



Northern SS, Lawrence Park CI, York Mills CI, Leaside HS, & North Toronto CI Boundary Review

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Updated: April 17, 2025

THIS FAQ WILL BE UPDATED REGULARLY AS QUESTIONS ARE RECEIVED

1. What are the legacy technical and commercial boundaries that were mentioned in the presentation and how do they relate to this specific review?

On May 22, 2024, the Board approved the elimination of the legacy technical and commercial boundaries for six schools that included Northern Secondary School. These were regional boundaries that only applied to these six schools in the TDSB. These boundaries were created decades ago when students were streamed into separate schools to take technical or commercial programs. Nowadays, students are no longer streamed into separate schools to access these programs and the former technical and commercial schools have all been reinvented to offer a broad range of programs that include academic programming. The Ministry of Education has also made technological education compulsory in all secondary schools, effective September 2024. Consequently, these boundaries no longer serve the purpose for which they were created.

The legacy boundaries will be eliminated for the purposes of admission to these schools beginning with the admission process for September 2025. These legacy boundaries were dissolved to eliminate 'as-of-right' access for some parts of the city, while expanding access to all students in Toronto.

The dissolution of the technical and commercial boundaries provides Northern SS with the ability to accommodate more local students. Staff's proposed boundary changes between Northern SS and its adjacent schools seek to:

- Improve equity of access to schools in this part of the City by eliminating shared attendance areas,
- Balance enrolments between North Toronto CI and Northern SS, and
- Create a larger and more appropriately sized secondary attendance area for Northern SS.

2. Why are you doing this?

Every year, TDSB Trustees approve a document called the Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy (LTPAS). This document, informed by a set of Guiding Principles that align with TDSB's Multi-Year Strategic Plan, identifies studies to be conducted over the next ten years to address accommodation issues and programming gaps across the system. One of the Guiding Principles is to ensure that across the system, we have consistent attendance boundaries to provide equity of access to all students. This includes reviewing instances of shared attendance boundaries where multiple schools are offered based on home address. There are several shared attendance areas between Northern SS and its adjacent secondary schools, including one area shared with Leaside HS. One part of this review is to assign these shared attendance areas to one school.



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A boundary change between Northern SS and North Toronto CI is also being proposed to address projected enrolment pressures at North Toronto CI. North Toronto CI sits on a site that cannot accommodate portables but is projected have substantial enrolment growth in the coming years.

The technical and commercial boundaries for Northern SS are being dissolved for September 2025, and it is now going to be classified as a Secondary School without a Boundary. Students residing outside of Northern SS' Collegiate attendance area will have to apply to attend the school via Secondary Schools without a Boundary (SSWAB) process. While a portion of its enrolment will still be geared towards students who are interested and committed to pursuing Technological Studies each year, the dissolution of the technical and commercial boundaries at Northern SS creates additional pupil places at the school to address accommodation pressures in the area as they arise.

3. What is a Boundary Change Review?

Local neighbourhood schools have attendance areas defined by boundaries that are used to establish admission to a school's regular program. Boundaries can be changed to reduce overcrowding, utilize surplus space, or designate addresses to a closer school.

A Boundary Change Review is one of the strategies included in the Board's Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy (LTPAS), a document that was first created in 2014 and is reviewed annually. The strategy provides an approach to program and accommodation planning within a ten-year timeframe that allows for responsiveness and flexibility in a changing environment. It is a roadmap for the future that identifies studies that could lead to Accommodation Reviews.

To learn more about the LTPAS, please visit: <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Strategy-Planning/Long-Term-Program-and-Accommodation-Strategy>

4. Which attendance area boundaries are proposed to be affected by this boundary change review?

The changes being proposed in this review will apply to the following secondary attendance areas:

- The shared Lawrence Park CI – Northern SS attendance area,
- The shared Lawrence Park CI – York Mills CI – Northern SS attendance area,
- The shared Leaside HS – Northern SS attendance area,
- The shared York Mills CI – Northern SS attendance area,
- A portion of the North Toronto CI secondary attendance area.



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5. Will my address be affected by this boundary change review?

For a complete list of addresses affected by these proposed changes, please see the following link:
https://www.tdsb.on.ca/portals/default/ARC_helpful_info_docs/Affected%20addresses_Northern%20Review.pdf

6. When will the attendance area boundary changes take effect?

Subject to Board approval, the boundary changes are proposed to be implemented for **September 2026**.

7. Do you know if this boundary change has any effect on the French Immersion, Gifted, or Special Education programs?

If approved, the boundary change would only affect boundaries for the Regular program. There would be no impact on French Immersion, Gifted, and Special Education programs.

