

the torch



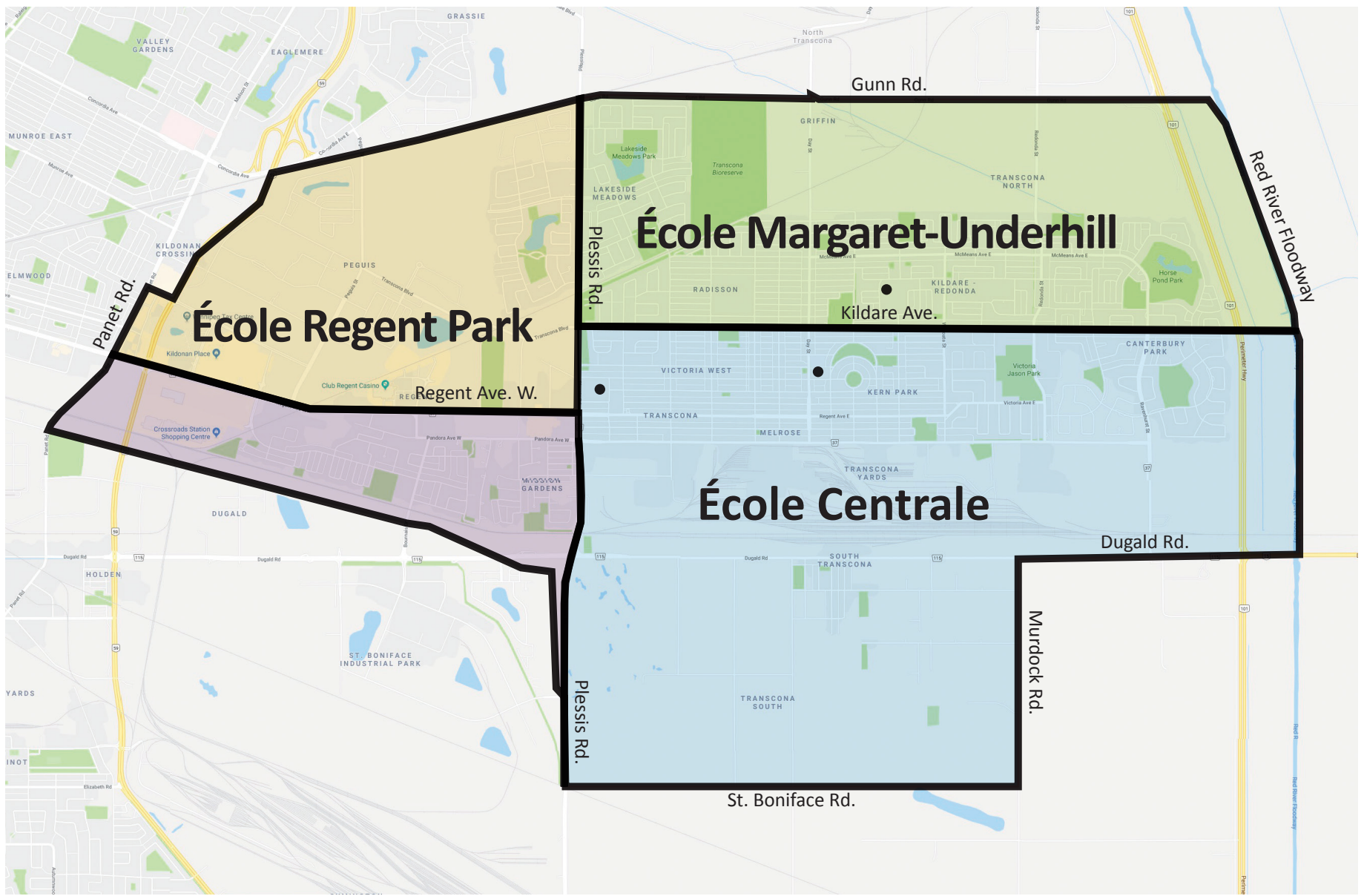
Transcona growth translates into French immersion realignment

Even though the pandemic sometimes makes it feel like time has stopped, nothing has stayed still in RETSD. There is growth in the Transcona area of the division, thanks to new developments in Devonshire and Summerlea (previously called Northlands) and the expansion of the Canterbury area. Your board has been planning for the resulting increase in student numbers.

The division is also seeing an increased enrolment in the French immersion program and transition plans are starting to roll out to welcome these students. New boundaries are in place as of September 2022 for French immersion schools and the transition has begun with Grade 4 French immersion students in the area moving to École Regent Park in September 2021. Other grades will move as renovations at the school are completed. Proposed for September 2023, École Margaret-Underhill and École Centrale will become K–5 French immersion schools.

The board, division, and community are excited about the proposed new school for the Peguis area to help meet the increased student numbers. The province is in negotiations to purchase the land for the school. The division cannot start planning the design or construction of the new school until given approval from the province since it is responsible for the purchase and the cost of the new school. The board will let the community know more as soon as it is can.





