

# **THE ROAD TO HEALTH: A FINAL REPORT ON SCHOOL SAFETY**

## ***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

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### ***“ONE BULLET WOUNDS MANY”***

It is all too easy to forget why we are here: Jordan Manners was five days beyond his fifteenth birthday when he died on May 23, 2007 in the hallway of C.W. Jefferys C.I. Secondary School (“C.W. Jefferys”) as a result of a bullet wound to the chest. The students of C.W. Jefferys honour his memory with a tribute that remains in the main hall of the school entitled “One Bullet Wounds Many”. With the support of Jordan’s family, this tribute was reproduced as the cover of this Summary Volume, in the hopes of ensuring that the stark reality of the tragedy that befell Jordan and his family will never be overlooked in favour of the detached systemic discussions that necessarily occupy the four volumes of this Report. Similarly, the School Community Safety Advisory Panel (the “Panel”) carefully laid out the last moments of Jordan’s life as he lay dying in the hallway of C.W. Jefferys to ensure that it is all very real. It is certainly real for those who personally experienced Jordan’s loss and it now should be real for all who claim an interest in the subject matter of this Report: the safety of youth. Fundamentally, if there is to be serious change in the Toronto District School Board (the “TDSB” or the “Board”) and beyond, then the death of Jordan Manners must serve as a wakeup call on the vulnerability of our youth to the evils of violence inside as well as outside of schools.

### **This Executive Summary**

Below we set out the Panel’s approach in addressing issues of school safety. Following which, this Summary sets out the major issues the Panel analyses in its four volume report. Thereafter, this Summary provides the more notable survey results flowing from the staff and student surveys conducted at C.W. Jefferys and Westview Centennial. Finally, we conclude with the 126 recommendations reproduced in full at the conclusion of this Summary.

### **The Panel’s Approach**

The approach the Panel has taken to this review is a broad one. The underlying premise to the Panel’s work is that “school safety” is synonymous with “school health”. Put simply, the Panel has concluded that addressing issues of safety in schools under the jurisdiction of the TDSB is inextricably tied to addressing the question of the health of the school environment. If a healthy learning environment is achieved then schools will be safe. Conversely, where safety issues have become a serious concern, there are clear indications of ill health and a dysfunctional learning environment. It follows, therefore that issues of school safety involve considerations of more than narrow questions about security measures, including building security and discipline. Indeed, it is one of the

operating theses of this Report that an overly narrow approach to safety has historically characterized this area and is one of the barriers to substantial progress.

The four volumes of the Final Report address the following issues which the Panel maintains fundamentally reflect and impact on the health of school environments generally and school safety in particular:

- (1) gender and school safety;
- (2) barriers to reporting school safety issues;
- (3) tracking violent incidents at schools across the TDSB;
- (4) the breakdown in the relationship between students and teachers;
- (5) the lack of youth activities;
- (6) inadequate funding;
- (7) lack of clarity concerning the role of Trustees;
- (8) discipline measures in schools;
- (9) strategies for detecting and deterring safety threats;
- (10) missing supports for complex needs students;
- (11) school safety concerns specific to Aboriginal students;
- (12) the relationship between safety and equity.

### **Violence and Weapons in Schools**

Schools inevitably mirror the communities they serve. In a large urban setting such as Toronto, these communities are not hermetically sealed and schools across the city have a wide range of students from all walks of life. This necessarily means that the ills that our communities face outside the schools will and have made their way into the schools.

There is a community-wide crisis of confidence in the ability of the TDSB to ensure violence-free and weapons-free environments in all of its schools. The Panel shares this concern. A combination of direct consultations with education personnel and community agencies, anonymous surveying of staff and students and research in respect of TDSB incident records for the last 24 months lead the Panel to the conclusion that there are guns in select schools across the city in non-trivial numbers. Circumstances are such that neither the TDSB nor the police are in any position to accurately account for the numbers of guns in schools. Sexual assaults have also increased at alarming rates across the city. Inhibitions to reporting sexual assaults in the present system have resulted in the vast majority of youth not reporting their own victimization or that of their fellow students.

As detailed below and in the body of this Report, the anonymous surveys at Westview Centennial (870 of the 1200 students responded) indicated that 23% of students reported that they know someone who had brought a gun to school in the past two years. 22.5% reported that they have seen a gun in the past two years. 6.1% reported that they knew four or more people who brought guns to school in the past two years.

Far from being a “Jane/Finch” issue, the problem is city-wide: In order to get a more complete picture of the serious incidents and firearm related incidents that have occurred across the TDSB, the School Safety Panel staff spent days wading their way through unintegrated reports to compile and collate the serious incident data for the last 24 months. A Table of Violent Incidents was prepared that reflects incidences across the City of Toronto (predominantly outside the Jane-Finch area). A thirty page chart prepared by the Panel entitled “Table of Violent Incidents” is attached as Appendix “D” to this Report. The table identifies 177 incidents of violence that have been reported in schools across the city (see Appendix “D” to this Report, chart entitled “Table of Violent Incidents”).

The incidents included in the Table of Violent Incidents were chosen from a larger pool of incidents and classified according to gun incidents (firearms, replicas, pellet guns or reports of guns), weapons incidents (knives or tasers), robberies and sexual assaults. The table was compiled from a collation of data obtained from TDSB Weekly Incident Reports covering the period of January 13, 2006 to and including November 30, 2007 and a review of the Board Crisis Reports covering the period of September 26, 2006 to and including December 6, 2007. The non-mandatory nature of the reporting requirements, as well as the inconsistent reporting among quadrants, supports the view that these numbers significantly understate the prevalence of violent crime amongst youth in schools. The table allows for a comparison between those incidents reported in Northwest 2 (“NW2” – the quadrant that includes the Jane-Finch community) (five) in contrast to those incidents reported in all other quadrants in the City (172). A summary table is provided below (see thirty page chart, Appendix “D”):

Category	On School Property(outside of NW 2)	Off School Property(outside of NW 2)	NW2
Gun Incidents – actual/replicas/pellet/reported	54	26	3
Weapons Incidents – knives and tasers only - Could be in possession/threatening	30	5	0
Robberies	10	5	0
Sexual Assaults	31	16	2

The summary table demonstrates that there a significant number of gun incidents across the TDSB and **outside of the NW2 area**. In total, there were 80 gun related incidents on or off school property reported in the either the Weekly Incident Reports or the Crisis Reports. Of the 80 incidents, only two occurred in the NW2 family of schools. The data detailed above (as expanded upon in the Table of Violent Incidents) demonstrates a similar trend for all serious violent incidents. While it is clear that the NW2 family of schools seriously underreports incidents, it is also equally clear that violence in general, and gun incidents and sexual assaults in particular, is a City-wide phenomenon.

The panel received data that the Board produces yearly for the Trustees that encapsulates the provincially mandated “Violent Incident” forms. The title of these reports is unfortunate as they do not represent a comprehensive reporting of incidences of violence in the school system. According to Systems Superintendent Quan (head of Safe and Caring Schools Department) these reports, as currently filled out, capture only a fraction of incidents of violence (the failures of this reporting system is explained in Volume 3, section 3.06.02, “Tracking Safety”).

### **Strategies that have Failed**

The TDSB has made significant achievements in the area of curriculum and boasts a prestigious record in its ability to maintain academic standards amongst engaged youth. However, the crisis of confidence that hangs over the TDSB relates to the Board’s inability, thus far, to successfully address the needs of the more marginalized youth who are not engaged and who are not succeeding academically.<sup>1</sup> It is, of course, a sad reality that these are the students who also represent the greatest safety concern as they are the students who are disengaged as a result of the failure to address their socio-psychological health needs.

A combination of the TDSB’s own cultural limitations and historically gross under-funding has rendered the Board unable to effectively address the needs of this growing population of disengaged and complex-needs youth who now represent an increasing safety concern. Deteriorating relationships between the schools, students, parents and communities are sadly part of this decline in the health of the school environment.

If progress is to be achieved, it is necessary to chronicle those strategies that have, to date, failed. The Tory Government of the late 1990’s embarked on a deliberate course designed to net out “equity” from the equation. Education was no exception and, indeed, the original *Safe Schools Act* and the impact it had on marginalized youth, particularly African Canadian youth, is a stark example of the fall-out from this Government policy.

The punitive approach that preached resort to mass suspensions and other forms of conventional discipline for complex-needs youth reached its zenith with the zero tolerance philosophy that dominated the early years of the *Safe Schools Act* amendments enacted in 2002. Youth were suspended and expelled in “droves”. The Panel refers to this enforcement style for responding to troubled youth as the “Safe Schools Culture”.

The Panel accepts that the Safe Schools Culture has deeply hurt this City’s most disenfranchised. The devastating effect that this style of discipline had (and continues to have) on marginalized communities is borne out by its lasting and ongoing effects. Spectres of “zero tolerance” policies continue to hang over the Safe Schools department (now called the Safe and Caring Schools Department). While the department has

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this Report, the Panel uses the terms “marginalized youth” and “complex-needs youth” as appropriate. The term “complex-needs youth” is meant to identify a broader class and, in addition to marginalized youth, captures those students who may suffer disengagement and alienation due to other unique challenges that may not typically attach to marginalized communities.

attempted to distance itself from the original Safe Schools Culture, the vestiges of TDSB's recent past are not so easily shed.

The Safe School Culture preaches a theory that complex-needs youth should be "treated the same" as all other youth. Predictably, this "one size fits all" approach results in those unable to "make the grade" being pushed out of the schools on to the streets of our communities. The government of the day (Conservative Government under Premier Mike Harris) had been elected (twice) on a platform which had, as a major plank, the dismantling of key social supports. The impact was, in effect, to push youth out of the schools into a setting where essential supports had been removed. Consultees, such as Dr. Akua Benjamin, refer to this resulting generation of youth as the "walking wounded" for whom hope and pride have been replaced by alienation and radicalization.

