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October 18, 2017

Marit Stiles
Trustee Ward 9

Good afternoon Trustee Stiles,

I am writing in response to your letter dated October 17, 2017 regarding the ongoing construction project at Regal Road Public School. You have raised several concerns around this project including issues with communication, scheduling of public meetings and access to Health and Safety test results. In terms of the first point, I can confirm that communication was not optimal and is an area that needs further work. The Communications department has dedicated resources available to Principals for typical communications issues; we recognized that in some circumstances greater support is needed. We have discussed this with Executive Officer, Ross Parry and have agreed to work on a plan to provide better support, especially for issues/concerns that arise related to staff and student safety. We also need to do better in terms of communicating delays to projects and the impacts of those delays, along with plans to mitigate those concerns. We should have clearly communicated the delay and the reasons for it, along with a realistic timeframe for completion. I am working with System Facilities Officer, Faris Mansur to implement a process whereby these types of delays are communicated in a timely manner to the Principal, with an expectation that they are then shared with the school community.

The issue of community meetings is another area where we fell short on this project. It is my understanding that a concern was brought forward that a student was suffering negative health effects from the ongoing work, and a meeting was requested. We failed to schedule that meeting in a timely manner. Staff continued to meet to discuss issues and strategies to mitigate the concerns, but those concerns were not clearly communicated to parents. A meeting was scheduled for October 17th, to discuss concerns; however this was not communicated to parents until October 13th, almost 2 weeks after the initial request. We should have scheduled a meeting to discuss when we were aware of the concerns, even if it was just to meet with the individual parent.

In your letter, you also request that meetings be held in the evening in order to allow working parents to attend, and I wholeheartedly agree. In fact, we normally schedule these meetings during the evenings to ensure that parents have an opportunity to listen to the presentations and get answers to their questions. We have found that this type of forum is the best way to present what are often very technical reports and address concerns quickly. The decision was made to hold a public meeting at Regal Road on October 17th immediately after school to update the parents and respond to concerns. At the time, it was agreed to hold the meeting after school as staff had other commitments to a parent meeting at another school that same evening.

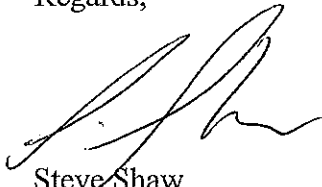
As there were increasing concerns regarding the air quality at Regal Road, we conducted further air quality tests; these tests demonstrated that the air quality was safe for occupants. This was shared with the Parent Council co-chairs later that day (October 13th). At that time, it was agreed that this information would be shared at the scheduled meeting on October 17th, but due to the prior staff commitments, the meeting had to end by 5:30 pm. We agree with your concerns and will schedule these types of meetings, in consultation with the Principal and Parent Council, to a time that meets the needs of community.

In terms of posting the test results, all Health and Safety test results must be posted on the workers' Health and Safety Bulletin Board in accordance with the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act. This is the area of the school where all inspections, minutes, test results and health and safety related information is posted for workers. At Regal Road, this bulletin board is located in the main office. In addition, staff created a binder for all information related to the construction. I have received confirmation that the asbestos testing results were located in the Caretakers office as they were the only TDSB staff members present in the building at the time the tests were taken.

Providing a copy of test results in the main office is an attempt to increase our transparency and allow parents to view test results. It is often difficult to interpret some of the test results without the necessary background and context. This is why we prefer to share the results at public meetings or encourage parents to contact our Health and Safety department if they have any specific questions.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further issues or concerns.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Shaw', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Steve Shaw
Executive Officer
Facility Services, Sustainability and Planning