

TO: The Chairperson and Members of the
Business and Facilities Standing Committee

FROM: Superintendent of Business and Facility Services

SUBJECT: **PROGRAM REVIEW 2017:01 – MUNDY’S BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL,
HURON PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL**

1. Background

In September 2013, the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) began phasing in the French Immersion (FI) program at selected schools in addition to offering the Extended French as a Second Language (EFSL) program. As of September 2017, FI is offered in Grades 1-5 and EFSL is offered in Grades 6-8. The EFSL program will be phased-out as the FI program continues to incrementally grow. Countywide, there are approximately 3,350 students enrolled in these optional programs combined. The introduction and popularity of the FI program has resulted in significant accommodation pressures at some schools. As a result, the program locations are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure sustainability, balanced enrolment and to minimize impact on home school student populations.

On January 25, 2017, the Board approved that a program review be undertaken, commencing in the fall of 2017, that included Mundy’s Bay Public School and Huron Park Public School, as set out in Report No. BF-D-1, Capital Plan 2016-2017, dated January 11, 2017. The intent of this review was to address the accommodation pressures currently and projected to be experienced at Mundy’s Bay Public School. As per Board Policy 4115 – Extended FSL Program and Board Policy 4116 – French Immersion, school locations shall be recommended by the Director of Education for the approval of the Board by November 30 of the year prior to the establishment of a new FI/EFSL school site.

2. Current Status

September 2017 enrolment at Mundy’s Bay Public School was 576 students with 236 students enrolled in the French programs and 340 in the English track. The school’s capacity is 464. The current utilization is approximately 124% and there are four (4) portables on site. The English track population is expected to increase while the French population is expected to remain stable as EFSL is phased-out. Overall, analysis indicates that the accommodation pressures will continue to increase with school utilization also expected to increase to approximately 140%. Mundy’s Bay Public School can currently accommodate up to six (6) portables from a space and functionality perspective.

September 2017 enrolment at Huron Park Public School was 354 students. The school’s capacity is 404 and current utilization is approximately 86%. The school currently has no portables on site but does have the ability to accommodate up to six (6) portables if required. The English track population is expected to decrease slightly and there is currently no FI/EFSL program. APPENDIX A depicts current and projected enrolment in more detail.

Several scenarios were examined to address the accommodation pressures at Mundy's Bay Public School. These scenarios included examining other schools in the community and their ability to accommodate the program, transferring the Grades 1-4 French students to Huron Park Public School, transferring the Grades 5-8 French students to Huron Park Public School, altering designated feeder schools, changing the attendance boundaries of Mundy's Bay Public School to reduce the English track population and minimizing intake of the FI program.

On October 10, 2017, a public information meeting was held and staff presented the following proposal:

1. Huron Park Public School accommodate Grades 1-4 FI;
2. Mundy's Bay Public School accommodate Grade 5-8 FI/EFSL;
3. Elementary feeder schools for Huron Park Public School and Mundy's Bay Public School remain consistent with existing Mundy's Bay Public School feeders;
4. September 2018 implementation.

The splitting of the program between two sites is a successful model that currently exists in other communities within the board. In the scenario initially proposed, it is estimated that approximately 90 FI students would be impacted by being transferred to Huron Park Public School while approximately 115 FI/EFSL students would remain at Mundy's Bay Public School. School enrolments would be more balanced with Huron Park Public School being approximately 120% utilized and Mundy's Bay Public School being approximately 110% utilized over the long term. Portable use at both locations would be required in order to meet class size requirements and to respond to fluctuations in FI intake and changes in the home school population in this scenario.

3. Comments and Concerns

The public information meeting was held in order to present the initial staff proposal, solicit feedback and answer questions. In addition, the opportunity to provide written feedback was also provided and staff received four written submissions. The meeting was very well attended with approximately 65 people present. In general, the attendees were in opposition to the staff proposed recommendation and voiced concern over any solution that did not keep the French population intact. Another common sentiment was a general distrust of the process and the feeling a decision had already been made. A variety of alternatives, however, were suggested that focused primarily on transferring English track students instead: creating an additional FI program at another location, consider other grade cohorts for transfer, or remain status quo. While there was widespread recognition that accommodation pressures exist, the community expressed a strong preference, if changes do occur, for a phased-in approach to any transition to minimize disruption of current students.

The following summarizes the comments and concerns raised through the public meeting and written submissions:

- Not having siblings in the same school will be upsetting for my children. I don't like the idea of splitting my children amongst three different schools;

