



Secondary Program Review: Update #3

To: Committee of the Whole

Date: 29 January, 2020

Report No.: 01-20-3823

Strategic Directions

- Transform Student Learning
- Provide Equity of Access to Learning Opportunities for All Students

Recommendation

It is recommended that the third update on the Secondary Program Review be received.

Context

This third update of the Secondary Program Review highlights ongoing activities as well as those that have taken place following the 13, November 2019 Committee of the Whole meeting.

1. Access

Consultation Evenings on the Optional Attendance Policy Review and Secondary Program Review

The following public consultation evenings were held in November 2019:
November 14 - Western Technical-Commercial School
November 20 - East Education Office (140 Borough Drive)
November 26 - CW Jefferys Collegiate Institute
November 28 - John Polanyi Collegiate Institute

Attendance at the sessions ranged from 30 participants to over 100 participants, with an estimated total of 240 participants. Participation at these meetings was diverse, and included parents, students, TDSB staff and members of the community.

The consultation evenings were divided into two components: Optional Attendance Policy Review and the Secondary Program Review. Staff provided a brief history of the Optional Attendance policy, its successes and challenges, and the current reality in terms of its impact.

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Staff then explained the purpose of the Secondary Program Review, the current landscape of our secondary schools, and anticipated challenges the TDSB will face due to demographic change, aging buildings, and changes to class size by the provincial government.

Following the presentation, participants were led through a series of questions, both on Optional Attendance and the Secondary Program Review in table groups. Table discussions were led by a group facilitator, supported by a note-taker to transcribe comments, suggestions and feedback.

On 7, January 2020, a similar presentation was made for representatives from the Toronto District School Board's Community Advisory Committees, including Alternative Schools (ASCAC), Black Student Achievement (BSACAC), Community Use of Schools (CUSCAC), Early Years (EYCAC), Equity Policy (EPCAC), French-as-a-Second Language (FSLCAC), Parent Involvement (PIAC), Special Education (SEAC) and Urban Indigenous (UICAC). There were twelve attendees at this consultation session.

In addition to notifications through School Connects and in school newsletters, a message encouraging participation in both the Optional Attendance survey and the Secondary Program Review survey was sent to all elementary and secondary school council chairs with the support of the Parent and Community Engagement Office in mid-January. As of January 20, there have been 493 responses to the Optional Attendance survey and 1,693 responses to the Secondary Program Review survey.

Staff from the Research department and the School Operations department are currently reviewing all notes from the consultation sessions, survey responses and e-mail feedback submissions. A future report will be drafted that will include an executive summary, a summary of consultation themes, and a summary of recommendations/suggestions made by stakeholder groups.

Please refer to Appendix A for the presentation by staff at the consultation evenings.

Steering Committee: Specialized Schools and Programs and Optional Attendance

As indicated in the previous Secondary Program Review Update #2, a steering committee for specialized schools and programs and Optional Attendance was struck. Membership is made up of both elementary and secondary principals and vice principals.

Due to current labour sanctions, a face-to-face meeting has not been possible. However, an online video conference was held on 28, November 2019. The meeting provided an opportunity for committee members to review proposed changes to the Optional Attendance policy, and to provide input into the work plan for a new Specialized Schools and Programs policy.

Specialized Schools and Programs Policy Development Work Plan

In June 2019, the Board of Trustees approved a policy review work plan for the Optional Attendance Policy (P013). The work plan recommended the separation of the provisions for regular schools and specialized schools/programs. The working draft policy for Optional Attendance (P013) proposes the removal of certain sections in the policy, including specialized schools and programs.

At the 8, January 2020 Governance and Policy Committee, a work plan for the development of a new policy for Specialized Schools and Programs was presented for the Committee's consideration and approval. The work plan included a preliminary draft of provisions for the development of a new policy, as well as a scan of selected school boards/jurisdictions.

At this meeting a question was asked about collection of data from this year's Optional Attendance process with respect to the number of applications, acceptances and rejections to specialized schools and programs, including address information of applicants. Although our current paper process makes it difficult to collect this data, a request has been made to all secondary schools to retain a spreadsheet of applications so that the Research department can analyze the information and share findings as part of a future Secondary Program Review update.

