



# **Secondary School Boundary Review**

**Waterloo Region District School  
Board**

**May 17, 2010**

# BACKGROUND

The purpose of this analysis was to provide an objective review of the existing boundaries of the Board's secondary schools, identify potential issues and make recommendations, where deemed necessary, on boundary re-configurations.

The review is intended to look at the system as a whole and to determine the impact of boundary changes on not only the locally affected school but on surrounding schools as well.

**Post WWII the Waterloo Region experienced significant increases in population which led to major infrastructure and development. Of the Board's 16 secondary schools, 9 were constructed between 1955-1969.**

**The Region is projected to grow significantly over the next 20 years which will present the Board with continued challenges in servicing an increasing and mobile population with schools that are geographically fixed.**

# OVERVIEW

**A natural school boundary considers the school's location, walking distances for surrounding communities, natural barriers and both existing and long-term student populations and settlement patterns.**

The concept of natural boundaries and community schools played a significant role in the review of the existing boundaries as well as any recommendations made.

The boundaries of the Board's existing secondary schools differ greatly from one school to another and possess unique circumstances and issues that can't be fixed by a singular approach – flexibility must be incorporated into any secondary boundary review.

**The recommendations are intended to provide options for addressing secondary accommodation issues with an approach of boundary review and reconfiguration.**

# STUDY PARAMETERS

- Secondary boundaries should, to the extent possible, maximize the number of walkers, serve the local population and support the delivery of the core program.
- Only use satellite zoning when a natural boundary does not exist.
- The use of specialized programs to supplement core school populations could be considered in lieu of physical boundary changes.
  - Consideration could be given to capping or relocating programs if they are consuming needed space and negatively impact the ability of the school to serve its local population.

# METHODOLOGY

A secondary school boundary review must consist of strong background information. This review incorporated the following:

- 10 year secondary school enrolment projections (provided by WRDSB).
- Ministry rated facility capacities as well as functional facility capacities.
- Identification of major growth areas and long term projected populations.
- Historical trends of demographic and socio-economic data of school boundaries.
- A review of programs and the number of students attending schools outside their home boundary.

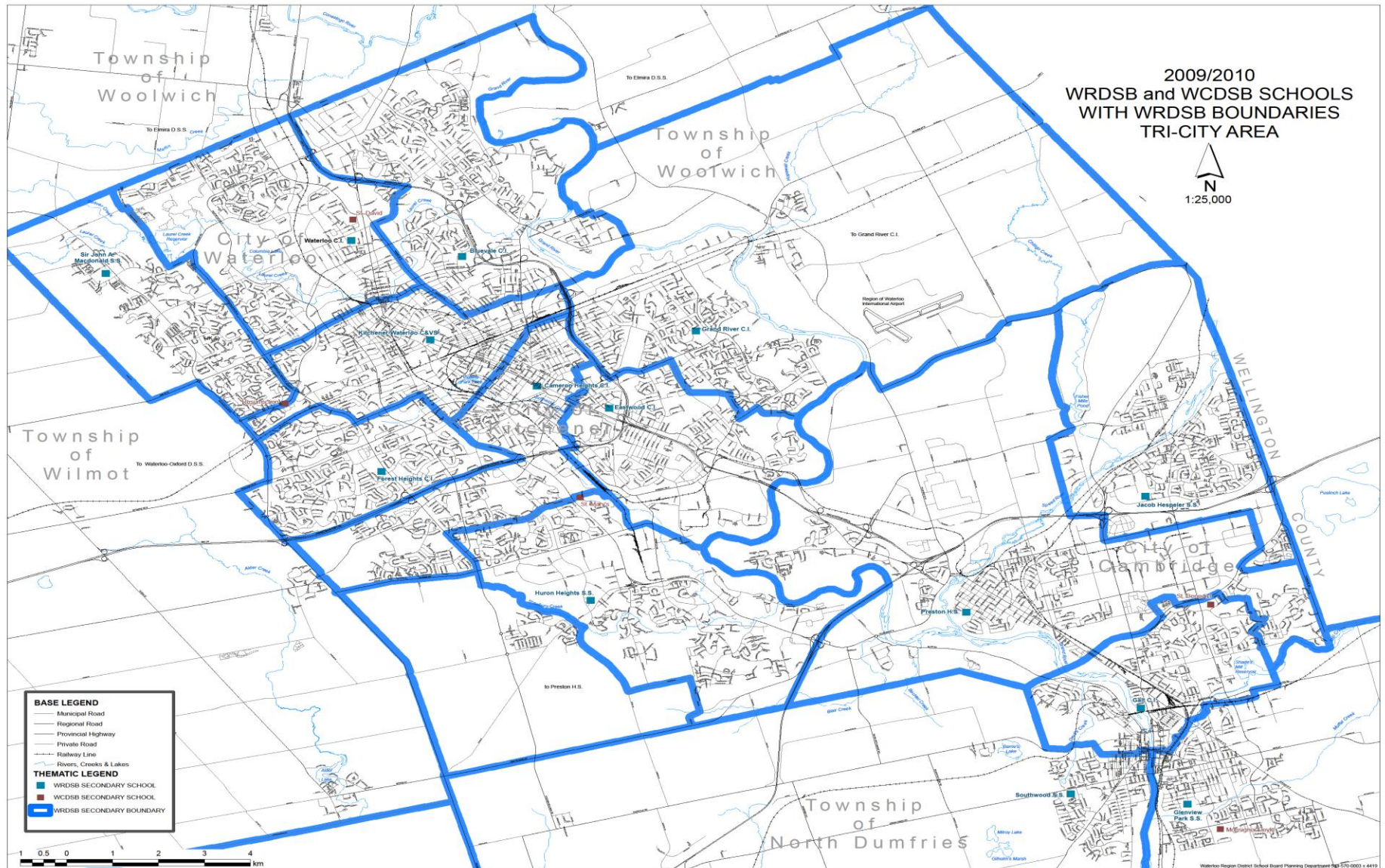
**The two main methodological components were;**

