

TCDSB Board Members

I am writing to you to express significant concerns related to the potential temporary relocation of Loretto Abby Catholic High School. I am raising concerns about the process as well as the appropriateness of the proposed solution.

I would like to start by recognizing that the school's infrastructure needs to be addressed. It is obvious from our daughters' experiences and the board observations that there are repairs required to keep the school in good working order. It is also fair to note that these issues have been long standing and the board and school administration have been fully aware of these issues for some time. The concerns I am raising are not about the need for the repairs but rather about the lack of a transparent, informed process to determine a solution to allow the repairs to occur in a manner that reflects a well-informed, fair and appropriate approach.

There appears to have been virtually no consultation or communication to parents or students about the board's recommendation that is to go forward at the January 16, 2020 board meeting. There was no formal communication shared with parents as most of us found out about the issue through social media on the weekend of January 11/12, 2020. This left us unable to discuss the issue with our daughters, who found out at the same time, through the same means. A communication was sent out by our principal on Monday January 13 advising us about a parent council meeting that evening. This approach left many parents who wanted to attend unable to do so due to the lack of notice and lack of any substantive understanding of the issue, the timelines or the proposed solution.

It is my understanding from the information shared at the Monday January 13, 2020 meeting that the urgency of the move is the result of the school boilers requiring urgent repair (again, an issue which has been long standing) and the risk that a failure of the boiler would render the school non-functioning requiring students to be dispersed. It is my understanding that the board is using the opportunity to repair the boilers to also address some other needed repairs. My concern is that it appears that there has not been a transparent and complete assessment undertaken to understand both the repairs needed, the costs and the timelines required to complete the repairs. I understand the proposed relocation site is only available for 20 months. Given that the estimated time for repairs is 18 months but that a full assessment and timeline has not been determined, it seems premature to force a decision to relocate the students to a school that may require a subsequent move should the repairs take longer than estimated. I would suggest

that it would be more prudent for the board to defer the decision until it can provide the trustees (and the school community) with a full assessment of the repairs required, the timelines, the cost and options for the school's relocation.

The board may also want to explore alternative locations for the relocation once it has an accurate, informed understanding of the repairs required and the timelines. The current school is located on the Yonge subway line. It is easily accessible and centrally located for the students who come from various areas of the city. A number of students have selected the school for these reasons and would be challenges to commute to the relocation school which would require significantly longer and less direct routes on public transit (e.g. multiple transfers).

I am requesting that this decision be deferred and that the board be directed to provide a full assessment to the trustees which reflect the due diligence necessary to enable the trustees to make an informed decision about an issue that will have a significant impact to our school community.

It is my opinion that the board is requesting a decision based on information that is incomplete and proposing a relocation site that is not appropriate. The little information that has been shared and the very urgent timelines suggests a poorly thought out plan. Given that these issues are not new and I am appealing to the trustees and the board to undertake the necessary due diligence to make an informed decision, particularly given the significance of this decision and the impact to our school community.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the discussion.

Catia Creatura-Amelio