

## **Avondale Accommodation Pressures Program Area Review**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Q: What is being proposed by TDSB staff?**

TDSB staff is proposing that Avondale Elementary Alternative School (JK-Grade 8) be relocated to Bayview MS.

TDSB staff is also proposing a change whereby students in Grade 6-8, who were previously redirected to Woodbine MS, have an opportunity to return to Bayview MS.

These changes require approval from the Board of Trustees. If approved, they will be implemented for September 1, 2024.

#### **Q: Who makes the final decision and when will it be made?**

The final decision about the Program Area Review will be made by the Board of Trustees. The proposal will be presented to the Board of Trustees at the Planning and Priorities Committee meeting on April 19, 2023, and the Board of Trustees meeting on April 26, 2023.

Parents and members of the public may present verbal or written submissions to the Planning and Priorities Committee. Please note those making delegations must register at least two days in advance of the meeting.

#### **Q: What function does the PART have if the Trustees make the final decision?**

The Program Area Review Team (PART) has an advisory role. The PART is made up of school council representatives from the schools involved, and it makes recommendations to inform staff and the Board of Trustees.

The Program Area Review process is the opportunity for the TDSB to hear directly from parents, guardians and the community about the proposal. Local Trustees are involved to hear the conversations firsthand but do not vote during the PART process.

Staff's report will be presented to the Board's Planning and Priorities Committee on April 19, 2023. At this meeting, there will be an opportunity to make written or verbal delegations. More information can be found at <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/leadership/boardroom/delegations>.

#### **Q: Can the PART make recommendations other than the Staff Recommended Option?**

Yes, the Program Area Review Team may recommend other options that were not identified as the preferred option by staff. The PART will create a report with its own recommendations. The

PART's report will be sent to staff who then review it. Based on information from the public meeting and from the PART's report, staff will create their own report. Staff will also comment on the PART's Report. The staff report (with the PART report appended) will be presented to the Board of Trustees for final decision making.

**Q: What is the best way for my thoughts to be heard?**

You could:

- Speak with your school Principal, Superintendent, or Local Trustee
- Make a delegation at the Board of Trustee Planning and Priorities Committee meeting on April 19, 2023. More information can be found at <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/leadership/boardroom/delegations>
- Email your comments to [accommodationreviews@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:accommodationreviews@tdsb.on.ca)
- Call the Planning department at 416-394-(PLAN) 7526

**Q: What is an elementary alternative school?**

Each alternative school is unique, with a distinct identity and approach to curriculum delivery. Alternative schools typically feature small student populations, a commitment to innovative programs, and significant community involvement. More information can be found on the Board's website for [elementary alternative schools](#).

**Q: Why is it being proposed that Avondale Elementary Alternative (EA) School be relocated away from its current location at 171 Avondale Avenue?**

The Avondale building currently houses two schools: Avondale Public School and Avondale Elementary Alternative school. Enrolment at Avondale Public School has been increasing and is projected to grow even further. The Avondale building does not have enough classrooms available to accommodate the students of both schools.

Every classroom in the building is currently being used. This has caused scheduling challenges for classes that need to access science, art, and music rooms.

Three portables were added to meet the accommodation needs of the school for the 2022-23 school year. Due to the challenges with the size and configuration of the Avondale site, these portables were added to the adjacent Oakburn property, an operating TDSB's Facilities Services administration centre and construction yard.

No portables can be accommodated on the Avondale property. Measures are in place to ensure the safety of students moving between the portables and the Avondale school building.

If no action is taken, projections suggest that up to thirteen portables will be needed on the Avondale site over the long-term. However, a review of the Oakburn property suggests that only seven could be placed there.

Although the relocation of Avondale Elementary Alternative School will not eliminate the need for portables, it will significantly reduce the total number required.

**Q: Why was Bayview MS, located at 25 Bunty Lane, selected as the possible relocation site?**

Bayview MS is the closest school with sufficient surplus space available and offers a range of program appropriate spaces. Bayview MS is located approximately 2.2 km from the Avondale site.

Currently, there are over 200 available pupil places at Bayview MS. This would meet the needs of Avondale Elementary Alternative School, which has a maximum enrolment of 140 students and currently uses seven classrooms in the Avondale building.

Enrolment at Bayview MS is projected to decline over the long-term. This is expected to leave up to 14 classrooms in the building surplus.

