

Davisville/Spectrum Parent Meeting April 25, 2017 – Notes, Questions and Answers

- Principal Shona Farrelly, Vice-Principal Cecile Robertson, and Jeff Latto, Senior Manager Major Capital Projects & Building Partnerships for the TDSB opened the meeting with a presentation to provide update the Parent Community on plans to date regarding the new building and the best thinking into school operations both before and during construction.
- Superintendent Ian Allison and Trustee Shelley Laskin were also in attendance and participated in the Question and Answer section.

Context:

- In 2012, the TDSB Board approved the plans to redevelop the Davisville/Spectrum property with a commitment for the continued operation of the existing school during the construction of the new replacement school.
- With the announcement of funding from the Ministry of Education for the new replacement school in late 2015, the need to redevelop the school property no longer was required.
- Through the New School Review Team Process, new building parameters have been established
- Staff are now turning their thoughts to school operations during the build - and there are challenges – given the challenges, an option to move off-site during construction has been considered – there are pros and cons to both
- In 2012 there was no “holding solution” – but in March 2017, TDSB Board approved the strategy to maintain the closed Vaughan Road Academy to serve as a ‘holding school’ to address upcoming accommodation planning in various parts of the TDSB

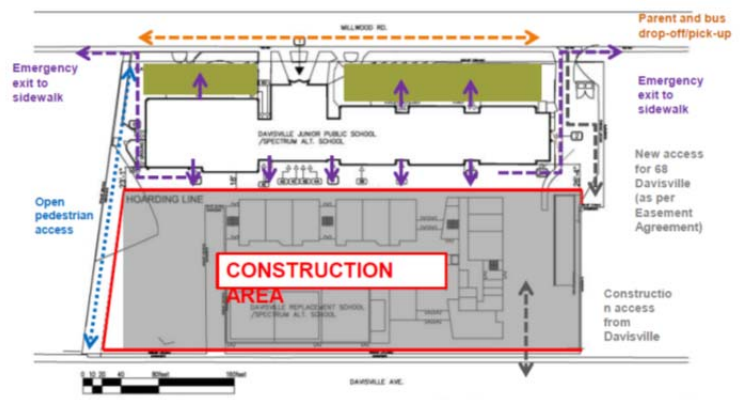
Purpose:

- To review the proposed Replacement School to understand its planning on the site (this will be discussed in detail at the Public Meeting on May 30);
- To identify preliminary plans on how the operation of the school will continue during construction with the new school construction site taking up half of the school property, and the associated issues;
- To discuss planning challenges as the school population continues to grow; and
- To hear from the parent community in order for staff to continue to develop pros and cons to a possible relocation of the school during construction.

Draft Master Plan



Draft Construction Plan with Hoarding



Construction Schedule

- January 2016: Space Template Approved by Ministry of Education
- June 2016: Snyder Architects awarded commission for architectural services for project
- December 2016/March 2017: NSRT Meetings
- May 2017: Public Meeting
- November 2017 – January 2018: Tendering of contract to select contractor
- July 2018: Construction start
- July 2020: Construction is Substantially Complete
- September 2020: New Replacement School opens
- October 2020 – August 2021: Existing school is demolished, and completion of outdoor play areas.
- September 2021: Completion of school play grounds and fields.

Note – If the school is temporarily relocated off-site, both the replacement school and the school grounds and field would be completed before the new school opens in September 2020

Challenges with Operating the School On-Site

- Principal Farrelly and Vice-Principal Robertson spoke to the challenges and issues for operating the school during construction given the population of the school continues to grow. The Kindergarten program will not be impacted but Grade 1-6 and Spectrum 7/8 will be. Issues identified included –
- Enrolment Growth
 - School enrolment will be increasing over the next three years. Enrolment will increase from 630 students (2017) to 678 (2018) and 706 (2019). New school will be completed for the start of the 2020 academic year.
 - For 2017-18, we can accommodate with internal reallocations of space, for example repurposing computer lab to classroom; music program on a cart
 - For 2018-19, we will have to consider other options with planning that could include loss of rooms used for lunch and physical education programs. This is required as during construction of the new school there will be no room on the school property for portables.
- Site Logistics
 - As construction of the Replacement School is within the playfields of the existing school, play space is extremely limited
 - Construction access will be from Davisville Ave; Pick-up and Drop-off will be from Millwood Road only.
 - Staff Parking will be located off site.
- Operational Challenges
 - With limited outdoor space, we will have to consider adding more split lunches including adding split recesses (up to 5 per morning and afternoon instructional time cess and possibly move to a 4 or 5 recess/lunch time scenarios to accommodate capacity within hoarding lines
 - Due to growing numbers, our Music rooms may no longer be available to meet the needs of all of our students and music will be delivered to classrooms
 - Computer Lab will have to be converted into a regular classroom to accommodate growth in 2017-18 and computers moved into classrooms

