

**Good Evening Mr. Chair, Trustees, Director of Education, Staff, Parents and Guests,**

Thank you for the opportunity to delegate at today's meeting. My name is Rosa Morphy, and I am the Co-Chair of the Notre Dame CSPC. I would like to thank the TCDSB staff for completing the TCDSB capital priorities matrix as published in today's agenda. The CSPC was delighted to learn that Notre Dame was given top priority ranking for the TCDSB's ranking of capital priority projects. It is an outcome that does not surprise us as we strongly feel that the current size and state of the school facilities have imposed limitations and prevented Notre Dame High School from reaching its potential for meeting the needs of students, parents and the community. This has impacted TCDSB as a whole as students are selecting other schools and boards with a greater selection of academic, extracurricular, and sports offerings. We would like to support the TCDSB in any way possible to ensure a successful outcome.

It is often stated that students do not attend Notre Dame for the facilities and esthetics, but rather for the school offerings. I can recall how surprised I was many years ago when my daughter told me she had selected Notre Dame for her high school. Based on the external appearance and small size, the school was not what I had expected for my daughters' academic future. Once I attended the Grade 8 Open House, it became evident to me that Notre Dame was the right secondary school for us despite the facility limitations. My daughters have attended Notre Dame for a collective five years and during that time I have appreciated Notre Dame for the school that it is – a school with a strong sisterhood and value system, where staff and students nurture and support each other while providing the guidance required as our daughters mature into young adults. However, we cannot ignore that there is a great deal of potential limited by the current school facilities.

Notre Dame was founded in 1941 as a small church building and grew to the Main Building on 12 Malvern Avenue, built in 1950. O'Connor Hall, a second building, was added in 1963, and further growth in the 1970's resulted in Notre Dame classes being held in the neighbouring St. John's elementary school. Currently, Notre Dame utilizes all three buildings, including part of the St. John's third floor.

Through this delegation, I hope to address some points for your consideration:

- Notre Dame is an academic girl's school that promotes leadership and academic excellence. Our school is trying to program for the students' needs and in doing so, is striving to attract those students who are currently leaving the TCDSB after elementary school to attend public high schools which offer more options.
- Notre Dame is the only TCDSB all-girls school east of Bayview, with the newly rebuilt St. Joe's Morrow Park located off Bayview, north of the 401. As a result, it is a school that services a large community from throughout east Toronto, including Scarborough. The school offers many wonderful programs and opportunities for students; however, it is limited by its current size and facility. In 2019, it was ranked #4 in the Board by the Fraser Institute.
- An optimal school facility and infrastructure is a key contributing factor to a student's learning experience and development, as well as the social and extracurricular activities that are so critical during the high school years. An appropriate school facility also plays a key role in motivating both students and staff, while potentially serving community needs.

Some of the limitations that I am aware of (many of which have been recounted by my daughters over the years) include:

- Notre Dame students must travel between the three building facilities to attend classes. As my daughters have recounted, this includes crossing a school yard during

cold and rainy weather (many times jackets are left in lockers), interrupting St. John's recess while dodging running elementary students and thrown balls.

- The school is overcrowded. There is a lack of study spaces which allow a student to comfortably work during free time. The limited cafeteria 250 capacity does not accommodate the required number of students. Many students are forced to eat quietly in the halls, outside, or skip lunch altogether.
- The school lacks a regulation size gymnasium and therefore is not able to host extramural sport finals.
- The school and classroom temperatures fluctuate across both extremes. My daughter has recounted her experience in wearing winter coats and mittens during a computer technology course.
- The HVAC system is outdated, and the school relies on opening windows for fresh air. Since the windows do not have screens, coupled with the fact that the neighbouring school yard is a haven for bees and wasps, this creates a risk for any students with a potential for anaphylactic reactions to bee stings.
- There is no gas setup in the laboratories; thereby eliminating any experiments that require bunsen burners.
- The school is not AODA Compliant to ensure accessibility for students with disabilities. There is no ramp to get into the building and no elevator. This creates issues when a student suffers an injury resulting in physical limitations.
- The lack of a drop off spot results in safety issues and the ire of neighbourhood residents as parents drive up on the curb to drop off/pick up their daughters.

We are delighted to see that Notre Dame High School is being prioritized. As noted, the Notre Dame CSPC and community would like to support the TCDSB in any way possible to ensure a successful outcome. It is our position that the investment of capital funds to develop an optimal school facility and infrastructure is a key contributing factor to a student's learning experience, development, and motivation. A modern school with

increased capacity will provide the ability to offer additional course offerings as well as student services support, such as special education, student success and guidance. These services are desperately needed now and will be more so post-Covid. The investment in a modern school will provide a healthier environment, improve student and teacher motivation, and contribute to student success for the many Toronto East students who prefer attending an all-girls school. Ultimately, this will ensure the sustainability and competitiveness of our beloved school.

Thank you.

Rosa Morphy

CSPC Co-Chair, Notre Dame High School