

Name: Megan Maloney

Brief summary of issue or topic of discussion:

I would like to appear for the next delegation night in regards to the Elementary Program Review. Specifically, I would like to discuss the revisions made and the lack of consideration for the distinct nature of Osgoode Public School.

I write this submission as the parent of 2 children who are directly impacted by the proposed boundary changes included in the Elementary Program Review (EPR) for Osgoode Public School (OPS), located in Osgoode, ON. Specifically, I would like to highlight the lack of consideration given to the unique circumstances of OPS in the revised report (Report 25-022) issued on 3 April 2025.

The revised report still maintains a proposed boundary change for OPS that would require 23 students to relocate from OPS, an under-capacity school (93%), to Castor Valley Elementary School (CVES) in Greely, ON which is currently and will remain over-capacity (161%). While the number of students impacted at OPS may appear small (8%), in a rural setting it represents an important portion of our school community.

It is disheartening to see that while the revised report noted important changes to be made in some areas, it did not consider the circumstances of OPS at all. It is necessary to highlight that there is currently no educational, logistical, or demographic justification for this proposed change beyond a desire to make the Osgoode boundary map “look more like a rectangle”. But children are not data points on a grid - they are individuals rooted in real lives and real communities. Adjusting boundaries for the sake of tidiness ignores the emotional and psychological cost to families who live just outside of this line, and who rely on the relationships, routines, and resources of their community in Osgoode.

I also want to emphasize that maintaining the current boundary for OPS would not undermine the long-term objectives of the ERP. CVES will remain over capacity regardless of whether the 23 students from OPS are moved. Both schools offer the same dual-track English and French programming, ensuring program consistency. OPS will remain under capacity, so accommodating a small number of students, even if as an interim solution,

would not place any strain on its resources or affect operational planning. It also ensures students go to school in their own community.

It is vital that we consider the mental health impact of these changes. Uprooting students can create stress, anxiety and disconnection, especially when they are not moving as a cohort, which is the case for the 23 students at OPS. Acting proactively now is not only compassionate, it is evidence-based. Research shows that children who receive early support are less likely to develop long-term mental health issues like anxiety or depression. Since there is no valid justification to support changing OPS' boundaries, we can be proactive and avoid the negative impact on these 23 students. This also aligns with the Board's mandate and the Ministry of Education's guidelines, which emphasize student well-being as a key component of student success.

It is my view that the revised report reflects a lack of understanding about the realities of rural communities. In urban areas, switching schools might mean crossing a few blocks. In rural zones, it often means crossing fields, townships, and entire social circles. Our kids don't just attend OPS, they grow up there. At its core, this issue comes down to a simple principle: kids should go to school in their own community. They should be allowed to grow, learn, and thrive close to home. Remaining at OPS offers these 23 children that opportunity. You cannot take that away based on arbitrary lines or aesthetics. In closing, I urge the Board to reconsider OPS' proposed boundary change. Let's protect what makes rural schools work: relationships, familiarity, and the deep ties between school and community. Thank you for your consideration.