- Growing Numbers puts pressure on gym usage and availability; limited outdoor space also impacts extra-curricular activities. Although we are committed to continuing our excellent after school and lunchtime programs, these will be greatly impacted by the new split lunch schedule and the lack of outdoor practice and game space. We will continue with sports that can be played in our one gym.
- Construction Issues
 - TDSB has had a great deal of experience with construction on-site – with entire schools and major additions
 - There are issues associated with construction – there are identified risks and mitigation strategies put in place – noise, dust, fumes, construction vehicle traffic, etc.
 - Health and safety is not just physical – there are also social and emotional factors in play e.g., compromised recess and outdoor play, overcrowding in halls and classes
 - In case of a fire drill, we cannot allow our students to stay in the big yard due to proximity of building and windows on the south side of the school. We would need to marshal our student population to the front of the school on Millwood – this will not impact the Kindergarten students as they will stay on-site (we may have more to add here once we have done a practice drill – I still can't visualize 600 plus students lined up on the sidewalks on Millwood. Do we know if we have the ability to “block” the sidewalk – meaning can we have students in 2 rows instead of one – this would help us marshal the students.

Proposed Relocation Option

- The former Vaughan Road Collegiate site (529 Vaughan Rd) is being recommended as a potential holding site
 - It is the closest TDSB site to Davisville that has sufficient space to accommodate the entire school and will be available as of September 2017
 - Current use: secondary school and child care centre (school is closing June 2017)
 - Site size: 5.36 acres Capacity: 1,221 pupil places Facility size: 183,211 sq ft
 - Rooms: 55 instructional rooms, 2 gyms, auditorium, cafetorium; swimming pool
 - Accessibility: good – has accessible entrance and washroom, all floors are accessible by elevator
 - As a TDSB holding school, modifications will be done to the site – both interior and exterior

Next Steps

- Continue planning for September 2017 school operations to occur on-site
- Continue to listen to concerns of students, parents and staff with regard to continued operations on-site during construction now that the realities of space have been identified
- Continue to develop options for school operations and programming and to mitigate physical, emotional and social health and safety during construction
- Continue to develop option to move off-site
- Share and discuss the pros and cons to each with details and share with the parent community as soon as possible
- Confirm timing and make a recommendation – continue to involve community in those decisions
- Plans to be in place for September 2018 meaning decisions regarding relocation to be confirmed by December 2017

Questions and Answers

Q. Why are you stressing that the parent community wants to stay on-site during construction?

A. Commitment made to stay on-site in 2012 – in response to Qs and As then, the following was the position – ***“When will construction start? What will happen to students during construction? The project is still in the beginning stages and is at least four years away from breaking ground on the site – Ministry of Education, and City of Toronto approvals including OPA, Rezoning approvals, etc. are still required. The current plan requires that the TDSB keep students in the current school building during construction. The TDSB will work closely with the principal and parent community to ensure student safety during the construction and program options for outdoor activities. The plan is to be able to move students directly from the old school into the new school. It should be noted that portables may be needed to accommodate increased enrolment before the new school opens. Once the new school is built, the old school will be demolished and the new playground, field and school grounds will be completed.*** Because the nature of the project has changed and the population of the school continues to grow, the circumstances have changed – but the commitment remained on the books and therefore is the starting point.

Q. In light of the presentation and how tight it will be to stay on-site, can we gauge public opinion on the potential option of moving?

A. Yes. We will be able to bring an option to move off-site now into the conversation. This is the first opportunity to do so.

