



# Updated Questions and Answers

December 22, 2022

## Student Accommodation Planning: Elementary Family of Schools/Clarke High School

### **Once an option is selected, what are the next steps and will changes be implemented by September?**

We are committed to supporting a positive transition for students, staff and families. 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. Information will continue to be shared regarding timing and any identified adjustments needed, as information becomes available.

### **How will bell times and bussing be affected, by potential changes, e.g. former walkers, and how will bussing be stabilized?**

Once a plan is identified, bell and bus times will be discussed with Student Transportation Services of Central Ontario (STSCO) in line with school board standards for transportation. STSCO continues to focus on driver recruitment to meet transportation needs. We will give families as much time as possible to prepare for any changes.

### **Can students be separated on the bus, e.g. elementary and secondary students?**

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.

### **Will there be a before and after school program at The Pines Senior PS and will there be bussing for the program?**

Once planning is finalized, we will review the viability of having a child care program with local operators, based on families' interest. Bussing options would have to be discussed with STSCO.

### **If younger students move to The Pines Senior PS, how will the school be adapted for the younger grades – to address program, safety, play spaces, washrooms, learning materials etc?**

If the consultation and planning process results in younger students moving to The Pines, renovations will be considered as part of a transition plan, to ensure safety and program needs

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

### **When will the Pupil Accommodation Review pause be lifted?**

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.

### **Why was the new school build request denied by the Ministry of Education?**

The Ministry of Education funds a limited number of projects each year, based on budget and priorities. 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 at Clarke High School.

### **Is there a building cap to be achieved (number of students) or is the goal stability?**

Each school has on-the-ground capacities that identify the number of students they were built to support. Newcastle PS is well over capacity and already has 11 portables onsite. We want to create longer-term stability for students as much as possible, while also offering high quality educational programs and opportunities that support success.

### **Can we move the child care out of Newcastle PS to free up space and only keep the before and after care program?**

The child care program (YMCA Toronto) at Newcastle PS uses two purpose-built rooms for toddlers and pre-schoolers, most of whom attend Kindergarten at the school when they are eligible. Having these two rooms available would not create enough space to address the enrolment pressures.

### **Are the "hold area" students included in the projections? Will the new home buyers be explicitly told that their kids will go to Waverley ?**

Students anticipated to come from the new development in the north village area are not included in Newcastle PS's enrolment projections because they will be directed to Waverley PS. As part of the subdivision approval process, the developers are made aware and are required to

inform the prospective homeowners that children in the development area will be attending Waverley PS until the Board is able to accommodate them in a neighbourhood school.

**Will the existing population of Clarke HS hold?**

Enrolment projections identify that Clarke HS will continue to experience stable enrolment at around 125-150 students.

**Can specialized programs at Clarke HS help to attract/maintain students - e.g. make Clarke an Arts School or Trades School?**

The Board will be undertaking a Specialized Program review in the coming year. As part of this review, consideration will be given to establishing specialized programs at additional locations.

**Can French Immersion (FI) be moved to Clarke HS to increase enrolment?**

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.

**Can current FI students be grand-parented if students are forced to move?**

Our Board Policy BA-7.1 provides guidance on this issue, and states, “Students living within the catchment area of the new French Immersion school, and within two years of graduation from the current French Immersion school, will be allowed to remain and receive transportation, if originally eligible to the existing French Immersion school. All other students would be required to attend their applicable new French Immersion school.”

**Why is there bussing for students to Bowmanville High School – if bussing is stopped will more students stay at Clarke HS?**

As a result of previous community discussions and the options identified at that time, bussing was provided to Bowmanville High School (BHS) to allow students access to programming that couldn't be supported by Clarke HS's enrolment. Busing to BHS is part of our considerations as part of this process.

**Will the staff and administration follow the kids (e.g. principals, secretaries, etc.) for continuity?**

As part of the Board's annual staffing processes, which are outlined in collective agreements, staffing adjustments will be made to accommodate the selected option. Continuity for students is important and staff at all affected schools will be part of the transition process to support students.

**Will there be support for teachers for moving locations?**

School staff will have input on and receive more information about support and resources once an option is confirmed.

