

## Memorandum

To: Board of Trustees

From: Anne O'Brien, Director of Education

Date: May 27, 2019

Subject: St. Christopher Catholic School and St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School Final Boundary Report

Origin: Bob Camozzi, Superintendent of Education, Facilities Services  
Rosemary Leclair, Superintendent of Education  
Lewis Morgulis, Manager of Planning, Admissions & Partnerships

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### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Moved by \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by \_\_\_\_\_

"THAT the Durham Catholic District School Board receives, for information the St. Christopher Catholic School and St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School Final Boundary Report dated May 27, 2019."

Moved by \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by \_\_\_\_\_

"THAT the Durham Catholic District School Board approves the proposed boundary revisions for St. Christopher Catholic School and St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School outlined in the report dated May 27, 2019."

### **RATIONALE**

On January 28, 2019 the Board of Trustees received the Long Term Accommodation Plan 2018-2023 (LTAP) report and approved the guiding principles and actions to be undertaken. Within the LTAP report, staff was directed to review the boundaries between St. Christopher Catholic School and St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School.

On February 25, 2019 the Board of Trustees “Approved in Principle” boundary changes for the English and French Immersion programs at St. Christopher Catholic School and St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School starting in 2020.

This report summarizes the public participation process which occurred during March and April 2019 and recommends that boundary changes between St. Christopher Catholic School and St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School be approved starting in 2020.

### **Boundary Policy**

In accordance with Board Policy PO-415 School Boundary, 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.

Following the meetings with the affected communities, and based on input from these communities, a final report on the proposed set boundaries is brought to the Board of Trustees for approval.

### **Boundary Review Process**

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

### **ANALYSIS**

#### **Public Open Houses**

A series of public open house were held on the following dates to explain the proposed boundary changes between St. Christopher Catholic School and St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School and receive public input:

- Tuesday March 19, 2019 at St. Christopher Catholic School
- Thursday March 28, 2019 at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School

- Monday April 1, 2019 at St. Christopher Catholic School

In addition to the open houses the Board set up a dedicated phone extension to receive input and an email address to receive additional questions and comments.

Over the three nights a total of 10 different parents or guardians attended the open houses. The attendance sheets are appended to the report. The main issues raised in the public open houses included the following:

- Parents wanted to have out-of-area students returned to their home school reducing the need for the boundary change;
- Parents questioned why the removal of 28-46 students was important to the long-term viability of both schools;
- Can the Board create another French Immersion site to reduce overcrowding;
- Parents with children who would be split by the implementation of the boundary change wanted both children to remain at St. Christopher CS;
- Parents were concerned if there will be before and after school child care at St. Thomas Aquinas CS and,
- Parents wanted more information as to where students would go after Grade 6 at St. Thomas Aquinas CS.

The Board received 7 emails and 1 voicemail from parents concerned about the proposed boundary change. The main issues raised in the correspondence are as follows:

- Parents whose children were attending as out-of-area (cross boundary) to St. Christopher CS were concerned what impact the change would have on their children attending;
- Parents who have children who will be split by the implementation of the boundary change wanted both children to remain at St. Christopher CS.

Staff have reviewed the parent concerns and provided the following information to parents:

- Students who are currently out-of-area at St. Christopher CS can remain, however the Board reviews each school's capacity to accommodate students annually;
- The current population and projected number of students and portables at St. Christopher CS requires that the Board remove students and portables from the site, the boundary change in 2020 will reduce the number of students immediately and in the long term;
- The creation of a fourth French Immersion site in Oshawa is not viable or sustainable, changing the boundaries of the existing programs is the most effective way to balance enrolment;

- Staff understood that the phased in approach to the boundary change may split some families. An option is to have all the children move to St. Thomas Aquinas CS in 2020 with transportation;
- The Board has confirmed that the YMCA will run a before and after school child care at St. Thomas Aquinas CS starting in 2019.
- Staff confirmed that students attending the regular track program at St. Thomas Aquinas CS will be attending Monsignor John Pereyma CSS for grades 7&8. The school started the grade 7&8 program in 2016 and is highly regarded for its Apple School designation. The school has a dedicated gym for the grade 7&8 students, a renovated Learning Commons with a media centre, lockers for all students, use of the cafeteria and specialized classrooms for the grade 7&8 students. Following grade 8 the regular track students would continue to attend Monsignor John Pereyma CSS for grades 9-12.
- For students who will be enrolled in the French Immersion program at St. Thomas Aquinas CS, after grade 8 they will be eligible to attend Monsignor Paul Dwyer CHS for the French Immersion program for grades 9-12. This program will start with a new grade 9 class in September 2020.

