

February 25, 2016

TO: Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board

TOPIC: **Pupil Accommodation Review – Staff Report: Armour Heights Public School and King George Public School**

INITIATORS: Peter Mangold, Superintendent, Student Achievement  
Joseph Tompkins, Superintendent, Student Achievement

## **BACKGROUND**

1. The Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board aims to provide educational programs and services of the highest quality. This is best accomplished when facilities are conducive to creating a stimulating learning environment designed to meet the needs of all pupils within fiscal parameters. In addition to facilitating the delivery of our Board mission, the Board will endeavour to optimize the use of its facilities. Various factors beyond the control of the Board impact this commitment. These factors include declining, increasing, and shifting populations, current funding and operational realities, new provincial legislation and policy, changing educational objectives and physical limitations of buildings.
2. The Long Term Accommodation Plan 2015-2020 was received for information by the Board of Trustees in May 2015. The Long Term Accommodation Plan is intended to provide the Board with information and/or direction on:
  - School buildings which are over or under utilized
  - Issues regarding program viability
  - Ten year enrolment projections
  - Status of physical plant including accessibility, physical condition, and buildings where operations/maintenance costs exceed the norm
  - Indicators for future directions regarding new schools and/or additions, school consolidations/closures, boundary reviews/changes.

In the plan, it was recommended that the Board conduct an accommodation review to consider the consolidation of Armour Heights Public School and King George Public School at the King George Public School site.

3. On September 24, 2015, the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board reviewed and revised Board Policy BA-1.2, Pupil Accommodation Review: School Closure/Consolidation, which relates to pupil accommodation and accommodation reviews, as a result of new provincial directives released in March 2015.

This policy governs the process by which schools are to be identified and recommended for study and review. Any school, or group of schools, impacted by the following criteria, may be identified in an individual or group accommodation review: Program Viability, Overcrowded, Operating/Maintenance Costs, Underutilized, and Exceptional Circumstances.

4. In accordance with Board Policy BA-1.2, Pupil Accommodation Review: School Closure/Consolidation, which relates to pupil accommodation reviews, the Board struck a School Accommodation Review Committee to consider the consolidation of Armour Heights Public School and King George Public School. Membership for the Accommodation Review Committee was approved on this date as well.

5. **Background Information for Armour Heights Public School**

Armour Heights Public School is located on 245 McFarlane Street in Peterborough, Ontario. The distance between Armour Heights Public School and King George Public School is 750 metres. The Average Daily Enrolment has declined from 375 students in 2000-2001 to the current projected enrolment of 225 students for the 2015-2016 school year. The school has an On The Ground Capacity of 311 pupil places. Enrolment for Armour Heights Public School is expected to increase slightly in the next 10 years.

6. **Background Information for King George Public School**

King George Public School is located on 220 Hunter Street in Peterborough, Ontario. The Average Daily Enrolment has declined from 434 students in 2000-2001 to the current projected enrolment of 232 students for the 2015-2016 school year. The school has an On The Ground Capacity of 291 pupil places. Enrolment for King George Public School is expected to increase slightly in the next 10 years.

7. As per Board Policy BA-1.2, Pupil Accommodation Review: School Closure/Consolidation, any school or group of schools whose Average Daily Enrolment (ADE) falls, or is projected to fall below 85% of the pupil places as designated by the On The Ground Capacity is considered underutilized and is to be considered for possible accommodation review. Armour Heights Public School and King George Public School are underutilized based on the following information:

- The On The Ground (OTG) Capacity for Armour Heights Public School is 311 ADE
- Current enrolment of Armour Heights Public School is 225 students which is 73% of capacity
- From 2000-2001, enrolment at Armour Heights Public School has declined by 150 students
- The On The Ground (OTG) Capacity for King George Public School is 291 ADE
- Current enrolment of King George Public School is 232 students which is 80% of capacity
- From 2000-2001, enrolment at King George Public School has declined by 202 students.

Another reason to consider an accommodation review is that expected maintenance costs over time will be significant due to the age of both Armour Heights Public School and King George Public School.

**8. Rationale for Consolidation of Armour Heights Public School and King George Public School – Initial Staff Report**

Consolidating students from both Armour Heights Public School and King George Public School at the King George Public School site would provide an optimal learning environment for all students. With the schools being only 750 metres apart, one Kindergarten to Grade 8 facility would best support the students in the area. This would allow for one less transition for King George Public School students. Refurbishing and building an environmentally friendly addition at the King George site, while maintaining the integrity of the building, would provide an improved facility for students within the area. Alternatively, building a new school at the King George site and disposing of both Armour Heights Public School and King George Public School could be considered for this consolidation.

