

SUPERIOR-GREENSTONE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

"Inspiring our students to succeed and make a difference"

Report No: 05

Date: December 5, 2016

TO: Chair and Members of the
Superior-Greenstone District School Board

FROM: David Tamblyn, Director of Education

SUBJECT: Pupil Accommodation Review for Red Rock Public School - Initial Staff Report

**STRATEGIC
PRIORITY:** Student Achievement and Well-Being, Responsible Stewardship of Resources

Background

The Superior-Greenstone District School Board is committed to the four core priorities of the Ministry of Education; achieving excellence, ensuring equity, promoting well-being and enhancing public confidence. The *School Board Efficiencies and Modernization Strategy* of the Ministry of Education aims to find new approaches to maintain fiscal responsibility in achieving these core priorities, given the current realities of school boards. In alignment with these core priorities, it is the policy of Superior-Greenstone District School Board to study schools where opportunities exist to deliver learning to our students in an increasingly effective and efficient manner. The social, emotional and academic environment of the school plays a large role in meeting these priorities.

To address these needs in our very small schools, staffing allocations have been given a priority to avoid quadruple grades in the literacy and numeracy blocks, and to ensure a low pupil-teacher ratio for multi-grade classrooms. In addition, administrative assignments have grown to increasingly include additional responsibilities, including teaching assignments and system portfolios. Schools have also welcomed community partners and agencies to occupy unused spaces.

Learning is a social construct, where peer to peer interactions play a significant role in the acquisition of higher order and critical thinking. "Peers can influence learning by helping, tutoring, providing friendship, giving feedback, and making class and school a place to which students want to come each day" (Wilkinson, Parr, Fung, Hattie, & Townsend, 2002, in Hattie, 2012, pg. 78, 2012). "Peers can assist in providing social comparisons, emotional support, social facilitation, cognitive restructuring, and rehearsal or deliberate practice. They can provide caring, support, and help, and can ease conflict resolution, and this can all lead to more learning opportunities, enhancing academic achievement (Anderman & Anderman, 1999, in Hattie, 2012, pg. 78, 2012). When students have an age appropriate peer group, both well-being and achievement are positively impacted.

At its Regular Board Meeting on March 19, 2012, the Superior-Greenstone District School Board carried a motion to proceed with a study of a Grade 7-12 class configuration in both the Nipigon Red Rock District High School and Lake Superior High School. Trustees approved the creation of a Grade 7-12 Advisory Committee for each of the areas involved in the study. Although a number of positive benefits of the K-12 model were identified, based upon the correspondence from parents and several students, as well as the feedback received at public meetings, there was a clear lack of support around the 7-12 model. There were a number of repeated concerns involving high school student influences on younger students, supervision and loss of leadership.

In 2014, to support the learning and social experiences of students in the very small intermediate classrooms (grades 7 and 8), the Red Rock Public School became a facility educating students in Kindergarten to Grade Four. Four families with children in grade eight (there were no students in grades

5, 6 or 7) from Red Rock Public School were given the option to transfer to the George O'Neill Public School in Nipigon. Although in 2014, no families made the decision to enroll at George O'Neill Public School, there are currently 5 students (3 families) who ride the bus to George O'Neill Public School daily.

Current Situation

Currently, with an enrollment of 14 students, Red Rock Public School is organized into two classrooms, Year One to Grade One, and Grade Two to Grade Four. There are two full time equivalent (FTE) teachers and the current on-site Vice-Principal has a teaching assignment and two system portfolios including Early Years Support and Special Education Assessment Support. The Principal of the school (off-site) is also responsible for the Nipigon-Red Rock District High School. The school employs a custodian, secretary and 0.2 FTE library technician. The facility has an Ontario Early Years Center and three classrooms function as office space for Board Leads.

Enrolment in 2015/16 was 14.0 ADE (average daily enrolment). While we had projected that 2016/17 enrolment would also be 14.0 ADE, current information indicates that projected enrolment for 2016/17 will be 12.5 ADE by the end of the school year. This is a 10.7% decline from initial projections. If this trend continues, enrolment is expected to be 7.0 ADE in 5 years and 4.0 ADE in 10 years.

Even if we were to maintain current enrolment levels, we are losing funding at Red Rock Public School due to the changes in funding model from the *School Board Efficiencies and Modernization Strategy* of the Ministry of Education. Based on 14 ADE, our operating grants* for 2016/17 at Red Rock Public School are dropping from \$293,297 under the old funding model to \$27,197 under the new funding model – a loss of \$266,100 in grants. While the Ministry has been phasing in these changes over 3 years, full impact of the new funding model will take place in the 2017/18 school year.