Did the Safe School Culture succeed in making schools violence-free and weapons-free environments? The answer is a resounding NO! The Panel's sobering findings with respect to youth victimization in a wide array of TDSB schools across the city speak for themselves (see Appendix "D", Table of Violent Incidents).

While the TDSB did not create poverty, racism, sexism or classism, it has the power and opportunity to shelter youth from its harshest effects. The Panel maintains that charting a new direction for safety in TDSB schools means charting a new direction for how the Board responds to complex-needs youth. It is about recognizing that "treating everyone the same" does not work when the starting points for youth can be so different. By way of simple example, if a thirteen year old comes to school hungry and sleep-deprived because of the personal crisis that may be his or her reality (due to challenges at home), how do we justify holding that youth to the same standard of behaviour and education as a well nourished student who comes from a nurturing and attentive environment?

The panel finds that a total dismantling of the "Safe Schools" culture is imperative and that a new vision should replace it which recognizes a different and inclusive concept of safety – an approach which includes discipline but is capable of operating beyond straight enforcement. The fundamental challenge for the TDSB involves identifying and employing key strategies aimed at re-engaging youth. As simple as this statement is to make, the TDSB (along with many other agencies in the Province of Ontario) has been wholly unsuccessful at meeting the challenge. Key elements to any successful strategy will be initiatives aimed at inclusion. In other words, the TDSB cannot hope to re-engage youth if its programs and initiatives are not geared towards accommodating their unique circumstances. Youth who come to school unable to learn because of their challenging lives outside of school have needs that must be addressed through social services supports as well as inclusive curriculum aimed at their realities. Zanana Akande, retired educator, former cabinet minister and community advocate, put it best: "it is absurd to preach course credit accumulation and delayed gratification to youth who have no hope of ever seeing the career opportunities we are trying to sell."

There are no "quick fix" solutions. Years of neglect of our marginalized communities have brought us to where we are today; reversing the trends will not be accomplished

overnight. Resource-draining measures such as metal detectors, while tempting as a response to the guns, are not going to transform unsafe conditions into healthy learning environments. Preventive measures aimed at encouraging youth to make better choices are the way to safety. In the end, conditions must be altered so that youth trust the safety of their environment enough to part with the weapons.

There is no prospect of effectively addressing concerns with respect to school safety unless a multi-faceted approach is taken to this complex problem. Time and again, the Panel has been treated to the mantra that “this is not just a school problem; this requires a coordinated effort by all the relevant arms of government and community agencies”. The Panel agrees. To this end, the recommendations in this Report do not confine themselves to simply the TDSB. To do so would fail to do justice to the breadth and complexity of the problems inherent in addressing the health of the TDSB school system.<sup>2</sup>

The shift in thinking that is required at both the TDSB and the Ministry of Education involves the recognition that, among other things, it is simply not enough to be accomplished in teaching curriculum. **Matters going beyond academics must be overcome in order to address the fundamental needs of youth who come to school unable to learn because of their challenging lives outside of school.**

The real change that is essential to making headway on issues of safety involves abandoning the failed philosophy of addressing safety through discipline/enforcement mechanisms. It does not work. While there will always be a place for discipline in identifying standards of behaviour, the reality that has thus far not been accepted in the system is that **marginalized youth cannot be punished/suspended into becoming engaged**. Resort to mass suspensions and other forms of conventional discipline for youth whose hope has faltered does not work. Louis March, Communications Director for the African Canadian Heritage Association expressed to the Panel what he hears daily: **“It is easier to get a gun than to get a job”**.<sup>3</sup>

Hope needs to be restored through programs and initiatives that create prospects for success for youth who are currently on the outside looking in. In the words of Peter Rosenthal, legal counsel and social justice advocate, “let’s make it easier to get the job”. Tied to this imperative is the need to recognize that when we speak of “a job”, as in the case of anyone else, it is symbolic of more than just employment. It is about access to opportunities, the creation of career aspirations and the fulfilment of life long ambitions. It is about dignity and self-respect. In our current environment, these goals are simply unattainable for the City’s marginalized youth.

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<sup>2</sup> No doubt in recognition of the constellation of issues involved, the Director of the TDSB has, in written advice to the Panel, confirmed her support for recommendations being directed, where appropriate, to other agencies and levels of government that the Panel may identify.

<sup>3</sup> Consultations with the Coalition of African Canadian Organizations dated August 16, 2007

## **SELECT ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS IDENTIFIED IN THE REPORT**

### **Dismantling the Safe School Culture – The Well-Being and Equity Department**

The Panel finds that the “Safe School” moniker has no place in a society that recognizes that safety can only be accomplished in partnership with equity. While recognizing that there are those employed at the Safe and Caring Department of the TDSB who do care, as long as the “Safe School” culture continues to exist in name, their efforts will be unsuccessful.

The Panel relies on the philosophy engendered in the notion of “equity” which has, as its most fundamental tenet, the recognition that people’s differences are to be recognized and accounted for with a view to creating inclusive environments that do not push people out. Strategies geared to inclusion involve adopting approaches and programs meant to recognize and acknowledge the diversity of the student population. These are the foundational principles upon which equity initiatives are built. That is, one size does not fit all.

The view that the Safe School Culture ought to be abandoned in favour of a new approach that involves infusing equity into youth management has spawned the Panel’s recommendation for a new department known as the “Well-Being and Equity Department”. Essential to the function of this department is the notion of “partnering up” the former Safe and Caring Schools Department with a revitalized Equity team in order to ensure that, among other things, there will be no discipline without equity. This is an important step forward to ensure that the message to our most marginalized community is that the TDSB has not only listened but has heard the pleas to put an end to the Safe Schools Culture.

### **The TDSB Education Culture**

Even with the changes proposed in this Report, unaided and unmonitored, the TDSB has neither the cultural nor the financial wherewithal to restore safety and equity in its most vulnerable schools. These inabilities do not flow from a general lack of caring as educators amongst TDSB staff and Trustees, on the contrary their concern and passion for youth is impressive. However the TDSB education culture has created such formidable barriers to progress, that many of the most well-meaning of educators are rendered powerless to institute real and sustainable change.

The Panel became concerned with the extent of the impact of the TDSB education culture when it became increasingly apparent how resistant Board employees were to addressing matters of school safety with the Panel. An extraordinary number of employees would only speak on issues of safety if it was on a “not-for-attribution” basis. The nature of this TDSB education culture is characterized as a “culture of silence” borne of fear of political or bureaucratic reprisal or both.

The TDSB education culture was eventually pursued on an off-the-record basis with employees from teachers through to senior staff. The existence of this culture of silence was confirmed in a significant number of these consultations. On the one hand, one can anticipate that the Board as an institution should reasonably have a certain expectation of loyalty from its employees. On the other hand, this expectation of loyalty can easily become oppressive when it mandates silence. The reticence by board employees to come forward was not restricted to one level in the system. Indeed a certain fear and/or resistance to scrutiny actually increases at the higher levels of administration or senior ranks of the Board.

Finally, the Panel commissioned a Report by retired educator Zanana Akande. Her Report is included in the appendices to the Final Report [Appendix “E”]. Ms. Akande confirms the longstanding nature of this education culture. A number of recommendations in respect of corporate initiatives to counteract the TDSB education culture and to create “whistleblower” type protections are proposed by the Panel.

### **The Trustee Level**

The reference to political reprisal leads to a recurring theme in the Panel’s consultations. Some of the Trustees have difficulty recognizing and respecting boundaries in their dealings with Board employees (including supervisory officers and administrators). Such practices are troubling and not consonant with developing and maintaining healthy school environments. Trustees themselves speak of the dysfunctional nature of decision-making at the Board level. It is the Panel’s view that it is essential for officials who preside over a \$2.3 billion dollar enterprise such as the TDSB to receive a minimal degree of mandatory training (currently absent) and to have job descriptions as well as a code of conduct. If public expectations for an effective and safe education system are to be met, it is imperative that Trustees are reasonably informed and are governed by basic rules of conduct. In addition, there is simply no justification for the failure to provide for full time remuneration for the position of the Chair of the TDSB. The public expects sound and competent leadership from the TDSB Chair. A salary of \$35,000.00 per year is grossly insufficient to compensate for the full time nature of the post.

### **Detection and Deterrence**

The Panel’s research has revealed that there are firearms and other weapons in non-trivial numbers in select TDSB schools across the city. In view of these results, any and all strategies directed at detection, deterrence and removal of weapons must be considered.

The Panel, out of concern over the presence of guns in schools, considered recommending metal detectors. Ultimately, after considerable debate, the Panel has concluded that metal detectors are not the solution to this complex problem.

The issue is first considered in a “real-world” context where there are neither unlimited resources nor unlimited political will to address issues of school safety. The Panel operates on the premise that the purchase and installation of metal detectors could only be

reasonably considered if the intention was to use them in the over 150 secondary schools across the city; proceeding in any other fashion would result in the targeted usage of such devices becoming a tool for the further stigmatization and marginalization of already troubled communities. The exercise, therefore, would involve massive expenditures of resources, in view of the cost of the technology (an x-ray machine such as seen in courthouses for checking bags can cost \$25,000.00) and the trained security officials that would be required to run the detectors.

Inevitably, funds earmarked for key preventive measures directed at re-engaging youth (such as youth workers and programs) would be lost to the hugely expensive endeavour of purchasing and running these detection devices. Furthermore, the Panel is concerned that any political will to adopt preventive measures would seriously dissipate in the face of the “quick fix” that metal detectors represent in a social setting where apparent “instant solutions” are often the path of least resistance.

