



**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
Report No. 23-048**

**12 September 2023**

**New Riverside South Secondary School – Approval of Opening Grade Structure, Program, and Attendance Boundary**

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**PURPOSE:**

1. To seek Board approval of the opening grade structure, program offering and attendance boundary for a new secondary school located in the Riverside South community in Gloucester.

**CONTEXT:**

2. In the fall of 2020, the Board received notice of capital priority funding for the construction of a secondary school in Riverside South.

A predecessor of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) took ownership of the school site on 21 July 1965. The 8 ha (19.75 acre) site is located at the southeast intersection of Spratt Road and Earl Armstrong Road. The municipal address of the site is 702 Earl Armstrong Road. Please refer to the general location map attached as Appendix A.

In October 2020, funding for the construction of a grade 7 to 12 secondary school in the Riverside South area was granted from the Ministry of Education based on the September 2019 Capital Priorities submission. The OCDSB was allocated \$42,319,111 in capital funding for the new 1516 pupil place, Grade 7 to 12 high school. In April 2023, the OCDSB was granted additional funding by the Ministry of Education as the work done to date in preparation for construction has revealed a funding shortfall. The project is out to tender and with reasonable construction scheduling, it is anticipated that a September 2025 opening is achievable.

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS:**

3. Current local attendance boundaries and school feeding patterns were reviewed in an effort to ensure that logical alignments are put in place, and a balancing of school enrolments is achieved. The location of future residential development and planned new school openings was taken into consideration.

The proposed boundary that staff are presenting serves the existing and future residents of Riverside South and Findlay Creek. Currently, the OCDSB does not have a secondary school in Riverside South or Findlay Creek. As a result, the OCDSB has a secondary student yield of approximately 31% within those communities. In comparison, other areas of the District see yields of 45% or higher. This analysis considers that staff anticipate significantly higher student yield upon opening.

Secondary students in the Riverside South community are primarily directed to Merivale High School HS or South Carleton High School. Secondary students living in the Findlay Creek community are primarily directed to Ridgemont HS. Additionally, there are option areas in proximity to the new Secondary School that direct students to Osgoode Township HS Gloucester High School HS and Brookfield High School HS.

Intermediate students from each community are largely accommodated within Riverside South and Findlay Creek respectively; with some exceptions detailed further in the report.

Riverside South is part of the City of Ottawa's South Urban Community located east of the Rideau River, mirroring Barrhaven. The Riverside South community was originally expected to contain in excess of 20,500 units at full build-out. To date, approximately 7,800 units have been built. It should be noted that despite prior planning, the new Provincial bill (*Bill 23 - More Homes Built Faster*) may influence the capacity of the new Riverside South Secondary School.

The Findlay Creek neighbourhood is a rapidly growing area located to the east of Riverside South, bordered by planned greenfield development. Findlay Creek has approximately 5,500 homes, and is anticipated to accommodate 2,500 additional units at full build-out. The decision to include the Findlay Creek area within the recommended Riverside South SS boundary is one that staff carefully considered.

## **WORKING GROUP MEETINGS:**

4. The Board-approved consultation plan included the formation of a local working group. The working group was composed of school council representatives, Riverside South and Findlay Creek community association representatives, principals from potentially impacted schools, trustees, and Board staff. This group met in February and April 2023.

The role of the working group was to provide localized input and advice with regard to proposed options, community and neighbourhood alignments, and parental and family preferences as they relate to student movement. Working group participants provided feedback on behalf of their communities.

The following points summarize the study objectives that helped facilitate the working group discussions:

- examine options for an opening grade structure, program offering, and attendance boundary for the new Riverside South SS;

- adjust attendance boundaries and programs for local schools which, if possible, will help balance enrolments at local area schools, are logical and sustainable in the longer-term, and provide for viable student programming;
- account for future planning considerations such as the opening of additional schools in future years; and
- examine designated school directions for new and future residential development areas.

