



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (PUBLIC)

8 April 2025

Report No. 25-022

Comprehensive Report on the Elementary Program Review: Revised Proposal related to Program Model and Support for Students, Attendance Boundaries and Grade Configurations

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PURPOSE:

1. This report is intended to provide, for discussion, a revised proposal related to program model and support for students, attendance boundaries and grade configurations, arising from the Elementary Program Review (EPR) prior to the final report outlining recommendations coming forward for decision-making purposes. The report provides a synopsis of the elementary program review to date, including proposed changes outlined in previous reports, highlighting any additional changes or adjustments that have been made in response to extensive feedback received through the active community engagement campaign.

STRATEGIC LINKS:

2. The OCDSB's Strategic Plan for 2023-2027 makes a strong commitment to improving program quality and accessibility. The need to review current elementary programming, service delivery and support structures were recurring themes that emerged during the strategic planning process consultation in the winter and spring of 2023, as described in [Report 23-029. 2023-2027 Strategic Plan Consultation Report](#). Specifically, there were concerns expressed about difficulty accessing programs, particularly French Immersion (FI) at community schools and inconsistent support for special education needs across programs.

The elementary program review is the first stage of a four-part, multi-year 'vision exercise' being undertaken by the District to ensure inclusive, high-quality and accessible programs and/or services offered by the District. The other stages of the 'vision exercise' include: early years and childcare services; secondary programming, service delivery and support structures; and, adult and continuing education. Each stage is fundamental to supporting the objectives outlined for the strategic pillars of learning, well-being and social responsibility.

CONTEXT:

3. **Current Elementary Programming and Delivery Models**

In summary, the District currently offers a bilingual (50/50) kindergarten program (BKP), English with Core French (ENG), and two French Immersion programs: Early French Immersion (EFI) which begins at grade 1 and Middle French Immersion (MFI) which begins at grade 4. There are also five elementary schools in the District designated as Alternative (ALT), each of which delivers the English with Core French program using an approach and philosophy that is based on seven tenets. The District also provides a virtual offering online (OCV). Each of these programs is augmented by support for multilingual learners and students with special education needs.

The existing structure for serving multilingual learners in the District has been in place for over fifteen years. The majority of multilingual learners are supported in the standard classroom with English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) support. The continuum of inclusion for multilingual learners prioritizes in-class support with targeted, language-acquisition-related withdrawal as needed, yet provides specialized classes of intensive support for students with limited prior schooling who may require significant literacy-based instruction, through English Literacy Development (ELD) classes, as well as intentional reintegration strategies based on students' learning needs over time.

The existing model for delivery of special education in the District was last reviewed in its entirety over twenty years ago. Since that time, research and best practices to support students with disability-related needs have shifted from a sorting of students based on ability to one where every student's profile is valued and can contribute to the teaching and learning environment. The majority of students with special education needs are currently being supported in the standard classroom. Some students receive support from site-based staff in schools or centrally-coordinated teams outside the classroom but within their community school. Some students, particularly those with the most complex learning needs, are supported in Specialized Program Classes (SPCs), typically located in a school outside of the student's community. Currently there are 11 distinct, exceptionality-based SPCs at the elementary level, totaling 142 classes.

The elementary programs are currently delivered through a patchwork of school configurations, which includes eight different school grade structures and a range of program structures: single track (e.g., English with Core French, including Alternative designated sites); EFI; dual track (e.g., English with Core French and EFI); and triple track (e.g., English with Core French, EFI, MFI) combinations, with each program having its own distinct attendance boundary. A number of schools across the District also host one or more of the ESL/ELD classes or SPCs (see [Appendix A: Navigating the Future: 2024 OCDSB Elementary Program Review](#) of Report 24-052).

4. **Elementary Program Review To Date**

Launched in April 2024, the first phase of the EPR involved an active community engagement campaign during which the District sought input from interest holders, internal and external to the organization, through in-person and on-line sessions held between April and June 2024 ([Report 24-101, Consultation Report on the Elementary Program Review](#)). Other key information sources, including District-level data and externally relevant research, were also reviewed ([Report 24-110, Contextual Report for the Elementary Program Review: District Data and Relevant Research](#)).

Informed by the three key information sources (public consultation, relevant research and District-level data), a revised program model, including proposed changes to supports for students through specialized program classes, was developed and presented to trustees in January 2025 ([Report 25-002 - Comprehensive Report on the Elementary Program Review: Proposed Program Model and Support for Students](#)).

