



Thornhill Elementary Schools - Accommodation Review Committee

**Minutes of ARC Working Meeting #1
held December 11, 2008, 6:30 p.m., at St. Michael Catholic Academy,
41 Simonston Boulevard, Thornhill.**

In attendance:

ARC Chair: Patricia Preston, Associate Director
ARC Secretary: Andy Di Sebastiano, Superintendent of Education: School Leadership

Members:

Norbert Koehl	CSC Chair	St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School
Sam Cuda	Parent	St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School
Maureen Hurley	Parent	St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School
Amanda Butters	Teacher	St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School
Tony Patriarca	Non-Teaching	St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School
June Buick	Principal	St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School
Joe Wigglesworth	CSC Chair	St. Michael Catholic Academy
Louie Gavros	Parent	St. Michael Catholic Academy
Trixie Santiago-Sorrell	Parent	St. Michael Catholic Academy
Dayna Fitzpatrick	Teacher	St. Michael Catholic Academy
Melodie Curran	Non-Teaching	St. Michael Catholic Academy
Luisa Busato	Principal	St. Michael Catholic Academy
Diane Scaini	Parent	St. René Goupil-St. Luke Catholic Elementary School
Paul Wilkie	Parent	St. René Goupil-St. Luke Catholic Elementary School
Lisa Falconi	Teaching	St. René Goupil-St. Luke Catholic Elementary School
Angie Della-Rovere	Non-Teaching	St. René Goupil-St. Luke Catholic Elementary School
Gordon Lovgren	Principal	St. René Goupil-St. Luke Catholic Elementary School
Father William Burns	Parish	St. Luke Parish, Thornhill
Lisa Thalassinou	Parish	Good Shepherd Parish, Thornhill
Carol Cotton	School Trustee	Markham, Area 1, Wards 1,2,3,6

ARC Facilitators:

Dan Del Bianco, Watson & Associates

ARC Resource Staff:

Bryce Eldrige, York Catholic – Superintendent of Plant
Dan McCowell, York Catholic - Senior Manager, Administrative Services
Tom Pechkovsky, York Catholic - Manager of Planning Services
Christine Hyde, York Catholic - Planner

Recording Secretary:

Wendy Cosentino

Public Observers Signed In:

Marie Hanley	Parent	St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School
Connie Mason	CSC Co-Chair	St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School

Absent:

Tracy O'Connor-Lauzon, CSC Chair - St. René Goupil-St. Luke Catholic Elementary School
Lygia Dallip, Watson & Associates
Joe McLoughlin, York Catholic – Manager of Maintenance Services

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

The meeting was held in the St. Michael Catholic Academy Library and was called to order at 6:30 p.m. Patricia Preston, ARC Chair, welcomed everyone to Working Meeting #1. Ms. Preston introduced Mr. Bryce Eldridge, York Catholic District School Board, Superintendent of Plant.

2. PRAYER

Father Burns led the group in prayer in celebration of the Advent season.

3. APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 11, 2008, ARC AGENDA

The agenda of the Thornhill Elementary Schools Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) meeting of December 11, 2008, was approved as distributed.

4. REVIEW OF INFORMATION SHARED AT NOVEMBER 20, 2008, MEETING

The minutes of the Thornhill Elementary Schools Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) meeting held November 20, 2008, were approved as distributed.

5. ARC MANDATE & STATUS

(a) **ARC Additional Members**

The ARC Secretary provided an update on the status of the ARC membership:

In accordance with *Board Policy 713, Section 2, Establishing an Accommodation Review Committee, Item 2.2, Composition of the ARC* and as directed by the members of the ARC at its meeting of November 20, a second invitation was sent to St. Rene Goupil-St. Luke Catholic Elementary School for a non-teaching representative. At this time, it was announced that Ms. Angie Della-Rovere accepted the invitation to represent non-teaching staff of St. René Goupil-St. Luke. Ms. DellaRovere was welcomed to the meeting and introduced to the members of the ARC.

Municipal & Business Reps:

In accordance with *Board Policy 713, Section 2, Establishing an Accommodation Review Committee, Item 2.2, Composition of the ARC* and as discussed by the members of the ARC at its meeting of November 20, 2008, it was agreed that ARC Chair would extend an invitation for membership to the municipality and business sector of the City of Markham.

In that regard, a copy of a letter of invitation sent December 1 on behalf of the ARC to Councillor, Ward 2, Town of Markham, and, President & CEO, Markham Board of Trade, were distributed for information. The ARC Secretary reported that verbal responses had been received which confirmed that although the invitations were received and welcomed, both parties have sent regrets and indicated they are unable to accept or name a designate at this point in time. Notwithstanding, a representative from the Councillor's office indicated that the dates of the public meetings have been noted.

