

Long-Term Program & Accommodation Strategy 2024-2033



Appendix A



**INSPIRING
MINDS &
SHAPING
FUTURES:**

Our Multi-Year
Commitment to
Student Success
2024-2028

Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy 2024-2033

Overview

This document is the 11th edition of the Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy (LTPAS). The first iteration of the LTPAS was approved by the Board of Trustees in 2014. Since then, the LTPAS document has been refreshed annually to ensure that the program and pupil accommodation needs of our students are being addressed in the most efficient way possible to improve learning opportunities, student achievement, and equity of access. The LTPAS document is presented to the Board every year for approval and then posted on the TDSB's public website.

Multi-Year Strategic Plan

The new Multi-Year Strategic Plan was approved by the Board of Trustees in April 2024 and guides all that we do. The plan acts as a high-level statement of intent that sets direction and identifies system goals to support all our students.

The Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy supports the MYSP by undertaking program and accommodation studies that are informed by a set of Guiding Principles. These 11 Guiding Principles align with the strategic directions of the MYSP, specifically to establish inclusive and welcoming learning environments, increase equity of access to programs and create modern and accessible learning spaces.

Some important facts about the LTPAS:

- The strategy supports the Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) approved by the Board of Trustees in April 2024.
- The guiding principles of the LTPAS are grouped under two main two themes: “Equity of Access” and “Efficient and Flexible Learning Space”. The theme of equity of access makes a direct connection to the overarching goal of the MYSP and provides guidance on how this will be achieved.
- The LTPAS document identifies all program and accommodation studies that could lead to new programs, program relocations, school closures, boundary changes, and grade reorganizations that will be conducted over the next ten years.
- Information about future program and accommodation studies is presented by type of study and by ward.
- The Ministry of Education imposed a moratorium on school closures in 2017 which is still in effect. As a result, new Pupil Accommodation Reviews cannot be initiated. Once the moratorium has been lifted, new reviews will be initiated.
- In 2023-2024, a total of 14 accommodations studies were completed.

Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy 2024-2033

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- On July 8, 2024, the Ministry of Education announced a new Capital Priorities program for 2024-2025. There is no limit on the number of projects that school boards may submit. TDSB staff submitted 5 projects under the category of 'Shovel-Ready Capital Projects for Funding Consideration' and 20 projects under the category Future Long-Term Growth Capital Projects for Information.

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TAB 1

Introduction and Context

Introduction and Context

The Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy developed by the Toronto District School Board provides an approach to program and accommodation planning with a ten-year timeframe that allows for responsiveness and flexibility in a changing environment by including an annual cycle of review.

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles align with TDSB's Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP). The following guiding principles were approved by the Board of Trustees in April 2019:

Equity of Access

1. **Neighbourhood schools that meet the needs of all students** – Focus on building strong neighbourhood schools that offer a wide range of programs including specialty programs that meet the needs and interests of all students and support all post-secondary destinations.
2. **Optimal elementary school size of at least two classes per grade** – Aim for enrolments of no less than two classes per grade in elementary schools where possible to ensure that schools have a sufficient number of teaching staff to offer a range of educational opportunities.
3. **Optimal secondary school size of at least 1,000 students** – Aim for enrolments of no less than 1,000 students in secondary schools where possible to ensure that a variety of pathways, opportunities and programs can be offered to all students – review secondary schools with enrolments of less than 700 students to address diminishing opportunities to offer viable programs that meet the needs of all students.
4. **Consistent attendance boundaries** – Establish consistent attendance boundaries across the TDSB – review instances of shared attendance boundaries where multiple schools are offered based on home address and split attendance boundaries where graduating cohorts are divided among two or more schools.
5. **School locations that support active transportation** – Locate schools and plan attendance boundaries to support active, safe and sustainable transportation to and from school with consideration to the distances specified in the Transportation of Students Policy P020 – locate elementary schools within walking distance and secondary schools in close proximity to public transit.
6. **Minimal transitions** – Minimize school transitions for students as they move through their elementary and secondary school pathways.