On the other hand, the specific loss of a life that could have been prevented as well the overriding priority of the safety of all of our children, makes it essential to consider the prospect of metal detectors as if resources were unlimited – what the Panel considers the “non-real world” scenario. Even in such a scenario, the Panel is of the view that metal detectors are not suited to addressing the problem. It is apparent that the logistics involved in controlling the entry and screening of students every day (including access to the building over the course of the day) would seriously hamper the learning environment including, but not limited to, students’ class schedules. That is, on consultation with the security experts who manage detector technology, lengthy delays and long lines to permit the daily individual screenings (or long waits in controlled collector rooms) are considered unavoidable costs. Therefore, leaving aside important discussions around the potentially negative impact to the school environment in general, resort to the technology would inevitably create a serious disruption to education as students could not be effectively placed in their first-period classes while they waited their turn to go through the detectors.

Schools are not the same kind of spaces as rock concerts, clubs or airports. Decisions about security strategies must be based on a consideration of not only the day-to-day requirements for a school to function efficiently, but also the kinds of spaces that we want schools to be. Schools should be welcoming, safe havens that facilitate a sense of community and promote learning. Security strategies that undermine these fundamental requirements may well come at too great a cost.

On the other hand, the loss of a life that could have been prevented is the greatest possible cost, and a rejection of metal detectors is not to say that nothing should be done to detect firearms or deter their presence in schools. Firearms pose a significant safety threat in Toronto schools, and, as such, schools have an obligation to protect students. The Panel believes that it is essential that the Board take steps to monitor and search those areas where firearms could be secreted, such as lockers, washrooms and other “nooks and crannies” that form part of school property. Random searches, possibly with the use of canines, are one way in which schools could carry out that obligation.

We recognize that suggesting the use of dogs to detect guns in schools presents as an intimidating proposal that, by all measures, should be foreign to school environments. Nevertheless, gun detection dogs present as a simple, inexpensive, effective and unobtrusive way to detect and deter the presence of firearms in schools. In a consultation with security experts from the Toronto Police Service, the Panel learned that two small, non-threatening, thirty-pound dogs (Springer Spaniels as opposed to German Shepherds or Doberman Pinchers) and their handlers (Board employees, not uniformed police officers) can, when students are in classes and not in hallways, inspect a school in a few hours.<sup>4</sup>

The current training and performance of the gun dog is such that when a dog (trained to pick up the scent of gun oil and/or gun powder) identifies a locker as containing a firearm, the dog simply stops in front of the locker and sits down. The usage of canine units must be strictly controlled to ensure their use on a purely random basis in the form of spot checks on secondary schools across the city. These random searches would be non-intrusive and would be designed to avoid any possibility of targeting certain schools or certain communities. In our view, if these basic principles were adhered to, canine units would be one strategy that would assist with reducing firearms in schools.

Ultimately, there are no short-term solutions to the problem of firearms in schools. Increased violence in schools is ultimately a reflection of both the TDSB's inability to adequately serve and engage our most marginalized youth, as well as deeply rooted social problems that have their origins outside of school walls. A preventive package based on principles of equity and designed to ameliorate the conditions that marginalized youth face is the primary imperative, and should not be undermined by short-sighted and expensive interventions that turn schools into fortresses. Less intrusive measures such as cameras, lanyards, uniforms, controlled access and canine detection strategies, when coupled with other long-term preventive measures, can assist to decrease the number of weapons in schools without undermining the open learning environments that we want our schools to be.

### **Gender and School Safety**

Violence against girls and young women is a pervasive problem in TDSB schools. Following the Panel's confidential reporting of an undisclosed sexual assault at C.W. Jefferys, the TDSB particularized the Panel's terms of reference to specifically consider the system-wide risks faced by female visible minority students. Surveys conducted by the Panel at C.W. Jefferys and Westview indicate that gender-based violence, including sexual assault and sexual harassment, is occurring at alarming rates and is largely going

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<sup>4</sup> Consultation with Staff Superintendent Michael Federico and other security experts with the Toronto Police Service on December 10, 2007.

unreported. For example, in respect of the 870 students surveyed at Westview, the following was reported by students:

- 29 female students (7.0% of female respondents) claim that they were the victim of a major sexual assault at their school over the past two years. Major sexual assault refers to cases in which a student answered yes to the following question: "In the past two years, have you been sexually assaulted at school. Has someone ever forced you to have sex at school against your will?"
- 21% of respondents report that they know of at least one student who was sexually assaulted at school over the past two years. 7% report that they know three or more students who were sexually assaulted at school over the past two years.
- The vast majority of student respondents (80%) from both C.W. Jefferys and Westview report that they would not report their own victimization to the police or school officials; and
- The vast majority of students from both C.W. Jefferys and Westview (close to 90%) who have witnessed various crimes did not report these incidents to the police.

As with other areas of youth victimization, the problems are not confined to one region in the city. For areas outside of Northwest 2 (thereby excluding, among others, Westview and C.W. Jefferys), TDSB reports reflect 31 incidents of sexual assaults on school property between January 2006 and December 2007 [see Appendix "D", Table of Violent Incidents]. Due to deficiencies in the tracking of safety issues by the TDSB (addressed below), the Panel is of the view that this number seriously understates the problem.

The Panel has found that all female students are at risk of gender-based violence. However, race, sexuality, disability, class, immigration status and other factors may play a role in producing vulnerabilities to violence. The Panel concluded that the seriousness of this problem required immediate attention and warrants further study in consultation with sexual assault experts.

It became immediately apparent to the Panel that current measures relating to the protection of youth against sexual assaults, including those aimed at the timely reporting of sexual assaults, do not work. The Panel research suggests that current anti-bullying programs have little effect in preventing violence against girls. The programs tend to be gender-neutral and treat youth as a uniform group. Anti-violence programming in the TDSB has not been approached holistically, nor has it reflected the relationship between safety and equity. Successful outcomes in this area involve developing effective initiatives, including gender-based peer education programs, that examine the roots of violence against girls, healthy relationships, and equality among marginalized groups, as well as the creation of "safe space" programs that use peer facilitators to lead open

discussions amongst girls and other vulnerable groups. Education on these issues should be complemented by a safety and equity audit process that examines safety deficiencies in schools, potential barriers to reporting in policies and student attitudes towards school safety.

The Panel finds TDSB's sexual violence policies to be deficient. School staff lack adequate training on sexual violence and TDSB policies for responding to such violence. As a result, compliance with the "Abuse and Neglect of Students" policy has been uneven amongst TDSB administrators. Furthermore, the TDSB does not have the resources or the expertise to offer counselling to boys who engage in sexual misconduct. The Panel urges TDSB to develop a comprehensive "Sexual Assault and Gender-Based Violence" policy along with regular policy training for staff.

The current policy requires that sexual assaults be reported to police and requires administrators to take direction from police concerning the informing of parents. Sexual assault experts concurred that automatic reporting posed a major barrier for girls to come forward. For that reason, girls 16 years or older should be allowed to determine whether to report an incident to police or parents. The administrator should consult with girls younger than 16 years to assess whether there is a pressing reason for them not to report an incident to police or parents.

Two important issues that TDSB needs to address are the increasing number of newcomer students to the system, and the prevalence of cyber-based violence among students. TDSB should facilitate orientation programs to reduce the vulnerabilities of newcomers entering Toronto schools, as well as update and strengthen the TDSB online Code of conduct.

To assist in implementing Panel recommendations, a "violence prevention coordinator" should be created to liaise with community groups and establish prevention programs across schools.

### **Safe School Transfers**

In the Interim Report, the Panel detailed the concerns shared by various members of the C.W. Jefferys staff with respect to issues surrounding "programless" safe school transfers. In particular, staff and administration at C.W. Jefferys advised the Panel that in many cases, safe school transfers had anger management problems and received little to no counselling prior to transfer. In addition, matching a transferred student's timetable was often times difficult and would lead to spaces in which the student had no classes scheduled. As such, the student would become a "hallway wanderer". Lastly, the Panel was advised that students who are transferred within the same family-of-schools are still exposed to the same bad influences or connections that may have contributed to the conduct that made the student a safe school transfer.

In reviewing the safe school data provided by the Board, the Panel observed that with the exception of the 2006-2007 school year, the number of safe school transfers has steadily

increased from the 2002-2003 academic school year until the most recent school year. **This year (2007-2008) is projected to have the highest number of safe school transfers with over 300 as of November, 2007.** The data also suggests that the SW and NW quadrants typically have the highest number of safe school transfers. To date, the highest number of safe school transfers occurred during the 2005-2006 school year, when the OHRC complaint against the TDSB was settled. During this same school year, suspensions drastically decreased across the TDSB.

There is no statutory authority for safe school transfers. As a result, there is a significant opportunity for the current policy to be abused by administrators who wish to have troubled students removed from their school without increasing their suspension and expulsion numbers. Abuse of the Safe School Transfer policy can take many forms including:

1. calling the police to intervene in situations with the ulterior purpose of having a student charged criminally and placed under a condition not to communicate with a student victim or student co-accused (the condition would require transfer);
2. issuing a Notice Denying Access (students returning from a Notice Denying Access can be transferred);<sup>5</sup> and
3. encouraging police to impose conditions requiring a student to transfer from his/her home school.

As a result of the potential for abuse, the Panel recommends that the Ministry of Education amend the *Education Act* to provide the Board with statutory power to transfer students in very limited circumstances. The legislative amendments should include the ability of a student to appeal the decision to transfer a student. The TDSB should also enact policy that unequivocally states that transfers cannot be used to discipline students.