The ARC will be deemed fully constituted with present membership in place as of December 11, 2008.

(b) **Review of Meeting Dates**

Meeting dates are recorded on the ARC Calendar (**Binder Section 8**) and also posted to the ARC website. It was agreed that the practice of setting the time for each working meeting on vote by members of the ARC prior to each working meeting will continue.

With membership complete, school tours discussed for the ARC will be arranged by Board Resource staff prior to the first Public Meeting. **It was agreed that a visit to each of the 3 Thornhill-Markham schools – St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School, St. Michael Catholic Academy, and St. René Goupil-St. Luke Catholic Elementary School, will be arranged for Monday, January 12, 2009, beginning at 4:00 p.m. The school tours will also include a visit to a new school facility in order to provide comparative values. Board Resource Staff will arrange for transportation and provide a tour itinerary for review before or with meeting agenda of January 8, 2009.**

6. **UPDATES TO ARC BINDER**

ARC members were provided with **A Summary of Supporting Documentation Distributed with Revised Table of Contents for Working Meeting #1, December 11, 2008**. Data provided will be discussed in detail with reference to the review process as the Committee proceeds with its mandate. Items updated from first distribution will be marked as “replacement” documents to identify current information. All documents distributed for discussion will be printed double-sided whenever possible.

The list of materials for addition to the ARC binder was reviewed by Board Resource Staff; with particular note to:

School Profiles

Distribution of the revised School Profiles was postponed. Board Resource staff indicated a need to consult with the Ministry of Education in order to ensure accuracy of values being reported. The York Catholic Resource team will verify data with the Ministry of Education and will bring forward revised school profiles for discussion at meeting of January 8, 2009.

School Profile – Extra Curricular Activities

The Extra Curricular Activities portion of the School Profile was provided; this information was prepared by each of the 3 school Principals to highlight school activities. The ARC was asked to discard Page 2 of the St. Anthony report as it was not specific to the school and included in error during printing.

ARC Website

The York Catholic District School Board, Communications Department, will serve as lead on the ARC website. Board Resource staff confirm that Communications has been diligent in the design and preparation for the web and has the network site up and running. All documents reviewed and approved by the ARC to date, have been posted to the site for public viewing.

In preparation for each meeting, minutes, agenda and supporting materials will be emailed to ARC members 48 hours prior to each meeting. The draft meeting minutes and agenda will also be posted to the ARC website accordingly.

7. **ARC “RULES FOR THE ROAD AHEAD”**

The ARC Chair introduced the “Rules for the Road Ahead” (**Binder Section 22**), a roadmap of principles used in general for various Board meetings. The ARC Chair commented that having the guidelines in place for consideration will help to ensure a safe and open environment for discussion

and a supportive atmosphere for everyone at the meeting table. **The Rules for the Road Ahead were endorsed unanimously by the ARC Committee as a whole.**

Any and/or all requests for information raised by local or major media outlets will be addressed by the Board Communications Department. ARC members will not be expected to reply to requests for information. Committee members are asked to refer any and/or all inquiries directly to the Board Communications Department for response.

8. QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Questions/inquiries received to date from the ARC or the community, were directed to the appropriate Board Resource for a recommended response. A summary of Questions & Proposed Responses was prepared (**Binder Section 23**) and distributed with the December 11 meeting agenda.

a) Questions from the ARC:

In response to request by the ARC at the meeting of November 20, 2008 re benchmark funding, a copy of correspondence from the Ministry of Education to the York Catholic District School Board (dated April 9, 2008, S. LaRosa, Director of Education) confirming support for new school construction under the Prohibitive to Repair (PTR) Capital program was provided. Board Resource staff spoke to the Board's submission to the Ministry of Education to secure this future opportunity, and the formal review process which is required to obtain funding (Accommodation Review).

In light of this discussion, it was requested by the ARC:

that the Board Communications Department prepare a letter on behalf of the ARC to provide all 3 school communities with a overview of the Accommodation Review process with requirements and timelines expected under the Ministry of Education: Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines and the York Catholic District School Board Policy 713: Pupil Accommodation Review, the establishment of the Thornhill Elementary Schools Accommodation Review Committee, and the status of its work to date. The letter will be reviewed for approval at Working Meeting #2 on January 8, 2009.

Following discussion of the **Summary of Questions and Proposed Responses to the ARC**, it was agreed that:

the summary and proposed responses to the ARC be approved with the exception of Question #2, Page 1, "Questions Received from the ARC" (11/24/2008 - re travel distance); and further, that the response to Question 2 be deferred to provide Board Resource staff an opportunity to further review the request in light of specifics requested by the ARC. The proposed response will be brought back to the ARC at the meeting of January 8, 2009, for approval.

