

Ministry of Education

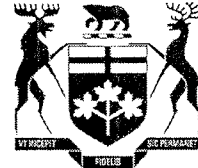
Minister

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Ministère de l'Éducation

Ministre

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Ontario

July 6, 2017

Mr. John K. Stephenson
President
Ontario Association of Architects
111 Moatfield Dr.
Toronto, Ontario M3B 3L6
president@oaa.on.ca

Dear Mr. Stephenson,

Thank you for your letter, on behalf of the Ontario Association of Architects (OAA) regarding the Toronto District School Board's (TDSB) Davisville Junior Public School. While my schedule does not permit to meet at this time, I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

Our government supports the renewal of our school facilities and public infrastructure. That's why we announced \$1.4 billion in ongoing renewal funding for the next two school years, which will allow boards to improve the condition of their current buildings.

The TDSB is responsible for reviewing its capital inventory to determine the most suitable pupil accommodation arrangements to best support student achievement and well-being, while managing its financial viability. While the ministry is responsible for policy that directs the allocation of funding to school boards, boards are ultimately responsible for distributing funding for each school or program according to their policy and priorities.

Every year, school boards are invited to submit business cases identifying their top eight major capital project needs over the next three years to address accommodation pressures; support the consolidation of underutilized facilities; replace facilities in poor repair; and provide facilities for French-language rights holders in under-served areas of the province. The ministry allocates Capital Priorities funding after a comprehensive assessment of the merits of school boards' business cases against the stated eligibility criteria. All business case proposals submitted through this program are evaluated with close attention, including whether the board is proposing a cost-effective solution, the impact on reducing the board's operating and renewal costs, and consideration for other benefits such as improved programming options in a new school.

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In 2015, the ministry approved capital funding of \$14.9 million to the TDSB to build a new replacement school on the existing school property. I understand this was the TDSB's top priority, as the business case submitted to the ministry identified accommodation pressures, poor facility condition and inadequate learning environments at the existing school as key reasons for requesting funding for a new replacement school.

Building a new school to replace an aging school in poor condition will allow the TDSB to address its highest priority renewal needs for health and safety, facility condition, energy efficiency and accessibility.

I appreciate your advocacy in supporting the preservation of Davisville Junior Public School. However, the Ministry of Education does not have the authority to designate a facility as a heritage site. The decision to designate a property to be of cultural heritage value or interest is a municipal responsibility, and as such would fall under the City of Toronto's jurisdiction.

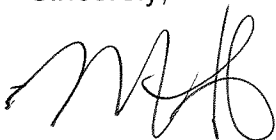
Further, any decision to demolish a school property made by the board requires ministry approval to proceed. To date, the ministry has not received any official business case from the TDSB to demolish Davisville Junior P.S. However, the ministry understands that the TDSB will seek approval to demolish Davisville Junior P.S. once the new replacement school is built. The TDSB's plan is for students to continue to attend Davisville Junior P.S. while the new construction takes place for the replacement school. Once construction is complete, students will be transferred from the old school to the new replacement school.

With respect to supporting community hubs, it is ultimately up to the TDSB to determine whether a community partner is appropriate to use school space that is not needed for educational purposes. It will ultimately be up to the TDSB to determine if the new replacement school will also have the potential to facilitate opportunities for any potential community hub opportunities. However, our government requires that school boards circulate property to public actors prior to disposition to the private sector through Ontario regulation 444/98.

For more information on this matter, I encourage you to contact the TDSB directly, or the City of Toronto on the heritage site issue.

Thank you again for taking the time to write on behalf of the OAA. I trust that this information is helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MH', written in a cursive style.

Mitzie Hunter, MBA
Minister