

Dear Trustees,

I am here tonight on behalf of the St. Jerome CSPC to delegate for our school community. The concerns St. Jerome's face as a community is of the utmost importance to us. Our aging school facility, built in 1963, has experienced noticeable problems. At the forefront of our concerns is the installation of awning style windows in our non-mechanically ventilated building. However, beyond our concerns of poor ventilation and incorrect windows, our aging school must also deal with old and decaying bathroom facilities which are in desperate need of repair. In the recent past, we have had to deal with major leaking from our washrooms, one of which leaked into the classroom below and the other which caused the entire ceiling to collapse! This is not exclusive to our kindergarten washrooms which deserve a complete renovation to properly service our youngest children. And while we experience many issues indoors, our outdoor facility is also experiencing the effects of aging. Our asphalt is in serious need of repair making it difficult for our children to safely run and play or even train for track and field on our crumbling pavement.

Our community cannot ignore that we are growing and growing quickly. Our school population is projected to be 640 students next year and rising. This increase in school population is causing a strain as our school building can no longer properly accommodate our growing enrolment. We simply do not have the space. We no longer have the space to accommodate expanding classes or proper rooms for important meetings regarding our children or the ability to potentially house speciality programs like 5th block or to add another Special Education Resource classroom or to expand our English as a Second Language program in our high immigrant community. Each year we continue to add portables to our school yard. We have added two portables every year for the past 4 years with very little consideration to their placement in our school yard. How many portables can St. Jerome's properly accommodate on our school grounds? Our school already could not handle the amperage from the portables installed in the summer of 2020 and we were required to connect them to the city lines. The increase of portables on our school grounds also means that our children have less and less space for proper play. We are quickly running out of space with no end in sight. How much longer can we allow this to go on?

Our increase in enrolment has also led to many other issues. Our kindergarten yard is inadequate in size and terrain. We cannot properly accommodate all four kindergarten classes at the same time outside. Our school gym is also too small to accommodate our current population which means our children do not have the opportunity to gather as a whole school community and celebrate or pray together. Also, with a single gym and the number of classes we have, it is impossible to schedule every class for a Gym period, leaving many classes to have gym outdoors all year round. The increase in enrolment also means an increase in staff. The school parking lot is overcapacity to even accommodate our present staff which means there are no spaces for parent visitors or school guests to park. We risk parking tickets just to volunteer at our school or attend important meetings regarding our children. Our library is also painfully tiny to meet the needs of our school community. Its size was reduced to accommodate the French Immersion Kindergarten class.

We cannot ignore that our French Immersion program continues to grow at our school. Our school was at 97% capacity when French Immersion was approved for our school. We were completely unaware of the strain this program would place on our infrastructure and in turn on our children. What plans were put in place to properly grow this program? We also cannot ignore the development at Downsview Park as the new development is in our catchment area. We cannot ignore the new condominiums that continue to be built along Keele Street. Once the owners can occupy, they, too, will fall within our catchment area. We cannot ignore that our neighbourhood is growing. Our current structure is unable to accommodate this steady growth; a growth that TCDSB itself once projected to exceed upwards of 800 students for our school. Time is of the essence. We are concerned that, ultimately, our growing community will no longer have access to our school as we are already over 175% capacity!

One of our primary concerns is providing a fair and equitable educational experience for our community. We are concerned that we are potentially creating an inequitable situation for a community who already experience difficult life circumstances as we are a high immigrant, working class community. Our school population is primarily made up of marginalized and new immigrant families along

with a high number of single parent homes. Our families deserve a school that is easily accessible to us. Our families deserve a school structure that properly and safely accommodates our children's learning needs. Our families deserve the proper space to accommodate before and after school care. Our families deserve the proper space to accommodate a daycare as this program currently occupies two potential school classrooms. We deserve the proper space to meet the needs of our marginalized community.

Our school community does amazing work each and every day, despite the challenges we face with a deteriorating, unsafe building that no longer meets our needs. At our most recent CSPC meeting, it was brought to our attention that new funding has been supposedly allocated to our school in the amount of upwards of 1.5 million dollars. How is this cost effective? Clearly, the TCDSB recognizes the debilitating situation at our school, however, no amount of money from these grants will fix our space issue. Distinguished Board of Trustees, Director Browne and all superintendents, I implore you to consider this: why is the St. Jerome community being offered band aids for a situation that requires stitches. The school of St. Jerome must be put forth as one of the top capital project schools for the Ministry of Education to consider.

Thank you