



June 25th, 2008

Dear Parent(s) / Guardian(s)

As you may be aware, the Toronto Catholic District School Board has approved a Long-Term Accommodation Plan which includes the construction of an addition to the St Pius X elementary school. Recently on June 18, 2008, a school community meeting was held at the school in order to present the building concepts, and to allow for community feedback.

This letter is forwarded to you to share some of the discussion points, and to respond to some of the concerns that were raised, as summarized below:

- School Catchment area, and enrolment policy and practices:
 - Briefly, the TCDSB has an obligation to provide schooling to all eligible school-age children. Parents are allowed to request enrolment at out-of-catchment schools, at which time the school capacity may be a factor. Enrolment decisions are made by principals and superintendents;
 - School communities may request that the Board consider a restriction on out-of-catchment enrolment via delegation to the Board. It was agreed at the June 18th meeting that a committee would be struck through CSAC in the fall of 2008.
- Transportation needs:
 - The Board provides transportation to students eligible through Board policy;
- Concept plans for the addition, size of the addition and impact on school grounds;
 - At this moment, the Board plans to construct a three-storey, six classroom addition, two classrooms per floor, likely at the southern extremity of the existing original building. This will provide conventional, modern teaching spaces to the five classes that are currently housed in portables or below standard spaces within the existing school, as well as one additional classroom space. A new elevator will provide accessibility, and new washrooms will be included.
 - More detailed building plans will be shared with the school community in the fall of 2008.
- Impact of construction on school operations:
 - Board staff is experienced in constructing additions during the school year, and will ensure that construction activities are segregated from school activities
- Timelines:
 - Start of construction is anticipated for summer of 2009, with completion of the addition in time for the 2010-2011 school year, providing no unanticipated roadblocks.
- Presentations by staff, and questions and answers are summarized in the Appendix to this document.

I look forward to seeing you in the new school year and sharing the concept layouts for our new addition.

Sincerely,

Colleen Tovey-Shackleton
Superintendent of Education

Richard Francki
Superintendent of Facilities Services

Highlights of the presentations by staff, and questions and answers

Staff present were:

TCDSB Representatives

Barbara Poplawski, Trustee Ward 10
 Angelo Sangiorgio, Dep Director Planning and Facilities
 Peter Kole (Planning)
 Virginia Barton (Construction)
 Richard Francki, Superintendent of Facilities
 Colin Kingsland, Architect
 Regrets: Colleen Tovey-Shackleton, Superintendent

St Pius X Representatives

Ms. G. Benedek, Principal
 Ms. Boshyk, Vice-Principal
 CSAC Executive & Members at Large
 St. Pius X Community Parents

Peter Kole (Planning) reviewed the history of the project in respect of the Long Term Accommodation Plan (LTAP):

- The final report/plan developed as requirement of Ministry of Education was presented by the Board in Dec 2007
 - report included both program and capital needs recommendations and school accommodation reviews (18 schools implicated)
- LTAP began with consultation process in Spring 2006 including 6 public meetings across Toronto; input was used to develop an interim plan in March 2007, followed by 12 public meetings in Toronto in May/June 2007
- Plan for St Pius recommends a 6 classroom addition and an eco-school program (energy conservation, waste management, school ground greening....)
- Survey doc was distributed at the meetings and the same survey was available online (with respect to the latter, 25/44 online respondents disagreed with recommendations and 19/44 agreed)
- Recommendations based on a number of issues were sufficient to justify an addition, e.g., support by enrolment projects (no foreseeable decline in next 10 year period), remove 3 portables and so improve/increase play space, overall deemed an improvement on the part of the Board, and provide additional facilities like washrooms
- Projected enrolment is based on the current “catchment area”
- Supporting documents are available online at the Board website
- LTAP to be revisited every 3-5 years

Comments, Q & A by Mr. Sangiorgio (Deputy Director Planning and Facilities)

