



Questions and Answers

December 22, 2022 Update

Student Accommodation Planning: Elementary Family of Schools/Port Hope High School

What are the capacities of Port Hope High School, Ganaraska Trail PS, and other local schools?

All On-The-Ground School Capacities for the local schools are [identified in this document](#), which is posted on the school board website's Student Accommodation Planning page for Port Hope High School.

When will the Pupil Accommodation Review pause be lifted; should we wait?

Since June 2017, the Ministry of Education has put a 'pause' on the Pupil Accommodation Review process, which means that school closure and/or consolidations cannot be considered as options to address enrolment, programming or facility challenges. We have not received any indication about when the pause will be lifted.

Can the Town of Port Hope adjust its bylaws to allow for portables at Ganaraska Trail PS, and could this address the increased numbers for a few years?

We have positive relationships with municipal partners at the Municipality of Port Hope and are exploring possible solutions to allow for more portables at Ganaraska Trail PS. If more portables are possible, there are still other considerations such as parking and traffic flow, loss of playground space, and overcrowding of shared facilities (i.e., gymnasium, washrooms, library), etc.

Why didn't you build a larger addition at Ganaraska Trail PS to proactively address the enrolment issues?

The Ministry capital funding formula prescribes how many student spaces can be built, in line with current enrolment, and it does not allow for building extra spaces for potential future enrolment.

If younger students move to Dr. Hawkins Senior PS, how will the school be adapted for the younger grades – to address program, safety, play spaces, materials, etc?

We are committed to supporting a positive transition for students, staff and families. If the consultation and planning process results in younger students moving to Dr. Hawkins, renovations will be considered, as part of a transition process, to ensure safety and program

needs are met and that play spaces are available. Learning materials will also be ordered and made available for students.

Moving students to Dr. Hawkins Senior PS may create challenges for families with different bussing and bell times – can this be addressed?

Bell and bus times are established in collaboration with Student Transportation Services of Central Ontario (STSCO). Once a final option is selected, bell and bus times will be discussed with STSCO. We will give families as much time as possible to prepare for any changes.

How have students been included in this process?

Students will be part of the transition process moving forward. Once planning is finalized, students and staff will have the opportunity to provide feedback about the supports and resources needed to ensure a smooth transition. Parents/families will also be engaged in the transitions planning process.

Can the “identity” for Dr. Hawkins be re-branded, e.g. signage, culture?

As part of this process, a number of updates and improvements will be considered for Dr. Hawkins Senior PS if younger students move to the school, including renovations, updated signage and improvements that support a collaborative school culture that reflects all students.

Isn't K-8 the ideal elementary configuration, why are we splitting students into smaller sections, and across divisions?

Many school configurations are beneficial for students, for different reasons. Whichever option is selected, the school board and schools will ensure that students are well supported for achievement, well-being and success.

Will bussing be affected for students with the changes?

Once a final option is selected, bell and bus times will be discussed with Student Transportation Services of Central Ontario (STSCO), and will continue to meet school board standards for transportation. We will give families as much time as possible to prepare for any changes.

How will the younger students be kept separate from the high school students at Dr. Hawkins?

This is an important consideration and will be part of the transition planning once an option is selected.

Can parents have input on improving the green space and playground at Dr. Hawkins?

Parents have provided input on the necessity to improve the green space at Dr. Hawkins. This input will be considered, after planning is finalized. Upgrades to the outdoor space will be a key consideration, along with other priorities that have been brought forward by the community.

How will child care options be affected by potential changes?

The child care provider operating at Dr. Hawkins Senior PS will be included in the transition process, to ensure child care options continue to be available for families.

Can the existing GTPS building be renovated to accommodate an increase in population?

Capital funding to support new schools, replacement schools, additions and deep retrofits to existing schools is allocated by the provincial government through the Capital Priorities program, an annual process where school boards identify their most urgent pupil accommodation needs.

The Ministry has a fixed capital budget that they allocate to school boards based on their assessment of where the greatest priorities lie across the province. In their review process, the Ministry assigns a higher priority to projects where utilization rates are equal to or greater than 100% at all nearby schools, as well as to those where the need for additional pupil places is demonstrable within the near-term as opposed to longer-term accommodation pressures. At this time, the Board has available pupil places in the area.

Can Beatrice Strong PS and Ganaraska Trail PS both operate as dual French Immersion (FI) schools?

The Board's Planning staff are analyzing enrolment projections to determine if establishing FI at Beatrice Strong PS, while maintaining a program at Ganaraska Trail PS, is a viable and sustainable option.

Do the enrolment projections account for continued immigration and migration, ages of children coming into the community, and purchase of homes?

The enrolment projection methodology takes into consideration these factors, and is [outlined in this document](#), which is posted on the school board website's Student Accommodation Planning page for Port Hope High School.

Has the planning group considered the purchase of older construction homes in the demographics and not just new builds?

