



Hodgson Middle School New Addition Questions and Answers – May 2021

Background

A new addition at Hodgson MS is required to accommodate enrolment growth in the Yonge and Eglinton area.

In November 2016, the Ministry of Education approved funding to build the addition.

In August 2020, the Ministry approved additional funds to build a larger addition to address the increase in developments proposed for the area and the increase in families moving into existing buildings.

Out of three options explored, the Ministry approved Option 3, the hybrid option, which involves demolishing the 1960s wing, replacing it with a larger addition, and renovating the 1914-27 wing. The expanded and renovated school will have a capacity of 838 pupil places.

Enrolment is projected to grow each year requiring additional portables. There are currently 9 portables on-site. It is forecast that 19 portables will be required by 2025-26.

We heard in 2018 from the community that there was a preference for the students to remain on-site during construction. We looked at what it would mean to have students remain on-site from the perspective of:

- site configuration to accommodate construction area and portables;
- impact on health and safety;
- impact on program for students; and
- impact on timelines for the project.

We concluded that keeping students on-site during construction is not possible. The relocation of students beginning in September 2022 is the safest option and has the following advantages:

- eliminates risk to student safety due to construction;
- all students will be accommodated within a physical building;
- all students will have access to a full program in a range of specialized classrooms and other amenities like a large gymnasium, cafetorium, pool, etc.;
- all students will have opportunities for a wide range of extra-curricular activities;

- allows the project to be completed in a shorter timeframe and minimizes disruption to neighbours; and
- allows for the existing building to be fully integrated with the new systems of the addition (e.g. mechanical and electrical systems).

The 529 Vaughan Road building (formerly Vaughan Road Academy) has been identified as the holding school for Hodgson MS during construction. It has the space to accommodate all students and to continue their program. The building offers a full range of facilities such as a swimming pool, two full-sized gymnasiums, an auditorium for assemblies and concerts, a large library, and science labs. The building and field were refreshed when it received Davisville Jr PS and Spectrum Alternative Sr School students in 2018. There are no health and safety risks to students or staff as would be experienced at the Hodgson site during the construction.

Design and Construction

Q1. What is the plan for the community rinks?

There will be hoarding around the rinks to separate them from the construction zone. Parking will not be available during construction; however, there will be access to the rinks from Davisville Road. It should be possible to keep the access open for the four months that is required for community use.

Q2. Given the complexity and the effect on the students, why is the rink being preserved? Wouldn't it make more sense to demolish the rink, use that for construction (allowing the students to stay in the school), and then construct a new rink when everything is done?

If the students stay on-site we would still require the 19 portables. The impacts on safety, health and program would still exist. Portables must be placed within a specific distance of fire hydrants. This limits where portables can be moved to on the site. The rink area does not create a significant advantage to allow the students to remain on-site.

Q3. What is the plan for the green space?

A plan has not been created yet, but a fulsome plan for the green space will be part of this construction project. The green space will be designed to support a middle school program. The TDSB will connect with a landscape architect in the coming months.

Q4. What is the plan for parking?

Parking will not be available on-site during construction. At this time there are no changes to the amount of parking stalls that will be provided as part of the construction project. The City is currently reviewing the traffic study completed by an independent traffic consultant and will provide any comments through the Site Plan Approval process.

Q5. Has there been any consideration for expanding the Hodgson site size by expropriating adjacent properties?

We have not considered expropriating adjacent properties to increase the size of the Hodgson site. Expropriation is highly disruptive to the neighbours, requires additional funds, and adds time to the construction process.

Q6. Will HVAC be upgraded to post-COVID standards?

At the moment we are designing the HVAC system per the TDSB guidelines and in accordance with the requirements of the Ontario Building Code. The addition will have operable windows and a mechanical system which will provide fresh air and exhaust air from the interior spaces. A new Building Automation System (BAS) will be installed for the addition with the intent to integrate the BAS with the upgraded mechanical systems of the existing building. The BAS will allow adjustments to increase the amount of fresh air into the building, taking into consideration the outdoor air temperature and humidity levels.