The Panel recognizes that transferring a student has a negative impact on their education and significantly contributes to students “dropping out” of school. As a result, even in circumstances where a student is subject to interim release conditions that require a transfer, a school administrator should presume that a transfer is not required and work with a court liaison officer to ensure that the conditions are amended so as to allow students to stay at their home school. Students should only be transferred when an administrator is of the opinion that a student poses a direct and real threat, physically or otherwise, to other students at the school. The Panel further recommends that all stakeholders in the criminal justice system should receive training on the issue of safe school transfers so as to ensure that conditions that require a student to transfer schools are used sparingly.

Since the release of the Interim Report, the TDSB has taken steps to address the problem of “programless” safe school transfers. Currently, students who are transferred as a result

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<sup>5</sup> A Notice of Denial was used in the K.D. Case referred to in the Interim Report.

of conduct that arose on school property are given access to alternative to suspension (“A2S”) and limited expulsion programming (Support Program for Expelled Students). This programming would be available to a student who received interim release conditions arising from an incident that occurred on school property or that resulted in a principal either suspending or expelling (limited) the student. For students who are transferred as a result of conduct that occurred off school property (where there is no suspension or expulsion that could attach to the conduct), the same type of programming is not offered. In these cases, the student would be offered programming and support services from a Child and Youth Counsellor. This support and programming would occur at the receiving school. The Panel commends the TDSB on acting in an expedient manner to address some of the problems caused by “programless” safe school transfers; however, the Panel recommends that there be no distinction, for the purposes of programming offered, between students who received interim conditions for conduct on or off school property.

Lastly, the Panel believes that safe school transfers should continue to receive supports upon entering their new school environment. The Panel recommends that a multi-disciplinary approach should be taken to address the many needs of a student who has come into conflict with the law. As such, the Panel recommends that all schools have a Safe School Transfer Team that would meet prior to receiving a Safe School Transfer to determine the needs of the student. The Safe School Transfer team should include the administration of the school, the head guidance counsellor, school social worker, youth counsellor, or Child and Youth Worker (“CYW”). In addressing the needs of a student, the team will determine whether the student requires alternative education programming and/or access to a social worker, psychologist, and/or psychiatrist.

### **Partner Agencies on School Safety**

There are numerous major players that work with the TDSB in addressing issues around school safety. The Ministry of Education and the Toronto Police Service are key institutional partners in this regard. Yet, currently, neither of these two organizations include a school safety official with an overall portfolio in school safety recognizable to Board officials or the public. It is the Panel’s view that, with the increasing community concern over student victimization, the creation of such posts are positive steps in ensuring integrated responses to school safety issues.

The Panel proposes that the Ministry of Education create a specific portfolio entitled the Provincial Safety and Equity Officer. This official would not only be directly responsible for oversight of the province’s school boards in respect of matters of school safety, but the post would involve being the repository for receiving reports concerning serious issues of youth safety in schools. Those reporting such concerns would be protected from reprisal through proposed new reporting protections that are aimed at addressing current fears of reporting.

In the case of the Toronto Police Service (following consultation), the Panel has recommended the creation of the position of Staff Superintendent – Executive School

Safety. The intention behind this recommendation is to ensure that, in the interests of consistency and accountability, school board officials and the public have access to a senior ranking officer whose mandate includes school safety.

### **The Creation of an Effective Coordinating Body**

It is not lost on the Panel that issues of school safety go beyond the jurisdiction of the TDSB and beyond the capacity of the TDSB to resolve on its own. Addressing issues of school safety will require a coordinated effort amongst the three levels of government and the various government, private and voluntary sector agencies that provide resources or services to marginalized youth and communities.

The consultations revealed a strong perception that there is a lack of co-ordination in this regard and that this failure has compromised the delivery of services to marginalized youth and communities and ultimately the safety of our schools. This perception is held not only by community members frustrated by the lack of action by government but by many individuals within government.

In recent years, there have been laudable City of Toronto led initiatives aimed at fulfilling this much needed co-ordination function with a specific focus on community development in marginalized communities. In 2004, Mayor David Miller established the Mayor's Advisory Panel on Community Safety which included representatives from the Federal and Provincial levels of government (including cabinet level representatives), the City of Toronto, the Toronto Police Service, community and youth, as well as private and not-for-profit organizations. The Mayor's Advisory Panel developed a Community Safety Plan, a comprehensive strategic plan aimed at improving public safety and building on existing strengths in Toronto's communities. The Community Safety Plan is comprised of four pillars:

1. **Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy:** 13 priority neighbourhoods were identified for focused investment to strengthen neighbourhood supports. Supports to these neighbourhoods were to be delivered through partnerships among the three levels of government, police, community groups and residents.
2. **Crisis Response:** coordinated program of City services to help communities and neighbourhoods to deal with traumatic incidents.
3. **Youth Opportunities:** Youth employment, education, training and mentorship, and engagement opportunities through partnerships with the three levels of government, the community and the private sector.
4. **Youth Justice:** intervention programs to engage youth who are in conflict with the law.

The City of Toronto has developed an infrastructure of “on the ground” human resources to implement the Community Safety Plan including Neighbourhood Action Teams for each of the 13 priority neighbourhoods. The Mayor has also created a Community Safety Secretariat to support the implementation of the Plan. It is the municipal government, by its nature, that necessarily must play a central role in any exercise in localized community development.

There have been a number of problems associated with the Community Safety Plan as a means of providing a much needed coordination function. The City on its own simply lacks the necessary resources to fully implement the Community Safety Plan and therefore must rely on partnerships with the provincial and federal levels of government. There has been an unfortunate level of ambivalence on the part of these levels of government to fully commit to this City-led coordinated approach.

While the Mayor’s Advisory Panel enjoyed broad participation from all of the relevant levels of government, public and private institutions and community representatives in the consultation and planning stage, that same level of coordination has not carried through in the implementation phase. In particular, the Federal and Provincial levels of government have been reluctant to commit the necessary financial resources (which they alone can command) to this City-led initiative. In fact, the Province, after participating for two years in the Mayor’s Advisory Panel, chose to implement its Youth Challenge Fund through the United Way of Greater Toronto.

Mayor Miller told the Panel that the Province’s failure to work through the City’s already-established process led to duplication and delays in the allotted resources actually reaching the marginalized youth and communities on the ground. In particular, the Province had to create a new infrastructure, including 31 new outreach workers, to deliver its resources through the Youth Challenge fund. This was at a time when the City already had an infrastructure on the ground to deliver these resources to the priority communities. In fairness, Mayor Miller did express some optimism as to the prospects for better cooperation in the future.

There has also been some criticism of the efficacy of the Community Safety Secretariat. Some within government have referred disparagingly to the Secretariat as “a desk”, without any real power or resources. Councillor Joe Mihevic, who chairs the Community Development and Recreation Committee of Toronto City Council, candidly acknowledged that his Committee had very little interaction with the Secretariat, despite the fact that there is substantial overlap between their respective responsibilities. Councillor Mihevic shared the perception that the Secretariat was “one person and a desk, functionally”.

The Interdivisional Committee on Integrated Responses to Priority Neighbourhoods is another City-led effort at coordinating the delivery of resources to marginalized youth and communities. Meeting once every two months, it also has a broad level of representation from all levels of government and a myriad of City of Toronto departments. The list of participants on the Interdivisional Committee is impressive:

Children's Services; the City Manager; City Planning; Human Resources; EMS; the Mayor's Office; Municipal Licensing and Standards; Parks, Forestry and Recreation; Shelter, Support and Housing Administration and Social Services; Strategic Communications; the Toronto Catholic District School Board; the TDSB; Toronto Community Housing; Toronto Police Services; Toronto Public Health; Toronto Public Library; Transportation Services; Service Canada; and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (Ontario).

The Interdivisional Committee process shares the weaknesses of the Community Safety Plan process; there is a lack of full participation from the levels of government who have the resources to tackle the problems of marginalized youth. Mayor Miller told the Panel that, while there are Provincial and Federal government representatives on the Interdivisional Committee, they are present in an observer role only.

The Panel sees little merit in any coordinating body that lacks access to the resources necessary to carry out whatever plans or strategies are developed by such a body. Coordination and planning without resources are not only ineffective, they hold out the false hope that governments are making significant progress toward addressing the conditions of marginalized youth and communities.

The Panel encountered a significant degree of cynicism about the true commitment of our governments and institutions to address the needs of marginalized communities. The communities are, to put it bluntly, fed up with being studied, consulted and reported on by commissions, task forces and panels. This Panel understands and agrees with this sentiment. There is no lack of understanding about what needs to be done; there have been enough reports and commissions to tell us this. What is required is real political will, backed up by real resources.

The Panel recognizes that the commitment of resources must be directed in a coordinated fashion and that all levels of government and a myriad of institutions must necessarily be involved. The Panel is of the view that some form of coordinating body is essential, based on the model of the Interdivisional Committee, but that those with the resources must be full participants in the process. This would include not just the development of a strategic plan, but also in the implementation phase. Accordingly, the Panel has recommended that the Interdivisional Committee be reinvented with a view to creating an effective coordinating body with the resources and participants that would make it capable of taking effective action. This coordinating body should have a public profile and should be accountable for its work.

**The Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth**

The Panel has consulted with the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth (the “Child Advocate”). The Child Advocate is an independent office of the Legislature of the Province of Ontario. In 2007, this office succeeded the Office for Child and Family Service Advocacy, which was established in 1979 and operated within the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. Conditions at Westview Centennial Secondary School and at the First Nations School of Toronto are unacceptable. High suspension rates, exceptionally poor academic performance and, in the case of Westview, the prevalence of serious weapons (including firearms) are only some of the issues of concern at the schools. The Child Advocate is supportive of a Panel recommendation to conduct systemic reviews to protect and advocate for youth at Westview and at the First Nations School.

