



Attendance Boundary Changes for Eglinton Junior Public School, John Fisher Junior Public School and Whitney Junior Public School

To: Planning and Priorities Committee

Date: 1 March, 2023

Report No.: 03-23-4489

Strategic Directions

- Provide Equity of Access to Learning Opportunities for All Students
- Allocate Human and Financial Resources Strategically to Support Student Needs

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- a) The residential developments at 101 Erskine Avenue and 18 Erskine Avenue be returned to their local school, John Fisher Junior Public School, effective September 1, 2023;
- b) The residential developments at 125 Redpath Avenue, 161 Roehampton Avenue, 33 Dunfield Avenue / 44 Lillian Street, 11 Lillian Street, 99 Broadway Avenue / 195 Redpath Avenue, and 8 Eglinton Avenue East / 15 Roehampton Avenue be returned to their local school, Eglinton Junior Public School, effective September 1, 2023;
- c) Students who reside in the residential developments identified in recommendations a) and b) and who attend Whitney Junior Public School as of the end of the 2022-23 school year, be allowed to remain at Whitney Junior Public School until they graduate; and
- d) Siblings of students described in recommendation c) be allowed to attend Whitney Junior Public School provided their older sibling is attending Whitney Junior Public School at the time that they enter the school.

Context

The purpose of this report is to address the enrolment pressure at Whitney Junior Public School by returning the residential developments that were redirected to the school to their local schools, Eglinton Junior Public School and John Fisher Junior Public School.

Whitney Jr PS is located in Ward 10 (Trustee Williams), Eglinton Jr PS is located in Ward 8 (Trustee Laskin), and John Fisher Jr PS is located in Ward 11 (Trustee Chernos Lin).

The Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy contains a study to explore returning these redirected residential developments to local schools, scheduled for 2024-25. This study was moved forward to this school year because of the enrolment pressure at Whitney Jr PS.

Accommodating Growth in the Yonge-Eglinton Area

The Yonge-Eglinton area is identified as a Centre in the City of Toronto's Official Plan, and an Urban Growth Centre in the Province of Ontario's Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. As such, the area is planned for high-density, mixed-use intensification including residential uses. It is already one of the densest communities in the country. The population is forecast to double over the long term. It has experienced significant residential intensification over the past ten years and will continue to experience significant intensification for the next 20 years.

Over the past decade, numerous accommodation solutions have been implemented for the schools in the Yonge-Eglinton area to ensure that students have the space they need in which to learn. The solutions include: reducing the grade range of the junior schools from JK-6 to JK-5; expanding the grade range of the middle school from 7-8 to 6-8; changing the attendance boundaries between Eglinton Jr PS, Maurice Cody Jr PS, Northlea EMS, and John Fisher Jr PS; relocating programs such as the Extended French program out of Eglinton Jr PS; converting John Fisher Jr PS from a single track French Immersion Centre to a dual track school (English and French Immersion tracks); rebuilding Davisville Jr PS / Spectrum Alternative Sr School as a larger facility; renovating and building an addition onto Hodgson MS (about to begin construction); and reopening the closed school, Bannockburn PS, as a new single track French Immersion Centre (to open in September 2024).

A further solution that has been implemented is the redirection of residential developments occurring in the Eglinton Jr PS attendance boundary to schools outside the area that have space available. To date, ten developments have been assigned to Whitney Jr PS and seven developments have been assigned to Rippleton PS. The students living in the redirected developments are bussed to the receiving schools

because of distance – Whitney Jr PS is located approximately 3 kilometres away and Rippleton PS is located approximately 7 kilometres away.

The redirections are intended as an interim solution until space becomes available at the local schools at which time the developments will be returned. As reflected in the guiding principles of the Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy under equity of access, the goal is to have students attend a neighbourhood school that they can make their own way to.

Neighbourhood schools are an essential component of providing equity of access. Through neighbourhood schools, children who live near to each other can attend the same school, students can participate in before-and-after school activities, and parents have easier access to the school. Neighbourhood schools support active student transportation – students can make their own way to school by walking, cycling, or using public transit. Bussing is not required which supports the TDSB's commitment to environmental sustainability.

Enrolment Pressure at Whitney Junior Public School

Since the implementation of the redirections, the enrolment of Whitney Jr PS has increased. The school's enrolment was above projection this school year and is currently operating above capacity. As of October 31, 2022, Whitney Jr PS had an enrolment of 455 students (112% utilization rate). The school had a shortage of two classrooms requiring the use of the staff room and computer lab to accommodate the overflow of students. The growth at Whitney Jr PS mainly comes from the ten redirected residential developments. If these residential developments continue to be redirected to Whitney Jr PS, the school's enrolment is projected to increase to 471 students (116% utilization rate) in September 2023 and continue growing to 501 students (123% utilization rate) by 2027.