- **attempting to identify natural boundaries for each school based on the school's location, walking distances and natural barriers.**
- **making observations of the existing boundaries and identifying accommodation issues and how they might be alleviated by boundary reconfiguration.**

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- The recommendations have been characterized in terms of their short, medium and long term focus. Short term are intended to address immediate pressures based on a 1-5 year time frame. Medium term recommendations will address Board needs in the next 5-10 years and the longer term recommendations attempt to highlight potential pressures in the 10-20 year time horizon.
- The following slides will highlight the recommendations by major area (Waterloo, Kitchener and Cambridge) made in the consultants report.
- ***There is a map showing an overview of the secondary school boundaries on the following slide.***

# SECONDARY SCHOOL BOUNDARIES



# RECOMMENDATIONS - WATERLOO

- The Waterloo area is predominantly serviced by three secondary schools – Bluevale C.I, Waterloo C.I and Sir John A Macdonald. The schools were constructed between 1959 and 2005 with Sir John A Macdonald being the newest school in the area.

## **Bluevale C.I.**

- School is currently over capacity and utilizes temporary space and has enrolment that is projected to grow over the next 10 years.
- Majority of enrolment is from home boundary.
- A permanent addition has been approved for this facility.
- Longer term projections for the boundary indicate that additional accommodation options may be necessary.

## **Waterloo C.I.**

- School is currently over capacity however enrolment is projected to decline. The community surrounding the school is largely made up of student housing with 40% of the homes being rentals.
- The school was constructed in 1959 and requires significant renewal investment.
- The school relies heavily on out of boundary students to supplement its local enrolment – almost 2.2 times as many students come into the boundary than leave the boundary.



# RECOMMENDATIONS - WATERLOO

## **Sir John A Macdonald**

- The school is the Board's 3<sup>rd</sup> largest and one of its newest – it is currently over capacity and utilizes 3 portables.
- School is located in a growth area and enrolment in the mid to longer term is expected to continue growing.
- Growth in enrolment is predominantly from the local population as more students leave the school's boundary than students who come in from out of boundary.

# RECOMMENDATIONS - WATERLOO



# RECOMMENDATIONS - WATERLOO

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Short Term**

- That the Board consider a boundary reconfiguration between Sir John A Macdonald and Kitchener-Waterloo C.I. The Westvale attendance area in the southern portion of SJAM's boundary should be made part of KCI's secondary boundary.

