229	105%	217	99%	201	92%	187	85%										
St. René-St. Luke	219	262	120%	255	116%	229	105%	217	99%	201	92%	187	85%										
Total	789	1018	129%	981	124%	960	122%	940	119%	905	115%	847	107%										

Analysis:

In total, the ARC developed 22 options including variations. An overview of the recommendations of the ARC, the Minority Report and Administration's recommendation is provided below.

ARC Recommendations:

The following summarizes the recommendation of the ARC School Valuation Report:

St. Anthony - To be consolidated with St. Rene Goupil – St. Luke

- Boundary to be merged with St. Rene Goupil- St. Luke

St. Michael - To be rebuilt with a capacity of 443, Arts program only

- Boundary to remain as is

St. René Goupil-St. Luke – (8) additional classroom spaces required, Regular Track only

- Boundary to be merged with St. Anthony

PACE Program – To be relocated from the Thornhill Community – Location to be determined by the Board.

Impact of ARC Recommendations:

• **Enrolment:**

St. Michael – In 2010, the school would be operating at 89% utilization with a nominal enrolment of 395 students, slightly decreasing to 386 nominal students (87% utilization) by 2013 and increasing to 414 nominal students in 2018 (93% utilization). Given that the school offers a regional program, there is a greater opportunity with this school to “self regulate” enrolment by increasing the number of TCH19 students accepted into the ARTS program.

St. René Goupil-St. Luke – With the inclusion of the St. Anthony area students, in 2010, the school would be operating at 85% utilization with a nominal enrolment of 342 students. The population would increase slightly by 2013 to include 345 nominal students (86% utilization). Future enrolment is expected to increase to 399 nominal students (99% utilization) in 2018.

PACE – The ARC recommendation suggests the relocation of the PACE program to a school within Richmond Hill. Currently over 90% of students within the program live outside of Thornhill, the majority of which reside in Richmond Hill.

• **Program**

a. St. Anthony- St. Rene Goupil- St. Luke

i. Class sizes and overall population provides greater opportunities for program delivery and extra curricular activities.

ii. Sustainable school population.

b. St. Michael - Size of facility for St. Michael matched to population.

i. ARTS program optimal size 425 to 445 pupils

ii. There may be some opportunities to consider the ARTS program in construction and design of the new school (i.e. multiple stage entrances)

- **Facility**
 - a. Recommendation is consistent with the Ministry of Education PTR funding grant by addressing the PTR status at both schools (replacement and consolidation).
 - b. Construction costs are estimated within budget.
 - c. Removes two PTR schools from the Board's facility inventory
 - d. Removes a YCDSB school from Ward 1
- **Site**
 - a. Replacement school at the existing St. Michael site
 - i. No other site alternatives are available
 - ii. Opportunity for campus, and integration with other uses (church, park, public school)
 - iii. Significant road frontage to accommodate multiple entrances (separate bus and car traffic)
- **Advantages:**
 - The combined school populations of St. Anthony and St. René Goupil-St. Luke, will assist in minimizing the number of split grades and provide greater extracurricular opportunities for students. (clubs, trips, teams, etc.)
 - The proposed capacities for St. Michael (443) and St. René Goupil-St. Luke (403) provide appropriate accommodation to the schools' population.
 - The St. Michael Academy site is more conducive for the construction of a larger focus school.
 - Larger overall site size compared to St. Anthony (4.9 vs 4.0)
 - Larger frontage to accommodate multiple driveways and loops.
 - Part of a campus which includes Good Shepard Catholic Church, German Mills Public School and a municipal park
 - Proximity to public transit and arterial road (Leslie)
 - Addresses the current PTR status of the two schools
 - Relocates the PACE program to a school closer to the majority of the students, therefore reducing bus ride times and transportation costs for the program.
 - Estimated cost is consistent with Ministry's "planning approval" funding.
- **Disadvantages:**
 - Elimination of a Catholic school in Thornhill, Markham Ward 1
 - Disruption to the St. Anthony community

Minority Report Recommendations:

The following summarizes the recommendation of the Minority report:

- St. Anthony** - Repair existing facility to remove PTR status
- Maintain existing PACE program
- Add a Day Care
- Add enhanced before and after school programs
- Additional programming such as science and math, as well as a laptop program
- St. Michael** - To be rebuilt with a capacity of 443, Arts program only
- Boundary to remain as is
- St. René Goupil-St. Luke** – Status quo from a building facility perspective

- Additional programming such as science and math

Impact of Minority Report Recommendations:

- **Enrolment:**

Note: Enrolment projections were not included in the “Minority Report”. Therefore staff has interpreted the potential impact on enrolment.

St. Anthony - The Minority report recommends program enhancements for St. Anthony as well as “Day Care added”. Surrounding Catholic elementary schools are also underutilized and there is no data to support that the implementation of these recommendations would result in an increase in enrolment. A recent example of this is the school community of Blessed John XXIII where an attempt to establish a day care program within the school failed to attract a sufficient number of children to run the program.

St. Michael – The ARC and Minority reports are consistent in any changes to St. Michael and therefore enrolment is anticipated to be the same as outlined above and illustrated in Table 1.

St. René Goupil-St. Luke – The Minority report recommends program enhancements for St. Rene Goupil–St. Luke. Unlike the regional arts program, these are local programs. There may be some moderate increase in enrolment at St. René Goupil – St. Luke from drawing students from surrounding, underutilized, Catholic schools. There is no quantitative data to estimate the potential increase from the public school board, as identified in the minority report; however the Catholic admission requirements may restrict the majority of the population.

As illustrated in Table 1 St. Rene Goupil is currently operating at 187 students and is projected to decrease slightly, however remain slightly under capacity for the remainder of the forecast period.

PACE – The Minority report recommends maintaining the PACE program at St. Anthony. As previously identified the majority of students enrolled in the program live within Richmond Hill. Of the 75 students in the program, 3 live within St. Anthony’s boundary. This arrangement contributes to longer ride times and less efficient transportation to support the program and does not take advantage of surplus space in closer proximity to the majority of the students.

- **Program**

- a. St. Anthony

- i. Maintaining the existing PACE program will not improve efficiencies in transportation, or reduce ride times for students participating in the PACE program.
- ii. Enhanced before and after school programs
 - 1. There are a number of schools with full daycare facilities and before and after care programs which continue to struggle with declining enrolment. (i.e. Blessed John XXIII, Christ the King).

- 2. The Ministry of Education has identified a 6 year phase-in (2010-2016) for the Early Learning Program and Before and After School programs for all schools.
 - iii. Enhanced education program (Science, Math, Laptop)
 - 1. These are local specialized programs and therefore are not likely to draw from the greater York Region student population vs. regional programs.
 - 2. There is no quantitative data to support any substantial increase in enrolment to the area unless a Regional focus program is adopted.
 - iv. By maintaining the two smaller school populations of St. Rene Goupil-St. Luke and St. Anthony
 - 1. Extra circular and program opportunities for students may continue to be restricted.
 - 2. Majority of students may need to be accommodated in combined grade classrooms.
 - b. St. Michael - Size of facility for St. Michael matched to population.
 - i. ARTS program optimal size 425 to 445 pupils
 - ii. There may be some opportunities to consider the ARTS program in construction and design (i.e. multiple stage entrances)
- Facility
 - a. Recommendation is consistent with the Ministry of Education PTR funding grant by addressing the PTR status at both schools (replacement and renovation)
 - b. Construction costs estimated within the Minority report are based on the 2003 RECAPP report which are identified as High and Urgent needs. The RECAPP report does not take into consideration additional costs required due to Ontario Building Code requirements or complications due to other components of the building. Therefore the costs identified in the report do not accurately reflect the actual funding required.
 - c. Removes one PTR school (St. Michael) from the Board's facility inventory
 - d. Maintains one older school (St. Anthony) in Board's facility inventory
- Site
 - a. Renovating the existing St. Anthony School
 - i. Provides a minimal opportunity to address access, parking and circulation issues at the school
 - b. Replacement school at the existing St. Michael site
 - i. No other site alternatives
 - ii. Opportunity for campus, and integration with other uses (church, park, public school)
 - iii. Significant road frontage to accommodate multiple entrances (separate bus and car traffic)
- **Advantages:**
 - The proposed capacity for St. Michael Academy (443) provides appropriate accommodation to the school's population.
 - The St. Michael site is more conducive for the construction of a larger focus school.
 - o Larger overall site size compared to St. Anthony (4.9 vs. 4.0)
 - o Larger frontage to accommodate multiple driveways and loops.
 - o Part of a campus which includes Good Shepard Catholic Church, German Mills Public School and a municipal park
 - o Proximity to public transit and arterial road (Leslie)