Q. What is the staff’s preference?

A. The staff are not here to influence the perspectives of parents in terms of how they provide input to the process as we did have remaining on site as our starting point given the comments made back in 2012. With that said, the staff have been concerned for some time about the impact of overcrowding and how that currently affects student behaviour, losing dedicated spaces for music and phys ed and about facility condition of the school. Continued growth and lack of outdoor space further compromises the ability to run an optimal program at the school. Staff have ongoing concerns about the increased reduction in space in classrooms and hallways that were originally designed to house a much smaller population. Overcrowding in these spaces, combined with overcrowding in the yard will make stress-free learning extremely challenging. Students with additional learning needs will be the most seriously affected. Staff are excited about the possibility of having more appropriate class sizes, movement in the halls, and an outdoor play space that allows students to play games and run around. The new outdoor space will require students to play very simple and mainly stationary games. They will not have an outlet to run or play freely. The closure of 305/306 to manage our increased enrolment will also reduce the number of physical education classes each class can have.

- Q. *I could not make a decision to move off-site unless I really understand the transportation issues. Why is there no details on the bussing yet?***
- A. We have had only preliminary conversations on transportation at this point as moving offsite was previously not an option. Given we are hearing from both staff and the community that an offsite option should be explored; we will get additional details and share that information.
- Q. *Why can't the kids eat in their classrooms during the construction as opposed to multiple lunchtimes?***
- A. Collective agreement issues – Collective agreements for teaching staff include a period of time of uninterrupted lunch (40 minutes) where supervision or other assigned duties cannot interrupt. Further to this, collective agreements cap a teacher's non-instructional supervision time to 80 minutes maximum per 5 day cycle per teacher. This supervision time is typically utilized during entry procedures and recess supervision throughout the week. For Full Day Kindergarten, we are staffed at one per classroom. However, for students in grades 1 – 6, we are staffed at a ratio of 100:1 for Lunch Room Supervisors. We are currently receiving an additional profile just to manage the split lunch as it now stands. In order to have students eat in their classrooms, we would need to have a significant increase in the number of Lunch Room Supervisors. This would also dramatically increase the workload of the caretakers as they would be expected to clean each room after lunch. There wouldn't be enough time to do this at the end of lunch and prior to the beginning of instructional time in the afternoon.
- Q. *Can there be different drop-off times for Kindergarten students and the rest of the school?***
- A. Yes. Staff is already thinking about the options. Part of this discussion is the impact on families if they have siblings who will need to be dropped off and picked up at different times.
- Q. *Can you speak more about the potential developments happening in the neighbourhood? Do you know if all the construction will happen at the same time?***
- A. Actually, the 1851 Yonge is already underway – the TDSB was given no notice nor did the developer share the construction management plan with the Board; with regard to 1951 Yonge (the LCBO site) the developer has just submitted their application to the City in mid-March – there is 120 days for the City to respond – in discussion with the City planner it will be in September. And then it will be a minimum of 2-3 years for the process of approvals and marketing to take place. We don't expect construction of this project to start before the completion of the new school.
- Q. *What retrofits to Vaughan Road would be required and can we walk through?***
- A. The primary retrofits required at the Vaughan Road facility are the installation of washrooms on the Ground Floor to create Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) Rooms. Exterior works includes the creation of a FDK playground, hard surface areas separated from the parking lot and an additional stair to the play field.
- Q. *When will the decision be made?***
- A. A final decision would have to go to the Board of Trustees for December 2017 in order to plan for September 2018 should there be a need to relocate. Backward mapping from there, any decision going

to board will have to go through committee(s) prior to that and no later than November 2017. As such, the community and staff feedback required to support any staff recommendation would need to be collated and reviewed by October 2017.

Q. *I have concerns regarding transportation and the safety issues surrounding Vaughan Rd. What is the nitty gritty?*

A. The details for transportation are not worked out as of yet; staff will work on providing additional details.

Q. *What will be the deciding factor into whether or not to relocate and who will make it?*

A. TDSB Staff are looking to map out both scenarios: to stay on site during construction or to relocate off-site during construction. Assuming both of these options ensure safe environments for students and staff, these will be presented to the Davisville/Spectrum parent community with the intent of finding out from families which scenario will provide the better learning experience/environment for students and staff at Davisville/Spectrum during the construction of the new school. The deciding factor will be what scenario works best for all involved.

Q. *Getting on a bus to go to school seems “romantic” but I am concerned that young children may have to leave before 7am and get home close to 6pm – what will that do for their sleep? Their learning? Their ability to do homework or have extra-curricular activities?*

A. Modelling of bus times and frequency of service to the Vaughan Road facility will be brought back to the parent community for consideration and discussion. There are already students who come to school at 7:30 for childcare. Many students are still here at 6:00 p.m. Students in childcare have actively participated in after school activities; we do not anticipate changes there.