### **Recommended Boundary Option**

Staff recommends that the St. Christopher Catholic School boundary be amended by removing the area south of King Street West (Hwy#2) and west of Stevenson Road South and directing all students to attend St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School for both the Regular Track and French Immersion programs.

All students within the area affected by the boundary change in the Grade JK-4 Regular Track and Grade 1-4 French Immersion programs will be identified and directed to attend St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School for September 2020;

Any student who is in the Grade 5-8 Regular Track, or in the Grade 5-8 French Immersion program from the affected area will remain at St. Christopher Catholic School until Grade 8;

Transportation to St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School or St. Christopher Catholic School will be provided in accordance with Board Policy. All students located within the affected area are entitled to receive student transportation.

Staff further recommends that no additional out-of-area enrolment to St. Christopher Catholic School be allowed starting in September 2020 to aid in the removal of portables and overcrowding at the site.

### **NEXT STEPS**

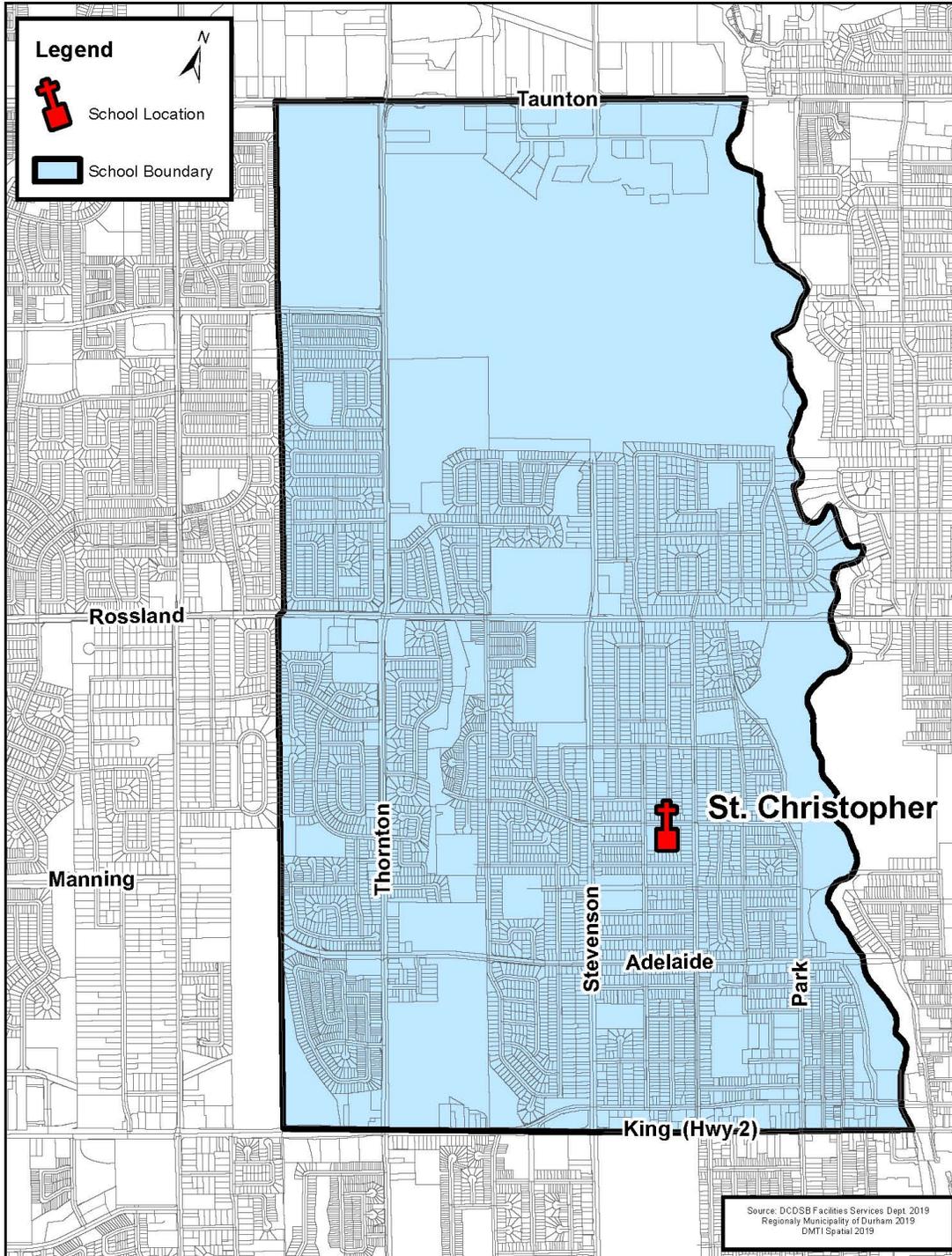
Following final approval of the elementary boundaries staff will update the Board's mapping and OSAS systems for September 2020, and update DSTS with respect to implementation.