### **Medium Term**

- That the Board monitors enrolment at BCI and should enrolment exceed the functional capacity of the school, the Board could explore boundary reconfiguration with WCI or KCI.
- Parts of Sandowne's and Lexington's attendance areas fall within the Board specified walking distances of WCI.

### **Long Term**

- That the Board develop a long term strategy for Waterloo that addresses the potential increases in school aged populations in BCI's and SJAM's attendance areas as well as the demographic and student housing issues in the neighbourhood surrounding WCI.
- Considering the long term demographics and facility condition, it may be necessary to study the long term viability of Waterloo C.I in its present location.

# RECOMMENDATIONS - KITCHENER

• There are total of 6 secondary schools operating in Kitchener - Kitchener Waterloo C.I, Cameron Heights C.I. and Eastwood C.I are located in the core of the City and in close proximity to each other. The three remaining schools are Forest Heights C.I., Grand River C.I. and the Board's newest school, Huron Heights S.S.

## **Kitchener-Waterloo C.I.**

- The school is the Board's 2<sup>nd</sup> oldest and 2<sup>nd</sup> largest and is currently well under capacity.
- Enrolment is projected to continue declining.
- The school has specialized programs that attract students from outside its home boundary.
- The majority of the school's boundary lies within the Board determined walking distance.

## **Cameron Heights C.I.**

- The school is the Board's largest facility and also has one of the largest student populations. It is over capacity and requires the use of 4 portables.
- Enrolment is projected to increase due to the fact of growth areas in the school's boundary as well as the success of the schools IB program.
- Almost 40% of the school's enrolment comes from outside its home boundary.
- The facility would face challenges in accommodating enrolment above existing levels.

# RECOMMENDATIONS - KITCHENER

## **Eastwood C.I.**

- The school is currently over capacity and requires the use of 3 portables.
- The school aged population of the school's boundary is in decline however enrolment has been slightly increasing or stable and is projected to remain to do so.
- Enrolment stability at this facility is likely due to the success of its specialized programs – the schools draws approximately 39% of its enrolment from outside its home boundary.

## **Forest Heights C.I.**

- The school has one of the Board's largest student populations and utilizes 10 portables to accommodate total enrolment.
- While the school is currently over capacity, the demographics and projections suggest that enrolment will decline significantly in the next 5-10 years.
- The school is largely a community school with the majority of the boundary within the Board determined walking distance.

