

Name: Kayla Lough

Brief summary of issue or topic of discussion:

Concerns about the Elementary Program Review from the Chair of Charles H Hulse Public School. I am a school council of basically one, our other members are not able to be as involved at the moment, like many of the other parents across the city. Because of this, I'm concerned that CH has not been properly represented. I've been trying to get up to speed since March 20th and spent countless hours trying to make sure CH parents are informed, since myself, the chair and someone who is very involved with the school, didn't understand the gravity of the changes of the EPR. I've been trying to connect with other parents from Zone 9 to try to wrap my head around all of this and I would love the opportunity to speak from a Zone 9 perspective.

OCDSB Special Board Meeting
Kayla Lough
Charles H. Hulse Public School
April 22, 2025

This delegation is a section of a 6 page letter I had written to Trustee [REDACTED] after her "Google Meet Town Hall" on April 5th. I have not sent this to her yet because more information comes out through the news or board meetings, which I would like to add to my letter, but I can't keep up. On April 8th there was a COW Meeting posted, which I watched the 1st hour of. I felt like there was a lot of potentially useful information that I could reference in my letter, but as of this morning, April 22nd, I have only been able to watch that first hour. Between April 8th and April 15th there are 7 hours of meetings to watch. I've been trying my best to stay informed to be able to inform the parents of Charles H Hulse PS, since I am the only active member of our school council, but it's been challenging. A lot of parents are struggling to work multiple jobs and whatever other hardships we are going through during this uncertain time, in not just Canada, but the world. It feels impossible to keep up with what is going on and now that more parents are becoming informed I am feeling a lot of pressure to make sure I do as much as I can to get the parents voices heard before it's too late.

A concern I have, which a few other parents are concerned about, is:
What will happen to help improve literacy within the proposed EE plan, especially the kids

within the EE only schools that are already struggling?

I had recorded Trustee [REDACTED] answer to this question during the Google Meet meeting:

"Everything that is offered in that school will be boosted. So, if you have a school that's left to languish and you don't have a school council, so you don't have parents that are advocating, you don't have fundraising. I've been approached, even before I was trustee, when I was running, I was taken aside to be told that Arch Street's library is languishing and that's English, we don't have English books, let alone parents who are raising, (suffice?) to say we need to have a French Immersion right? So, and that's not the fault of the families, we have neglected those schools, so part of supporting the students who chose to be in an English program, making sure, this will be true for all students, but, being thoughtful to ensure that any students, who is struggling in terms of literacy, and also for whom English might be a second language or a third language, that what we are supporting those students and that there is the opportunity for, it would be Enhanced English with a French Immersion, there's more opportunity as well for the students in both programs, to be interacting and to try to get away from it being, cause we don't want to just create the same streaming and have this half of the hallway English and this half of the hallway French, trying to support the students to all be in a Tier 1 school. For everybody to be in a fabulous school, where they have those individual supports that they need in order to succeed, whether they are choosing English or whether they are choosing French, and Enhanced English also includes Core French in earlier years then would be true in other areas of Ontario."

My interpretation:

- Everything that will be offered will be "boosted"
- A hint that schools need school councils, parents advocating, and need more fundraising
- Arch Street's library doesn't have enough English books and would need more fundraising to add French books, but parents are already not doing enough fundraising for English, "let alone" parents who would do it for French. That's not the parents fault, OCDSB has neglected them.
- "Support" students struggling with literacy, especially those whose 1st or 2nd language isn't English
- Acknowledging the potential divide between English students and French students with hopes of making all the students be in a "fabulous school" where they have "their individual

supports" whether they are in EE or FI.

- A comment on how OCDSB would be adding FI in earlier grades than a lot of the province

I had a hard time trying to interpret what was meant by that response. Hopefully the translator was able to convey that properly to the Arabic speaking families.

My take away from that response is that OCDSB has always had a hard time supporting families and we would have to try to advocate for our children's needs once the changes happen. The problem with that is: that the entire EPR sends the message that this is being done for equity and to improve program quality, which doesn't align with this response. The response gives the impression that the school board is mostly concerned with adding FI, but parents will still be responsible to advocate for what their needs are and then fundraise these needs themselves, which is not at all "improving program quality". The EPR is a perfect opportunity for OCDSB to truly raise literacy rates overall, rather than just adding French Immersion students, which might raise a school's overall numbers, but leave the current struggling students behind.

The proposal says: there will be "supports" for multilingual learners, with English as a Second Language/English Literacy Development (ESL/ELD) classes that currently exist modernized and remaining in place. Although that's great in theory, and this might help schools that have a classroom or less of ESL/ELD students, how will that work when the ESL/ELD students make up the majority of the school? These parents are often struggling to support their children's literacy, while trying to learn on their own, in just English. These same parents may also struggle with helping their kids with the increased amount of French in the EE program. Does OCDSB have any plan on how they could help support families as a whole with literacy, which in turn, would help literacy rates overall across the board?

There is also the question of what will happen to classrooms in terms of support or even just class sizes, when all of the students from alternative schools are added to EE and FI. Turning an entire alternative school into an EE or EE/FI school might help with enrollment, but there will be an above average amount of students that will end up needing space in the "Specialized Program Classes". Similarly to what I was saying about ESL/ELD, if there is a higher percentage of students that need these supports, one space for all of the different needs of all these students, simply won't be enough. There are extremely important and valid

reasons why families choose alternative, and now schools are going to have to use their already limited resources to support kids that were already being neglected by OCDSB within alternative schools, and deserve even more support if they are forced to join EE or FI. Unfortunately a promise from a school board that has already neglected them is going to be hard for them to come to terms with. That doesn't even touch on the fact that a lot of parents seem to use Alt since they're unable (either financially or are on waitlists) to get diagnoses' that might make it easier or quicker to get into one of the SPC's.

Summary:

The proposal says: there will be "supports" for multilingual learners, with ESL/ELD classes that currently exist modernized and remaining in place. Although that's great in theory, and this might help schools that have a classroom or less of ESL/ELD students, how will that work when the ESL/ELD students make up the majority of the school?

Does OCDSB have any plan on how they could help support families as a whole with literacy, which in turn, would help literacy rates overall across the board?

What will happen in terms of support for ALT students in classrooms as well as class sizes, when all of the students from alternative schools are added to EE and FI? Similarly to ESL/ELD, how will there be enough resources for students who already have limited support and will most likely need more while having to be integrated into EE? Will they then be added to the "Specialized Program Classes" or have any support from the SPC's?