Staff will prepare a subsequent boundary report to address the secondary school boundaries following approval of this boundary change.

Attachments  
AOB:BC:JM:LM:tc

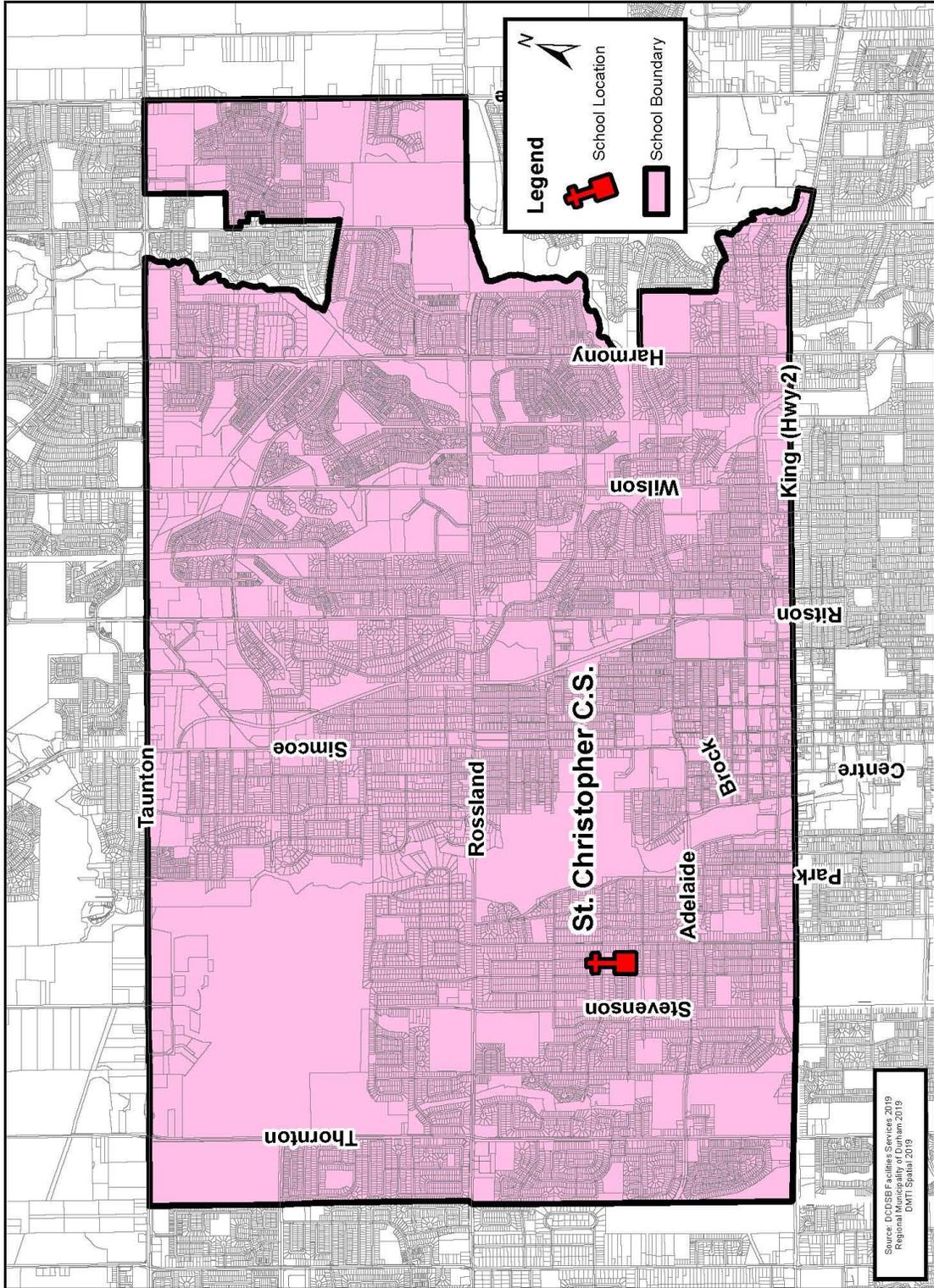
**APPENDIX 1:**

**St. Christopher Catholic School  
Final Regular Track Boundary, September 2020**



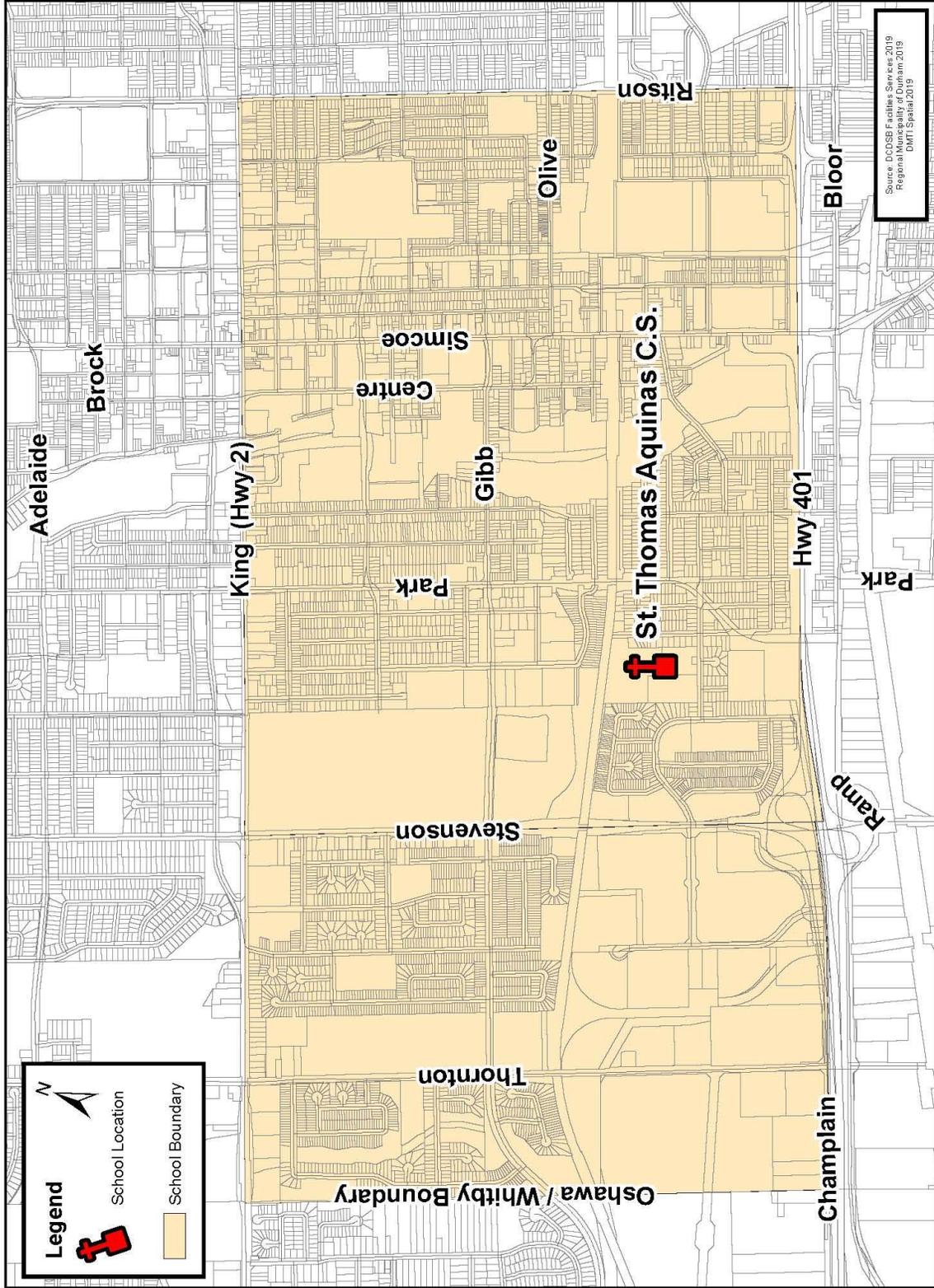
APPENDIX 1:

