



**SEAC
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (PUBLIC)
Report No. 17-092**

**13 December 2017
16 January 2018**

Gifted Geographic Model Transition

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PURPOSE:

1. To discuss the transition of gifted specialized program classes to the geographic model.

CONTEXT:

2. In September 2016, staff presented the findings of the Gifted Program Review. *Report No. 16-113 Gifted Review* presented the findings of the literature review, jurisdictional scan, quantitative and qualitative research including focus group discussions with students, staff, and parents. In October 2016, Report No. 16-120 Gifted Report Recommendations outlined recommendations for changes to the program delivery model arising from the Gifted Program Review and a plan for consultation with the community on the proposed changes.

The Board directed staff to create a Gifted Advisory Group to further explore options for changes to the gifted program.

At the Board meeting of 20 December 2016, the Board approved the following motions:

- A. *THAT staff work with SEAC and an Advisory Group that would include SEAC representation to expand options to be presented to the public to improve the effectiveness of services for Gifted students and to increase equity of access for under-represented groups;*
- B. *THAT the Congregated Gifted program transition to a specialized class location model using geographically defined catchment areas (Geographic Model);*

- C. *THAT staff bring forward an interim report on the development of options by the end of May 2017 and a final report including a plan for the Geographic Model transition, including costing, no later than the end of December 2017;*
- D. *THAT staff bring forward a report with a plan, including costing, of implementing a universal screening tool, once the Ministry of Education has released a new Gifted definition, or no later than end of October 2017;*
- E. *THAT staff bring forward a plan, including costing for professional development/coaching support for school based staff working in the regular class with elementary Gifted students, no later than March 2017.*

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

3. Geographic Model

Since 2013-2014, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) has been implementing a new specialized program class model based on geographically defined catchment areas and designated home schools, called the geographic model. The intent of the geographic model is to stabilize the service delivery model for students with special education needs and to optimize the school experience of these students by promoting attendance at schools with proximity to a student's community.

For the purpose of distributing specialized classes geographically, the District has five geographic zones (Far West, West, South, East and Far East). For example, current specialized program classes vary from one to five zone configurations (e.g., Deaf and Hard of Hearing [DHH] one zone, Dual Support Program [DSP] elementary, three zones, Autism Spectrum Disorders [ASD] elementary, five zones).

The number of zones used varies by specialized program class type and is influenced by a range of complex factors including:

- the number of classes required to meet District needs;
- enrolment trends and projections;
- legislative requirements (i.e., staffing ratios by exceptionality);
- school configurations;
- school space availability; and
- current/future student transition considerations.

To implement the geographic model by exceptionality, a range of factors must be considered determining the appropriate number of program classes, and how and where these can be situated to ensure access, stability, and sustainability.

4. Student Learning and Accommodation Planning

Last year, the OCDSB began a multi-year plan to undertake pupil accommodation reviews for a large portion of the District. This plan for student learning and accommodation planning was outlined in Report No. 16-090

Student Learning and Student Accommodation Planning Multi-Year Plan and approved by the Board in June 2016.

A number of specialized program class relocations were made as part of the first two area reviews (the Western and the Eastern Secondary). Factors which underpinned decision-making regarding the class relocations included the geographic model concept, minimizing student transitions, school grade programming and configurations, the availability of instructional space, and the number and type of specialized classes currently in place at existing sites.

This experience will be critical in informing future decisions on accommodation reviews. However, the Ministry has imposed a moratorium on the commencement of any new pupil accommodation reviews, which has an impact on the implementation of the geographic model. For example, the planned Alta Vista-Hunt Club Review area currently accommodates approximately 30 specialized program classes serving most exceptionalities. The District faces a challenging question about the order of future decisions – proceeding with the implementation of the geographic model or waiting until the accommodation review process is complete. Given that we cannot suspend operational decisions indefinitely, it is best to proceed and make adjustments as required as a result of future decision making processes.

5. Strategic Realignment of Operational Specialized Program Class Resources

In considering implementation of the geographic model, a long-term vision and an annual mechanism to monitor student need and enrolment by exceptionality must be established.