This report to the Governance and Policy Committee, including the policy development work plan, the preliminary draft of provisions, and the scan of other boards/jurisdictions can be found on the Agenda and Minutes page on the TDSB site:

<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Leadership/Boardroom/Agenda-Minutes>

Update on Implementation of Changes to PR545 and PR612

As reported in an update to Committee of the Whole on 13, November 2019, changes to PR545 and PR612 were presented for information to Governance and Policy Committee in October 2019. Messaging about adherence to timelines and the revised procedures was sent by email to all school principals, superintendents, and elementary and secondary guidance counsellors. As well, similar messaging was shared through System Leaders' Weekly.

Early feedback in our Secondary Review Process has been about the discrepancy in offer dates made to students who have applied through Optional Attendance to both regular and specialized schools and programs. For this year's process, a request has been made to all secondary school principals to delay notification of the outcome of Optional Attendance applications to the week of 10, February 2020, where possible. This will assist in addressing the unintended consequence of stress and anxiety this process creates for students and their families when they receive notification from one school but then wait up to two weeks for the results from the other school(s).

Technical and Commercial Boundaries

With the approval of the Long-Term Program & Accommodation Strategy 2019-2028 at the 12, December 2019 Board Meeting, a Local Feasibility Team will be established in January 2020 to explore options for eliminating technical and commercial boundaries.

The team will include secondary school principals, superintendents, trustees and other central staff, as required. Public consultation will be conducted as part of the process.

Recommendations will be presented to trustees for approval in May 2020.

2. Program

Identification of Specialized Program Type in Trillium Database

All schools currently running specialized programs now have the capability in our School Information System (SIS) to identify students who are in such programs. In the month of January, schools were provided with step-by-step instructions on how to change a student's program for the upcoming 2020-2021 school year.

Assistance has been provided by the SIS team to schools, and the Planning department will follow up with schools over the next few months to ensure that all pre-registered students in a specialized school or program have been identified as such in SIS.

The ability to track students enrolled in specialized programs will enable Planning staff to better track the number of students enrolled in specialized programs, and understand where those students reside. Moving forward, this data could lead to refinements in the annual enrolment projection process where the specialized program could be distinguished from the regular track. At present, the two are combined.

System Alignment in the Use of the 6th Character for Course Codes

Over the 2019 summer months, a system scan of existing secondary schools and programs, as well as course offerings at each site, was conducted. Although the TDSB has guidelines for the use of the 6th character for secondary course codes, *Coding 101*, consistency of practice was identified as a concern.

In December 2019, in collaboration with the Coordinator for Guidance, Career Development & Well-Being and with the SIS team, *Coding 101* was reviewed and updated. In a webcast for all secondary school guidance counsellors and timetabling vice-principals, the changes to *Coding 101* were presented. Identified schools have made changes to their course codes for 2020-2021 so that practice is consistent across the district.

The alignment of practice is necessary to better track student interest in specific courses and course types, and understand how schools are able to provide specific course offerings. Similarly, it will allow for comparison of similar data sets that have been, until now, misidentified.

3. Location

There are no updates to this section for this month's report.

4. Facilities

Meeting with Toronto Lands Corporation

On 28, November 2019, a meeting was held with the Toronto Lands Corporation (TLC) to review the mandate of the Secondary Program Review, and to share updates on the work conducted thus far. Given the TLC's mandate to manage all Board wide real estate interests, the TDSB and TLC will continue to work together for the shared goal of providing opportunities that ensure the accommodation and well-being of our students.

Action Plan and Associated Timeline

Other consultation opportunities continue to be planned, including focus groups with students, trustees, senior team, teachers and administrators.

The following consultations are planned for the end of January:

30, January 2020 - Two online consultation meetings (1 p.m. and 7 p.m.)

30, January 2020 - Consultation with the Toronto School Administrators' Association

31, January 2020 - Consultations with students at the Urban Indigenous Education Centre

A meeting for trustees will be confirmed for the end of May 2020 where staff will share findings from the Secondary Program Review consultations and respond to questions about the activities that have taken place since the Review was initiated last June. This will also assist staff in identifying areas that may require further clarification or description in advance of the final report to be presented in June.