Q7. Construction access is via Harwood Road. How will this impact the neighbourhood (e.g. noise, pollution, parking issues, trucks waiting, etc)?

Access to the construction site has yet to be finalized and will be reviewed by the City through the Site Plan Approval process.

Every effort will be made to keep disruptions to the community to a minimum; however, as with any construction project, noise, dust generation and deliveries cannot be completely avoided. The General Contractor will erect construction fencing/hoarding with silt fence and wet the ground to help contain dust generation, as well as stage deliveries to limit the need for trucks waiting on the street.

Q8. What will be the time during the day that construction will occur?

The City has a by-law that specifies when construction can occur. The hours for construction are 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM, Monday to Friday, and 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM on Saturday.

Q9. Can construction start earlier than Summer 2022?

No, because the design is not complete and City and Ministry approvals are still required (i.e. Site Plan Approval and Approval to Proceed). The design process will extend into the 2021-22 school year. Starting the construction before Summer 2022 would require moving the students off-site for the start of the 2021-22 school year. We would like to keep the students on-site for the 2021-22 school year to allow time to organize the move to the 529 Vaughan Road building and to provide enough time for a smooth transition process for families and staff.

Q10. The schedule for keeping the students on-site during construction indicates that demolition will occur in May and June. What happens to the kids graduating at that time?

This option is not recommended due to the many challenges associated with it. In this option, the students are on-site during construction and are accommodated by using multiple portables. It also takes a year longer than the preferred option of moving the students to the 529 Vaughan Road site. For the purposes of building a timeline that is as short as possible, demolition of the 1960s wing was proposed for May and June. As a consequence, the students would not have access to a gym for graduation on-site. An alternative space in a nearby school could be identified to accommodate the graduation ceremonies.

Q11. How long did the construction of Davisville take and how does that compare to the plan for Hodgson?

The demolition of the previous Davisville building took approximately six months (November 2018 – April 2019). The construction of the new Davisville building took approximately 24 months (May 2019 – June 2021). The total duration was 30 months.

The current anticipated construction duration for Hodgson, including demolition, is 25 months assuming a single phased project.

Q12. Has the construction of the Davisville replacement school stayed on schedule?

The construction component of the Davisville project was approximately on schedule. However, the Site Plan Approval process required additional time. There was a small delay due to COVID which limited the number of workers on-site. The 25 months that we have estimated for the Hodgson project should be sufficient – there is some additional time included in this estimate as a buffer.

Q13. The Davisville timeline was originally two years. The new school was supposed to be open for September 2020. In 2019 the parents were told it would take another year due to the delay in getting Site Plan Approval. For Hodgson, we should not move to 529 Vaughan Road until Site Plan Approval has been received.

Yes, it was the Site Plan Approval process that took longer for Davisville, not the actual construction process.

Q14. How certain is the construction start date in Summer 2022? What is the likelihood of a delay?

With any construction project, there is always a chance of things occurring that could impact the construction timelines, such as delays in receiving Site Plan Approval from the City and Approval to Proceed from the Ministry, labour issues, and supply issues. At this time, our best estimate is that construction will begin in Summer 2022.

Q15. What if the opening of the new Davisville building is delayed and Davisville/Spectrum remains at 529 Vaughan Road a little while longer – would Hodgson students be relocated mid-school year?

Currently, everything is on schedule for Davisville/Spectrum to move into their new replacement building in Summer 2021. If there is a delay, we have the 2021-22 school year to provide more time to the Davisville/Spectrum move. Hodgson MS is planned to move to the 529 Vaughan Road building in Summer 2022 which provides us with the 2021-22 school year as flex time.

Q16. Does the pandemic impact the construction timelines?

We are anticipating that the impact of the pandemic will be significantly lessened by Summer 2022 when construction is planned to begin. School construction projects are still occurring during the pandemic and there has been little impact on timelines.

