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David Thompson, Chairperson

Geof Botting, Director of Education

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**To: Trustees**

**From: Geof Botting, Director of Education**

**Date: April 22, 2014**

**Topic: Administrative Analysis of Accommodation Options for the Schools under Review in the Burk's Falls Area ARC**

**Background:**

Not unlike many other Boards in the Province, the Near North District School Board (NNDSB) is experiencing declining enrolment resulting in excess space in its facilities. What is important to recognize is that in October 2003 (10 years ago) the Board was utilizing 91% of its school capacity decreasing to 72.95% of utilization in October 2008.

As a result of the Ministry of Education consulting the education sector on its School Board Efficiencies and Modernization document in recognition of underutilization in school boards across the province, the Ministry is taking a measured and phased approach to promoting a more efficient use of school space. Accordingly, the Ministry has revised GSN grants and allocations to incent boards with the expectation of consolidating space.

Currently 26 of 33 elementary schools are operating at less than 80% capacity. Based only on elementary enrolment projections developed in 2012, the number of surplus spaces is expected to increase to 3,915 by October 2017, with the overall utilization rate projected to fall to 61.02%. By October 2017, 29 of 33 elementary schools are projected to operate at less than 80% capacity. For many of these schools it is important to recognize that operating below 80% capacity is paying for empty spaces.

Aside from declining enrolment, current and future capital repairs is a major issue facing the Near North District School Board. The Board's inventory of facilities is aging with many having lived past their expected useful lives. For the purposes of financial reporting and calculating depreciation, the expected useful life of a building is approximately 40 years. Useful life is defined as the estimated period over which a capital asset is expected to be used. It is important to realize that the life of a capital asset may extend beyond its useful life through investment of renewal dollars. In the NNDSB inventory of facilities 24 of its facilities were built in 1973 or earlier, and have therefore exceeded their estimated useful lives. Given the Board's limited renewal funding and the number of facilities it has, it is not financially sustainable to maintain the current number of buildings.

The Board can no longer afford to keep all of its facilities open and continue to pay the operating costs and ongoing capital repair/renewal costs when it is not receiving funding sufficient enough to pay for such expenditures. This is attributable to the very significant needs of the system given the age of its inventory of facilities. It is critical that all students across the district have safe and effective learning spaces.

Over the past two years, the Board has begun to address its excess capacity and non-sustainable costs associated with school operations and school renewal, with a series of 4 accommodation review processes across the district. By addressing declining enrolment and its excess capacity, the Board has begun the process of “right-sizing” its system -- which is long overdue. This is allowing the Board to begin to optimize its investment in capital programs and its allocation of school operations and school renewal grants.

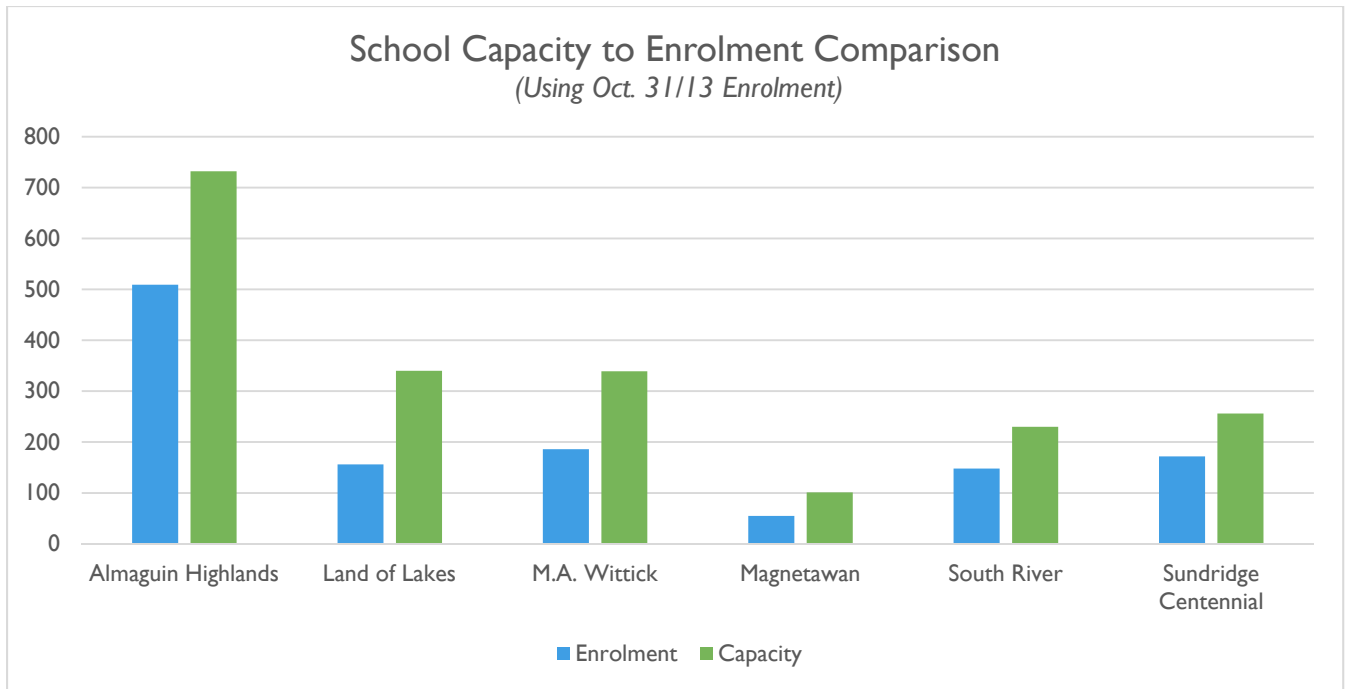
An accommodation review committee was struck as a result of a Board motion in public session on May 28, 2013, which put forth an option to move the Grade 7 & 8 students from Land of Lakes School to Almaguin School, renovate Land of Lakes to accommodate Early Learning to Grade 6 students, and move the students from M.A. Wittick to Land of Lakes School and Magnetawan students to the most appropriate school.