The need and capacity for all specialized program classes are analyzed annually to consider fluctuations in student demographics and changes in the student population. Learning Support Services (LSS) endeavors to provide the most accurate projections regarding student need to align with staffing timelines. Over the past three years this annual review has recommended resource realignment that has included opening additional classes (e.g., ASD), consolidating classes (e.g., Primary Special Needs [PSN], elementary gifted), and shifting a number of classes across geographic zones (e.g., primary semi-integrated Developmental Disabilities [DD]). This operational practice ensures that the District is responsive to changing student needs balanced with responsible stewardship of resources.

6. Definition of Giftedness

The Ministry of Education (MOE) currently defines giftedness as “an usually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of educational potential indicated”. The MOE is in the midst of reviewing existing definitions for various exceptionalities. The release of the gifted definition had been anticipated for 2016-2017. Specific timelines for a MOE release providing a revised definition of giftedness are unknown at this time. The release of a new definition of giftedness may affect elementary and secondary specialized program classes

differently. When accessing specialized programming, secondary gifted students enroll in individual gifted courses, unlike elementary students, who access a specialized program class.

7. Gifted Screening

The District is currently considering options for the adoption of a gifted screening tool. This decision has the potential to affect the number of students who may be formally identified and/or consider specialized program class options.

8. Gifted Advisory Group

The Gifted Advisory Group was formed to work with LSS to explore options for gifted programming. In June 2017, an interim report was brought forward which indicated that the Advisory Group was focusing on one option (at this time) - the possibility of piloting a Renzulli-like approach to gifted programming at the elementary level.

The interim report of the work of the Gifted Advisory Group included the following proposed steps for programming for gifted students:

- a) continue with the current model of specialized classes for gifted students;
- b) initiate a pilot model at a small number of school locations using some of Renzulli's principles for gifted programming;
- c) after a minimum of two years of implementation and evaluation, and if success is seen, consult with stakeholder for potential roll out of a revised model for gifted programming in the 2020-2021 school year; and
- d) continue to build staff capacity for IEP implementation and gifted programming in the regular classroom through workshops, professional development and the gifted Google forum.

The advisory group is in the process of defining a vision for the pilot program so that staff can assess the operational impacts/needs of the pilot. Staff was directed to bring forward a final report on their work with the Gifted Advisory Group in December 2017, however, that report will not be ready until early in the new year.

Should the Board approve this pilot project, it may have implications for the future of gifted programming, but it is still early to predict what that impact may be.

9. Transitioning Gifted Specialized Program Classes to the Geographic Model

Elementary

Currently, the District operates with 23 gifted elementary specialized program classes located in 14 school sites across the 5 geographic zones. The specialized program class is highly valued by students and families enrolled in it. The gifted exceptionality has a number of factors which add to the complexity of moving to a geographic model, including that it is offered in two program streams (English and Early French Immersion), and is the only specialized program class that is offered by grade. In addition, the number of classes offered in the western area of the District is higher than in other areas, and enrolment has been

declining in the specialized program class in recent years. (See attached Appendix A)

In order to establish long term program stability for gifted specialized program sites, program enrolment, school configurations, and student transition pathways will need to be considered. Current enrolment in elementary gifted specialized program classes would support classes in 3 geographic zones for each of the two program streams (English and French Immersion).

Given the continued work of the Gifted Advisory Group, the pending MOE release of a revised gifted definition, the impact of a potential District gifted screening process, and the pending decision regarding a possible pilot project, staff is not recommending elementary gifted specialized program class relocations in order to transition to the geographic model at this time.

Transitioning elementary gifted specialized program classes to the geographic model would require class relocations and, as such, impacts the current student cohort. Current unknown variables have the potential risk of causing multiple transitions in order to arrive at long term stability for elementary gifted specialized program class locations and are therefore not recommended at this time.

In the interim, the annual review of specialized program classes will be able to accommodate any changes required as a result of yearly growth or decline in gifted specialized program class enrolment. As part of this annual review process, LSS and Planning staff will continue to assess options for the Far West gifted specialized program classes currently located at John Young Elementary School in Kanata South as outlined in memo *17-104 John Young Elementary School Accommodation Pressure*.