Q. *I live near Millwood and observe buses and near accidents all the time. Tell me more about safety for bussing.*

A. Modelling of bus times and frequency of service to the Vaughan Road facility will be brought back to the parent community for consideration and discussion.

Q. *When will we have more information? We need more information before we can decide.*

A. More information on both the scenario to remain on site and the scenario to relocate off site will be brought to the parent community before summer break.

Q. *Why can't you just move Spectrum to alleviate space issues?*

A. Spectrum is an integral part of our school – we are rebuilding Davisville/Spectrum. In the same light we are not considering reducing the French Immersion program.

Q. *Will there be the same process as you are providing parents at John Fisher with regard to leaving French Immersion and returning to the English program?*

A. No. John Fisher is an exceptional circumstance. It is not a community school per se, but a school where students are placed from neighbouring schools for French Immersion. A parent always has the right to remove their child from the specialized program.

Q. *What will recess look like in the limited outdoor space?*

A. There are no regulations and no guidelines provided for outdoor space. The Ontario Building Code does not speak to safe capacities of outdoor space, and it is difficult to directly translate requirements related to indoor space to outdoor space. For instance, if we were to treat the space left between the hoarding and the school as a gymnasium there would be a permitted capacity according to the Ontario Building Code of 920 kids! Obviously, that is not possible given the remaining space which is only 14% of existing playground space. One thought is to paint the hoarding lines on the pavement and do an actual count. This we believe is the best way to determine what is a reasonable and safe number of students and staff/parents that could be in the open space should the school remain on site during construction.

Q. *What about green space and playscape?*

A. Unfortunately, there will be no green space or playground equipment.

Q. *Why is the construction area where the hoarding is so big? Are there not construction methods that can decrease this and increase the playspace for the students?*

A. The fencing or hoarding that is being shown around the new school project is required to accommodate construction. The additional areas are needed to accommodate site office trailers, material storage, movement of construction vehicles around the new school as it is being built, storage of excavated earth (which is not trucked off site but used for final grading of the project's landscape) and the loading and unloading of materials as they arrive on site.

Q. *How do the teachers feel? We value their opinion.*

A. These are some of the teacher's direct quotes -

"I believe that a strong physical education program is at the heart of so many things for our students: mental health and well-being, school spirit and creating a culture of belonging outside of academics. Team sports would disappear if we remain on site- where would we have our extracurricular programs? Which programs would we keep and discard? I am saddened by the prospect of losing rich programming for our kids... Davisville is not just an academic place... it's about building team skills, learning to play fairly and to develop and learn about each other in a context that builds confidence, resiliency, cooperation and self-realization. I cannot foresee how our school would benefit from losing our Phys. Ed. spaces and programming." DPS Staff

"When it's raining outside and it's indoor recess, staff and students are on edge...when we are all cooped up inside, we all feel restless, irritable and cranky...no chance to get our crazies out means behavioural problems galore!" DPS Staff

“I am not going to lie...when it’s indoor recess, I feel like the quality of my program suffers...I feel stressed out...there is no room to move around in the class...we are on top of each other...outdoor recess allows us to take a break from being cramped...” DPS Staff

Q. *Even without construction it feels like the school space is shrinking – we would like to hear more from the staff.*

A. As noted previously, enrolment will be increasing from 630 students (2017) to 678 (2018) and 706 (2019). So yes space at the school is becoming a rare commodity. The new school is being built to 731 student capacity which we currently understand is a stable long-term yield of students from the school’s catchment area.

Q. *Can you tell us more about how we provide input – tell us more about the survey?*

A. The process for determining community input has not as yet been determined.

Q. *Can we tour Vaughan Road? Do we need to clarify who “we” is?*

A. We will make those arrangements.

Q. *Can you tell us more about what is happening at Avondale and George Webster?*

A. Avondale and George Webster are undergoing construction of replacement schools. In both cases, the construction of the new school was located on the footprint of the previous school. The reasons for this was that the size and shape of the existing properties did not allow for the existing school to remain untouched during construction of the new school. As such, the only option was to relocate the school during construction.