Q17. Has the Site Plan Approval process begun? When does the 12-18 month estimate for Site Plan Approval begin?

The Site Plan Approval process began in March of 2021 and we are awaiting initial City comments.

Q18. When will Site Plan Approval be received?

We are anticipating receiving Site Plan Approval in Spring 2022.

Q19. Can the Trustees engage the local Councillor to expedite the municipal approvals?

Yes, Trustee Chernos Lin has spoken with the local Councillor and will speak with her again. The local Councillor knows the importance of timely approvals for the families. Timelines are also discussed regularly by senior staff at TDSB-City meetings.

Q20. Can Hodgson MS be relocated in the Fall of 2021 rather than the Fall of 2022?

No, we require Site Plan Approval to proceed with the major elements of the construction process. We are anticipating receiving Site Plan Approval in Spring 2022.

Q21. Does the TDSB have Approval to Proceed yet from the Ministry of Education?

To date, the Ministry has approved the capital project and allocated funding. We have not applied for Approval to Proceed yet. This is an approval required from the Ministry when the design is completed, and we have a cost estimate from an independent cost consultant. Approval to Proceed is required from the Ministry before we can tender the project and hire a contractor.

Q22. Has the contractor been selected yet?

No, this will be done closer to when we have Site Plan Approval – early 2022.

Q23. Which aspects of construction are you most concerned with for the Hodgson addition?

The 25-month time estimate has some buffer built into it. There may be a challenge in getting steel right now. Some builders are looking at other materials. We could encounter a contractor who does not perform as they have in the past. During construction we meet every two weeks with the contractor to be on top of issues. There is a possibility that construction could be done in 20 months. It will be easier with the students off-site.

Q24. Why not build an entire new school rather than a new addition and a renovation?

The school's 1914-27 wing is structurally sound and has great instructional spaces built to standards that exceed contemporary builds. While the wing has not been formally designated by the City as having heritage value, school buildings of that era are increasingly being recognized as historically significant and require plans to conserve the elements of heritage value.

Q25. Will portables be required at Hodgson after the construction is completed?

No, it is unlikely that portables will be required at Hodgson after the construction is completed. We have used the most recent information available to right-size the addition. However, over time, if trends change like the population grows more than is reflected in the City's *Midtown in Focus* study, then portables are a possibility.

Q26. Will the new addition be designed to accommodate a fourth story in the future?

At the moment there are no plans to accommodate an additional floor on the addition for future expansion.

Q27. Can feeders school parents be involved in the design process for Hodgson?

Yes, the design process will include opportunities for parents from feeder schools to be involved.

Q28. Will the staff of Hodgson remain the same during the construction process?

Consistency is beneficial in projects like this, but staff ultimately have the choice to apply to other positions at other schools.

Q29. Will the students be moved in September 2022 even if approvals (e.g. Site Plan Approval) are still being sought?

Lots of things can happen. We will provide updates to the parents, students, and staff. What we have presented to you is our best thinking at this time.

Accommodation Options

Q30. Will families have options if they don't want to move to 529 Vaughan Road?

Families will have the same options that exist in any school year. That is, families will be able to apply to other schools through the TDSB's optional attendance process.

Every residential address has a designated junior school, middle school, and secondary school. If a student wants a different option than the designated schools, the student can apply to other schools on optional attendance. To do this the school must have the optional attendance status of "limited".

Admission is not guaranteed. It is based upon space availability in the appropriate grade and program, and lottery if there are more applicants than spots available.

Q31. Are there other middle schools in the area that students can choose to attend?

All the schools with middle-level grades in the vicinity of Hodgson MS are full and are “closed” to optional attendance.

Q32. Is Bannockburn an option?

No, Bannockburn located at Avenue Road and Wilson Avenue is not an option for Hodgson MS. It is currently leased to a Montessori school. It is being proposed as a solution to the JK-5 enrolment growth impacting Eglinton Jr PS. Additionally, the Bannockburn building is not large enough to accommodate all the Hodgson students. Hodgson is projected to have 700-800 students at the time of the construction – the Bannockburn building can accommodate just over 300 students.