Secondary Gifted

Currently, the OCDSB offers secondary gifted specialized program classes at the following schools: Bell High School, Glebe Collegiate Institute, Lisgar Collegiate Institute, and Merivale High School. All four of these sites are located within the West zone in the geographic model. Two of the high schools offer specialized program classes in both English and French Immersion (Bell H.S and Merivale H.S.), one school offers English gifted specialized program classes (Lisgar C.I.), and one school offers French Immersion gifted specialized program classes (Glebe C.I.).

Designated secondary gifted specialized program classes are determined based on a student's secondary school (home school). Each secondary school has a designated gifted specialized program class site for both English and French Immersion. Some of our secondary schools have options for choice between two and three designated gifted specialized program class sites for both English and French Immersion. (See attached Appendix B)

As a result of the Secondary School Review, policy changes were made to ensure that all secondary schools offer French as a Second Language programming in Core French and French Immersion. To align with this policy

direction, where gifted programming is offered in secondary schools, it should be offered in both English and French.

A review of enrolment by grade indicates a trend of overall decline in students accessing the secondary gifted program with the most significant decline at Merivale High School and Glebe Collegiate Institute. A summary of current enrolment is included in Appendix C. At the secondary level, a critical mass of students is required to provide ideal course options and varied programming within the specialized program class format. Enrolment trends and future projections will be critical considerations in terms of the implementation of the geographic model.

In September 2019, the District expects to open a second International Baccalaureate (IB) program at Merivale High School. Although IB is not a gifted program, it has historically attracted a significant number of students that are identified as gifted. Potential future impact of the introduction of an additional IB site on enrolment in secondary gifted specialized classes will be monitored.

Staff believes that secondary gifted programs could migrate to the geographic model without waiting for a new Ministry definition for giftedness. However, the implementation would have to consider a number of changes including:

- offering the program in English and French at all sites;
- ensuring distribution of the sites to provide greater geographic accessibility;
- aligning the number of sites with enrolment patterns and projections; and
- ensuring a critical mass of students to provide robust programming.

The implementation of the geographic model would likely require the relocation and/or consolidation of some of the current program sites. This is a sensitive issue as the community holds the current sites in high regard. However, the purpose of the geographic model is not to maintain historical practices, but to ensure that all programs are offered in a stable and sustainable manner that ensures equity of access for all students. Currently the program is offered at four sites in one zone. A move to the geographic model would require offering the program across more zones; current enrolment would support delivery at two sites.

Considerations regarding changes to specific site location should reflect the following factors:

- site capacity to accommodate current enrolment for both English and French Immersion gifted students (i.e., two sites);
- balanced geographic distribution (i.e., East, West);
- public transportation service; and
- general accessibility of the site location.

The implementation of the geographic model could provide stable designated specialized program class sites with more equitable access for all students in the District. The current practice that has allowed some choice for secondary gifted

specialized program class placement would be eliminated, bringing gifted specialized program classes in alignment with all other exceptionalities in the geographic model. The implementation of the geographic model may result in an increase in enrolment if sites across two geographic zones make it more accessible for students.

Enrolment in secondary gifted specialized program classes will be reviewed annually as previously described. At such time as enrolment presented a critical mass of students to provide ideal course offering, a third site could be considered for another zone of the District (e.g., South).

10. Program Equity

The review of the secondary gifted specialized program class identified inconsistent practices across sites in terms of course program standards. In order to ensure equity of program experience for all gifted learners, consideration should be given to the introduction of program standards in order to provide consistency in a secondary gifted specialized program class course package. For example: 4 gifted credits in each of grade 9 and 10; 1 gifted credit in each of grade 11 and 12.

Placement into secondary gifted specialized program classes would continue to be administrated by the designated site in keeping with other District secondary program options (e.g., IB, Adaptive). LSS would continue to be available to support the process with the provision of central staff (e.g., Learning Support Consultants, Psychology staff).