Q. *Does it make sense for the school to “practice” recess under tight conditions?*

A. Yes!

Q. *When will the decision to stay or to move be made?*

A. We will continue to gather as much information as possible to answer parent questions and develop pros and cons for both options and share the information as we have it. We will gather again in the Fall to provide an additional update – and mapping backwards, a decision would need to be made by the Board before the end of December, 2017 – so we would make a decision regarding moving off-site towards the end of October/beginning of November. We will involve the community in that decision.

Other Questions via E-Mail

Q. *Can you ask Transportation to provide a response to the following questions?*

1. *Approximately 600 students would need to be transported on a daily basis. (about 100 – 120 would be grade 6 – 8). I know there is a different parameter for this group, but if the families don’t have a choice to move, is there an exception for them? How many students can fit on a bus? It averages around 60 per bus-the capacity for Grade 4 and up is 48 and JK-3 is 71.*

2. *Would all the buses be “big buses”?* All regular transportation would be provided by 71 passenger routes. Those on special needs vans now would continue to be transported on vans
3. *Are there special requirements for car seats for JK/SK students?* Basically students under 4 ½ years old or under 18 kilograms must be provided with a car seat.
4. *We will have a before and after care program. Is there a possibility for an early and late bus to accommodate families who would normally just walk their children across the street?* That would be a decision made by Executive staff. We have provided a late bus in other similar situations.
5. *Are there funds available to accommodate after school programs? This is a HUGE part of our school now, but students either simply walk back to the before and after care or walk home. This wouldn't be able to happen, so the question is, in this situation can other buses/transportation be accommodated?* Same as above but our experience suggests those programs are no longer provided because the school is out of area and students can no longer walk back and forth.
6. *All students are in district for Davisville. We are closed to Optional Attendance. Would all the bus pick-up and drop-off locations be at the school, or could we set up “bus stops” in the area?* We would provide the existing bus stops and could consider a couple more at key strategic locations.
7. *An approximate annual cost....we would likely need to do this for 2 full school years.* Approximately \$529,000 annually
8. *If we were moved early, can buses be arranged “mid-year”?* If mid-year means this year the carriers are still being challenged to maintain their full complement of drivers but the amount of notice is always key, the more notice we can provide the better they can gear up for it.

Q. *Why isn't the current traffic flow being maintained as it is today with school staff entering/exiting their parking lot from Davisville Rd?*

A. *The following is an explanation provided by the architects for the new school (Snyder Architects) by way of their traffic consultant. This is the rationale that forms the Transportation Impact Study that was submitted as part of the Site Plan Application (SPA) a couple of weeks ago for the new school. The architects have not had comments back from the City on the SPA and are not expecting any for a couple more weeks. At that time we will better understand City of Toronto Transportation Services' position on the project and whether or not the submitted design of the parking ramp, and access off of Millwood, will be supported.*

We would like to clarify that unlike some comments to the contrary, the traffic configuration for the redevelopment since it was first presented at the Public Meeting on Sep 20, 2016 has not changed. This includes access to the underground parking garage off of Millwood Ave.

Safety, especially around school sites, is paramount and the school board's traffic consultant has worked closely with the City to arrive at the current solution.

Traffic circulation rationale for the Redevelopment of the Davisville Jr PS / Spectrum Alternative School:

This neighborhood, like other core areas of the City, are undergoing a lot of change and the notion that a significant redevelopment such as this will be able to leave an existing neighborhood 'unchanged' is a misnomer. When fundamentally the site layout has to be 'reversed' as in this case with the location of the school changing from the north to the south, 'change' is inevitable and we have always attempted to maximize the benefits while mitigating any adverse impacts.

This redevelopment brings significant benefits to the neighborhood – a state-of-the-art school that will offer an enhanced quality of education and better accommodate the enrollment pressures created by the already-changing nature of the neighborhood and a proposed City-operated Aquatic Centre. So the already restricted school site is being further densified by adding a significant public community asset.

This increased densification fundamentally impacts current traffic patterns:

Being a public use, the appropriate location for the Aquatic Centre is the SW quadrant, facing Davisville Ave. This restricts all on-site traffic to the east edge. Further, given the lack of space, it eliminates any surface parking options on site, resulting in an underground parking garage for long-term parking. This eliminates the otherwise simpler and multiple opportunities for access from the street to an adjacent surface parking lot on the school site.

The proposed parking garage has been located to ensure required direct connectivity to both the Aquatic Centre and the school. The underground garage cannot be accessed from Davisville Ave in any cost effective manner.