- Families with multiple children may have children in multiple schools simultaneously causing difficulty for the family;
- Potentially examine changing the feeder schools to ease the burden;
- Create an all French school with open access and no waiting lists;
- Maintain program at existing location and change regular attendance area;
- Phase-in program and changes to avoid impacting existing students;
- Moving Grades 5-8 of the French program to the Huron Park site instead of 1-4;
- Students being transferred could attend four different schools in a short period of time;
- Concern that there will be changes to program location again;
- Before and After school program availability at Huron Park;
- Splitting the program to two different schools would impact mentorship possibilities (Reading Buddies);
- Transportation impacts a major concern;
- Information wanted regarding location of bus stops, whether or not separate buses would serve the two locations, bell times of schools, distance to bus stops is too far, length of bus ride, how individuals would be impacted;
- Would prefer maintaining existing bus stops so parents do not have to be at two places at the same time;
- Ensure same resources are available to transferred students;
- Not enough funding for French programs;
- There is no data to draw from on the impact transitioning has on the students;
- Work with the Town of Midland for the purposes of allowing additional portables beyond current maximum in order to allow time for a more detailed review of student impacts and options;
- There was discussion during the registration process that relocation of the program could occur;
- The French program selection process should be prioritized to families that already have a child or children in the program before opening it to other families without children in the program;
- Confusion over the registration process being a lottery selection;
- Examine other boards experience and methods;
- Concern over siblings not receiving equal education opportunities;
- This meeting is being held for political purposes only, the decision has already been made;
- Mundy's Bay is a new school, why is it already overpopulated? Why wasn't there better planning to accommodate the FI program intake;
- Consider more frequent stops for the French program or combining bus routes with the English track students.

Staff thanked the community for their time and contributions to this process. The information received is valuable and helps guide not only the outcome of this program review but other board practices as well.

4. Revised Staff Recommendation

Subsequent to the public meeting and taking into consideration the community's input, staff reevaluated the initial proposal and the suggestions put forward. Further analysis of utilization and enrolment projections within the context of the suggested alternatives indicate that, while a change is required at Mundy's Bay Public School in order to address long-term accommodation pressures, Huron Park Public School and Mundy's Bay Public School can accommodate a variety of configurations and phased-in approaches. Since the schools involved in this review can accommodate a variety of approaches, the revised staff recommendation is based on minimizing any impacts to student achievement while also incorporating community input and working within the resources available. The following outlines the revised staff recommendations for consideration:

1. Transfer Grades 5-6 of the FI program (current Grades 4-5; approximately 45 students) from Mundy's Bay Public School to Huron Park Public School in September 2018;
2. Grandfather the remaining EFSL students at Mundy's Bay Public School until EFSL is phased-out;
3. Phase in Grade 7-8 FI at Huron Park Public School over the subsequent two years;
4. When fully phased-in, Mundy's Bay Public School will accommodate Grades 1-4 of the FI program and Huron Park Public School will accommodate Grades 5-8 of the FI program.

From an accommodation perspective, Mundy's Bay Public School would be able to accommodate this transition. It is estimated that approximately 45 students would be impacted by being transferred to Huron Park Public School. School enrolments would be more balanced with each school being approximately 115% utilized over the long-term. Portable use at both locations may be required in order to meet class size requirements and to respond to fluctuations in FI intake and changes in the home school population. For more detail on the impacts of current and future enrolment and utilization please refer to APPENDIX B.

From a program delivery perspective, the transfer of Grades 5-6 is the preferred option as opposed to transferring and phasing-in of primary grades. It avoids the scenario of FI students having to potentially move twice while also grandfathering the remaining EFSL cohorts until graduation, thereby minimizing disruption. This solution recognizes the importance of initially having two grades at a location which provides more resources, team teaching opportunities and greater staffing efficiencies, particularly in the case of planning time. This also takes into account that Grades 5-6 have the same amount of instructional time and subjects, therefore, making the proposed configuration a natural break for the transition.

Subject to Board approval, further information relating to transportation and staffing will be available as the Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium and SCDSB staff progress through their respective planning processes for the 2018-2019 school year. If approved, transition plans and supports will be cooperatively developed and implemented by the respective school administrations.

5. Conclusion

The success and popularity of the FI program has reaffirmed the need for long-term accommodation strategies that can effectively deliver the program in a sustainable, equitable, and efficient manner. While considering the home school population, it is acknowledged that families desire consistency in the program location. Wherever possible, staff make every effort to incorporate community input into the recommendations provided for consideration. The staff recommendation is intended to address consistency moving forward while also addressing the accommodation pressures at Mundy's Bay Public School. Within the resources available to staff, this recommendation minimizes impacts to the school community while still providing access to the FI program for the Midland, Penetanguishene, Tay, Tiny and portions of the Springwater and Oro-Medonte communities.