Following discussion of the **Summary of Questions and Proposed Responses to the Community**, it was agreed that:

The summary and proposed responses to the Community be approved.

The approved responses processed through the ARC will be posted to the ARC website.

9. GENERIC SCHOOL VALUATION FRAMEWORK

a) **Explanation of the Generic School Valuation Framework**

In accordance with the Ministry of Education mandate and *Board Policy 713: Pupil Accommodation Review, Section 2, Establishing an Accommodation Review Committee*, and specifics outlined in *Subsections 2.1 - Mandate of the ARC, 2.4 - Meetings of the ARC, and 2.5 - Work of the ARC*, the Accommodation Review Committee is mandated to weigh the value of the schools to its students. The **School Valuation Framework**, outlined in *Board Policy 713, Section 2.6, is the tool to be used for this purpose. The School Valuation Framework will familiarize members with all 3 of the schools under review by providing a point of comparison for facilities, program, and achievement levels, using identical criteria established through the customization process.*

b) **Customizing the Generic School Valuation Framework**

The School Valuation Framework is the instrument that will provide objectivity to the process of making accommodation recommendations for Thornhill students.

The **Generic School Valuation Framework: Elementary**, has been developed in consultation with the standard established by a working group with representation from 13 school boards (public and catholic) across the province, and based on the Ministry of Education Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines to customize School Valuation based on 4 values - the value of the schools to each of the Board, local community, local economy and most importantly, to students. As per *Board Policy 713, Section 2, Subsection 2.6*, the ARC will consider the questions set out in the Generic School Valuation Framework in order to customize based on needs identified by the group. This customization process will provide the ARC with the opportunity to generate key data that will be used for all 3 schools in order to reach accommodation recommendations/scenarios. **Requests to add to the framework can be accommodated by consensus vote**; however, the ARC will not be permitted to remove any of the values, categories and/or questions already contained in the framework.

As per *Board Policy 713, Section 2.4, Meetings of the ARC*, the customized School Valuation Framework and school-specific valuation factors will be presented at the first public meeting set for February 5, 2009. The ARC may receive community feedback on the School Valuation Framework at this point in time for their consideration in the review process.

The School Valuation Framework, once customized, will be completed by each school, for each school, under the accommodation review. The valuations will be brought forward and summarized in the ARC School Valuation Report for final submission to the Director of Education as per *Board Policy 713, Section 2.8*.

c) **Availability of Data for Filling in the Framework**

A copy of each of the *Generic School Valuation Framework: Elementary (ARC Binder, Section 2)* and, *Ministry of Education, Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines (ARC Binder, Section 3)* have been provided for point of reference. A PowerPoint presentation, prepared and distributed for review, *Thornhill Accommodation Review – December 11, 2008 (ARC Binder, Section 29)* provides a detailed outline on the School Valuation Framework (School Valuation Report and Recommendations, School Values, and Customizing the School Valuation Framework).

10. Breakout Session

a) **Customizing Existing Framework:**

The ARC met in school groups to review the Generic School Valuation Framework and begin discussion on how to customize the tool. A member of the School Board team joined each of

the school groups as a resource to provide clarification or additional information on values contained therein. School groups were asked to consider what they deem as important to their school and their students and if not addressed in the existing framework, identify for consideration by the ARC as a whole.

(b) Group Reporting:

The following group reports were presented with items identified for consideration in customizing the School Valuation Framework:

St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School

- PACE Subcategory – information directly about PACE (i.e. transportation)
- parish distance and involvement – parish contact with the children
- public transit and high density (i.e. Langstaff) – proximity and future enrolment
- volunteer opportunities at school and parental involvement
- influence of visa students on community

St. Michael Catholic Academy

- proximity to green space (i.e. ravine)
- specialized rooms and spaces (i.e. equipment)
- partnership between School and Parish
 - reinforcing Catholic values
 - proximity of parish to school
 - range of activities available at Parish for students
 - school support of parish in some areas

Note: concern was expressed around interpretation of questions in the School Valuation Framework.

St. René Goupil-St. Luke Catholic Elementary School

- proximity of church to school - parish within walking distance to school
- Generic School Valuation Framework, Item 4.13 – Before and After Daycare Programs are in place not just proposed to be built

6. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the ARC (Working Meeting #2) will be held at St. René Goupil-St. Luke Catholic Elementary School on Thursday, January 8, 2009. It was agreed that the meeting begin at 7:00 p.m.

The focus of Working Meeting #2 will continue on the customization process of the School Valuation Framework. Schools groups will meet to further identify needs; all requests identified and accepted by consensus vote will be summarized by Board Resource staff and entered into the School Valuation Framework for review at Working Meeting #3 (January 22).

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.