

Name: Alex Carr

Brief summary of issue or topic of discussion:

Dear Trustees and OCDSB staff,

The updated EPR proposal does not address any of the pressing and valid concerns of Connaught parents, and we implore Trustees to vote no until such time the arbitrary boundary change is removed, or clarity is provided on the process for grandparenting.

The proposed boundary change for Connaught undermines the principles of the EPR and shows that these principles are being applied unevenly:

Siblings will be separated to access Enhanced English and French Immersion tracks with no bilingual option in either Connaught or Devonshire for affected families at Connaught.

Longer commutes and increased car usage – Most students will have to walk double the distance, directly past Connaught PS to get to Devonshire. This is the opposite of community-based learning. This increased distance also means walking to school will drop from 96% to a whopping 50% with many families being forced to drive.

Childcare access - 73% of affected families need childcare at Connaught. The proposal provides no clarity on before/after care availability at Devonshire.

High cost for our kids - Affected students at Connaught in grades 4 to 6 will experience two transitions in a short time frame when they go to middle school. This is significant, even for the most resilient kids, and especially unfair for these kids who have had to be resilient entering school during COVID.

We implore Trustees to vote no until such time clarity is provided on the process and criteria for grandparenting.

Grandparenting is not something to be taken lightly and it is most unfair to ask Trustees to vote on a plan without further detail on this critical process. The board has promised and

alluded to a fair exemption process. But that's not the type of thing that can be figured out later in the transition plan. Parents and Trustees need to know about eligibility and equity. It can't be left up to the status quo process of submitting one-off requests to principals or superintendents. That is not equal, and it is not fair to parents and kids who will be waiting months not knowing what to plan for, and not knowing what to say to their kids when asked where they'll be going to school. Trustees need these details now, not later.

This is even more significant for Connaught, where as stated above, the boundary changes are in contradiction to the OCDSB's EPR principles. According to board figures, 50 kids will be unfairly affected. Exemptions must be given to these kids who are collateral damage in an arbitrary boundary change. We know from the board's own school utilization that an exemption option for this relatively small number of families will not affect school utilization in noticeable way. The official exemption policy under the transition plan should be: exemptions should be provided to remain at their current school for any child affected by a boundary change that runs counter to the EPR principles. This would apply to the affected families at Connaught, who, as stated above, are losing access to bilingual learning and are being forced to walk or drive past their community school.

Thank you,

Alex