**STATUS**

9. The Armour Heights Public School and King George Public School Accommodation Review took place from November 12, 2015 to January 26, 2016. Community Consultation occurred in a variety of ways including:
- Two meetings at which the public was able to make presentations to the Accommodation Review Committee
  - Two working meetings where the committee was able to discuss different aspects of the Pupil Accommodation Review
  - Four 10 minute delegations
  - One 3 minute delegation
  - Six presentations made to the committee by Board personnel
  - Questions were answered during the meeting or posted to the Board website if they required consideration from staff
  - The opportunity to ask questions online through email was available but not utilized by the public.
10. The mandate of the Armour Heights Public School and King George Public School Accommodation Review Committee was to ensure that the Board has the information necessary to make a decision in the best interests of students regarding staff accommodation recommendations. The information will inform senior administration's final staff report and subsequent decision by the Board of Trustees.

Specifically, it is the committee's mandate to:

- Act as an official conduit of information shared between the school board and the school communities
- Provide feedback on the impact of consolidating the school populations of both Armour Heights Public School and King George Public School in one building on the King George Public School site
- Comment on the initial staff report and consider providing other accommodation options with supporting rationale.

**11. Community Consultation**

Community consultation was an integral component of the Armour Heights Public School and King George Public School Accommodation Review. Below are the major areas of discussion during the process:

- A thorough review of the enrolment data for both schools was considered
- Details regarding the French Immersion program in Peterborough City and County were reviewed as there was a desire to consider offering French Immersion at the King George Public School site
- How parents decide which school/school board their children attend was discussed using survey data
- The financial implications of consolidating both schools on one site were shared as well as a general review of the funding formula
- People were generally supportive of a new building and saw it as a new opportunity, but respected the historical aspects of King George Public School and the traditions of both schools
- There was a desire to investigate the incorporation of historical aspects of the King George Public School building into a new build
- This is seen as an opportunity to bring two school communities together
- The committee reviewed a variety of consolidation options presented by staff and also generated some of their own
- Most options considered consolidation on the King George Public School site as the Armour Heights Public School site is not large enough to accommodate a school of approximately 500 students
- The committee was not supportive of having to relocate King George Public School students for potentially over a year with a number of options presented
- A new school on top of the hill on the King George Public School site is the option identified as keeping students in their present schools until the transition takes place (no relocation would be necessary)

- Benefits of a new building integrating the environmental aspects of the site and innovative environmental science and outdoor education programming were shared by delegations and committee members – some committee members and delegations also expressed a desire to pursue possible alternative education programming
- The committee felt strongly that any new build/renovation receive public input during the design and planning stage
- The option recommending a renovation and an addition to King George Public School offers challenges for finding off-site locations for students during the build and maintaining the King George Public School building – some committee members considered the relocation of students a short-term problem which allowed the original King George Public School building to be saved
- General support was received, though not complete consensus, for the option of a new building overlooking the city at the top of the hill provided that it was built as a green school with innovative programs.

**12. Staff Recommendation**

Considering information gleaned from staff reports, input from the Accommodation Review Committee and feedback from public delegations, administration believes that the consolidation of both Armour Heights Public School and King George Public School on the King George Public School site would be in the best interests of all students. The consolidation will allow for the creation of one dynamic community school serving Ashburnham where students will make one transition from elementary to secondary school.

The construction of a new building east of the current King George Public School building, on the same site, at the top of the hill is seen as providing an optimal learning environment accessible to all students and allows students to remain in their current setting until the building is completed.

This option allows for an environmentally friendly building utilizing the natural environment of the King George Public School site with consideration of input from both school communities prior to the build.

Administration supports a new build rather than an addition to the existing building due to the need to relocate all King George Public School students during the renovation, the unpredictable costs of an addition to a building of this age, and the challenge of building an addition that complements the age of the building. A new build would be able to take advantage of current knowledge regarding accessibility, effective and modern learning environments, and the efficient use of resources, space and light. Feedback from the school communities regarding the build could also be considered at this time.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That the Pupil Accommodation Review – Staff Report: Armour Heights Public School and King George Public School, dated February 25, 2016, be received for information.
2. That the Armour Heights Public School and King George Public School Accommodation Review Committee be dissolved.

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