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7. **Balanced enrolment across tracks** – Aim for a balanced representation of students across programs in schools where French programs are offered.

Efficient and Flexible Learning Space

8. **Optimal utilization rate of 90%** – Ensure that school buildings are used efficiently by targeting utilization rates of 90% while recognizing the importance of child care – address issues of underutilization (schools operating at 65% utilization or less) and overutilization (schools operating at 110% utilization or greater) – use existing space in schools efficiently to balance enrolments.
9. **Minimal use of portables** – Use portables when the enrolment of a school exceeds the capacity of the building – review the use of portables on a site when the number of portables approaches the maximum number that can be accommodated on the site.
10. **Flexible buildings and sites** – Plan school sites, school buildings, and additions to be flexible and adaptive to a dynamic and changing city – design sites that can accommodate portables and future expansion as well as school spaces that are multi-functional.
11. **Different models of school organization** – Explore different models of school organization such as JK to Grade 12, Grade 7 to 12, specialized schools and programs, Alternative schools, congregated Special Education sites, campus models, multiple schools co-existing within the same building, full-year schools, and schools in mixed-use developments.

Annual Cycle of Review

Each year, the Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy is reviewed and updated and then presented to the Board of Trustees for approval.

The first step in the annual review process involves the refreshing of school data (detailed system information such as operational, planning and program data for every school) and the review of the guiding principles to ensure they are still relevant. Initial concepts for the entire system are then developed and shared with others.

Input from meetings with Trustees and Superintendents of Education and from discussions with the City of Toronto and coterminous school boards is considered. The list of all planned program and accommodation studies is reviewed and modified if needed. The changes are then reflected in the next version of the Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy which is a ten-year rolling plan.

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Implementation

The planned studies are called Local Feasibility Studies. A Local Feasibility Study can be defined as a preliminary analysis of an accommodation or program concept to determine its viability. A Local Feasibility Study is conducted by a staff team, the Local Feasibility Team (LFT). The team, led by the Superintendent of Education, conducts the analysis and follows the appropriate Board policy or procedure. The Local Feasibility Studies could lead to other public processes such as Pupil Accommodation Reviews, Program Area Reviews or Boundary Reviews.

Annual Planning Document

The Annual Planning Document provides details about the studies that will be done during the next school year. It reflects the short-term work in the form of Local Feasibility Studies that will be done to execute the long-term strategy. It is presented to the Board for approval.

Studies in the Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy

The Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy includes studies that address program priorities and accommodation issues.

Studies to Address Program Priorities

Seven program areas have been identified as priorities for study to address a range of issues such as increasing access, implementing new initiatives, and promoting equity. The program areas are:

- Secondary Program Review
- Building the Workforce of Tomorrow
- French Immersion and Extended French
- Elementary and Secondary Alternative Schools
- Elementary Academies
- Indigenous Education
- Special Education and Inclusion

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Studies to Address Accommodation Issues

The Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy identifies studies to address the key accommodation issues of underutilization and redundant facilities (Pupil Accommodation Reviews), areas of sustained overcrowding where additional pupil places are required (Emerging Capital Priorities to Submit for Funding), and opportunities to reduce costs and generate revenue (Reviews of Non-operating School Sites for Potential Sale).

In addition, the Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy identifies other studies to balance enrolments across schools and make use of existing school space to solve problems (Boundary Changes, Grade Changes, Program Relocations, New Programs, Rooms Available for Partnership, Development Redirections, and Child Care Occupancy Reviews).

Summary of Studies Planned for 2024-2025

Studies identified in the Annual Planning Document 2024-2025 will begin, or continue, this school year. The following provides a high-level summary of the 34 studies that have been identified.

