

**Name: Rebecca Taggart**

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

Re: grandparenting policy under the revised EPR proposal

As a parent to two children enrolled at Knoxdale Public School, and residing in the Briargreen neighbourhood, my written delegation will be calling on trustees and board members to firmly commit to an explicit, clear and generous grandparenting policy that allows students to finish their time at their current/preferred school of choice.

Establishing as an EPR policy the grandparenting of existing Knoxdale students residing in Briargreen to ensure continuity of community schooling.

Wednesday April 16, 2025

To: All OCDSB Trustees

CC: [REDACTED], Director of Education

[REDACTED], Associate Director of Academic Operations

[REDACTED], Associate Director of Education, Business Operations

Requested change: That trustees and board staff amend the current EPR proposal to include a clear and inclusive exemption policy for students currently enrolled at Knoxdale who wish to remain at Knoxdale until the end of their school years there.

Dear Trustees and Members of the Board,

I am writing on behalf of concerned parents residing in the Briargreen neighbourhood who remain opposed to the proposed changes in the revised EPR report. The revised report continues to exclude our children from their current school community at Knoxdale Public School by forcing a transition to Briargreen Public School effective September 2026. We appreciate the extension to the consultation process and the opportunity to share our concerns, as we feel our voices have yet to be heard. I hope to convey these concerns in my written delegation at tonight's Special Board Meeting.

History:

The original EPR proposal released in January 2025 saw a significant change to the boundaries defining the school communities of Knoxdale, Manordale and Briargreen. Under the original plan, all Craig Henry residents were to be rezoned to Manordale, while residents of the Centrepoinette and Briargreen neighbourhoods would be directed to Briargreen Public School (which would switch from an English-only school to dual track). The neighbourhoods west of Greenbank Road (Trend-Arlington, Arlington Woods, Qualicum, Leslie Park and Cedar Hill) were to remain at Knoxdale, which would change from a French Immersion centre to dual track as well.

Our concerns:

As stakeholders in this family of schools, we continue to feel as though our perspectives and interests have not been heard and represented thus far in the process. We have attended meetings, rallies, School Council meetings and online delegations. While this engagement has rallied our community together, it has also taken a deep toll on individuals' mental and emotional well-being.

With the revised EPR proposal, dated April 8, 2025, revisions to Knoxdale's boundaries were made. Our neighbours in Craig Henry successfully advocated for their children to remain at Knoxdale, their community school. Here in the Briargreen neighbourhood, our own children feel just as attached to Knoxdale as their peers in Craig Henry do; they have formed important foundational relationships with classmates and teachers at Knoxdale; as parents, we too have formed attachments with our childrens' friends' parents and their educators. These relationships are valuable to us and contribute to our strong sense of belonging to the Knoxdale community.

The proposal:

The revised EPR proposal articulated the beginnings of a grandparenting policy; for one, rebranding it as 'exemptions' and being initially defined as "a process [that] will be established for parents to submit requests for exceptions based on specific circumstances (e.g., sibling considerations)."

With the EPR's overarching goal being to "preserve community ties," I am advocating for a clear and inclusive exemption policy for all current Knoxdale students residing in Briargreen to remain at Knoxdale until the end of their school years there. The above

mentioned definition of exemptions is vague and leaves too much to the discretion of those enforcing the policy and those applying to it and interpreting it. A new, clear and explicit exemption policy should also include younger siblings not yet enrolled at the school, for whose parents wish that their children remain together rather than dividing their children between two different schools.

## Conclusion:

The OCDSB's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan outlines 'Well-being and Belonging' as one of its central tenets. In it, the Board affirms its commitment to foster connections between students, families and their respective communities. To quote the Strategic Plan directly, this is to "ensure [that a] focus on diversity does not foster division".

Without generous exemptions, the revised EPR proposal divides communities; look no further than the Manordale-Knoxdale-Briargreen family of schools for an example of this division. Throughout these neighbourhoods, families are invested in and attached to their school communities. My children love Knoxdale. Please give them the chance to stay.