Q33. Can Grade 6 students be kept at the junior feeder schools?

No, there is insufficient space at the JK-5 feeder schools for them to accommodate their Grade 6 students during the construction period. The feeder schools have small constrained sites that can accommodate very few portables or no portables at all.

Q34. Can Grade 6 students be kept on-site in the old wing of Hodgson during the construction and relocate the Grade 7 and 8 students off-site?

We think it is better for the students and staff for all grades to be together in the same building. There are more program opportunities and supports for students by having them together in one location. Staff can work together and support each other by being in one location. If the Grade 6 students stayed in the old wing they would still be near construction; safety concerns would remain.

Q35. Will virtual class be available this September?

The virtual schools that were set up for the 2020-21 school year will not be available for the 2021-22 school year. In-person school is the best place for students to learn, build relationships and receive support; however, a remote-learning option will be available through the home school or a hub formed with other nearby schools.

Q36. Will the 2021-22 school year be uninterrupted at the Hodgson site (meaning not relocated to 529 Vaughan Road mid school year)?

Yes.

Q37. The 19 portables will not be required right away – can the move to 529 Vaughan Road be delayed?

Although the 19 portables will not be required at the start of construction, there will still be 15 portables on-site. With 15 portables and active construction, the site will still be impacted in the same way as if 19 portables were on-site. The health, safety, and program concerns would remain.

Q38. To decrease the number of portables on-site during construction, could a timetable be implemented where a portion of the students are learning virtually while a portion are learning in-person?

If we were to keep a portion of the students on-site during construction, the health, safety, and program concerns would still exist.

Virtual learning is not part of the Ministry of Education's delivery model for elementary students. It was introduced as a solution just for the pandemic. For 2022-23 we are anticipating that there will be a full return to in-person learning for elementary students.

Q39. Why is there not a plan to add a JK-8 school at Yonge and Eglinton (such as at Canada Square) to take the pressure off of Hodgson?

A new JK-8 school in the Yonge and Eglinton area is one of the needs we have identified in our Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy. Our arm's length real estate company, the Toronto Lands Corporation, is monitoring the development proposals in the area to identify mixed-use development opportunities that are large enough to accommodate a school. Canada Square is a site that we are currently investigating with the City and the developer.

Q40. Will the new developments along Bayview Avenue impact enrolment at Hodgson?

Developments located on the west side of Bayview Avenue and south of Eglinton Avenue East are in the Hodgson MS catchment area. These developments have been factored into Hodgson's long-term enrolment projection.

Q41. Have the enrolments been reviewed recently as many families have left the area due to the pandemic and the construction?

Yes, recent trends in families moving in and out of neighbourhoods are reflected in the updated projections. Every school year we produce reports on actual enrolment to monitor trends. Every school year we use these reports to recalculate our short and long-term enrolment projections. The latest projections for Hodgson are still showing growth to 800-900 students.

Q42. Can we share space with the new Greenwood private school?

This solution would still require some Hodgson students to be accommodated on the Hodgson site. Safety concerns would remain for these students. Dividing Hodgson students and staff between multiple sites makes a challenging learning environment – it is preferred to have all students and staff together in one location. This is possible by using the 529 Vaughan Road building.

Q43. Have you considered leasing office space to accommodate students during construction?

To lease a space, we need to submit a business case to the Ministry of Education and receive its approval. We don't have a strong rationale to lease additional space when we own a holding school, 529 Vaughan Road, that can accommodate all the Hodgson students. The 529 Vaughan Road building can provide them with an excellent learning environment that is safe and secure and has all the amenities that students should have access to (gym, library, sports field, etc).

Q44. Other parts of the City relieved enrolment pressures by bussing students in new developments to schools outside of the area. Was this considered to relieve Hodgson?

