

Dear Trustee Kennedy,

Thank you for inviting the St Monica Parent Council to participate in the capital priorities meeting. Our apologies for not being able to get back to you in enough time to participate in person. Please accept the following letter on behalf of our Parent Council to advocate on behalf of the students and staff.

Good evening Director Browne, Trustees, Senior staff,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a parent perspective in the capital priorities discussion. St. Monica elementary school has long been on the list of capital priorities for a replacement school. It's time that the important work to build a replacement school for the students of St. Monica begins.

St. Monica is an oversubscribed school. Every year students are turned away from our catchment area because there is not enough room in the building to accommodate them. Some of the students go to other Catholic schools whereas others choose to stay within their catchment area and go to the public school. We would rather have the appropriate space to include all members of our Catholic family in our school.

Staff have been creative about creating learning spaces. Every room in the building is well utilized. The library functions as a classroom. The gym functions as a classroom for Physical education and also for music. As parents we recognize the importance of children having the ability to expand their horizons through exploring literacy options in the library, have space to creatively use the gym and participate in music. Currently due to restrictions in space these opportunities are not optimal.

The literacy room has been turned into a room for special education. Special education classes and English language learner classes are held in the hallway or in alcoves in the hallway. As parents we want to ensure every child has an optimal learning environment which is currently not possible.

We want every student to feel welcome and accepted however, this is difficult when our school is not functionally accessible. We have children at the school who have physical needs. There is one lift in the school which works very slowly when it does work. It allows children to access the first and second floors but the third floor is not accessible.

St. Monica is in need of a new playground. This is something that we have discussed and supported at the Parent Council for several years. The students at St. Monica deserve a good playground, however, we are reluctant to fund an initiative such as this when it is really a new school which is needed.

Temperature regulation within the school building is an ongoing issue. In the winter months the classrooms are very warm and in the spring and fall only a few rooms have air conditioning. The parents appreciate the upgrade of the ventilation system secondary to the pandemic.

Technology and internet access is essential to keep up with the new educational initiatives, teaching students to critically appraise information gathered from the internet and evolving curriculum. Recently at St. Monica's there was a wifi update however there are ongoing connectivity issues. Use of technology is important in day to day classroom activities and it is also particularly essential to some individuals learning and IEPs.

Given that there are several condo projects on the cusp of being finished as well as others that will be finished in the near future, it is important that St. Monica be able to accept all of the Catholic children who live in the catchment area. This will not be possible with the current building.

On behalf of all the current and future students of St. Monica Elementary School the parent council would ask the board to make St. Monica a priority to ensure that everyone is included and welcomed.

Sincerely,
Laura McAdam
Secretary, Parent council