Following the release of the above report, work continued on finalizing changes to elementary school attendance boundaries and grade configurations required to support successful implementation of the proposed model in all sites across the system. The proposed program offerings, attendance boundaries and grade configurations for the District's elementary schools were presented to the Committee of the Whole for discussion at the 4 March 2025 meeting ([Report 25-016 - Comprehensive Report on the Elementary Program Review: Proposed Attendance Boundaries, Grade Configurations and Program Offerings, Appendix A to Report 25-016](#)).

5. **Overarching Principles of the Elementary Program Review**

The EPR and the changes proposed to attendance boundaries, grade configurations and program offerings are guided by three overarching principles:

- **community based education** - the recognition of each school site as core to the community allows for the localization of programs and/or services related to learning, well-being, and social responsibility, as well as the effective and efficient operationalization of the District as a system;
- **dynamic, bilingual teaching and learning environments** - the ability to offer programming in English and French for all students at each school site, along a continuum of bilingualism organized by subject area/discipline, allows students to build confidence, proficiency and achievement in both official languages; and,
- **continuum of inclusion** - the provision of support at each school site allows for an array of assistance for all students, including multilingual learners and those with special needs, with the potential for full inclusion, withdrawal assistance, and/or specialized program classes.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

6. Elementary Program Model

The elementary program model presented for discussion at the 21 January 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting remains the proposed model. In summary, the proposed program model would continue to provide kindergarten students with a 50/50 bilingual program; students in Grades 1 to 8 would have a choice between two program pathways: Enhanced English (EE) and French Immersion (FI). The following chart provides an overview of the English and French instructional minutes in the proposed model, and outlines the change it represents from what is currently in place:

Program/ Grade	English Instruction	French Instruction	Change from Current
Bilingual Kindergarten Program (two-year)*	50%	50%	No change
Enhanced English (EE) Program (Grades 1 - 8)	84% 1260 minutes/week English and other curricular areas	16% 240 minutes/week Core French and other curricular areas	Core French - Increase in French instruction from 200 minutes to 240 minutes/week
French Immersion (FI) Program - Primary/Junior (Grades 1-6)	40% Math/English 600 minutes/week	60% All other curricula 900 minutes/week	FI in Grade 1: Change in English instruction from 20% to 40%. Grades 2-6: No change
French Immersion (FI) Program - Intermediate (Grades 7-8)	50% 750 minutes/ week Math/English and other curricular areas	50% 750 minutes/ week French and other curricular areas	No change

Entry into the FI program will be fluid for the primary grades such that students will be able to access the program at the beginning of grades 1, 2 or 3. Entry to FI beyond grade 3, for example, for students moving into the District in Grade 4 or later who have come from a French-language school board, may be approved on a case-by-case basis at the school level, applying centrally-developed criteria.

7. Transitional Provisions - Phasing Out of MFI and ALT

The proposed program model means that both Middle French Immersion (MFI) and Alternative (ALT) would be discontinued for new students effective September 2026 and phased out over time allowing students already in the MFI or Alternative pathway to remain through to the end of grade 8. The transitional provisions take a broad approach to phasing out both programs, in order to mitigate the impact not only on those students already in an ALT or MFI pathway, but also the small group of students whose plans already include these

pathways. As a result, the following transition provisions would be established for phasing out MFI and ALT:

- a) Middle French Immersion: The last cohort of MFI students would enter grade 4 as of September 2026 and complete grade 8 by the end of the 2030-2031 school year. Students currently enrolled in grade 2 and 3 of the English with Core French program will, therefore, retain the pathway option to enroll in the MFI program in grade 4. Students currently in grade 1 of the English program will have the option to enrol in the FI program for grade 3 in September 2026, as part of the proposed fluid entry.

MFI programs will, in the majority of cases, remain at their current school locations during the phase-out period. However, there will be situations where it is necessary to relocate an MFI program effective September 2026 as part of the broader school configuration changes. It may also become necessary to consider additional program consolidation/relocation options during the phase-out period due to enrolment trends over time, for instance.

- b) Alternative programs: Students currently enrolled and attending a site designated as ALT as of April 2025, and any junior kindergarten (JK) students registering for September 2025, would continue to have access to Alternative programming until they complete grade 6 or, as applicable, grade 8. The last cohort of JK students starting in September 2025 will complete grade 6 at the end of the 2032-2033 school year, with those opting to continue to grade 8 at Summit Alternative, finishing at the end of the 2034-2035 school year.