The working group process was collegial and informative in providing local input regarding a preliminary attendance boundary. The discussions on the proposed attendance boundary took into account updated student enrolment and school-age population trends, residential development patterns, and student distribution data.

## **PUBLIC MEETING:**

5. At its last meeting in April 2023, the working group came to a consensus with respect to a proposed plan to be shared at the public consultation meeting. The plan was to be presented to the public for the purpose of receiving input from parents/guardians, students, and members of the broader community.

A public meeting to discuss the boundary and opening grade structure for the new Riverside South SS was scheduled for 26 April 2023. Flyers advertising the public meeting were included in all impacted schools newsletters, distributed to the community associations, and distributed to the City of Ottawa. The meeting was attended by approximately 100-125 people, mostly consisting of the Riverside South, Findlay Creek, East Barrhaven, and Manotick communities.

The public meeting consisted of a presentation on the preliminary boundary and opening grade structure followed by a question and answer period. Questions presented verbally during the meeting were recorded in the “Riverside South SS Public Consultation Comment Binder”. Members of the public were encouraged to provide written comments (physical or electronic) following the meeting. All written public comments were recorded verbatim in the “Riverside South SS Public Consultation Comment Binder”. The “Summary of Public Feedback” section of this report will provide an overview on the comments received from the public.

## **RECOMMENDED ATTENDANCE BOUNDARY FOR THE NEW RIVERSIDE SOUTH SECONDARY SCHOOL:**

6. The recommended boundary for the new Riverside South SS is shown in Appendix B. In general, the boundary is comprised of:
  - Steve MacLean PS’s Boundary;
  - Vimy Ridge PS’s Boundary;
  - The eastern portion (across from the Rideau River) of Farley Mowat’s Boundary

Generally, the recommended boundary for the new Riverside SS School creates a local catchment for Riverside South that would eliminate the optional boundary for Merivale HS and South Carleton HS. The recommended boundary would redirect students residing in Findlay Creek from Ridgemont to the new Riverside South SS.

It should be noted that the Vimy Ridge PS boundary will be reviewed and amended in light of the new Findlay Creek PS boundary setting exercise that is anticipated to be launched. (Report 23-061) The findings of that consultation will not impact the boundary setting for the new Riverside South High School.

## **OTHER RECOMMENDED ATTENDANCE BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS:**

7. Through this report, a number of recommended adjustments to other attendance boundaries are proposed. These recommendations seek to create sustainable boundaries for schools impacted by the opening of the new Riverside South SS.

This report provides an opportunity to establish a more logical geographic boundary for Farley Mowat PS which currently contains neighbourhoods both east and west of the Rideau River. The Riverside South SS will have a 7 to 12 grade structure, by default, eliminating grades 7 and 8 at Steve MacLean PS. With the grade structure altered at Steve MacLean PS, this frees up room to repatriate the Riverside South students residing in the Summerhill neighbourhood (located east of the Rideau River) currently directed to Farley Mowat PS, and allow them to be accommodated at Steve MacLean PS. The community has historically expressed an interest in this redirection. The proposed attendance boundary adjustments for Farley Mowat PS and Steve MacLean PS are shown in Appendices C and D.

Feedback received as a result of the Working Group meetings included an interest in the boundary of the “Boothfield” community. The “Boothfield” community is a small developed area east of the intersection of Spratt Road and Limebank Road. Although this community is directed to Vimy Ridge Public School, the “Boothfield” community is geographically closer to, and shares a stronger sense of community with, Steve MacLean PS. It is recommended that the “Boothfield” community be redirected from Vimy Ridge PS to Steve MacLean PS. The revised boundaries for Steve MacLean PS and Vimy Ridge PS are shown in Appendix D and E.

