



Atikokan Accommodation Review Public Consultation Minutes
Atikokan High School Grayson Hall
May 18, 2017 – 5:00 p.m.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Martha Duquette, Staff Representative, North Star Community School; Mellissa Gallagher, School Council Chair, North Star Community School; Jody Labossiere, Principal, North Star Community School; Sylvia Parker, Community Representative, North Star Community School; Beth Fairfield, Principal, Atikokan High School; Darryl Gannon, School Council Representative, Atikokan High School; Karen Gannon, Staff Representative, Atikokan High School; Jeff Lehman, Community Representative, Atikokan High School; Chloe Machura, Student Representative, Atikokan High School; Heather Campbell, Director of Education

STAFF: Laura Mills, Superintendent of Business; Travis Enge, Manager of Plant Operations & Maintenance; Lygia Dallip, Ameresco; Sandra Ward, Recording Secretary

1. Welcome, Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Heather Campbell, Director of Education, who introduced members of the Accommodation Review Committee and resource staff.

An overview of the agenda, timelines and meeting procedures were reviewed.

The Committee and attendees were asked to respect the following session norms:

- Cell phones “off” or on “vibrate”
- Respect and expect differences of opinion
- Be open-minded and solution-based
- Root thinking and solutions in the best interest of students
- Limit side-bar discussions in the whole group
- Questions/Comments will be provided during Unannounced Delegations

2. Summary of Modified Student Accommodation Review Process

Heather Campbell provided an overview of the Modified Student Accommodation Review Process. The Rainy River District School Board passed a resolution to commence with a Modified Student Accommodation Review based on the Initial Staff Report received at the April 4, 2017 regular Board meeting. A Modified Student Accommodation Review process was approved, as both the Board and administration felt strongly that the opportunity to receive feedback from the community was very important in helping the Trustees in their decision-making.

Possible outcomes for a Board decision are as follows:

- Status Quo

- Consolidated School on North Star Community School site
- Consolidated School on Atikokan High School Site (Staff Recommendation)

The above noted timelines and accommodation review process are in accordance with the Ministry of Education's Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines, and Board Policy and Procedure 6.50, Student Accommodation.

3. Role of the Accommodation Review Committee

The purpose of the Accommodation Review Committee is to be a conduit of information between the community and administration. The Committee reviewed the options and supporting data identified in the Initial Staff Report, reviewed the School Information Profiles for the schools. The Committee will communicate the information to the community, and capture the community voice and relay the information back to administration.

The mandate of the Committee is to follow the three guiding principles contained in Policy 6.50 when making the final decision. The guiding principles are as follows:

“The Rainy River District School Board is committed to providing and maintaining quality learning and teaching environments that support student achievement and well-being, with an emphasis on meeting the needs of students in the 21st century.

The Board's schools will have flexible learning environments and an array of programs and pathways that afford students with the highest quality learning opportunities.

The schools exist for students, but also enhance the surrounding communities in providing neighborhoods and community access that supports the well-being of students and their families.”

4. School Information Profiles

The School Information Profiles consider the value of the school to the students and to the School Board, and provides detailed information regarding each of the schools in the Accommodation Review:

Beth Fairfield, Principal, Atikokan High School provided a brief overview of the School Information Profile for Atikokan High School.

Jody Labossiere, Principal, North Star Community School provided a brief overview of the School Information Profile for the North Star Community School.

Both School Information Profiles are posted on the Board's website.

5. Staff Initial Report

a) Options Explored

Travis Enge, Manager of Plant Operations and Maintenance, provided a brief overview of the options explored by administration. The recommended option is a new, consolidated Kindergarten to Grade 12 school on the Atikokan High School site.

The option to build a new school on the existing Atikokan High School site looks to maintain key aspects of the Atikokan High School facility, such as Grayson Hall and the Outers facility, while expanding and enhancing programs and pathways and affording students “the highest quality learning opportunities.”

Other options presented are:

- AHS Option 1 – Create a combined K-12 school within the existing Atikokan High School building, retaining surplus space, facility upgrades to accommodate elementary students programming needs, and purpose-build full-day kindergarten classrooms, and upgrades re: accessibility.
- AHS Option 2 – K-12 school at existing Atikokan High School building, right-sizing building to match enrolment needs, retrofitting to accommodate elementary programs, constructing an addition to accommodate full-day kindergarten and elementary administration, with upgrades re: accessibility.
- NSCS Option 1 – K-12 school at North Star Community School site, with construction of a secondary wing and labs, and secondary gymnasium, shared library and administrative spaces. Grayson Hall would remain as a community accessible facility. It was noted that this option is preferable if a community partner is not secured for this building.
- NSCS Option 2 – Partial consolidation of K-12 programs at North Star Community School, retaining shop wing and Grayson Hall for secondary use with secondary students moving between these facilities and North Star Community School.

