

Ministry of Education

Ministère de l'Éducation

Capital and Business Support
Division

Division du soutien aux
immobilisations et aux affaires

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157-2023-3392

September 18, 2023

Nancy Crawford
Chair of the Board of Trustees
Toronto Catholic District School Board
80 Sheppard Avenue East
Toronto ON M2N 6E8

Dear Nancy Crawford,

Thank you for your letter dated May 17, 2023, to the Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education, regarding air conditioning in Toronto Catholic schools. Your letter has been forwarded to me and I am pleased to respond.

As you may be aware, the Ministry of Education (ministry) provides ongoing funding to school boards to address school renewal needs and to conduct the necessary long-term planning to keep schools in a state of good repair. Each year, school boards are allocated approx. \$1.4 billion to repair and renew school buildings and sites. School boards can use some of this funding to install air conditioners in schools. For the 2023-24 school year, the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) has been allocated approximately \$65.3 million for school renewal. In addition, as of September 1, 2022, we note that your board was carrying forward \$158.5 million of renewal funding from prior years that was not legally committed. I encourage your board to use these school renewal funds to meet all urgent and priority needs, which can also involve ventilation and air conditioning requirements.

Furthermore, over \$665 million in funding has been allocated to school boards since August 2020 for ventilation improvement measures, including the installation and/or upgrading of Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems. TCDSB has been allocated approximately \$20.3 million for ventilation improvement measures, including approximately \$11.3 million through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP).

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While the ministry provides renewal funding to school boards, it is the board's responsibility to determine how to allocate this funding to its schools based on local needs. Under the Education Act, school boards are responsible for the provision of suitable and adequate accommodation for their students and staff in their jurisdiction. This responsibility includes ensuring that each individual school follows all appropriate provincial and municipal health and safety requirements.

Thank you for taking the time to write and sharing your concerns. The ministry is committed to supporting healthy and safe learning environments for students and staff. The ministry also looks forward to continuing to work collaboratively with TCDSB.

Sincerely,

Didem Proulx
Assistant Deputy Minister
Capital and Business Support Division