



Public Schools Branch Review of Schools Report October 19, 2022

Schools included in this review: Birchwood Intermediate, Queen Charlotte Intermediate, Stonepark Intermediate, East Wiltshire Intermediate and Bloomfield Elementary

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INTRODUCTION

On June 29, 2022 the Director of the Public Schools Branch (PSB) advised the Board of Directors that a report would be provided in the coming weeks to highlight any changes and concerns with the following five schools: Birchwood Intermediate, Queen Charlotte Intermediate, Stonepark Intermediate, East Wiltshire Intermediate and Bloomfield Elementary.

The Public Schools Branch is committed to ensuring that its students have access to quality education programs and services and that its learning environments are healthy, safe and effective places for students and staff. This commitment requires the PSB to continually ensure that it is maximizing the use of all available resources.

The Review of Schools Report is a document that provides an overview of identified schools and serves as a valuable tool that highlights challenges, informs decisions and guides planning.

Over the past number of years, student enrollment in several schools has continued to increase causing pressure on the school's functional capacity impacting the facility, available space for teaching and learning, program offerings, delivery of key services, etc. The schools identified for this review are:

- Birchwood Intermediate School
- Queen Charlotte Intermediate School
- Stonepark Intermediate School
- East Wiltshire Intermediate School
- Bloomfield Elementary School

As part of the review of schools, I met individually with the school administration to talk about their current enrollment and any challenges they are facing. We considered physical issues, program issues, capacity issues, financial issues and demographic issues.

AUTHORITY

In accordance with the *Education Act*, the PSB is responsible for delivering approved educational programs and services, ensuring its schools are safe and ensuring the effective management of the PSB's resources. In addition, the PSB School Review Policy, establishes that the Director of the PSB

(Director) shall conduct a review of schools on a regular basis to consider any issues (i.e. physical, programming, capacity, financial, demographic, etc.) and make recommendations for the Board of Directors (Board) consideration.

The Director may recommend to the Board that:

- A. The status quo at the school(s) be maintained,
- B. The status quo be maintained, but that the situation at the school(s) be monitored;
- C. A more in-depth study of the schools(s) be done, and options for change be explored.

If a resolution to consider a change to a school(s) is passed by the Board, the Director will conduct a study and prepare a Study Report which will involve consultation with affected parties.

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

The Public Schools Branch analyzes enrollment data trends in relation to each school's functional capacity. The term functional capacity is difficult to define, especially in our current teaching learning environment. Basically, the model of comparing available classrooms with student enrollment is a model that needs to be revisited.

A school's functional capacity number is determined by counting the number of classrooms and multiplying by the average number of students for that space, taking into consideration the square footage of the space. This number does not take into account the additional space that schools now require to support individual or small group learning and provide a variety of programs and services to support students.

Currently, spaces such as computer labs, staging areas, cafeterias, libraries, etc., are being used as classrooms. These are not ideal learning spaces and it is also impacting the utilization of these spaces for their intended purpose. Therefore, the term functional capacity needs to be considered against the teaching and learning environments of today's system. For example, there is a need for literacy and numeracy rooms, areas for resource groups, outside agencies, students with exceptional/high needs, etc.

Research on functional capacity indicates that:

90% utilization is considered to be the functional capacity target at the elementary level

85% utilization is considered to be the functional capacity target at the intermediate level

75% utilization is considered to be the functional capacity target at the high school level

RECOMMENDATIONS

Queen Charlotte Intermediate School - This intermediate school is fed predominantly from West Kent Elementary, Spring Park Elementary, St. Jean Elementary and West Royalty Elementary. The functional capacity of the school is listed at 620 students. For the 2021-2022 school year the official enrollment was 647. 2017- 2020 data from Baragar indicated that the school would exceed functional capacity for several years starting in 2019. However, the enrollment data from 2021 suggests that Queen Charlotte's enrollment will decline and stay below the functional capacity threshold. As it stands, Queen Charlotte Intermediate can operate for the 2022-2023 school year without additions or renovations. It is important to note that new/updated data from Baragar is expected January/February 2023.