Effective September 2026, the four grade K-6 schools and the one grade 7-8 school would begin to transition to community schools. Current attendance boundaries for Alternative will remain in place during the phase-out period although it may become necessary to look at consolidation/relocation options in future years based on enrolment trends over time, for example.

The District is committed to the integration of tenets of the Alternative program, including cooperation and teamwork, multi-age groupings and cross-curricular initiatives, for instance, into both the EE and FI programs. Over the phasing out of this program, staff will work collaboratively with the Alternative Schools Advisory Committee (ASAC) to capture ways to embed best practices from the tenets across the system.

8. **Support for Students**

The provision of supports for multilingual learners and students with special education needs within the District will continue to be grounded in inclusive education through effective instructional practices such as Universal Design for Learning, Differentiated Instruction and Culturally-Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy - that ensure individual student learning needs are understood and a responsive plan is established. This includes using a multi-tiered approach to interventions and monitoring student learning needs to ensure the appropriate level of support is being implemented. With these effective instructional practices

in mind, Learning Support Services (LSS) developed the following guiding principles to situate the support for students as part of the EPR:

- shift services to students, not students to services;
- ensure early intervention and monitoring to inform programming and keep options open for students;
- focus on a continuum of inclusion, prioritizing in-class support with targeted withdrawal as needed; and
- create teaching and learning environments that support student well-being and adjust to students' unique needs.

In line with the above guiding principles, a proposal was brought forward to gradually phase out five of the current eleven distinct exceptionality-based specialized program classes (SPCs) at the elementary level. The SPCs are the least inclusive intervention in the service delivery model continuum. In examining the current model of SPCs, classes that support students with less complex learning needs (i.e., Language Learning Disabilities (LLD), Learning Disabilities (LD) Specialized Intervention Program (SIP), Primary Gifted) will be phased out over a three-year period as the current cohort of students moves through the program. In the case of Primary Special Needs (PSN) and Junior General Learning Program (GLP, phasing out these programs disrupts the practice of prematurely making placement and pathway decisions for students at the kindergarten or primary level, which may inadvertently limit their pathway opportunities.

The feedback from many interest holders throughout the consultation process has been in favour of inclusive practices. However, a key concern identified is the potential difficulty students will face without sufficient support within the standard classroom settings. In response to community feedback and current budgetary constraints, the initial proposal has been revised. The phasing out of LLD, LD-SIP, and primary Gifted classes will proceed. However, the PSN and junior GLP programs will be retained while further support and enhanced integration options are explored. This adjustment addresses concerns raised during community consultations and allows for more time to discuss and understand a more inclusive learning model. This change reduces the number of SPCs being phased out from 39 to 26 (see chart below). LSS remains deeply committed to preserving pathway options for all students. The staff of LSS will continue to focus efforts on reviewing and revising the criteria for placement to ensure equitable, accessible and inclusive practices are central to the collective work of the District. The focus remains on strengthening in-class support and resources to facilitate a student-centred teaching and learning environment that meets the diverse needs of all learners.

A summary of the SPCs that are continuing, as well as those identified to be phased out, is provided in the chart below.

SPCs Continuing	SPCs Being Phased Out
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Program (36 classes) ● Behaviour Intervention Program (BIP) (12 classes) ● Deaf/Hard of Hearing (D/HH) Program (1 class) ● Developmental Disabilities (DD) Program (9 semi-integrated classes; 25 classes at 2 specialized sites) ● Dual Support Program (2 classes) ● General Learning Program - junior (6 classes) /intermediate (6 classes) ● Gifted Program- junior (4 classes) /intermediate (6 classes) ● Physical Support Program (2 classes) ● Primary Special Needs Program (7 classes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gifted - Primary (1 class; up to 20 students/class) ● Language Learning Disabilities (LLD) Program - Primary and Junior (11 classes; 10 students/class) ● Learning Disabilities (LD) Semi-Integrated Program - Junior and Intermediate (14 classes; 8 students/class)
TOTAL: 116 classes	TOTAL: 26 classes

The proposed shift will take a phased and measured approach, ensuring access to appropriate and timely interventions that are responsive to the unique needs of each student. The resources currently committed to supporting these SPCs will be reinvested to support learning in standard classrooms.

