



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Report No. 19-003

15 January 2019

New Fernbank Elementary School Study – Consultation Plan Approval

Key Contact: Michael Carson, Chief Financial Officer, 613-596-8211 ext. 8881

PURPOSE:

1. To obtain Board approval of a consultation process and timeline to establish the opening grade structure, program offering, and attendance boundary for a future elementary school to be opened in the Fernbank area of Stittsville.

CONTEXT:

2. Fernbank is a growing new development area located within Stittsville. At full buildout, there is expected to be an estimated 11,000 new homes in the community. By the end of 2017 approximately 1,600 of these had been built and occupied. Building permits for an additional 600 new residential units have been issued so far in 2018.

A future requirement for four elementary schools and one secondary school within the Fernbank Community Design Plan (CDP) area was first identified and submitted to the City of Ottawa in 2008. The District is currently in the process of seeking acquisition of the first of the four elementary sites.

Most elementary school students residing within the Fernbank development area are directed to John Young Elementary School (ES) for the kindergarten to grade 6 English Program with Core French (ENG) and Early French Immersion (EFI). The school is located in the southern part of Kanata. It should be noted that there is an underdeveloped area located west of Robert Grant Drive in the Fernbank area where students are currently directed to Westwind Public School (PS) for the kindergarten to grade 6 English Program with Core French and EFI.

Significant accommodation pressures exist at John Young ES. The school's preliminary 31 October 2018 enrolment was 735 students against a school capacity of 547, resulting in a utilization rate of 134%. The school currently requires the use of 11 portables on site for instruction. Enrolment at John Young ES is expected to increase to 800 students for the 2019-2020 school year.

In May of 2018 the Board approved a list of updated capital priorities which ranked the planned opening of a new elementary school in Fernbank for 2020 as its highest priority. A business case for the project will be submitted to the province for consideration once the next Ministry call for capital funding requests is received.

The purpose of this study is to gain approval for the opening grade structure, program offering, and attendance boundary of the new Fernbank elementary school in order to be shovel-ready once capital funding is secured from the province.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

3. A general location map for the study area showing future OCDSB school sites situated within Fernbank area, and also including John Young ES, is attached as Appendix A.

John Young ES is located on Morton Drive in the Glen Cairn area of Kanata South. In addition to serving students residing in Fernbank, the school's attendance area also includes the area bounded by Terry Fox Drive to the west, Hazeldean Road to the north, and Eagleson Road to the east (as outlined in Appendix B).

Appendix A provides the general location of all four of the District's future elementary school sites that have been identified in the Fernbank area. Fernbank elementary school site #1 is located at the southwest corner of the extensions of Cope Drive and Rouncey Road. The parcel is 2.84 hectares (approximately 7 acres) in size and is located directly adjacent to a municipal park. This block is the only OCDSB elementary school site in Fernbank which is currently development-ready (serviced and accessible).

In March 2018 capital funding for the construction of a grade 7 to 12 secondary school in Stittsville was approved by the Ministry of Education. The designated site which will accommodate the new school is located within the Fernbank development area. It is expected that a study will commence in the fall of 2019 which will determine the attendance boundary, program offering and opening grade structure of the new secondary school. Future students attending the new Fernbank elementary school would feed to the new secondary school upon its opening.

This study does not qualify as a Pupil Accommodation Review (PAR) under Policy P.118.PLG Pupil Accommodation Review, and will include a different consultative process.

Policy P.118.PLG states that a PAR is not required when the Board is planning the relocation of grades or programs in which the enrolment constitutes less than 50% of the school's total enrolment. Staff does not foresee an attendance boundary for the new Fernbank elementary school which would result in the movement of more than 50% of a school's enrolment.

Although funding for the project has not yet been received from the province, the completion of this study and the setting of a program and attendance boundary for the new Fernbank elementary school will assist the District with being able to open the facility in a timely fashion once that takes place.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

4. The cost of conducting the study will be managed within existing departmental budgets.

COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:

5. It is proposed that a working group be formed in early 2019 and that it be comprised of District staff and two representatives from each study school.

In addition to impacting John Young ES, the opening of a new elementary school in the Fernbank development area may affect enrolment at Bridlewood Community ES, the school that is currently designated the Middle French Immersion (MFI) program site for students residing in that part of the Fernbank area.

As indicated earlier, students residing west of Robert Grant Avenue in Fernbank are directed to Westwind PS (kindergarten to grade 6) for the English Program with Core French and Early French Immersion. A. Lorne Cassidy ES is the designated MFI program site for that area.

It is recommended that the working group include representatives from each of the four above-mentioned schools: John Young ES; Bridlewood Community ES; Westwind PS; and A. Lorne Cassidy ES.

Appendix C provides a snapshot of current enrolment and accommodation data for those four schools which are expected to be included in the study process.

Local community associations will also be invited to provide a representative on the working group. Area trustees will be notified and invited to attend all working group meetings.

According to the recommended consultation plan, a study working group will meet on several occasions over the course of the winter and spring of 2019. Meetings have been preliminarily scheduled for the months of February, March, and April 2019. Additional meetings of the working group may be convened should they be necessary.

A public consultation meeting is tentatively scheduled to be held within the local community in May 2019. Final decisions regarding the study are scheduled to be made by Board in June 2019.

A detailed study consultation plan and timeline for the study is attached as Appendix D of this report.

STRATEGIC LINKS:

6. The opening of a new elementary school within the developing Fernbank community will serve to provide students with improved access to learning environments and optimize the use of District resources. This is consistent with stewardship objectives of the 2015-2019 Strategic Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the New Fernbank Elementary School Study Consultation Plan and Timeline, attached as Appendix D to Report No. 19-003, be approved.

Michael Carson
Chief Financial Officer
(ext. 8881)

Jennifer Adams
Director of Education and
Secretary of the Board

APPENDICES

- Appendix A General Location Map – Study Area
- Appendix B School Attendance Boundary Map – John Young Elementary School
- Appendix C Current Enrolment and Accommodation Chart
- Appendix D Study Consultation Plan and Timeline