



**DURHAM CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**
Learning and Living in Faith

Memorandum

To: Board of Trustees

From: Tracy Barill, Director of Education

Date: December 19, 2022

Subject: **Archbishop Denis O'Connor and Notre Dame Catholic Secondary Schools Boundary – Final Staff Report**

Origin: Scott Grieve, Superintendent of Business, Finance and Facilities Services
Paula Sorhaitz, Superintendent of Education, Ajax Family of Schools

Recommendation

Moved by _____, seconded by _____

“THAT the Durham Catholic District School Board approve the proposed boundary revisions for Archbishop Denis O'Connor and Notre Dame Catholic Secondary Schools as outlined in the *Archbishop Denis O'Connor and Notre Dame Catholic Secondary Schools Boundary – Final Staff Report*, dated December 19, 2022.”

Moved by _____, seconded by _____

“THAT the Durham Catholic District School Board approve the change in boundary revisions for Archbishop Denis O'Connor and Notre Dame Catholic Secondary Schools effective September 2023.”

Rationale

On January 24, 2022, the Board of Trustees received the Long-Term Accommodation Plan 2022-2026 (LTAP) report and approved the guiding principles and actions to be undertaken. Within the LTAP report, staff were directed to undertake an Ajax Program and Boundary review to address potential program and service delivery models at one or more Catholic Schools. This full boundary and program review, sought to rectify a longstanding boundary issue that arose from the St. Patrick Single Track French decision of 2015.

Background Information

At the April 7, 2014 Special Board meeting staff presented a series of proposed boundary changes in accordance with Board Policy PO-415 – School Attendance Area, that affected St. Patrick Catholic School, St. Jude Catholic School and Mother Teresa Catholic School (now St. Teresa of Calcutta). Through the boundary review process three changes to the existing boundaries at St. Patrick Catholic School, St. Jude Catholic School and Mother Teresa Catholic School were approved “In Principle” to be taken to the community for consultation. The changes to the boundaries were as follows:

1. Adjusting the St. Jude Catholic School boundary to add all of the St. Patrick Catholic School English program boundary;
2. Adjusting the St. Patrick Catholic School boundary to add the French Immersion and Extended French boundaries for Mother Teresa Catholic School;
3. Removing the English program boundary from St. Patrick Catholic School.

Through the consultation process at St. Patrick Catholic School numerous concerns were expressed with respect to the transition of regular track students that were in Grades 6 and 7 in 2014. As a result, staff ultimately recommended that students in Grade 6 and 7 in the English program at St. Patrick Catholic School be permitted as legacy students to stay at St. Patrick Catholic School. Staff also recommended that students who were in the English program at St. Patrick Catholic School be provided with the option to attend Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School for grades 9-12 given that it was the Secondary School affiliated with St. Patrick Catholic School. The staff recommendations were approved by Board on November 24, 2014.

The recommendation regarding the option to attend Notre Dame CSS was only intended to apply to the Grade 6 and 7 students that had been grandfathered to stay at St. Patrick.

Unfortunately, the legacy language has left the graduating St. Jude grade 8 students having the option to attend either Notre Dame or Archbishop Denis O'Connor Catholic Secondary School. This situation poses challenges with respect to the joint board-approved Student Transportation Policy PO429. According to the policy, eligible students who live within the boundary of their school are provided transportation to their designated area school and students who are out of boundary are not provided transportation.

To address this unusual circumstance, approval was given by the Board on September 26, 2022 to proceed with an 'In Principle' boundary revision for Archbishop Denis O'Connor and Notre Dame Catholic Secondary Schools in the St. Jude area, which would be effective for September 2023. Staff were directed to consult with the effected communities.

This report summarizes the consultation process, the information provided to the community, and the feedback received. It also outlines the final proposed boundary changes being recommended for approval.

Alignment with Discovery 2023

In 2019, the Board adopted a renewed strategic Plan "Discovery 2023: Renewing the Vision". This plan outlined the major strategic priorities that the Board was committed to addressing.