- Minimizes disruption to the community by maintaining two small community schools for St. Anthony and St. Rene Goupil – St. Luke.
- Addresses the PTR needs of both St. Anthony (partial) and St. Michael Academy (replacement)
- **Disadvantages:**
 - Does not address the larger number of combined grade classes and potential reduced opportunities for students.
 - Maintains 2 smaller schools and associated administrative costs.
 - Ongoing renewal costs of aging facility (St. Anthony)
 - Additional program offerings would require increased resources, with little to no positive impact on enrolment.
 - Does not relocate the PACE program to a school closer to the majority of the students, therefore not reducing bus ride times and transportation costs for the program.
 - Estimated cost under estimates funding required.

Staff Report:

In the development of staff recommendations consideration was given to the ARC School Valuation Framework report and the Minority report, as well as the input received from each of the public meetings. In addition to these factors Administration met with and sought clarification from the ministry regarding ministry expectations.

Finally, consideration was given to minimizing any disruption to students. The staff recommendations below allow for the following:

- Time for Ministry Approvals;
- Time for PACE parent consultation;
- Time for Demolition, Design & Construction and;
- Minimizes disruption to students to one school year instead of up to 18 months.

The following summarizes the recommendation of the Staff Report:

St. Anthony - Repair existing facility to reduce FCI

St. Michael - To be rebuilt with a capacity of 425-450, Arts program only

- Boundary to remain as is

- Introduce “early registration program” and priority placement for Thornhill Markham students.

St. René Goupil-St. Luke – Recommend to the Ministry Year 2 Early Learning Program Candidate and consideration be given to enhanced programming.

Impact of Staff Report Recommendations:

- **Enrolment:**

St. Anthony - Enrolment at St. Anthony is projected to decline due to a maturing community. The school will be operating with approximately 170 pupils for the next several years. Future new development (Langstaff) timing and actual yields are unknown. Current research does not indicate significant pupil yields, however if consumer behaviour changes it could result in more than anticipated future growth. In the meantime, the St. Anthony facility provides an opportunity for alternative uses to be considered for the unused portion of the building. These uses may consist of administrative space, storage, “mothball” or alternative program offerings.

St. Michael – Identical to the other two options, In 2010, the school would be operating at 89% utilization with a nominal enrolment of 395 students, slightly decreasing to 386 nominal students (87% utilization) by 2013 and increasing to 414 nominal students in 2018 (93% utilization). Given that the school offers a regional program, there is a greater opportunity with this school to “self regulate” enrolment by increasing the number of TCH19 students accepted into the ARTS program.

St. René Goupil-St. Luke – Is projected to continue to operate under capacity over the forecast period. Enrolment projections suggest that as proposed redevelopment continues in the area the school will remain viable with a population close to its capacity of 219.

PACE – Consistent with the ARC’s School Valuation Report recommendation, Administration supports the recommendation to consider the relocation of the PACE program to a school more central to the attending population. Currently over 90% of students within the program live outside of Thornhill, the majority of which reside in Richmond Hill. Redirecting PACE students to a school in closer proximity will reduce ride times and transportation costs. The movement of the PACE centre will require a separate consultation with parents of students in the program.