Resource Implications

Not applicable.

Communications Considerations

Information about the 30, January 2020 online consultation meetings has been shared through the TDSB public website, TDSB Connects, Trustees' Weekly, System Leaders' Weekly, DirectLine and Twitter. School Council Chairs and Vice-Chairs, as well as school principals, have been asked to share this information with their communities.

The webpage for the Secondary Program Review continues to be updated as reports are approved at Board Meetings. As well, the Question and Answer page is updated on a regular basis as new questions are received to the Secondary Program Review e-mail address (secondaryreview@tdsb.on.ca).

Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)

P013 - Optional Attendance

PR545 - Optional Attendance

PR612 - Admission to Specialized Schools and Programs

Appendices

- Appendix A: Presentation by staff at Public Consultation meetings

From

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PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING:

OPTIONAL ATTENDANCE POLICY AND SECONDARY PROGRAM REVIEW



Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge we are hosted on the lands of the Mississaugas of the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Wendat. We also recognize the enduring presence of all First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

TONIGHT'S AGENDA

- 7:00 p.m. Introductions & Presentation from Staff
- 7:15 p.m. Optional Attendance Facilitated Discussions
- 8:05 p.m. Secondary Review Facilitated Discussions
- 8:50 p.m. Closing Remarks
- 9:00 p.m. Adjournment

Setting Context

- Vision for Learning
- Enhancing Equity Task Force
- Multi-Year Strategic Plan
 - Transform Student Learning
 - Create a Culture for Students and Staff Well-Being
 - Provide Equity of Access to Learning Opportunities for All Students
 - Allocate Human and Financial Resources Strategically to Support Student Needs
 - Build Strong Relationships and Partnerships Within School Communities to Support Student Learning and Well-Being

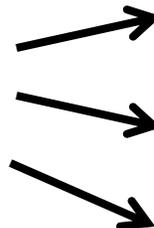
Optional Attendance Policy Review

OPTIONAL ATTENDANCE POLICY

- Created in 1999 when 6 school boards amalgamated to become the Toronto District School Board
- Legacy attendance areas, boundary agreements, technical and commercial boundaries
- Policy provided mechanism to facilitate choice whereby students could choose to go to a school outside of their designated area as long as the school had space

Successes and Challenges

- Provides choice of school and/or program outside of local area, where space is available
- Enables students to remain with cohorts if the family changes residence, if space is available
- Weakens concept of neighbourhood schools
- Creates 'hierarchy' of schools
- Difficult to predict enrolment numbers (large margin of error)



Optional Attendance - Current Reality

- Just over 50% of secondary students attend their home school by address (compared to 76% of elementary students).
- Some secondary schools are operating with fewer than 500 students, resulting in limited course choices and limited opportunities for students.
- Secondary schools are competing for a shrinking secondary school-aged population.
- Students are fleeing certain schools and neighbourhoods in favour of others.
- The impact of Optional Attendance is being felt overwhelmingly at schools in underserved communities (i.e. those with greater need).

Secondary Program Review

What it is and why it's necessary

What?

- A review of secondary schools, programs, policies and procedures to ensure that all students have equitable access to programs and opportunities, as close to home as possible.
- The larger vision is to create a system of strong neighbourhood schools that provide rich programming and increased access to courses that support all pathways.

Why?

- The existing structure of secondary schools across the TDSB is not in sync with the recent strategic and visionary documents approved by the Board of Trustees.
- There have been unintended negative consequences of the existing landscape, including inequity of access and an imbalance of enrolment among secondary schools across the system.
- Action is necessary to develop and implement a new vision for secondary school programming that aligns with the Multi-Year Strategic Plan, its goals and action plans; the Guiding Principles of the Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy, and re-enforces the Board's commitment to equity.