Our Catholic learning community is based on a strong foundation that has flourished for over 50 years, providing quality Catholic education to generations of diverse learners. Discovery 2023: Renewing the Vision is reflective our commitment to maintaining the strength of our system, rooted in faith, with Jesus Christ at the centre of everything we do.

Within the Plan, Strategic Priority 5: Managing Resources the stewardship of resources was identified as essential to the efficient and effective management and operation of the board. Financial, human resources and asset management promote a fiscally responsible Catholic school system which is integral to public trust, transparency and accountability. Management of resources, oriented towards student achievement, well-being and faith formation priorities is the responsibility of each employee.

Attendance Area Policy

In accordance with Board Policy PO-415 School Attendance Area, a proposed school boundary is developed for each Catholic Elementary and Secondary School located within the Board's jurisdiction. The development of boundaries is undertaken to create neighbourhood or community schools. The boundary of each school should be of a sufficient size to sustain the long-term operation of the school at a full or near full capacity level.

Staff is required, through Policy, to report to the Board of Trustees with respect to the proposed boundaries. The Board of Trustees approves "In Principle" so that when the community consultation process commences, the affected schools will have a draft set of boundaries to work from and on which to provide comment.

Boundary Review Process

- Staff develop draft boundaries for review by Administrative Council
- The draft boundaries are brought forward to Trustees for Approval “In Principle”
- Staff are directed to meet with the affected school communities to present the approved “In Principle” boundaries and receive public input
- Staff review all input and present the proposed final boundaries to the Board of Trustees for approval
- The Board of Trustees provides final approval to the boundaries
- Staff communicate the approved boundaries to all affected parents and guardians of students living within the school boundaries and communicate all changes to attendance.

ANALYSIS

Previous English Boundary Studies

The Board has conducted several English boundary and program studies since 2014 to address the concerns of over and under-utilized schools throughout the Board’s jurisdiction. The following lists the dates of the studies:

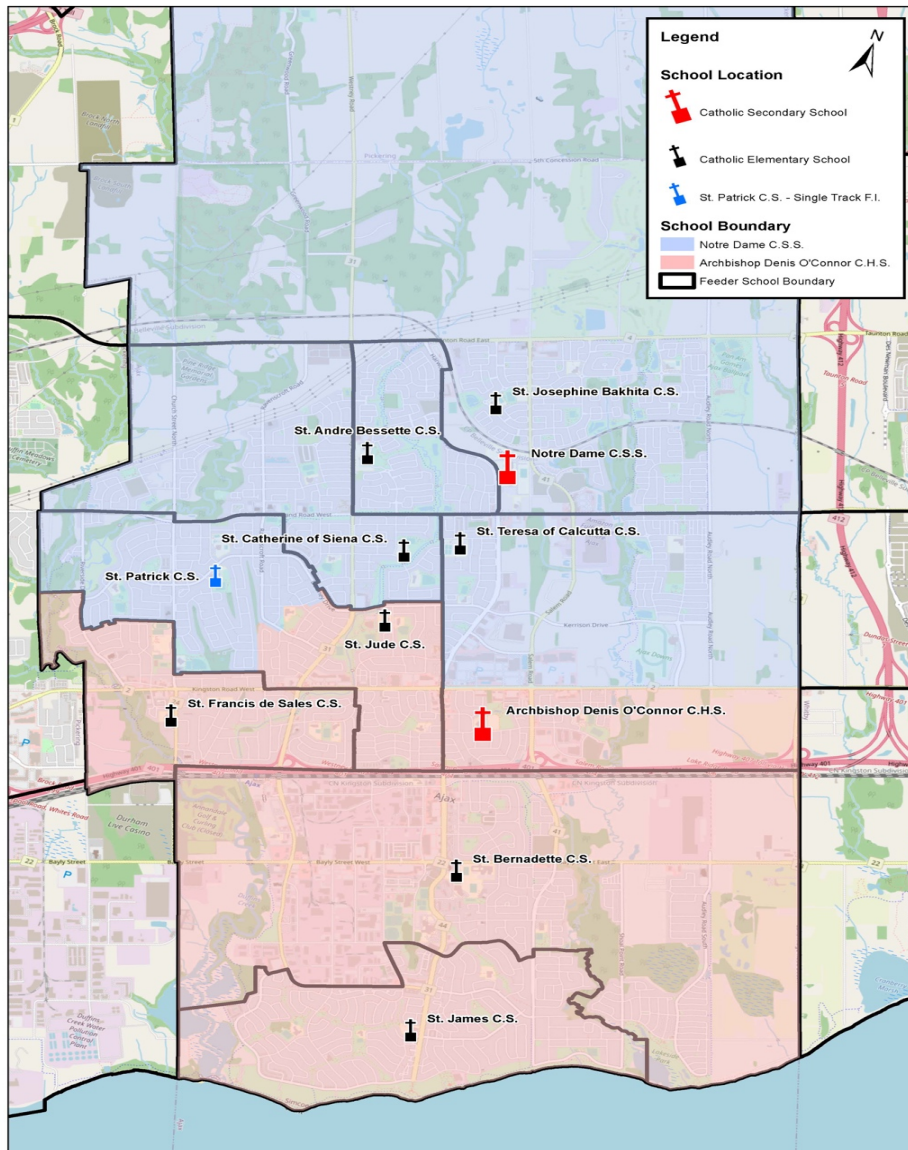
Date	Study
June 2014	South Ajax English Boundary Study
December 2014	South Oshawa Grade 7&8 English Program Study
April 2017	Northwest Whitby English Boundary Study
May 2017	Father Leo J Austin Catholic Secondary School and All Saints Catholic Secondary School Boundary Report
May 2019	South Central Oshawa English & FI Boundary Study
September 2019	Oshawa Secondary School English Boundary Study

