

Name: Joanne Pendon

Brief summary of issue or topic of discussion:

To whom it may concern,

We, a group of concerned parents at Sir Winston Churchill PS (SWC), are submitting this written delegation for the OCDSB meeting on April 22, 2025, regarding the Elementary Program Review (EPR). Our concerns were sent to our school trustee, [REDACTED], on April 10, 2025 following a town hall meeting she attended. We are submitting this delegation because the most recent EPR revisions did not address our concerns.

The proposed EPR changes raise significant concerns for SWC and Carleton Heights PS, including the viability of French Immersion (FI) programs at both schools and persistent overcapacity at Carleton Heights.

We were able to collect meaningful feedback from a cross section of our SWC community—including 52 families responding to our survey, 38% of which would not be reassigned to Carleton Heights PS.

Our initial findings show the following:

- 52% of families indicated they are considering leaving the OCDSB if the proposed changes are implemented in their current form. Notably, only 23% indicated that they would stay with the OCDSB, while the remaining 25% is undecided.
- 85% of families expressed clear disagreement with the proposed boundary changes.
- 98% of families shared that they are unhappy with the proposed changes, citing emotions such as frustration, anxiety, and disappointment.

Next Steps and Recommendations:

We respectfully propose that the OCDSB planners evaluate the following requests with consideration for their potential impact, as follows:

- We request that the board review the projected enrollment figures for the French Immersion programs at SWC and Carleton Heights PS, to assess the viability of offering French Immersion in two separate locations.
- We request the board to consider simultaneously introducing all grades of the Enhanced English program to SWC in 2026 to resolve the challenges surrounding increased overcrowding at Carleton Heights PS posed by the phased transition currently proposed.

Thank you for reviewing our delegation,

SWC Parent Group

To whom it may concern:

We, a concerned group of parents at Sir Winston Churchill PS (SWC), are bringing forward our written delegation for the OCDSB meeting on April 22, 2025 with respect to the Elementary Program Review (EPR).

The SWC community has identified concerns with the boundary and curriculum changes put forth by the OCDSB Elementary Program Review (EPR). While many echo those raised by countless parents/ caregivers from across the board, a couple concerns with how the EPR plan will be implemented at SWC stand out: the changes will lead to unsustainable French Immersion programs at SWC and Carleton Heights PS and perpetuate an overcapacity issue at Carleton Heights PS. These concerns were sent to our school trustee, [REDACTED], on April 10, 2025 following a town hall meeting she attended.

To support our position, we have collected 52 survey responses from families within the SWC community, many of whom have expressed strong concerns about the proposed changes. We continue to collect feedback as more families share their perspectives.

Background

Currently, Carleton Heights PS and SWC share a single catchment area. SWC offers the Early French Immersion (EFI) program, along with two specialized programs — the Primary/ Junior Autism Program and the Behaviour Intervention Program. SWC serves families who

represent a broad diversity of cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, contributing to a supportive and inclusive school community. According to the OCDSB's Enrollment data sheet, in 2023/ 2024, SWC was running at 67% capacity. Carleton Heights PS offers English and Middle French Immersion (MFI) programs, and was running at 142% capacity in 2023/ 2024. Both schools serve a shared community, and families benefit from the ability to choose the learning environment that aligns most closely with their child's needs.

Under the proposed EPR plan, the catchment area for these two schools will be divided in two, and both schools will offer the modified French Immersion and Enhanced English programs by the time the EPR plan is fully implemented. French Immersion for JK- Grade 6 is slated to begin in 2026 at both SWC and Carleton Heights PS, with students allocated based on the new boundary maps. The Enhanced English program will also be phased into SWC, starting with only JK to Grade 3 in 2026 and expanding by one Grade each year until reaching full implementation through Grade 6 by 2029. This divided boundary and phased implementation introduce two major concerns: it threatens the viability of the French Immersion program at both schools and it leaves Carleton Heights PS over capacity, according to the board's projections.

Concern # 1: The Viability of Two Separate French Programs

Splitting the current EFI stream at SWC between SWC and Carleton Heights PS would reduce cohort sizes at both schools, making it difficult to maintain strong, sustainable French Immersion programming in either site.

Distribution of French Instruction Within the Catchment Area

In 2023/ 2024 SWC had approximately 290 EFI students in Grades 1 through 6. Notably, while Grade 1 had 59 EFI students, Grade 6 had only 32 EFI students—a typical pattern of attrition over time in EFI programs. If 50% of SWC's current student population moved to Carleton Heights PS, it would leave an estimated 30 French Immersion students at each school in Grade 1, and only 16 students at each site in Grade 6. These smaller cohorts would result in more split- Grade classrooms— further straining instructional quality and undermining the consistency needed for effective French immersion learning.

