

October 5, 2023

Toronto Catholic District School Board
Catholic Education Centre
80 Sheppard Avenue East
Toronto, ON
M2N 6E8

Re: Open Letter from a concerned parent of the St. Raphael School community

Dear Chair Crawford, Trustees of the TCDSB and Dr. Browne,

My name is **Michael Calabrese** and I am the parent of two boys who attend **St. Raphael CES** in North York. One of my sons is in Grade 4, and the other is in Grade 7. They have been students at the school since 2014 and 2018, respectively.

At a Virtual Town Hall Presentation hosted by York Centre Councillor, James Pasternak and Ward 5 Trustee, Maria Rizzo, on Monday, April 26th, 2021, I had an opportunity to speak regarding my sincerest concerns as it relates to the physical condition of St. Raphael CES.

I'd like to take this opportunity to share them with you as well as each of the twelve school board trustees, along with the two student trustees. My concerns with the physical building are as follows:

- The school first opened its doors in [September 1962](#)
- This means that St. Raphael school will be 61 years old this September
- Note, the first [Ontario Building Code](#) was filed on November 24, 1975 and came into force on December 31, 1975
- The windows at St. Raphael only open 4 inches (as was noted in the recent Pinchin Air Quality Report). This makes it very difficult to get any real "fresh" air into the classrooms.
- The main source of heating for the building is hot water radiator heating, which is one of the least energy efficient means to heat any interior space. Hot water rads just run and run and run. They never shut off on their own as they lack a feedback loop system (i.e. a thermostat)
- Further to the above two points, the school lacks mechanical ventilation (i.e. HVAC)
- There is but **ONE** washroom on the main floor of the school that services nearly 500 students. I am gravely concerned about the fact that my youngest son who is all of 9 years old, can find himself in a confined space with Intermediate students who use the same washroom. This is particularly concerning as there is no teacher supervision in this space and my son can potentially be exposed to inappropriate language, behaviour

and potentially physical harm at the hands of Intermediate students. I hope you agree, that this is indeed a **safety** concern.

- the HEPA filters that have been placed in the classrooms during COVID to increase the number of Air Changes per Hour generate a significant amount of noise. Teachers have noted that the increased noise the machine generates (as it has to operate on the high setting in order to maximize its capability of purifying the air of air borne pathogens such as COVID19) is a source of distraction to students who find it hard to hear instructions, their ability to focus during assessments is diminished (i.e. quizzes and tests) and students struggle to maintain attention to the tasks they are assigned to complete.
- The school's [Facility Condition Index](#) is **41%** (based on the most recent assessment conducted in 2013)

It is for these reasons, that I appeal to the Toronto District School Board that St. Raphael School be given priority status for any upcoming Education Capital Investments.

Simply stated, the physical envelope of this school has passed its "best before date". It was built in an era that pre-dates the modern Ontario Building Code and therefore lacks many of the amenities that a modern building would possess. Without a doubt, the students of St. Raphael need a 21st century school that reflects 21st century construction building practices that promote student personal safety and well-being. **"Full stop"**.

I trust that the TCDSB will consider these concerns and agree that St. Raphael's time has come. The community has been patient, polite and waited its turn. We are ready for a new school and look forward to one.

Thank you for your attention to my delegation.

Yours in support of Catholic Education,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Calabrese', with a stylized, cursive script.

M. Calabrese