**Bison Run Catchment Proposal**

We acknowledge and regret that the matter of school construction and catchment has caused uncertainty for families. We have been engaged in a lengthy and thorough consultation with respect to creating a long term and sustainable catchment for Bison Run School. Some of the key points in the decision-making process are outlined below:

* The province has for many decades directed school divisions to utilize available space in existing schools before new schools are approved.
  + The schools in Whyte Ridge currently have space for students living in Whyte Ridge and nearby communities such as Bridgwater Lakes and Bridgwater Trails
  + The schools in Waverley Heights have space for student living in Waverley Heights, Bridgwater Forest, and for some of the students living in Prairie Pointe
  + Bonnycastle has space for the FI students living in the Bridgwaters
  + Viscount Alexander and Crane have space for French Immersion students for a fairly large part of Pembina Trails School Division
* We conducted three public consultations
  + Acadia School in 2019
  + 2019-2020 at South Pointe
  + On TEAMS during the pandemic
* We ran a ThoughtExchange to get feedback from our families
* We engaged Harris Consulting in 2022 to meet with parents of several schools, principals, and to conduct another online survey
* The plans that we shared over these past three years were all DRAFT versions. They were not the final product.
* Two new schools have been promised to Pembina Trails
  + Prairie Pointe
  + Bridgwater Lakes
* Bison Run School will be a K-8 School (English Program) that will eventually serve the community of Bison Run, which is in early stages of development but will be the home to hundreds of students in a very short time. Our plan therefore provides a way for us to both alleviate enrolment pressures at South Pointe and accommodate the growing population of Prairie Pointe where there are no available seats in schools.
* This imperfect plan before the Board allows us to ensure that students currently without a place to attend school have a place and provides for a long-term sustainable plan for the new school in Bison Run
* As soon as the new schools in Bridgwater Lakes and Prairie Pointe are ready, students living in those communities will attend there.

Establishing catchments in new neighbourhoods is challenging. What follows is an attempt to answer some of the more frequently asked questions coming from our public.

**Q1: The plan presented in 2019 is not the same as the catchment plan now. Why?**

A1: The 2019 draft changed between 2019 and the anticipated opening in 2023 due to variables changing over time. These include but are not limited to:

* The number of anticipated homes in Bison Run has increased. Although it is hard to imagine when looking at an empty field, this school could soon be filled by children living right in the Bison Run neighbourhood. Space must be reserved for these children.
* École South Pointe has exceeded capacity. By shifting some students who live closest to Bison Run the Division is better able to manage enrolment at both South Pointe and Bison Run.
* Enrolment growth has slowed at other schools where there is capacity. As such, some catchment area changes are not necessary to control over-crowding at this time.

**Q2: Why is Bridgwater Trails no longer part of the Bison Run plan?**

A2: Students living in Bridgwater Trails are able to continue to attend Whyte Ridge and Henry G. Izatt because space is available. At least in the short term, families could apply under [Schools of Choice](https://www.pembinatrails.ca/page/798/school-of-choice) for 2023-2024 if they prefer that their children attend Bison Run.

**Q3: Will students who are expected to leave South Pointe to attend Bison Run have school bus transportation?**

A3: Yes. Under policy, this interim catchment area qualifies for bussing.

**Q4: How will students currently living in Bridgwater Centre get to school?**

A4: We anticipate using adult crossing guards to help make the walk as safe as possible.

**Q5: Will every student living in the interim catchment areas be forced to move to Bison Run?**

A5: No. Students in grade 8 in 2022-2023 will not be expected to leave South Pointe and HGI for the last months of their K-8 education. Students in grade 7 will also be given the option to stay. Since Bison Run does not offer French Immersion programming, these catchment changes do not affect French Immersion students.

**Q6: How will we help our students prepare to potentially move from their schools partway through the school year?**

A6: To the greatest extent possible, students at Whyte Ridge, Henry G. Izatt and South Pointe School who will be moving to Bison Run School in 2023 will be clustered as classroom communities in September 2022.

**Q7:** **Will Bison Run School take students from out of catchment under Schools of Choice?**

A7: It is anticipated that there will be some consideration for in division Schools of Choice applications as per guidelines.

**Q8:** **Where can I find policies?**

A8: [School catchments](https://sbptsdstor.blob.core.windows.net/media/Default/frf/5/JC%20School%20Catchment%20Areas.pdf)

[Schools of Choice](https://www.pembinatrails.ca/page/798/school-of-choice)

[Transportation](https://sbptsdstor.blob.core.windows.net/media/Default/medialib/eeaa-student-eligibility-for-transport-walkers-and-riders.72b8c68281.pdf)