

Enrolment Planning and Program Revision – Port Elgin

Background

As part of Bluewater District School Board's (BWDSB) facility planning staff have identified enrolment growth in the Port Elgin area schools. Staff have examined the future projected enrolment in the Port Elgin area in order to plan appropriately and ensure sufficient pupil spaces exist in the area. BWDSB has three schools in the Port Elgin area; Northport Elementary School, Port Elgin-Saugeen Central School and Saugeen District Secondary School. Northport Elementary School programs for JK to Grade 8, Port Elgin-Saugeen Central School programs for JK to Grade 8 including French Immersion and Saugeen District Secondary School programs for Grades 9 – 12 including Extended French.

The current enrolment at the elementary level is 107% utilization. This makes it very difficult to provide programs based on the configurations required to comply with ministry class sizes. Enrolment at the three Port Elgin schools is illustrated in Table 1. Portables are being used to accommodate the over utilization.

Table 1 – Port Elgin Schools 2018-19 Enrolment

Current Full Time Enrolment (as of Sept. 13/18)	Northport Elementary School	Port Elgin- Saugeen Central School	Saugeen District Secondary School
Capacity (OTG)	410	683	933
Enrolment	452	713	590
Utilization	110%	104%	63%
Temporary Accommodation	92	46	0
Grade 7-8 students	84	142	0

Projected Growth from Development

There are approximately 220 residential units expected in Port Elgin by the end of 2019. Over the next 10-15 years, approximately 1,100 residential units are expected. Developments are aimed toward a range of buyers from families to retirees.

Projected Enrolment Impact

The number of students generated per household can range. For this area, based on recent development, staff have used a .35 student per family household yield. In the short term, there are an estimated 84 students coming into the Port Elgin area. Given that the current elementary utilization is exceeding 100%, the addition of 84 students will create overcapacity at the two elementary schools. There is no capacity at the Port Elgin elementary schools to accommodate pupils given a low level of growth in the area. It is very possible that development could advance faster than expected and could generate a higher than expected number of pupils in the area. The elementary schools will be unable to accommodate the students in the current program structure given current capacity limitations.

By 2022-23, it is expected that there will be 152 pupil spaces required over the current capacity of these elementary schools. Five-year development growth could generate approximately 200+ pupils. In order to support the growth of students, an additional school or expansion will be required. Staff have had early discussions on this possibility. In the best of business cases, the ministry prefers new builds in areas where all existing pupil spaces have been utilized.

Table 2 – Port Elgin Schools 2019-20 Projections

2019-20 Enrolment Projections – Average Daily Enrolment (ADE)	Northport Elementary School	Port Elgin-Saugeen Central School	Saugeen District Secondary School
School Capacity (OTG)	410	683	933
Average Daily Enrolment	494	696	611
Utilization	120%	102%	65%
Potential Surplus Space/Space Shortage(-)	-84	-13	322

Table 3 – Port Elgin Schools 2022-23 projections without development growth

2022-23 Enrolment Projections (ADE)	Northport Elementary School	Port Elgin-Saugeen Central School	Saugeen District Secondary School
School Capacity (OTG)	410	683	933
Average Daily Enrolment Growth Estimate	505	740	787
Utilization	123%	108%	84%
Potential Surplus Space/Space Shortage(-)	-95	-57	146

Options and Analysis

By the 2019-20 school year, there will be a need for additional capacity at the Port Elgin elementary schools with temporary accommodations to support enrolment given a standard expectation of growth in the area. However, development could generate a higher than expected number of pupils in the area. This would provide a challenge in accommodating the students in the current program structure at the elementary schools.

The options to address the over utilization for 2019-20 include:

Option A

Regain capacity by enforcing school boundaries. Create additional capacity with the use of portables and school boundary changes that would utilize capacity at G.C. Huston Public School, Paisley Central School and other area schools.

Option B

Utilize the available capacity at Saugeen District Secondary School for Grades 7 and 8.

Option A has limited feasibility over the short-term and has many moving parts in terms of boundary changes, bussing changes, and site issues associated with the placement of portables. The disadvantage of this option is the cost and time to find suitable portable places, implementing new boundaries and changes to transportation routes for students impacted (and not) by a boundary change. Boundary changes were reviewed and found to be insufficient in creating required pupil spaces over the mid-term.

