

PROCESS, POLICY & PROCEDURE:

The views and opinions express here are those of the speaker/writer and do not necessarily reflect those of the CENHARC, its members or the Hot Stove, its members.

The AMDSB's Policy # 18 is generic and vague, however one should not have to be a lawyer to be able to understand and follow it. Unlike Thames Valley.

Although Accommodation Reviews are not new the AMDSB, this is only the second round for Policy # 18. Some previous reviews that resulted in school closures such as the Seaforth High School or Grade 7 & 8 consolidation in Elementary Schools or Secondary Schools took place before Provincial guidelines were established.

The Policy needs to expand on the actual Accommodation Review (AR) process and the outcome the ARC is to present and to expand on the duties and responsibilities of the ARC members. Maybe the ARC is not asking enough procedural questions or are they taking their role beyond what is necessary.

Is the ARC process just a means of Public input? We go in there with no direction except that there is an Accommodation problem that needs to be solved. Should we be looking at this or that. "What about this or how about that?" What is the Board Administration thinking or going to do???? Does the Board take what it hears from the AR to develop their recommendation(s)/scenario(s) or has it already been formulated before the process started? They may hear but do they listen!!

The ARC members are gathering Public input on the Accommodation issue(s) before the Board. Is the ARC there to take this input and make simple recommendations on what they would and would not like done or "do this if this or don't do this if this"? The Board could do that themselves or is the ARC to develop their own scenario/recommendation?

The ARC's scenario maybe in line with what the Board will propose themselves to the Trustees. At this point is where I see the major flaw in the Process. The Board and the ARC, with the same objective but maybe coming from different direction and could possibly come up with the same result/scenario. This has not been the case with the CENHARC. Two camps may have been formed. **Why can't the Board make known a preliminary proposal/scenario/recommendation at the beginning of the process?** Having a known proposal would give the public something to speak about and help to gather input and give the ARC a sense of direction, either improve the Boards proposal or develop their own. The Board at the same time could be working on their final proposal. The current ARC developed an 'outside the box' scenario for the task they were given and to oppose a perceived direction of the Board. The CENHARC was established to look at the accommodation issue(s) at five elementary schools; the local secondary school was not included in their mandate. Is the ARC making more of what is expected of them? Now, the two camps are using their energy to

convince the public and themselves that they are right. The Trustees, the final decision makers, have the tasks of acting as both the Board's messenger and as the Public's ears and representatives, a double-edged sword.

Yes, we have been told the Trustees will make the final decision. If only one proposal is before them that is not much of a decision making process. The current Policy encourages the Status quo or gives the ARC little manoeuvring room.

The ARC makes a recommendation(s), the Board proposes their recommendation and the Trustees vote on either proposals, make changes to either or makes their own decision. If the Trustees change a recommendation or go their own direction the public has been given no opportunity to appeal this decision let alone had time to address this proposal.

Outside consultation and group discussions(groups) should not be discouraged. Much useful work can be done outside the formal process.

The Board needs to develop a long-term plan on AR's, similar to Upper Grand. To include when areas/schools might be reviewed and whether the Board has an overall plan or recommendations for solution(s) i.e. Grade 7 & 8's into high schools.

Previous Reviews under this Policy or previous policies, had country/town elementary schools and the town high school within the same community, whether it was Stratford, St. Mary, Mitchell or Goderich, reviewed together. Not pitting community against community. A school(s) would still exist within that community. This, CENHARC, had five communities/schools grouped together without the high school involved and yet the high school could/would be greatly impacted. Whereas in Usborne the school was reviewed by itself when any decision could/would have great impact on neighbouring schools who had no direct say in the process or the outcome. The trustees, upon recommendation from the Board, decided to have Usborne stand-alone and then questioned how the Board could make a decision about Usborne that affected the neighbouring schools without directly consulting those schools. Now, in both Usborne and CENH, the Board has held Public meetings to inform the public of the proposed changes and to gather feedback.

Schools that could be impacted by a review should have observer status at AR meetings or at least be officially informed that change could affect/happen to them.

Why is it necessary to have municipal representation with voting rights on the ARC? The possible imbalanced that would have incurred in the CENHARC had any meaningful vote taken place needs to be addressed.

Can the Trustees, chairperson(s) and staff capably/properly handle (minutes, information, research, compilations) more than one AR at a time? Hate to think if the Usborne and CENHARC were on the same timetable what the Board meetings would look like. Usborne was told they were a stand-alone school because the Board was too busy with the North Huron

Review and the Goderich Transition to do a full review in South Huron. The CENHARC was told the determination of the five schools in its review was an arbitrary line down #4. Was this correct? Fair? Logical? Will return to these points.

Is moving Students to a different/new school then removing the Grade 7 & 8's at a later date to a secondary school, one or two moves?

What of the schools the have been left out of reviews, Brookside or Colborne, does the Board have a plan for them? What about future reviews affecting, say Holmesville, North Easthope or Mornington, do the Trustees consider this?

The Board did a school by school/ area by area AR several years ago. It would be nice to know that there is a timetable or framework in place outlining future reviews. Yes, the Board does a yearly look at school capacities and other factors to determine if a school(s) needs reviewed. A two to three year preliminary review/plan could help to determine what schools need to be actually addressed and what impact that review could/would have on them directly and any impact on future reviews of neighbouring schools. During this time the Board staff could be working on their Preliminary recommendation for the Official AR.

Although the final decisions have not been made, the two Accommodation Reviews by the AMDSB this year have been a public relations fiasco for the Board. The Public has lost all faith in the Board and even the Trustees. At the beginning of the process we were told **NO** decision had been made and that there is **NO** plan. We knew what past ARC had recommended and what past Board trends were, but there was NO decision or plan. The Goderich and Mitchell reviews could read between the lines and saw the writing on the wall and saw little option but to go with what was expected.

FEMSS was not included in the CENH review because then it would have openly revealed the Boards agenda. FEMSS did not need to be official included because the changes there were not affecting more than 50% of the student population. They already have the principal in place that has been part of the 7-12 schools in Stratford. Why was Hullett included when it was a feeder school to CHSS? It was to be a receiver school, receiving a student population of more than 50% of its current enrolment therefore needing to be reviewed. Its proposed new overcapacity will not be solved by declining enrolment but by the movement of Grade 7 & 8 from Hullett, Clinton PS and Holmesville PS to CHSS. Oh yea, a review has to take place in Central Huron before this can occur although there is no plan or no decision made. Still trying to figure out the proposed under capacity of East Wawanash unless it is becoming the new home of Brookside after both their 7 & 8's go to FEMSS. The Boards recommendation for Osborne tells the same story. The closure of Osborne and the placement of its Grade 7 & 8 into SHDHS along with Exeter's and its Grades K-6 into Exeter PS, is less than the 50% required by the Board to need an official review of both Exeter PS and SHDHS. Was there no predetermined plan/outcome?

Why do you think there is so much apathy and frustration out there in the public. We have been misled maybe not lied to. Perception means everything. What was April's Character Attribute?

Policy 18 needs to be changed to better reflect the concerns of the Public if it is to remain effective in future reviews, there may not be that many left. The process and its procedure must be revised to regain the faith and trust of the public and to encourage their future participation.