### **How many more portables can be placed at Newcastle?**

The school may be able to house one more portable, subject to a number of considerations, such as electrical loads, available school yard space, washroom capacity, available parking spaces, and availability of portables within the system.

### **What about using Kirby PS?**

The former Kirby PS is currently being used as an Education Centre for KPR staff. As the Board has available space in Clarke HS, utilizing the former elementary school is not a viable option.

### **Can the French Immersion program go to The Pines?**

Board staff have considered utilizing The Pines as a single-track FI school – however, the building does not have available classroom space for a single-track K-6 school. Further, the Board does not feel that it is in the best interest of primary students to attend school at this campus.

## **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS - OPTION A**

### **Is there an option of building an addition at Newcastle PS?**

School board staff will explore all options including opportunities for a building addition. However, building additions are funded through the province and we do not know if the province would approve this location as a successful business case for an addition.

### **How many rooms are empty at each school?**

All the rooms at Newcastle PS and The Pines Senior PS are currently being utilized. Clarke HS has several empty rooms, mostly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

### **Why not use Bowmanville HS for Clarke HS secondary students, Clarke as an intermediate school and The Pines as an elementary school?**

Bowmanville HS is nearing its capacity and would be unable to accommodate all of Clarke HS's students.

### **Could we have Grade 4-8 at Clarke HS?**

The Board did consider the option of Clarke HS becoming an elementary school; however, there are concerns that the space is not as suitable for elementary students.

**How will the Board handle the overcapacity if nothing changes?**

The Board utilizes several approaches to managing accommodation pressures, including use of temporary accommodations (i.e., portables), and directing students in new developments to 'holding schools'.

**Will there be more programs/sports with option A?**

Extracurricular options offered at all schools depend on student interest and staff volunteers to coordinate them. All schools have a variety of student opportunities.

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS – OPTION B**

**Why is there enrolment decline at Clarke HS and can it be improved?**

Enrolment has been declining at Clarke HS for several years despite efforts to support and promote the school. A combination of factors have affected the decline. There were fewer students in previous years due to declining enrolment, which affected course selection and programming options. Fewer program options may have led to some students attending other nearby secondary schools.

**Can the building support all the students in the proposed options?**

Yes. The Clarke HS physical building can accommodate the Board-proposed options at its location.

**Will there be more space at Bowmanville HS in the future?**

Bowmanville HS is nearing its capacity. We do not anticipate space being available for the next few years.

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS – OPTION C**

**What will the program for Grade 7/8 look like within a secondary school?**

Several of the Board's high schools have an intermediate school located within the physical building of a high school, and it has been a successful model. The intermediate students have separate schedules, including defined access to spaces. They operate as a separate school in most ways.

**If this option is selected, can there be rotary subjects for Grade 4-6?**

In the junior grades, there is one homeroom teacher who teaches the core subjects. Students in Grades 4-6 also receive 200 minutes of French instruction per five day cycle and an additional 40 minutes of coverage by another teacher. This totals 240 minutes in each cycle where students are not taught by their homeroom teacher.

**Will the Board stop allowing students to go to BHS so we have enough students at Clarke HS to offer a greater variety of programs/courses?**

Bussing to BHS is being considered as part of this process.

**How many kids will choose to leave because of incoming 7/8s?**

Several of the Board's high schools have an intermediate school located within the physical building of a high school, and it has been a successful model. Decline of secondary students has not been identified as an issue after the creation of an intermediate school in the same building.

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS – OPTION D**

**Will there be another exit/entrance to Clarke to accommodate more buses or can we get a new road into the Pines/Clarke?**

Once an option is selected, renovations will be considered to ensure program and safety needs are met. Adjustments to roads and entrances require collaboration, consultation with and approval of municipal partners, and must meet all applicable bylaws. We will review the potential for any possible improvements.

**Why not propose a K-8 not K-12 school?**

The Board chose to submit a business case for a K-12 school in order to relocate both school sites away from the current Highway 115 location. Consideration will be given to submitting a business case for a K-8 school during the next Capital Priorities program. We continue to work with the Ministry to determine capital funding options for the Newcastle area for the future.

**Could we add portables to keep students at the Pines?**

Portables are very costly and currently in low supply. The Board considers the benefits of all options as well as costs associated with the options when managing student enrolment pressures.