

**Draft Notes re: Motion – Placement of students in response to exceptional circumstances arising from facility conditions (Laskin/Gershon) March 22, 2017**

Thank you Madame Chair. I would like to ensure my colleagues understand what the Board has been doing to accommodate students at Eglinton Public School since I first became involved in the Board in 1997.

The current Eglinton School building opened in 1999. It included Spectrum Alternative School with approximately 52 Grade 7 and 8 students. It was the last capital project approved by the Metro School Board prior to amalgamation. In order to rebuild the school, the entire school and childcare were bussed to a closed school in North York at Don Mills and the Donway – it was approximately 8 kms away – the students and the childcare were relocated for the period of construction and then the entire school and child care moved back.

The previous school had a capacity of less than 300. When it opened, the new school had a ministry rated capacity of 486. Even 2 decades ago, Trustees relied on staff to provide them with the best possible planning data to forecast enrolment growth.

Eglinton sits on a site of 1.6 acres. It's building of just over 64,000 sq ft goes to the sidewalk. There is minimal set-back. There is no room for portables.

In the *Midtown in Focus Report*, the City speaks to “an era of sustained development in Midtown has been underway since the early 2000s. This concentration of activity, investment and intensification presents challenges but, planned for appropriately, also offers opportunities to sustain a livable, complete community.” The City is planning. And as you know, as the City plans they have no obligation to ensure there is space in local public schools for children emanating out of the development they approve. This is a natural place to speak about our need to receive Education Development Charges as our TCDSB colleagues do, but I know I do not have time for that right now.

From 1999 to 2004 Eglinton grew. In 2004 it had 342 students. We knew what would be happening and we began to plan for it. In 2009, during the Yonge-Davisville ARC it was estimated that the projected enrolment in 2018 would be 523.

*On October 28th 2009, the Toronto District School Board approved the establishment of the Davisville-Yonge Accommodation Review Committee (ARC). The five schools considered in this Accommodation Review are Davisville Jr PS/Metropolitan Toronto School for the Deaf (MTSD), Eglinton Jr PS, Hodgson Sr PS, Maurice Cody Jr PS and Spectrum Alternative Sr School. The school facilities in this community are experiencing pressures such that they will not be able to accommodate the student population in less than ten years. Maurice Cody Jr PS is presently over capacity. Eglinton Jr PS and Hodgson Sr will be overcapacity within a few years. The task of the ARC was to investigate ways to resolve the overcrowding and find meaningful solutions to better meet the educational needs of all the students in the community.*

I was not an elected trustee between 2003 and 2010. But because of my involvement I was asked to be a community member on this ARC.

In the recommendations from the ARC that the Board approved in June 2010, the following actions were implemented as a result particular to Eglinton.

- In 2011, Spectrum Alternative School was moved to Davisville Jr PS.
- In 2011 capital improvements were undertaken to create further additional capacity at Eglinton Jr PS. These improvements to facilities that were included were funded with a combination of provincial funding for capital improvements and FDK funding.

With Spectrum removed, and interior renovations done (building classrooms in previous corridors, etc.) the ministry rated capacity went from 486 to 507.

Remember projections from 2005 were that the capacity would grow to 523 in 2018. However, given the trend and through the Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy in 2014 we knew that projections were going to be exceeded due to development. We began to plan for it even with limited ability to build for it. The Yonge-Eglinton Program Area Review was initiated.

