



Name: Emily Crowe

Brief summary of issue or topic of discussion:

I represent a group of concerned parents and community members who are opposed to the changes to attendance boundaries and grade configurations proposed for Woodroffe Avenue Public School. The proposal will remove children from JK to Grade 3 from their community, from their community school, and from their siblings, and ship them to Regina Street, which is in some cases the fifth farthest school and in almost no case is the closest. Access to Regina Street from the Carlingwood and Woodpark neighbourhoods is only possible via Carling Avenue and Richmond Road/Byron Avenue, which have heavy vehicle traffic and are non-residential as well as being major construction sites, with Richmond/Byron often closed altogether. Not all children affected by this change would qualify for bussing after kindergarten and families would be responsible for getting children to school themselves. For families without personal vehicles, this means a long and dangerous walk with young children along sidewalks that are often impassable in winter, or a long, circuitous, and expensive trip on public transit. Furthermore, for children entering JK in the 2025/2026 school year, this will mean starting at a new school three times by the time they reach grade 4. For this community, these changes achieve the exact opposite of the stated aims of the review to create fewer transitions to new schools for students and to create community schools, where more children are able to walk to school or have a shorter commute by bus.

I am a parent from the Carlingwood and Woodpark area who is opposed to the changes to attendance boundaries and grade configurations proposed for Woodroffe Avenue Public School (WPS). This proposal will destroy a model JK to Grade 8 community school and remove children from JK to Grade 3 from their community, their school, and their siblings, and send them across the Kichi Zibi Mikan and Transitway to Regina Street, which is in some cases the **fifth** farthest OCDSB school and in almost no case is the closest.

WPS has a dedicated kindergarten wing and outdoor classroom that are less than 10 years old and were purpose-built for small children, with amenities such as smaller toilets and sinks and sized-down playground equipment. If WPS becomes a Grade 4 to 8 school, this costly capital investment goes completely to waste. Furthermore, our youngest children would not only be denied these facilities, but also sent to a school that is projected to be **124% over-capacity**, with enrollment increasing every year as children in the Alternative Program graduate from Regina



Street and are replaced by larger incoming cohorts of JK students – while WPS and **all** closer schools, including Broadview, Churchill, and D. Roy Kennedy, are left under capacity. For children entering JK in the 2025/2026 school year, this will also mean starting at a new school **three** times by the time they reach grade 4.

Regina Street is primarily accessible from Carlingwood and Woodpark via Carling Avenue and Richmond Road/Byron Avenue, both busy commercial thoroughfares with heavy vehicle traffic, as well as major construction sites, with Richmond/Byron often closed altogether. Not all children affected by this change would **even qualify for bussing after kindergarten**, and families would be responsible for getting children to school themselves. For those without personal vehicles, this means a long and dangerous walk with young children along poorly maintained sidewalks that are often altogether impassable in winter, or a long, circuitous, and expensive trip on unreliable public transit. Splitting children into separate JK to Grade 3 and Grade 4 to 8 schools further compounds this logistical nightmare, as older children will be unable to walk their younger siblings to school and parents will have to juggle drop offs and pick ups at multiple times and locations. As mothers are still disproportionately responsible for childcare, this will inevitably have significant impacts on women's ability to participate in the paid workforce, with greater effect on lower-income and newcomer women.

These changes are particularly galling because they are a “solution” to a problem that the board is itself creating with its prioritization of the creation of dual-track schools and its elimination of the Alternative program, leaving space at Regina Street to be filled with children from outside the area. It is unclear why the board has decided that the “equity” of French Immersion in all schools trumps the equity of supporting differently-abled and neuro-diverse children who thrive in the Alternative program and Special Education Classes, or the equity of all children being able to attend community schools, or the equity of supporting working mothers.

The Elementary Program Review is as yet **uncosted** and has not taken transportation, Extended Day Programs, staff movement, student mental health, or school retrofitting into account, and it is unacceptable that the board expects parents and communities to sacrifice the well-being of our children in the name of some nebulous “greater good.” I urge the board and the trustees to go back to the drawing board and engage meaningfully with students and parents to create a plan that **truly** achieves the creditable goals of the review.