Like all Alternative schools across the TDSB, Avondale Elementary Alternative School does not have a local attendance area. Students across the City of Toronto are eligible to attend Avondale Elementary Alternative School.

Currently, just under 50% of the school's students reside within the attendance area of Avondale PS. The Bayview MS attendance area is home to the second largest group of students. Bayview MS is located within the community.

Relocating Avondale Elementary Alternative School farther away from their current location may cause many of its students to simply opt out of the alternative school in favor of Avondale PS, their local school by address. This would do very little to address the accommodation pressure at the school.

Staff explored other sites in the area but each presented their own set of challenges. Through careful consideration, Bayview MS was identified as the most feasible for Avondale Elementary Alternative School.

**Q: How can a middle school building accommodate younger students?**

Bayview MS was retrofitted to accommodate Avondale PS and Alternative students between 2015 and 2019 while the new Avondale building was constructed. The school offers similar program spaces (such as a Kindergarten room, gym, performance stage, science labs, art room,

design and technology room) that currently exist at Avondale. In addition, there is a cafeteria, baseball field and soccer pitch at Bayview MS that Avondale does not presently have.

Other elementary students have used Bayview MS. Wilmington ES, a Kindergarten to Grade 3 school, used the retrofitted spaces at Bayview MS between June 2022 and February 2023 while its school building was closed to allow for repairs.

Improvements at Bayview MS will be explored to create appropriate outdoor spaces for Kindergarten to Grade 5 students, while ensuring that the existing Bayview MS outdoor activities can continue. TDSB staff are currently assessing these requirements.

**Q: How can we protect what Bayview MS students already have so that quality of education is not negatively impacted?**

An implementation plan will be developed that considers the needs of both schools. The implementation plan will explore scheduling of the specialized spaces (art, science, design and technology) to ensure programs for both schools are optimized.

Changes to outdoor activity spaces will happen. The goal for indoor and outdoor spaces is to ensure what already exists will not be reduced.

**Q: Why can't the Oakburn Building be used for Avondale Alt?**

The Oakburn site is an operating TDSB's Facility Services administration centre and construction yard. The building was constructed in 1949 and was purpose built for administrative uses, not school use.

Oakburn is strategically located to readily dispatch construction and maintenance staff and materials to TDSB schools. The function and operations of the Oakburn site cannot be duplicated at any other TDSB location at this time.

Since Oakburn was not designed to be a school, a significant amount of work would be required to retrofit the building and parking area to accommodate a school use. Converting the building to a school use would also trigger a different set of requirements under the Ontario Building Code that would need to be considered.

Retrofitting Oakburn for school use would be a highly challenging and very lengthy process that involves the relocation of an operating administration centre and construction yard. This would introduce significant costs for the TDSB that are not currently funded. A project of this scale would also require approval from the Ministry of Education through a future Capital Priorities cycle.

**Q: Even after Avondale EA relocates elsewhere; Avondale PS is projected to have seven portables. What is the long-term accommodation plan for Avondale PS? What else can be done to ease the pressure at Avondale PS?**

Avondale PS' enrolment is projected to peak in 2028 with 1,055 students, and then slowly decline. All known residential development has been included in the projected enrolment.

Short-term strategies include ensuring that the school only accepts students residing within its attendance area. As an example, school staff will continue to ensure that only students who have an eligible home address or attend the onsite childcare at Avondale attend Avondale PS. In the situation where a family has moved out of the Avondale PS attendance area, the grace period to remain at Avondale PS will no longer be an option.

Over the long-term, enrolment will continue to be monitored to determine if further changes are required to mitigate growth. Any potential changes will be included in the Board's Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy document.

Lastly, the TDSB is pursuing options for new school(s) to meet the accommodation needs of the Willowdale area. We have landholdings that could be explored for future elementary or secondary school use at the appropriate time. These opportunities may include the Oakburn property and or the Burnett building.

**Q: Why was not the Burnett School, located at 21 Eddfield Avenue, not selected as a possible site?**

This option is not recommended by staff because the building does not offer the program spaces required and would need significant investment to address its condition.

Burnett PS is located approximately 2.3 km away from Avondale PS, just slightly further than Bayview MS. Built in 1955, the 9-classroom school is currently leased to a private school.

