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Dear Davisville/Spectrum Parents/Guardians, Staff and Community:

As the end of the school year approaches, I would like to take this opportunity to update you on the plans to rebuild Davisville/Spectrum, especially for those of you unable to attend the recent meetings. We're excited that it's just a year until shovels hit the ground. In July 2018, construction will begin on a new Davisville/Spectrum Public School that will have room for our increasing number of students to learn and grow in a bright, safe new setting.

No longer will 16 of their classrooms be located in rooms once designed for small groups of the hard-of-hearing children. No longer will the Toronto District School Board scramble to keep up with repairs to the roof, windows, water system and foundation. Our spacious new three-storey school will have green space on the roof, several play areas on the ground, underground parking, a triple gym and in all, space for 731 students. Currently, the 620 students of Davisville and Spectrum Alternative School share a school built for 538. Given the redevelopment in the area, student numbers are projected to continue to climb. Our new school also will house an infant and toddler child care centre, and we are negotiating with the City of Toronto to develop a public Aquatic Centre on the site in the coming years, as part of a much-needed community hub.

We are pleased that the Ontario Ministry of Education decided to give us the capital funding we need to create the new school without having to partner with a developer and sell part of our property to allow a 12-storey apartment or condo tower, as had been the earlier plan.

We also learned this spring that there is an option to relocate students off-site while construction takes place. In March, the TDSB designated the former Vaughan Road Academy as a "holding" facility where students can be relocated when their schools are being rebuilt. If we choose this option, it would be possible to shorten the disruption by a full year, and finish the building and the school grounds by September 2020, since it would give construction workers access to both the Davisville building and the field at the same time. It also would immediately give our students more room to learn and play in the spacious former high school (Vaughan Road) that would be renovated. It would also remove children from the noise and disruption of being on a construction site.

But off-site relocation comes with its own challenges. Students would need to be bussed from Davisville to the Vaughan Road site and back home each day.

On April 25 we invited Davisville and Spectrum parents to a meeting to review the proposed replacement school. At that time the option to move off-site during construction was shared with the school community. The presentation and notes from that meeting are posted on the school's website and can be found [here](#).

On May 30 the New School Review Team (NSRT) shared parameters of the new school at a public meeting. At that time, the issue of traffic and parking for the new site was raised. The TDSB will continue to work with the City to ensure that a solution is found that provides the safest traffic conditions for students and residents. The [presentation](#) from the public meeting as well as the [summary notes](#) from the meeting are posted on both the Board's and the Davisville parent website. A follow-up meeting for parents from Davisville and Spectrum was held on June 13. The presentation can be found [here](#). The notes and Qs and As from that meeting and any we have received since are included with this letter.

The TDSB staff will be reviewing all aspects of the construction situation this summer. If they determine that children cannot safely remain on site you will be notified in the fall. If it is determined that there could be reasonable modification to the school schedule, the school will inform you of the options that may be available for the students – stay or go to the former Vaughan Road Academy. I would like to comment briefly about the potential dilemma.

As noted at the meeting, the administration and staff have been concerned for some time about the impact of the growing population of the school. They commented that overcrowding in undersized spaces negatively affects student behaviour. The school is also forced to lose dedicated spaces for music and physical education. If students were to remain in the school during construction, there would be little outdoor space available for play, and staff has warned it would have to stagger arrival times, recess, lunch and dismissal, which could pose challenges for families.

At the same time, we clearly understand that for parents, transporting students by bus to the Vaughan Road site creates its own challenges. If the children are transported to Vaughan by bus TDSB staff will develop details of the transit plan to explain the exact nature of pick-up and drop-off and will provide case-study information regarding the safe operation of similar relocations within the TDSB. For those who would like to experience this bus “commute,” we can arrange for families to ride the route on school busses September 20. More information will come in early September.

I know this is an important issue for you so do not hesitate to contact me over the summer with any questions or concerns. It is my intention to keep you full informed and to take into consideration suggestions from Davisville/Spectrum families. You can find background information about the history of the rebuild on the next few pages.

I wish you a safe and enjoyable summer and will provide another update in early September.

Sincerely,



Shelley Laskin

cc. Ian Allison, Superintendent of Education – Learning Network 2 Schools, Learning Centre 1
Jeff Latto, Senior Manager, Major Capital Projects and Building Partnerships
Tom Schloessin, Architectural, Coordinator, Design Services, Architectural/Structural
Garry Green, Senior Manager, Community, Business & Student Transportation Services
Beth Butcher, Executive Superintendent – Learning Centre 1
Josh Matlow, City of Toronto Councilor Ward 21

Background

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB or Board) began a process to explore options for redeveloping the Davisville school site in June 2010, when the vote supported the recommendation of the Davisville-Yonge Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) that a school presence be maintained on the Davisville site to accommodate the programs as defined by the ARC. At its meeting of October 28, 2010, the Board launched five redevelopment opportunities which would result in new schools and a revenue stream to invest in other TDSB schools. Davisville Jr. P.S. (now housing Spectrum Sr Alternative School) was one of them. A Local School Community Design Team (LSCDT) was struck. The membership on this team in addition to me and Superintendent Ian Allison was largely made up of community (through the resident and ratepayer associations) and school representatives (administration, teaching and support staff, childcare and parents, nominated through the school council), the local councilor's office, senior members of staff of the Board who managed the process along with architects selected by the Board.