## **SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS**

### **THE C.W. JEFFERYS STUDENT SURVEY**

- In June 2007 the Panel successfully administered a school safety survey to 423 students at C.W. Jefferys. This sample represents 56% of all students enrolled in the school at that time.
- The results suggest that, with the exception of the period immediately following the shooting of Jordan Manners, most C.W. Jefferys students feel very safe or fairly safe at their school. Indeed, despite the shooting, most C.W. Jefferys students feel that their school is actually safer than other high schools in Toronto.
- Other positive findings include the fact that most respondents feel that the teachers and students at their school get along. A high proportion of respondents also feel that teachers at C.W. Jefferys sincerely care for their students.
- Qualitative comments suggest that many C.W. Jefferys students are also fiercely proud of their school and feel that it has been unfairly given a bad reputation as a result of the extensive coverage of the Manners shooting.
- Despite these optimistic results, the survey also indicates that a large proportion of C.W. Jefferys students think that there are serious problems at their school. These problems include disorder in the hallways, students who talk back and disrespect their teachers, discrimination by teachers against students, unfair grading and unfair punishment practices.
- Many C.W. Jefferys students also think that there are serious or very serious problems at their school with respect to students who carry weapons, drug dealing, bullying, fighting and youth gangs.
- For example, according to the survey, 60% C.W. Jefferys students think that weapons are a serious (18%) or very serious problem (42%) at their school. One out of ten every ten respondents (11%) think that students bring weapons to school everyday.
- Almost half of C.W. Jefferys students also feel that gangs are serious or very serious problem at their school.
- The results of the survey also indicate that a significant proportion of C.W. Jefferys students have been the victim of threats, physical assaults, theft, sexual assaults, gun threats and other types of crime – both inside and outside of school.

- For example, 22% have been the victim of robbery or extortion on school property and 21% have been the victim of robbery outside of the school.
- 18% have been threatened by someone with a weapon at school. The same proportion have been threatened with a weapon outside of school.
- 11% of C.W. Jefferys students have been assaulted with a weapon at school and 16% outside of school.
- 12% had a gun pointed at them (or were shot at) on school property over the past two years and 14% outside of school.
- Importantly, gun assault is highly concentrated among those who claim gang involvement. For example, only 8% of those who have never been involved in a gang had a gun pointed at them at school, compared to 20% of former gang members and 41% of current gang members. Similarly, 9% of students who have never been involved in gangs had a gun pointed at them outside of school, compared to 31% of former gang members and 63% of current gang members.
- 14% of students report that they were sexually assaulted at school over the past two years (19% of female students). 14% of students report that they were sexually assaulted outside of school (18% of female students).
- Sexual assault victimization at school is highest among Black females and white females. However, Asian and South Asian females are more likely to be sexually assaulted at school than outside of school.
- Not a single West Asian female student reported a sexual assault – either in school or outside of school.
- The Panel stresses that the levels of victimization observed in this study are quite consistent with the findings of other high school victimization surveys conducted in Toronto and other North American cities over the past decade. Thus, it would be premature to state that C.W. Jefferys is more violent or crime-ridden than other schools in the Toronto area.
- The survey also found that the vast majority of students at C.W. Jefferys will not talk to the police or school officials about crimes they have witnessed or even their own victimization experiences.
- Reasons for not reporting include fear of the offenders, fear of the police, distrust of the police and a desire not to upset parents. It is also clear that part of the “no-

reporting” issue is rooted in an emerging youth culture that enforces a “code of silence” and calls for youth to “stop snitching.”

- C.W. Jefferys students support a wide range of school safety initiatives. They are particularly supportive of increased extra-curricular programming, increased counselling for troubled youth, the increased use of security cameras and increasing the presence of security staff (hall monitors) within the school environment.
- C.W. Jefferys students are somewhat less supportive of initiatives like installing metal detectors, allowing the police to search student lockers and creating one way in and out of the school.
- Finally, the survey also found strong evidence that racism is a major concern of many black students at C.W. Jefferys. Indeed, the majority of black students perceive racial bias with respect to grading and disciplinary practices and feel that teachers treated some students better than others. Many black students also perceive racism outside of the school environment – especially with respect to policing activities and employment opportunities.

### **C.W. JEFFERYS TEACHER SURVEY**

- By July 2007 the Panel had received 51 completed school safety questionnaires from staff members at C.W. Jefferys. This sample represents 63% of staff employed at the school during that period.
- As with the student survey, the C.W. Jefferys staff survey produced both optimistic findings and results that are cause for serious concern.
- To begin with, the results suggest that most C.W. Jefferys staff are dedicated professionals. Despite many challenges, the majority of respondents are happy with their jobs, enjoy working with students, and claim that, in general, teachers and students at C.W. Jefferys get along.
- On the other hand, at the time of the survey, the majority of C.W. Jefferys staff were very dissatisfied with the current school administration. Most felt that discipline was too lenient or inconsistently applied at the school and that this situation had caused a significant decline in school safety and a worsening of student behaviour over the past few years.
- Indeed, a large proportion of faculty had witnessed criminal activity at C.W. Jefferys over the previous two years – including fights between students, drug trafficking, physical threats, sexual harassment and students with weapons.

- The majority of respondents also indicated that they had been subject to blatant student misbehavior – including challenges to authority, insults, and teasing.
- 22% of the 51 C.W. Jefferys staff respondents report that they feel unsafe at school.
- 67% of the staff members surveyed report that they feel unsafe in the neighbourhood around C.W. Jefferys after dark.
- Almost 20% of staff feel unsafe in the C.W. Jefferys neighbourhood during the day.
- 13% of staff feel unsafe coming to school once per week or more often.
- 85% of staff members live more than ten kilometers from C.W. Jefferys. Only 25% stated that they would consider ever living in the neighbourhood around the school.
- 58% of C.W. Jefferys staff sometimes worry about gangs at school. 70% worry about the gangs in the neighbourhood around C.W. Jefferys.
- 42% of staff admit that they sometimes worry about being robbed at school and 41% sometimes worry about being shot or attacked with a weapon at school.
- A third of the staff respondents (33%) sometimes worry about being physically assaulted at school.
- 59% of C.W. Jefferys staff believe that student bullying occurs at their school every week.
- Half of the C.W. Jefferys staff feel that drug dealing occurs at their school every week.
- A third of C.W. Jefferys staff report that fights between students take place at their school on a weekly basis.
- 14% of C.W. Jefferys staff believe that students bring weapons to school on a weekly basis.
- A significant proportion of C.W. Jefferys staff also report that they have been victimized, at school, in the past two years. Staff are more likely to be victimized at school than outside of school.
- In the past two years, 59% of C.W. Jefferys staff have been insulted or teased by students at school.

- Over half of C.W. Jefferys staff (52%) report that they have been threatened by a student at school in the past two years. 8% claim that they have been threatened by a student with a weapon.
- 14% of staff claim that they have been physically assaulted by a student at school in the past two years. 4% report that they have been assaulted by a student with a weapon.
- 39% of staff report that they have been sexually harassed by a student at school in the past two years.
- A third of staff respondents (30%) report that they have been the victim of minor theft (under \$50) in the past two years. 20% claim that they have been the victim of major theft (over \$50).
- 2 of the 51 staff respondents from C.W. Jefferys (4%) report that they have seen a student with a gun at school in the past two years. One out of every four (24%) have witnessed a student with another type of weapon – like a knife or a bat.
- 88.2% of staff respondents have witnessed at least one fight between students at their school in the past two years. A third have seen a fight between students on five or more occasions.
- 86% of C.W. Jefferys staff report that they have seen drunk or intoxicated students at school in the past two years.
- 80% of C.W. Jefferys staff have witnessed a student threaten another student.
- 61% of C.W. Jefferys staff have witnessed a student threaten a teacher at school in the past two years.
- 55% of staff have witnessed a student sexually harass another student in the past two years. 20% have witnessed a student sexually harass a teacher.
- Four out of ten staff respondents have witnessed a student engaging in theft at school over the past two years
- Almost a third of C.W. Jefferys staff have witnessed drug trafficking at their school in the past two years.
- With these findings in mind, it is not surprising to note that the majority of C.W. Jefferys staff support policies that are “tough” on student misbehavior. A high proportion of staff respondents, for example, would like to suspend or expel more students at C.W. Jefferys, call the police more frequently to deal with unruly students, give police the power to search student lockers, increase the number of

security cameras in the halls and increase the number of fulltime security staff. Most would also support having a single entrance in and out of the school.

- However, it important to note that the majority of C.W. Jefferys staff members are also very supportive of “softer” initiatives that would attack the root causes of student misbehavior. These initiatives include the provision of better counseling for troubled youth, more after school programs and programs that would increase the involvement of parents in school activities.
- Finally, it is important note that, unlike the C.W. Jefferys students, few teachers feel that unfair grading, unfair punishment and racial discrimination by teachers against students is a problem at their school. In addition, few teachers support the hiring of more racial minority teachers as a strategy for increasing school safety.

### **THE WESTVIEW STUDENT SURVEY**

- By late November 2007 the Panel had collected 870 completed questionnaires from students at Westview Centennial Secondary School. This sample represents 71.9% of the students who were attending the school during this time period.
- As was the case with the C.W. Jefferys students survey, the Panel survey of Westview students provides mixed, often contradictory results. For example, while most students claim that Westview has serious problems with gangs, violence, drug dealing and weapons, the majority of respondents also feel quite safe at their school.
- Furthermore, while at the same time acknowledging problems with criminality and poor student behaviour, many Westview students believe that their school has been unfairly labelled as dangerous or unsafe.
- Most Westview students feel that teachers and students get along at their school and that teachers genuinely care for their students. If anything, the data suggest that the relationship between students and faculty at Westview is even more positive than student-teacher relationships at C.W. Jefferys.
- Nonetheless, the results also indicate that a large proportion of the Westview students who participated in the survey think that there are serious problems at their school with student disorder in the hallways, students who talk back and disrespect their teachers, unfair grading, unfair punishment and discrimination by teachers against students.
- One out of every five Westview student respondents (18%) reports that they feel unsafe at school.

