

PLANNING TODAY TO ENERGIZE EDUCATION TOMORROW

During the 2009/10 school year, the DSBN engaged in a system-wide review of our school buildings which enabled trustees to gain an overview of how our facilities are being used, and to identify potential areas for growth and revitalization in the future.

The majority of school boards throughout Ontario are facing the challenge of declining enrolment because of changing demographics. Parents are having fewer children later in life, which reduces the number of students starting Kindergarten each year.

One way school boards can address the issues of declining enrolment and aging facilities is through accommodation reviews. Through this process, education can be rejuvenated by building some new schools, consolidating some schools, renovating some schools and closing some schools.

At their most recent meeting, Trustees passed a Facilities Planning report which examines how to provide optimal learning spaces for students by initiating three phases of accommodation reviews beginning in September, 2011. Phase one accommodation reviews will undertake an in-depth study of central and south St. Catharines and Thorold secondary schools as well as elementary schools in Fort Erie.

Over the coming months, Board staff will begin to assemble an Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) for the two reviews. Each committee will undertake an in-depth study of the school planning areas and provide recommendations that will help guide Trustees in their decision making. Each ARC will include a business community member and/or a municipal representative, parents, a trustee, and DSBN staff. All ARC meetings will be open to the public, and the public will also have an opportunity to provide feedback during specially scheduled public meetings.

Moving forward, our goal is to continue serving students with excellent programs. The accommodation review process will ensure that funding is spent on enriching the educational opportunities for students

The full report, along with information about accommodation reviews is available at www.dsbno.org/arc.