Current Landscape

- Secondary students in the TDSB currently have access to a wide range and variety of schools and programs.
- The system is comprised of 111 secondary schools that include:
 - Neighbourhood secondary schools
 - Technical and Commercial Schools
 - Alternative Schools
 - Specialized Schools
 - Congregated Special Education Schools
 - Adult Education Centres (EdVance programs)
- A number of specialized programs also exist, accommodated within a number of secondary schools across the system.

New Realities

Demographic Changes and the Impact on Enrolment

- The secondary panel has declined from a high of 140,433 students in 1976 to approximately 72,600 students today.

School Utilization

- As of October 31, 2019, the average utilization rate across all 111 secondary schools was 78%. Some schools are operating at over 150% capacity while others are operating at only 30-40% capacity.

Aging Buildings

- The average age of our secondary school buildings is 64.

Change to Secondary Average Class Size

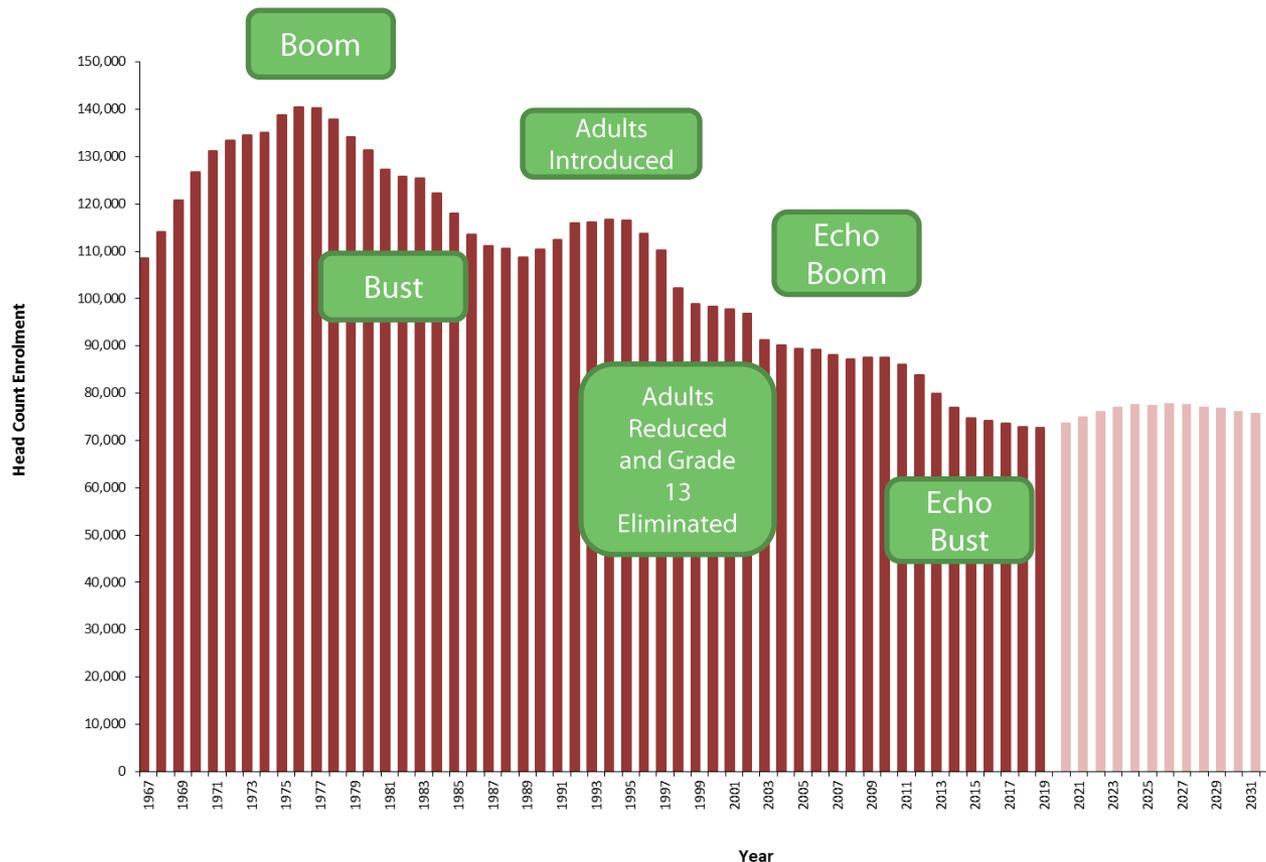
- The recent changes to secondary school class size significantly impact staffing and program offerings

Polarization of City of Toronto

- Secondary students are choosing programs and schools in higher income areas and fleeing from those in lower income areas.