French immersion boundary changes

Green: Grades K–4 students will attend École Margaret-Underhill as of September 2022

Blue: Grades K–4 will attend École Centrale as of September 2022

Orange: Grade 4 students from École Margaret-Underhill will attend École Regent Park as of September 2022

Grades K–3 students will continue at École Margaret-Underhill for the 2022–23 school year

Purple: Grade 4 students from École Centrale will attend École Regent Park as of September 2022; Grades K–3 students will continue at École Centrale for the 2022–23 school year



Board executive changes

We extend our thanks to Keith Morrison who stepped down on December 31 as vice-chair of the board of trustees and we add a special welcome back to Colleen Carswell who will be assuming the role of vice-chair. Both trustees provide thoughtful insight to support the board in its important work.

Modernizing upgrades in our schools

Building upgrades will help the division provide positive and healthy learning spaces as we welcome more students to our schools. The board has also planned for a combination of the increase in student numbers and enrolment in French immersion, leading to a shift in the French immersion catchment boundaries. It also includes upgrades at École Regent Park—the addition of four classrooms and a gym—to increase student capacity to 700 as part of the French immersion boundary adjustments.



At Westview School, a large-scope construction project is nearing completion. It involves a complete building envelope upgrade with new windows, roofing, newly insulated exterior walls, and new classroom millwork. The project also includes a complete mechanical system upgrade, with the installation of a new state-of-the-art boiler system and new HVAC equipment. Although the HVAC system was not installed because of COVID-19, the timing is great as it provides an additional layer of ventilation protection for the Westview students and staff. Due to the extent of the project and the temporary lack of ventilation during construction, the 191 Westview students and over 30 staff temporarily moved to Radisson School from September until mid-January. Thanks to the warm welcome from the Radisson students, staff, and community, the transition went smoothly.



Big changes also are under way at Bernie Wolfe School. Completed to date are three of the four phases of the project, including the closure of three open concept areas and renovating them into 20 new classrooms, and the creation of a consolidated Student Services suite and new washrooms, including new staff and gender-neutral washrooms. The final phase consists of building a new office for guidance counsellors and a student work area. This phase is expected to be completed by early May 2022.



If you've passed by Chief Peguis Middle School and École Springfield Heights School in recent months, you'll have noticed work being done at these schools. Chief Peguis now boasts a new roof with skylights and new windows, while Springfield Heights now has a second-storey addition, an elevator, and a new accessible washroom.



More upgrades are on the horizon. The division is currently waiting to hear from Central Services about the significant construction project planned for Donwood School.



“The Donwood envelope and mechanical systems replacement project has been tendered and we’re looking forward to seeing this significant upgrade get underway,” says trustee Susan Olynik. “It’s exciting to see our schools getting these improvements and the Donwood project, as with those at our other schools, represents an investment in education for years to come.”

When the project launches at Donwood School, it will include a complete building envelope upgrade, with new windows, upgraded insulation in walls, new roofing with upgraded insulation, and new masonry veneer. The mechanical systems upgrade will include a new state-of-the-art boiler system and the replacement of all HVAC equipment.



A big thank you... to all of you

The pandemic threw us all for a loop and while we continue to face some struggles, it's also reminded us of how important River East Transcona School Division is—not just to education, but to one another.

“The board of trustees thanks all our staff whose unwavering efforts and commitment have kept our students safe, engaged, and continually learning, whether they worked as an educator in a classroom or in any other

number of vital roles within the division,” said long-serving trustee Peter Kotyk. “We thank the parents, extended families, and caregivers who have made big adjustments to keep their children’s education moving forward. And finally, we thank our dedicated students for adapting to the challenging, changing ways of recent learning while keeping their imaginations and enthusiasm intact. All the best on your RETSD educational journey.”

Throughout the pandemic, the people in the division—staff, students, and the community—have commiserated with one another, inspired each other, motivated each other, and supported each other. And even though it's been a challenge, it's one that's been met and made a bit easier because we've come together as a community for the sake of something bigger: education.

Farewell to Kelly Barkman, superintendent/CEO



You can't really think about River East Transcona without thinking about Kelly Barkman.

As the superintendent/CEO of the division, Kelly's steady hand and dedication to education has helped steer the direction for student learning for the past decade. But the time has come for Kelly to chart a new course, beginning with his retirement.

“It's been a true honour to have worked beside Kelly,” said board chair Jerry Sodomlak.

“His passion for education and commitment to our five pillars of culture, excellency, equity, celebration, and communication have always been an inspiration for others, especially during the recent challenges of the pandemic. On behalf of the board, I extend our best wishes for the next chapter of his life—and we're sure RETSD will remain part of that in some way.”

The board has begun the process of searching for a new superintendent.

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For more information about the board of trustees, visit: www.retsd.mb.ca/BoardofTrustees