Existing Enrolment and Boundaries

Within the Durham Catholic District School Board each secondary school is served by a series of feeder schools for the Regular Track (English) program, and in schools like Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School by a French Immersion feeder school. At present Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School and Archbishop Denis O'Connor Catholic High School each take in a portion of the St. Jude Catholic School boundary. As a result, students have been given the option to attend two different secondary schools from this feeder school.

The map below is the existing boundaries for Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School and Archbishop Denis O'Connor Catholic High school.

**Notre Dame CSS and Archbishop Denis O'Connor CHS
Current Secondary School Boundaries**



Current Boundary Statistics

A 2021/22 review of secondary students coming from St. Jude Catholic School determined that there are 12 grade 9 students; 9 grade 10 students; and 18 grade 11 students residing within the Notre Dame CSS portion of the boundary. There are 29 grade 9 students; 29 grade 10 students; and 25 grade 11 students residing within the Archbishop Denis O'Connor CHS portion of the boundary. The table below shows

where these students attend. There is a total of 77 students attending Archbishop Denis O'Connor CHS and 45 students attending Notre Dame CSS as of September 2021.

Students in the St. Jude CS Boundary as of Sept 30, 2021	Students Residing in Notre Dame CSS Portion				Students Residing in Arch. Denis O'Connor CHS Portion			
	GR 8	GR 9	GR 10	GR 11	GR 8	GR 9	GR 10	GR 11
Attending Notre Dame CSS	36	7	8	14	36	4	3	9
Attending Arch. Denis O'Connor CHS		5	1	4		25	26	16
Total		12	9	18		29	29	25

Financial and Operational Considerations

Consolidating the divided Secondary School Boundary to direct all students to a single school has the potential to increase transportation efficiencies and reduce the number of required buses (saving approximately \$50,000/bus). Therefore, the date of implementation of any decision will have a financial and operational implications.

