



**Waterloo Region  
District School Board**

## **WEST WATERLOO ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS BOUNDARY STUDY**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q: When is the new Vista Hills Public School opening?**

Construction for the new Vista Hills Public School is expected to start in May/June 2015. The construction schedule is on target to allow the school to open its doors to students for the first day of classes in September 2016.

**Q: When will boundary changes take place?**

It is anticipated that a report and recommendations resulting from the West Waterloo Boundary Study will be presented to the Board of Trustees in early fall 2015 (either Sept. or Nov.). The Board of Trustees makes the final decision regarding boundary changes. Should the Board approve changes, implementation of those changes would begin in September 2016.

**Q: Why does the Board use portable classrooms instead of expanding schools (additions) when enrolment exceeds the current school size?**

It is rare for a school within the first 10 to 15 years of its operation to be without portables. When building schools, the Board has to consider the size of school that will be required for the long-term (50+ years). As neighbourhoods mature, student populations tend to level out or decline. If a school is built for its peak enrolment that means that a school may have empty classrooms for the majority of its lifespan. Legislative changes dictated by the Ministry of Education may also impact the utilization of a school. Recently, the reduction in class sizes and introduction of Full-Day Kindergarten has resulted in greater space needs to accommodate the same number of students sometimes resulting in portables or permanent additions at schools.

**Q: Will the new school have French Immersion classes?**

It has yet to be determined if the new Vista Hills Public School will have French Immersion. Typically the process for implementing French Immersion at new schools is to grow the program starting with Grade 1. Grade 1 French Immersion classes are often added to schools when there is enough interest generated from within the school's boundary. For more information on French programs at the Board, go to: [www.wrdsb.ca/french](http://www.wrdsb.ca/french)

**Q: What grades will be offered at the new school?**

The new Vista Hills Public School is being constructed to accommodate Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8 students.

**Q: If my child has to change schools, will the same extra-curricular activities be available to them?**

The number and nature of clubs and extra-curricular activities is determined by the interests and participation of staff in the current year at each school.

**Q: If boundaries change, what happens to the teachers, do they move with the students?**

There is a procedure and formula applied to staffing when major boundary changes occur. The number of positions at the receiving school held for teachers at the school losing the students follows the formula set out in the procedure. All qualified teachers who are interested in changing schools may identify themselves to the receiving Principal (voluntary transfer). If the number of teachers who declare an interest is greater than the formula amount, the Principal will select the teachers based on individual conferences (interviews).

**Q: What are the bell times at the schools?**

The following bell times have been confirmed for September 2015:

School	AM Bell	PM Bell
Abraham Erb Public School	9:10 AM	3:30 PM
Edna Staebler Public School	8:35 AM	2:55 PM
Laurelwood Public School	8:40 AM	3:00 PM
Mary Johnston Public School	9:10 AM	3:30 PM

Please note that these bell times may change in 2016 with the introduction of Vista Hills Public School and the resulting boundary changes. The bell times for Vista Hills Public School will be known closer to the opening date (likely mid-February 2016).

**Q: How are new schools or additions funded/How are my taxes funding capital projects?**

Prior to 1998, school boards received some provincial capital grants, but they also raised taxes for operating and capital purposes. In 1998, the Province introduced an allocation-based funding model, which means the Province sets the tax rates and school board funding is a provincially determined. Boards have limited ability to raise funds for locally determined needs. In 2009-10, the Ministry of Education (Ministry) reviewed the funding approach to existing capital programs and the effectiveness of the former New Pupil Places (NPP) funding model in light of declining enrolment. As a result, a number of changes were introduced in 2010-11. The current Capital Priorities Grant (CPG) program used to fund major capital construction projects is a debt support grant that does not fluctuate with enrolment. This funding is allocated on an annual basis for two to three year capital needs. Boards are required to submit business cases for each project request, and project requests must align with Ministry priorities.

**Q: There was just a boundary study done in 2007 in this area, why is the Board reviewing the area again?**

The boundary study completed in June 2007 recommended the boundaries for Edna Staebler Public School which opened in 2008. Since then, the neighbourhood around Edna Staebler Public School has continued to yield high enrolments and the Province introduced Full Day Kindergarten, doubling the number of kindergarten students at the Board's facilities on a daily basis. Further, residential development on the West side of Waterloo has expanded, adding the Vista Hills neighbourhood, and requiring an additional school. This boundary study provides the opportunity to create a better balance of enrolment at the schools on the West side of Waterloo and establish a boundary for the new Vista Hills Public School.

**Q: Will there be a Child Care provider at the new Vista Hills Public School?**

The Board sent out a request for proposals to determine if there was a 3<sup>rd</sup> party child care provider interested in co-building a child care centre with the school; however, no parties were interested. For information on the Board's Before and After School programs, please visit: [www.wrdsb.ca/beforeafter](http://www.wrdsb.ca/beforeafter)