



Trustee  
**Marit Stiles**  
Ward 9, Davenport



OPEN LETTER

John Malloy  
Director of Education  
5050 Yonge Street  
Toronto, Ontario M2N 5N8

October 17, 2017

Dear Director Malloy,

I am writing to follow up on conversations with staff regarding the status of construction and resulting communications issues, at Regal Road Jr PS.

I want to start by expressing my sincere appreciation for the support and leadership of Superintendent Sandra Tondat and Executive Superintendent, Sandy Spyropoulos throughout a difficult period at the school. Indeed, I have no doubt that all staff – administration, teachers, ECEs, facilities staff, caretakers, etc. -- are doing everything they can to ensure the health and safety of our staff and students.

Furthermore – and I believe I speak for most of the Regal Road families when I say this – we are very pleased that the Board has prioritized the work that is taking place at Regal Road. We know that the TDSB has a \$3.8-billion capital repair backlog, and we also appreciate that there is no way all the work required on our 600+ schools could take place solely during summer months. We also recognize that – like most of our older buildings and consistent with many other public buildings in Toronto – the issue of asbestos abatement is a reality in much of our school construction and renovation projects, and we appreciate that the Board adheres to strict health and safety standards.

Having said that, I want to draw to your attention to several issues that have emerged, and that I believe highlight larger systemic issues in our Board, and propose some potential solutions.

First, communication with families has been inconsistent. I recognize that much of this responsibility falls to Principals, and would urge that the Board consider assigning a dedicated communications support person to work with principals during construction and renovation phases at all our schools. So many of the issues that have arisen at Regal Road could, I believe, have been avoided with clear, consistent communication.

Further to this, meetings between families and technical and knowledgeable staff have been difficult to schedule, and many families felt excluded by the choice to hold an information meeting at 3:30PM, when many working parents are unable to attend. While we appreciate

that the meeting time was extended, it is unfortunate that this meeting could not take place at a later time, like most school/family meetings.

Second, I am concerned that the current practice of keeping air quality test reports in principals' offices, and not allowing them to be copied by parents, creates an appearance of lack of transparency. This is not at all helpful to building confidence between administration and families. Furthermore, it is inconsistent with our Board's commitment to ensuring greater accountability and transparency across the system.

The *Designated Substances Regulation* under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* requires that results of tests monitoring airborne concentrations of a designated substance and worker exposure to airborne concentrations of such a substance, "be posted in a conspicuous place or places where they are most likely to come to the attention of workers who would be affected by them."

I would like, please, to have confirmation that these results were in fact posted for workers/staff at Regal Road Jr PS and that this is our practice as a Board? Having said that, and assuming that we are in compliance, I would like to suggest that going forward we adopt a practice of posting these results in the school where families can also easily view them, without having to ask permission of principals. I believe it is an oversight of provincial government regulations that the same assurances we provide to workers are not provided to the families and students who spend similar hours in our buildings and breathe the same air.

I would greatly appreciate your response to these suggestions. If current Board policy prohibits the posting of the air quality testing results outside the Principal's office, I would be happy to bring forward a motion to change this.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and thank you again for the tremendous leadership you continue to bring to our Board.

Sincerely,



Marit Stiles  
TDSB Trustee  
Ward 9, Davenport