*The Program Area Review Team (PART) membership was informed that a Local Feasibility Team (LFT), comprising TDSB Principals, Trustees, central program and planning staff, was established to examine potential solutions to existing and projected accommodation pressures at a number of Yonge-Eglinton area schools: Davisville Jr PS/Spectrum Alternative Senior School, Eglinton Jr PS, Maurice Cody Jr PS, Oriole Park Jr PS, Forest Hill Jr & Sr PS, Hodgson Sr PS, and Northlea E & MS. The objective of the LFT was to come up with a feasible solution to address accommodation pressures at these schools in light of increasing enrolment and space constraints.*

*Another concern expressed by PART members at this meeting (and echoed by community members at all public meetings) was the likelihood of continued growth beyond what is currently known and projected for due to the extent of residential development in the area. Having incorporated known development applications to-date within the study area, elementary pupil enrolment projections suggest that schools included within the scope of the Yonge-Eglinton study will be in a deficit of 23 instructional classrooms, or almost 700 elementary pupil places, by 2024; this is the equivalent of a new JK-8 elementary school. Staff informed PART and community members that, due to capital funding constraints, a new school cannot be built despite there being enrolment pressures in this area.*

As a result of the 2015 PART, the recommendations for grade shifts, attendance boundary changes, changes to French programming, and proposed capital improvements to schools resulting in improvement to over-enrolment and utilization rates will be noticed in September 2017 when the junior schools become JK-5 and the senior school becomes 6-8. To address long-term growth in the Yonge-Eglinton area, 'creative' options continue to be explored by staff, including working with the City of Toronto and the development community on the potential of a "vertical school", and incorporating satellite spaces for TDSB classrooms or child care space in new residential developments. And continuing to build a business case for EDCs.

With the implementation of the recommendations, the need for portables were minimized which is especially important on highly constrained sites like Eglinton Jr PS, where portables cannot be

accommodated due to the size of the site. As an aside, they can't be accommodated at Maurice Cody Jr PS either, where a shared use agreement with the City for the AstroTurf field prevents portables from being placed on-site until 2024.

In 2015, we projected 531 students at Eglinton for September 2016. Actual headcount in October 2016 was 567. Yesterday when I was at the school with planning staff to discuss space constraints at Eglinton with the administration and the Superintendent there were 589 students. These are 589 registered students in district to Eglinton. Remember the rated capacity is 507. How are they accommodating? Resource sized rooms are used as classrooms. And as a result of decisions made by this Board in accepting of the PART recommendations, Eglinton will be JK-5 as of September 2017.

Planning is projecting 539 for September 2017. We already know that there are approximately 32 JK students who had planned to attend JK for SK French Immersion. Four parents have already said they were staying at Eglinton. More will. They are registered Eglinton students. The Principal believes the number in September will be closer to 560 and could very well be closer to 580 or exactly where it is now. Yes, that is with no Grade 6. 69 students leave but over 110 enter.

The school is already planning that the classrooms need to reorganize as 2 additional K classrooms will be needed. They will not be purpose built. And projected growth for the school continues. We are planning for it through the Yonge-Eglinton PART Phase 1 additional recommendations and Phase 2 of the plan which begins this fall.

And that is why Madam Chair we need this motion. The Education Act has made it clear we entrust the day to day management of the board to its staff through the board's director.

The TDSB has been planning for growth in the Yonge-Eglinton area schools through its Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy since 2014. Staff planning projections have always assumed that John Fisher PS would remain to serve students in French Immersion within its catchment area. There was never a consideration that students from John Fisher PS would leave en masse and want to transfer to their local English school. **This is an exceptional circumstance.**

Many of the local schools have space – the real hot spot is Eglinton. The motion allows for exceptional circumstances to ensure students can be accommodated then at another local school that has space.

John Fisher parents began going to Eglinton a few months ago to transfer their children to Eglinton and withdraw from French Immersion at John Fisher. A central process is necessary. As I have just explained, we cannot absorb the potential students at Eglinton.

At this point we do not know how many parents will choose to withdraw their students – we need a process to understand how the local schools can accommodate in terms of creating additional classroom space, portables, etc. We cannot admit students to any school without a plan to address this. The motion gets us to a plan. We will likely be able to accommodate parents in local schools in an organized fashion (for September) if we know what grades children are going into, if there are siblings, etc. but not at Eglinton – at another local school.

The process will be public and communicated.

We understand this is a difficult situation for all. We will continue to support the students, staff and community of John Fisher Jr PS.