

**John Young Elementary School – Interim Accommodation Measures  
Consultation Plan Approval**

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**PURPOSE:**

1. To obtain Board approval of a consultation process and timeline to review accommodation pressures at John Young Elementary School (ES) in advance of the building and opening of the new Fernbank ES by considering the implementation of measures that would alleviate pressure in the interim.

**CONTEXT:**

2. John Young ES is located in the Glen Cairn neighbourhood of Kanata South. It is experiencing significant accommodation pressures primarily due to residential growth occurring in the Fernbank development area.

The Fernbank development area is located south of Highway 417 between Kanata and Stittsville (See Appendix A). The development is expected to contain an estimated 11,000 new homes at full build out. Construction in the Fernbank area has been on-going for a number of years. As of the end of December 2018, 2,350 residential building permits had been issued within this community. Building has continued to be strong in this area.

There are four elementary school sites that were identified for the OCDSB as part of the completed Fernbank Community Design Plan (CDP) process. The District acquired the first site on 18 September 2019.

In anticipation of a request from the Ministry for a list of capital priority projects, in May 2018, the Board approved an updated list of capital priorities which ranked the opening of a new elementary school in the Fernbank development area as the highest priority project. The identified planned opening date for the new school was September 2020.

When the Ministry request did not come as planned, the OCDSB continued to plan for the new Fernbank ES and a study to set the opening grade structure, program and attendance boundary of the new school commenced in the winter of 2019. On 24 June 2019, the Board approved the opening grade structure, program and attendance boundary area for the new Fernbank ES.

The new Fernbank ES became the Board's top capital priority in May 2018. The Ministry did not release a call for capital priorities between September 2017 and July 2019. On 22 July 2019 the Ministry announced the launch of the 2019-2020 Capital Priorities program. On 27 September 2019, the OCDSB submitted eight requests for capital, with the new Fernbank ES ranked as the highest capital priority of the Board. To date, this project has not received funding from the Ministry.

3. Accommodation Overview

Currently, most of the students residing in the Fernbank development area are directed to John Young ES and as a result, the school is experiencing significant accommodation pressure.

As of 31 October 2018, the school accommodated 735 students in a building with a pupil capacity of 547 (a utilization rate of 134%). Eleven portable classrooms were required on site. As of 30 September 2019, enrolment had risen to 844 (a utilization rate of 154%) and 16 portable classrooms were required on site.

As residential development in the Fernbank area continues, accommodation pressure at John Young ES is expected to increase.

## **KEY CONSIDERATIONS:**

4. The OCDSB submitted its request for capital to build the new Fernbank ES, along with seven other projects, on 27 September 2019. It remains uncertain how or when the Ministry will release its decisions for funding awards, but staff does not anticipate that the decisions will be announced prior to February 2020.

The anticipated announcement date presents a challenge: if a positive decision regarding funding for the new Fernbank ES is made, and if that decision were to be announced by February 2020, the OCDSB would be able to have the school construction commence in the summer of 2020 and an opening of September 2021 would be achievable.

However, if the funding decision is later than February 2020, the start of construction could be delayed beyond the summer of 2020 and a September 2021 opening would not be feasible. In this scenario, the opening of the new school would likely be in September 2022.

Although the hope was to have John Young ES continue to accommodate future Fernbank students until the new school was ready to open, there are too many variables to leave John Young ES's attendance pressures unmanaged. Staff cannot be certain that funding will be received for the new Fernbank ES. Should the funding be received, it is difficult to guarantee the timing of the announcement and the subsequent approvals that are required in order to know when the new school will open. Staff is bringing forth recommendations to launch a consultation regarding the pressures at John Young ES and the measures that can be taken to alleviate those pressures for the next few years. These measures are considered to be interim only, as the only solution to the growing enrolment in this area of the city is the construction of more pupil places.

5. The Proposed Plan

When considering interim accommodation measures, the OCDSB engages in consultation with a range of options; including options that may be developed as part of the consultation process. While staff is still very much open to examining options, it was determined that a focused plan be presented for consultation that would see the least amount of disruption for students and schools, and would be in place for a reasonable amount of time. Staff proposes that the following accommodation scenario be consulted upon.

The new Fernbank ES school boundary has been established. Staff suggests that students who live in this area be redirected as follows: redirect Fernbank-area year 1 kindergarten, year 2 kindergarten and grade 1 students from John Young ES to Westwind Public School (PS) effective September 2020. The redirection of students would be undertaken as a block move. Fernbank-area students entering grades 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 as of September 2020 would continue to attend John Young ES.