The new Riverside South SS boundary removes the majority of the Merivale/South Carleton HS option areas that are associated with Steve MacLean Public School and Farley Mowat PS. The proposed boundary for Merivale HS is shown on Appendix H. There is a remnant portion of this option area that is associated with Manotick PS. This section is bordered by Rideau Road to the north, Limebank Road to the east, Mitch Owens Road to the south, and the Rideau River to the west. The remnant portion of this option area is to be merged with the existing option area for South Carleton HS and Osgoode Township HS that is directly adjacent. Staff carefully considered including this area within the new Riverside South SS attendance boundary, however, it would result in the students who are living within this area being directed to attend Kars on the Rideau PS for one year (grade 6) before attending the new Riverside South SS for grades 7 to 12. In addition, there are concerns with the capacity of the new secondary school, especially with the

possibility for intensification of growth areas. The change to the South Carleton HS and Osgoode Township HS is shown on Appendix F and G.

The grade 7 to 8 ENG and EFI attendance boundary for Kars on the Rideau PS will be modified to redirect a small portion to the new Riverside South SS. This area is bordered by Earl Armstrong to the north, Limebank Road to the east, Rideau Road to the south, and the Rideau River to the west. The change to Kars on the Rideau grade 7 to 8 ENG and EFI attendance boundary is shown on Appendix K.

The option area for Osgoode/Gloucester HS will be modified to redirect a small portion to the new Riverside South SS. This area is bordered by Leitrim Road to the north, Hawthorne Road to the east, Blais to the south, and Bank Street to the west. This change is proposed to ensure all of the Findlay Creek community is included in the new high school's boundary. The change to the Gloucester HS and Osgoode Township HS is shown on Appendix L and G.

The attendance boundary for Brookfield HS will be modified to redirect a small portion to the new Riverside South SS. This area is bordered by the Hunt Club Bridge to the north, Limebank Road to the east, Mary Drive to the south, and the Rideau River to the west. This change is proposed to ensure all of the Riverside South community is included in the new high school's boundary. The change to Brookfield HS is shown on Appendix J.

The attendance boundary for Ridgemont HS will be modified to redirect the southern portion to the new Riverside South SS. The area that is being redirected coincides with the Steve MacLean PS and Vimy Ridge PS attendance boundaries. The change to Ridgemont HS is shown on Appendix I.

## **RECOMMENDED OPENING GRADE STRUCTURE:**

8. The new Riverside South SS is funded and will be built as a grade 7 to 12 school. Staff recommend that the school open with a grade 7 to 10 grade structure. With a 7 to 10 opening grade structure, the school's projected enrolment for 2025 is estimated to be approximately 767 students with a utilization rate of 50.6% (see Appendix M). In September 2027, with a full complement of grades (7 to 12), the enrollment is projected to be approximately 1375 students with a utilization rate of 90.7%. It is anticipated the school would most likely begin to require portables on site for instruction in its fourth year of operation (2028), if not before depending on the yield of students from the area and the continued growth. The limited opening structure allows for logical growth for the new school and stability for Grades 11 and 12 students in their existing schools.

The grade 11 and 12 students that are impacted by the opening of the Riverside South SS shall continue to be directed to their current school(s) and be provided transportation if they are eligible.

## **RECOMMENDED PROGRAM OFFERING:**

9. The programs offered at the new Riverside South SS will be that of a typical OCDSB composite secondary school, with both English and Immersion programming

offered. The community expressed interest in the availability of Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) offerings. SHSM's are often developed at a school based on the particular interest and initiative of a teacher or department. These programs have to be approved by the Ministry of Education. A secondary school as large as Riverside South SS will likely have a SHSM, but it may take time to develop naturally and to be approved.

## **LACK OF CONSENSUS:**

10. There are some issues that staff have attempted to resolve, but are still outstanding. One of these issues is how to approach the process of grandparenting. There was a lack of consensus on the opening grade structure of the new secondary school. Experience tells us that ideally a 7 to 10 or even 7 to 9 opening structure allows for the best transitions, growth of the school community, and satisfies the Ministry and the public's investment (by not opening a school vastly underutilized with a lesser opening structure). Historically, the OCDSB has typically made block moves of all grades/students in the opening structure. We do not typically give a one-time option to remain with older siblings in Grades 11 and 12, for example. In the past we have permitted student transfers for extenuating circumstances when criteria for such was met.

