



Shelley Laskin, Trustee – Ward 11

Telephone: 416-395-8787

E-Mail: Shelley.Laskin@tdsb.on.ca

Website: www.tdsb.on.ca/laskin

Twitter: @shelleylaskin

May 7, 2018

Robin Pilkey, Trustee, Ward 7
Chair, Toronto District School Board
5050 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ontario M2N 5N8

Dear Robin:

As you are aware, the Board agreed and included the following in the approved motion “Need for Funds to Address Accommodation Pressures: Communication to Minister of Education - *That the Board will be coming forward with requests to acquire land in the Yonge-Eglinton area in the near future.*”

I want to make you aware that Eglinton Jr Public School parents contacted Premier Wynne as their local MPP for Don Valley West to discuss their concerns regarding the loss of program spacing and overcrowding at their school. Parents advocated for the acquisition of a property located at 744 Mount Pleasant Road, south of Eglinton Jr. PS, as it was their understanding it may be available for purchase.

A follow-up meeting was called by Premier Wynne at her local constituency office on April 29th where parent, staff and childcare representatives of Eglinton Jr PS, the local City Councillor Josh Matlow, Ward 22 and myself as the local Trustee were invited to discuss how this property could potentially be used to alleviate significant capacity issues experienced at Eglinton Jr Public School.

To refresh your memory, Eglinton Jr. PS is situated on a highly constrained site of 1.6 acres with no ability to accommodate portables or expand. The school is situated within an ‘Urban Growth Centre’, as per the provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and correspondingly in the City of Toronto’s Official Plan. The area has experienced, and continues to experience, significant residential intensification and density that has generated enrolment growth and accommodation pressure at the school. The broader Yonge-Eglinton area has also experienced significant population growth due to residential intensification and demographic shifts.

The influx of new residential dwellings has resulted in a significant accommodation pressure at Eglinton Jr. PS, a situation that has resulted in a perpetual cycle of review. Since 2009, the TDSB has explored and implemented a series of accommodation measures to mitigate enrolment growth at Eglinton Jr. PS, and at adjacent schools. These measures were explored through a series of accommodation studies, which included extensive public consultation and approval by Trustees. The implementation of these measures were within the Board’s mandate and included program relocation/augmentation, boundary changes, grade changes and internal renovations.

Through 2017-18, the Board continued to review Eglinton Jr. PS and surrounding schools to identify options for mitigating ongoing growth pressures. A boundary review was struck in the spring of 2018 with Maurice Cody Jr. PS, an adjacent elementary school, to partially relieve enrolment pressure at Eglinton Jr. PS by utilizing a nominal amount of available space at Maurice Cody Jr. PS. This boundary review will conclude with a report to the Board of Trustees in May 2018. The review emanated from an accommodation study undertaken in 2015, and was supposed to be explored in 2022. Due to the enrolment pressure arriving earlier than anticipated, the review was required now.

Because the pressure at Eglinton Jr. PS is not fully addressed through this boundary change, another study was struck in the spring of 2018 to explore redirecting new residential development within the Eglinton Jr. PS attendance area to another school with available space. No space is available locally to accommodate the number of students anticipated from these developments. As a result, the recommendation will be to accommodate these students, through bussing, at Whitney Jr. PS, an elementary school located in Moore Park (TDSB Ward 14), that has some available capacity to accommodate growth. This study will conclude with a report to the Board of Trustees in June 2018. Redirecting students is a 'band-aid' solution and is not intended to be implemented in perpetuity but to 'hold' enrolment at Eglinton Jr. PS through to 2020-21.

In the fall of 2018 the Board will embark on yet another comprehensive study of the Yonge-Eglinton Area. Referred to as 'Yonge-Eglinton Phase II', this review will explore any and all available opportunities to relieve enrolment pressure at Eglinton Jr. PS, and to achieve a more appropriate balance and distribution of students over the mid-term. Based on a review of projected enrolment and high level accommodation option, it is anticipated that solutions achieved through this process will only mitigate enrolment growth through the mid-term. It has been recognized since as far back as 2015 that an additional elementary school would be required to accommodate long-term growth within the Yonge-Eglinton area.

In the meantime, the existing commercial plaza at 744 Mount Pleasant Road, south of Eglinton Jr. PS, of approximately .57 acres could be a mid-term solution. If the property were acquired by the TDSB it would be able to address the existing shortcomings of the Eglinton Jr. PS site - ensure appropriate program space within the school and the additional acreage would provide the school with much needed play space, which it does not currently have. It is important to note, however, although tremendously valuable for Eglinton Jr. PS, the acquisition of the plaza does not address our long-term issues in the area. It is possible there will be a series of requests for land acquisition in the Yonge-Eglinton area in the near future.

The potential acquisition of this property has been explored by staff at the Toronto Lands Corporation (TLC). To date, we have not been able to confirm the rumour that the property either has recently been sold or will be sold. However, I wanted to let you know that the TLC on the Board's behalf will continue to monitor the status of the existing commercial plaza at 744 Mount Pleasant Road, south of Eglinton Jr. PS. Should it become available, please note I will be requesting the Board seek approval to purchase it through land acquisition funds from the Ministry.

Sincerely,



Shelley Laskin

cc. Kathleen Wynne, MPP, Don Valley West, Premier of Ontario
Indira Naidoo-Harris, MPP, Halton, Ministry of Education/Minister Responsible for Early Years and Child Care
Carlene Jackson, Associate Director, Operations and Service Excellence, TDSB