Final ARC Recommendations - Niagara-on-the-Lake Accommodation Review

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of its study of the data and its deliberations regarding the best interest of students and communities, the Accommodation Review Committee respectfully submits the following recommendations:

WHEREAS

1. Niagara-on-the-Lake is: the first capital of Upper Canada, the home of the Shaw Festival, the selected venue for the National Arts Centre/Toronto Symphony Orchestra’s international music festival, a hotbed of world-class agriculture, viticulture, tourism and culinary arts, and a host to millions of visitors, international and national leaders annually;

And WHEREAS

2. Niagara District Secondary School is the only secondary school in Niagara-on-the-Lake and it has strong community support;

And WHEREAS

3. The value of Niagara District Secondary School to secondary school age students is incontrovertible, with high student satisfaction and with 65% of graduates proceeding to post-secondary education in 2007, and another two students going on Rotary Club of Niagara-on-the-Lake student exchanges;

And WHEREAS

4. Niagara-on-the-Lake’s secondary school age cohort is 750 students in 2007; projected numbers of 600 students in 2012 and 525 students in 2017; numbers that managed properly can sustain a viable high school of 400 students or more within the Town over the long term (including losses to the separate school board);

And WHEREAS

5. The District School Board of Niagara has contributed to a declining enrolment cycle at Niagara District Secondary School through:
   a. Lack of facility improvement and upkeep;
   b. Persistent threat of closure since 1991;
   c. Accommodating over 40% of local public secondary school students outside of Niagara-on-the-Lake.
We hereby recommend:

1. THAT the District School Board of Niagara recognize the significant educational, cultural, social value and the environmental merit of providing secondary education within Niagara-on-the-Lake and initiate the process to reinvent Niagara District Secondary School as a viable sustainable high school;

2. THAT the District School Board of Niagara construct a new high school on the existing site of Niagara District Secondary School for a student capacity of 400 to 500;

3. THAT the District School Board of Niagara provide sufficient staffing allocations to ensure a teaching complement allowing delivery of courses for completion of a high school education;

4. THAT the District School Board of Niagara explore community partnerships for joint facilities, including collaborating with the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake toward shared community facilities;

5. THAT the District School Board of Niagara encourage the Ontario Ministry of Education to create an alternate funding formula to support quality secondary education in municipalities not qualifying for rural funding but having a single secondary school near a large urban centre (such as Port Dover, Strathroy and Niagara-on-the-Lake);

6. THAT the District School Board of Niagara supports the creation of a shared vision for a secondary school that reflects local academic, athletic, artistic/cultural and social needs and values, thereby positioning the school to become the secondary school of choice for a majority of Niagara-on-the-Lake’s secondary school students. The visioning process may include but not be limited to: academics/course selection, competitive sports, uniforms/dress codes, codes of conduct, spiritual life, and specialty (district-wide) programming that meets local needs first and foremost.

7. THAT the District School Board of Niagara increase support for the existing Performing Arts program by:
   a. extending bussing to students from Niagara Falls;
   b. ensuring Niagara District Secondary School is offered exclusivity in all newly created regional Performing Arts programming.

8. THAT the District School Board of Niagara supports Niagara District Secondary School’s application for two new high skills majors in:
   a. arts and culture
   b. agriculture

9. THAT the District School Board of Niagara provide Niagara-on-the-Lake’s “new” secondary school with marketing and communication support to create a positive new image and brand including a new name;

10. THAT the District School Board of Niagara support a partnership with the local churches to foster a spiritual aspect at the high school;

11. THAT the District School Board of Niagara investigate a Magnet program for Niagara District Secondary School;
12. THAT the District School Board of Niagara recognize and consider the effect any future school or system reviews and/or decisions may have on the sustainability and viability of Niagara District Secondary School;

13. THAT the District School Board of Niagara build a new elementary school, junior kindergarten to grade 8, to house Colonel John Butler and Virgil students, including day care facilities, on the Virgil or Colonel John Butler site;

14. THAT the District School Board of Niagara renovate Parliament Oak, junior kindergarten to grade 8, including day care facilities;

15. THAT the District School Board of Niagara adjust the boundaries of Parliament Oak grandfathering the existing students;

16. THAT the District School Board of Niagara renovate and build an addition to St. Davids to house Laura Secord and St. Davids students, junior kindergarten to grade 8, including a day care facility.