

**SUPERIOR-GREENSTONE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**  
*"Inspiring our students to succeed and make a difference"*

**Report No: 13**

**Date:** February 27, 2017

**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 – Final Staff Report

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

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**Background**

Superior-Greenstone District School board continues to work diligently at keeping all of its current schools open, as the school board recognizes that these schools are extremely important to the community, to the families, and to our region. It is the policy of Superior-Greenstone District School Board however, 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 informing the decisions made regarding this policy. The Superior-Greenstone District School Board is committed to preparing our students for the complex challenges of the future. Researchers in the field of education have cited specific competencies that students must have to meet these challenges, including the valuable skill of collaboration. Students need to learn to participate in teams, assuming various roles on the team; establish positive relationships with peers and manage conflict, learn from and contribute to the learning of others, co-construct knowledge with their peers (through discussion, interaction, problem solving etc.) and learn to respect the diversity of perspectives that their peers have to contribute. The school and classroom environment must provide for this type of collaboration. In today's classrooms, students are no longer passive recipients of knowledge, sitting at their desks and learning from the teacher and through workbooks/worksheets and drill/practice, but active learners, engaging in tasks as collaborative teams, and co-constructing their knowledge by building on the ideas of their peers and their research. When there are many students in the classroom, there are additional perspectives offered, thus enhancing the classroom environment. This diversity provides more learning opportunities for all learners, and thus, increases their academic, social and emotional learning.

As of January, 2017, the enrolment at the Red Rock Public School is eleven students, from Kindergarten to grade 4. There are two classrooms; Kindergarten to grade one with 5 students, and grade two to grade four with 6 students. No grades have more than three students of the same age. The Ten-Year Projections show that enrolment will continue to decline to 7 students in five years, and to 4 students by the year 2026-2027 (10 years from now). With the past trends and future projections, and the prospects of industry locating to the community appearing remote, the learning environment for the current and future students at the Red Rock Public School cannot be maximized.

On December 5, 2016, the Superior-Greenstone District School Board of Trustees voted in favour of conducting a Modified Pupil Accommodation Review, as per board policy 905: Pupil Accommodation Review. As per the Initial Staff Report and in the best interest of student achievement and social and emotional learning, the preferred option of this study is to continue to provide transportation for all current students and all future students to the George O'Neill Public School, beginning in September, 2017.

George O'Neill Public School is located in the community of Nipigon, which is 16 kilometers from Red Rock. Students would be picked up at approximately 8:10 am and would return home by approximately 3:45 pm daily. This school has single and double grades as their enrolment has remained fairly stable at approximately 100 students for the past three years and is projected to remain stable for the 2017-2018 school year. A large number of responsive programming options are available for students. For example, there is a Kindergarten Program taught by an Educator Team (teacher and ECE), 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).

While the primary reason for launching this study is to improve the learning environment for our students, it is also the responsibility of the school board to be fiscally accountable. If we were to maintain current enrolment levels at Red

Rock Public School, we would be losing funding at this school, due to the changes in the funding model from the *School Board Efficiencies and Modernization Strategy* of the Ministry of Education. Based on an enrolment of 14 students (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)

### **Current Situation**

The January 31, 2017 Public Meeting at the Red Rock Public School had 6 parents and 6 community members in attendance. Board staff presented information from the Initial Staff Report and the School Information Profile. Following the formal presentation, members of the public and parents were then given the opportunity to pose questions and thus were able to indicate some of their concerns. Most concerns raised by parents and community members involved other possible solutions to avoid the closure of Red Rock Public School or to avoid students leaving the community. Questions were posed relating to the following:

- The extent of collaboration between Superior-Greenstone District School Board and Superior North Catholic District School board; specifically, if students could be co-located at St. Hillary's School in Red Rock.
- Exploration regarding how many grade 5-8 students would return to Red Rock Public School if grades 5-8 were offered, and if recess could be combined.
- The social, emotional and academic learning environments for the students, and what other ways this learning environment might have been enhanced at Red Rock Public School.
- The option of providing bussing to the Dorion Public School rather than to the George O'Neill Public School.
- The future of the building, specifically what would happen to the Ontario Early Years Centers.
- Alternative ways to generate funding to keep Red Rock Public School open.

The questions posed reflect the discussions that have taken place and continue to take place with senior staff, as we have explored all possible options for the future of the Red Rock Public School. At this time, the recommendation of senior staff, in the best interest of student achievement and social and emotional learning, is the preferred option to continue to provide transportation for all current students and all future students to the George O'Neill Public School, beginning in September, 2017.

### **Next Steps**

As per Policy 905: Pupil Accommodation Review, the next steps in the Modified Pupil Accommodation process is to provide the public with an opportunity to respond to the Final Staff Report through public delegations to the Board of Trustees. This will take place in Red Rock on March 22, 2017, at the Red Rock Public School. Notice of this delegation opportunity will be posted on the Board website, in the local newspaper and through social media. The feedback from the delegations will be compiled and presented to the Board of Trustees for consideration.

The Board of Trustees have the discretion to approve the recommendation of the Final Staff Report as presented, modify the recommendation of the Final Staff Report, or to approve a different outcome.

### **Administrative Recommendations**

*That the Superior-Greenstone DSB, having received report No. 13, Pupil Accommodation Review for Red Rock Public School - Final Staff Report, accept this report for information.*

Respectfully submitted by:

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