The Board asked staff (through the LSCDT) to explore delivering the ARC's approved program at Davisville Public School through a new building funded by redevelopment of the school site. The parameters that guide the redevelopment project (school size, program, funded by residential development) were set by the Board as this was a school board process. The LSCDT looked at a comprehensive range of options and through a series of meetings developed a master plan for the school site, modeling the overall design of the school building and play space, green space, parking/drop-off and identifying potential development options that would support the needs in funding the new school.

The following was developed and agreed to (the School representatives supported with conditions) by the LSCDT in May 2012:

- 3-storey integrated school and residential development on Davisville Avenue;
- Playground, field and open space along Millwood Road;
- School-only access lane along east edge of the site with underground school parking; and
- A key requirement in the plan is to have the current school remain operational during the entire build.

Following a public meeting in June 2012, Board staff were able to address community concerns regarding the size of the residential development and modify the school program to change the 20 story tower to a mid-rise residential development (7-12 storeys) along Davisville Avenue.

From the work of the LSCDT we believed that the Davisville school site was large enough to accommodate the residential development that was required to help fund the project, but this was not currently consistent with the City's Official Plan that guides the growth and development in the City. It currently designates the Davisville site a Neighbourhood Area, limiting the site to low-rise residential uses. During the LSCDT process, it also became clear that the community, supported by the local Councilor, wished to see a community hub on the site. Space for community was included in the Master Plan.

On December 12, 2012, the TDSB approved moving forward in the next step of the redevelopment process and approved the School and Development Design Principles, the Land Use Management Master Plan and the Maximum Build-to-Envelope as agreed upon by the Davisville-Yonge LSCDT. The proposed redevelopment was contingent upon the TDSB receiving approval to proceed from the Ministry of Education for the construction of a new elementary school to replace the aging Davisville building.

Davisville was included in the Board's approved Capital Plan as one of the Board's priority projects to be funded through redevelopment of .98 acres according to the principles and parameters in the Land Use Management Plan approved by the Board. The Business Case was submitted to the Ministry in both 2013 and 2014 but was not approved.

What Changed?

The population of Davisville continued to grow and the facility itself continued to require renewal and repair. Tactics changed. In the Business Case provided to the Ministry in 2015, Board staff argued Davisville, as the Board's number one capital funding priority, should be provided with full funding to rebuild it. They noted that the severance of the site to support a cost-neutral redevelopment option (which was not supported by the Councilor who wished to adhere to the Official Plan) could be avoided should Capital Priority funding be allocated to the project by the Ministry of Education. The data included in the Business Case spoke for itself.

When we submitted the Business Case to get capital funding from the Ministry of Education in 2015, Davisville Jr. PS was operating at 98% utilization with 459 students and a capacity of 469 pupil places (building capacity is 538 including Spectrum Alt. Sr. PS). The building was constructed in 1960 and had a renewal backlog in 2014 of \$11.3M, earning the building Prohibitive to Repair, or "PTR" status as described by the Ministry of Education (FCI > 65%). Between 2012 and 2015 over \$1.5M had been spent at the school on items such as partial roof replacement, water systems upgrade, window replacement and footings/foundations upgrades. During the last two years another \$.5M has been spent. Staff are currently analyzing the additional costs to keep the school safely operating (from a facility perspective) through 2020.

Again, in 2015, planning projected enrolment to reach 709 students by 2019, then growing to 728 students by 2024 (including Spectrum). Staff noted the school was only able to manage the current enrolment by using 16 resource rooms that are less than 600 square feet. These rooms were not intended for regular instructional use for classes of up to 30 students and our Business Plan argued they should not be considered suitable learning spaces. In 2015, the Business Plan suggested portables would be required on the site beginning in 2017, reaching a total of 3 by 2024. If the undersized resource rooms were not used for regular instruction then up to 19 portables would be required on the Davisville Jr. PS site. In October 2015, the province announced the capital funding to rebuild Davisville/Spectrum.

In actual fact, planning staff were not far off projections in 2015 – the school has continued to grow. There are currently 620 students in the school. Next year's projection is for 630 even with Grade 6 English stream students moving to Hodgson for Grade 6. During the LSCDT in 2012, the school was integrated into the residential development requiring a smaller footprint. In addition, since we did not have another school to relocate to, as part of the rationale for selling public land to a private developer to rebuild the new school, a commitment was made to the community to stay on-site. In 2012, the thought was the new school would be rebuilt as part of the integrated development and be open by 2017.

School Website <http://schoolweb.tdsb.on.ca/davisville/Home.aspx>

Parent Website <https://davisvilleparents.com/>

Thank you to Principal Shona Farrelly, Vice Principal Cecile Robertson and the School Council Chairs - Tamara Kolber from Davisville and Tanya Murdoch from Spectrum for your insights and forwarding parent comments – your support is sincerely appreciated.