- One out of five respondents (21%) feels that Westview is more violent than other Toronto high schools.
- 58% of the 870 Westview student respondents believe that students who bring weapons to school have a very serious or serious problem at their school.
- 59% of Westview students believe that gangs at school are a serious or very serious problem.
- 13% of Westview student respondents think students bring weapons – including knives and guns – to school every day.
- 55% of Westview student respondents at least sometimes worry about the gangs in their school.
- 50% sometimes worry about having something stolen at school.
- 44% sometimes worry about being robbed at school.
- 39% sometimes worry about being attacked or beat up at school.
- 20% sometimes worry about being sexually assaulted at school.
- The results of the survey also indicate that, like their counterparts at C.W. Jefferys, a significant proportion of Westview students have been the victim of threats, physical assaults, theft, sexual assaults, gun threats and other types of crime – both inside and outside of school.
- 50% of student respondents from Westview report that they have been insulted or teased at school in the past two years.
- 40% of Westview students have been threatened with physical harm at school in the past two years. 15% report that they have been threatened with a weapon.
- 38% of Westview students have been the victim of minor theft (under \$50) at school in the past two years. One fourth (23%) have been the victim of major theft (over \$50).
- 37% of Westview students report that they have been physically assaulted at school in the past two years. 10% report that they have been assaulted with a weapon at school over the same time period.
- 23% report that they have been a victim of robbery or extortion at their school over the past two years. 20% have been the victim of such a crime outside of school.

- 10% report that they have been attacked by someone with a weapon at school – 11% have been attacked by someone with a weapon outside of school.
- Many Westview students also report that they have seen guns and knives within the school environment and know students who have brought guns or knives to school.
- Although many students admit that they themselves have brought a knife to school, relatively few report that they have ever carried a gun. Further analysis indicates that much of the exposure to weapons at Westview is highly concentrated among former and current gang members.
- 23.0% of Westview students report that they know someone who brought a gun to school in the past two years.
- 6.1% of students know four or more people who brought a gun to school in the past two years.
- 22.5% have seen a gun at school in the past two years. 5.0% have seen a gun at school on four or more occasions in the past two years.
- 5.5% of students have been threatened by someone with a gun at school in the past two years.
- 2.9% have had a gun pointed at them at school in the past two years.
- 2.8% claim that someone has tried to shoot at them at school (or on school property) in the past two years.
- A total of twenty students (2.3%) state that they have taken a gun to school in the past two years. Six students claim that they have brought a gun to school on many occasions.
- 15 students (1.7% of the sample) claim that they have talked to a teacher, the principal or the police about a gun at school.
- Students are more likely to be exposed to guns outside of school than inside school.
- 42.2% of all students have seen someone with a gun outside of school in the past two years (compared to 22.5% in school).
- 18.4% of students have seen someone with a gun outside of school on four or more occasions (compared to 5.0% in school).

- 9.0% of students have been threatened by someone with a gun outside of school (compared to 5.5% in school).
- 5.3% of students have had a gun pointed at them outside of school (compared to 2.9% inside of school).
- 4.9% of students claim that someone has shot at them outside of school (compared to 2.8% in school or on school property).
- 52 students (6.0%) claim that they have carried a gun when they were outside of school (compared to 20 students who have carried a gun in school).
- 17 students (2.0%) claim that they have carried a gun many times outside of school (compared to only 5 students who have carried a gun to school on many occasions).
- 34 students (3.9% of the sample) claim that they have talked to the police about a gun they saw outside of school.
- 11.8% of the sample (93 students) claim that they "used to be involved in a gang."
- 4.8% of the sample (39 students) claim that they are a current gang member. There is a strong relationship between self-reported gang involvement and exposure to guns.
- 16.7% of students who have never been involved in a gang know someone who brought a gun to school, compared to 48.4% of former gang members and 66.7% of current gang members.
- 17.3% of students who have never been involved in a gang have seen a gun at school in the past two years, compared to 42.9% of former gang members and 69.2% of current gang members.
- 2.2% of students who have never been involved in a gang have been threatened with a gun at school in the past two years, compared to 20.9% of former gang members and 30.8% of current gang members.
- Only 1% of students who have never been involved in a gang had a gun pointed at them at school in the past two years, compared to 11.2% of former gang members and 18.9% of current gang members.
- The results are similar for exposure to guns outside of school. In sum, gun exposure seems to be highly concentrated among students who are gang involved.
- Knives are much more common than guns on school property.

- 50% of the respondents report that they know of at least one student who has brought a knife to school in the past two years.
- 23.2% report that they know four or more students who have brought a knife to school in the past two years.
- 51.9% of respondents claim that they have seen a knife at school over the past two years.
- 19.2% have seen a knife at school on four or more occasions
- 8.5% of respondents (73 students) have been threatened by someone with a knife at school over the past two years.
- 10.6% of respondents (91 respondents) have been threatened by someone with a knife outside of school.
- 2.2% of respondents (19 students) claim that they were stabbed or cut at school by someone with a knife over the past two years.
- 4.4% of respondents (38 students) claim that they were stabbed or cut by someone with a knife outside of school property.
- 16.4% of respondents (141 students) admit that they have brought a knife to school over the past two years.
- 6.0% of respondents (51 students) claim that they have brought a knife to school on many occasions.
- 21.0% of respondents (181 students) claim that they have carried a knife outside of school.
- 8.6% of respondents (74 students) claim that they have carried a knife outside of school on many occasions.
- One out of every three female students at Westview (33.7%) claims that they have been the victim of sexual harassment at their school over the past two years. Sexual harassment is defined as someone making unwanted sexual comments that upset the student or made them feel uncomfortable. Only 8.6% of male students reported sexual harassment.
- 29.3% of female students claim that they have been the victim of unwanted sexual contact (touching and grabbing) at their school over the past two years. 8.6% of male respondents report being the victim of such behaviour.

- 29 female students (7.0% of female respondents) claim that they were the victim of a major sexual assault at their school over the past two years. Major sexual assault refers to cases in which a student answered yes to the following question: "In the past two years, have you been sexually assaulted at school. Has someone ever forced you to have sex at school against your will?" Only 2.7% of male respondents (11 respondents) claim that they have been sexually assaulted at school.
- 21% of respondents report that they know of at least one student who was sexually assaulted at school over the past two years. 7% report that they know three or more students who were sexually assaulted at school over the past two years.
- 12.9% of female respondents (52 students) report that they were the victim of a major sexual assault outside of school over the past two years (compared to 3% of male respondents).
- 24% of respondents report that they know of at least one student who was sexually assaulted outside of school over the past two years. 8.4% claim to know three or more students who have been sexually assaulted outside of school over the past two years.
- As with C.W. Jefferys, black and white females appear to be the most vulnerable to sexual assault, both inside and outside of the school environment. There is no evidence that Muslim females are more likely to suffer from sexual assault than others. The rate of sexual assault is highest among Christian females and those with no religion.
- The vast majority of student respondents (80%) from both C.W. Jefferys and Westview report that they would not report their own victimization to the police or school officials.
- The vast majority of students from both C.W. Jefferys and Westview (close to 90%) who have witnessed various crimes did not report these incidents to the police.
- Only a small proportion of Westview students (less than 20%) who have seen guns or knives at school reported these incidents to the police.
- Reasons for not reporting include fear of the offenders (snitches get stitches), fear/distrust of the police, a belief that the police would not or could not protect them, the fear of being labelled a snitch or a rat, a desire for one's own revenge, a fear of upsetting parents, etc.
- The code of silence protects offenders and makes it difficult for the police and school authorities to root out students who pose a threat to school safety.

- Westview students, as with C.W. Jefferys students, support a wide range of school safety initiatives. They are particularly supportive of increased extra-curricular programming, increased counselling for troubled youth, the increased use of security cameras and increasing the presence of security staff (hall monitors) within the school environment.
- They are somewhat less supportive of initiatives like installing metal detectors, allowing the police to search student lockers and creating one way in and out of the school.
- As was the case at C.W. Jefferys, a high proportion of students from both Westview and C.W. Jefferys think that racial discrimination by teachers against students is a serious problem at their school. These views are particularly widespread among the Black students.
- For example, 53% of Black students at Westview believe that students from their racial group are more likely to be unfairly expelled from school than others, compared to only 23% of Asian students and 24% of South Asian students. Similarly, 48% of Black students believe that discrimination makes it difficult for students from their racial background to get good grades at school, compared to only 21% of Asians and 25% of South Asians.

### **THE WESTVIEW TEACHERS SURVEY**

- By December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007 the Panel had collected 39 completed questionnaires from staff at Westview. This sample represents 35% of the staff employed at the school during that time period.
- The data indicate that most of the teachers and staff members who completed the Westview survey appear to be dedicated professionals. Despite some challenges, the vast majority are happy with their jobs, report that they enjoy working with the students at Westview, and claim that, in general, teachers and students at Westview get along.
- Unlike their counterparts at C.W. Jefferys, at the time of the survey, the majority of Westview staff respondents were quite satisfied with the current school administration.
- Nevertheless, the staff respondents at Westview did indicate that changes are necessary. Several respondents felt that discipline was too lenient or inconsistently applied at the school and that this situation had caused deterioration in school safety and student behaviour.