Recommended Accommodation Solution

A team composed of the Principals, Superintendents and Trustees of Eglinton Jr PS, John Fisher Jr PS and Whitney Jr PS and central staff including Planning and Facility Services staff was formed to explore options to the overcrowding at Whitney Jr PS. To address the pressure the school is currently experiencing and the forecasted continued growth, the TDSB needs to develop a solution for implementation as early as September 2023.

The team determined that portables were not a preferred solution for Whitney Jr PS because the site is small at 2.89 acres and portables would have to be placed on the school's play field.

The team also determined that the current space usage at Whitney Jr PS should continue. To improve the conditions, the computer lab will be fit up as a regular classroom and two rooms in the basement will receive improved ventilation.

To manage continued growth, the team focused on the redirected residential developments because there has been a change in the enrolments of the local schools, Eglinton Jr PS and John Fisher Jr PS. In September 2022, an English track was opened at John Fisher Jr PS and the northern portion of the Eglinton Jr PS attendance boundary was assigned to John Fisher Jr PS. These changes decreased the enrolment at Eglinton Jr PS.

As of October 31, 2022, Eglinton Jr PS had an enrolment of 449 students (82% utilization rate) and John Fisher Jr PS had an enrolment of 357 students (68% utilization rate). The English track at John Fisher Jr PS is being phased in, starting with Junior Kindergarten this school year and expanding by a grade each year up to Grade 5. As the English track is phased in, the enrolment at Eglinton Jr PS will decrease each year.

To balance enrolment across the three schools, the team is recommending that six of the redirected residential developments be returned to Eglinton Jr PS, two redirected developments be returned to John Fisher Jr PS, and two redirected developments remain assigned to Whitney Jr PS. Two residential developments need to remain assigned to Whitney Jr PS to avoid overcrowding at Eglinton Jr PS.

The table below identifies the redirected developments by address.

Redirected Residential Development	Recommended School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 125 Redpath Avenue • 161 Roehampton Avenue • 33 Dunfield Avenue / 44 Lillian Street • 11 Lillian Street • 99 Broadway Avenue / 195 Redpath Avenue • 8 Eglinton Avenue East / 15 Roehampton Avenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return to local school – Eglinton Jr PS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 101 Erskine Avenue • 18 Erskine Avenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return to local school – John Fisher Jr PS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2221 Yonge Street • 5 Soudan Avenue / 8 Hillside Avenue East 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain assigned to Whitney Jr PS (until more space becomes available at local schools)

The eight residential developments proposed to be returned to local schools consist of approximately 4,300 new rental and condominium units in mid and high-rise buildings.

These buildings began occupancy in 2020 and yielded 55 students in JK to Grade 6 in 2020, 77 students in JK to Grade 6 in 2021, and 150 students in JK to Grade 6 in 2022.

It is recommended that the reassignment of the eight residential developments to their local schools take effect for September 1, 2023 for new students who have not entered the TDSB yet. Existing students residing in these buildings will have the choice to attend their local school or continue to attend Whitney Jr PS until they graduate. Also, the younger siblings of these students will be allowed to attend Whitney Jr PS if their older sibling is attending the school when they enter.

Because John Fisher Jr PS is phasing in the English track one grade at a time (the school only has Junior Kindergarten this school year), older students living in the two residential developments to be returned to the school will not have the choice to attend John Fisher Jr PS because their grade will not be available at the school yet. These students will need to continue to attend Whitney Jr PS.

Transportation will continue to be provided to the students who choose to attend Whitney Jr PS.

Appendix A contains a map that shows the redirected residential developments, the affected schools, and the junior attendance boundaries.

Appendix B shows the impact of these recommendations under two scenarios. Table 1 shows the status quo, if the students living at the impacted addresses continue to be accommodated at Whitney Jr PS. Table 2 shows the impact of the recommended changes which return these redirected developments back to their local schools, Eglinton Jr PS and John Fisher Jr PS.

Community Consultation and Feedback

A notice describing the proposal to return the eight redirected developments to their local schools was sent to the impacted school communities through School Messenger on January 24, 2023. That same week Canada Post delivered notices to the impacted residential developments.