A community consultation was convened to review the preferred option of the Board of Trustees and provide input and alternative options for Board consideration through an ARC process. Four public meetings were held. The first public meeting took place on September 26, 2013. The second and third public meetings (October 30, 2013 and February 12 respectively) were designated for community and parent input. At the fourth meeting, the committee reached consensus on the recommendation and consideration, which will be brought forward in the ARC committee’s report to the Board on April 22, 2014.

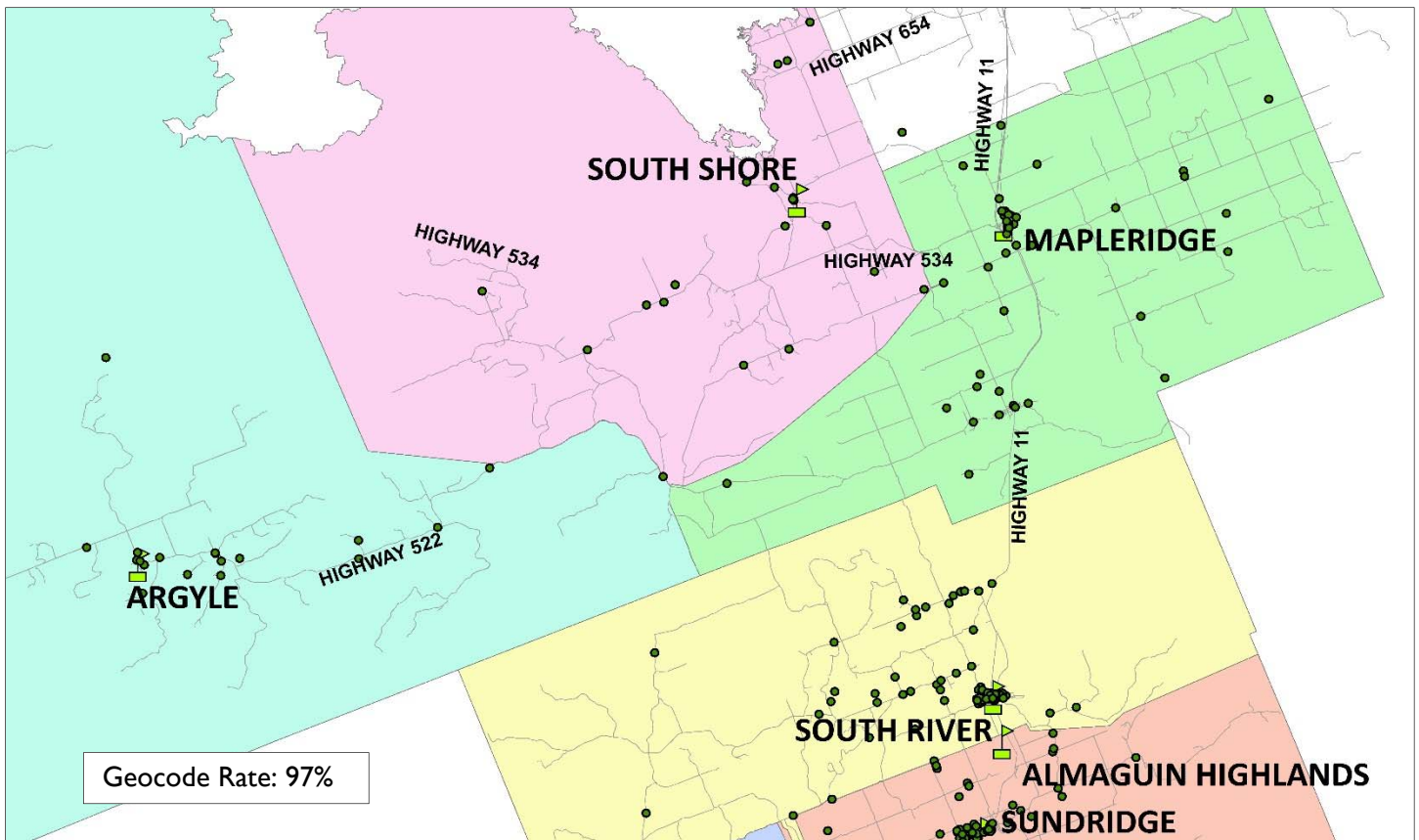
**Discussion:**

**Review of Options from Burk’s Falls ARC – Almaguin Highlands Secondary School, Land of Lakes Public School, M.A. Wittick Public School, Magnetawan Central School, South River Public School and Sundridge Centennial Public School**

