

Rexdale (Albion Heights JMS, Elmbank JMA, Greenholme JMS, Humberwood Downs JMA,  
Melody Village JS)  
Final Report of the Pupil Accommodation Review Committee

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Pupil Accommodation Review Committee (PARC) makes the recommendations listed below.

It is recommended that:

The Ward 1 Rexdale Pupil Accommodation Review Committee recommends Model # 3 whereby:

1. The attendance area for Albion Heights JMS is expanded to include the current Elmbank JMA attendance area west of Highway #27.
2. The attendance area for Elmbank JMA is expanded to include the entirety of the current Melody Village JS junior attendance area.
3. Melody Village JS becomes a French Immersion Centre to serve the FSL needs of the Northwest Etobicoke family of schools.
4. A First Nations Elementary Program- Native Language Program- begins at Elmbank JMA effective September 2013, with a pathway to West Humber CI.
5. A transition plan is created for the students enrolled in Elmbank JMA and Melody Village JS. The purpose of the transition plan is to allow these students to effectively integrate from Elmbank JMA into Albion Heights JMS and from Melody Village JS into Elmbank JMA.
6. The name change process, as outlined in P047, is initiated immediately in order to reflect the SK-Grade 8 configuration and the French Language Centre at Melody Village JS.
7. The implementation date is September 2013.

**RATIONALE:**

The PARC reviewed all of the input received during the public engagement process including: the responses in group discussions; the bus tour of the 5 school communities held March 29<sup>th</sup>; the surveys distributed; the 4 Public Meetings (Open House format) held April 12<sup>th</sup>, April 26<sup>th</sup>, May 31<sup>st</sup> and June 7<sup>th</sup>; plus written comments to the Superintendent of Education. The PARC considered all the input to help guide its determinations. Using these findings, as well as additional issues identified by the PARC members and the Pupil Accommodation Terms of Reference, the PARC decided upon the recommendation(s) above.

The PARC looked at 4 possible accommodation models including maintaining the status quo. These models were a result of work by the Toronto District Board Planning staff, members of the PARC; the public response to the 4 Public Open House sessions. Two models were posted at the April 12<sup>th</sup> and

April 26<sup>th</sup> Open Houses and 4 models were posted at the May 31<sup>st</sup> and June 7<sup>th</sup> Open Houses. Models 3 and 4 were developed as a direct response to the consultation and ideas from all who submitted surveys as well as e-mails and discussion at the PARC committee meetings.

The significant findings and rationale for the recommended model options include the following:

- All five schools will remain open for programming. There is some uneven growth in the Rexdale area with major new housing starts in and around Rexdale Blvd, west of Highway # 27, as well as overcrowding at schools just North of Finch.
- Enrolment pressures at Humberwood Downs JMA and declining enrolment at the other four (4) schools provides the opportunity for the implementation of model 3.
  - Humberwood Downs JMA is 95% utilized while Albion Heights (69%), Elmbank JMA (69%), Greenholme JMS (70%), and Melody Village JS (69%) are under-utilized.
  - Over the long-term, enrolment is projected to increase at the five (5) schools. In 2011, total enrolment was 2,710 students for these schools. By 2020, total enrolment is projected to be 2,959. In other words, enrolment is projected to increase by 249 students by 2020.
- Students enrolled in French Immersion program are bused to Elmlea JS at Islington and Rexdale for SK- Grade 5 and subsequently attend Hilltop MS. Elmlea JS is 96% utilized (96%) with 5 portables on site. The ratio of students enrolled in the French Immersion program to the English program is unbalanced. Moreover, SK children have long bus rides to and from home. The establishment of an FSL program in one of the 5 schools will fill a void for French Immersion programming in the area.
- Students who are not self-identifying as First Nations/Aboriginal are more likely to do so with the establishment of a First Nations Program. Dr. Dion's report from York University has described the needs of this community and suggested ways to be culturally relevant pedagogically. The plan is to have a pathway into a secondary school.
- The response from the community to the model chosen was an agreement that if Humberwood Downs JMA is not accessible for the families west of Highway #27 then Albion Heights JMS is the next best alternative in order to provide some possibilities for older intermediate-aged children to be able to access after school programs- both extra- curricular as well as with an academic focus such as tutoring.
- If families choose to have their children complete their schooling at Elmbank JMA rather than attend Albion Heights JMS, they can apply to do so through Optional Attendance.
- An addition of a portapak (a modular addition consisting of 8 classrooms) will likely be required at Albion Heights JMS.
- The major reasons given by both PARC members and the public in support of the accommodation model outlined above in the recommendations section of this report include the following:
  - The **cost of renovations and/or additions**: the recommended model requires renovations and/or an addition at Albion Heights JMS, Humberwood Downs JMA, and Melody Village JS. This option seemed very reasonable to the community.
  - The **number of transitions for students**: the recommended model reduces the number of transitions for students attending the current regular program at Melody Village JS (will be attending Elmbank JMA for JK-8) and students attending the proposed French Immersion program at Melody Village (will be attending Melody Village JS for SK-8).