11. Next Steps

The implementation of the geographic model is an important step toward bringing stability to gifted programming. However, it may be premature to move forward with the geographic model for elementary gifted programming at this time. The Gifted Advisory Group has yet to deliver a final report, which is expected in the new year and which will bring clarity to the proposed pilot project, using the Renzulli model, which was outlined in the discussion report presented last spring. The details of that pilot project and its implementation timeline and assessment models could impact future thinking related to gifted programming. The anticipated new Ministry definition of giftedness may also have an impact on program offerings. Similarly, the Board has had an opportunity to discuss the concept of a universal screening tool, but no decision has yet been made. With so many decisions of impact pending, it is recommended that we continue with the current gifted program offerings, and not proceed with the implementation of the geographic model.

At the secondary level, there are fewer issues which impact the implementation of the geographic model. However, careful consideration needs to be given to an implementation plan for the geographic model. Implementation would not begin until September 2019 and the community would be best served if any changes to program locations were phased in/phased out by cohort. To achieve this, more detailed information about the implementation plan for the geographic model would need to be shared by the spring of 2018 to allow time for proper planning.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

12. From a staffing perspective, elementary gifted specialized program classes are staffed at a very similar ratio to a regular program class. Essentially this means there is no additional staffing cost attributed to student/teacher ratio. At secondary, gifted specialized program classes are staffed through section allocation to individual schools based on enrolment. There are no additional costs to staffing secondary gifted classes based on student/teacher ratio.

As with our other specialized program offerings, transportation is a significant cost of the current gifted specialized program class model. An analysis completed by Ontario Student Transportation Authority (OSTA) as part of the Secondary School Review found that transportation costs to the four secondary gifted sites from September 2015 to June 2016 was \$674,293 plus HST. These costs were over and above estimated transportation costs if these students were attending their community schools.

Consultation with OSTA and the Planning department indicates that gifted specialized program class transportation costs would not be significantly affected by potential class relocations associated with a shift to the geographic model for either the elementary or secondary panel unless the number of students in specialized gifted classes increases. The principle determinates of transportation costs are the total number of students accessing transportation and the method of transportation (e.g., small vehicles, yellow school bus, OC Transpo Presto Pass).

COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:

13. The implementation of the geographic model for secondary gifted specialized program classes is an issue of great interest to the gifted community. There will be a need for consultation with the community on this topic. Decisions with respect to program sites will be made based on distribution across geographic zones and space availability, as well as community input.

STRATEGIC LINKS:

14. The considerations to transition secondary gifted specialized program classes to the geographic model align with the 2015-2019 Strategic Plan, particularly in the areas of Equity, Learning and Well-Being. In addition, the proposed considerations reflect a commitment to the OCDSB Exit Outcomes.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

15. The following questions are provided to support the discussion of this item by the Committee:
 - Are the potential revisions to the Ministry definition of giftedness and the possibilities of a pilot project of the Renzuli-like approach and/or

- implementation of a universal screening tool reasons to defer implementation of the geographic model at the elementary level at this time?
- Are there other implementation issues for movement of the secondary gifted specialized program classes to the geographic model?
 - Does 2019 allow sufficient time for implementation of the geographic model at the secondary level?

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Jennifer Adams
Director of Education and
Secretary of the Board

Appendices

Appendix A – Elementary Specialized Gifted Programs Classes 2017-2018

Appendix B – Current Secondary Gifted Centres and Feeder Areas

Appendix C – Secondary Gifted Specialized Program Classes: Enrolment October 31,
2017

**Elementary Specialized Gifted Programs Classes
2017-2018**

School	Grade Level	Geographic Zone	Number of Classes	Program
Hawthorne	Intermediate	East	1	ENG
Vincent Massey	Junior/Intermediate	East	2	EFI
Henry Larsen	Intermediate	Far East	1	EFI
Goulbourn	Intermediate	Far West	1	ENG
John Young	Primary/Junior	Far West	3	ENG
Cedarview	Intermediate	South	1	ENG
Jockvale	Junior	South	1	ENG
Bell Intermediate	Intermediate	West	1	EFI
Broadview	Junior/Intermediate	West	3	EFI
Broadview	Junior/Intermediate	West	1	ENG
First Avenue	Junior	West	3	ENG
Fisher Park/Sum	Intermediate	West	1	EFI
Glashan	Intermediate	West	2	ENG
Hilson Ave	Junior	West	1	EFI
Knoxdale	Junior	West	1	EFI