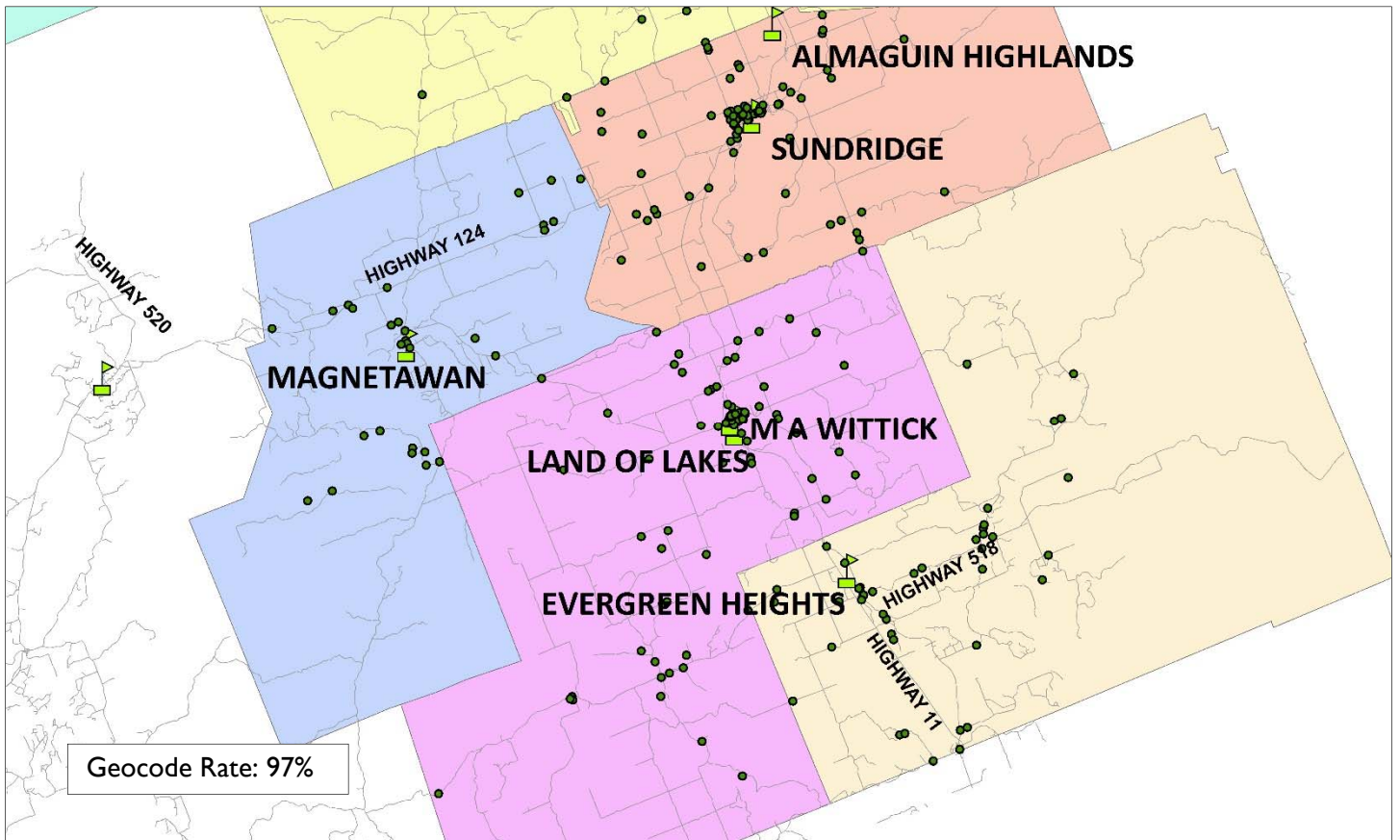
School	Grades/ Program	On the Ground Capacity	Oct. 31/2013 Enrolment Head Count				Surplus Capacity	Utilization Rate	Capital Repairs to 2017	Capital Repairs to 2020
			JK-6	7-8	9- 12	Total				
Almaguin Highlands Secondary School	9 -12 Regular and Extended French	732	--	--	509	509	223 spaces	69.5%	**N/A	
Land of Lakes Public School	7 - 8 Regular and 5 - 8 Extended French	340	14 (extended French)	142	--	156	184 spaces	45.9%	\$ 113,496.30	\$ 1,312,107.30
M.A Wittick Public School	JK-6 Regular	339	186	--	--	186	153 spaces	54.9%	\$ 1,166,849.50	\$ 2,277,186.50
Magnetawan Central School	JK-6 Regular	101	55	--	--	55	46 spaces	54.5%	\$ 467,781.90	\$ 867,369.90
South River Public School	JK-6 Regular	230	148	--	--	148	82 spaces	64.3%	\$ 2,181,320.50	\$ 3,165,052.50
Sundridge Centennial Public School	JK-6 Regular	256	172	--	--	172	84 spaces	67.2%	\$ 285,600.00	\$ 1,782,211.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>1998</b>	<b>575</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>1226</b>	<b>772 spaces</b>	<b>61.4%</b>	<b>\$ 4,215,048.20</b>	<b>\$9,403,927.20</b>



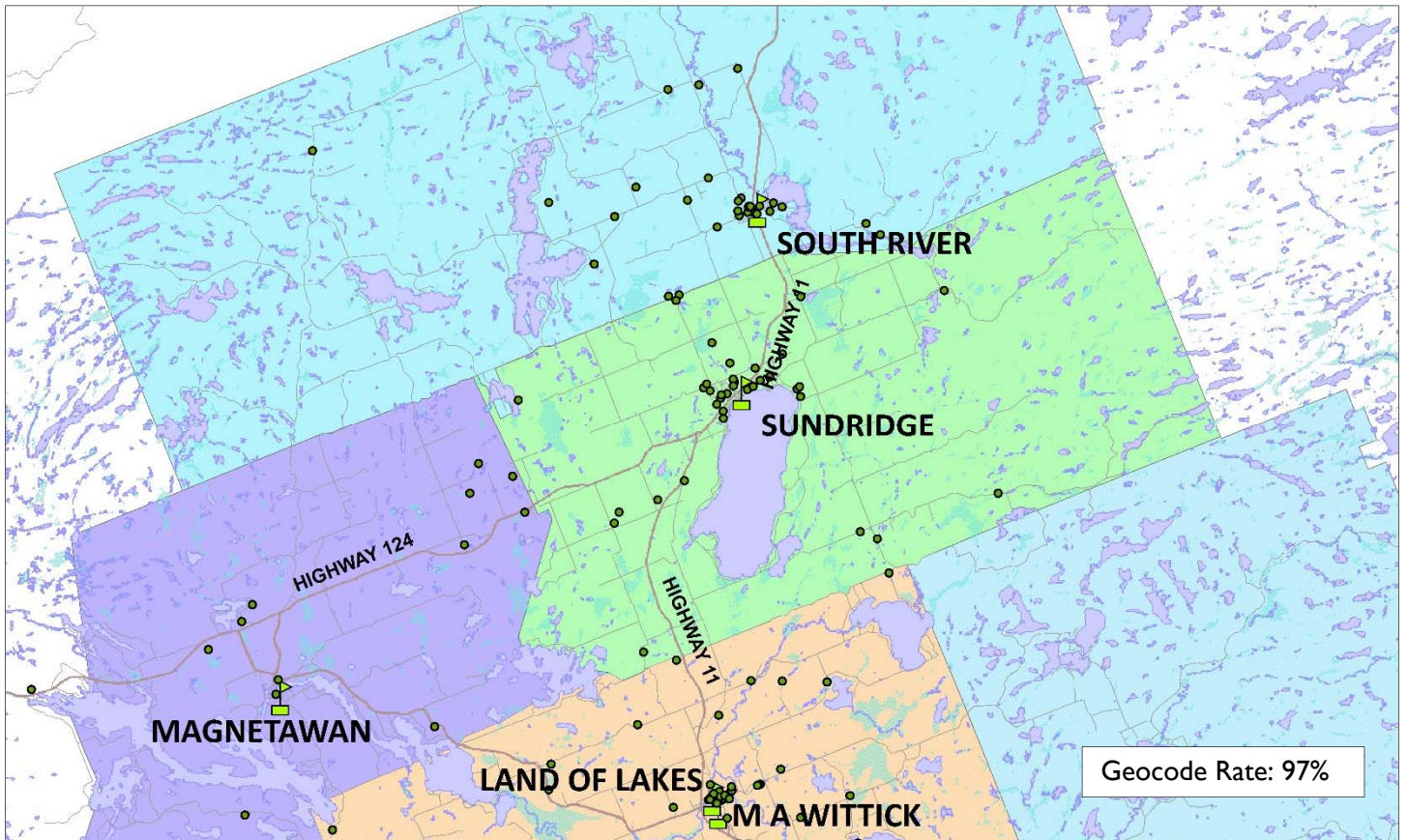
### Almaguin Highlands Students in Northern Region of School Boundary



