

# Halton District School Board

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Report Number: 20022 REVISED

Date: February 10, 2020

**FOR DECISION**

TO: The Chair and Members of the Halton District School Board

FROM: Scott Podrebarac, Superintendent of Education  
Stuart Miller, Director of Education

RE: **Acton Boundary Review**

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## **Background:**

The following motion M19-0137 ([from Report 19109](#)) was approved by the Board of Trustees on October 2, 2019:

*Be it resolved that the Halton District School Board direct staff to undertake an elementary and secondary school boundary review for the Acton community in the Town of Halton Hills, which will include schools in ERA 126 (McKenzie-Smith Bennett and Robert Little Public Schools) and SRA 107 (Acton District High School) with an expected completion date of no later than June 2020.*

The Halton District School Board is committed to providing the best educational opportunities and learning environment for its students. The Board has authority under Section 171 (1), s.7 of the Education Act to determine the number and kind of schools to be maintained and the attendance area for each school. With this mandate and authority in mind, a working group of past and current Principals and Superintendents, all with extensive experiences working in our three Acton schools, met and proposed a new grade configuration of our three schools in Acton that would offer Acton students enhanced learning opportunities, access to improved learning environments and enhanced community supports. This proposal was further supported by the [2018/19 LTAP](#) showing all three Acton schools will experience stable enrollments that forecast a small loss of students through the 2028 school year (*appended*).

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## **Recommendation:**

*Be it resolved that the Halton District School Board adjust the grade configurations for the elementary schools in ERA 126 (McKenzie-Smith Bennett PS and Robert Little P.S.) and SRA 107 (Acton District High School) as outlined in Option 1 and detailed in Report 20022.*

*Be it resolved that the Halton District School Board adjust the grade configurations for the elementary schools in ERA 126 (McKenzie-Smith Bennett PS and Robert Little P.S.) and SRA 107 (Acton District High School) as outlined in Option 1 and detailed in Report 20022; whereby the grade configuration for Robert Little PS takes effect for September 2020 and the grade configurations for McKenzie-Smith Bennett PS and Acton District High School take effect for September 2021.*

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## **Boundary Review**

The development of a potential new grade configuration (later called Option 1) emerged from this working group mentioned above. The group unanimously supported the following reconfiguration of schools (*See Appendix A for Map of Acton schools*).

<b>Current</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
Robert Little Public School (K-Grade 5)	Robert Little Public School (K-Grade 6)
McKenzie-Smith Bennett Public School (K-Grade 8)	McKenzie-Smith Bennett Public School (K-Grade 6)
Acton District High School (Grades 9-12)	Acton District High School (Grades 7-12)

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After consultation with Administrative Council it was determined a Boundary Review Process was the most thorough and consultative way to fully explore the Acton Grade Reconfiguration with all stakeholders.

The procedure for the Acton Boundary Review was implemented as per the Halton District School Board Administrative Procedure: [School Boundary Reviews \(2016\)](#).

A Boundary Review Steering Committee (BRSC) was established to lead the school boundary review process. The committee members included Halton Hills Superintendent Scott Podrebarac; Superintendent of Education and Boundary Review Committee (BRC) Co-Chair, John Pennyfather; General Manager of Planning, Domenico Renzella; Senior Analyst of Planning, Laureen Choi; Analyst of Planning, Mitchell Gundy; the Trustee for the affected areas, Trustee Jeanne Gray; and a Trustee from outside the affected areas and BRC Co-Chair, Trustee Leah Reynolds.

The Boundary Review Steering Committee (BRSC) initially met on November 13, 2019. At this meeting the BRSC determined that Pathway 1 was the most appropriate pathway despite the limited number of options that would result from the process. Given the proposed grade reconfigurations would impact all students, current and future, in Acton and its surrounding areas the BRSC felt it was important to engage with the community through the formation of a formal Boundary Review Committee. A timeline of the process for the Acton Boundary Review is outlined in Appendix 2.

The three affected Acton school communities were informed of the boundary review and the Public Information Meeting by email through SchoolMessenger on [November 15, 2019](#). There are approximately 1350 Kindergarten to Grade 12 Halton District School Board students residing in the study area.