What's Happening with Secondary Enrolment?

- First peak in 1976.
- First low in 1989 – decline of 32,000 (-23%) over 13 years.
- Second peak in 1994 – growth of 8,000 (+6%) over 5 years.
- Second low in 2008 – decline of 29,000 (-25%) over 14 years.
- Third peak in 2010 – growth of 370 (+0.3%) over 2 years.
- Decline of 14,925 (-17%) from 2010 to now.
- Reached a period of decline and enrolment is projected to marginally increase, then stabilize



Source: TDSB Strategy and Planning

Working Draft Policy Facilitated Discussion

Optional Attendance – At a Glance

Preparation for Optional Attendance

- Mid November: Planning determines school status (Limited or Closed) based on building capacity and projected enrolment.
- End of January: Enrolment projections sent to schools
Schools determine available spaces

Optional Attendance – Secondary Schools

- Early February: Optional Attendance applications due
If demand exceeds available space, lottery conducted to determine offers
- Mid-February: Parents/students notified about status of application
- End of February: Parents/students must confirm acceptance

After the first Monday in March, no Optional Attendance offers can be made, including from a waiting list. The Optional Attendance process is over.

Working Draft Policy

Current:

Applies to:

- a) Regular schools
- b) Schools with French programs
- c) Alternative schools
- d) Specialized schools/programs

Proposed:

Would apply to:

- a) Regular schools
- b) Schools with French programs

Current Policy/Procedure on Alternative Schools to include Admissions Procedures

New Policy/Procedure will be created for Specialized Programs

Working Draft Policy

Current:

Applications can be submitted to:

- 2 Regular schools
- 2 Specialized Schools/Programs

Proposed:

One application for a Regular school only.

New Policy/Procedure to specify application process to Specialized Programs

Working Draft Policy

Current:

7 Priority Groups

Distinction between students who attend the feeder school as in-district students vs. those who attend as Optional Attendance students

Proposed:

9 Priority Groups

No distinction for feeder school students

Additional priority for current TDSB students vs. non-TDSB students

Comparison of Current and Proposed Priority Groups

Current Optional Attendance Policy

- **Priority 1:** Students who have siblings already in the requested school and expected to be in the school for the next school year.
- **Priority 2:** Secondary students whose child(ren) is/are enrolled in the child care centre in the catchment areas of the Secondary school.
- **Priority 3:** Students attending licensed child care, including licensed home childcare, in the catchment area of the requested school.
- **Priority 4:** Students receiving child care in the catchment area of the requested school.
- **Priority 5:** Feeder school students who are currently under optional attendance.
- **Priority 6:** Students who are in district to the feeder school, but not in district to the next panel school.
- **Priority 7:** Other students resident in the City of Toronto.

Proposed Attendance at Schools Outside of Designated Attendance Area Policy

- **Priority 1:** Students who are attending another school as an Out-of-Area student at and who wish to return to their designated school by address. **Proposed NEW**
- **Priority 2:** Secondary students whose child/children is/are enrolled in a child care centre in the designated attendance area of the secondary school.
- **Priority 3:** Students who have siblings currently attending the requested school and the siblings are expected to be at the requested school for the next school year.
- **Priority 4:** Students currently attending a feeder school of the requested school. **Proposed NEW**
- **Priority 5:** Children enrolled after January 1 in the school-based child care pre-school program of the requested school (see 6.1.6). **Proposed NEW**
- **Priority 6:** Children attending child care programs in the designated attendance area of the requested school.
- **Priority 7:** Current TDSB students **Proposed NEW**
- **Priority 8:** Other students residing in the City of Toronto.
- **Priority 9:** Students residing outside the City of Toronto. **Proposed NEW**

Working Draft Policy

Current:

Students in school-based child care are automatically admitted into the school, without an Optional Attendance application

Proposed:

Students in school-based child care who register after January 1 must apply as out-of-area students

Working Draft Policy

Current:

Students who change residence or who withdraw from child care must change schools.