KPR projections use Child Tax Benefit and Universal Child Care Benefit reporting to calculate a yearly estimate of children living in a school catchment. The 5-12 year old population has remained relatively stable for the last five years in these school catchments.

What software does the Board use for planning?

Along with other sources of information for projections and planning, KPR uses Baragar Systems who have been in business for 40 years and have over 100 school boards as clients.

If nothing changes, what happens in two years?

Enrolment projections indicate that by the 2024-25 school year, the Board would require additional space at Ganaraska Trail PS to accommodate the anticipated enrolment. Although, staff are re-visiting the option of placing additional portables on site with municipal staff, there are other considerations including parking and traffic flow, loss of playground space, overcrowding of shared facilities (i.e., gymnasium, washrooms, library), etc. Enrolment projections indicate that the current enrolment will increase beyond the two-year timeframe, which is why the Board is looking for a more sustainable solution.

Does any scenario take into account other local areas e.g. Cobourg & Port Hope boundaries?

No, there has not been consideration of adjusting Cobourg's boundaries. There is enough space for students within the Port Hope area to find a local solution.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS – OPTION B**Can all of the Kindergarten students attend one school?**

Kindergarten students ideally need larger and upgraded classrooms to support early learning needs, which may require more extensive renovations. Students also benefit from having older student role models in a range of grades at schools.

Will Grade 4s need to move in another year?

The Board is undergoing this process to find a sustainable solution. One of the proposed options does explore the impact of transitioning the Grade 4 students to Dr. Hawkins Senior PS.

Will students be able to use the yard at Dr. Hawkins/PHHS?

If a decision is made to have younger students attend Dr. Hawkins, we will determine how best to provide opportunities for all students to have access to the larger yard at different times. We would do this in collaboration with Port Hope HS to ensure that the needs of both the elementary students and the secondary students are being met. We would also ensure appropriate supervision is available at all times.

Will students be able to leave the school property during breaks?

Once a decision has been made, it would be a site-based decision on whether students from the elementary school are allowed to leave the property at break. Clear parameters around this would be established by the school administration and staff with consideration to safety, supervision, and impact on the school community.

Why do we bus kids to Cobourg?

The students that are bussed to Cobourg from Port Hope are students attending Cobourg Collegiate Institute (CCI) for French Immersion or International Baccalaureate programs. No elementary students are bussed to Cobourg.

Can parents/guardians have a tour of Dr. Hawkins Senior PS to see the physical space?

Once a decision has been made and a plan has been put into place, parents will be invited to see the physical building. This may not happen until the Open House that is typically scheduled during the fall of each school year.

Can we get more support for the Grade 6's with special education needs?

Once an option is selected, we will take steps to ensure a positive transition for all students. This will include considerations such as, what the play areas look like and what structures need to be in place to ensure safety and supervision for all students at all times.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS – OPTION C

Will there be enough room when students move on to high school?

Yes. Port Hope HS has enough available classrooms for the scenarios proposed.

Why isn't George Hamilton being bought back from the town?

There is enough space at existing schools in Port Hope to accommodate the number of students.

Will there be additional bussing costs?

Bussing costs will be approximately the same, as both Ganaraska Trail PS and Dr. Hawkins are centrally located for walking students.

What happens 5-7 years from now?

The Board anticipates that the area will experience housing growth in the next 5 to 10 years. Through this review we are taking steps to position ourselves to be ready for the students that will be generated from this growth.

Can Port Hope HS keep the FI program to prevent students from leaving?

The Board will be undertaking a Specialized Program review (including FI) in the coming year. As part of this review, the Board will be reviewing FI locations.

Would there be monitors on the buses?

Bus monitors are assigned for specific students as part of a special transportation request that is based on medical and/or safety needs.

Where are the students going to play?

In the event that younger students move to Dr. Hawkins Senior PS, we will ensure that students have access to both the pavement and the green spaces on the property at certain times throughout the school day.

Can we have a parent led initiative to improve the green space/playground at Dr. Hawkins Senior PS?

We encourage parents and guardians who want to have a voice in leading an initiative such as improving the green space at a school to reach out to the school principal to have this added to the agenda for School Council meetings.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS – OPTION D**What will happen to Port Hope High School Students?**

Port Hope HS students will remain at Port Hope HS and continue to access the classes and rooms that are dedicated to the high school.

Is there enough room to accommodate both elementary and secondary students within Port Hope HS?

Yes. There is sufficient space to accommodate the options proposed.

Can Dr. Hawkins Senior PS support a Grade 5-8 school?

The projected enrolment numbers, together with the available space within the physical building (Port Hope HS), indicate that students in Grades 5 to 8 can be supported within the school.

Will Grade 5 -12 students be kept separate on the bus?

Many buses use seating plans to help coordinate seating so that younger students are separated from older students and, above all, to ensure the safety and needs of all students on the bus are considered.

Can we have another year of stability and wait to make changes until the 2024-25 school year?

Board staff are exploring a phased-in approach to all the potential options.