The BRSC met on six occasions in the time period between November 2019 and January 2020. Board staff from the Planning Department, Superintendents and Trustees reviewed pertinent information to the boundary review. Some of the work BRSC members focused on was:

- Planning the BRC meetings and Public Information evening,
- Considering the full rationale for Option 1,
- Gathering feedback from the BRC members, and
- Considering all public comments received and responding to these via a regularly updated FAQ.

The following evaluation criteria from the Halton District School Board's Boundary Review administrative procedure were referenced throughout the process:

- **Viability of Program** – How many students are required to offer and maintain programs in an educationally sound and fiscally responsible way
- **Balance of Overall Enrolment** - Is student access to programs, resources and extracurricular opportunities being maximized? Is over and underutilization of buildings avoided to the extent possible?
- **Stable, Long-Term Boundaries** - Do the projections show long term stability and result in avoiding the need for additional boundary changes in the short term?
- **Transportation** - Does the option demonstrate cost effective transportation?
- **Student Experience** - Does the option demonstrate an effort to reduce the number of school moves students have experienced? Are there program enhancements to be had? Can enrollments be positively impacted through greater retention of students?
- **Other:** Are there community impacts?

The BRSC initially reviewed the single option developed by Board staff. The BRSC assessed the option as per the established criteria indicated above. Given the limited scope of this boundary review and the study areas, only one option was generated by the BRSC. As such, [Option 1](#) was selected for the Public Information Meeting (see *Appendix 3*).

Throughout the process, the public was encouraged to share concerns and questions with board staff through the email created for this boundary review ([actonboundaryreview@hdsb.ca](mailto:actonboundaryreview@hdsb.ca)). All meeting

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presentations, the generated option, an updated FAQ and all related information were posted on the website: [Acton Boundary Review Website](#).

Approximately 65 people attended the January 14th Public Information Meeting. The audience also included members of the Boundary Review Steering Committee, the Boundary Review Committee, Stuart Miller, Director of Education and the Chair of the Board, Andrea Grebenc. The [Public Meeting Presentation](#) was posted on the Board's website. At this meeting, Board staff shared information on the process and the recommended option, responded to questions regarding the process, and explained the feedback process. Via two separate community SchoolMessenger emails the public was asked to provide their insights directly through a link provided to the community via email and on the Board's website. Laptops were also available at the Public Information Meeting for attendees to give feedback. All feedback was to be submitted by Friday January 24 at 4 p.m. using the [Boundary Review Public Information Feedback Form](#). In total 38 responses were received and shared with the Boundary Review Steering Committee.

**The following themes were identified from the feedback process and through the first two BRC meetings:**

- Apprehension around the developmental readiness and questions around safety and exposure to high risk activities in a Grade 7-12 school
- Concerns around low enrollments at ADHS and its impacts on course offerings and extracurriculars
- Support for fewer transitions for Robert Little students
- Support for improved Grade 8 to 9 transitions and the potential for slowly growing ADHS numbers
- Desire for more specifics around how a Grade 7-12 school would operate
- Assurances that enough space was available in ADHS to hold the Grade 7 and 8s

The BRC held their final meeting on January 28, 2020. The focus of the meeting was to analyze the data from the Public Information Feedback Forms and address the predominant concerns related to parental fears and uncertainties tied to a Grade 7-12 school organization before asking BRC members for their final recommendations. Michelle Lemaire, Principal of Burlington Central School, was invited to present to BRC members and those in the gallery on the specifics of a Grade 7-12 model. Burlington Central, similar to Aldershot School, has been operating as a Grade 7-12 school in the HDSB since 2002. Principal Lemaire answered many questions from BRC members and the gallery following her presentation.

At the conclusion of the final BRC meeting on January 28, 2020 all members of the BRC were asked to make a recommendation individually and speak to this. Given the single option being considered, the BRC members were asked to frame their recommendation within three categories: Keep the Status Quo in Acton; Accept Option 1 as presented; or Accept Option 1 with certain considerations.

