

Name: Atefeh Abedini

Brief summary of issue or topic of discussion:

Dear Members of the School Board,

I am writing to express deep concern regarding the exclusion of the Briargreen community from the Knoxdale Public School boundary in the latest boundary review iteration. Although Briargreen has long been part of the Knoxdale school community, it has not been re-added to the revised boundaries, leaving families uncertain and anxious about the future of their children's education. Approximately 30–50 children from Briargreen currently attend Knoxdale and consider it their community school. Many have siblings in nearby daycare centers, and families have structured their routines, work schedules, and support systems around this stable setup. While we acknowledge the option of applying for a cross-boundary transfer, this does not offer the long-term security or predictability that families with young children—particularly working mothers—need. I want to discuss formal grandfathering for Briargreen families already enrolled at Knoxdale to avoid unnecessary disruptions that could negatively affect children's mental health, learning, and family well-being. This change would uphold the principle of community-based education and protect continuity in a school that these families have come to trust and rely on.

Many thanks

Atefeh

Recommendation for a Grandfathering Provision for Briargreen Students Attending Knoxdale PS .

Submitted by: Atefeh Abedini April 17, 2025

Purpose and Request: We request the implementation of a formal grandfathering provision for families in the Briargreen community impacted by the EPR. Specifically, we ask that all current Briargreen students enrolled at Knoxdale PS who wish to remain be permitted to continue at the school until they complete Grade 6.

Grandfathering Provision Recommendation:

- Guarantee these students the right to complete their elementary education at Knoxdale PS through to the end of Grade 6. The same approach must be equally extended to Briargreen students to ensure consistency, fairness, and equitable treatment.
- Be implemented automatically, without requiring individual applications or discretionary review.
- Be clearly outlined in the EPR implementation framework to provide certainty and reduce administrative and emotional burden on families.

This approach would offer critical stability for students affected by boundary changes while supporting the successful implementation of new programming without disrupting student well-being or learning continuity.

Rationale:

- **Survey Results Supporting Grandfathering:** A community survey conducted in April 2025 among 33 Briargreen households identified 49 children expected to attend Knoxdale PS in the 2025–26 school year. Of these, 32 students indicated they would use a grandfathering provision to remain at Knoxdale PS, demonstrating a strong desire for continuity. With Knoxdale PS projected to operate at only 80% capacity in September 2026, grandfathering these students represents a minimal, low-impact adjustment that supports educational, emotional, and logistical stability for a limited number of families.
- **School Transition Hardships:** The redirection of Briargreen-residing students represents a significant and abrupt transition. Transitions have been identified as disruptive by the board's own documents. A 2015 Committee of the Whole report from the OCDSB states “The number and nature of transitions for students during their schooling is pivotal to their sense of fitting in and having a place in their school¹.”
- **Childcare Hardships:** Briargreen families heavily rely on before- and after-school childcare

¹ A 2015 Committee of the Whole report from the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) states: “The number and nature of transitions for students during their schooling is pivotal to their sense of fitting in and having a place in their school .” (OCDSB, Report No. COW 15-034, March 2015)

programs affiliated with Knoxdale PS. Transitioning students to Briargreen PS would jeopardize access to these essential services, particularly given the lack of comparable childcare infrastructure within the Briargreen neighbourhood. The recent community survey indicated that 88% (28 of 32) of students who wish to be grandfathered also require EDP support, highlighting the significant childcare needs tied to remaining at Knoxdale ps.

- **Logistical Impact on Families:** Many families have younger children in daycares near Knoxdale PS and coordinate school commutes and work schedules accordingly. Splitting siblings between schools places an undue logistical and emotional burden on families and risks further inequities.
- **Financial Hardships:** The proposed changes will increase childcare costs for many families. The later start time at Briargreen PS means that families who previously did not require before school care will now face additional expenses. These new financial burdens will disproportionately impact lower- and middle-income families.
- **Impact on Working Mothers:** For many women, including myself, the uncertainty surrounding these changes intensifies the daily challenge of balancing professional and caregiving responsibilities. The emotional, logistical, and financial toll of these adjustments will fall heavily on mothers and further exacerbate gender-based inequities in care work.

Precedent and Equity

The OCDSB has previously granted grandfathering provisions for other communities impacted by the EPR, including Broadview and Churchill. These actions were grounded in principles of equity, transparency, and the reduction of student disruption. We respectfully request that the Board apply these same principles in a consistent and equitable manner to support families in Briargreen. The current limited exemption framework shifts the burden of advocacy onto individual families, many of whom may lack the time, resources, or capacity to navigate discretionary processes.

Personal statement:

My family's decision to settle in Briargreen in 2023 was intentional and deeply rooted in our desire to access Knoxdale Public School. Although we had access to both Briargreen and Knoxdale, we purposefully chose Knoxdale for its academic strength, its established French

Immersion pathway to Sir Robert Borden High School. Like many families, we have built our daily routines around this school, from daycare options located within walking distance to after school programs and friendships formed as early as our kids' young age. This continuity has been essential to our children's well-being and to our own sense of community and belonging. We respectfully ask that the Board honour the thoughtful decisions of families like ours and uphold the values of stability, equity, and community-based education.

Summary:

We strongly urge the Board to approve a formal grandfathering provision for all current Briargreen-residing students enrolled at Knoxdale PS who wish to remain. This compassionate and pragmatic measure will protect the continuity of their education and align with the OCDSB's core values of equity, student well-being, and responsible change management.