- Indeed, a large proportion of faculty had witnessed criminal activity at Westview over the previous two years – including fights between students, physical threats, students with weapons, theft and drug trafficking.
- The majority of respondents also indicated that they had been subject to deliberate student misbehaviour – including challenges to authority, insults, teasing and accusations of unfairness with respect to both student punishment and grading.
- The majority of the staff who participated in the survey are fearful of the neighbourhood around Westview (especially at night) and claim that their school has serious problems with hallway disorder, students who disobey authority, bullying, theft, youth gangs, violence between students, and drug use and drug trafficking.
- 16% of the 39 Westview staff respondents report that they feel unsafe at school.
- 59% of Westview staff members surveyed report that they feel unsafe in the neighbourhood around Westview after dark. Almost 25% feel unsafe in the Westview neighbourhood during the day.
- Only 8% of Westview staff, however, feel unsafe coming to school at least once per week.
- 70% of Westview staff members live more than ten kilometers from Westview. Only 30% stated that they would consider living in the neighbourhood around the school.
- 61% of Westview staff sometimes worry about gangs at school. 66% worry about the gangs in the neighbourhood around Westview.
- 29% of Westview staff admit that they sometimes worry about being robbed at school and 37% sometimes worry about being shot or attacked with a weapon at school.
- A third of the Westview staff respondents (32%) sometimes worry about being physically assaulted at school.
- 47% of Westview staff believe that student bullying occurs at their school every week.
- A third of Westview staff (34%) feel that drug dealing occurs at their school every week.
- 42% of Westview staff report that fights between students take place at their school on a weekly basis.

- 13% of Westview staff believe that students bring weapons to school on a weekly basis.
- In the past two years, 50% of Westview staff have been insulted or teased by students at school.
- Over half of Westview staff (55%) report that they have been threatened by a student at school in the past two years. 5% claim that they have been threatened by a student with a weapon.
- 8% of Westview staff report that they have been physically assaulted by a student at school in the past two years. 5% report that they have been assaulted by a student with a weapon.
- 13% of Westview staff report that they have been sexually harassed by a student at school in the past two years.
- A third of Westview staff respondents (34%) report that they have been the victim of minor theft (under \$50) at school in the past two years. 11% claim that they have been the victim of major theft (over \$50).
- 2 of the 39 staff respondents from Westview (5%) report that they have seen a student with a gun at school in the past two years.
- Over half of Westview staff respondents (58%) report that they have witnessed a student with another type of weapon – like a knife or a bat.
- All but one staff respondent from Westview (97%) has witnessed at least one fight between students at their school in the past two years. A third (35%) have seen a fight between students on five or more occasions.
- 74% of Westview staff report that they have seen drunk or intoxicated students at school in the past two years.
- 71% of Westview staff have witnessed a student threaten another student.
- 57% of Westview staff have witnessed a student threaten a teacher at school in the past two years.
- 38% of Westview staff have witnessed a student sexually harass another student in the past two years. However, only 8% have witnessed a student sexually harass a teacher.
- Four out of ten Westview staff respondents have witnessed a student engaging in theft at school over the past two years

- One out of every four Westview staff (26%) have witnessed drug trafficking at their school in the past two years.
- With these findings in mind, it is not surprising to note that the majority of staff support policies that are “tough” on student misbehaviour. A high proportion of staff respondents, for example, would like to suspend or expel more students at Westview, call the police more frequently to deal with unruly students, give police the power to search student lockers, increase the number of security cameras in the halls and increase the number of fulltime security staff. Most would also support having a single entrance in and out of the school.
- However, it is also important to note that the majority of staff are also very supportive of “softer” initiatives that would attack the root causes of student misbehaviour. These initiatives include the provision of better counselling and treatment for troubled youth, more after school programs and programs that would increase the involvement of parents in school activities.
- For the most part, the results of the Westview staff survey are remarkably similar to the results of the staff survey at C.W. Jefferys. However, unlike the staff members at C.W. Jefferys, the teachers and support staff at Westview appear to be significantly more satisfied with the current administration at their school. Compared to their counterparts at C.W. Jefferys, the Westview staff are also less likely to believe that school safety and student behaviour have deteriorated over the past two years. Thus, one might conclude that the results of the Westview staff survey are somewhat more positive or optimistic than the results of the C.W. Jefferys staff survey.
- However, we caution that such conclusions may be somewhat premature. One concern with the Westview survey is the low response rate. Many teachers, staff and administrators at Westview simply refused to participate in the survey. This makes it somewhat difficult to generalize the results of this survey to the views and experiences of the entire staff at this school.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 2.11 Ontario Human Rights Commission Settlement with the TDSB and the Province

*To the TDSB:*

1. The Toronto District School Board should report yearly to the Provincial School Safety and Equity Officer on the progress they have made in implementing their settlement with the Ontario Human Rights Commission. *(page 30)*

### 3.05.03 Responding to Incidents of Gender-Based Violence in Schools

*To the TDSB:*

2. The Toronto District School Board should develop a “Sexual Assault and Gender-Based Violence” policy. Interventions and approaches should be developed to respond to sexual assault and other forms of gender-based violence, with a view to ensuring that the equality rights of girls and young women to a safe learning environment are protected. The policy should be developed in consultation with the community and organizations that work to combat gender-based violence. The policy should detail definitions, penalties, reporting procedures, resources and an annual review of how the policy is being applied in practice. All Toronto District School Board employees who work with students should have regular training on the policy and the Board should ensure that sufficient resources are allocated to implement the policy.

In order to encourage victims of sexual assault to come forward and to protect the school community, the “Sexual Assault and Gender- Based Violence” Policy should state that, with respect to students who are age 16 or over:

- a. The decision concerning whether to report the sexual assault to the police should be made by the student.
- b. The decision concerning whether to notify the student’s parent/guardian of the sexual assault shall be made by the student.
- c. The Chief Social Worker shall mobilize appropriate supports for the student as soon as the incident is brought to the attention of school authorities. Supports may be both TDSB supports and/or community supports, and should be provided to assist the student to make their decision concerning reporting sexual assaults to the police and/or parent/guardian. The appropriate supports should be present when the student is interviewed by police and throughout the investigative/judicial process.

- d. Where the student chooses to inform their parent/guardian, the Chief Social Worker should ensure that family counselling services are made available to the victim and his or her family during and after the disclosure.

Where the victim of a sexual assault is under the age of 16:

- a. The principal and/or designate, in consultation with the Chief Social Worker (or other supports) shall report the sexual assault to police.
- b. The principal and/or designate, and Chief Social Worker, in consultation with the student and appropriate supports, shall decide whether the parent/guardian should be notified of the sexual assault. There should be a presumption that the parent/guardian will be notified, except in exceptional circumstances.
- c. The Chief Social Worker shall mobilize appropriate supports for the student as soon as the incident is brought to the attention of school authorities. Supports may be both TDSB supports and/or community supports, and should be available if the student is interviewed by police and throughout the investigative/judicial process.
- d. Where the student chooses to inform their parent/guardian, the Chief Social Worker should ensure that family counselling services are made available to the victim and his or her family during and after the disclosure.

Regardless of whether the sexual assault is reported to police, the Toronto District School Board, through the department responsible for school safety, should ensure that appropriate disciplinary action is taken and that procedures are in place to ensure the safety of the school community with respect to alleged perpetrator. *(page 391)*

- 3. The Toronto District School Board should establish programs at both the high school and junior-intermediate level for students who have engaged in repeated acts of gender-based violence, in order to support the re-integration and re-engagement of these young people into society and prevent future incidents. *(page 393)*
- 4. The Toronto District School Board should partner with community agencies providing services for women and girls experiencing violence, in order to enhance supports available for students and teachers to both prevent and respond to gender-based violence in schools. *(page 394)*
- 5. Toronto District School Board policies and resources relating to sexual assault and gender-based violence should be posted in schools and should form part of

the orientation process for all teachers and students at the commencement of each year. *(page 395)*

6. The Toronto District School Board should revise and broaden its “Online Code of Conduct” and student/parent declaration to address acts of cyber-violence and the consequences for students who engage in such conduct, on or off school property. Cyber-violence should also be included as a topic in violence prevention programming. *(page 396)*

### **3.05.4 Preventing Gendered-Based Violence in Schools**

*To the TDSB:*

7. The TDSB should provide teachers, administrators, superintendents and support staff with staff development in the following area: gender-based education concerning causes of gender-based violence, prevention strategies and TDSB policies for responding to gender-based violence. The training should be mandatory for all TDSB teachers, administrators, superintendents and support staff. *(page 402)*

*To the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities:*

8. The Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities should review current teacher education programs to evaluate its effectiveness in preparing teachers to respond to issues of sexual violence in the classroom and in the school environment. Where necessary, existing training courses should be updated. Training concerning gender-based violence in schools should be made mandatory for all pre-service teachers. *(page 402)*

*To the TDSB:*

9. The Toronto District School Board should implement a peer-based education program, supervised and supported by teachers, youth and social workers. The program should teach students on the topics of the dynamics of violence against girls and women, healthy relationships, and the acceptance of diverse racial and cultural groups. The program should be available to students in all grades at high schools. *(page 405)*

10. The Toronto District School Board should implement the Newcomer Orientation Week (NOW) program in all Toronto schools with high levels of newcomers in order to reduce the vulnerabilities of newcomer students. *(page 406)*
11. The Toronto District School Board should use a safety and equity audit process that, in addition to examining physical plant and use of physical space of schools, includes the following features:
- (a) Consultation with staff, parents and community members where appropriate;
  - (b) Consultation with female students and students from groups that are vulnerable to violence;
  - (c) An assessment of violence prevention policies and procedures, including their effectiveness and practice;
  - (d) Observation of social dynamics on school property; and,
  - (e) A follow up audit should take place within a reasonable time period to assess whether recommendations have been suitably implemented. *(page 408)*
12. The Toronto District School Board should create and implement a “safe space” program in its high schools for female students and other vulnerable groups. *(page 409)*