We are bussing junior students who live in new developments in the Eglinton Jr PS catchment area to schools outside of the area. This is a temporary solution while we conduct studies to secure more space in the vicinity of Eglinton Jr PS. We needed to do this because Eglinton Jr PS is a very small site that cannot be expanded or accommodate portables, so we had to implement a solution using other schools.

Hodgson MS is a much larger site than Eglinton Jr PS. It can accommodate multiple portables as well as an expanded facility. We have been fortunate to receive Ministry funding to right-size the facility to accommodate the long-term projection. Redirecting new developments is not required as we move forward with the construction project.

529 Vaughan Road

Q45. When the students are relocated to 529 Vaughan Road, will the classes be organized in the same way as when they were at Hodgson MS?

Yes, staff will move with the students and the school organization will remain the same.

Q46. Parents would like students to stay at school during lunch. Can this be made mandatory?

We can't force students to stay for lunch. It is a parent decision. At the start of the school year, Grade 6 students tend to stay at school for lunch. This usually changes mid school year. Most Grade 7 and 8 students leave the school for lunch. There are not a lot of options for students to buy lunch in the vicinity of 529 Vaughan Road. Most students are likely to stay at school for lunch. We will consider increasing the lunch period to offer more extra-curricular activities. This could encourage students to stay at school for lunch.

Q47. Will the pool at 529 Vaughan Road become part of Hodgson's physical education program?

Yes, this will be a new and exciting element of Hodgson's program.

Q48. Are there lockers at 529 Vaughan Road for the students to use?

Yes.

Q49. There are many great amenities at 529 Vaughan Road (pool, gyms). While Davisville was there, the pool was closed for periods, blinds were missing from classrooms, and the science labs were closed. What is the plan to make sure the building is in great shape?

The principal of Davisville has made a list of needs. A project supervisor will be assigned. Improvements will be made over 2021-22. The labs were closed while Davisville was there because labs are not necessary to support the junior grades. The labs will be opened to support the intermediate grades of Hodgson.

Q50. Are there other groups using the 529 Vaughan Road building (besides the current schools being held there, Davisville Jr PS and Spectrum Alternative Sr PS)?

The building is currently used by a child care centre and a small group of TDSB central administrators (in the Guidance Office suite). There are two rooms available for lease to a community agency.

Q51. Who will be using the two rooms available for lease at 529 Vaughan Road?

A community group, the Oakwood Vaughan Community Organization, has expressed interest in leasing the two rooms to deliver community programming. The lease has not been finalized. Any uses of the two rooms must be compatible with an operating school and will be approved by the principal. The two rooms are on the third floor and are self-contained (separated from the school by a crash door; the rooms have their own dedicated washroom and exterior entrance).

Q52. What will happen to the 529 Vaughan Road property?

The 529 Vaughan Road site is a core holding of the TDSB. It was closed as a secondary school in 2017 due to declining secondary enrolment, but it has been kept by the TDSB to provide options. The site could be used as a multi-purpose centre, a holding school during construction projects, or, in the long term, a future elementary or secondary school. Since 2018 the building has been used as a holding school for Davisville Jr PS and Spectrum Alternative Sr School during the construction of their replacement building. From 2022 to 2024 we are planning to use it as a holding school for Hodgson MS. Beyond 2024 we don't have a specific plan, but it is likely that it will be used for future construction projects.

Mental Health and Well-Being

Q53. Have you considered the amount of mental stress this relocation is placing on parents and students following two very challenging years?

We understand the stress that the pandemic has placed on families. We also understand that the construction project and the move are stressors too. Supporting student mental health and well-being is our top priority alongside supporting student achievement. School staff and central staff in our Professional Support Services Department work together to support students. The move to 529 Vaughan Road will not occur until September 2022, so there is a year of transition for staff to work with students and families to prepare for the move. A return to in-person learning in an excellent building like 529 Vaughan Road provides the best environment for supporting student achievement and mental health.

Q54. Is this the right time to make this move - could the students and families be given a couple years of stability before making the move?