This option does not support the need to expand existing schools or the application for an additional school in Port Elgin. In the best-case scenario, school boards are successful in getting funding for new schools when all available space is being utilized. This option does not use existing space at the local secondary school – a criteria the ministry would look at when considering the case for expansion or an additional school.

Option B is a more effective consideration that can meet the short and mid-term enrolment expectations. There currently exists space at Saugeen District Secondary School and location is not a significant change from the other schools in Port Elgin. This would free up space at Northport Elementary School and Port Elgin-Saugeen Central School for an increase in elementary students in JK – Grade 6. This is a lower cost mid-term option that provides accommodation to support student achievement. It provides time for staff to further research development timelines, pupil yields and enter into discussions about the need and feasibility of an additional school in the area or a school addition. Implementing option (B) now over option (A) would eliminate the need to make multiple changes over the next two to three years that impact our students and families as well as increase in costs and transportation.

Program Revision

Staff is recommending a program revision at Northport Elementary School, Port Elgin-Saugeen Central School and Saugeen District Secondary School in order to better support growth in student enrolment. Northport Elementary School would become a JK – Grade 6 school. Port Elgin-Saugeen Central School will provide program for JK - Grade 6 including French Immersion. Saugeen District Secondary School will become a combined school and program for Grades 7 – 12 including French Immersion. This program revision will utilize available capacity over the short to mid-term period.

Timing

There will be approximately 220 Grade 7 and 8 students by September of 2019.

Table 4 - Grades 7-8 at SDSS Solution 2019-20 Projections

2019-20 Enrolment Projections (ADE)	Northport Elementary School	Port Elgin-Saugeen Central School	Saugeen District Secondary School
School Capacity (OTG)	410	683	933
Average Daily Enrolment Estimate	399	577	840
Utilization	97%	83%	90%
Potential Surplus Space/Space Shortage(-)	11	106	93

Table 5 - Grades 7-8 at SDSS Solution 2022-23 projections without development growth

2022-23 Enrolment Projections (ADE)	Northport Elementary School	Port Elgin-Saugeen Central School	Saugeen District Secondary School
School Capacity (OTG)	410	683	933
Average Daily Enrolment Estimate	402	596	1053
Utilization	98%	87%	112%
Potential Surplus Space/Space Shortage(-)	8	87	-120

Staff will investigate additional school space options that will meet the enrolment outlook.

Student Well-Being

Staff recognize that a program change can create anxiety among those impacted by the change. Staff will be certain to provide regular communication and support to students, parents and staff as we proceed. BWDSB understands that strong support for our students and staff is critical to ensure well-being and provide the best opportunities for student success.

Communication Plan

Staff will schedule an information meeting in the near future to go over the proposed program change at these schools. Community members can also provide feedback in writing to peprogramreview@bwdsb.on.ca.

Transportation

The proximity of the schools involved in this program review will have minimal impact on transportation for students attending these schools. There will be no financial increase in transportation costs as a result of this program change.

Facility Investment in Student Spaces

There is approximately \$2.0 M earmarked for renewal work at Saugeen District Secondary School. Updates to the west wing of the school will be part of the investment. In addition, there will be site improvements that will create a separate play space for the elementary cohort.

There are currently ten closed classrooms at Saugeen District Secondary School. According to projections and staff modelling, this program change will require 10 classrooms for 2019-20. Therefore, all closed classrooms will be opened and prepared for 2019-20.

Future Facility Plan

As stated, this is a short-term plan to provide quality spaces for Grade 7 and 8 students due to capacity constraint at the local elementary schools. Staff are examining a long-term plan that could include expansion of existing elementary schools or possibly an additional school. However, prior to additional space being created, it is likely that SDSS could require additional space in the future to accommodate increases in enrolment. This situation will be monitored very closely and if required could be supported with portables.

Recommendations:

That the Business Committee recommend to the board that Bluewater District School Board staff conduct a public information meeting for Port Elgin residents on the program revision at Northport Elementary School, Port Elgin-Saugeen Central School and Saugeen District Secondary School effective 2019-20 school year.

Submitted to
Bluewater District School Board
Business Committee of the Whole
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For further information, please contact
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Services