As of the September 15, 2022 enrollment collection there are 635 students attending Queen Charlotte Intermediate. Areas like the cafeteria and library have been utilized as temporary learning spaces and no other common areas exist to do something similar. This school has very few options internally to create more space. The enrollment will need to be monitored closely on a month-by-month basis as we move forward. ***It is my recommendation that a more in-depth study of Queen Charlotte Intermediate be done, and options for change be explored.***

Birchwood Intermediate School - This intermediate school is fed predominantly from Glen Stewart Primary and Stratford Elementary and to a lesser extent Prince Street Elementary and West Kent Elementary. The functional capacity of the school is listed at 594 students. For the 2021-2022 school year the official enrollment was 535. The areas that supply Birchwood Intermediate continue to develop and provincial projections for population growth in this area if materialized will place added strain on the school's ability to absorb additional students. However, Baragar projections currently indicate that the school enrollment will sit below the functional capacity threshold for the next number of years. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the utilization rate exceeds 90% for Birchwood Intermediate.

The school can operate for the 2022-2023 school year without additions or renovations. As of the September 15, 2022 enrollment collection there are 547 students attending Birchwood Intermediate. ***It is my recommendation that a more in-depth study of Birchwood Intermediate be done, and options for change be explored.***

Stonepark Intermediate School - This intermediate school is fed predominantly from Sherwood Elementary, LM Montgomery Elementary, Donagh Regional, and by segments of Parkdale Elementary, St. Jean Elementary and Prince Street Elementary. The functional capacity of the school is listed at 810 students. For the 2021-2022 school year the official enrollment was 770. Baragar data suggests that Stonepark Intermediate will not exceed functional capacity in any year from 2022-2036. Stonepark Intermediate can operate for the 2022-2023 school year without additions or

renovations. As of the September 15, 2022 enrollment collection there are 784 students attending Stonepark Intermediate. The three Intermediate schools in the Charlottetown area should be looked at together because of the interconnectedness and therefore, ***it is my recommendation that further study on the issues surrounding enrollment and functional capacity is required at Stonepark Intermediate because of the interconnectedness of the Charlottetown area Intermediate schools.***

East Wiltshire Intermediate School - This intermediate school is fed predominantly from Eliot River Elementary, Central Queens Elementary and Englewood Consolidated. The functional capacity of the school is listed at 648 students. For the 2021-2022 school year the official enrollment was 660. Baragar projections have been accurate to date as the school's enrollment has exceeded the functional capacity by a few students. This trend is expected to continue for the 2022-2023 school year, but then fall below the functional capacity threshold for the years following. As of the September 16, 2022 enrollment collection there are 634 students attending East Wiltshire Intermediate. The school can operate next year without additions or renovations. However, some options suggested by the administration to utilize space may need to be explored if the numbers continue to rise. ***It is my recommendation that a more in-depth study of East Wiltshire Intermediate be done, and options for change be explored.***

Bloomfield Elementary - This elementary school is fed predominantly from the community of Bloomfield in West Prince and French Immersion students in O'Leary Elementary and Ellerslie Elementary zones. The functional capacity of the school is listed at 287 students. For the 2021-2022 school year the official enrollment was 258. While the enrollment and the functional capacity numbers suggest adequate room, the issue with space at this school centers around the Early French Immersion catchment area. The challenge becomes having enough classrooms for both English and French Immersion students as both streams require separate classrooms. For instance, for the 2022-2023 school year there are 37 in Kindergarten (32 in French and 5 in English). This will result in three classrooms as opposed to two. This trend can be found throughout the grades at Bloomfield Elementary. Most recent Baragar data suggests very stable enrollment at Bloomfield Elementary over the next decade. Currently, the school can operate without additions or renovations. However, some work may need to take place to utilize space as this uneven distribution will most likely continue. As of the September 16, 2022 enrollment collection there are 252 students attending Bloomfield Elementary. This number is comprised of 168 French Immersion students and 84 in the English program. ***It is my recommendation that a more in-depth study of Bloomfield Elementary be done, and options for change be explored.***

Other Schools Affected - Due to the interconnectedness of some schools it is possible that a further review may include working with enrollment data and suggesting possible solutions impacting other schools in the Charlottetown Family, Bluefield Family, and Westisle Family of schools.

Cross Reference

Enrollment Projections and Capacity at Greater Charlottetown Intermediate Schools and Western PEI Schools of Concern - March 2022

Board Governance Policy (GP 14) - School Review, June 26, 2019

Education Act