9. Community Schools and School Configurations

As indicated above, Report 25-116, dated 4 March 2025, presented a proposed plan for the District’s elementary schools, including changes in program offerings, grade configurations and attendance boundaries. These changes were identified as necessary to support the implementation of the new program model, including the phasing out of ALT and MFI, and to achieve, to the extent possible, the following desired outcomes:

- equitable access for all students to programs offered within a designated community school model;
- better planning and accommodation conditions, wherever possible, to improve the learning experiences of students, including finding opportunities for:
 - reducing and rationalizing grade configurations;
 - improving transitions between feeder schools - keeping cohorts of students together as they transition between schools; and,
 - re-balancing enrolments where possible to provide more stability for low enrolment schools and their communities;
- community-based schools that are, where possible, dual tracked so that both programs are available, recognizing that there will continue to be some schools that will offer only EE or FI, in various areas of the District, where a dual track option is not feasible; and,
- students served at their designated community school in most cases, learning and interacting with peers from their own community.

The initial proposed plan generated considerable feedback from parents and guardians, caregivers and community members. For example, one of the outcomes of the proposed plan was an increase in the number of grades K-3 and grades 4-8 schools in the District. These configurations were necessary in some zones or areas of the District to balance enrolments, allow for more efficient utilization of schools and support more robust and sustainable dual-track programs at most sites. Specifically, consolidating small enrolment numbers across fewer grades helps to ensure reasonably sized grade cohorts for purposes of organizing classes. Feedback about these configurations included concerns about siblings being separated and parents and caregivers having to make separate arrangements for drop-off and pick-up. In other cases, concerns were raised around where and how attendance boundaries were established in relation to differing perspectives on what constitutes a community or neighbourhood.

All of the feedback received, including in-person and/or on-line options, email and otherwise, was carefully reviewed and considered in the context of the desired outcomes and whether changes could be made in some areas of the District without compromising the overarching principles underpinning the review. As a result, the initial proposal has been revised to respond to the feedback received. In some cases this means undoing the proposed changes and leaving school boundaries, program offerings and grade configurations status quo; in other cases, it means making adjustments to the proposed boundaries, for example, to preserve traditional community ties within neighbourhoods.

As a result of the revisions, the proposed plan includes fewer schools with grade K-3 or grades 4-8 grade configurations. The revised plan includes five single track EE schools: Arch Street Public School, Convent Glen Elementary School, Dunlop Public School, Hawthorne Public School and North Gower/Marlborough Public School). This is significantly fewer than the number of English only schools currently in the District. The revised plan also includes two additional single-track FI schools, Pleasant Park Public School and Severn Public School, bringing the total number of fully single-track FI schools to six.

Amendments to the original plan have been made in the following areas of the district, described with common neighbourhood names:

1. Alta Vista/Elmvale Acres
2. Britannia/Queensway Terrace North and South/Carlingwood
3. Carson Grove/Beaconwood/Beacon Heights
4. Centretown/Centretown West
5. Convent Glen/Chapel Hill/Châteauneuf/Mer Bleu
6. Greenboro/South Keys/Sawmill/Blossom Park
7. Highland Park/McKellar Park
8. Kanata North
9. (Former) Rideau Township
10. Trend Arlington/Craig Henry/Manordale-Woodvale

11. Wisteria Crescent/Windsor Park/Uplands/Hunt Club

A revised chart showing the proposed program offerings and grade configurations by school is attached as [Appendix A](#). Individual schools that have been revised (program offering, grade configuration and/ or phasing and/or attendance boundaries) are highlighted in bold.

The School Locator developed for purposes of the Elementary Program Review has been updated to reflect the changes so that parents and guardians, caregivers and community members can identify whether their school has changed.

10. **Transitional Provisions**

The current program review at the elementary level does not meet the definition of a pupil accommodation review and therefore does not trigger the requirements set out in the Ministry's Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines (PARG). Notwithstanding, even if the PARG requirements were deemed to apply for some reason, there is an exemption where, despite changes to attendance boundaries, a school maintains at least 50% of its current enrolment in the year the changes are implemented, or in this case, the 2026-2027 school year. Therefore, transitional provisions will be established, as required, to ensure that the 50% threshold is respected in all cases, by phasing in the implementation of some grade configurations effective September 2026 and beyond.