8. How will the attendance boundary changes affect my child currently attending Northern SS, Lawrence Park CI, York Mills CI, Leaside HS, & North Toronto?

It is proposed that all students attending their respective secondary school (Northern Secondary School, North Toronto Collegiate Institute, York Mills Collegiate Institute, Lawrence Park Collegiate Institute, or Leaside High School) on June 30th, 2026, be permitted to remain at the school until they graduate.

9. I have children who are currently attending intermediate school and will be starting Grade 9 in September 2025. Will they be affected by these boundary changes?

No, the boundary changes only take effect in September 2026. Any child already attending Northern Secondary School, North Toronto Collegiate Institute, York Mills Collegiate Institute, Lawrence Park Collegiate Institute, or Leaside High School on June 30th, 2026 will be permitted to remain at the school until they graduate.

10. Will younger siblings (not yet in grade 9) of students currently enrolled at Lawrence Park CI, Leaside HS, North Toronto CI, Northern SS, or York Mills CI be able to attend the same school as their older sibling?

It is proposed that siblings of students attending Northern Secondary School, North Toronto Collegiate Institute, York Mills Collegiate Institute, Lawrence Park Collegiate Institute, or Leaside High



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School, as of June 30th, 2026, be allowed to attend the same school provided their older sibling is currently attending that school at the time the younger sibling enters, and be allowed to remain until they graduate.

11. Why is North Toronto CI being included in this review if it doesn't have any shared attendance boundaries?

Although North Toronto CI does not have any shared attendance areas with Northern SS, both schools are located less than 500 meters from one another. At the same time, North Toronto CI is facing accommodation pressures while, following the 2024 decision to remove the legacy Technical and Commercial attendance areas, Northern SS has capacity to accommodate additional local students.

12. What other options have been put forth to help with North Toronto CI's accommodation pressures.

The proposed accommodation solution, as outlined in the review, reflects what is being recommended to address the current and long-term needs of the school. There are no other measures available that could address these accommodation pressures:

- As part of the solution, all residential developments not yet occupied will be immediately redirected to Northern SS.
- North Toronto CI's site cannot accommodate any portable classrooms.
- There are no optional programs that could be removed from the North Toronto CI (ex. French immersion).
- There is no childcare or community partners in the school.
- There is one special education program, but it serves the local community. Furthermore, it's removal would not impact the short- or long-term accommodation pressures.
- Capital projects to increase North Toronto CI's capacity would only be approved by the Ministry of education if all neighbouring schools are filled to capacity. Northern SS located less than 500m away and has sufficient capacity to accommodate additional local students.

13. Are new schools planned to be built to accommodate kids from new developments and overall population increase?

The midtown area has been a focus of TDSB staff for over a decade given the significant accommodation enrolment growth (primarily at the elementary level where most of the school sites are quite small and constrained).

At the elementary level, several Board-approved changes have been put into place to manage the enrolment growth and accommodation pressures:



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- Boundary changes.
- Development redirections.
- Grade changes.
- Program moves.
- Replacement school at Davisville Jr PS (completed in 2021).
- Addition at Hodgson MS (scheduled to be completed in 2026).
- Re-opening of Bannockburn PS as a French Immersion centre to create additional pupil places in the Yonge-Eglinton area.

Internal retrofits have also been completed, where possible, to create additional classroom spaces when required.

Secondary schools in this part of the City have not been faced with as significant accommodation pressures. While these schools are operating at or over 100% utilization, secondary class sizes are – on average – larger than elementary class sizes, so more students can be accommodated in secondary facilities without the need for additional space. At schools where enrolment growth has necessitated additional space, we have been able to place portables on-site or create space internally through retrofits. As mentioned above, the dissolution of the technical and commercial boundaries at Northern SS now creates additional pupil places at the school to address accommodation pressures in the area as they arise.

14. Can the Northern SS attendance area be opened up to the broader North Toronto CI attendance area so other North Toronto CI students – who may prefer Northern SS – send their students there as well?

Northern SS' status as a Secondary School without a Boundary (SSWAB) means that any student in the City can apply via the SSWAB process each other to attend the school. As mentioned at the public meeting, for the next three years—2025 through to 2027—applicants will be placed according to priority:

- Priority #1 - Students who have a sibling currently attending the requested school and that sibling will still be attending the requested school the next school year.
- Priority #2 - 30% of spaces in each grade will be held for applicants residing in the City of Toronto and outside of other priority categories who are interested and committed to pursuing Technological studies each and every year.
- Priority #3 - Applicants residing within collegiate areas that have historically contributed large numbers of students to the former Technical and Commercial schools and have limited ability to receive an influx of additional students due to building and/or site constraints:
 - Riverdale CI to Danforth CTI;
 - North Toronto CI to Northern SS;
 - Humberside CI to Western TCS; and



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- Harbord CI to Central Technical School and Central Toronto Academy.
- Priority #4 - TDSB applicants residing within the City of Toronto.
- Priority #5 - Non-TDSB applicants residing within the City of Toronto.
- Priority #6 - Applicants residing outside the City of Toronto.