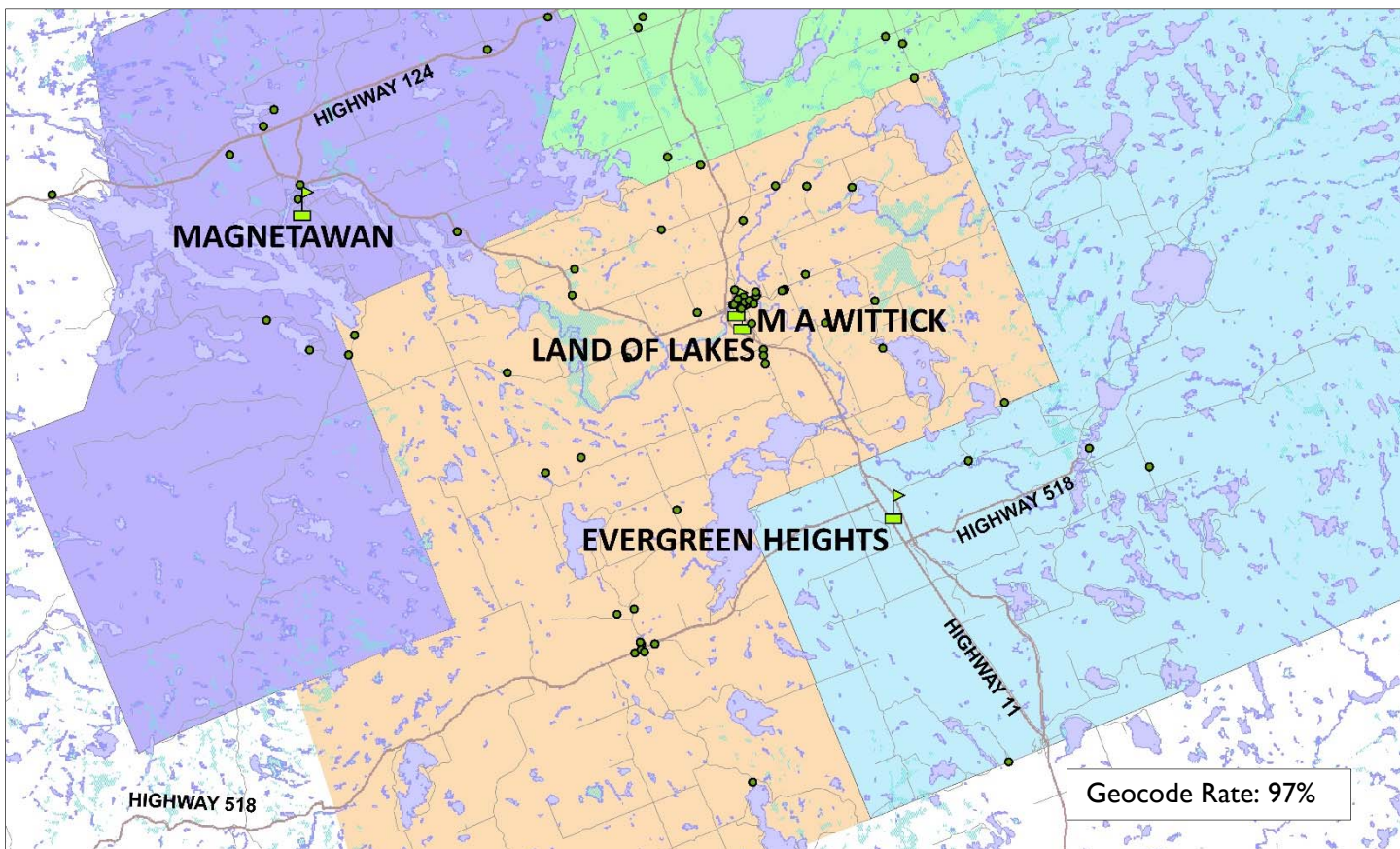
## Almaguin Highlands Students in Southern Region of School Boundary



