



Dawn Danko
Chair of the Board of Trustees
Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
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December 13, 2021

Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education
315 Front Street, 14th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 0B8

Re: Impact of Ministry Indecision on Gym Expansions at Rosedale, Queensdale and Billy Green

Dear Minister Lecce,

On November 23, 2021, HWDSB was gratified when the Ministry announced \$600 million to build new schools and child care spaces across Ontario. This announcement included the approval of \$16,667,921 for a new 650-pupil place school and three-room child care in Upper Stoney Creek (Nash).

We are grateful for investments in school renewal, a strategic priority at HWDSB, because we know that quality learning spaces support the learning and well-being of our students. We did not receive approval for new schools at Rousseau, Sherwood, the Sir John A. Macdonald hub and Waterdown Bay, or for portapaks at Eastdale or Shannen Koostachin.

However, we wish to highlight a serious concern about decisions that were not made regarding our capital priority project submissions. The Ministry of Education has not yet decided if our gym expansion requests are approved. This indecision hinders our ability to provide students with equitable, high-quality learning spaces.

As noted in previous correspondence, HWDSB's facilities were built to a wide variety of standards and benchmarks. Our facility benchmark strategy helps ensure that all facilities meet standards for appropriate learning environments. Ministry indecision on elementary gym expansions impacts this work.

Because the Ministry has not approved prior submissions, and does not allow use of Proceeds of Disposition for gymnasium expansions without Ministry approval, Board staff submitted three gymnasium expansion projects under the 2021 Capital Priorities Submission.

This is why, despite the exciting news about the replacement school for Upper Stoney Creek, we were still eagerly awaiting approvals on November 23 for the gym expansions submitted for Rosedale, Queensdale and Billy Green elementary schools. Every year of delay means that students graduate without benefiting from these key facility improvements.

Thank you for your careful consideration and for helping Board staff and Trustees provide facilities that live up to the standards our students deserve.

Sincerely,

Dawn Danko, Chair of the Board

CC: School Councils at Rosedale, Queensdale and Billy Green