Proposed:

Students who change residence or who withdraw from child care must change schools, unless the following year is a graduating year

Working Draft Policy

Current Policy Name:

Optional Attendance

Proposed Policy Name:

Attendance at Schools
Outside of Designated
Attendance Area

Other recommendations?

- Current paper process vs. centralized process (web-based application)
- Please share your recommendations and feedback
- Online survey – Optional Attendance

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Policy Consultations

We Want to Hear From You

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) is committed to open and inclusive policy decision-making and values community input and participation through consultation. Consultation is a two-way communication process between the Board and external participants, including students and their parents/guardians, school councils, advisory committees, community members, different levels of government, service agencies, professional organizations and union partners. The objective of consultation is to gather public input regarding options, alternative courses of action, as well as to identify unintended effects for various participants and to find solutions.

Policy development and reviews are carried out in accordance with the policy review schedule that is approved by the Board of Trustees and is revised on a regular basis. [To view the latest policy review schedule, please click here.](#)

We would like to know your thoughts about our policy decision-making. Inviting you to our policy consultations. Please click on the policy of your interest to see the current draft. You are welcome to provide your comments, including suggestions on the wording and provisions of the draft policies, questions or recommendations using the contact information below.



Consultations

Policy	Status	Closing Date	Draft Policy	Survey	Contact Information
Attendance at Schools Outside of Designated Attendance Area (formerly Optional Attendance) (P013)	Open	February 03, 2020	Draft Policy	Survey	Email: secondaryreview@tdsb.on.ca
<p>Objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To provide policy direction about access to schools outside a student's designated attendance area. <p>Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Please note that in the Review Work Plan that was approved in June 2019, it was recommended to separate and clarify provisions related to requests for Regular Schools vs. Specialized Schools/Programs. This working draft Policy would only apply to Regular Schools and schools with French programs. A separate draft Policy on Specialized Programs will be developed and posted in the coming months for feedback and comment. 					

Secondary Program Review

Facilitated Discussion

Secondary Program Review

What would the ideal secondary school experience look like?

- *Ice breaker:* In your opinion, what is the goal of secondary schooling?
- What is the most important part of your child's (or your, or your students') secondary school experience?
- What are the positive aspects of the secondary school your child (or you) currently attends (staff - or work at)?
- What are the challenges your child (or you) have experienced at your current secondary school?
- If applicable, why did your family (or you) choose to attend a school outside of your neighbourhood secondary school? How did your family (or you) choose this secondary school?
- If not attending your neighbourhood secondary school, what would be the furthest distance your family (or you) are willing to travel to attend another regular school or specialized/alternative program/school? (in time)
- Any additional comments?

Online Survey – Secondary Program Review

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Secondary Program Review

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) is undertaking a review of secondary schools to ensure all students have equitable access to programs and opportunities, as close to home as possible.

The vision of the Secondary Program Review, which will address both under and over-utilized schools, includes fewer schools with strong programming and increased access to courses that support all pathways. In order to achieve that, the Board will consider potential consolidation and/or relocation of schools, repurposing secondary school buildings to address other system needs, and different models of school organization (e.g. full-year programming).

Background

The Board of Trustees approved an action plan for the [Secondary Program Review](#) in June 2019. This plan includes looking at all the programs and courses offered at each site, related policies and procedures and enrolment.

The current and projected enrolment at the secondary panel does not support the number of facilities in operation. As of October 2019, the average utilization rate at the 112 secondary schools in the system was 78%; 25 of them were operating below 50% of their capacity. That means that the Board has almost 20,000 surplus pupil spaces across the system.

Reports

- [October 2019](#)
- [June 2019](#)

Resources

- [TDSB's Mission and Values](#)
- [Equity & Inclusion](#)
- [Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#)

Surveys

- [Secondary Program Review](#)