Should any students residing in North Toronto CI's attendance area wish to apply to Northern SS for September 2026, they will be given priority.

15. If North Toronto CI's utilization levels are projected to be like those of the other schools in this review, why can't they continue to operate as-is?

Some schools in this review – such as Lawrence Park CI and York Mills CI – currently have (or had) portables to accommodate high enrolments. Lawrence Park CI currently has four portables on-site, and York Mills CI has had up to 11 portables in the past. The ability to use portables means that higher enrolments/utilizations can be accommodated. North Toronto CI sits on a constrained site that cannot accommodate portables, so projected enrolment growth at this school needs to be addressed.

Utilizations well over 100% are not necessarily ideal in our system either. One of the Guiding Principles in TDSB's annual Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy (LTPAS) is to ensure that – across the system – we have efficient and flexible learning spaces. We want to ensure that our buildings are used efficiently by targeting utilization rates of 90%, addressing issues of underutilization (schools operating at 65% utilization or less) and overutilization (schools operating at 110% utilization or greater) by using existing space in schools efficiently to balance enrolments. The dissolution of the technical and commercial boundaries at Northern SS provides the opportunity for the school to take in more local students to help achieve a better balance between Northern SS and its surrounding schools.

16. Lawrence Park CI has a utilization rate 143% and it's been above 150% in the past and no boundary changes are proposed to reduce the pressures there. Why can't North Toronto CI's function similarly with utilization rates of 130% to 135%?

Some schools in this review – such as Lawrence Park CI and York Mills CI – currently have (or had) portables to accommodate high enrolments. Lawrence Park CI currently has four portables on-site, and York Mills CI has had up to 11 portables in the past. The ability to use portables means that higher enrolments/utilizations can be accommodated. North Toronto CI sits on a constrained site that cannot accommodate portables, so projected enrolment growth at this school needs to be addressed through other means.

Utilizations well over 100% are not necessarily ideal in our system either. One of the Guiding Principles in TDSB's annual Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy (LTPAS) is to ensure that – across the system – we have efficient and flexible learning spaces. We want to ensure that our buildings are



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used efficiently by targeting utilization rates of 90%, addressing issues of underutilization (schools operating at 65% utilization or less) and overutilization (schools operating at 110% utilization or greater). The dissolution of the technical and commercial boundaries at Northern SS provides the opportunity for the school to take in more local students to help achieve a better balance between Northern SS and its surrounding schools.

17. We purchased our home 10 years ago with the goal of our children attending North Toronto CI. Can exemptions be made for those that already own their houses?

Boundary modifications are a tool used by school boards throughout the province to balance enrolment among a group of schools. The Board periodically changes boundaries for this purpose, and they are always subject to change. Students currently attending the impacted schools will be grand-parented and will not be asked to leave.

North Toronto CI is currently facing accommodation pressures and measures to correct the situation need to take effect in the next few years, prior to the situation becoming critical. If we were to proceed with an exemption for all current homeowners, this would essentially nullify any effect of the boundary change, as it would take decades for any changes to be observed. This exemption would also not be equitable for renters.

18. We live in the Northern SS – Lawrence Park CI shared attendance area, which will now become a single school attendance area for Lawrence Park CI. How is losing access to a school equitable?

Apart from some minor exceptions, such as with the shared attendance areas between Northern SS and other local secondary schools, addresses across Toronto only have access to their community schools; whether it's the local elementary, intermediate, or secondary school.

The Board is actively working to rationalize several boundary anomalies in the system, and thus addressing systemic inequalities, whereby some areas have as-of-right access to multiple secondary schools. The proposed changes described in this review align with that direction.

19. We live in a shared attendance area and are losing access to one of the schools. Will the TDSB reduce our property taxes to compensate us for the loss of access?

Property taxes are solely the responsibility of the City of Toronto. The TDSB has no control over the tax rate or property value.

The mission of the TDSB to enable all students to reach high levels of achievement and well-being and to acquire the knowledge, skills and values they need to become responsible, contributing members of a democratic and sustainable society.



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20. The reputations of the schools in this review are not equal and online rating websites indicate some of these schools are not academically as strong. I am now losing access to a better school, how is this fair?

Every one of the secondary schools in this review are excellent. They each offer a breadth and depth of educational programming and opportunities for all students.