St. Christopher Catholic School  
Final French Immersion Boundary, September 2020



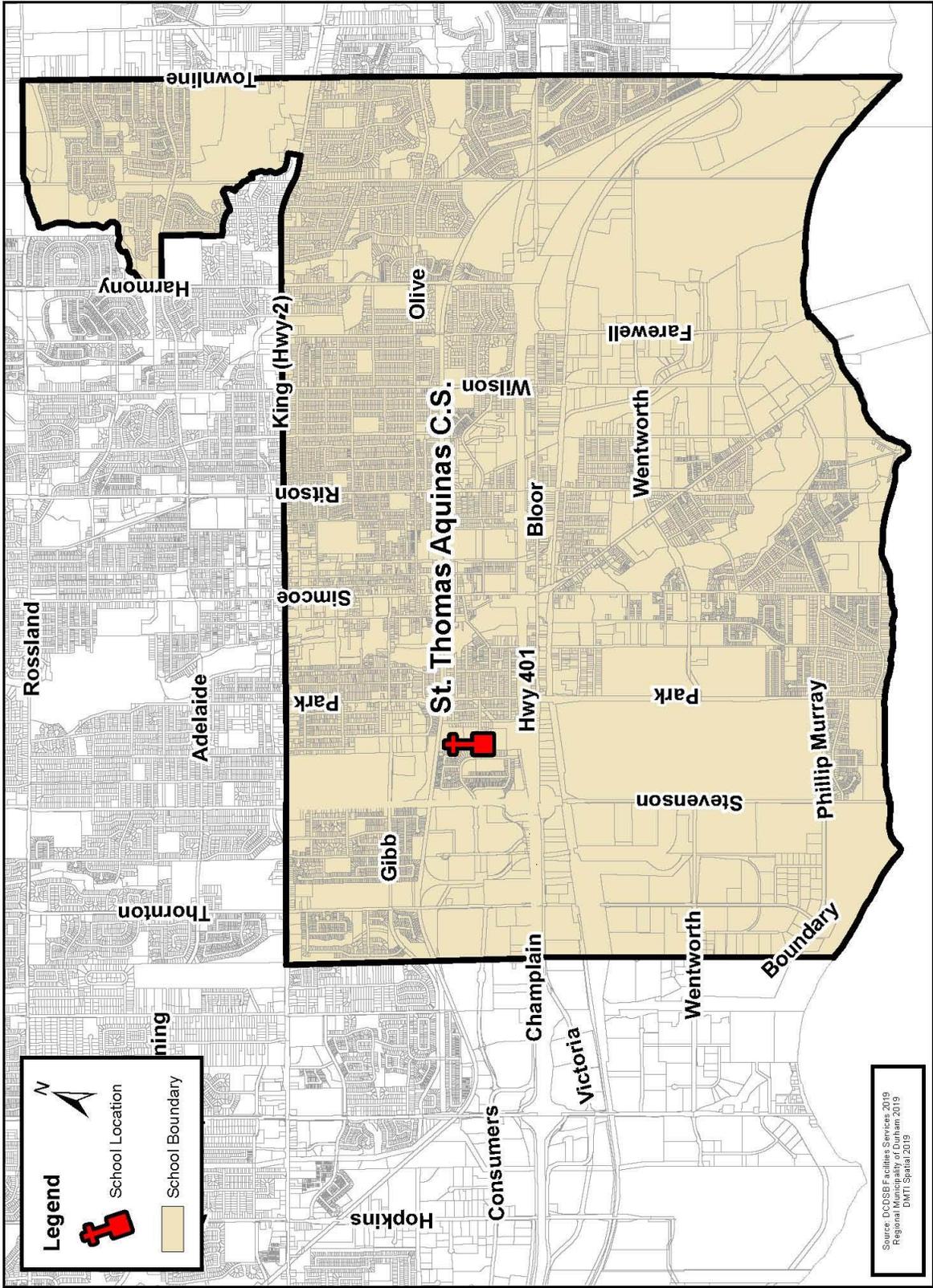
APPENDIX 1:

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School  
Final Regular Track Boundary, September 2020



APPENDIX 1:

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School  
Final French Immersion Boundary, September 2020