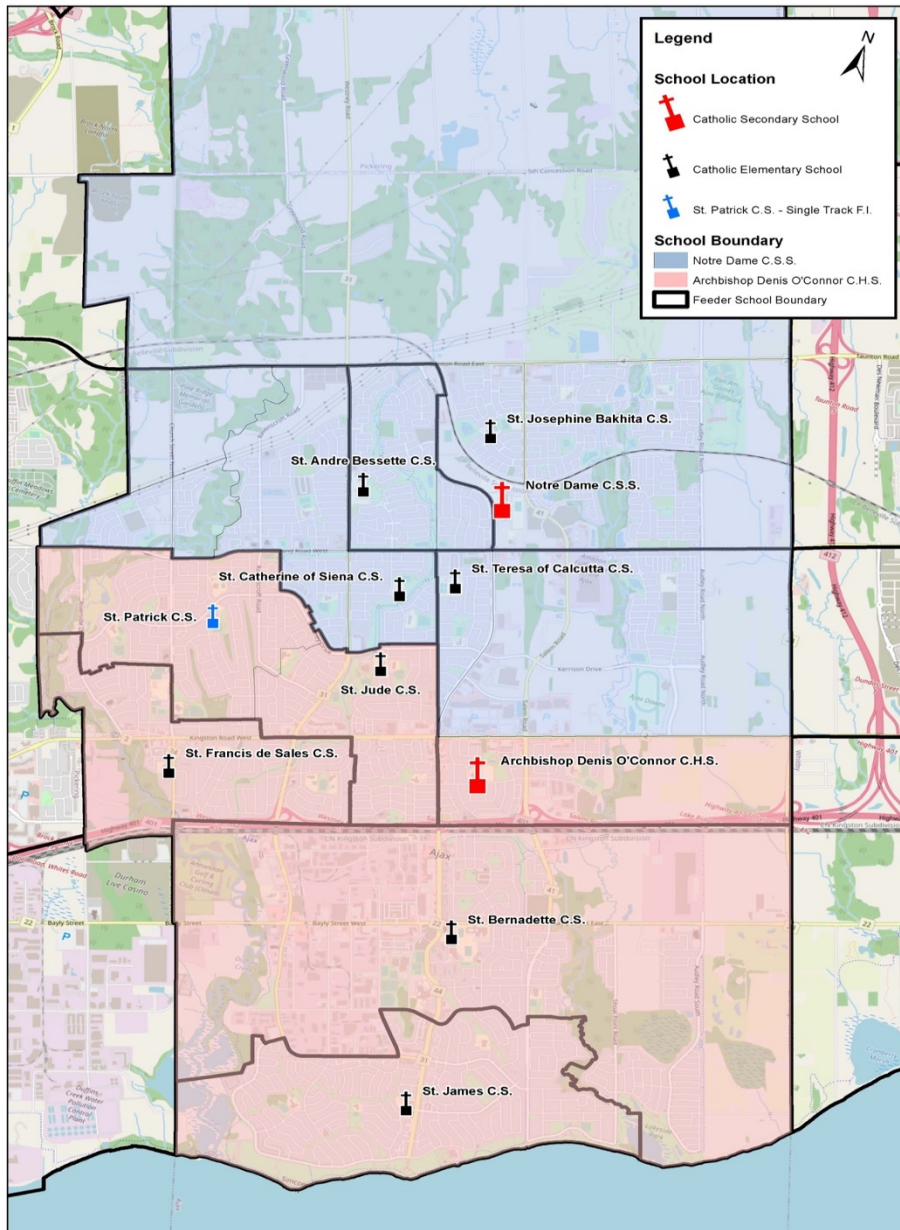
Proposed Boundaries and Implementation

The proposed boundary change will direct all graduating grade 8 students from St. Jude Catholic School to attend Archbishop Denis O'Connor Catholic High School for grades 9-12 for the Regular Track program beginning in the 2023/2024 school year. As with previous changes to secondary school boundaries within the Durham Catholic District School Board, staff recommends that the changes be phased in, beginning with Grade 9 student cohort of 2023, so that existing students at each Catholic Secondary School can complete their program at their current secondary school through to the end of Grade 12. If approved, the 35 grade 8 students (as of September 9, 2022) currently enrolled at St. Jude would be impacted by the decision and would be required to go to Archbishop Denis O'Connor Catholic Secondary School in the fall of 2023. Seventeen (17) of the 35 students live in the current Notre Dame boundary, and eighteen (18) live in the current Archbishop Denis O'Connor boundary.