- Enrolment is subject to space;
- Attendance boundaries can be established through a consultation process with the Board;
- Consensus of community present appeared to be that this consultation process be initiated. The process is protracted and involves public consultation, consultation with other schools and ultimately is contingent upon Board approval. Likely will take 2-3 months therefore is too late for this September.
- Past CSAC members noted that this appeared to be a new policy (or a new take on existing policy) since in prior years requests had been made by the CSAC exec and Principal of the Trustee and Superintendent to restrict student enrolment;
- A parent stated that the community at this meeting was formally making a request about closing the boundary. Mr Sangiorgio responded that the mechanism for initiating this process was by delegation to the Board;
- Anticipated full day learning at JK-SK will also put pressure on schools for additional classrooms;
- Program issues also are imposing additional pressures, e.g. spec ed;

- Analysis indicates a shortage of 2 internal and 3 external (portables) classroom spaces; the addition will also accommodate “service space” (i.e., washrooms) and barrier free access and elevators; school is 1 of 18 projects that are to be “right-sized” ;
- Redirecting students to 3 schools in proximity to St Pius is not feasible: St James has no space; James Culnan has 2 classrooms only; St Cecilia also has a climbing enrolment;
- Estimated timing: approvals will require 6-12 months and construction 12-16 months;
- Mr. Sangiorgio asked the community: “Do you want to re-open the issue of the addition?”, to which a few responded “Yes”; Other parents cautioned that the addition was necessary to satisfy current needs, and that the focus of the community should be to restrict enrolment growth by ensuring non-porous catchment area boundaries;
- Parent question: “What happens to students while construction is going on? Will they be bussed?” . Mr Sangiorgio responded that bussing was provided to students regardless, and that the Board was well experienced at constructing additions while maintaining school operations.

Virginia Barton (Construction)

- Funds for construction is targeted to alleviate current enrolment pressures;
- Old/historical part of the school will be preserved;
- Design considerations include where the addition will go in physical space while maintaining the integrity of the old building (Note: CSAC informed last week that the addition was to be annexed to the South end of the current building);
- The same consultants (mechanical and electrical) are engaged for all 18 school projects; this affords the Board cost efficiencies and ensures design consistency.

Comments, Q & A:

- Alternatives will be investigated with respect to accommodating student population during construction; relocation is considered the last resort and Board representatives did not feel that relocation would be necessary based on past experience with other schools and projects of similar scope
- Questions arose: “If doing the addition, does it guarantee (that there will be) no more portables?” and “Will we have to let more children in?” The answer by Mr Sangiorgio was that the Board had no control over development, and that it would be compelled to admit students from new unanticipated development in the future;
- Some parents were in favour of pursuing plans to prevent the building of an addition; other parents were not in favour of this plan;
- Several attendees, including CSAC members past and present involved in discussions with the Board at various points in time re: the LTAP, suggested it was premature to reject the addition and in essence “throw the baby out with the bathwater” since the estimates presented by the Board and the current situation re: 3 classrooms in portables outside of the school and deteriorating service spaces like bathrooms stood to be addressed with the proposed 6 classroom addition;
- It was reiterated that final decision had not yet been made with respect to where the addition will be attached to the existing building;
- Contingency plans are part of the process, i.e., planning for full day JK-SK;
- Reiteration that relocation is not anticipated;
- Request was made that parents want the full information on what a 6-classroom addition would mean, and that all of the information needs to be communicated to the parents.

Barbara Poplawski (Trustee) was asked to sum up St Pius parent community concerns, and did so as follows:

- The community wants to look at establishing boundaries/catchment area for St. Pius;
- the community wants to look at the pro’s and con’s of the possible addition, and wants to see what the impact of the addition would be on the neighbourhood;

Peter Kole's recommendation to parent community was to:

- “right size” to 420 students spaces, where all students are contained within the permanent physical space of the school (i.e., 3 portable populations moved into the school upon completion of addition); but if full day learning occurs, will require 450 student spaces, in which case will need to decrease student enrolment by about 60 students;
- NEWS: the planning arm of the Board actually sought approval for a plan to build 6 new classrooms (phase 1) to accommodate current student population, and later an additional 5 classrooms (phase 2) -- the latter in the event that a policy on full-day kindergarten is passed.

Ms. Benedek

- thanked Board reps and parents for attending;
- reminded parents that there are implications with respect to reducing the student population to below threshold levels that permit us to retain a Vice-Principal and Librarian.