

**Name: Amanda Wolfe**

**Brief summary of issue or topic of discussion:**

To discuss considerations and implementation of the revised EPR process to consider grandparenting exceptions.

Request for a Sibling Placement Provision

**CONTEXT:** During recent discussions regarding implementation of the EPR, board staff indicated blanket exemptions for siblings would not be possible and that they were not aware of the wishes of parents. As such, a group of impacted parents with separated siblings propose the following for your consideration.

**REQUEST:** A group of parents requests the addition of an explicit **Sibling Placement Provision** as part of the “exemptions” application process that the OCDSB will develop, per [Report 25-023](#), which may benefit families across the district. The Sibling Placement Provision should be distinct from other “grandparenting” requests and should not be subject to planning considerations given that these are direct short-term consequences of the implementation of new boundaries and program changes.

**RATIONALE:** When school boundaries change, two considerations are student grandparenting (i.e., “exemptions”) and sibling placement, but they serve different purposes and apply to different situations. Student grandparenting or “exemptions” apply to current students who are already enrolled in a school and would seek an “exemption” to continue at their current school, even if they now live outside the new boundary. The term grandparenting is broad, encompassing a wide variability of rationales and may be subject to assessment of capacity and viability of sending and receiving schools. Conversely, a sibling placement provision specifically allows only younger siblings of current students to register or remain at the same school, despite being rezoned. This is to maintain family unity and reduce disruption to families who would otherwise have to split their children between two different schools. This provision is an explicit exception to new attendance area rules and should not be subject to planning considerations given they are short-term in nature and direct consequences of the implementation of new boundaries and phasing-out programs.

In April 2025, a survey of approximately 625 Broadview JK-6 student families identified 23 families (with a total of 26 younger siblings) that are newly rezoned to Churchill who would request for a younger sibling to remain with an older “grandparented” sibling over a 3 year period: 2026-27 (10 JK; 10 SK), 2027-28 (1 JK) and 2028-29 (5 JK). These exceptions are not expected to affect long-term viability or capacity, and are expected to taper off during the 3-4 years after implementation of new boundaries.

**APPLICATION:** In instances where younger siblings are rezoned to attend a newly designated school, but the older sibling is “grandparented” into a school out of boundaries because the relevant grade level is not offered at the newly designated school, the younger sibling shall be permitted to attend the current school of the older sibling, upon request by parents or caregivers. The Sibling Placement Provision applies until the younger sibling completes the most senior grade offered in the school.

The OCDSB may apply this provision in the following ways:

1. The Sibling Placement Provision is added as a clearly outlined and independent exceptional circumstance into the EPR student exemption application process in 2025.
2. Parents and caregivers then request an attendance boundary exemption under the Sibling Placement Provision and this is approved without restriction.
3. This provision would remain in effect until full implementation of the EPR and phasing out of other programs at the designated school is complete, and for individuals until they complete the highest grade.

**EXAMPLE:** In 2027 (year 2 of EPR implementation), [REDACTED] is 7 and is in Grade 2 at Broadview. Her younger sibling [REDACTED] is 4 and is ready to enroll in JK but the family has been rezoned to Churchill, which offers only JK/SK/Grade 1 as it phases in EE/FI and phases out the Alternative cohort. The family is faced with the EPR consequence of siblings attending two different dual-track JK-6/JK-8 schools. To resolve this matter, parents request and are approved for an exemption under the Sibling Placement Provision, and [REDACTED] registers to attend Broadview with his older sibling.

## Appendix A: Questions & Further Information

Q. Why is this sibling scenario different enough to warrant its own exemption provision?

A. The unique situation of phasing out of programs while creating new school attendance boundaries results in areas where siblings will be split into two different dual-track schools for their entire elementary education (both JK-6/JK-8, e.g., Churchill Alternative and Broadview) - not split between schools of different grade configurations.

Q. Would allowing younger siblings to attend the older siblings' current school make the EPR-designated school unviable?

A. While some families may choose to send their young children to two different schools based on their children's needs and family circumstances, most parents with young children would find this untenable (and additionally unreasonable if both are dual-track schools). Without the choice to unite children at one school within the OCDSB, many families with split siblings may decide to leave the OCDSB altogether. According to our research, the OCDSB's own definition of program viability (OCDSB Report 18-022 App B, page 6) states that the threshold of "fragile enrolment" is less than 10 students per elementary grade. Placing a small number of students with their older siblings appears unlikely to result in long-term impacts to this viability and is a short-term consequence over 3-4 years after EPR implementation (see survey data above on time-limited impacts).

Q. What about capacity at the older siblings' current school?

A. These younger siblings would be enrolling into the older siblings school if it were not for the EPR boundary changes (current state). Effectively, as a result of the new boundary, Broadview's catchment is seeing a reduction in its size and its enrollment is as such projected to decrease with fewer pupils in the lower grades as the JK/SK cohort begin at Churchill, and all Grade 1-8 students are grandparented to remain at Broadview post-EPR. The new capacity at Broadview appears to be therefore precisely in the lower grades where younger siblings would be newly enrolled. Further, Broadview is projected to be under its present day capacity in 2026 and beyond as a result of the EPR (Appendix A EPR Updated Index).

Q. How long will a sibling placement provision be in place? OCDSB can't extend this forever.

A. The OCDSB would only extend the sibling provision for the period that the designated school does not offer EE/FI in all grades; it is the phasing in of grades over time which is the cause of this sibling separation.