Carleton Heights PS currently offers a MFI program; however, enrollment numbers are low: the 2023/ 2024 data shows 18 students in Grade 4, 8 students in Grade 5, and 13 students

in Grade 6. The low MFI enrollment numbers at Carleton Heights PS do not demonstrate high demand for French Immersion programming at the school. The numbers may also suggest that the introduction of the new French Immersion program will not result in a significant influx of French Immersion students at Carleton Heights PS.

Splitting the current French Immersion program at SWC risks undermining a stable, thriving program that has been built through years of community investment. Preserving this success aligns directly with the board's own goals of supporting community-based education and ensuring long-term program viability.

Concern # 2: Capacity Pressures and Opportunities at SWC and Carleton Heights PS

Carleton Heights PS is operating at 142% capacity (exceeding its capacity by 155 students), while SWC is operating at 67% capacity (with space to accommodate approximately 214 additional students before reaching capacity). The enrollment imbalance between the two schools is expected to persist after boundary changes are implemented. Specifically, based on current and projected enrollment data from the OCDSB:

- The proposed phased transition of Enhanced English program to SWC may exacerbate the capacity issues at Carleton Heights PS in 2026, as an estimated 50% of all SWC students would transfer to Carleton Heights PS in 2026 (approximately 200 students), while 50% of students from JK through Grade 3 (approximately 150 students) would be transferring from Carleton Heights PS to SWC. This would result in Carleton Heights PS placing even greater strain on an already overburdened school.
- By the end of the phased transition of the Enhanced English program to SWC, Carleton Heights PS is projected to remain over capacity at 112%, with 46 students above its limit, while SWC is expected to remain under capacity at 86%, with 91 spaces still available.

Feedback from the SWC Community:

A group of SWC families initiated a grassroots awareness campaign to ensure that the SWC community is fully informed about the details of the proposal, including the boundary changes. Through this outreach, we were surprised and concerned to discover that many families were unaware of the full scope of the changes being considered.

Despite limited time and the challenge of informing families who had little prior knowledge of the proposal, we were able to collect meaningful feedback from a cross section of our community—including 52 families who responded to our survey, 38% of which would not be reassigned to Carleton Heights PS. We expect many more responses to come in as we continue our outreach. Our initial findings show the following:

- 85% of families expressed clear disagreement with the proposed boundary changes.
- 98% of families shared that they are unhappy with the proposed changes, citing emotions such as frustration, anxiety, and disappointment.
- 52% of families indicated they are considering leaving the OCDSB if the proposed changes are implemented in their current form. Notably, only 23% indicated that they would stay with the OCDSB, while the remaining 25% is undecided.

This data not only reflects significant concern within the SWC community and underscores the need for greater transparency, consultation, and responsiveness from the OCDSB—but also suggests that projected student numbers may fall well below sustainable levels, as families consider leaving the OCDSB in search of greater control over their children's education.

Next Steps and Recommendations:

We respectfully propose that the OCDSB planners evaluate our requests with consideration for their potential impact, as follows:

- We request that the board review the projected enrollment figures for the French Immersion programs at SWC and Carleton Heights PS, to assess the viability of offering French Immersion in two separate locations.
- We request that the board review the projected enrolment figures and proposed boundaries for French Immersion at SWC and Carleton Heights PS to assess whether the current plan supports sustainable program delivery and balanced capacity between the two schools. Specifically, we ask that the board consider:
 - Whether it is feasible to sustain two independent French Immersion programs within a single catchment area, given current and projected demand.
 - Whether a more balanced approach to enrolment could be achieved by introducing all grades of the Enhanced English program at SWC starting in 2026, rather than phasing it in. This may provide more immediate relief to the ongoing overcrowding at Carleton Heights PS.

Should the planners agree with the reasoning outlined above, we kindly request that the existing 2024/ 2025) Early French Immersion boundary for SWC remain intact and a revised phased introduction of Enhanced English program to SWC be reflected in the 2025/2026 Enhanced English boundary plan. This approach would ease persistent overcapacity at Carleton Heights PS by using SWC' s available space to accommodate approximately 214 Enhanced English students— without exceeding capacity— while preserving a strong and unified French Immersion program. It would reduce Carleton Heights' projected capacity to 84% and provide all families with two local Enhanced English options. Students at SWC, along with those at Carleton Heights who choose to remain would avoid unnecessary disruption, helping to preserve continuity and stability.

Centralizing the French Immersion program at SWC would prevent the dilution of limited resources, maintain strong single- Grade cohorts, and ensure consistent access to qualified French educators. This model reduces displacement, eases pressure on staffing and infrastructure, and offers students a more stable and supportive learning environment. We believe this is the most inclusive, efficient, and student- focused path forward— it supports the mental health of our children, strengthens classroom delivery, and minimizes setbacks caused by the stress of school transitions.

Crucially, this plan offers a more balanced and sustainable solution: it improves program delivery, supports family choice, and maintains a strong and viable French Immersion program. It also helps retain families within the OCDSB by providing them with stability, clarity, and a high- quality education— while restoring confidence that the board respects and values our voices in decisions that directly affect our community.