Archbishop Denis O'Connor and Notre Dame Catholic Secondary Schools Boundary Report – Final Staff Report

The map below indicates the proposed September 2023 boundaries for Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School and Archbishop Denis O'Connor Catholic High School.

**Notre Dame CSS and Archbishop Denis O'Connor CHS
Future Secondary School Boundaries: September 2023**



Consultation Outcome

Board staff conducted a communication plan, which sent letters to the families of the St. Jude area with children attending either Notre Dame Catholic Secondary school, Archbishop Denis O'Connor Catholic Secondary School, or St. Jude, who would be impacted by this decision. Staff also posted information boards in the main offices of the three schools for student, staff and community awareness. Local union affiliates were notified. And a community meeting was held at St. Jude Catholic Elementary School on Wednesday October 24th, 2022 from 7-9pm. There were 6 people in attendance. In total there were 3 comments and questions (see attachment) received through the various modes of submission.

All questions and comments by the public during the entire process, either at the public meetings or through email and/or phone, that are relevant to the study, have been posted on the [website](#).

The three questions that were submitted through the online process were all related to personal questions about a family's specific location and which school they would attend based on the proposed recommendations.

Staff also posted a generic list of questions and answers on the board website.

Communication

Following the formation of the Committee, the Durham Catholic District School Board committed to an open and transparent process that allowed for public input through a variety of means:

- A [dedicated webpage](#) containing all the boundary review information https://www.dcdsb.ca/en/our-board/Boundary-Reviews.aspx?_mid=122365
- A phone line at 905-576-6150 ext. 42252
- An email address planning@dcdsb.ca

Summary and Recommended Option

Staff have reviewed the community input, and in conjunction with the data surrounding enrolment, transportation, and programming offerings, staff are recommending proceeding with adjusting the secondary boundary in the St. Jude area for Notre Dame and Archbishop Denis O'Connor Catholic Secondary schools, with an implementation date of September 2023.

Next Steps

Upon approval of the boundary adjustment, staff will initiate an implementation process as follows:

- Communications
 - Advise Administrators of St. Jude CS, Notre Dame CSS and Archbishop Denis O'Connor CSS
 - Letters to families impacted by the decision.
- Transitions
 - Transition of students from Grade 8 to Grade 9 will be supported by school staff from St. James CS, Archbishop Denis O'Connor CSS and designated Intermediate Guidance Teachers
- Transportation
 - Transportation details to be finalized and communicated in Spring 2023.

TB/PS/SG/pw/tc

Attachments: Q & A's from meeting

Archbishop Denis O'Connor and Notre Dame Secondary Schools Boundary Review - Questions & Answers

1	10-4-22 12:26:25	10-4-22 12:28:09	anonymous	████	████	St. Jude Catholic School	My son is currently an out of boundary student at Saint Jude. We live across the street from Notre Dame. His home school is Brother Andre. What happens in the situation? What high school will he be attending? It's a one minute walk from our house to Notre Dame why would he be going to doc. We live on ██████.	Based on your location of residence, your child's HOME school for Secondary School would be Notre Dame CSS. Your child should be directed to apply and attend at Notre Dame
2	10-4-22 20:03:15	10-4-22 20:07:26	anonymous	████	████	St. Jude Catholic School	I have a son that attends St. Jude but we live about 3.6km from Notre Dame. We will prefer he attends Notre Dame as his brother is there already and gets busing. Can we choose Notre Dame for him as well?	If St. Jude CS is your HOME school, based on your address, as of September 2023, your child would be directed to attend Archbishop Denis O'Connor CHS. If you would like your child to attend Notre Dame CSS. You will need to apply as a "cross-boundary" student. This means you will need the approval from Both Principals at Notre Dame CSS and Archbishop Denis O'Connor CHS. Also, No busing will be provided as per the Board's current transportation Policy.
3	10-11-22 20:20:50	10-11-22 20:24:02	anonymous	████	████	Archbishop Denis O'Connor Catholic High School	I'd like to know which Catholic Highschool is (Address Provided) belongs to in terms of boundaries. Thxs	As of the September 2023/2024 school year. That address will be in the Secondary school boundary of Archbishop Denis O'Connor CHS.