Although the building has sufficient space to accommodate Avondale Elementary Alternative School, the building lacks the specialized classrooms such as science, art, design and technology, performance stage) that are currently available at Bayview MS.

The building is well past its life expectancy and requires significant repair and upgrades to bring it up to a standard that is acceptable for a TDSB school. The Board does not wish to re-introduce another aging asset into its portfolio of schools when another solution exists at an existing building nearby with available and suitable space.

The long-term plan for the Burnett site is to retain the property due to its proximity to the Yonge-Sheppard corridor, a designated growth centre. At the appropriate time, the building would be demolished, and a new school built in its place.

Funding for a future school on the site is not currently available and would need to be provided by the province through the Capital Priorities program.

**Q: Bayview MS is a school for Grades 6 to 8. What will be done to keep the Kindergarten and elementary grade students separated?**

As is already in place for the students at the Avondale site, there will be separate areas within the school and on school property for instruction and recess. Teacher supervision inside and outside the school building will ensure a successful, enjoyable, and safe school environment for all students.

**Q: Bayview MS does not have the Extended Day Program or Before-and After-School Programming. Can this be provided for Avondale EA School at Bayview MS?**

A survey of families requiring a before-and after-school program will be conducted to determine the level of interest. The survey will take place after the Board of Trustees decides about the relocation site. More information about this process will be available after the decision is confirmed.

**Q: Bayview MS does not have a library for younger students. What can be done to address this?**

The library collection at Bayview MS will be expanded to meet the needs of the Avondale EA school program.

**Q: Bayview MS does not have air conditioning. What can be done to fix this?**

There is no air conditioning in older schools such as Bayview MS and Burnett PS. Air conditioning was provided at the newly-built Avondale building because many windows were designed not to be opened due to the noise from Highway 401.

Bayview MS is located within an established neighbourhood where highway noise does not exist. Like other TDSB schools, Bayview MS currently manages excessively hot days by opening windows, turning off lights, and having outdoor instruction.

The cost to install full building air conditioning at all schools that don't currently have it would reach into the hundreds of millions of dollars. In addition, there would be added maintenance, replacement, and operational costs. As a result, the installation of full building air conditioning at all older schools is not financially possible, especially given that the TDSB currently faces a repair backlog of approximately \$4 billion.

**Q: Bayview MS does not have an outdoor play area for younger students. What can be done to fix this?**

An age and program appropriate play area at Bayview MS will be established for the Avondale EA School program. An assessment of what is required for Kindergarten and other grades is currently underway.

**Q: Why was relocating the Avondale PS Grade 6 to 8 students to Bayview MS, an existing grade 6 to 8 school, not selected as the preferred option?**

Relocating Avondale PS Grade 6 to 8 students (currently 200 and almost 300 by 2027) to Bayview MS, would address the surplus space at Bayview MS and help to address the accommodation pressure at the Avondale site.

However, this option does create significant challenges that makes it unsuitable to pursue further.

A portion of the Avondale PS attendance area is beyond the 3.2 km walking distance to Bayview MS. More than 100 students would require TTC tickets. School bus transportation is not provided to students in Grade 6 to 8 as per Board Policy.

This option would also create a split pathway for students to secondary school and would ultimately divide peer groups and friendships.

By address, Avondale PS students are assigned to Georges Vanier SS. Other students at Bayview MS are assigned to Earl Haig SS. Whenever possible, TDSB is eliminating split pathways, and does not wish to create any more.

For many families, an older sibling often looks after younger siblings in getting to and from school. If at Bayview MS, the older sibling is prevented in assisting in this task. In these situations, families seek out childcare support that is costly.

**Q: Can transportation to Bayview MS be provided to Avondale EA School students? There will be increased traffic congestion at Bayview MS. There isn't sufficient parking and drop off capacity at Bayview MS.**

The TDSB does not provide transportation to students attending alternative schools. Students attending alternative schools are required to make their own way to and from school. Avondale EA students are responsible for their own transportation to school.

We encourage parents and students to walk to school wherever possible. The TDSB has resources available to assist in the walk to school.

<http://tdsbweb.tdsb.on.ca/schoolserviceshealth/active-safe-and-sustainable-transportation>.

The TDSB will work with the City of Toronto to assess the student safety concerns and determine if or where crossing guards may be required.