The revised proposal alleviates some of the transitional anomalies originally identified, although there may still be some cases where attendance boundaries and grade configurations will be somewhat complicated, at least in the short term. Strategies will be developed through the transition implementation planning period to address any remaining anomalous situations and ensure appropriate supports are in place for students. As was the case previously, specific communications will be shared with parents and caregivers at each of the sites where there have been revisions to help them better understand the impact of the transitional provisions for their children and the school.

11. **Process to Consider Grandparenting Exceptions**

There have been numerous inquiries and concerns about whether grandparenting provisions have been or will be considered through the transition. It has been the District's practice in the past to try and minimize the impact of program and boundary changes through the inclusion of one-time exceptions. For example, one-time options have been granted for students to remain at a site where the changes will lead to a higher than usual number of transitions in a short period of time, or to allow siblings to attend the same school as exceptions to the new boundary.

Given the complexity and scope of the changes being proposed, there is reluctance to identify broad-scale grandparenting exceptions. Blanket grandparenting exemptions or exceptions are also based on an assumption that everyone feels the same way. As such, rather than introduce blanket

grandparenting exemptions, a process will be established in the coming weeks to allow parents and caregivers to submit requests for exceptions that would, for instance, allow their children to remain at their current school based on specific circumstances, such as sibling considerations, notwithstanding the revised attendance boundaries.

12. **Additional Operational Considerations:**

The following is an update on the operational considerations that have been identified as part of the process:

- **Childcare:** The Early Learning Department recognizes the critical importance of accessible before and after school programming and is well-positioned to understand the diverse needs across the District. Any transition plan for child care or recreational programs will be handled with utmost sensitivity and care. In anticipation of potential boundary and grade configuration changes resulting from the EPR, a comprehensive transitional plan is being developed. This will involve consultation with the City of Ottawa's Systems Services Manager, a thorough assessment of the impacts on the District's existing Extended Day programs and third-party providers, outreach to local recreational organizations, and the preparation of needs assessment surveys for school communities that may experience changes in their current or future programming. The EPR also presents an opportunity to explore innovative partnerships and a wider range of programming options to best support families during this period of change. Of importance to note, the proposed revisions to school configurations outlined in this report will mitigate the scope of the impact on before and after school programs across the District.
- **Student Movement:** As indicated previously, the number of students moving schools each year ranges between 6,000 and 8,000 students. The initial plan projected about 3,000 additional students could be moving schools effective September 2026. The revised proposal will mean a substantial decrease in the number of additional students moving schools than initially forecasted. Final numbers are still being confirmed and will be shared as part of the final report, but current estimates are that approximately 1,500 more students than normal may be required to move schools due to the proposed changes. Staff has also noted in Paragraph 11 of this report that grandparenting opportunities will likely exist for some of these students, lowering the number further for those who have to transition to new schools. It is important to balance this one-time move against the numerous benefits of achieving a more equitable and accessible school system. In addition, as part of the implementation plan, measures will be included to provide support to students to manage the change, for example, students who may experience heightened levels of anxiety with change. The District will be able to draw on previous experiences managing significant change and disruption, including previous boundary changes, to monitor and mitigate negative impacts for affected students and ensure appropriate supports are in place to create welcoming teaching and learning environments.

- School Locator: The School Locator originally released at the end of February 2025 has been updated to reflect the revised plan and will be available for parents and caregivers to access as of 3 April 2025.
- Staff Movement: The increased level of staff movement across employee groups assigned to elementary schools as a result of the changes being proposed will be managed by Employee Services in partnership with principals and vice-principals, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO), Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) Student Support Professionals (SSP) and OSSTF Education Support Professionals (ESP) and others, through collaborative working groups, taking into consideration current collective agreement provisions, staffing and transfer timelines and processes. Employee Services will be able to draw on previous experiences to mitigate impacts and support a successful transition.
- Transportation: Given the scope of the proposed changes, there will be challenges associated with adapting the transportation system to accommodate the new boundaries and grade configurations. The proposed changes to boundaries and grade configurations have been shared with representatives of the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority, and discussions will be ongoing to support the considerable work that will be required to accommodate them. The implementation of the recommendations contained in the June 2024 [Transportation Consortium Review](#) prepared by Deloitte on behalf of the Ministry of Education, may also provide opportunities to make these changes, resulting in overall improved efficiencies in student transportation.
- Site-based Renovations: The revised plan will mean fewer renovations will be required as a result of changes to grade configurations. Where renovations may be required to support a new grade configuration, for example, they will be prioritized and included in the annual capital plan developed by Facilities. In addition, as part of the implementation plan, work will begin in the fall to develop plans to inventory existing furniture and other equipment and identify where there are gaps and surplus moving forward.
- School Names: Under the revised plan there continues to be a need to review at least some school names. The process for school name review/renewal will be confirmed once the plan is approved.
- Program Viability (Small/Low Enrolment Programs and Grades): As indicated above, the creation of K-3 and 4-8 schools helps to support what might otherwise be 'soft' enrolment programs by consolidating cohorts over fewer grades. The shift away from these configurations, albeit for valid reasons and in response to feedback, may increase the risk of small and potentially unsustainable programs moving forward. There are also some situations where intermediate (Grade 7 and 8) enrolments may not be sustainable in the longer term, particularly as the District reaches full implementation. In the short term, supporting these programs can result in less efficiency in terms of

