

TORONTO-DANFORTH SECONDARY SCHOOLS
PUPIL ACCOMMODATION REVIEW COMMITTEE (PARC)

FINAL REPORT

Danforth Collegiate and Technical Institute
East York Alternative Secondary School
East York Collegiate Institute
Eastdale Collegiate Institute
Eastern Commerce Collegiate Institute
Greenwood Secondary School
Monarch Park Collegiate Institute
Riverdale Collegiate Institute
School of Life Experience (SOLE)
Subway Academy 1

March 31, 2016

BACKGROUND:

On March 11, 2015 the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) approved the establishment of a Pupil Accommodation Review Committee (PARC) for 10 secondary schools, 8 of which are in Ward 15 with 2 in Ward 16. The review involves:

- four comprehensive secondary schools (Danforth CTI, East York CI, Monarch Park CI and Riverdale CI),
- one city-wide secondary school that offers both credit and non-credit courses (Eastdale CI),
- one secondary school that currently has no students enrolled (Eastern Commerce CI),
- three alternative secondary schools (East York Alternative SS, SOLE and Subway Academy 1) and
- one city-wide ESL secondary school where students typically spend one to three semesters in the school before transitioning to other secondary schools or to adult education programs (Greenwood SS).

The PARC did its work using the following TDSB Terms of Reference criteria to guide its deliberations:

- offer a wide range of program opportunities for the benefit of all students in the review area;
- maintain a good distribution of schools with access to public transit and address redundancy by reducing the number of schools in close proximity; and,
- maximize the use of Board facilities over the long term.

The PARC also had to work within requirements set by the Ministry of Education and related legislation, including the following:

- the Ministry of Education's "Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline" that was in place when this PARC was established by the Board;
- the 2015 Margaret Wilson report that led to the Ministry giving the TDSB a number of directives, including the requirement to list all schools with 65% utilization rate or less and present a plan for pupil accommodation; (Note: the utilization rate is calculated by dividing a school's enrolment by the capacity of the school. This calculation compares the number of students attending a school (enrolment) by the number of students the school was designed to hold according to the categories of instructional space and their room capacities as determined by the Ministry of Education (capacity). The utilization rate is one way of analyzing how much space is available in a school facility.)
- the Ministry's rigid calculations of schools' capacity that are not flexible enough to take into account that a school with certain facilities, such as tech rooms, have the same rated capacity as a regular classroom but typically accommodate fewer students each period because of the nature of the program offerings;
- the government's funding formulae for school boards.

Secondary school enrolments across the city and across this review area have been declining for some time, due in large part to a combination of factors including demographics, provincial education funding policy (e.g. public funding for Catholic secondary schools and the establishment of French-language school boards) and the elimination of Grade 13. Although there may be some small increases in enrolment, the overall picture shows an expected continuing decline in enrolment. Small enrolments in secondary schools impede a school's ability to offer as wide a program as possible. Secondary schools need a critical mass of students in order to offer a full range of program offerings. Many of the secondary schools in this review have small enrolments.

Riverdale CI, East York Alternative SS and SOLE are the only secondary schools in the review that have, and are projected to have, strong enrolments relative to the size of their facilities and thus have utilization rates at 80% or higher. Subway Academy 1, currently housed in Eastern Commerce CI, had a 75% utilization rate in fall 2015 and is projected to grow to an 83% utilization over the next few years. The other schools in the review have lower utilization rates and thus have more space than required for their programs.

The students, parents and community representatives from the ten schools, supported by principals and central Board staff, had a number of challenges in attempting to come to their recommendations, striving to ensure a wide range of programs to meet the needs of all students while making efficient use of the school spaces. It was clear from the beginning that the schools in the review are offering strong programs to diverse communities of learners and are valued by their communities. The PARC had seven working meetings, starting in November 2015 and hosted four public meetings, the last of which was held on March 10, 2016.

Input into the decision-making process came in a variety of ways: small group discussions, large group discussions, question-and-answer at both the PARC working meetings and the public meetings, deputations (there were eleven deputations at the third public meeting) and an invitation to send email responses over a two-month period.

As a result of the input they received from the public and from their own working meeting discussions, the PARC considered 12 different possible accommodation options. These options included some that involved closing a school (e.g. Danforth CTI, Monarch Park CI), relocating schools (e.g. Greenwood SS, Eastdale CI, SOLE) and moving three schools into one location (e.g. moving the three alternative schools – East York Alternative SS, SOLE and Subway Academy 1 into the Danforth CTI building). The PARC also discussed a wide variety of transition recommendations. Their discussions were thoughtful, energetic and focused on making the best possible recommendations to support the students in this review. The secondary school students on the PARC made an outstanding contribution to the discussions.

SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSIONS:

Accommodation options:

The PARC reviewed and discussed 12 possible accommodation options. Two of those options involved closing a school and relocating its students to other schools in the area and the other options involved relocating schools into other school buildings with space. Each option was discussed and analyzed for its impact on the students and programs in the affected schools. Some options were eliminated because there was not sufficient space to accommodate the students affected; others were eliminated because they were seen as having a very negative impact on the students and their program choices. Some options were eliminated because the suggested move(s) would place too many distinct programs/schools in one building to be able to be managed effectively. The PARC needed an extra working meeting in order to allow the options to be considered in detail.

There was consensus to keep the status quo for Riverdale CI (already over capacity and subject to a Board-approved process regarding admission requirements) and for East York CI (it has some space but there are discussions in another arena regarding moving another program into the school in the near future). There was also consensus in leaving East York Alternative SS in its current location (already above capacity) and Subway Academy 1 in its current location in the Eastern Commerce building, which will also be home to the Board-approved JK-12 First Nations school, scheduled for September 2017.

As the discussions progressed both in the PARC working meetings and in the public meetings, a number of findings that were important to the community became clear, including the following:

- If a specialized school had to be relocated to another school building through this process, there was very strong support to relocate the school, in its entirety, with its own separate and distinct space, and with its current programs and services brought with it.
- There was very strong support that if Greenwood SS were to be relocated, it would have its own dedicated school administrator.
- There was very strong support for developing a solid transition plan for any students affected by the PARC's accommodation recommendations.
- There was very strong support for involving students, parents and staff affected by any relocations, in the planning process and transition plans.
- There was strong support for establishing one or more community hubs in the secondary schools in this review. (Note: Community hubs involve partnerships with community services that, where feasible and in accordance with Board policy, could be located within a school building.)
- There was good support for keeping the current tenants (i.e. those who pay rent for space) and users (i.e. those who compensate the Board through other arrangements and TDSB

office space for staff and for programs such as the TDSB Museum and Archives) in their current buildings, if possible.

- Two of the schools in the review, Greenwood SS and Eastdale CI are city-wide schools. There was good support for having them review their mission and TDSB classification as a means of keeping the schools strong.
- As a result of the discussions with the three alternative schools in this review (East York Alternative SS, SOLE and Subway Academy 1), there was good support for having them review their mission and vision (as required by board policy), in light of the issues raised in the discussions at the PARC.

As possible options were eliminated throughout the process, there were two remaining options under consideration: relocating Greenwood SS to the Danforth CTI building and SOLE to the Monarch Park CI building OR relocating Greenwood SS to the Danforth CTI building and SOLE to the Eastdale CI building. There had been consensus on all of the other items that have become recommendations for this report. This was a very difficult decision for the PARC members and it generated lengthy discussions. As a result, the facilitator decided that since consensus on this decision would be difficult, there would be a vote by secret ballot, in accordance with the process that the PARC decided upon in its first meeting. Voting members were those determined by the TDSB Pupil Accommodation Review Procedure (PR598). There was quorum and the vote was held.

The results were as follows:

3 spoiled ballots, 5 ballots for relocating Greenwood SS to the Danforth CTI building and SOLE to the Eastdale CI building, 15 ballots for relocating Greenwood SS to the Danforth CTI building and SOLE to the Monarch Park CI building. There were at least three abstentions; the Greenwood student representatives abstained.

- Both Greenwood SS and SOLE are currently located in one building at 24 Mountjoy.
- As noted above, Greenwood SS is a city-wide ESL secondary school where students typically spend one to three semesters before transitioning to another secondary school or to adult education programs. As it says on the website: the school was “designed for new immigrant high school aged students” and the school “helps you prepare to move to the high school of your choice and complete the necessary high school credits to earn your diploma”. The student representatives on the PARC were very passionate about their school and they had three meetings with Superintendent Mike Gallagher to address their concerns and answer their questions, as they did not agree with the relocation of their school. Greenwood SS currently has about 240 students and is projected to maintain that number in the next few years. There were 1969 secondary school ESL students who had been in Canada since September 2014 in schools across the board.
- There was discussion about whether to relocate SOLE to the Eastdale CI building or to the Monarch Park building. It was noted that most alternative students learn best in a

smaller, self-contained environment; the need to relocate the school, in its entirety, with its own separate and distinct space, and with its current programs and services brought with it had very strong support in the PARC and in the public meetings. The transition planning, however, could also include access to specialized spaces, such as the gym and stadium at Monarch Park CI. Although the preference was to stay in the current location, there was some support from the SOLE committee members about the potential relocation to the Monarch Park CI building.

