

Name: Jeanna Chan

Brief summary of issue or topic of discussion:

Elementary Program Review

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to submit a written delegation for the OCDSB meeting of March 19 with respect to the Elementary Program Review. I am writing to iterate my family's concerns about the proposed changes and the immense negative impacts that they will have on schools, families, and most importantly, our students, our children.

My concerns with the proposal are as follows:

1. **Disruption to academic/social well-being of children:** My children currently attend Connaught PS, a school that is within walking distance from our home and one where my children have flourished and thrived. Under the new proposal, my kids would be forced to attend Devonshire, which is twice the distance from our home. We would literally have to walk past Connaught in order to get to school, and cross two very busy arteries. The proposal does not include expanding the boundary; rather a small portion of a neighbourhood is being hived off, presumably to address population size at Devonshire, given Connaught boundary is not being expanded and it is currently neither at or near full capacity. My children, and those within the OCDSB, are not simply numbers that can be shifted to accommodate population sizes at other schools.

This will impact our professional work lives, now doubling commute times and making for more challenging pick-ups and drop-offs. My older child would have to change schools for one year, before having to change schools again the following year to attend Fisher Park. This is hugely disruptive, particularly for kids who require routine and stable social/academic environments in order to thrive and struggle with change. My kids faced immense upheaval for two years during the Covid-19 pandemic, and this proposal would yet again throw their education into turmoil.

2. **Forced choice between French Immersion or attending a school close to home:** To add to our frustration, the English and FI boundaries for Connaught differ, and therefore go against the stated goal of aligning boundaries. This means my family, and those who are also affected, will need to choose between FI or attend a school closer to home.

3. **Lack of meaningful consultation:** In addition, families and other stakeholders have only had a month to review and provide feedback on the proposal. The Director of Education, Mr. Pino Buffone, has specifically and publicly said that it is either this plan, or no plan. That is unacceptable and demonstrates a complete lack of transparency from the OCDSB.

I would respectfully ask that the OCDSB trustees consider the following:

- Reconsideration of school boundaries, keeping more kids in their neighborhoods in the true spirit of community-based education. We have confirmed that Connaught is not currently at or near full capacity, which means that should the boundaries be reconsidered, this would not cause undue hardship on the school or present challenges in terms of population size.
- If the plan is adopted as presented, impacted families are grandparented to ensure stability for kids and families.
- Significantly more time is provided to enable transparent decision-making and meaningful consultation with communities, planners and decision-makers before any vote on approval. This will help build trust with families and the OCDSB and ensure there is no loss of faith with decision makers, including trustees.

I would like to thank you for your consideration, as well as all those who have spoken out against this plan and support quality and stable education for our children, that supports and prioritizes academic, social, mental, emotional, and over-all well-being.

Yours sincerely,
Jeanna Chan