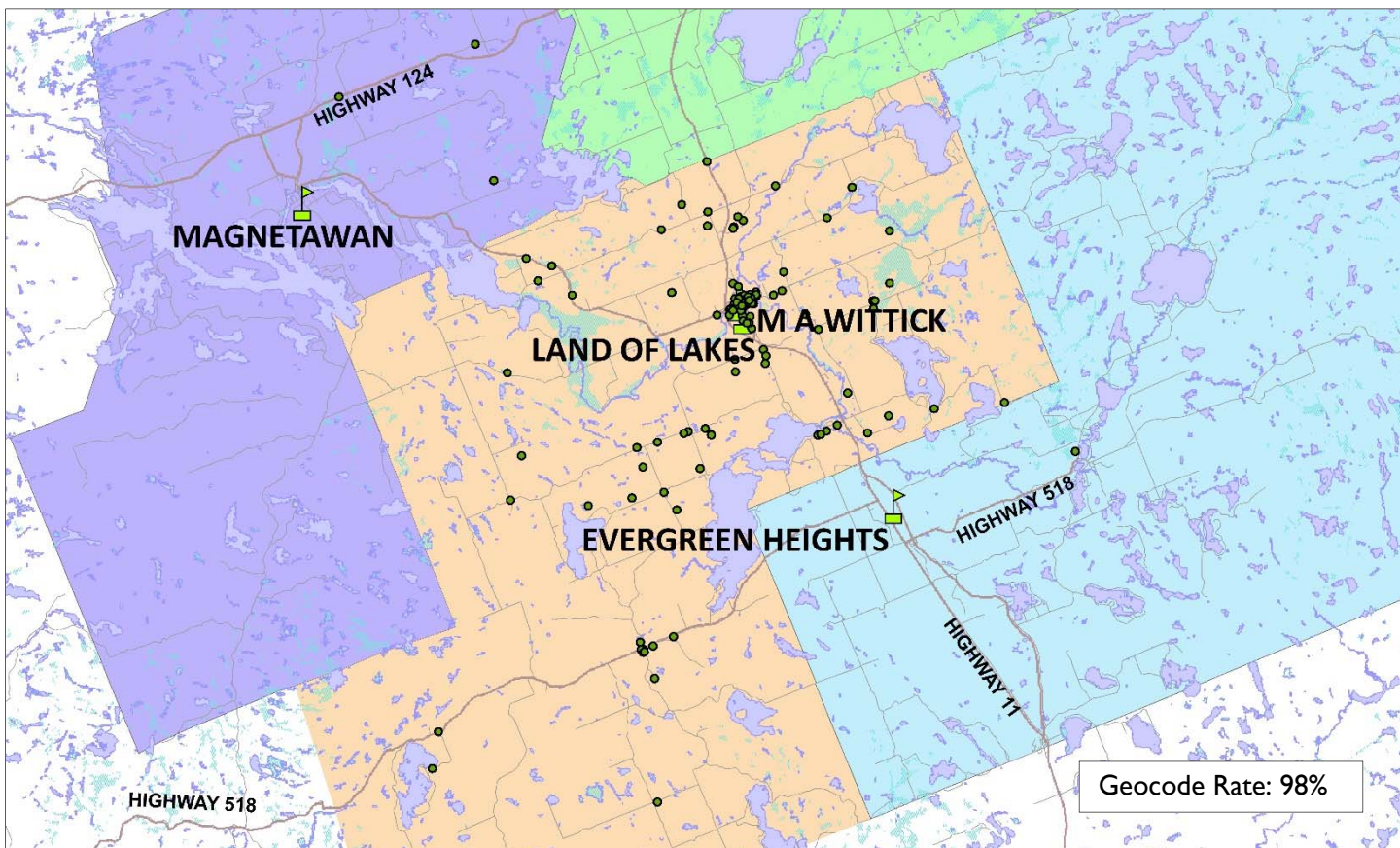
## Land of Lakes Students in Northern Region of School Boundary



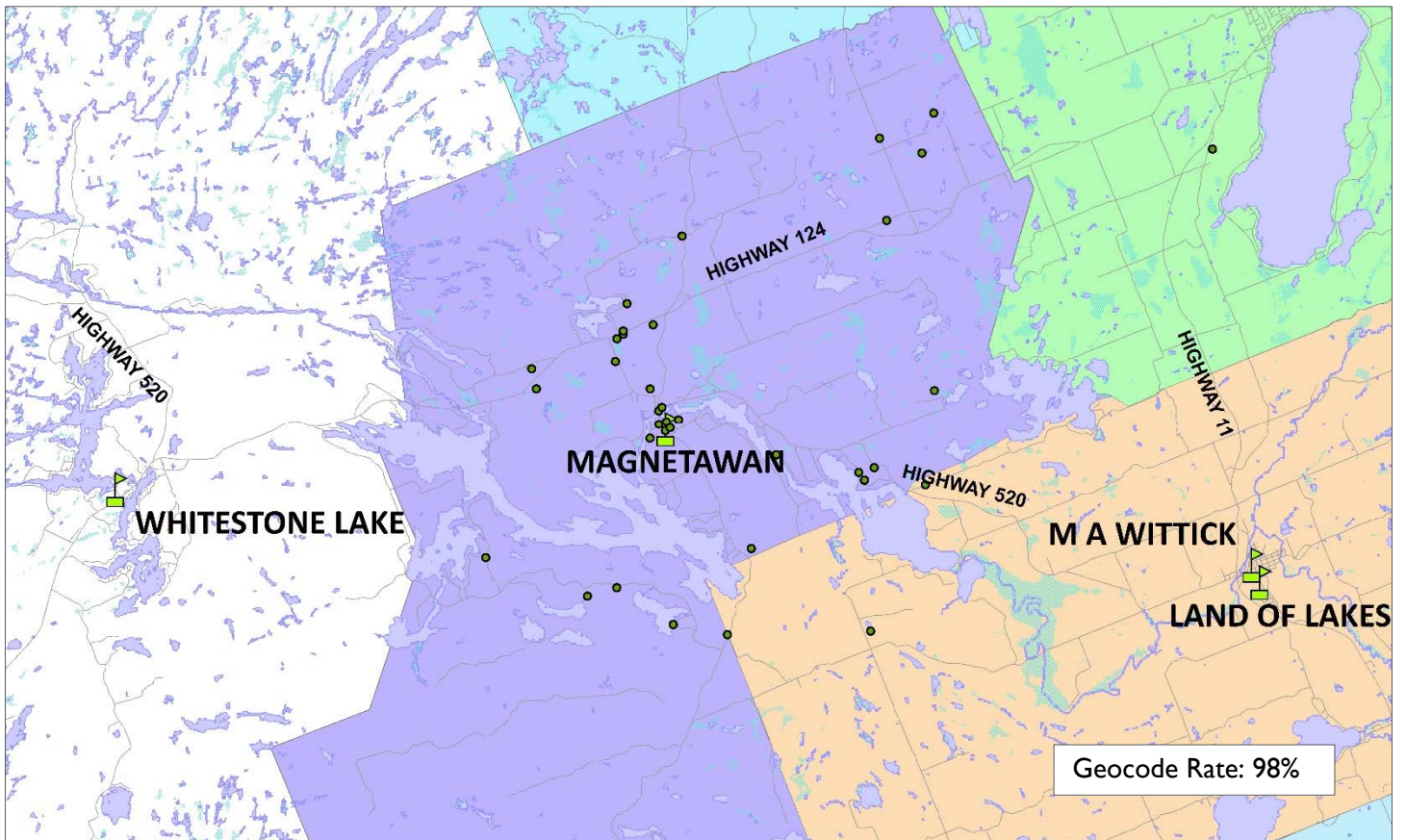
## Land of Lakes Students in Southern Region of School Boundary