Schools have procedures to ensure safe arrival and departure for students. Pick-up and drop-off periods can present a challenge at all schools, including the current Avondale building.

Bayview MS is well situated with public transit by way of Bayview Station on the Sheppard Subway line.

**Q: This is the third move for Avondale EA School. Will this be the last move? Is this change permanent? This has been very stressful for my children.**

The relocation of Avondale EA School is designed to be for the long-term.

The mental health and well being of students, teachers, and staff is very important to the TDSB. The moves have been challenging for all involved. Staff will endeavour to ensure that all changes are implemented to minimize impact on students and families.

Changes happen and are necessary for the TDSB to continue giving the best opportunities to students. Relocation of schools and programs is not taken lightly because of their impact.

**Q: Why are portables needed at the newly built Avondale school?**

It is common that new schools in Ontario are built to accommodate a long-term sustainable enrolment, not the peak. This measure will yield cost savings in the long term by not over constructing a school. It also saves money in cleaning and overall maintenance of empty classrooms when the population cycles through low periods. During high periods of enrolment, portables are used.

This approach is not unique to the TDSB and is used by school boards across the province.

**Q: Instead of being reassigned to Bayview MS from Woodbine MS, I want to remain with my friends and be allowed to graduate from Crestview PS to Don Valley MS. Is that possible?**

The long-term plan for students who live in new residential development along Sheppard Avenue East between Bayview Avenue and Leslie Street is to join other local students at a local school. Currently, these students attend a school outside of their local community.

Students residing in new residential developments were assigned to Crestview PS, and Woodbine MS because there was insufficient space at Elkhorn PS and Bayview MS.



Space has become available at Bayview MS, but not at Elkhorn PS. We can end a portion of the redirections for those who are interested. Current students may choose between Woodbine MS and Bayview MS. Once a decision is made, students are expected to remain at the school of their choice until graduation.

Don Valley MS has limited space and there is not an opportunity to make this a formal pathway between Crestview PS and Georges Vanier SS. Still, students may apply through the Out-of-Area Admissions Process for admission to Don Valley MS, subject to the availability of space.

More information is found at <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Find-your/School/Out-of-Area-Admissions/Elementary>

**Q: How many Avondale EA School students will actually relocate to Bayview MS?**

If the relocation of Avondale EA School to Bayview MS for September 1, 2024 is approved by Trustees, a survey of Avondale EA School families will be done in spring 2024 to help finalize enrolments for September 2024. The survey will ask families to state their intentions for the following September.

**Q: Can the school board get developers to pay for more schools?**

Education Development Charges (EDCs) are monies collected from developers. The current regulation establishes that EDCs can be used to purchase land for future school sites, not to support the cost of building new schools or renovating existing ones.

While other school boards in Ontario are allowed to collect EDCs, the TDSB does not qualify because it has excess capacity when assessed on a district-wide basis, regardless of significant capacity pressures and challenges faced in many neighborhood schools.

More information is found at <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Accountability/Renewal-Needs-Backlog-and-Facility-Condition-Index/Education-Development-Charges>

**Q: Can't the developers be stopped or slowed down until more school space is available?**

School boards are commenting agencies in the land use planning process and do not have the ability to 'stop' development. The provincial Planning Act does not provide school boards with any legislative or regulatory power(s) that could prevent development from occurring.

Under the Education Act, school boards are expected to accommodate students at schools within their jurisdiction, including those from new development, by using several tools available such as bussing to schools where space is available, boundary changes, grade changes, program and school changes including relocations.

**Q: If TDSB can't stop development, what has the TDSB been doing?**

TDSB and its real estate and land use planning company, Toronto Lands Corporation, have communicated to City Planners about the lack of student spaces in Willowdale, and that the necessary redirection of students outside their local areas to schools that have space.

Since the ability to redirect students elsewhere is available to the TDSB, we have not appealed any development application within Willowdale to the Ontario (Toronto) Lands Tribunal, formerly known as the Ontario Municipal Board. In other areas of Toronto where the TDSB has appealed because the ability to redirect students no longer existed, the Tribunal did not stop the development.

Although some communities have existing schools that are full because of new development, the TDSB, TLC, and City Planners continue to work collaboratively to ensure that new emerging communities in other parts of the City are complete communities where local schools are included.