

Good evening, all, my name is Adriana Aviles, St. Jerome CSPC chair.

I am here today to urge the board of trustees to prioritize our school in the Capital Priorities submission to the Ministry.

St. Jerome's student enrollment is growing quickly. Our school capacity is 444 and our current enrollment is at 630 students.

We must acknowledge the steady growth of our French Immersion program. Each year, as we add a new class to support French Immersion, it further intensifies the strain on our already limited space.

FDK French Immersion classes start off full and taper off in the older grades, often occupying an entire class for just 12-15 students. Staffing the program has also proven difficult.

We must recognize the ongoing development in the Downsview Park area. This expanding population will inevitably exert additional pressure on St. Jerome's student capacity.

We also house a YMCA Daycare which takes up the space of two classrooms in our building.

Regrettably, we are now having to decline families from our own community due to space constraints.

Our current structure is unable to accommodate us now, not including the steady growth the TCDSB itself once projected to exceed upwards of 800 students within the next few years.

The question remains, what do we do now?

Over the years, numerous portables have been added to the property, reducing play areas. The addition of portables has proven difficult or impossible due to electrical insufficiencies.

Our library was also significantly reduced in size to accommodate an extra FDK French Immersion class, and of course, class sizes are running at full capacity.

We have learned to adapt to the reduction in physical space, but at what cost to our children.

This situation affects our most vulnerable students.

St. Jerome has a high student population with extra support needs.

We don't have the physical space to accommodate therapy sessions, programs like 5th block, or expanding needs like ESL or special education.

We currently use a crowded storage room for therapy sessions. Can you imagine that? How undignified that must feel for both the student and the therapist?

Simply put, we need this capital funding. We are out of space, now!

We understand that it will take years to see the effects of this funding, but we've been advocating for this for the past 9+ years.

Our time is now.

We are out of time, and we are out of space.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express that ALL schools should receive the funding they need. We have a responsibility to all children, to their success, to our future.

It feels so unfair to present this knowing that if we are blessed with this opportunity, another school won't get what they need.

I truly hope that one day ALL our schools will be equipped with what they need when they need it.

Thank you kindly for your attention and consideration,

Respectfully, St. Jerome CSPC Chair
Adriana Aviles