Model 3 does not increase the number of transitions at any of the five (5) schools involved in this review. The terms of reference indicated minimal transitions are better for students.

- **Utilization rates:** the recommended model will result in utilization rates close to 80% for all schools (Albion Heights JMS and Humberwood Downs JMA will be right sized with capital investment). The terms of reference indicated utilization rate between 80%-90%.
  - **Enrolment:** the recommended model will result in projected enrolments of 668, 621, 540, 1108, and 416 at Albion Heights JMS, Elmbank JMA, Greenholme JMS, Humberwood Downs JMA, and Melody Village JS respectively. The terms of reference suggested enrolment to be between 450 and 650.
- The PARC began meeting on March 1<sup>st</sup> 2012 and concluded on June 13<sup>th</sup> 2012. There were 5 committee meetings prior to the first Public Meeting (Open House format) on April 12<sup>th</sup> – in total there were 3 additional committee meetings scheduled after the Public Meetings began. A total of 8 committee meetings were held; the facilitator for all meetings was Claude Grimmond.
  - The PARC committee met at West Humber CI for all meetings, including pick up and drop off for the March 29<sup>th</sup> Bus Tour. The 4 Public Meetings were held at Albion Heights JMS, Melody Village JS, Greenholme JMS and Elmbank JMA. At the Public Meetings, committee members were given a guided tour of the school if they requested it. Student Ambassadors were available to showcase their schools.
  - Passports, PARC Fact Sheet and Survey Questionnaires were given to every person who attended the Public Open Houses. The Passport gave information as well as a map for the various stations. At each Open House there were stations for French Immersion, Native Languages, Planning, Proposed Models, Parenting Education Centre, Parent and Family Literacy Centres and Interpreters.
  - The members of the public as well as the members of the PARC were very clear in their message that they would not support model # 4 – it received zero votes on June 13<sup>th</sup>. Model 3 received the most votes and thus is the preferred model being recommended by the committee.
- At the Public Meetings, participants were encouraged to complete surveys and to send comments to the website [brighterfutures@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:brighterfutures@tdsb.on.ca).

## **OTHER SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS:**

There were other significant findings that were identified in the public engagement process:

- Three of the schools in the Rexdale PARC have significantly more land than is considered necessary for an elementary school: Melody Village JS, Elmbank JMA and Greenholme JMS; thus there is a plan to consult with the TDSB staff about the possibility of severing some land from the property to help generate funds. Albion Heights JMS was not part of this grouping as there will be space needed to establish the portapak of 6 additional classrooms. The potential severing of land is especially important given that there is to be no school closure. Identifying a funding source is a component of all PARCs.
- Some community members feel that any land severing is problematic. We discussed the need to evaluate possibilities to generate funds for TDSB in order to provide monies for new buildings.
- There is a belief that with all the new housing starts West of Highway # 27 t a new school will need to be built in the future. All of the new building starts will generate a number of school-aged children. According to the Ministry of Education, TDSB has a number of underutilized schools that need to be closed in order to generate funds before any Ministry monies will be allotted to a new school.
- Committee members asked that bussing to and from Elmbank JMA be considered if families choose to remain at that site rather than be re-directed to Albion Heights JMS.
- Committee members also requested that consideration be given to a “late” bus once per week to allow for participation in sports, extra-curricular and tutoring programs.
- There is a plan for revitalization of the Jamestown Neighbourhood at John Garland Blvd. These homes, owned and operated by the Toronto Community Housing Corporation, are part of the future revitalization.