Five BRC members chose to support Option 1 as presented and one BRC member chose the status quo. Those in support cited:

- less transitions for elementary students
- consistency in the community, both elementary schools K-6
- easier transition from elementary to secondary
- possibly retain more students in Acton District High school
- increase course selection at Acton District High School
- increase extracurricular opportunities at Acton District High School
- mentorship opportunities for High School students
- more opportunities for community programs
- addresses the longer term needs of the community
- better optimization of school space without the need for portables

The BRC member who chose the Status Quo cited:

- does not feel the retention of students in Acton District High School will happen
- does not feel the course selection will increase

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- the school is not set up to segregate the Grade 7 & 8 students

Following the final BRC meeting, the BRSC met and the outcome of the discussion was that the BRSC recommended to the Director of Education that Option 1 would:

- best meet the criteria as established by the BRSC; and
- would present enhanced learning options and potential for improved access to community supports in Acton.

Subsequently, the Director and Administrative Council reviewed the recommendation from the Boundary Review Steering Committee and confirmed that Option 1:

- offers fewer transitions for Robert Little students;
- provides for improved Grade 8-9 transitions for ADHS students;
- serves to optimize enrollments at ADHS through greater retention of students from Grade 8 to Grade 9;
- balances enrollments in two K-6 schools that better align with the Primary and Junior curriculums;
- provides opportunities to offer community supports in the underutilized space at MSB (interest from EarlyON provider already);
- diversifies learning spaces at ADHS can provide a greater level of engagement for Grade 7 and 8 students;
- is the preferred option of the BRC and the BRSC; and
- addresses the recommendation in the Board motion.

As a result, the Director recommends the Halton District School Board adjust the grade configurations for the affected schools in ERA 126 and SRA 7 as outlined in Option 1, effective September 2021. This option will follow the implementation timelines detailed in Appendix 3.

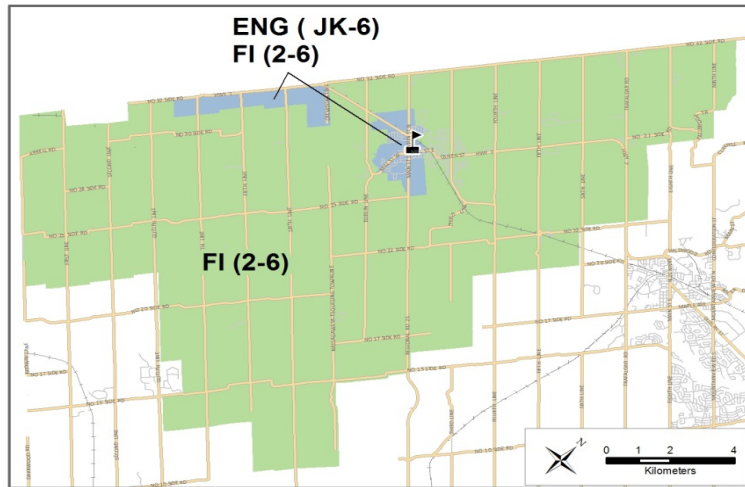
Board staff will support the transition of students from McKenzie-Smith Bennett and Robert Little Public School to Acton District High School, through a comprehensive integration process throughout 2020 and 2021. The integration process will be advised by a formal Integration Committee made up of staff, students, parents and the area Trustee and will look at all facets of a successful and well detailed transition for students.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Scott Podrebarac,  
Superintendent of Education*

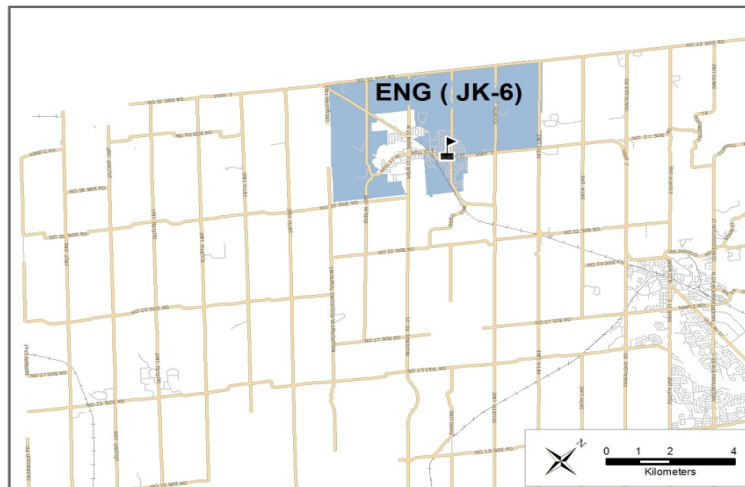
*Stuart Miller,  
Director of Education*

