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Breaking ground on special schools

By Joel Ceausu

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New NDG facility will have supra-regional mandate, serving all English school boards in Quebec.

Ground will be broken on the English Montreal School Board's new Mackay Centre and Philip E. Layton Schools today.

The \$21.9 million state-of-the-art facility will be built on a lot on Terrebonne Street, between Benny and Madison Avenues in NDG. The EMSB has owned the green space for decades, which is currently under municipal custodianship and being used as an informal playing field by the public and the neighbouring Commission scolaire de Montréal (CSDM) elementary school École Marc-Favreau.

The new school will house approximately 200 students with developmental, intellectual, auditory or visual impairments, and will be the only one of its kind to offer specialized educational and rehabilitative services for the anglophone community. Its supra-regional mandate means that students from all nine Quebec English school boards will be attending this school, with some travelling as much as three hours per day by school bus.

The facility has been designed to cater to the diverse needs of its unique student population: The ground floor will feature specialized classrooms, washrooms, an outdoor courtyard, as well as an indoor therapeutic

swimming pool, while the upper level will accommodate school administration, private offices and medical equipment.

The EMSB says it will minimize the impact on commuting students, nearby residents and the environment: Construction materials will be fabricated off-site to minimize noise and dust pollution. To minimize traffic impact, school bus drop-off points will be located on the school property which will have a 100-car parking lot. Crossing guard and bussing services will be carefully coordinated with the sister EMSB St. Monica school as well as Marc-Favreau.

Access to École Marc-Favreau will be maintained throughout the construction period and a permanent path will be built on right-side of the property to allow students access to the school from the rear. A smaller sports field between the schools will be accessible by both student populations.

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