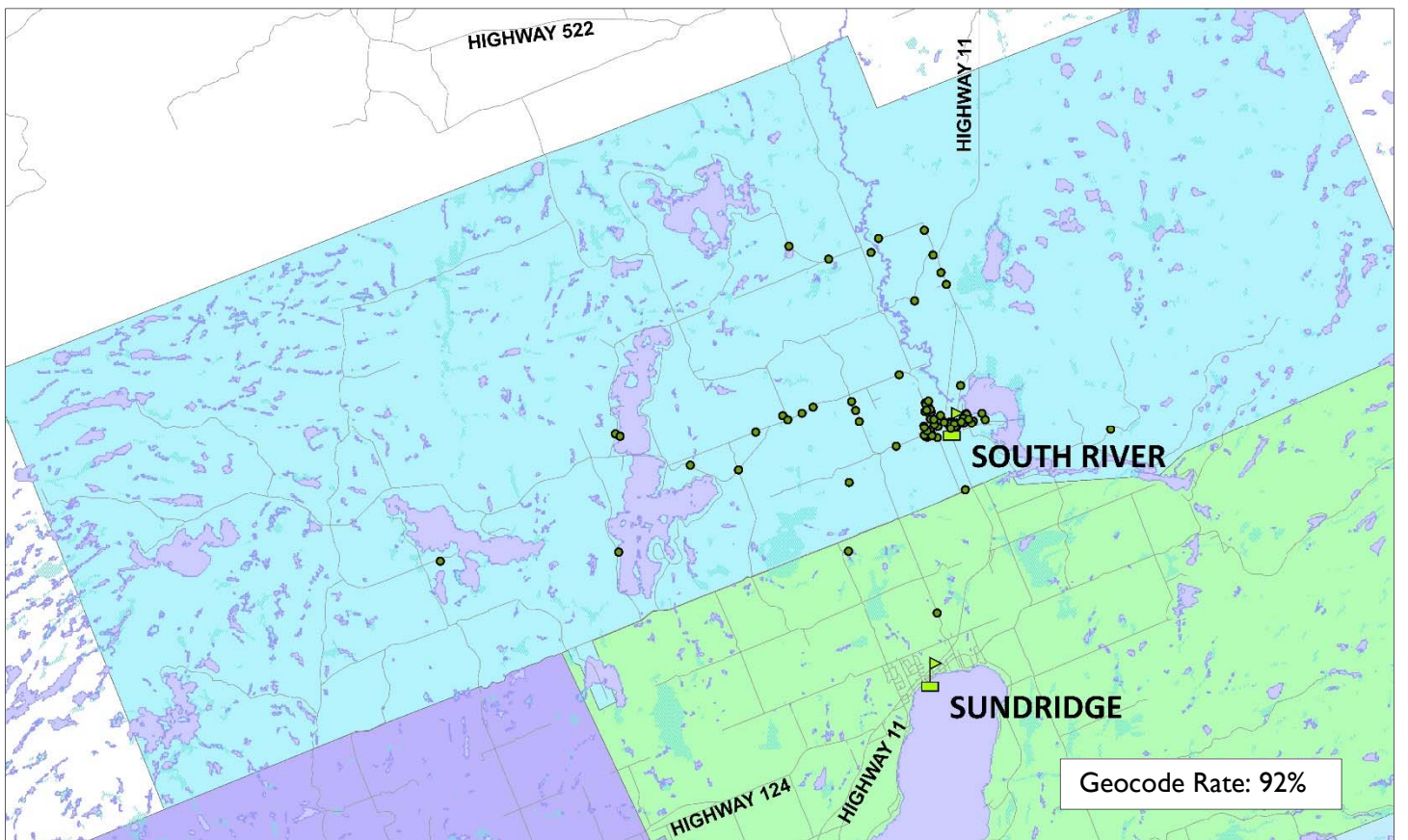
## MA Wittick Students



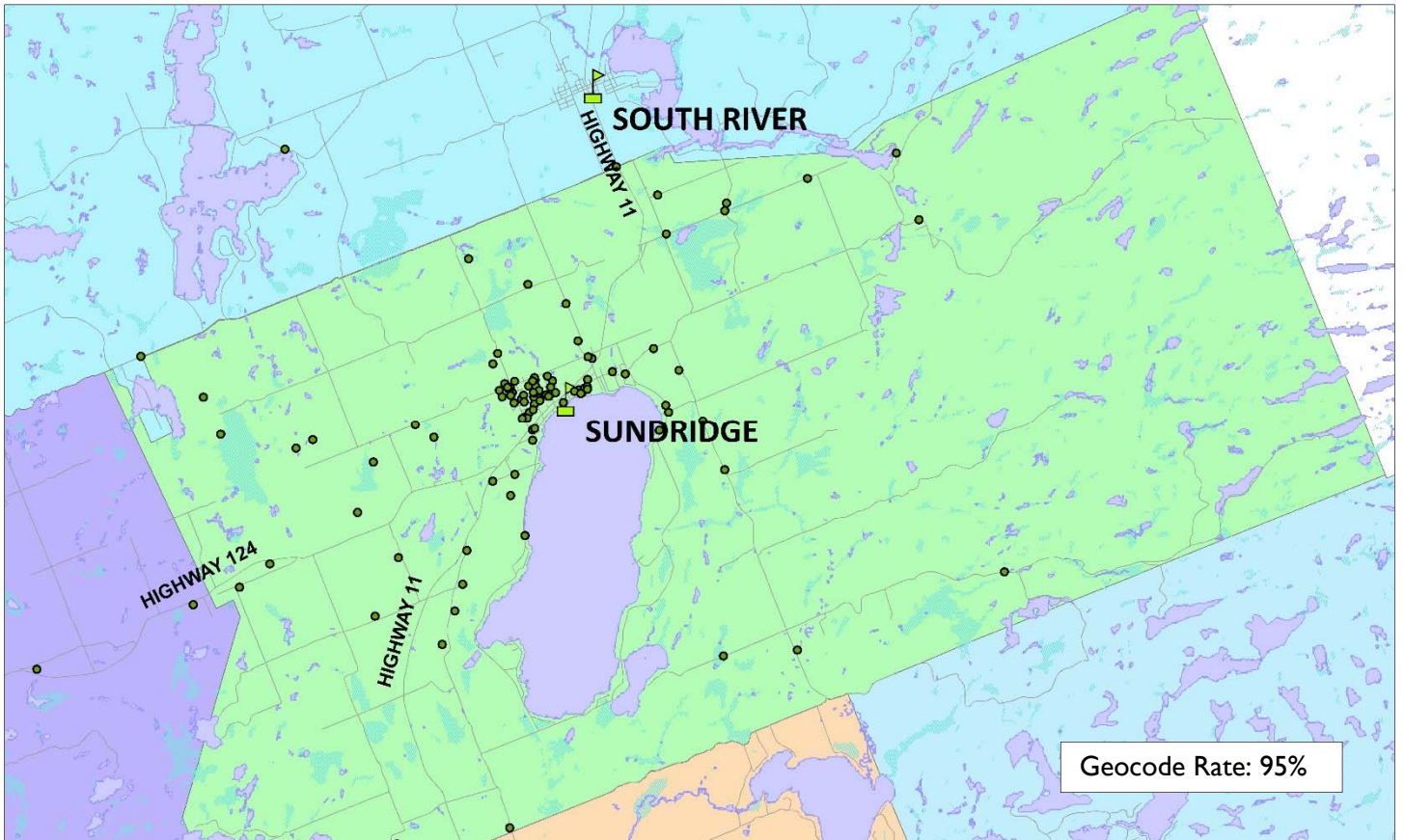
## Magnetawan Students



## South River Students



# Sundridge Centennial Students



## Option Presented by Accommodation Review Committee (ARC)

That the Board close M.A. Wittick Public School and move JK-6 students to a refurbished Land of Lakes. Keep Magnetawan Central School open. Send Land of Lakes Public School 7-8 students back to their home schools. French Immersion students from Grades 5-8 would continue to attend the new Land of Lakes Public School.

The following chart provides a comparison overview of the Board preferred option and the option recommended by the ARC committee.

### Comparison of Options

	<b>Board Preferred Option –</b> Move the Grade 7 & 8 students from Land of Lakes School to Almaguin School, renovate Land of Lakes to accommodate Early Learning to Grade 6 students, and move the students from M.A. Wittick to Land of Lakes School and Magnetawan students to the most appropriate school.	<b>ARC Option –</b> Close M.A. Wittick Public School and move JK-6 students to a refurbished Land of Lakes. Keep Magnetawan Central School open. Send Land of Lakes Public School 7-8 students back to their home schools. French Immersion students from Grades 5-8 would continue to attend the new Land of Lakes Public School.
<b>Buildings Closed</b>	Two	One
<b>Capital Repair Costs to 2020 Eliminated</b>	\$3,144,556.40	\$2,277,186.50
<b>Surplus Capacity Reduced</b>	440	339
