

Name: Jeff Morton

Brief summary of issue or topic of discussion:

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to submit a written delegation for the OCDSB meeting of April 22 with respect to the Elementary Program Review (EPR). I am writing to outline my concerns with the overall approach that the Board has taken with respect to the EPR, highlight specific issues with how the proposed changes will impact my family and community, and advocate for greater clarity on how the changes will be implemented.

My concerns with the proposal are as follows:

1. The EPR has seemingly been completed hastily and without proper engagement or consultation with OCDSB families. While there was a brief consultation period over the past two months, most families - who will have the lived experience of these changes - have not been meaningfully engaged nor consulted. As you know, there was little to no direct outreach to specific impacted families, schools, or marginalized communities beyond the online survey or the few opportunities for delegation at a handful of Board meetings. While some trustees have initiated engagement with specific schools, this has resulted in an uneven consultations, and unfortunately, those voices who are the loudest have seemingly received the most attention. The fact that the revised proposal was put together in a matter of weeks is further demonstration that this plan has been put together hastily.

2. In the case of my family and community, the proposed boundary change at Connaught PS undermines the principles of the EPR of community-based education and bilingual learning environments, making it more difficult for impacted Connaught families to access French Immersion. In our case, a small carve-out of the most walkable part of the Connaught catchment is slated to move to Devonshire, for those who are enrolled in French Immersion only. Those in the English stream would continue to go to Connaught (which remains a dual stream school). In the case of my family, we would be forced to choose between FI or pulling our children out of FI to support their learning in a familiar and thriving academic and social environment, protect their mental health, and allow us to maintain a two-working-parent household with a management commute to school and

access to EDP. The proposed change would mean that my older child would face three school transitions in four years, which is difficult and disruptive for any child. Should we make the decision that one of my children needs to attend EE and the other FI, we would be forced to split the siblings between two different schools. We should not be put in a position to have to make this choice.

3. The transition plan that has been put forward by the Board does not provide any clarity on the true implementation of EPR. There is no clear policy on exemptions/grandparenting, access to childcare, or how children will be supported in this transition. Without details on how the EPR will be implemented, there is no way for trustees to fully understand the implications of the EPR and the very real financial, logistical, mental health, and academic impacts it might have on children and families.

Within this context, I would ask:

- That trustees consider delaying the vote on the EPR so that proper, fair, and transparent consultations can take place;
- That a real, costed, and established transition plan be provided to trustees and parents, with clear guidelines on exemptions/grandparenting, access to childcare/EDP, and how children and families will be supported during the transition period.
- That the underlying data and inputs to the EPR be made available to families, stakeholders and trustees so that the principles behind the EPR can be better justified, supported, and understood.

Ultimately, I would ask that boundaries for Connaught PS to remain as is, given their minimal impact to population numbers but their huge impacts to the well-being of impacted children. This would uphold the spirit and principles of the EPR. Should this not be an option, I would further ask that exemptions/grandparenting be available to all impacted families and that this be articulated clearly in advance of a trustee vote.

I would like to thank you for your consideration, as well as those who have spoken up in support quality and stable education for our children.

Yours sincerely,

Jeff Morton

Concerned parent at Connaught PS