CURRENT Secondary Gifted Centres and Feeder Areas

Appendix B to report
17-092 Gifted Geographic Model Transition

Designated Secondary School	Gifted English Centre	Gifted Immersion Centre
A.Y. Jackson S.S.	Bell H.S.	Bell H.S.
Bell H.S.	Bell H.S.	Bell H.S.
Brookfield H.S.	Merivale H.S.	Merivale H.S.
Cairine Wilson S.S.	Lisgar C.I./Merivale H.S.	Glebe C.I./Merivale H.S.
Canterbury H.S.	Lisgar C.I./Merivale H.S.	Glebe C.I./Merivale H.S.
Colonel By S.S.	Lisgar C.I.	Glebe C.I.
Earl of March S.S.	Bell H.S.	Bell H.S.
Glebe C.I.	Lisgar C.I.	Glebe C.I.
Gloucester H.S.	Lisgar C.I./Merivale H.S.	Glebe C.I./Merivale H.S.
Hillcrest H.S.	Lisgar C.I./Merivale H.S.	Glebe C.I./Merivale H.S.
John McCrae S.S.	Bell H.S./Merivale H.S.	Bell H.S./Merivale H.S.
Lisgar C.I.	Lisgar C.I.	Glebe C.I.
Longfields-Davidson Heights S.S.	Merivale H.S.	Merivale H.S.
Merivale H.S.	Merivale H.S.	Merivale H.S.
Nepean H.S.	Lisgar C.I./Merivale H.S.	Glebe C.I./Merivale H.S.
Osgoode T.H.S.	Lisgar C.I./Merivale H.S.	Glebe C.I./Merivale H.S.
Ridgemont H.S.	Lisgar C.I./Merivale H.S.	Glebe C.I./Merivale H.S.
Sir Robert Borden H.S.	Bell H.S./Merivale H.S.	Bell H.S./Merivale H.S.
Sir Wilfrid Laurier S.S.	Lisgar C.I.	Glebe C.I.
South Carleton H.S.	Bell H.S.	Bell H.S.
West Carleton S.S.	Bell H.S.	Bell H.S.
Woodroffe H.S.	Lisgar C.I./Merivale H.S.	Glebe C.I./Merivale H.S.

Optional Areas

Canterbury H.S./Hillcrest H.S.	Lisgar C.I./Merivale H.S.	Glebe C.I./Merivale H.S.
Glebe C.I./Hillcrest H.S.	Lisgar C.I./Merivale H.S.	Glebe C.I./Merivale H.S.
Glebe C.I./Lisgar C.I./Nepean H.S.	Lisgar C.I./Merivale H.S.	Glebe C.I./Merivale H.S.
Glebe C.I./Nepean H.S.	Lisgar C.I./Merivale H.S.	Glebe C.I./Merivale H.S.
Gloucester H.S./Osgoode T.H.S.	Lisgar C.I./Merivale H.S.	Glebe C.I./Merivale H.S.
John McCrae S.S./LDH S.S.	Bell H.S./Merivale H.S.	Bell H.S./Merivale H.S.
John McCrae S.S./South Carleton H.S.	Bell H.S./Merivale H.S.	Bell H.S./Merivale H.S.
Lisgar C.I./Nepean C.I.	Lisgar C.I./Merivale H.S.	Glebe C.I./Merivale H.S.
Merivale H.S./South Carleton H.S.	Merivale H.S.	Merivale H.S.
Nepean H.S./Woodroffe H.S.	Lisgar C.I./Merivale H.S.	Glebe C.I./Merivale H.S.
Osgoode T.H.S./South Carleton H.S.	Bell H.S./Lisgar C.I./Merivale H.S.	Bell H.S./Glebe C.I./Merivale H.S.

Secondary Gifted Specialized Program Classes: Enrolment October 31, 2017

School	Grade	Count
Bell High School	09	28
	10	46
	11	62
	12	66
Total		202
Glebe Collegiate Institute	09	6
	10	25
	11	23
	12	11
Total		65
Lisgar Collegiate Institute	09	98
	10	72
	11	108
	12	88
Total		366
Merivale High School	09	6
	10	1
	11	5
	12	5
Total		17