Nevertheless, our traffic consultants investigated this option - even if access from Davisville was possible, such access is not viable due to the traffic problems it will create:

Davisville Ave is slated for significant change in the future – as part of the City’s Midtown in Focus neighborhood enhancement project, the City is proposing to redesign Davisville Ave from a four-lane to a two-lane street with bike lanes and wider pedestrian sidewalks and our proposed solutions have to take this into consideration.

A traffic light at the Davisville entrance driveway would not be warranted because of low traffic volumes to and from the school and the spacing from Yonge street would not meet City standards. Furthermore due to traffic volumes on Davisville, vehicles making left-turns to or from the garage would have long delays and on-street queuing raising safety concerns and create bottleneck; the proposed solution disperses traffic better.

School buses, as they do today, have to enter from Millwood and exit to Davisville so they can drop kids off on the right (west) side for student safety. So cars entering from Davisville will conflict with school buses exiting to Davisville, further aggravating the bottleneck.

Due to the nature and volume of traffic on Davisville, only a right-in and right-out option from /to Davisville was investigated – this will result in traffic driving around the block through Millwood, likely impacting Millwood more than our proposed solution.

As part of the Traffic Impact Study submitted to the City, the proposed traffic impact along Millwood was investigated.

The existing curb-side drop-off along Millwood includes school and Childcare drop-off; the proposed solution mitigates this by shifting Childcare-drop-off on-site (to the short-term parking at the SE corner), reducing some pressure on the street. Some parents are also currently dropping off kids on the north side of Millwood which is an unsafe situation. The length of the signed drop-off along Millwood has been extended – this along with the relocated childcare drop-off will result in a safer and more orderly drop-off activity along Millwood.

Existing bus circulation from Millwood to Davisville is unchanged.

As the design evolved, the proposed much wider entrance driveway from Millwood along with the median divider has now been eliminated.

The traffic impact report confirms that the effect of additional traffic due to staff accessing the site from Millwood is not significant and the impact is minor. This is due to the low volume but also due to the nature of school staff parking – it is fundamentally different from traffic impact due to general public parking; unlike the latter, school staff parking typically results in only one incoming and one outgoing trip per car per day. This also happens during predicted times – staff typically arrive over a short duration before school and leave over a longer duration after school closing (which helps mitigate traffic volume).

The traffic report also addresses the capacity of Millwood and found the roadway will continue to operate below capacity and at acceptable levels of service.

Traffic along either Davisville or Millwood cannot be looked at in isolation; any change in traffic pattern along one road affects the other road since traffic flow is like a fluid network and effective solutions are inter-related and often not simplistic or intuitive. The proposed solution tries to avoid traffic bottlenecks and better disperse the traffic to mitigate adverse effects on the overall neighborhood traffic flow.

Q. *By now you are I'm sure very familiar with the many flaws and risks of keeping the kids at Davisville during construction, and it sounds like the Vaughan Road option is still in its infancy –instead, I'd like to propose a 3rd option: make a trade/deal with the condo developer on the adjacent property to the west... The only downside – the shape of the school would need to be adjusted due to the parcel being a slightly different shape and some negotiation with the condo developer would be required. For how much stress this is causing so many people, this really seems like a much better overall solution that either of the first two being proposed.*

A. There are a number of issues that would not make this possible and they include –

1. The school property is designated Neighbourhood in the City's Official Plan. The development property is designated Mixed-Use (which can permit Tall Buildings). The land-use switch is fundamentally incompatible with planning policy and we can't think of any scenario where the City will entertain this switch. The City will not allow mid to high-rise development on a Neighbourhood designated property. This is what the developer will need as compensation for their higher-development land being used for a school.
2. That raises the next issue - it will be cost prohibitive. A mixed use parcel across from the subway, fronting Yonge at Davisville is in a totally different price league than a school parcel in a residential neighborhood.
3. It's not in the school's best interest: a school building off Yonge will exponentially increase safety, noise and access / drop-off issues and we would essentially be compromising life-long school safety and functioning to avoid a couple of years of transitional disruption.
4. The TDSB is governed by the Province of Ontario... our assets are provincial assets. The Ministry of Education would have to be approached in this matter & it would be unlikely that they would consider this. The land exchange involves complex and protracted disposition procedures (Regulation 444/98!!!!) which takes years to complete. Given the condition of the existing building, we do not have this time available.