- It was also noted in the discussions that if SOLE were to be relocated into the Eastdale building, the result would be that four Alternative Schools (SOLE, SEED Alternative School, Inglenook Community School and Oasis: Triangle Program) would be located very close together and it would create a high concentration of alternative schools in that area.
- Several members of the PARC wanted it noted that they “reluctantly” supported the accommodation recommendations.
- As noted above, there currently are no students enrolled in Eastern Commerce CI and the Board has decided to establish a JK-12 First Nations school in that building. It is necessary to close the school while retaining the building with its current users.
- The PARC also decided to recommend that the commercial boundaries for Monarch Park CI and Eastern Commerce CI be removed. These boundaries are left over from the past and are not relevant for current secondary schools.

The PARC’s recommendations for the accommodation of students in this review are dependent upon a commitment to retrofit and refresh the spaces in both Danforth CTI and Monarch Park CI.

At its March 9, 2016 meeting, the PARC decided to make two accommodation recommendations and one boundary recommendation:

- That Eastern Commerce CI be closed, effective 2016.
- That Greenwood SS be relocated into the Danforth CTI building and SOLE be relocated into the Monarch Park CI building, effective September 2017.
- That the commercial boundaries for Monarch Park CI and Eastern Commerce CI be removed, effective August 31, 2016.

Transition issues:

There was strong consensus on the PARC that the transition for the students affected by the relocations recommended in this report needed direct and workable transition recommendations. The discussion worked on the following guiding principles for the transition:

- Specific and on-going supports for the students affected by the relocations and tracking of these supports over time;

- The active participation of students, parents and staff in the planning and implementation of the relocations;
- Clear and up-to-date communication, both in print and on the website, about the progress of the construction/refreshing of the spaces for the relocated schools in their new locations;
- Staffing and dedicated school administrative supports during the transition process;
- City-wide communication over time to emphasize the relocations, not closures, of Greenwood SS and SOLE.

The specific transition recommendations are listed later in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The PARC recommends that:

1. Eastern Commerce CI be closed, effective September 2016;
2. Greenwood SS be relocated into the Danforth CTI building and SOLE be relocated into the Monarch Park CI building, effective September 2017;
3. The commercial boundaries for Monarch Park CI and Eastern Commerce CI be removed, effective August 31, 2016.

SUPPORTING RECOMMENDATIONS:

The PARC recommends that:

4. Where possible, and in accordance with TDSB policy, potential community hub partners for the secondary schools in this review be identified;
5. Where possible, current tenants and users be maintained in their current school buildings;
6. Every effort be made to support the unique cultures of the two schools being relocated and to ensure the programs and services currently in place for the students are maintained;
7. Greenwood SS review its mission statement and TDSB classification;
8. Eastdale CI review its mission and TDSB classification and pursue potential opportunities for community partnerships;

9. East York Alternative SS, Subway Academy 1 and SOLE review their mission and vision; and,
10. Transition supports are provided for students affected by the above recommendations; these supports include but are not limited to the following:
 - a) Staff plan for as seamless a transition as possible for any students who are affected by these decisions with the commitment from staff to communicate during the transition process;
 - b) A transition committee, composed of students, parents, school administrators and staff, be created to be part of the decision making process around implementation details, designs and facilities to meet program needs;
 - c) An opportunity be given to students being relocated to visit the new location prior to the move;
 - d) Staffing levels be maintained at both relocated schools in the first year of transition;
 - e) A dedicated school administrator, a dedicated office staff person and a dedicated School Based Safety Monitor be provided for the relocated Greenwood SS;
 - f) A dedicated office staff person be provided for the relocated SOLE; and,
 - g) A communication plan be developed and implemented by August 2016 that emphasizes the relocation, not closure, of both Greenwood SS and SOLE and includes a website to keep the public informed on all aspects of the transition; information to be available in multiple languages.

Minority Report:

The student representatives from Greenwood SS asked that this Minority Report be included with the PARC Report:

The Greenwood SS student representatives did not vote as they needed more time and it was not granted to them. They do not agree with the relocation of their school.