<b>Condition of Facilities</b>	Elimination of \$3,144,556.40 in capital repairs as M.A. Wittick requires \$2,277,186.50 in capital repairs and Magnetawan requires \$867,369.90 in capital repairs.	Elimination of \$2,277,186.50 in capital repairs due to MA Wittick being closed.
<b>Sustainability Financially</b>	<p>More financially sustainable. This option deals with the Board's excess capacity at Almaguin Highlands Secondary as well as three elementary schools by consolidating M.A. Wittick into Land of Lakes and Magnetawan into the most appropriate facilities with the Grade 7 and 8 students going to Almaguin.</p> <p>This option reduces future capital repair needs from 2013 to 2020 in the amount of \$3,144,556.40 (MA Wittick \$2,277,286.50 and Magnetawan \$867,369.90). It is important to note that School specific Ministry of Education School Renewal Grants generated (including Top-Up Funding for Rural and Supported schools), are only \$41,713.07 per annum for M.A. Wittick and \$12,428.36 per annum for Magnetawan.</p>	<p>Less financially sustainable. This option deals with excess capacity at M.A. Wittick and Land of Lakes but does not address excess capacity at Almaguin or Magnetawan.</p> <p>This option reduces future capital needs from 2013 to 2020 in the amount of \$2,277,286.50 associated with MA Wittick. It is important to note that School specific Ministry of Education School Renewal Grants generated (including Top-Up Funding for Rural and Supported schools), are \$41,713.07 per annum for M.A. Wittick and \$12,428.36 per annum for Magnetawan.</p>



