A school library par excellence
Parkdale's shame now really shines
Students now get key tech advances

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When Ministry of Education officials toured the library at Parkdale Collegiate Institute a few years ago, one of them turned around and asked the librarian, "Where's the rest of it?"

That's the story veteran trustee Irene Atkinson told yesterday, before the school opened its new $1 million, 5,000-square-foot library.

Atkinson and former Parkdale principal Gary Duncan helped lead the drive to replace the outdated facility that will give the high school's 600 students a technological window on the world.

In addition to books, the new library contains video conferencing and broadband technology that will connect students and staff to the York public school board, York University, the University of Alberta, the Banff Centre of the Arts and other learning centres.

It's the kind of technology that could never have been housed in the old, smaller facility, the school's new principal, David Freedman, said yesterday.

"A library is a hub. It's the hub that ties everything together. We've made that hub a little bit more expansive," he said.

Parkdale's students have been using the public library this school year and the school's librarian delivered books to classrooms while construction was underway.

There was a shortfall of appropriate resources, however, said Debbie Green, whose son Will Bishop-
Green attends Grade 9 at Parkdale.

"I'm hopeful it'll mean he'll learn to be a better critic about the resources he uses and be more library savvy," Green explained.

The networking facilities will enable Parkdale students to test out a new joint high school/college credit program with Seneca College.

While the Toronto District School Board continues to struggle with a backlog of renovation work, including the need for new roofs, boilers and windows in many of its aging buildings, this has been a good year for Parkdale, Atkinson said.

The school's tennis courts were replaced. The 117-year-old building has also had three new boilers installed, and now the library has been revamped.

The school, located at 209 Jameson Ave., was slated to be rebuilt in 1987, but when other priorities made that impossible, the community focused on rebuilding the library, Atkinson said.