Hodgson's enrolment is projected to continue to grow. There are nine portables currently on-site and the site will only become more constrained as more portables are added. Timely completion of the construction project will provide stability for the school and a better learning environment. The 2021-22 school year will be used to prepare students and families for the transition occurring in September 2022.

Transportation

Q55. When will the school bus times be established?

In 2020-21 we will have discussions with the school. We will conduct a survey in March 2022 to determine parents' choices. This information is required to build schedules. We could have bus times established by April or May 2022, definitely by June 2022.

Q56. What will be the times for the early and late busses?

We will work out the schedule with the school and community. Overall, our school busses run between 7:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

Q57. Will all school bus stops have early and late runs?

No, there will likely be one central school bus stop for the early and late busses.

Q58. Where will the central school bus stop be located for the early and late runs?

We will work with the school and community to find an appropriate location. It will probably be near Hodgson MS.

Q59. Will the late bus support sports after school?

Yes, it will support the after-school activities organized by the school which will include clubs and sports.

Q60. Students will need early and late busses for those short time periods during the school year when they are participating in a club or on a team (not for the whole year). How does this get coordinated and communicated?

Schedules for students using the early and late busses will be created by the school by season or term. The clubs and sports teams will be staggered. The school will provide information to parents on the schedules for clubs and teams.

Q61. Is there a chance that busses will be full and students will not get a seat?

We will be using bus routing software to create the bus stop schedule and ensure that all students choosing the school bus option have a seat. The goal will be to place stops as close as possible to where families live. Some stops will require multiple busses to pick up the number of students using that stop.

Q62. It appears that TTC is being promoted as the preferred option for parents to choose.

No, we are providing information on both options, school bus and TTC. Families will be able to choose the option that works best for them.

Q63. Do parents have to choose school bus or TTC for the whole school year or can they choose a mix where the school bus can be used one day and TTC the next day?

Students won't be able to have a mixed schedule where they are using both the school bus and TTC. The preference is that parents make a decision and stay with it. There will be an opportunity to switch options at points of time in the school year (to be determined).

Q64. The school bus ride to 529 Vaughan Road will require extra time for students to get to school. This will impact students' sleep.

The bus ride will not be that long. From the west end of Hodgson's catchment area it could take 10-15 minutes. From the east end of Hodgson's catchment area it could take 20-25 minutes. It should not be that disruptive to students' schedules. Bell times will be set with the principal. Bell times are flexible. We will work with the community to find bell times that work for parents.

Q65. If a student stays late one night a week for an after-school activity, would they have to take every late bus home?

No, students will only take the late bus on the day of their after-school activity. The school will have a schedule showing which bus students are on which bus for each day of the week.

Q66. What security will be in place after school between the end time of the extra-curricular activity and the arrival of the late bus?

Every extra-curricular activity will have a supervisor who stays with the students until all the students have been picked up by parents, placed on a school bus, or boarded TTC as per the arrangement with the students' parents.

Q67. Could additional school busses be added if there are additional after-school activities?

The goal will be to avoid adding more school busses by having the school create a schedule spreading the after-school activities out over time to reduce activities occurring at the same time.

Q68. If a student misses a bus after school, how will parents be notified? How will the student get home?

Principals have plans and checklists to get students out on time to board busses. The plans will allow for dealing with parents and students on an individual basis. For Davisville, we

organized a couple of bus rides for parents to see for themselves the bussing experience. We recognize that students and parents will have differing levels of comfort with the TTC. As a contingency, it would be helpful for students and parents to go over a TTC option.

Q69. Davisville parents experienced differing lengths of time for the commute to 529 Vaughan Road. TTC rides have been longer.

It is our understanding that the construction of the Crosstown LRT has created longer commutes. We understand that the Crosstown LRT will be complete by Fall 2022.

Q70. A good way to get to 529 Vaughan Road is by bike. It takes 20-25 minutes. There is a safe route that does not use main roads.

Active student transportation to school is a great option. There are bike stands at 529 Vaughan Road to secure bikes.