(*Note – grants refers to School Foundation, School Operations and School Renewal grants)

For a complete School Information Profile, please see Appendix A.

Accommodation Conditions

A school may be considered for study if certain accommodation conditions apply. At this time, the following conditions apply to Red Rock Public School, including:

- The school is unable to provide a suitable and equitable range of learning opportunities for students;
- The school has experienced an adverse impact on learning opportunities for students due to declining enrolment;
- Reorganization involving the school could enhance programs and learning opportunities for students;
- Under normal staffing practices, it would be necessary to assign three grades to one class in the school;
- The consolidation of schools is in the best interest of the overall school system.

Modified Pupil Accommodation

Policy 905: Pupil Accommodation, Section 6.0 states that a board may choose to undertake a Modified Pupil Accommodation based upon several factors. Those factors are addressed in Table 1.0.

Table 1.0: Factors Supporting the Implementation of a Modified Pupil Accommodation

Factors	Current Status 2016-2017	Status 2011-2012
Utilization Rate of the Facility	7.1%	15.5%
Enrollment (number of students is ≤75 students)	14 students (October Report) 13 Actual (November Numbers) Year One – 3 Year Two – 1 Grade One – 2 Grade Two – 2 Grade Three – 2 Grade Four – 3 (As of January 1, one grade four and one grade two will move to Dorion).	37 Students (March Report)

Process and Proposed Timelines for Modified Pupil Accommodation

Date	Task
December 5, 2016 Board Meeting	Board Report to Board of Trustees: Initial Staff Report and School Information Profile provided
December 6, 2016	Initial Staff Report and School Information Profile posted on Board Website
December 6, 2016 4:00 p.m.	Staff Meeting and School Council Meeting at Red Rock Public School to discuss Initial Staff Report.
December 6 – 9, 2016	Notification of Stakeholders and Community Partners of decision to conduct Modified Pupil Accommodation Review.
January 31, 2017	Public Meeting of Stakeholders Held in Red Rock
February Board Meeting (date to be determined)	Final Report to Board Meeting
One day after February Board Meeting (date to be determined)	Final Staff Report Posted on the Board website
March 22, 2017	Public Delegations to the Board of Trustees in Red Rock
April Board Meeting (date to be determined)	Presentation of Final Decision of the Board of Trustees
One day after April Board Meeting (date to be determined)	Final Decision of the Board of Trustees posted on the Board Website and communicated to stakeholders.

Option to Address Accommodation Issues

The preferred option in the best interests of student learning is to continue to provide transportation for all current students and all future students to George O'Neill Public School in Nipigon.

Supporting Rationale: The George O'Neill Public School is located 16 kilometers from the Red Rock Public School. The George O'Neill Public School is a Kindergarten to Grade 8 school and has a capacity of 202 and is currently serving an enrolment of 108 students. A number of programming options are available to students at this school, including a Kindergarten Program taught by an Educator Team, Native Language and French as A Second Language programs, several ongoing leadership programs including Students' Council, a large number and variety of extra-curricular programs; all housed in a facility that is a community hub (Child Care, Family Support Programs, Contact North). Transportation to the George O'Neill Public School from Red Rock has been an option for families since the 2014-2015 school year, with a designated bus instituted during the 2016-2017 school year.

This is the preferred option as it reflects the belief that the students need to be in an increasingly social environment that includes similar aged peers with programs and services to optimize learning.

Timelines for Implementation: This option would be implemented beginning in September, 2017.

Next Steps

In accordance with Policy 905 *Pupil Accommodation*, it is the recommendation of Senior Administration that the Red Rock Public School be studied through a Modified Pupil Accommodation Review.

Administrative Recommendations

That, the Superior-Greystone DSB, having received report No. 05 Pupil Accommodation Review for Red Rock Public School - Initial Staff Report, recommend that Red Rock Public School be studied through a Modified Pupil Accommodation Review.

Respectfully submitted by:

David Tamblyn
Director of Education
the Director

Nicole Morden Cormier
Superintendent of Education

Cathy Tsubouchi
Superintendent of Business

Charlie Bishop
Assistant to

References

Hattie, John. (2012). Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximizing Impact on Learning. London: Routledge.

Appendix A: School Information Profile (under separate cover)