RECOMMENDATION

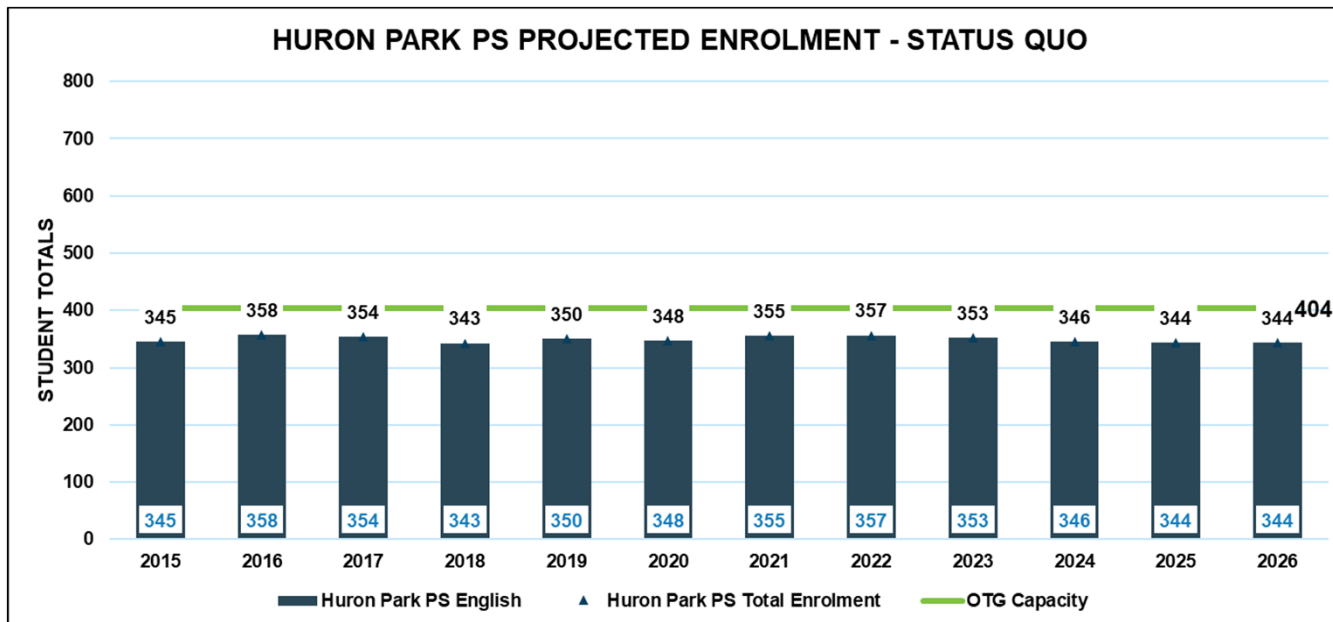
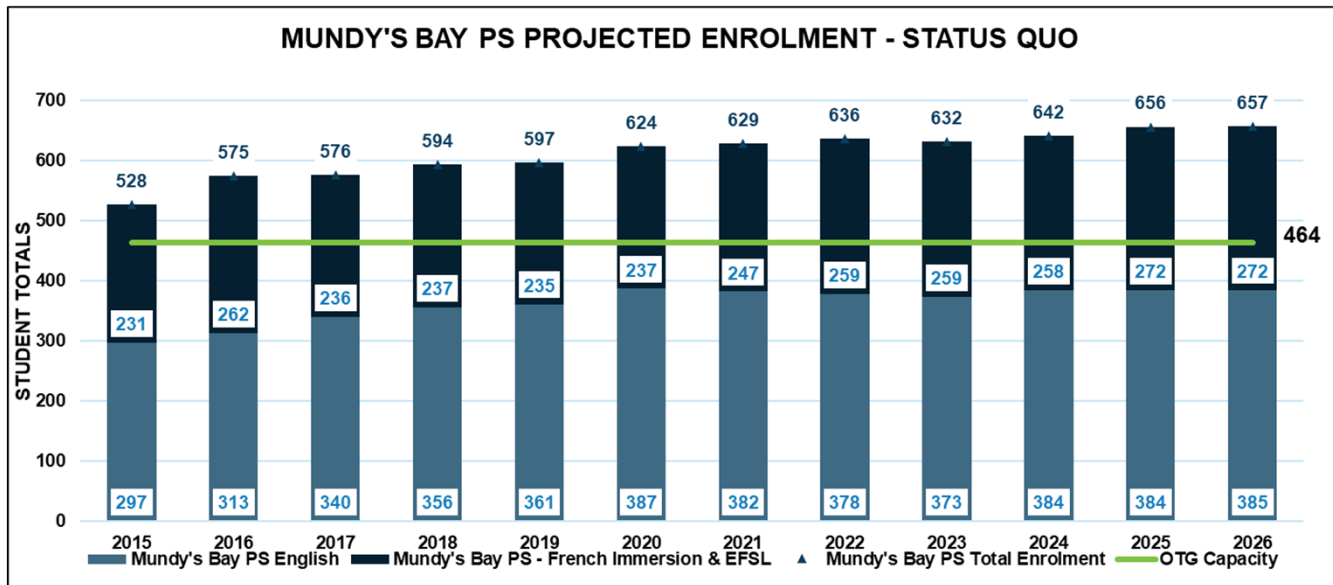
That the Business and Facilities Standing Committee recommend that the Board approve the transfer of Grades 5-6 of the FI program, and subsequently phase in up to Grade 8, from Mundy's Bay Public School to Huron Park Public School in September 2018, as set out in Report No. BF-D-3, Program Review 2017:01 – Mundy's Bay Public School, Huron Park Public School, dated November 1, 2017.

Respectfully submitted by:

Brian Jeffs
Superintendent of Business and Facility Services

November 1, 2017

APPENDIX A: Status Quo - Enrolment and Projections



APPENDIX B: Staff Recommendation - Enrolment and Projections

