

Name: Paul Black

Brief summary of issue or topic of discussion:

Elementary Program Review, specifically the proposed program and boundary changes.

March 17, 2025

Trustee Lynn Scott, Chair of the Board

Members of the Board of Trustees

Ottawa-Carleton District School Board

RE: Elementary Program Review – Boundary Changes

Dear Chair and Members of the Board,

My name is Paul Black. I am a father of 3 living in Craig Henry. In September 2025, my oldest son will be in Grade 1 and my daughter will start Junior Kindergarten. My youngest would start at Knoxdale in September 2027. My kids would currently attend Knoxdale Public School but through the boundary review would move to Manordale Public School.

My family is strongly opposed to the proposed changes that would remove us from our community school at Knoxdale.

Equitable Access to Programs

The boundaries of Knoxdale, Briargreen, and Manordale are collectively exclusive. The outer limits of their boundaries today are unchanged after the EPR. The changes are simply moving kids between the three schools all in the name of adding Early French Immersion to Briargreen and Enhanced English to Knoxdale.

None of the changes improve access to these programs – they just change the building where the programs are taking place. In the case of our three area schools, the changes result in extremely limited improvements for students where any minor positives (e.g. students living in Briargreen go to Briargreen for French Immersion) are offset by negatives (e.g. students in Craig Henry who currently walk to school are now bused out of their neighbourhood).



Walkability

My family and I live 750 metres walking (5-10 minutes) from the front door of Knoxdale Public School. We walk to school, with many of our neighbours. Under the proposal, my kids would now take a bus over 2 kilometres to get to Manordale. Why put kids on a bus when they live so close to a school? Why discourage walking to school?

Why draw the line along Greenbank Road to exclude families who are so close to the school while at the same time busing students from neighbourhoods north of Baseline Road to Knoxdale, bypassing Briargreen in the process?

School Capacity

Of the three schools, Manordale currently has the highest capacity at 83% while Briargreen is at 72% and Knoxdale is at 68%. Manordale is the only school with portables, currently. After the EPR (per Appendix A of report 25-016), Manordale will be over capacity at 105% while Knoxdale and Briargreen will be at 61% and 70%, respectively. Why put Manordale so much over capacity while Knoxdale and Briargreen sit 1/3 empty?

My Request

I am requesting that the board reconsider the Knoxdale, Manordale, and Briargreen boundaries to better reflect the stated goals of the EPR and to recognize opportunities for improvements and adjustments where they make sense.

- Why not let kids who walk to school continue to do so?
- Are these changes really resulting in more equitable access to French Immersion for this grouping of schools? Or is it just changing the building in which it's provided?
- Why force kids to change schools and put Manordale over capacity while leaving other schools sitting 1/3 empty?

Thanks for considering these points.

Sincerely,
Paul Black