	Capital expenditures for Land of Lakes due to needed renovations to become a JK-6 facility excluding the necessity of retrofitting specialty rooms such as Music and Industrial Arts, is estimated to be between \$1-\$1.5 million which will need to be funded either through the Board's Accumulated Surplus or through a Capital Priorities submission to the Ministry of Education as a result of the ARC	Capital expenditures for Land of Lakes due to needed renovations to become a JK-8 facility is estimated to be in excess of \$1.5 million including retrofitting current Music room or Industrial Arts, and reductions in floor space for library, and potentially special education classrooms; this option will need to be funded either through the Board's Accumulated Surplus or through a Capital Priorities submission to the Ministry of Education as a result of the ARC
<b>Student Safety</b>	Two Vice Principals at Almaguin, cameras, Nod squad Peer Support, JK-6 at LOL may need consideration of crossing guards.	JK-6 at LOL may need consideration of crossing guards.
<b>Curricular; Extra-Curricular</b>	7-8 students access to full Almaguin facility-gym, music, science and technology, computer labs., library, theatre  7-8 Extended French relocated to Almaguin  Extra curricular or intramural activities status quo or possibility of increased opportunities in larger setting	Access to specialty areas such as science and technology, theatre, hospitality, music as well as specialty teachers will be minimized in JK-8 schools  7-8 Extended French to remain at Land of Lakes  Extra curricular or intramural activities status quo or reduced due to small numbers of 7/8 students  To accommodate the 7/8 students at Magnetawan, consideration to the loss of library facility currently located in a portable or triple grades concept.
<b>Equity of Access</b>	Fully	Fully
<b>Community School</b>	Loss of Magnetawan as community school  Re-location of Child-Family Resource Centre (Early Years) from M.A. Wittick to Land of Lakes	No loss of community schools  Child-Family Resources Centre (Early Years) from M.A. Wittick to Land of Lakes only with renovations to specialty area such as music or industrial arts.
<b>Full Day Kindergarten (FDK)</b>	Renovations required for FDK at Land of Lakes	Renovations required for FDK at Land of Lakes
<b>Transitions for Students</b>	Fewer Transitions	Fewer Transitions

<b>Special Education Supports</b>	<p>7-8 students in self-contained classrooms have immediate access to Snoezelen Room</p> <p>K-6 self-contained classroom from M.A. Wittick to Land of Lakes. Staff may make recommendation to move this classroom to a more central location.</p>	<p>K-6 and 7-8 self-contained classrooms to be located at Land of Lakes.</p> <p>Consideration to move this classroom to Sundridge P.S. would require renovations to existing facility and re-location of central special education offices in this region.</p>
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### **The Burk's Falls ARC Recommendations and Considerations:**

1. That the Board close M.A. Wittick Public School and move JK-6 students to a refurbished Land of Lakes. Keep Magnetawan Central School open. Send Land of Lakes Public School 7-8 students back to their home schools. French Immersion students from Grades 5-8 would continue to attend the new Land of Lakes Public School.
2. That the Board establish a school boundary border between Almaguin Highlands Secondary School and North Bay secondary schools to address surplus capacity at Almaguin Highlands Secondary School and decrease transportation costs.
3. The Board engage in a transportation audit for all students affected by the change of schools.
4. That the Board gives serious consideration to the following matters in the implementation of the above recommendations:
  - Request the Village of Burk's Falls, the Municipality of Magnetawan, the Village of South River and the Village of Sundridge to assess the need to add crossing guards or sidewalks as needed to ensure the safety of students based on the new walking routes created by the changes in school location,
  - Accommodate all M.A. Wittick Public School community programs at the refurbished Land of Lakes Public School site,
  - Special Education resources and programs be consolidated at the new Land of Lakes site
  - Transition opportunities be offered for all students who are changing schools,
  - Allow adequate time for staff and students to prepare for transition,
  - Provide adequate communication to parents regarding transition for students,
  - Provide opportunities for School Advisory Council members to be consulted on transition planning/activities,
  - All teaching and learning resources from M.A. Wittick Public School should follow students to their new facility,
  - That the proceeds from the sale of M.A. Wittick Public School and land be reinvested in the schools in the community,
  - That the Board follow the Naming/Renaming of Schools Guideline to determine a name for the newly consolidated Land of Lakes/ M.A. Wittick Public School,
  - That the Board seriously consider support offered from Municipalities, service clubs (eg.- Magnetawan Lion's Club), businesses and/or individuals offering monetary support, services or volunteer work as viable solutions to defray costs that were presented by the various Superintendents throughout the ARC process before closing a school, and
  - That "Shop" and "Family Studies" facilities at Land of Lakes be retained. Area 7-8 students be scheduled in rotation to use the facilities. The shop teacher may be a shared cost between all of

the schools. (Or explore the option of a mobile "Shop" similar to the Canadore College "Shop" trailer).

Recommendation:

It is the recommendation of senior administration that the Board of Trustees choose one of the two options presented.

When deciding between the Board's preferred option and the ARC's preferred option, it is the recommendation that the Trustees give serious consideration using the analysis provided to the following factors:

- detailed analysis of the information within the "Comparison of Options" chart,
- the consistent trend of declining enrolment,
- the responsibility of addressing the Near North District School Board's systemic excess capacity,
- significant future capital renewal needs,
- aging fleet of inventory of facilities,
- yearly decreasing provincial grants and
- input of the communities.

In matters of implementation, it is recommended that:

- Transition activities be available to all students, including extra support such as Child Development Counsellors for any students who may have additional challenges with transitions/change
- Opportunities for School Advisory Councils to be consulted on transition planning/activities to be provided
- Opportunities for staffs at any effected schools be involved in transition planning and team building activities
- A transportation review take place