It was noted that all building designs presented are conceptual and are for discussion only at this time. Further development of the building and site will be finalized at the architectural stage of the process.

b) Enrolment

Laura Mills, Superintendent of Business, presented enrolment projections for Atikokan High School and North Star Community School. Projections have been based on enrolment trends and 2011 Census data. Since the initial staff report, the 2016 Census data has been published and an updated chart was provided showing a larger decline than expected. The data also shows an increase in the 65+ population.

Atikokan High School shows a steady decline over the next five years, with a utilization rate of nearing 27% by the year 2021. Within 10 years, the enrolment and subsequent utilization rate decreased further to 113 FTE students and a utilization rate of 25%.

North Star Community School is projected to hold steady over the next five years, with a utilization rate of approximately 40%. Within 10 years, the School is projected to be at a 39% utilization.

c) Financial Analysis

Laura Mills, Superintendent of Business, presented an overview of the current status of revenue versus expenses at both Atikokan High School and North Star Community School, as well as the projected funding and costs associated with a new Kindergarten to Grade 12 consolidation.

North Star Community School is impacted by the elimination of the enhanced operations top-up funding as a result of being within 10 kilometers of an elementary or secondary schools. This loss of revenue is occurring even if the North Star facility remains open and continues to be underutilized.

The Supported School Grant will be impacted by a consolidation as the elementary panel will have sufficient enrolment in one location.

d) Facility Renewal Needs

Travis Enge, Manager of Plant Operations and Maintenance reported that a Facility Condition Index (FCI) review of Atikokan High School and North Star Community School was completed by Ministry of Education consultants in 2012.

Atikokan High School is considered to be in very poor condition with a significant FCI of 73% and North Star Community School is in relatively good shape for its age with an FCI of 37%.

e) Programming

Heather Campbell, Director of Education, reported on the challenges in dividing specialized elementary student programming between the two schools, e.g. Special Education, French as a Second Language, and succession planning. However, benefits to a consolidated school include few transitions for students; opportunities for collaboration for students and staff; enhanced learning spaces; support for parent engagement; enhanced site design; and, opportunities for partnerships.

f) Transportation

Laura Mills, Superintendent of Business, reported that there are approximately 81% of Grade 7-12 students walk to Atikokan High School and almost 57% of North Star Community School students are bussed. Therefore, it is anticipated that there would be little to no change in transportation costs.

6. Summary of May 11, 2017 Accommodation Review Committee Meeting

Heather Campbell shared the questions posed to the Accommodation Review Committee at their May 11th meeting and the Committee's subsequent discussion.

At the meeting, the Committee suggested another possible option: move the Grades 7 and 8 students to NSCS and build a smaller high school for Grades 9 to 12 students, with the rationale that this would address elementary programming and the demand for the physical education programming, while preserving Grayson Hall and the Outers facility. This was not thought to be a viable option as it does not address utilization and potential for securing capital funding.

Following a review of the feedback provided by the Accommodation Review Committee, Director of Education Heather Campbell noted that some of the suggestions have given Administration staff pause for thought. The suggestion that a sports field is not necessarily as important as gym space and space for the performing arts, will be discussed further by Administration.

7. Questions and Answers

Director of Education, Heather Campbell addressed a number of questions that have been received to date, including the following:

- Where will the students go during construction?
- Could there be a therapy room included in the actual new school design?
- Will the new build affect Special Education funding?
- Does the square footage of the new build include space for a daycare?
- Will there be the inclusion of specialized spaces (e.g., Reading Recovery programming) within the consolidation?
- Will there be enough space in a new school or in an addition, if the decision is to consolidate on the NSCS site?
- What will happen to the playground equipment presently at NSCS?

Director Campbell indicated that the Questions and Answers are posted on the Rainy River District School Board website and this section will continue to be updated as questions are received and are responded to.

8. Announced Delegations

There were no announced delegations.

9. Unannounced Delegations

A number of attendees addressed the Accommodation Review Committee and Administrative staff at the meeting with questions, comments and concerns. These items are attached to the minutes as Appendix A. The questions and answers will be added to the Q&A page on the Board website.

10. Next Steps/Wrap Up

To ensure that comments/feedback are included as part of the final report to Trustees, a Feedback Form was made available and it was noted that forms could be handed in following the meeting, or returned to the schools by 4:00 pm Friday, May 19, 2017. Any comments provided will be included for the School Accommodation Review Committee's consideration at its meeting on May 23, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. at North Star Community School, Multi-Purpose Room. The public is welcome to attend however, it will only be as an observer as this will be a working meeting. It was noted that the meeting will be broadcast if anyone wishes to watch.

Director Campbell also outlined the next significant dates in the Modified Accommodation Review process.

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.