The program offering at the new Riverside South SS needs to address Middle French Immersion (MFI) students. Currently, MFI students in Riverside South attend Kars on the Rideau PS, and MFI students in Findlay Creek attend Blossom Park PS. It is recommended that MFI students continue to attend Kars on the Rideau PS and Blossom Park PS. Students graduating from the MFI program at either school can attend the new Riverside South SS in grade 9. Neither program is robust enough to easily remove these students; nor is there room to initiate a new program within the catchment of the new secondary school. Therefore it is anticipated that these students will begin attending the new Riverside South SS in grade 9.

## **SUMMARY OF PUBLIC FEEDBACK:**

11. Both during and following the public meeting, feedback from the impacted schools and the general public was solicited. Major themes are summarized below.

Comments were received that expressed interest to include the entirety of Farley Mowat PS's boundary within the new Riverside South SS boundary. Factors such as proximity and the overcrowding of Longfields-Davidson Heights SS (the current secondary school for Farley Mowat PS) were used to support their comments. Staff are of the opinion that the inclusion of Farley Mowat PS's western boundary would result in excess overcrowding of the new Riverside South SS. Further, staff believes that the Rideau River serves as a logical geographic barrier that separates the Barrhaven community and the Riverside South community.

Comments were received suggesting that Farley Mowat PS students should be given the option to continue to attend Farley Mowat PS once the new Riverside South SS opens. Other comments received suggested that students should be

allowed to continue at their school of choice. At this time, staff is recommending a block move of students.

Comments were received that expressed concerns with the size of the proposed boundary, and thus the potential for overcrowding. Staff anticipates that the population of the school will stabilize over time, as the Riverside South and Findlay Creek communities stabilize. Portables will most likely be required at the school and there is potential for an addition to the secondary school should it be required.

Comments were received in support of repatriating the “Boothfield” community to Steve MacLean PS.

Comments were received that suggested the inclusion of the Manotick PS attendance boundary within the new Riverside South SS attendance boundary. These comments were largely supported by the Manotick community closely associating with the Riverside South community. Comments relayed that the new Riverside South SS would be the nearest secondary school to Manotick PS. Comments also relayed that it is easier to provide public transportation from Manotick PS to the new Riverside South SS, compared to the other secondary schools to which Manotick PS feeds into. Staff do not recommend including Manotick PS within the new Riverside South SS boundary. Manotick PS has a JK to 5 grade structure, therefore the inclusion would result in students graduating from Manotick Public School at grade 5, being redirected to attend Kars on the Rideau PS for grade 6, and then being redirected to attend the new Riverside South SS for grades 7 to 12. It is not ideal for students to be redirected to Kars on the Rideau PS for only one year. The inclusion of Manotick PS may also result in excess overcrowding of the new secondary school.

A bulk of the comments received were on the topic of the opening grade structure. These comments were both in support of, and opposed to a 7 to 10 opening grade structure. Some parents of students that would be in grade 11 in 2025 had strong preferences to keep their children at their current school, while other parents expressed strong preferences in moving their children to the new Riverside South SS. Comments in favour of keeping their children in place were largely related to ensuring that their graduating student had stability in their academic career and extracurricular activities. Comments in favour of moving their children to the new Riverside South SS were largely related to difficulties in transportation, and a desire to attend a secondary school within their community. Staff recommends an opening grade structure of 7 to 10 to allow the secondary school to develop at a natural rate. Historically, the depth of the programs and extracurricular activities at a newly opened secondary school are typically limited due to the lack of a vibrant grade 11 and 12 population.

Comments were received on the availability of SHSM programs at the new Riverside South SS. The establishment of SHSM programs are unique to each school that shows interest, and are subject to approval by the Ministry of Education. Should there be SHSM at the Riverside South SS, they will be determined after the school opens.

Comments were received on transportation options for the new Riverside South SS. Staff notes that transportation is under the jurisdiction of the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA). OSTA will review the proposed secondary school boundary, and any other boundary adjustments. There were particular concerns regarding students crossing Earl Armstrong Road (for students accessing the new secondary school, or for Summerhill students accessing Steve MacLean PS).