**APPENDIX 2: SIGN IN SHEETS**

March 19, 2019



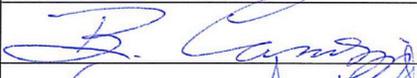
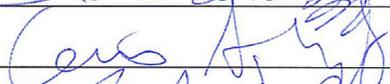
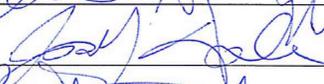
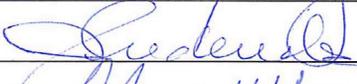
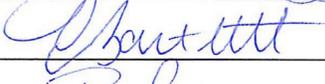
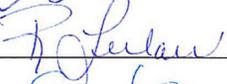
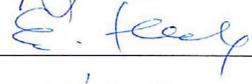
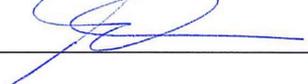
**ST. CHRISTOPHER/ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CATHOLIC SCHOOL  
BOUNDARY CHANGE MEETING:  
PUBLIC MEETING AT ST. CHRISTOPHER CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)	SIGNATURE
Bob Camozzi	<i>Blum</i>
Julie Johnson	<i>J. Johnson</i>
Julie Bonello	<i>JB</i>
EUGENE HEAUSER	<i>E Heuser</i>
Felicia Reis	<i>Reis</i>
Amanda Bawks	<i>ABAWKS</i>
Jennifer Bastarache	Jennifer Bastarache
Sim Wilson	<i>J. Wilson</i>
Mike Neubauer	<i>M. Neubauer</i>
Jody Dale	<i>Jody Dale</i>
Carolyn Bartlett	

**ST. THOMAS AQUINAS/ST. CHRISTOPHER CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**  
**BOUNDARY CHANGE MEETING – MARCH 28, 2019**  
**PUBLIC MEETING AT ST. THOMAS AQUINAS SCHOOL**

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)	SIGNATURE
Shannon Piercy	<i>[Signature]</i>
Eugene Heaney	<i>[Signature]</i>
Donald Fernandes	<i>[Signature]</i>
Bob Canziani	<i>[Signature]</i>
David Byrne	<i>[Signature]</i>
Cathy Tynan	<i>[Signature]</i>
Rosemary Leclerc	<i>[Signature]</i>
Lewis Margolis	<i>[Signature]</i>
Carolyn Bartlett	<i>[Signature]</i>
Jasmine Fredericks	<i>[Signature]</i>
Claudia Chazac	<i>[Signature]</i>
Jim Wilson	<i>[Signature]</i>
Mike Neubauer	<i>[Signature]</i>

**ST. CHRISTOPHER/ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CATHOLIC SCHOOLS  
BOUNDARY CHANGE MEETING – APRIL 1, 2019  
PUBLIC MEETING AT ST. CHRISTOPHER SCHOOL**

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)	SIGNATURE
Bob Camozzi	
Lewis Margolis	
Jody Dale	
Cathy Tynan	
Jasmine Fredericks	
Carolyn Bartlett	
Rosemary Leclair	
EUGENE HEANEY	
Kellee Grines	
JAMIE CARSWELL	
Michael Neubauer	

## **APPENDIX 3: PUBLIC CORRESPONDANCE**

### **A Summary Log of Voicemails/Emails Received Pertaining the Boundary Change Between St. Christopher C.S. and St. Thomas Aquinas C.S. 2019**

#### **Tuesday, February 26, 2019**

##### **Voicemail from Anne Walsh**

Provided her address, and wanted to confirm that her home address is not affected by the boundary changes, as noted on the boundary letter.

##### **Response**

R. Leclair called back on February 26, 2019 at approximately 4:50pm to confirm that this household would not be impacted by the boundary change. Ms. Walsh indicated she was understanding of the changes.

#### **Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

##### **Email received at 10:48am from Tara Scott of St. Christopher C.S.**

“My children are currently out of area students at st Christopher in grade 1 French immersion and jk. I will have another son starting in September we live at harmony and Adelaide pretty much dead smack in the middle of the two schools even though I am zoned to st Thomas is there a way I can keep my children at st Christopher’s as they are settled there and I am happy there? Is there anything I can do?”

##### **Response**

Thank you for providing input to the St. Christopher CS and St. Thomas Aquinas CS boundary review process. Your input and questions will form part of the public record regarding the proposed boundary change.

The area that will be impacted by the proposed boundary change is south of King Street West, and west of Stevenson Road. It will affect students in Grades JK-4 in both the English (regular track) and French Immersion programs for September 2020. The change will be phased in over the next four years thereafter to direct all students from that area to attend St. Thomas Aquinas CS.