A virtual public meeting was held on February 13, 2023, to share information and gather community feedback. 125 people attended the meeting. During the meeting, 15 attendees provided verbal comments and questions. 70 attendees provided written comments and questions through the chat feature. The feedback was mixed. There were attendees in support of the recommendations, attendees not in support, and attendees who proposed that the implementation of the recommendations be deferred until September 2024.

Through the duration of the review process, staff received numerous comments and questions through email and phone. Questions were answered, compiled, and placed

into a Questions and Answers document. The document was posted to the TDSB's public website for the public to access. It was periodically updated with new questions brought forth by the public and staff.

An online survey was available for members of the public to submit comments and questions. 74 responses were received. 63 responses (85%) were supportive of the proposed recommendations. 11 responses (15%) were not in support of the recommendations.

A letter signed by 31 parents was received that expressed disapproval of the proposed recommendations and requested that the proposal be rescinded or modified. The modification proposed is to allow all existing and future parents of the affected addresses to freely choose between Whitney Jr PS and Eglinton Jr PS (or John Fisher Jr PS). The letter is posted on the Accommodation Reviews website for this study.

In response, staff is supportive of existing parents of students attending Whitney Jr PS who live in the affected addresses freely choosing between Whitney Jr PS and their local schools. However, staff is not supportive of this choice being extended to future parents. Based on the feedback received, most parents living in the impacted addresses are interested in their children attending Whitney Jr PS; staff are concerned that the enrolment at the school will not decrease if choice is offered indefinitely to future parents.

A second letter was received from the same group of parents expressing concern that if future students were to attend Eglinton Jr PS, they would be part of the relocation of the school to a holding site, 529 Vaughan Road, during the proposed reconstruction and expansion of Eglinton Jr PS, estimated to begin in 2026.

In response, this project is at a preliminary stage and timelines are very approximate. The relocation of the school will impact every address in the Eglinton attendance boundary. During the relocation, the school will stay intact with the staffing at that time and the programming – relationships between parents, staff and students will continue uninterrupted. Holding sites are a necessary tool in the construction of replacement schools. They have been used successfully for decades by the TDSB as well as other school boards in Ontario. Most recently, 529 Vaughan Road was used during the replacement of Davisville Jr PS / Spectrum Alternative Sr School and will be used for the expansion of Hodgson MS.

This group of parents has also submitted a request to the Ontario Human Rights Commission for intervention. The parents contend that the affected addresses have a significantly larger proportion of people of colour, new immigrants, families that do not speak English as their first (or second) language, and lower-income families. They believe staff's recommendations will disproportionately affect the most vulnerable and

disadvantaged part of the Whitney Jr PS community, leading to greater education and wealth disparity and racial inequality that can span multiple generations.

In response, none of the existing students residing at the affected addresses and attending Whitney Jr PS will be impacted – they and their younger siblings can remain part of the Whitney Jr PS community. In addition, by returning the affected addresses to a local school, the families will gain the benefits of a neighbourhood school including increased accessibility.

Long-Term Solution for the Yonge-Eglinton Area

Intense growth will continue for the Yonge-Eglinton area for the next couple of decades. The long-term goal is to establish neighbourhood schools that students and families can make their own way to that have sufficient space to accommodate all local students so that no residential developments are redirected to schools outside of the area.

To that end, staff are exploring rebuilding Eglinton Jr PS as a larger building, adding an addition to Davisville Jr PS, and constructing additional pupil places on the west side of Yonge Street.

There are 27 known additional residential developments to be built. The redirection of residential developments will continue to be used as an interim solution. When space becomes available locally, the redirected developments will be returned to the neighbourhood schools.

Action Plan and Associated Timeline

If approved, implementation of staff's recommendation will be effective for September 1, 2023.

Resource Implications

Over time, as the number of students from the redirected developments graduate from Whitney Jr PS, the number of busses required to transport the students will decrease. It could result in a reduction of one bus and savings of approximately \$55,000 per year.

Facility upgrades at Whitney Jr PS will be covered by existing budgets such as School Condition Improvement. The estimated cost is \$700,000.

Communications Considerations

Information about the attendance boundary review is posted on the TDSB's Accommodation Reviews website. Information about the Board of Trustee decision will be added there and posted on the impacted schools' websites and the schools' profile pages on the TDSB website.

Notice will be sent to the parents and staff of the impacted schools through School Messenger and will be emailed to all attendees of the public meeting who provided email addresses.

Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)

Policy P068 Accommodation and Program Review, Section 6E

Appendices

- Appendix A: Map – Redirected Residential Developments and Impacted Schools
- Appendix B: Planning and Enrolment Data

From

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