

BRIEFING NOTE

DATE: 5 June 2006

TO: Program and School Services Committee

FROM: Associate Director

RE: Cooperative Education and the Canadian Armed Forces

Issue/Problem: (Description)

On 24 May 2006, the Board decided that staff present a written briefing to the next meeting of the Program and School Services Committee on the Cooperative agreement with the Canadian Armed Forces including:

- (i) background of the agreement or relationship;
- (ii) reason for the relationship;
- (iii) number of students involved;
- (iv) type of work the students are doing;
- (v) perceived benefits of the program; and
- (vi) approval process for Cooperative Education programs.

Senior Staff Person Carrying Responsibility: Rod Thompson, Associate Director

Background Information:

All Toronto District School Board (TDSB) cooperative education programs follow the procedures of the Cooperative Education and Other forms of Experiential Learning Policies and Procedures for Ontario Secondary Schools 2000. Based on the maturity level, the credit background and the interests of the students, it is the responsibility of the cooperative education teacher to find and determine the suitability of placements.

In terms of central programs, they are generally formed to meet the needs of students and often with a supporting partner such as Sunnybrook Health Science Centre, the University Health Network, Local 27 Carpentry Union, TDSB in partnership with the Skilled Trades Union, and Toronto Homes for the Aged. This year, the TDSB has partnered with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Government Services and the Ministry of Children and Youth to implement the "OPS Learn and Work Pilot Program for Youth Ages 16-18" to create a paid co-op program at Lester B. Pearson C.I.

Over 8,000 students are involved in TDSB cooperative programs intended to increase credit accumulation; to provide experiential learning opportunities; to develop career awareness; and in some cases, to allow students to be paid. Often these partnership programs required signed agreements. In the past, the TDSB has signed agreements for the Army Reserve Cooperative Education Program.

Response to the Board Decision:

- (i) background of the agreement or relationship:

The Department of National Defense has had a long-standing history of working with the education system. Since 1990, the program has operated in the separate and public boards in the Greater Toronto Area and has been very successful in York,

Peel and Durham where there has been strong support from the school boards, students and parents. The program has also been implemented in the TDSB following the success in former boards. It was started in North York and, prior to amalgamation, had participants from Scarborough and the City of York.

The TDSB provided army reserve co-op based on the policies of the 1989 cooperative policy document, which stated that cooperative students could not be paid. Eventually, this led to a hiatus in the program since the army reserve in June 2002 determined that first they must pay students and second that they could not afford to pay students. By that time, the 2000 Ministry Policy document stated that students in specialized programs could receive remuneration.

In January 2005, there was interest in renewing the program and meetings were held to plan the program for the second semester of the following year. Based on an agreement signed in June 2005 by the Director of Education and followed by an Information Report to Board in June 2005 indicating the possibility of resuming Army Reserve Co-op in the second semester of 2005-2006, the program was implemented this semester.

Currently, there are Military Cooperative programs in Aurora, Barrie, Owen Sound, Oshawa, Mississauga, and Georgetown.

(ii) reason for the relationship:

The purpose of all cooperative education programming is to provide students with workplace learning experiences to allow them to make informed choices regarding future education and careers based on information and experience. Cooperative education allows students to earn credits while “trying on” a career to determine whether they have the aptitude, skills and education required. Based on the recent release of Program/Policy Memorandum 139, students can also use up to two cooperative education credits towards the compulsory credits required for an OSSD. Finally, in specialized programs, students may now earn a wage which advantages many of our students. In order to meet the diverse interests and needs of our students, all avenues for experiential learning need to be encouraged which includes the reserve and military.

(iii) number of students involved:

According to records, there are 14 TDSB students involved this semester who form part of the group of 104 students from other boards such as York Region, Peel, and Toronto Catholic District School Boards. Many requests have already been received from our teachers for student placement in this program for 2006-2007.

The TDSB students are:

- five nineteen year olds;
- five eighteen year olds;
- three seventeen year olds; and
- one sixteen year old.

All students under 18 years of age require parental approval.

(iv) type of work the students are doing:

Students accepted into the program actually become members of the Canadian Forces Primary Reserve. They undergo basic army training at one of the military facilities in Toronto (i.e. Fort York or Moss Park Armouries). The program is operational in the second semester from February to June and involves the students in a four-day per week cooperative education placement for which they can earn four credits. In addition there is the opportunity for students to experience field camp training at Camp Borden or Meaford. The training includes:

- military drill dress and deportment;
- first aid, fire safety, and proper handling of hazardous materials;
- weapons handling and range practice;
- military structure, laws, and traditions;
- fieldcraft and survival techniques;
- use of communications equipment; and
- physical fitness training.

(v) perceived benefits of the program:

- 4 credits (2 can count towards compulsories);
- salary – approximately \$600 per week;
- benefits – medical and dental;
- possible summer employment;
- uniforms and equipment are provided by the Canadian Forces;
- young people who choose to stay in the army reserve are provided with educational grants for post secondary education. This tuition assistance program will reimburse reserve force members up to \$2,000 per year to a maximum of four years;
- future opportunities in a variety of career areas such as logistics officer, vehicle technician, medical assistant, supply technician, cook, and even musician;
- transferable skills such as teamwork, leadership training, problem solving, fitness, and communications skills;
- self-confidence; and
- self-discipline.

(vi) approval process for Cooperative Education programs:

See Background Information above.

For Further Information Contact:

Rod Thompson, Associate Director at (416) 397-3187 or via e-mail at rod.thompson@tdsb.on.ca

E03(CanArmedForcesBriefing)jd.3371