resource allocations. It will be important to monitor enrolment and program size and feasibility balanced against the commitment to providing better access to all programs through more dual track schools. It is also important to note that planning projections are based largely on trends and so may be somewhat less reliable during the first few years of the new model. As a result, it will be necessary to closely monitor the impacts and whether more accommodation changes, hopefully minor in nature, are needed. In addition, as indicated previously, as MFI and ALT are phased out, low enrolment may necessitate looking at relocation and consolidation options.

REVISED TIMELINES:

13. In order to ensure there is an opportunity to provide feedback on the revised plan, an additional opportunity is being scheduled on April 22, 2025 for delegations specifically on aspects of the revised proposal. As a result, the final recommendations are tentatively scheduled to be presented at the May 6, 2025 Committee of the Whole, for approval at a Special Board meeting on May 13, 2025.

For a number of reasons, it is important that the decision not be further significantly delayed. First, it is important that a decision be made prior to finalizing the 2025-2026 budget and in time to allow senior staff and system leads to build the necessary work into their 2025-2026 work plans. From a community perspective, it is also important to provide parents, caregivers and students with a clear and coherent path forward for the District's elementary schools and programs, built on the overarching principles, and resolving the uncertainty and instability that will continue until decisions are made.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

14. The proposed program model and the revised school configurations and boundaries represents a substantial change impacting all of the District's sites. Planning and implementation of a change of this magnitude will require the re-allocation and/or re-investment of resources (human, material and/or fiscal), including: staffing implications; new learning resources; professional learning; capital improvements; and, other logistical considerations. Aspects of implementation will be integrated into existing work plans for next year, such that associated costs or resource allocations will be covered within existing budgets and staff complements. Below is a summary of resource implications associated with the recommendations.

Project Transition Team: A transition team will be established under the leadership of the Associate Directors, Academic and Business, to lead and manage various aspects of implementation. As with the opening of a new school, consideration has been given to releasing a project lead, for example a school administrator, for all or part of next year to act as project manager, overseeing and coordinating the work. While there may also be some limited need to engage resources to do the work or to backfill other members of the team, the

work will largely be integrated into existing work plans and roles for next year, rather than establishing multiple dedicated positions.

Inclusive Student Support: As indicated above, phasing out SPCs will require some additional investment in site-based and classroom supports. This will occur through the strategic reinvestment of the savings achieved through the reduction of 26 SPCs. This reduction will allow for the reinvestment of approximately 32 FTE positions into standard classroom support. The savings in administrative time associated with completing and processing applications for the closed SPCs will also be reallocated to directly supporting students in standard classrooms. There will also be a redistribution of multidisciplinary team resources (time) into schools/classrooms.

Professional Development and Learning Resources: Professional learning requirements associated with the proposed program model and support for students will be incorporated into the annual professional learning plans developed for the 2025-2026 school year and beyond. With regard to learning resources, there are already plans in place to inventory what resources are already in schools to inform what resources may be required upon implementation of the revised model.

Site-based Renovations: The proposed changes to school grade configurations and attendance boundaries will require both one time and ongoing investment of resources. This includes one-time capital investments to support changes in schools such as retrofitting classrooms and school yards, for example, where kindergarten is being added for the first time. Similarly, a change in grade configurations and/or enrolment might cause a need for more/different furniture, learning materials (resources, manipulatives, other). While every reasonable effort will be made to shift resources across schools, as needed, there are also likely to be one-time costs to ensure schools have access to what they need.