# RECOMMENDATIONS - KITCHENER

## **Grand River C.I.**

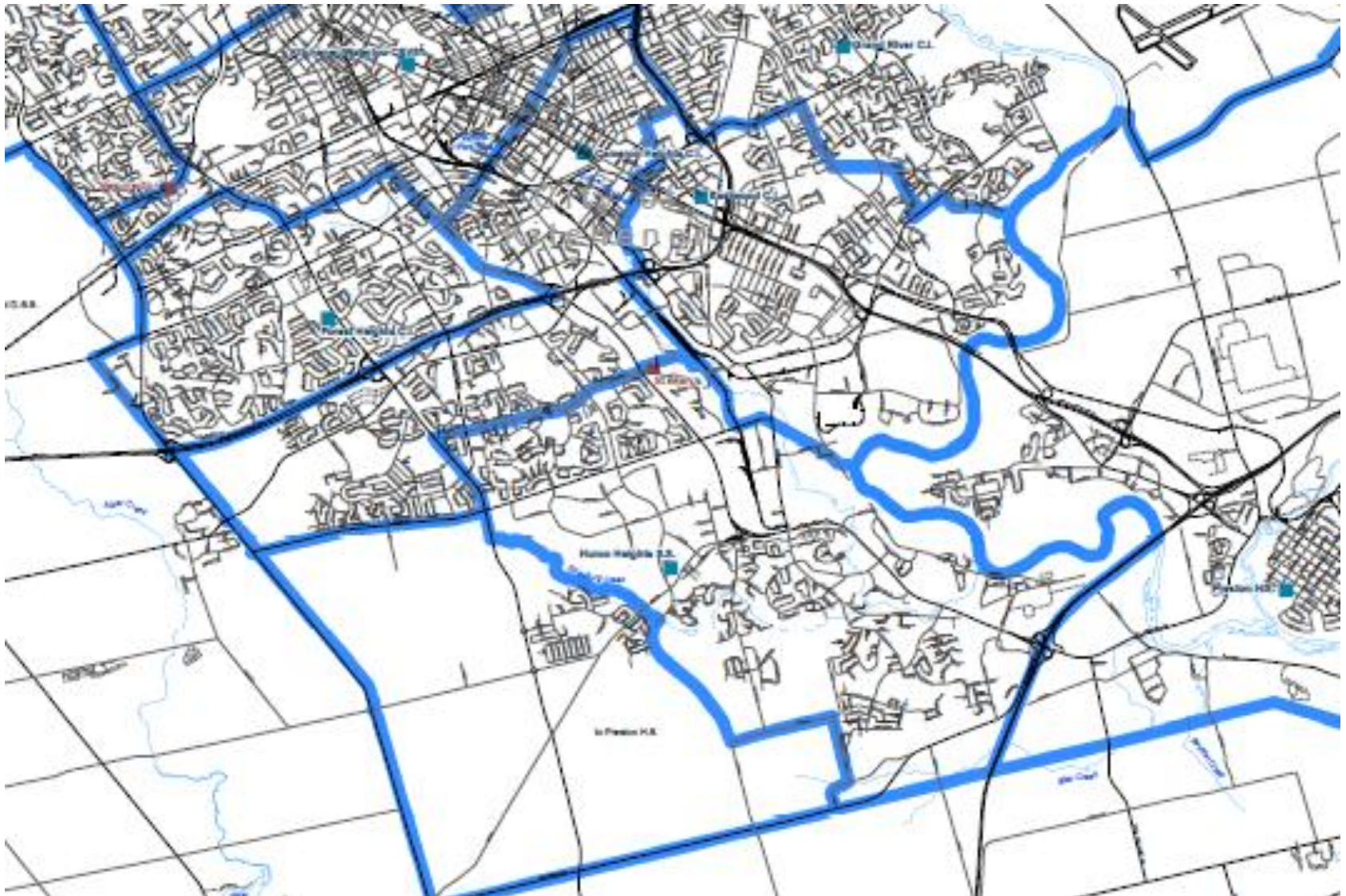
- Enrolment at this school currently exceeds the facility's permanent capacity – 6 portables are required to accommodate total enrolment.
- Population and enrolment in the school's attendance boundary is projected to increase according to both Board enrolment projections and Regional population forecasts.

## **Huron Heights S.S.**

- This is the Board's newest school and was opened in 2006/07.
- The school's enrolment currently exceeds its permanent capacity – there are currently no portables onsite and enrolment is accommodated in permanent space.
- The school is located in a major growth area in West Kitchener. There are currently a portion of students in this growth area that are bussed to Preston High School in Cambridge due to a lack of available space at Huron Heights.
- Population and enrolment in the school's boundary is forecast to continue growing.



# RECOMMENDATIONS - KITCHENER



# RECOMMENDATIONS - KITCHENER

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Short Term

- Consistent with the recommendation in the Waterloo section, that the Board consider a boundary reconfiguration between KCI and SJAM and that the Westvale attendance boundary be made a part of KCI's school boundary.
- That the Board consider a boundary reconfiguration between Huron Heights and Preston High School so that the area of Huron Heights boundary that is currently bussed to Preston be made a permanent part of Huron Heights boundary. An internal reconfiguration of space and potentially the use of temporary space will be necessary to accommodate this recommendation.
- Should enrolment levels at Cameron and Eastwood exceed the functional capacities of the schools, the Board could consider capping enrolment in their specialized programs until a more permanent accommodation strategy is reviewed.
- That the Board monitor enrolments at GRCl and review potential permanent accommodation solutions for this facility.

### Medium Term

- That the Board begin the process of examining the need and feasibility of a new west Kitchener secondary school. Enrolment growth at Cameron C.I. is due in part to growth areas in the extreme south-west portion of its boundary and outside the school's walking distances. Enrolment growth at Huron Heights has resulted in students that live within walking distance of the school being bussed to a school outside the City with available space and the area is projected to continue growing.



# RECOMMENDATIONS - KITCHENER

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Medium Term (Con't)**

- The Board currently owns a large site in an ideal location should a secondary school be deemed necessary. The site is adjacent to City of Kitchener lands and presents a good opportunity for joint partnerships.
- The option for a new secondary school should be examined in detail prior to adding any additional permanent space at Huron Heights. Should a new secondary school not be deemed viable a permanent addition at Huron Heights may be necessary.
- Should a new west Kitchener school not be viable, the Board should explore boundary reconfiguration between Cameron and either Forest Heights or KCI dependant upon enrolment levels at each facility.