## Option 1



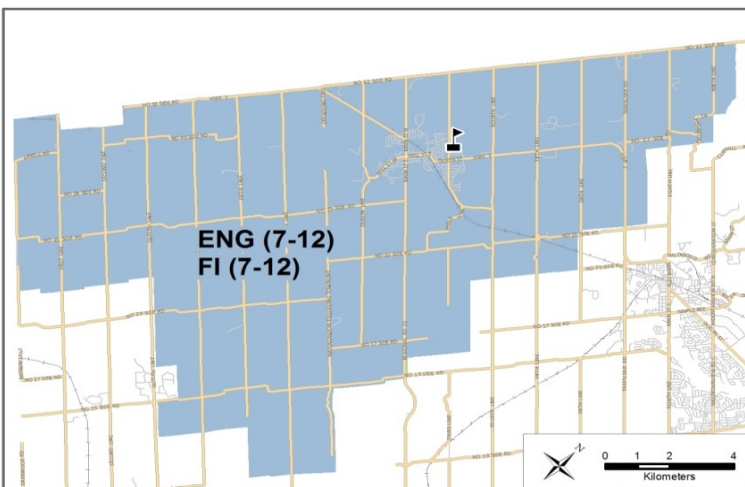
### Robert Little PS

ENG JK - 6  
FI 2 - 6



### McKenzie-Smith Bennett PS

ENG JK - 6



### Acton Elementary/ Acton District HS

ENG 7 - 8  
FI 7 - 8  
ENG 9 - 12  
FI 9 - 12

#### Acton Boundary Review Study

Option 1 --> changes implemented for September 2020 and September 2021

##### Robert Little PS

- In September 2020, school becomes a JK-6 ENG and 2-6 FI school, keeps Behaviour Resource class
  - no change to current ENG and FI boundaries

##### McKenzie-Smith Bennett PS

- In September 2020, becomes JK-8 ENG and 7-8 FI school, keeps Learning Disability and Life Skills programs
  - no change to current ENG and FI boundaries
- In September 2021, becomes a JK-6 ENG school, keeps Learning Disability and Life Skills programs
  - grade 7 and 8 ENG and FI students move to Acton District HS to create Acton Elementary 7-8 program
  - no change to ENG boundary, FI program ends and moves to Acton Elementary

##### Acton Elementary/Acton District HS

- In September 2021, Acton Elementary is created and is a 7-8 ENG and FI program, Acton District HS remains a 9-12 ENG and FI school
- no change to current 9-12 ENG and FI boundaries, also become the 7-8 ENG and FI boundaries

