

To:	Warden Hicks and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	August 08, 2019
Subject / Report No:	SSR-CW-10-19
Title:	School-Based Capital Child Care Projects – Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board Update
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Reviewed by:	Barb Fedy
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	
Status:	Recommendation adopted by Committee of the Whole as presented as per Resolution <i>CW173-19</i> ;

Recommendation

1. That **SSR-CW-10-19 regarding School-Based Child Care Capital Projects Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board Update be received; and**
2. That **Council endorse the staff recommendation to proceed with the school-based capital build child care projects with the Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board; and**
3. That **the Director of Social Services be authorized to execute and sign the Joint Confirmation form with the Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board before August 31, 2019.**

Executive Summary

The Ministry of Education's 2017 Early Years Capital Program has approved capital construction proposals to retrofit existing childcare spaces and create additional childcare spaces at two school locations. A decision is required on whether the County wishes to execute the joint confirmation with the Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board (BGCD SB).

Grey County provides fee subsidy for eligible families and operating funds for licensed childcare providers from an envelope of funds provided by the province.

Background and Discussion

The 2017-2018 Early Years Capital Program (EYCP) is an investment of \$1.6 billion in capital funding for school boards across Ontario to support school-based “stand-alone” child care capital builds and retrofits to create new licensed child care spaces for children aged 0 to 4 years. The EYCP supports the MEDU vision for child care and early years under the Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework, as well as the commitments made in Ontario’s Action Plan under the Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (ELCC).

Further to the province’s request for capital funding applications, Children’s Services supported local school boards by reviewing each submission to ensure alignment with the local and provincial priorities, resulting in three school board submissions for EYCP funding.

In December 2017, the MEDU announced that three (3) local school boards were approved for a total of five (5) school-based child care capital build projects. Further to report SSR-CW-09-19, which reviewed the capital projects with the Bluewater District School Board and the Conseil Scolaire Catholique Providence, this report is specific to the projects being undertaken by Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board (BGCDSB).

Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board (BGCDSB)

Site	Age Group	Current Spaces	Proposed Spaces	Net Change	Notes
St Basil	Infant	0	20	20	98 space increase (significant). Inquiry had been submitted to MEDU regarding adjusting the net new spaces.
	Toddler	0	30	30	
	Pre School	0	48	48	
Notre Dame	Infant	0	20	20	64 space increase (significant). Inquiry has been submitted to MEDU regarding adjusting the net new spaces
	Toddler	10	30	20	
	Pre School	24	48	24	
Total Spaces		34	196	162	

In April 2019 Grey County Children’s Services was asked by MEDU to confirm support for ongoing operating funding within the existing child care allocation, for the additional licensed child care spaces being created as part of school-based capital builds.

Each Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) determines how to distribute a fixed allocation of funds between the General Operating Grant (GOG) and Child Care Fee Subsidy. Child Care Fee Subsidy is intended to assist individual families that meet the income testing with their licensed child care costs. The GOG is intended to assist with increased access and affordability to licensed child care for all families. Operators are encouraged to use the GOG to help keep the cost of their licensed spaces low.

Grey County child care operators have kept the cost of licensed spaces on the lower end of the provincial averages.

Increasing the allocation to GOG so that each operator maintains their per space funding at current levels with the addition of 162 new spaces, would reduce the funds available for Child Care Fee Subsidy. A reduction in GOG may result in child care operators increasing rates to defray daily operating costs.

Presently, Grey County does not have a waiting list for fee subsidy, however demand is stable and reducing the available subsidy funds would change this. An increase in operating costs could increase subsidy demand or require the CMSM to implement a cap on daily per diems paid to the operator for subsidy eligible families.

Joint Confirmation

Grey County has received a Joint Confirmation Form listing the school-based capital projects that Grey County Children's Services has been working on with the three local school boards. The "Joint Confirmation – Previously-Approved School-based Child Care Capital Projects" forms must be signed by both Grey County and school board, then submitted to MEDU by August 30, 2019.

On July 11, 2019, Grey County Council approved proceeding with the additional spaces for projects at the Bluewater District School Board and Conseil Scolaire Catholique Providence. Approval from Council is required to meet the Ministry of Education submission deadline to confirm that Grey County supports proceeding with the two capital projects at the Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board.

On the Joint Confirmation Form, the County can choose one of the three following Confirmation Status/Decision:

1. Defer – Grey County and the school board choose to wait to confirm whether this project will proceed. Any required operating funding the new child care capital spaces will be managed from within Grey County's existing operating budget.
2. Proceed – Yes, Grey County and the school board confirm that this project will proceed. Any required operating funding for the new child care capital spaces will be managed from within Grey County's existing operating budget.
3. Not Proceed – No, Grey County and the school board confirm that this project will not proceed. The required operating funding for the new child care capital spaces cannot be managed from within Grey County's existing operating budget.

In June 2019 the MEDU advised that those school-based capital projects that are selected to "not proceed", cannot expect the capital funds to become available in future years.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 requires the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) to provide strategic leadership for its local child care and early years services. Under the Act, Grey County is a CMSM. This includes forecasting long range child care and early years needs, both operationally and capital builds, and plan accordingly.

Financial and Resource Implications

The Children's Services 2019 child care budget will not be impacted as the capital builds have not yet started. The construction of the school-based child care capital build projects is managed and paid for through funding flowed by the Ministry of Education directly to that school board. No Grey County levy is used for the capital build project.

The potential impact will occur upon completion of the capital build projects and Ministry licensing expected between 2020-2022. As the new spaces associated with these new capital builds become active, it is understood that general operating grant funding may be reduced to all operators. This may result in an increase in local child care fees.

With the new provincial approach to child care, announced in the 2019 provincial budget, families may benefit from the new CARE tax credit as a method to offset some of the increased child care costs. Further details as to the scope of the CARE tax credit are pending release from the Province.

County staff resources will be required as a project team member in partnership with the operator and school board.

Children's Services will continue to monitor and analyze impacts from forthcoming provincial policy announcements, and, as needed, develop strategies to minimize any negative impacts to the system to maintain access to quality child care for Grey County residents.

Relevant Consultation

Internal (list)

- Grey County Clerk's Office
- Grey County Finance Department
- Grey County Planning Department (Planning Data Analysis Coordinator)

External

- Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board

Appendices and Attachments

[EYCC Memo 26 April 2019 - Previously Approved School Based Child Care Capital Projects](#)