

YORK MEMORIAL COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

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May 24 update on school operations for September 2019

Dear current and incoming students and parents,

After carefully reviewing viable choices for operating York Memorial CI during the 2019-2020 school year, TDSB staff are proposing two options for consideration. One would see both York Memorial CI and George Harvey CI sharing the George Harvey building as two separate schools. The other would accommodate York Memorial CI in the former Scarlett Heights Entrepreneurial Academy building at 15 Trehorne Drive, near Eglinton Avenue and Royal York Road. In the latter scenario, George Harvey CI remains in its building.

The two options take into consideration spaces that are available for use next year, and what we have heard to date from parents and students by various means: during a May 14 TDSB meeting held at George Harvey CI, via student council-led social media initiatives, through School Council input and trustee constituency feedback, and from numerous emails and phone calls.

The next step in this phase to determine the location for York Memorial CI in September 2019 involves seeking additional contributions from students and parents. TDSB staff are in the process of finalizing a presentation to provide more information about the two options, including profiles of each facility, and advantages and disadvantages of each. At the upcoming York Memorial CI School Council meeting on Tuesday, May 28 at 6:00 pm at George Harvey CI, this presentation will be shared for discussion, led by the School Council. Both the School Council and TDSB want to hear as many voices as possible and so we encourage all current and incoming parents to attend. For those who cannot attend on Tuesday, the presentation will also be posted on the York Memo school web site, and a link included in a subsequent communication.

On May 29, a lunchtime presentation will take place for York Memorial students, and TDSB staff will be available to respond to questions. Following the presentation, students will subsequently be engaged to share what they believe are the characteristics of a great school that will best meet their needs and provide opportunities for growth and success.

TDSB staff will then review student and parent feedback from these more focussed consultations to determine where we will be located for September 2019. As noted previously, we expect to have that information before the end of the school year.

In the meantime, and as some of you may have noticed, activity is starting to take place in and around the York Memorial building. TDSB has been working with staff from the City of Toronto on how best to preserve the heritage architectural components. Our goal is to save as many heritage items as possible, including memorials, paintings and other memorabilia. Highly qualified heritage restoration experts have been retained to assist in the removal and preservation of heritage items from the school.

The Ontario Fire Marshal investigation into the cause of the fire is ongoing. At the moment, some areas of the building are unstable due to the fire and must be addressed before TDSB can conduct an in-depth assessment of the damage to the building. An engineering company has conducted a preliminary review and recommended demolition of selected areas of the school, including the structural beams located in the auditorium. In addition, there are several sections of exterior wall that are at risk of collapse. This will require exterior bracing or removal of some of the exterior walls on the top floor of the building. Fencing remains in place around the perimeter of the building and I want to remind everyone that it is not safe to be inside or near the building unless authorized. The more detailed assessment of the damage caused to the building will begin after stabilization, and may take several weeks to complete. This integral work will help to inform what happens beyond the 2019-2020 school year.

Finally, and certainly not least important, students and staff continue to progress toward the end of the year at the George Harvey CI building. We remain focussed on this important goal and on preparing students for success next year, whether they are continuing with us at Memo or moving on to post-secondary opportunities.

Once again, I can't underscore enough how appreciative we all are for all the support we have had from parents, TDSB staff, and the George Harvey CI school community. We know we can count on that steadfast support as we chart our path forward, one step at a time.

Thank you.

Donna Drummond
(Principal)