The TDSB does not support the ranking of schools for several reasons. School rankings encourage quick judgements about the overall school quality that cannot be substantiated by limited information. These school rankings do not provide important contextual information about the student experience in these schools, nor do they accurately reflect broader information about the quality of student learning within these schools. These rankings do not take into account important social and economic factors that also contribute to testing performance such as special education needs, and students whose first language is not English. Essentially, judgment of school quality should not be based on one single piece of information (such as student test results), but on the whole picture of what each school has to offer.

21. Is the rationale that the influx of students expected from high rise developments in the midtown area will cause North Toronto CI to be over capacity?

Even though North Toronto CI is currently operating with a utilization rate of 99%, the school currently has accommodation pressures. Classrooms are fully utilized, and we have no options to temporarily add any relief on the site (such as portables). Any additional influx of students, whether from long-established parts of the attendance area or from new residential projects, will cause additional pressures on students, staff, and spaces. The school will quickly lack space, and this is not a situation we want for the community.

22. How are the two blocks of the current North Toronto CI attendance area going to make any difference in pressures at the school?

There are approximately 30 regular grade-9 students each year that come from the combined upper and lower North Toronto CI blocks (that are proposed to be transferred to Northern SS). This means over the course of four years (from grade 9 to 12), these blocks contribute a total of 120 students. This number doesn't include any students attending optional programs, such as centralized student interest programs (CSIP's), special education (such as gifted), French immersion, or French extended. So, in any given year, North Toronto CI's enrolment could increase just from the well-established community and not necessarily from the newer residential projects. Action needs to be taken immediately to decrease the **existing** pressures at North Toronto CI.



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23. Why not allow families in North Toronto CI catchment to attend Northern SS if they want, rather than imposing strict boundary modifications?

The Board is actively working to rationalize several boundary anomalies in the system, and thus addressing systemic inequalities, whereby some areas have as-of-right access to multiple secondary schools. Giving access to Northern SS to all families within the North Toronto CI attendance area would just create a new shared attendance area.

Northern SS' status as a Secondary School without a Boundary (SSWAB) means that any student in the City can apply via the SSWAB process each year to attend the school. As mentioned at the public meeting, for the next three years—2025 through to 2027—applicants will be placed according to priority. The third priority is for “applicants residing within collegiate areas that have historically contributed large numbers of students to the former Technical and Commercial schools and have limited ability to receive an influx of additional students due to building and/or site constraints,” which includes North Toronto CI to Northern SS.

Families living in the North Toronto CI attendance area previously had a right-of-access to Northern SS through the former (now dissolved) Technical and Commercial attendance areas.

24. How can I provide additional feedback to the Board?

The public has an opportunity to depute the Board of Trustees on this matter at the Planning and Priorities Committee (PPC) of the Board.

This meeting will take place on **Wednesday May 14th, 2025**. You must register a delegation by **Monday, May 12, 2025, at 4:00pm** to be able to speak at this PPC meeting.

Click on the following link to learn more about the delegation process, including the procedure, request form, and general rules: <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/leadership/boardroom/delegations>

The final Board decision will be made on Wednesday May 21st, 2025.

25. How did the Board determine which North Toronto CI blocks were to be transferred to the Northern SS attendance area?

The proposed modification of the two North Toronto CI blocks was determined by analyzing several factors, such as the need to transfer a substantial number of students from North Toronto CI, the distance to schools, the travel times to schools, the presence of natural (ex.: ravine system) and man-made barriers (ex.: roads, railways), and student safety.



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26. Northern has a Facility Condition Index (FCI) of 91.78% while North Toronto has a score of 0.98%. Has this been considered? When will repairs at Northern be prioritized?

The Facility Condition Index (FCI) rating is a measurement of the condition of a school building. It does not reflect on the safety of the building. The health and safety of students, staff and community members are our top priority when planning school repairs. Our Facility Services staff works year-round to ensure our schools are safe regardless of their FCI rating.

Almost half of TDSB school buildings were built more than 60 years ago (e.g. Northern SS). Older schools often have a higher FCI rating as some building components such as walls, lights, floors, and ventilation systems may require major repairs or replacement. These schools also often have unique spaces such as wide corridors, larger room sizes, parenting centres, lunchrooms, childcare facilities, swimming pools, and auditoriums, which are outside the scope of the Ministry's current funding benchmarks. Although some of the renewal backlog might be related to these spaces, the cost of the replacement school does not include these spaces or features in its design. This results in a higher FCI.

The proper maintenance of aged building components will extend their life cycle without compromising safety. Building components that cannot be repaired are replaced with new ones. In addition, it costs more to replace individual building components when they have failed as opposed to doing it when building a new school. Our staff works year-round to make sure that the schools are safe regardless of their FCI value. The health and safety of students and staff is considered a top priority in planning school repairs.