## SUMMARY OF IMPACTS TO OTHER SCHOOLS:

12. Staff has created the following chart that outlines impact of the new Riverside South SS on currently existing secondary schools:

School	Summary	Impact Upon Opening (students gained/lost)	Impact Upon Opening (utilization factor %)
Merivale High School	- Removal of option area - Redirecting secondary students to the new Riverside South Secondary School	-165	120.5%
South Carleton High School	- Removal of option area - Redirecting secondary students to the new Riverside South Secondary School - Expanding the South Carleton and Osgoode Township High School option area	-34	88.6%
Ridgemont High School	- Redirecting Findlay Creek Public School's secondary students to new Riverside South Secondary School	-30	87.8%
Osgoode Township High School	- Redirecting a small portion of the Gloucester High School and Osgoode Township High option area to the new Riverside South Secondary School - Expanding South Carleton High School and Osgoode Township High School option area	-3	82.5%
Gloucester High School	- Redirecting a small portion of the Gloucester High School and Osgoode Township High option area to the new Riverside South Secondary School	-10	72.2%
Brookfield High School	- Redirecting a small portion of the Brookfield High School attendance boundary to the new Riverside South Secondary School	N/A	N/A

**Table 1.** General Impact to Secondary Schools.



In summary, the new Riverside South SS boundary is anticipated to affect six secondary schools. The attendance boundary proposes to:

- Eliminate the option area for Merivale HS and South Carleton HS;
- Redirect secondary students located in the Findlay Creek area that attend Ridgemont HS to the new Riverside South SS;
- Modify and expand the Osgoode Township HS and South Carleton HS option area;
- Eliminate a small portion of the option area associated with Osgoode Township HS and Gloucester HS; and
- Redirect a small portion of secondary students from Brookfield HS.

13. Staff has created the following chart that outlines impact of the new Riverside South SS on elementary schools:

School	Summary	Impact Upon Opening (students gained/lost)	Impact Upon Opening (utilization factor %)
Steve MacLean Public School	- Redirecting grades 7 and 8 to the new Riverside South Secondary School - Redirecting a portion of Farley Mowat Public School's boundary to Steve MacLean Public School	+262	122.2%
Vimy Ridge Public School	- Redirecting grades 7 and 8 to the new Riverside South Secondary School	-197	166.8%
Kars on the Rideau Public School	- Redirecting of a portion of grades 7 and 8 to new Riverside South Secondary School	-38	81.1%
Farley Mowat Public School	- Redirecting of a portion of grades JK to 6 from Farley Mowat Public School to Steve MacLean Public School	-383	63.5%

**Table 2.** General Impact to Elementary Schools.

In summary, the new Riverside South SS boundary is anticipated to affect four elementary schools. The boundary proposes to:

- Direct grade 7 and 8 students from Steve MacLean PS, Vimy Ridge PS, and Kars on the Rideau PS to the new Riverside South SS, resulting in changes to each school's boundary and;
- Modify Farley Mowat PS's current attendance boundary.

The impacts described above are not expected to result in unsustainable enrolment numbers for any of the schools. Detailed projections for each of the affected schools are available in Appendix N.