You have indicated that your children are not located in the area impacted by the boundary change, and that they are attending St. Christopher CS as out-of-area students. All out-of-area requests are reviewed annually by the school. The reason for the boundary change is to address the current overcrowding at St. Christopher CS. The Board will attempt wherever possible to keep students from the same family together.

#### **Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

##### **Email received at 12:24pm from Jeff Weatherbee from St. Christopher C.S.**

“We are crossed boundaries as are daycare is within the st Christopher’s boundaries and still will be when the change takes effect. Will these changes effect my children?”

Thank you

##### **Response**

Thank you for providing input to the St. Christopher CS and St. Thomas Aquinas CS boundary review process. Your input and questions will form part of the public record regarding the proposed boundary change.

The area that will be impacted by the proposed boundary change is south of King Street West, and west of Stevenson Road. It will affect students in Grades JK-4 in both the English (regular track) and French Immersion programs for September 2020. The change will be phased in over the next four years thereafter to direct all students from that area to attend St. Thomas Aquinas CS.

You have indicated that your children are not located in the area impacted by the boundary change and that they have child care within the St. Christopher CS boundary. All out-of-area requests are reviewed annually by the school. Requests related to accommodation related to child care are carefully considered and in most cases

approved by the Board on a year by year basis.

**Tuesday, March 12, 2019**

**Email received 1:18pm from Rochelle Ford of St. Thomas Aquinas C.S.**

"I am just curious my son currently attends St. Thomas and we are currently out of boundary as located by Bond at Simcoe. Does this mean he would have to switch schools? St. Christopher and St. Thomas is the same distance from our house but he takes the bus from his daycare to school."

**Response**

Thank you for your inquiry about the proposed boundary changes. The Board's changes will affect the St. Christopher Catholic School boundary by directing students living south of King Street W. and West of Stevenson Road to attend St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School starting in September 2020. Your son will not be affected by the boundary change and will be able to remain as an out of boundary student at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School.

**Wednesday, April 3, 2019**

**Email received at 10:52am from Jamie Carswell of St. Christopher C.S.**

"At this current time it has been stated that 46 current students at St. Christopher's would be impacted by the proposed boundary changes. Of these 46 anyone in Grades 5-8 are entitled to remain at their current school. Of those 46 how many does this entitle? If any of these students have younger siblings the option for both to move to St. Thomas is available, however, why not the vice versa? Despite the increased capacity, and current plan to cap additional incoming it does not make sense that the current students enrolled are not provided the option both ways. As a parent if we choose to move or relocate outside our current routine it is done with a great amount of care and consideration. When I purchased my home I did so knowing my children could continue their education unheeded at St. Christopher's. They have built a foundation crucial to their growth at St. Christopher's. It has been a school that has gone above and beyond for my kids to have a place that is safe and secure, a place to foster friendships, relationships with educators and continued growth. Of my own children and the other families affected it should not be impacted by outside decisions to change boundaries. A hand forced to make these changes is unfair to the kids who want nothing more than to continue where they have always continued. As a parent, I do not believe that 46 students who are thrown into this situation should have to readjust because the powers that be decide it is time to make boundary changes. This needs to be taken into consideration, even more so in a day and age where the pressures have seemingly mounted onto kids with a faster paced world, they don't deserve the added stress, no matter how old or how young. Even with the proposed year to allow families to prepare and adjust, let's be honest, that isn't going to make a real difference, the impact will be critical on any young mind. I have no ill will to St. Thomas and it's teachers and staff, I am sure it is a great place for all current attending, but my children's education began and will continue at St. Christopher's and I feel that should be the same for the others impacted.

Thank you for your time, should you have any questions you are more than welcome to inquiry."

**Response**

Thank you for providing your comments with respect to the proposed boundary change. In answer to your question, the number of students that will be in grades 5-8 at St. Christopher CS as of September 2020 is 18 of the 46 students identified in Area B. These are the students that will be entitled to remain at the school when the boundary change takes effect. If some of the students wish to attend St. Thomas Aquinas CS they will be allowed to do so with their siblings. The purpose of the boundary change is to reduce overcrowding at St. Christopher CS.

We will be adding your letter and comments to the parent feedback section of the final boundary report.