- **Program**

- a. St. Anthony- Renovations to reduce FCI
 - i. Continue as a JK-8 school.
 - ii. Consider other program enhancements
- b. St. Michael - Size of facility for St. Michael matched to enrolment.
 - i. ARTS program optimal size 425 to 445 pupils
 - ii. Opportunity to consider the ARTS program focus in the design and construction of the new school (subject to meeting funding benchmarks)
- c. St. Rene Goupil- St. Luke – No change
 - i. Continue as a JK-8 school
 - ii. Consider other program enhancements

- **Facility**

- a. Recommendation is consistent with the Ministry of Education PTR funding
- b. Construction costs are estimated within budget.
- c. Removes one PTR school (St. Michael) from the Board’s facility inventory
- d. Maintains one older school (St. Anthony) in Board’s facility inventory, with a reduced FCI

- **Site**
 - a. Renovating the existing St. Anthony School
 - i. Provides minimal opportunity to address access, parking and circulation issues at the school
 - b. Replacement school at the existing St. Michael site
 - i. No other site alternatives
 - ii. Opportunity for campus, and integration with other uses (church, park, public school)
 - iii. Significant road frontage to accommodate multiple entrances (separate bus and car traffic)

- **Advantages:**
 - The proposed capacity for St. Michael Academy (425-450) provides appropriate accommodation to the school's population.
 - The St. Michael site is more conducive for the construction of a larger focus school.
 - Larger overall site size compared to St. Anthony (4.9 vs 4.0)
 - Larger frontage to accommodate multiple driveways and loops.
 - Part of a campus which includes Good Shepard Catholic Church, German Mills Public School and a municipal park
 - Proximity to public transit and arterial road (Leslie)
 - Minimizes disruption to the community by maintaining two small community schools for St. Anthony and St. Rene Goupil – St. Luke.
 - Addresses the PTR needs of both St. Anthony and St. Michael Academy
 - Relocates the PACE program to a school closer to the majority of the students, therefore reducing bus ride times and transportation costs for the program.
 - Estimated cost is within the Ministry's "planning approval" funding.
- **Disadvantages:**
 - May not address the number of combined classes and possible reduced opportunities for students.
 - Maintains 2 smaller schools and associated administrative costs.
 - Ongoing renewal costs of aging facility (St. Anthony)

Transportation:

The current non-transportation zones for elementary schools are 1.2 km for students in JK to grade 3, and 1.6 km for students in grades 4 to 8 (*Appendix Map – 7*).

The relocation of the PACE program may partially offset the increased transportation costs depending on the chosen location.

Other than PACE students, there will be no change for the current St. René Goupil-St. Luke, St. Anthony and St. Michael communities.

Secondary Feeder Alignment

All three elementary schools will continue to attend St. Robert. The secondary boundary for the PACE students currently attending St. Anthony C.E.S is St. Theresa of Lisieux.

Summary:

The Thornhill Accommodation Review was a lengthy and emotional process involving three school communities and various stakeholders. The process has resulted in three substantial reports, the ARC's School Valuation Report, the School Valuation Report "Minority Report" and a Staff Report.

It should be noted that the Minority Report makes several claims regarding the data and the process. Administration is confident that the process followed throughout the Thornhill Accommodation Review (November 2008 to June 2009) is consistent with the Ministry of Education Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines and YCDSB Policy 713.

All participants in the process are committed to the same objectives of ensuring suitable and equitable learning environments for all students. The solutions proposed in this staff report are consistent with many of the principles discussed by the ARC and supported by board accommodation principles.

The proposed staff recommendations have considered all of the input received to date and are based on the rationale of minimizing disruption to all students during the transition period. The staff recommendations are subject to additional input from the public, at a public meeting required by board policy to receive input on the proposed staff recommendations.

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

1. Thornhill Accommodation Review Process - Flowchart
2. ARC's School Valuation Report - Report only;
3. School Valuation Report "Minority Report" – Report only

CD containing digital copy of the full ARC School Valuation Report & School Valuation "Minority Report"