Any new year 1 kindergarten, year 2 kindergarten and grade 1 students moving into the Fernbank area during the 2020-2021 school year would also be directed to Westwind PS. New grades 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 Fernbank-area students would be directed to John Young ES.

As outlined above, if the new Fernbank ES does not open in September 2021, the proposed plan would extend into the 2021-2022 school year as well. Year 1 kindergarten, year 2 kindergarten, grade 1 and grade 2 Fernbank area students would be directed to Westwind PS, effective September 2021. Fernbank area students entering grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 as of September 2021 would continue to attend John Young ES.

Any new year 1 kindergarten, year 2 kindergarten, grade 1 and grade 2 students moving into the Fernbank area during the 2021-2022 school year would also be directed to Westwind PS. New grades 3, 4, 5 and 6 Fernbank-area students would be directed to John Young ES.

There is no way to be certain of the impact that this redirection would have on John Young ES or Westwind PS, but using current numbers as an indication, John Young ES's current 16 portables could be reduced by as many as three in the first year (from 16 to 13) and Westwind PS would need three portables where they currently have none. Should a second year of accommodation be required, the John Young ES portable count would remain at 13, where Westwind PS's count would increase to 7.

Upon the opening of the new Fernbank ES, year 1 kindergarten to grade 5 Fernbank-area students will be redirected to the new school, as approved by Board on 24 June 2019.

6. Other Options Considered

Staff considered redirecting all grade 6 John Young ES students to Glen Cairn Public School (PS), a grade 7 and 8 school also located in Kanata South. After completing grade 6 at John Young ES, students feed to Glen Cairn PS.

Redirecting John Young ES grade 6 students to Glen Cairn PS would follow a

natural feeding progression, albeit one year earlier than normal. This option was discounted due to insufficient accommodation pressure being alleviated at John Young ES.

Staff also examined forming the new Fernbank ES at another location, in advance of the new school receiving funding and being built. All Fernbank area year 1 kindergarten to grade 5 students would be block moved to a different location. Grade 6 Fernbank area students would complete their final year at John Young ES, prior to transitioning to Glen Cairn PS for grade 7. This option was discounted as there were no elementary schools in close proximity to John Young ES that had adequate available instructional space to accommodate the Fernbank area students.

Finally, staff fully anticipates hearing about cases of siblings from the Fernbank area being separated because of the proposed redirection. We have always been cognizant of the disruption to families that are a result of these sorts of accommodations decisions. As consultation takes place, and recommendations regarding interim solutions become clearer, staff will address the ramifications of the grand parenting of siblings.

7. Formal Pupil Accommodation Review Not Required

A formal Pupil Accommodation Review (PAR) under Board Policy P.118PLG, Pupil Accommodation Reviews is not required for the proposed plan.

The policy states that a PAR is not required when the Board is planning the relocation of grades and programs in which the enrolment constitutes less than 50% of a school's enrolment. The calculation is based on the enrolment at the time of the relocation.

In accordance with Board policy, affected schools and communities are to be informed about the proposed study before a decision is made by the Board of Trustees to exempt a school from a PAR.

## **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

8. The cost of conducting the review will be managed within existing departmental budgets.

## **COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:**

9. An Information flyer and web link to this report will be sent to those schools affected and their respective communities when this report becomes public, in advance of the Committee of the Whole meeting on 5 November 2019.

Once a decision has been made to proceed with the review as an exemption from a PAR, notice in accordance with the policy will be provided to the City of Ottawa, coterminous school boards, the Ministry of Education, and community partners that have expressed an interest.

Given the focused scope of the proposed interim accommodation measures, two information meetings with affected principals and school council representatives are proposed to be held in December 2019 and January 2020, and prior to a larger public meeting. Affected schools include John Young ES and Westwind PS.

A public consultation meeting, to be held within the community, is planned for January 2020. Final Board decisions regarding the review are scheduled to take place in February 2020. The timeline and consultation plan are attached as Appendix B and C to the report.

Appendix D provides current and projected enrolments for those schools which are to be included in the process.

## **STRATEGIC LINKS:**

10. Conducting a review of pupil accommodation in this part of the District in order to provide students with improved access to learning environments serves to optimize the use of District resources which is consistent with the Culture of Caring objective of the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

- A. THAT Board affirm that a Pupil Accommodation Review (PAR) under Board Policy P.118.PLG is not required for this study; and
- B. THAT Board approves the timeline and consultation plan attached as Appendix B and C to Report 19-105, in order to consult with local school communities and the public.

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Michael Carson  
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Camille Williams-Taylor  
Director of Education and  
Secretary of the Board

## **APPENDICES**

- Appendix A General Location Map
- Appendix B Timeline
- Appendix C Consultation Plan
- Appendix D Current and Projected Enrolments