- Emerging Capital Priorities: 5
- Pupil Accommodation Reviews: -
- Boundary Change Studies: 8
- Grade Change Studies: 4
- New Program Studies: 1
- Program Relocation Studies: 2
- Development Redirection Studies: 8
- Non-Operating School Site Studies: 5
- Child Care Occupancy Reviews: -
- Program Priorities: 1
- Other: -

Multi-Year Strategic Plan

In April 2024, the Board passed its Multi-Year Strategic Plan which sets direction and identifies system goals to support all students. The MYSP centers Equity as a guiding principle for all the work the Board does and reflects a commitment to Truth and Reconciliation: Calls to Action. The MYSP contains four strategic directions, listed below:

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- **Belong:** All students belong, are engaged, and valued in an inclusive environment
- **Achieve:** All students reach high levels of achievement, success, and personal development
- **Thrive:** All students graduate with the confidence, skills, and knowledge to thrive
- **Revitalize:** All students and staff learn and work in inclusive, safe, and modern environments.

The Multi-Year Strategic Plan sets direction and provides support for how we work but the real change happens when each unique school and each unique department examines their specific data, determines actions for their improvement, measures impact and communicates progress. The entire system improves when classrooms, schools, and departments focus their improvement efforts within the context of system direction.

The Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy is an important part of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan. It advances the strategic directions through program and accommodation studies that aim to establish inclusive and welcoming learning environments, increase equity of access to programs and create modern and accessible learning spaces.

Vision for Secondary Program

A new vision for Secondary Program was developed through the Secondary Program Review. The vision, approved by the Board of Trustees, includes fewer schools, stronger programming, and increased access to courses that support all pathways, including apprenticeship and the workplace. Further, the vision supports the revitalization of neighbourhood secondary schools with a breadth of programs, many of which, over time, have experienced significant enrolment declines.

Current and projected enrolments at the secondary panel do not support the number of facilities currently in operation. The vision addresses both under and over-utilized schools since changes to any delivery model will have some degree of impact on all schools in a geographic cluster.

The vision for Secondary Program is now integrated with the Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy. Staff is working collaboratively to embed the vision into the LTPAS and include future studies in future iterations of the LTPAS.

An important aspect of moving forward with Secondary Program was the revision of related policies and procedures such as those related to Specialized Schools and Programs, Alternative

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Schools, and Optional Attendance. Policy work has been done as well as the review of admission criteria and practices to ensure equity of access.

Capital Funding

The TDSB has the responsibility to provide strong programs to students in quality learning spaces in schools across Toronto.

Managing school facilities is part of that responsibility. School buildings and properties are valuable community assets and the TDSB is committed to managing them to support students and the broader school community.

As part of its annual planning process, the TDSB reviews school facilities to determine facility condition as well as current and projected utilization. Given that many schools were built in the 1950s and 1960s, most major building systems within the schools need to be renewed. Unaddressed repairs in aging schools over time have led to a rapidly increasing renewal backlog. The backlog, \$4.2 billion as of March 2023, is the amount of funding required to bring our buildings back to a good state of repair.

The ongoing challenge for the TDSB is determining how to fund capital requirements including not only renewal but also new builds and major renovations to address growth pressures.

Capital funding to support new schools, replacement schools, additions and deep retrofits to existing schools is provided to school boards by the Ministry of Education. This funding is allocated through the Capital Priorities program, a process where school boards identify their most urgent pupil accommodation needs.

Capital Priority projects are identified and ranked in the Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy.

On July 8, 2024, the Ministry of Education announced a new Capital Priorities program for 2024-25. There is no limit on the number of projects that school boards may submit. On September 16, 2024, the TDSB staff submitted 5 projects under the category 'Shovel-Ready Capital Projects for Funding Consideration' and 20 projects under the category Future Long-Term Growth Capital Projects for Information.

Staff are currently working with representatives from the Ministry of Education to explore other sources such as the use of proceeds of disposition to fund outstanding Capital Priority projects.