**April 8, 2019**

**Email received at 1:16pm from Amanda Bawks of St. Christopher C.S.**

"I attended the boundary change meeting held at St. Christopher's school. I have two children currently at St. Chris grades 6 and 2. If the boundary change happens my kids will be separated which is going to cost me for child care for my youngest. St. Chris is 2.8km from our home  
St. Thomas is 3.4 km from our home  
Preyma is 6.2 km from our home  
My youngest will have to change schools for grade 4 and again for grade 7. There are currently 78 out of district students at St. Chris and there won't even be 40 students in our neighborhood. Wouldn't it make sense to have out of district students go to a school within their boundary? If this change occurs we will be leaving the Catholic school system and going to the public school around the corner. Another concern stated at the meeting was whether there was enough E.A's because the disability percentage is higher at other schools and even now my children will report some issues to me about disruptive and distracting behaviour by students who do not have an E.A regularly. The reply I received was in 27 yrs they have never seen a student with a disability cause disruptive/distracting behaviour so other students couldn't learn.

Everyone deserves to have their needs met to create a successful learning environment. There are a lot of shortages and I want to ensure that the needs are met before we start making huge changes to children who are comfortable in what they consider a safe, educational environment."

### **Response**

Thank you for providing the Board with comments regarding the proposed boundary change between St. Christopher Catholic School and St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School. We will be adding your email to the public record as part of the final boundary report package.

### **May 6, 2019**

#### **Email received at 3:26pm from Tierney DeMarco of St. Christopher C.S.**

I am looking for some information regarding the review and my specific questions are as follows:

1. The webpage dedicated to the information about the review is not clear as to whether a review is to be completed in order to make a decision OR whether the decision is final - the boundaries are changing. Can you please clarify.
2. Is the change in boundary being reviewed in order to accommodate over-crowding due to the fact that the school has a French Immersion program? If so, why is that impacting students who have decided against the French Immersion program?
3. What, if any, accommodations are being made for current St. Christopher students who have exceptional needs? I am concerned for the long-term well-being of one of my children based on this. What process, if any, is in place to review specific circumstances?

4. How does the Board respond to the fact that despite moving to the area in which I now live so that my children might attend St. Christopher ( as a former student of that school myself) I would be, if the decision is final to revise the boundaries, forced to have my children attend a school which clearly ranks lower on Provincial ratings? I believe my children would be receiving a sub-par education in that school and have heard nor read anything to the contrary.

Eagerly awaiting a response.

Respectfully,

Tierney DiMarco

## **Response**

Good afternoon Tierney,

Thank you for providing the Board with questions and comments regarding the proposed boundary change between St. Christopher Catholic School and St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School. We will be adding your email to the public record as part of the final boundary report package. In response to your questions, I can provide the following information:

The boundary review is conducted by the Board in accordance with its boundary review policy. The policy requires that the Board approve the changes "in principle" and then go out to the community for consultation. Once the final report is drafted it is sent to the Board of trustees for approval. The final boundary report will be at the May 27, 2019 meeting of the Board of Trustees for their review and approval.

The boundary change addresses overcrowding in both the regular track (English) and French Immersion programs. Ultimately the school has to reduce growth and remove portables from the site. The area impacted by the boundary change relocates students in both programs.

The student services department in collaboration with school principals at all schools coordinate supports and services for students with exceptional needs regardless of boundary.

Both schools involved in the boundary process have a history of a strong educational culture with a focus on inclusion, instructional practice, experiential learning and student success.

### **Follow Up Comments**

**May 7 2019**

**Email received at 10:02pm from Tierney DeMarco of St. Christopher C.S.**

Thank you, Mr. Morgulis, for your prompt response.

I must say, respectfully, I don't feel that you addressed all my concerns.

1. If the purpose of the review and proposed changes are designed to reduce future growth than why are current students being impacted. Is there not a way to change the boundary for new incoming students and allow families who are already a part of the school community to continue to attend?
2. I recognize that all schools provide support for students with particular needs; my concern is really more about my daughter in particular - we have worked all year to create a trusting relationship with those staff who accompany her into the bathroom, for a medical issue, I worry about needing to establish that again.
3. My question about the differences between the two schools in terms of their rankings and quality of education wasn't really answered. What does it mean when you say "a history of a strong educational culture ..."? Is it not correct that St. Thomas ranks lower than St. Christopher based on academic test results?

I would appreciate any additional feedback you might be able to provide.

Thank you for your time.

Best regards,

Tierney DiMarco