### **Long Term**

- That the Board develop a long term strategy for east and west Kitchener that addresses the long term growth potential of certain areas as well as declines in the school aged population of the more urban areas in the core.

# RECOMMENDATIONS - CAMBRIDGE

- Five of the Board's secondary schools are located in Cambridge – 3 in close proximity to each other in the core (Galt) and one each in the communities of Hespeler and Preston. With the exception of Jacob Hespeler which was constructed in 1986, the average age of the Cambridge schools is almost 80 years.

## **Preston H.S**

- The school is slightly over capacity but does not require the use of portables and accommodates enrolment in permanent space.
- Enrolment is expected to increase in the short term and then stabilize.
- This school currently accommodates students from Huron Heights home boundary due to a lack of available space at Huron Heights.

## **Galt C.I.**

- This school is the Board's oldest facility and was constructed in 1853. The school is currently operating below its capacity and does not utilize portables.
- Enrolment at the school has been declining steadily over the past several years and is projected to continue doing so.
- The school has one of the lowest participation rates in the Board's jurisdiction.

# RECOMMENDATIONS - CAMBRIDGE

## **Southwood S.S.**

- The school is located in the south west portion of the Board's jurisdiction and is the Board's smallest facility.
- The school's enrolment exceeds its permanent capacity, however, the school utilizes a permanent 8 class portapak meaning it could reasonably accommodate up to 1,100 students.
- Enrolment at Southwood has averaged approximately 1,000 over the past several years and is projected to decline to between 900 and 950 in the mid-term.

## **Glenview Park S.S.**

- According to the school's permanent capacity and enrolment, the school is operating well below capacity. However, due to specialized programs and associated space requirements the school is operating at capacity.
- Enrolment in the short to mid-term is expected to decline at this facility but longer term there is significant growth and population forecast for areas in the south-eastern portion of this boundary.
- The school currently devotes considerable resources to certain specialized programs creating both space challenges and difficulties in maintaining its core program for its local population.

# RECOMMENDATIONS - CAMBRIDGE

## **Jacob Hespeler S.S.**

- The school is currently operating close to capacity and does not utilize portables.
- The school is largely a community based school with the majority of the school's enrolment not requiring transportation.
- Enrolment at the facility is projected to incur some slight short term declines and is then expected to increase again in the mid to longer term.
- There is a small section of the school's boundary that is bisected by Highway 401 which creates a natural barrier and requires those students living on the other side to be bussed.

# RECOMMENDATIONS - CAMBRIDGE



# RECOMMENDATIONS - CAMBRIDGE

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Short Term

- Consistent with the recommendation made in the Kitchener section, that the Board consider a boundary reconfiguration between Huron Heights and Preston High School so that the area of Huron Heights boundary that is currently bussed to Preston be made a permanent part of Huron Heights boundary.
- That the Board consider a boundary reconfiguration between Preston and Jacob Hespeler so that the portion of Hespeler's attendance boundary that lies south of the 401 be made part of Preston's attendance boundary.
- That the Board explore program related options for Galt, Southwood and Glenview Park to ensure that the Cambridge portion of the Board's jurisdiction is not deficient in program needs compared with other areas in the Board. Additional programs at these facilities can potentially increase enrolment levels, make use of available space and provide the basis for important partnerships within the community.

### Medium Term

- There are no medium term recommendations currently identified in Cambridge.

### Long Term

- That the Board develop a long term strategy for Cambridge that addresses potential growth as well as existing demographics. This strategy should include recognition that given current and projected enrolments, schools in Cambridge may operate with smaller student populations, while continuing to offer a complete core program.

## NEXT STEPS

- The observations in this analysis sometimes differ greatly from school to school and area to area resulting in recommendations that vary in complexity and timing.
- Some of the recommendations are dependent on other decisions or future studies.
- The Board's next step is to determine those recommendations whereby the process could start immediately and set a course of action towards implementation of the recommendations (i.e Board Motions/Public Consultation etc.)
- Identify recommendations that require further Board study or direction and determine a course of action to begin the required study/analysis process.