In many school boards, growth pressures are fully supported through government funding and Education Development Charges (EDC). EDCs provide school boards with funds to purchase

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school sites and cover all related site preparation and development costs that result from growth. The TDSB does not have access to EDCs because the Board has surplus space – the Board’s total elementary or secondary enrolment does not exceed existing school capacity across the city.

The TDSB launched legal proceedings challenging Section 10 of Ontario Reg. 20/98 under the Education Act, which prevents school boards from collecting EDCs if they have excess space across their system regardless of their growth-related infrastructure needs in high-growth areas. Unfortunately, the TDSB was not successful in the legal challenge against the province. The hearing was held at the Superior Court of Justice in March 2021 and the decision was made in June 2021.

The TDSB keeps advocating for access to EDCs through other channels, including direct discussions with the Ontario Government. The TDSB is also requesting the government to amend the Education Act to allow greater flexibility as to the use of EDC revenue.

The TDSB is faced with the challenge of having both high growth areas and aging neighbourhoods with declining enrolment. This, along with the Ministry’s expectation to generate revenue from the sale of property, has resulted in pressures in certain areas of the system.

Toronto’s Changing Demographics

Since the TDSB operates in a very dynamic and growing city, it is important to plan for the future and be adaptable when needed to respond to unforeseen changes. The TDSB has designed its long-term planning process to be flexible and accommodate this continuous change. For instance, the Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy is reviewed and updated each year to consider emergent trends and issues. As part of this annual update, the long-term enrolment projections are recalculated each year to reflect the most recent enrolments, Board decisions on program locations, boundaries and grade ranges, and residential development activity. Staff also conducts a system-wide review of pupil accommodation needs. This analysis includes reviewing operating and closed school sites in all wards with Trustee participation and input.

Staff monitors changes in demographics and neighbourhoods that impact both short-term and long-term enrolment projections to identify potential areas of over and underutilization. That analysis could lead to reviews that are included in the Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy.

Toronto’s population growth is closely monitored to ensure that school capacity is maintained where it could be needed. Future growth could be accommodated by opening previously closed

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schools, building new schools, adding additions on existing schools, adding portables on school sites, and changing boundaries to shift students to underutilized schools.

It is important to note that while the Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy identifies studies to initiate in the next ten years, a longer-term view beyond the next ten years is taken into consideration when conducting a study. This is particularly important when planning the construction of new schools or the disposition of sites. City-building initiatives take a significant amount of time. Much of the work undertaken by the City of Toronto on changing land uses, planned growth, and community master plans considers a timeframe beyond ten years. Staff incorporate the City's longer-term plans into studies to ensure that student accommodation is available at the appropriate time.

The annual process to update the Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy and capital budget ensures the TDSB is responsive in managing Toronto's changing demographics.

Toronto's Vertical Growth

Toronto is growing vertically and that offers an opportunity for the TDSB to explore new options for building new schools. One such option is mixed-use opportunities in dense urban areas where expensive property values make it too costly for the school board to acquire land for a conventional school. A school could be integrated into a specific development area where there is anticipated residential intensification, population growth and accommodation pressures. The school could be located on the ground level with commercial and retail uses occupying other ground floor space or floors above. A residential or an office component would be located on the above storeys.

Designing schools in combination with a condominium or commercial building must assign a priority to:

- Student safety
- School programming
- Schools as community hubs
- Opportunity for resource sharing in a mixed-use project

Where schools within mixed-use development could be appropriate:

- Downtown core, employment land conversion, Yonge Street corridor;
- New residential areas: emerging new (vertical) communities-high rise developments;

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- TDSB sites with aging facilities and sufficient site size to accommodate redevelopment; and
- Areas where the cost of new school sites are impractical/impossible to acquire.

The TDSB is involved in many new major development projects happening throughout the City of Toronto. They include:

- Christie Lands
- Don Mills and Eglinton
- Golden Mile
- Downtown/Central Waterfront
- Midtown

The TDSB will continue to explore this type of opportunity for future new school projects.