Classroom Teachers and Other School-based Staff: Overall, the changes to elementary programming should not result in a measurable change (increase or decrease) in the total number of classroom teachers or other school-based staffing. Some modelling has also been done using revised configurations and projected enrolment which shows that the impact on staffing, particularly the number of English teachers and number of French teachers, appears negligible.

Summary: It is expected that many of the upfront costs of implementing the new model, for example, staff time, purchase of learning resources and materials, and school renovations, will be absorbed within existing budgets. A contingency fund of approximately \$375,000 will be included in the staff recommended 2025-2026 budget, for transition implementation purposes, including to support a full-time project lead for the school year leading up to September 2026.

COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:

15. The active community engagement campaign was designed to ensure there was opportunity for feedback from all interest holders, internal and external to the organization, in order to inform the decision-making processes. The use of multiple communication channels to reach and engage with the community – including emails, newsletters, social media platforms, school websites, community education liaisons, and community forums – were effective and encouraged expansive and fulsome feedback.

The report on the consultation, attached as [Appendix B](#), provides a summary of the feedback collected from interest holders and synthesizes key themes and insights. Collectively, there were 10,458 respondents engaged throughout the entire consultation process. It is important to note that this total number is not reflective of unique participants; individuals may have been counted more than once if they attended numerous sessions or consultation pathways. Each consultation pathway had a unique focus, and therefore, yielded diverse perspectives, lived experiences, points of view, and insights in response to the proposed program model. For example, the Family and Community Engagement (FACE) sessions were largely composed of parents/caregivers whose children attend schools engaged in the Student Achievement Through Equity (SATE) Inquiry, where a higher number of students face challenges and systemic barriers associated with race, ethnicity, language and socioeconomic status. As a result, the consultation report is structured by presenting each consultation pathway and its emergent themes to respect the unique contributions provided within each consultation method. Further, where possible, relevant quotations from community members are also included in the report.

With a significant amount of feedback, particularly through the online survey, the data were excerpted and reviewed on a weekly basis by the Strategic Business Analyst to ensure that the quantity of responses could be realistically managed. Subsequently, the analyzed data were shared with senior staff and relevant departments (e.g., Learning Support Services, Planning Department, Program Services) to review, consider, and apply or address feedback. As a result of collaboration between artificial intelligence software provided through the ThoughtExchange platform, the Strategic Business Analyst, and an external ThoughtExchange data analyst, 110 themes were extrapolated across all consultation pathways, and all of these themes were coded into seven overarching themes that were consistent across all pathways. The seven key, overarching themes across this stage of the consultation were the following:

1. Community and Social Structures;
2. Student Well-Being and Transitions;
3. Equity and Access to Education;
4. Support and Resources for Students with Special Education Needs;
5. Operational Logistics and Implementation;
6. Transparency, Communication, and Consultation; and,
7. French Immersion Program Changes.

All of these themes are presented in the attached consultation report.

16. **Extended Feedback Opportunity**
In light of the revisions to the proposed program model, attendance boundaries, and grade configurations outlined in this report, the District will provide an opportunity for the community to offer further feedback. This extended consultation period will allow interest holders to share their perspectives on the adjustments made in response to the initial engagement process. An online survey will be open from April 3rd to April 24th, 2025, to gather feedback on the revised proposal. The feedback collected through this survey will be used to further inform trustee decision-making regarding the revised proposed program model, ensuring that the final decisions are informed by community input and aligned with the overarching principles of the Elementary Program Review. This additional step underscores the District's commitment to transparency and responsiveness throughout this process.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

17. The following guiding questions are provided for discussion:
- a) Does the revised proposal for elementary school configurations reflect an appropriate balance between the guiding principles and the practical considerations and concerns that parents and others have raised through the engagement campaign?
 - b) How do the proposed changes improve equitable access to programs and services?
 - c) Does the revised plan to pause the phasing out of the GLP and PSN align with the guiding principles articulated for delivering special education?
 - d) What support will be available to students impacted by the proposed changes to the elementary program review?

FOR DISCUSSION

Pino Buffone
Director of Education and Secretary of the Board

- APPENDICES**
Appendix A Summary of Proposed Changes by School (revised)
Appendix B Consultation Report dated April 8, 2025