## **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

14. The cost of conducting the study has been managed within existing departmental budgets.

## **STRATEGIC LINKS:**

15. The opening of a secondary school within the developing Riverside South area will provide the District with the ability to serve the local community. The addition of a school within its own caring community is consistent with the objectives of the Strategic Plan by improving equity of access to a choice of high quality programs in an environment which fosters innovation and creativity. The provision of additional new school facilities within a growth area of the District provides opportunity for each of the Strategic Plan's three key priority areas to be addressed; creating a culture of learning, well-being and social responsibility.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- A. THAT the new Riverside South SS open in September the year it is completed for occupancy as a grade 7 to 12 secondary school, initially offering grades 7 to 10, to grow a grade per year thereafter until offering a full grade complement;
- B. THAT the boundary of this secondary school (as shown in Appendix B) be drawn from the current 7 to 12 boundaries of Merivale HS, South Carleton HS, Osgoode Township HS, Ridgemont HS, Brookfield HS, and Gloucester HS in accordance with Appendices F, G, H, I, J, L.
- C. THAT any grade 11 and 12 students (upon opening of the new Riverside South SS) attending Merivale HS, South Carleton HS, Osgoode Township HS, Ridgemont HS, Brookfield HS, and Gloucester HS, shall remain at their current high school with transportation provided if they are eligible under Student Transportation Policy P.127 TRA and Procedure PR.556 TRA;
- D. THAT the boundary for Farley Mowat PS be amended (as reflected in Appendix C) to bring that portion of its current boundary east of the Rideau River into the Steve MacLean PS catchment; all students grade K to 5 will be expected to block move to Steve MacLean PS upon opening of the new Riverside South SS. Students entering grade 6 upon opening of the new Riverside South SS may remain at Farley Mowat PS with all transportation provided if they are eligible under Student Transportation Policy P.127 TRA and Procedure PR.556 TRA;
- E. THAT the grade structure for Steve MacLean PS be amended to a K-6 grade format and the boundary be amended as reflected in Appendix D;

- F. THAT the grade structure for Vimy Ridge PS be amended to a K-6 grade format and the boundary be amended as reflected in Appendix E;
- G. THAT the boundary for South Carleton HS be amended as reflected in Appendix F;
- H. THAT the boundary for Osgoode Township HS be amended as reflected in Appendix G;
- I. THAT the boundary for Merivale HS be amended as reflected in Appendix H;
- J. THAT the boundary for Ridgemont HS be amended as reflected in Appendix I;
- K. THAT the boundary for Brookfield HS be amended as reflected in Appendix J;
- L. THAT the Grade 7 to 8 English Program with Core French and Early French Immersion Attendance boundary for Kars on the Rideau PS be amended as reflected in Appendix K;
- M. THAT the boundary for Gloucester HS be amended as reflected in Appendix L;
- N. THAT students in the area bounded by Rideau Road to the north, Limebank Road to the east, Mitch Owens to the south, and the Rideau River to the west that are impacted by the opening of the new Riverside South SS,
  - i. Students residing in this area upon opening of the new Riverside South Secondary School, be given a one-time option to remain at / choose to attend Merivale HS, Osgoode Township HS, or South Carleton HS and be provided transportation if they are eligible under Student Transportation Policy P.127 TRA and Procedure PR.556 TRA;
  - ii. Students not residing in this area upon opening of the new Riverside South SS, be directed to attend Osgoode Township HS, or South Carleton HS and be provided transportation if they are eligible under Student Transportation Policy P.127 TRA and Procedure PR.556 TRA; and
- O. THAT any student on a cross boundary transfer at a school whose program cohort is being relocated to another school as a result of approved recommendations in Report 23-048 be allowed to move with their program cohort without having to reapply for a transfer.

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Director of Education and  
Secretary of the Board



**APPENDICES:**

<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Title</b>
Appendix A	General Location Map
Appendix B	Recommended Boundary for Riverside South Secondary School
Appendix C	Recommended Boundary for Farley Mowat Public School
Appendix D	Recommended Boundary for Steve MacLean Public School
Appendix E	Recommended Boundary for Vimy Ridge Public School
Appendix F	Recommended Boundary for South Carleton High School
Appendix G	Recommended Boundary for Osgoode Township High School
Appendix H	Recommended Boundary for Merivale High School
Appendix I	Recommended Boundary for Ridgemont High School
Appendix J	Recommended Boundary for Brookfield High School
Appendix K	Recommended Boundary for Kars on the Rideau Public School
Appendix L	Recommended Boundary for Gloucester High School
Appendix M	Riverside South Secondary School Five-Year Projections
Appendix N	Five-Year History and Projections for Impacted Schools