



BOARD

28 April 2020

Report No. 20-039

New Stittsville Secondary School Attendance Boundary Consultation Plan

Key Contact: Michael Carson, Chief Financial Officer, 613-596-8211 ext. 8881

PURPOSE:

1. To seek approval to amend the previously-approved consultation plan contained in Report 19-078, New Stittsville Secondary School Study – Approval of Timeline and Consultation Plan, presented to Committee of the Whole (COW) on 17 September 2019. The consultation plan supported the process to determine an attendance boundary, opening grade structure and program offering for the new Stittsville secondary school. Staff are also seeking approval to continue with public consultation, employing an alternate format(s) of delivery.

CONTEXT:

2. On 22 October 2019, the Board approved the timeline and consultation plan for the new Stittsville secondary school study to determine the attendance boundary, program offering and opening grade structure for the new secondary school.

Capital funding for this 1353 pupil place secondary school was approved by the Ministry of Education in March 2018, with a scheduled opening date of September 2022.

In accordance with the approved timeline, a working group was formed, comprised of school council representatives and principals from potentially impacted schools, local community association members, and District staff. Trustees who represent potentially impacted school communities were also invited to attend the meetings. Over the course of three working group meetings held in recent months, material regarding possible options for a secondary school boundary and related program offerings, opening grade structure and possible elementary school redirection options were considered.

In Report 19-078, the approved timeline indicated that four (4) working group meetings, followed by a public consultation meeting, would be held as part of the consultation phase of the study.

At the last working group meeting held on 9 March 2020, it was the consensus of the group that a fourth meeting was not warranted and that the process could move forward to the next phase; the public consultation meeting.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

3. Given the current situation as a result of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the ability to proceed to a public consultation meeting employing the usual methods of a large group format is not possible. In order to carry on with this process, an alternate means of consultation needs to be considered due the physical distancing limitations/restrictions imposed by all levels of government.

Staff would like to suggest the following alternate public consultation method and notification possibilities:

4. OCDSB Website Online Video Post:
This method could include the posting of a PowerPoint presentation video on the OCDSB website which would present highlights of an initial staff recommendation report. The report would outline the boundary options being put forth for consideration, including all background material considered throughout the working group process.

Notice of this video could be disseminated through various means including schools sending emails to parent/guardian(s), school council emails to families, notice on the OCDSB website and local community newspaper(s).

This method of consultation would provide the public with the opportunity to view the video over a specified time frame, which would include a period for input by email. This process could take place over a timeframe of approximately one month.

As part of the month-long extended consultation process, staff would respond to individual questions and prepare a frequently asked questions (FAQs) area on the web page with responses to common questions received. This information would be available for the public to review online. As is our usual practice, a hard copy record (original version) of all input is compiled in a binder and placed in the Trustees' Lounge. In place of this process, a link to a cache of comments will be developed for trustee review.

This alternate consultation method allows for a presentation which can be observed on more than one occasion as compared to the standard single date public meeting event. While this is not the usual format, staff believe this provides a robust opportunity for public access and feedback.

At the conclusion of the process, staff will consider all input received and will amend and finalize a recommendation to the Board on the boundary, opening grade structure and program offerings for the new Stittsville secondary school.

5. Objectives for Process Completion under Alternate Public Meeting Method:
The request for the delivery of an alternate public consultation meeting format and subsequent Board meeting will allow the process that is currently underway, for the new Stittsville secondary school study, to be completed in a timely fashion and generally in accordance with the approved timeline.

The efforts of the working group to date include:

- careful contemplation of the options by its members;
- maintaining the continuity of study material and members;
- working group discussions; and
- local input/considerations for the impacted school communities for the possible boundary options and other related changes.

It would not be ideal if the consultation extended into the fall of 2020 as a new working group would likely have to be formed. The current working group might not remain intact resulting in a loss of valued input to this important decision-making process. A new process would once again require several months to undertake and complete, with a finish date likely a year from now.

Additionally, should the public consultation meeting be completed within this school year, final consideration by the Board could be reserved to September 2020, if time does not permit in June 2020, due to limits within this school year.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

6. The cost of conducting the proposed study will be managed within existing departmental budgets.

COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:

7. The recommended timeline and consultation plan, as modified, are attached as Appendix B and C.

As noted under the key considerations section of this report, alternate methods for conducting the public consultation meeting portion of the study and possibly the recommendation/decision meeting need to be considered.

Providing an online video public consultation meeting, that includes a PowerPoint presentation, along with options considered and supporting material over an extended period of time, and with updates that included frequently asked questions (FAQs), will allow for a fulsome public consultation.

8. This approach would include the following:
- Notice to the public of the video consultation which would include phone messaging from study school principals, school and school council email notice, OCDSB website notice and local community newspaper(s);
 - PowerPoint presentation of information package or recommendation report;
 - Study Reports and working group packages posted for reference;
 - Online email address to receive public input;
 - Updates of FAQs and answers provided on an ongoing basis; and

- Consultation duration of approximately 30 calendar days.

As part of the process, notice of the final report, decision-making process and method would be posted on the OCDSB website.

STRATEGIC LINKS:

9. The opening of a secondary school within the Stittsville and Fernbank area will provide the District with the ability to serve students within their local area.

The addition of a school within its own community reinforces the objectives of the 2019-2023 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 a new school facility with an established and growth area of the District, provides opportunity for the Strategic Plan's key priority areas to be addressed: creating a culture of innovation, caring and social responsibility.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the amendment to the timeline, attached as Appendix B to Report 20-039 and the consultation plan, attached as C to Report 20-039, for the new Stittsville secondary school study for establishing the attendance boundary, program offering, opening grade structure and associated changes, be approved.

Michael Carson
Chief Financial Officer

Camille Williams-Taylor
Director of Education and
Secretary of the Board

APPENDICES

Appendix A-Location Map
Appendix B-Amended Timeline
Appendix C-Amended Consultation Plan