



**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Report No. 21-097**

7 December 2021

**Vimy Ridge Public School Interim Accommodation Review-
Consultation Plan**

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PURPOSE:

1. To obtain Board approval of a consultation process and timeline to review the alleviation of accommodation pressures at Vimy Ridge Public School by considering an attendance boundary redirection of grade 7 and 8 students from Vimy Ridge Public School to Steve MacLean Public School.

CONTEXT:

2. Findlay Creek is a rapidly developing community which will contain over 7,000 homes at full build out. During the community development plan process with the City of Ottawa, the Board had originally identified the need for two elementary schools to serve the accommodation needs of this future community.

As of the end of 2020, approximately 5,185 of the homes have been built. During 2020, a near decade high number of homes were built (680) likely accelerating enrolment growth and accommodation pressures at Vimy Ridge Public School.

Vimy Ridge Public School opened in 2017 as the first of the two planned OCDSB elementary schools for the community. It remains the only public elementary school within the Findlay Creek Community serving local students. The school which has a capacity of 674 pupil places, offers a Kindergarten to Grade 8 English with Core French and Early French Immersion program.

With ongoing growth in the community over the next few years, enrolment growth is no longer sustainable at the school.

3. The need for a second 674 pupil place elementary school within the Findlay Creek Community was first identified as a capital priority in 2018. In September 2019 and again in May 2021, the Board submitted a capital priority funding business case to the Ministry of Education for the construction of the new school. A response to the latest request is still pending.

Supporting earlier business case requests by the Ministry of Education for capital priority funding for this new elementary school, the Board acquired the school site in October 2021. The 2.55 ha (6.3 acre) site is located at 4501 Kelly Farm Drive, at the southeast intersection of Kelly Farm Drive and Miikana Road. Please refer to the general location map attached as Appendix A.

On 29 October 2021, the enrolment at Vimy Ridge Public School was 1,081 students including 1,023 in-school students and 58 OCV students. This enrolment requires the use of 17 portables on site for instructional purposes.

- The enrolment is projected to increase to 1,219 (181% UF) for 2022-2023 and 1,370 (203% UF) for 2023-2024 resulting in the need for 24 and 28 portables for instruction respectively. Going beyond 21 portables would most likely result in the loss of the use of the outdoor basketball court.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

4. When considering an interim accommodation measure, the OCDSB typically engages in a consultation plan with a range of potential options. Due to the limited local options to consider, staff is proposing that the following plan be considered for implementation, effective September 2022.

5. The Proposed Plan

In advance of the proposed consultative approach, staff has formulated a focused plan to address the accommodation pressures at Vimy Ridge Public School as follows:

Redirect the Vimy Ridge Public School grade 7 – 8 attendance boundary area to Steve MacLean Public School on a phased basis commencing with grade 7 for September 2022 and grade 8 in September 2023.

- For 2022-2023, the grade structure at Vimy Ridge Public School would be revised to Kindergarten to grade 6 and grade 8.
- Current (2021-2022) grade 7 Vimy Ridge Public School students would remain at Vimy Ridge Public School to complete grade 8.
- For 2023-2024, the grade structure at Vimy Ridge Public School be revised to Kindergarten to grade 6.

Growing enrolment pressures would be significantly reduced by temporarily redirecting the grade 7 and 8 students to Steve MacLean Public School. It would result in lowering the enrolment at Vimy Ridge Public School by approximately one hundred students the first year to 1113 students (165% UF) and another hundred the second year to 1153 (171% UF) (see Appendix D & E).

It would also lower the estimated number of portables required on site over the next two years from 24 and 28 to 20 and 21 respectively.

With the addition of grade 7 students from Vimy Ridge Public School in 2022-2023 and both grade 7 and 8 students in 2023-2024, the enrolment at Steve MacLean Public School would increase from 853 students (108% UF) to 961 (122% UF) the first year and from 828 (105% UF) to 1046 (133% UF) the second year.

During the interim measures, the school would most likely require 9 portables on site the first year and 12 the second year. Going beyond 9 portables at Steve MacLean Public School would result in the loss of the use of the sports field. The OCDSB has a joint use agreement in place with the City of Ottawa for the sports field. The agreement may need to be suspended while the interim measures are in place.

Ultimately, the alleviation of enrolment pressures in this part of the District would be realized with either the opening of a second elementary school in the Findlay Creek community (as yet unfunded) and/or with the opening of a new Riverside South secondary school (Gr 7-12) which is now scheduled for a September 2024 opening. The attendance boundaries, program offerings and opening grade structures for these new schools would be subject to a broader public consultation process.

6. Formal Pupil Accommodation Review (PAR) Not Required

A formal PAR under Board Policy P.118PLG, Pupil Accommodation Reviews (currently suspended under a provincial moratorium) is not required, as the interim measure will not move more than 50% of Vimy Ridge Public Schools enrolment.

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:

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

COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:

5. An Information flyer and web link to this report (when it becomes public), will be sent to those schools affected by the review, and their respective communities, in advance of the Committee of the Whole meeting on 23 November 2021.

Once a decision has been made to proceed with the consultation process 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 study, two information meetings, including affected principals and school council representatives, are proposed to be held in the months of December 2021 and January of 2022, and prior to a broader public consultation meeting. Affected schools include Vimy Ridge Public School and Steve MacLean Public School.

A public consultation meeting, to be held virtually, is tentatively planned for February 2022. Final Board decisions regarding the review are scheduled to take place in February 2022. The timeline (attached as Appendix B) and consultation plan (attached as Appendix C) are attached.

STRATEGIC LINKS:

6. 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 the Board affirm that a Pupil Accommodation Review (PAR) under Board Policy P.118.PLG is not required for this study; and,
- B. THAT the timeline and consultation plan attached as Appendix B and C to Report 21-097, be approved in order to consult with local school communities and the public.

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 Historical and Status Quo Projected Enrolments
- Appendix E Interim Accommodation Measure Enrolment Projections