##### Notes:

2019 is enrolment as of October 31, 2019

ENG = English Program

FI = French Immersion Program

SPED = Self Contained Special Program

School	Program	OTG	T. Port	T. Cap.	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Robert Little PS	ENG	400	8	584	200	230	239	235	239	239	237	235	234	233	230
	FI				77	90	85	77	81	80	81	81	80	79	
	SPED				2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	
	<b>Total</b>				<b>279</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>311</b>
	<b>Available / Shortage of Pupil Places</b>	121	78	74	86	78	79	80	83	84	86	89			
<b>Percent Utilization</b>					70%	80%	81%	79%	81%	80%	80%	79%	79%	79%	78%
McKenzie-Smith Bennett PS	ENG	772	7	933	539	503	328	332	317	309	314	311	311	310	307
	FI				68	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	SPED				29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	
	<b>Total</b>				<b>636</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>336</b>
	<b>Available / Shortage of Pupil Places</b>	136	202	415	411	426	434	429	432	432	433	436			
<b>Percent Utilization</b>					82%	74%	46%	47%	45%	44%	44%	44%	44%	44%	
Acton Elem	ENG						148	138	153	161	145	138	139	137	137
	FI						39	40	32	26	29	28	28	28	
	SPED						0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	<b>Total</b>						<b>186</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>165</b>
Acton District HS	ENG	630	9	819	390	402	425	444	428	418	422	418	413	412	398
	FI				55	59	47	45	46	48	46	43	40	36	38
	SPED				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	<b>Total</b>				<b>445</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>436</b>
	<b>Total (Elem + Sec)</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>666</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>621</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>600</b>			
<b>Available / Shortage of Pupil Places</b>					185	169	-28	-36	-28	-23	-12	3	9	18	30
<b>Percent Utilization</b>					71%	73%	104%	106%	104%	104%	102%	100%	99%	97%	95%
<b>Study Total</b>					<b>1360</b>	<b>1352</b>	<b>1340</b>	<b>1341</b>	<b>1327</b>	<b>1312</b>	<b>1306</b>	<b>1285</b>	<b>1277</b>	<b>1265</b>	<b>1247</b>

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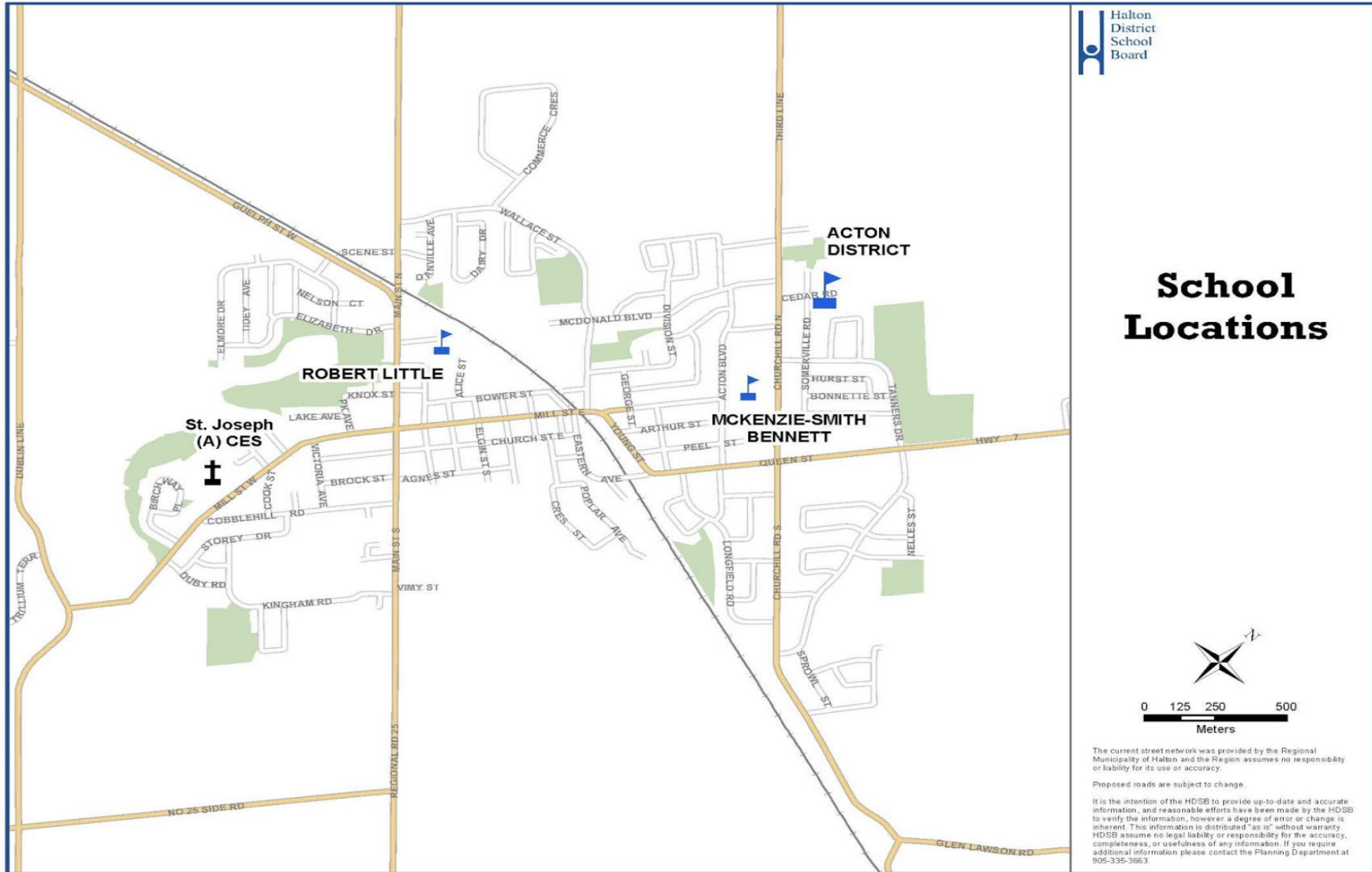
The current street network was provided by the Regional Municipality of Halton and the Region assumes no responsibility or liability for its use or accuracy.

### Option 1

School	Program	OTG	T. Port	T. Cap.	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	
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	<b>Total (Elem + Sec)</b>					<b>445</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>666</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>621</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>600</b>
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<b>Study Total</b>					<b>1360</b>	<b>1352</b>	<b>1340</b>	<b>1341</b>	<b>1327</b>	<b>1312</b>	<b>1306</b>	<b>1285</b>	<b>1277</b>	<b>1265</b>	<b>1247</b>	

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## Appendix 1: Acton Schools Map



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## **Appendix 2: Acton Boundary Process Review Timelines**

### **BRSC Meetings**

Wednesday, November 13, 2019  
Tuesday, November 26, 2019  
Tuesday December 3, 2019

Wednesday December 18, 2019  
Wednesday January 22, 2020  
Tuesday January 28, 2020

### **BRC Meetings**

Tuesday November 26, 2019  
Tuesday December 3, 2019  
Tuesday January 28, 2020

### **Communications Timelines**

Boundary Review (BR) Announced  
Initial Communication to Community  
Communication Re: Initial BRC Meeting  
Communication Re: Public Information Meeting  
Communication Re: Final BRC Meeting

Wednesday October 2, 2019  
Friday November 15, 2019  
Friday November 22, 2019  
Wednesday January 8, 2020  
Thursday January 23, 2020

### **Process Timelines**

Public Information Meeting  
Deadline for Public Feedback  
Administrative Council Meeting  
BR Board Report Posted  
Board Meeting for Information  
Board Meeting for Decision

Tuesday January 14, 2020  
Friday January 24, 2020  
Monday February 10, 2020  
Friday February 14, 2020  
Wednesday February 19, 2020  
Wednesday March 4, 2020



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## **Appendix 3:**

### **Proposed Option 1 Implementation Details**

#### **Effective September 2020:**

- Robert Little retains all Grade 6 students becomes K-6 dual track school

#### **Integration Committee formed September 2020**

- Will include parent representatives from all schools, teachers, administrators, area Trustee and Superintendent
- Include Student voice for students in Grades 7-12
- Involve Community partners

#### **Effective September 2021**

- MSB becomes K-6 single track English program school; retains Life Skills program for Grade 5 and 6; offers Learning Disabilities\* class(es) for Grade 5 and 6
- ADHS becomes becomes Grade 7-12 Dual Track school (English and French Immersion programs); offers Learning Disabilities\* class for Grade 7 and 8
- Placement of students in the Life Skills\* program at MSB will be made in consultation with parents to collaboratively choose the most appropriate program for Grades 7 and 8 (stay at MSB, transition to Silver Creek, start in Community Pathways Program at GDHS).

*\* Note: the location and number of all Special Education classes in any geographic area of the Board is based on the number of students needing that specific placement and is at the discretion of the Superintendent of Student Services*