*To the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities:*

13. The Ontario Ministry of Education should create a position of “Violence Prevention Coordinator” that is responsible for the implementation of violence prevention programs in schools that are gender-sensitive and predicated on principles of equity and diversity. Violence prevention programming and education should involve students, school administrators, teachers, parents, and community agencies. *(page 410)*

*To the TDSB:*

14. All Toronto District School Board violence prevention programs should be regularly evaluated to determine their effectiveness and to make recommendations for improvement. *(page 410)*

*To the Ministry of Education:*

15. Recognizing that there is little research on the issue of sexual assault and gender-based violence in schools, the Ontario Ministry of Education should fund a comprehensive study of safety issues affecting female students in order to ensure that school safety policies appropriately address the specific safety risks faced by female students. This research should also examine policies concerning the reporting of incidents of sexual assault to police. *(page 412)*

*To the TDSB:*

16. The Toronto District School Board should launch a public awareness campaign concerning issues of sexual assault and gender-based violence in schools. *(page 412)*

### **3.06.01 Barriers to Reporting**

*To the TDSB:*

17. Each school should establish a “Student Hotline”. The phone number for the school hotline should be separate from the main school phone line. The Student Hotline should be staffed by students from the school who are trained on reporting, and who are aware of the appropriate supports for student victimization and bullying. In addition, the TDSB should prepare a website, separate from the TDSB website, where students can anonymously report issues of school safety. *(page 415)*
18. In view of the Panel’s findings with respect to the education culture at the TDSB, the TDSB should contract an outside management consultant to provide advice and training in respect of pro-active measures the Board can take to counteract the characteristics and dynamics identified by the Panel in its Report on the TDSB education culture. *(page 423)*

*To the Ministry of Education:*

19. The provincial government should establish a provincial School Safety and Equity Officer (“Provincial Officer”). The Provincial Officer will be a central repository for the reporting of serious issues of student safety. *(page 423)*

*To the Ministry of Education:*

20. The Panel recommends that the provincial government create mandatory reporting obligations for serious issues of student safety. Serious issues of student safety include:
- (i) possession of any prohibited or restricted weapon as set out in the Criminal Code of Canada;
  - (ii) a violent incident that has caused serious bodily harm; and
  - (iii) sexual assaults subject to Panel’s recommendations concerning reporting of sexual assault. *(page 423)*

21. The Panel further recommends that the provincial government amend the *Education Act* to create mandatory reporting obligations for all school staff. At a minimum, the reporting provisions would require all Board staff to report serious issues of student safety. The provisions would develop reporting structures that ensure that the principal and vice-principals are informed of every reportable incident. The provisions would obligate the principal of a school to advise the Board representative in charge of issues of safety and the Provincial Officer of serious issues of student safety and where applicable, advise the police of any particular issue. Where an employee has knowledge of a breach of the reporting provisions, the employee must report the breach, pursuant to reporting protection legislation, to the School Safety and Equity Officer. (page 423)
22. The provincial government should amend the *Education Act* to include reporting protection legislation that would apply to all school board employees. The legislation would enable an employee of a school board to anonymously report, in good faith, serious issues of student safety to the Provincial School Safety and Equity Officer and would allow the employee to disclose, if necessary, a student's OSR. The legislation would prohibit any form of direct or indirect reprisal, retaliation or adverse employment consequences against the individual reporting employee. The legislation would include a punitive and remedial penalty attached to the protection. (page 424)

*To the TDSB:*

23. The TDSB should implement Board policy that mirrors the above noted recommendations (20 to 22) with necessary modifications. (page 424)
24. Student and Teacher surveys should be conducted every five years. These surveys should gather information on: 1) Feelings of safety at school; 2) Safety-related problems at school; 3) Fear of victimization; 4) Individual victimization experiences; 5) Witnessing crimes and violence at school; 6) Reporting crimes and violent incidents to authorities (including reasons staff and faculty decide not to report); 7) Perceptions of school punishment practices; 8) Perceptions of racism at school; 9) Ideas and attitudes towards improving school safety; and 10) Attitudes towards the use of the police in school. (page 427)
25. Student and teacher surveys should be based on large, random samples of students and staff. The sampling strategy should ensure that the final sample is representative of the types of communities and schools that make up the Toronto District School Board. For the student survey, we recommend that the sample size should consist of at least 5,000 students (randomly selected from at least 40 schools). For the staff survey, we suggest a sample size of at least 1000 teachers (randomly selected from a sample of at least 30 schools). (page 427)
26. Having regard to section 302(9) of the *Education Act*, which mandates the canvassing of students with respect to their safety, the Panel recommends that the

TDSB develop a policy for anonymously canvassing the school community on safety matters. Parental consent should not be necessary for such limited anonymous canvassing on safety as long as: 1) Students are fully informed about the purpose of the survey prior to survey administration; 2) Students are fully informed that their participation is voluntary and that they do not have to answer questions that they do not want to answer; and 3) Students are fully informed that the survey is both confidential and anonymous. *(page 427)*

27. The TDSB should create high quality evaluation designs (pre-test/post-test control group/experimental group designs) to evaluate programs aimed at reducing violence in schools. The Panel further recommends that program evaluation be conducted by highly qualified, external researchers, who do not have a vested interest in documenting program success. *(page 427)*

### **3.06.02 Tracking Safety**

*To the TDSB:*

28. The Board should consolidate the Weekly Incident Reports and the Crisis Reports into a “Safety Incident Report” that would be used to document all incidents – both violent and non-violent – related to school safety. This standard form would be mandatory and would be used to document the following types of incidents within the school environment: physical threats, threats involving weapons, minor physical assault (not causing injury), major physical assault (causing injury), robbery/extortion, theft, sexual harassment, minor sexual assault (inappropriate touching or grabbing), major sexual assault (forced sexual contact), property damage and weapons at school. Safety Incident Reports should be created by a principal for each incident and submitted to the Safe and Caring Schools Department every week. The Safe and Caring Schools Department would consolidate the Safety Incident Reports by quadrant, FOS, and school, and circulate the Report to the Chair of the Board, Director, Associate Director, Executive Superintendent to Trustees, Superintendents, and all administrators. *(page 432)*
29. Each year the TDSB should produce a detailed report on school safety issues using data collected from individual schools. The information gathered for these Annual Reports could be based largely on the “Safety Incident Report”. Official school data should be further broken down by the following variables: 1) gender of offenders and victims; 2) age of offenders and victims; 3) grade of offenders and victims; and 4) racial/ethnic background of offenders and victims. *(page 432)*

### **3.06.03          Renewal: Creating a Positive Bond Between Students and Teachers**

*To the TDSB:*

30. The TDSB should analyze the Board's suspension and expulsion data to determine the adverse impact it has on students who are disabled or are members of a racialized community by March 31, 2008. *(page 436)*
31. Multicultural, anti-racism staff development should be provided to teachers, administration, and school staff at every school. *(page 438)*
32. The TDSB should amend its transfer processes to permit teachers at schools in "at-risk communities" to be transferred to a different school upon request. Teachers should be permitted to have input in the location of their transfer. Such transfers should not have a negative impact on the teacher's career advancement. *(page 439)*
33. TDSB teachers working in "at-risk communities" should be given a thorough orientation on the social and economic conditions affecting students in these communities. This orientation would be delivered by a team that includes local community organizations and leaders, and students or former students. *(page 439)*
34. The Toronto District School Board should establish school-based teams made up of social workers, child/youth workers, and teachers to help family caregivers navigate and access the mental health services their children and youth require, and these teams should make use of a variety of treatment techniques, and work across disciplines. *(page 439)*

*To the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities:*

35. The Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities should review and enhance mandatory classroom management training for all secondary school teachers, with an emphasis on the particular context of classroom management in the "at risk community" setting. The Practical year training should include an extended classroom management component. *(page 440)*

*To the TDSB:*

36. TDSB should provide staff development in classroom management skills, with a particular focus on schools in "at-risk communities". This staff development should be mandatory for teachers teaching in schools in "at-risk communities". The staff development program must be subject to ongoing review and continuous growth. *(page 440)*
37. Teachers who have been teaching for less than 5 years should be mentored by senior teachers. *(page 440)*

38. The Toronto District School Board should put in place mandatory staff development for principals, vice-principals, and senior administration on best practices in educational change. *(page 440)*
39. The Panel affirms the recent initiatives taken by the TDSB with respect to diversity and equity in its recruitment practices. The Panel calls on the TDSB to establish specific targets and timeframes with respect to employment equity. The Equity Foundation Statement should be implemented with respect to hiring and HR processes. This would include increasing the total number of internationally trained teachers. *(page 443)*
40. The Panel recommends that the TDSB lower class sizes in the LOI secondary schools to create more vacancies, and thereby, allow for movement of staff into these schools. This in turn will create vacancies across the system which may ultimately be filled by new hires. It is contemplated that these changes will enhance the cultural and racial diversity amongst the TDSB's teaching staff. *(page 444)*
41. Thorough curriculum reform should be implemented pursuant to the Equity Foundation Statement. There should be an action plan with specific time frames and accountabilities established. *(page 449)*
42. The TDSB should identify "at risk" students based on two categories: (1) students with high absenteeism rates and (2) students who successfully complete less than seven credits by the end of grade nine. The Panel recommends that in secondary schools, students not attending class on a regular basis need to be flagged by the classroom teachers and reported to an attendance counsellor. A set of procedures should be established with positive measures for encouraging students to attend, including an advocate/mentor program for improving poor attendance. Suspension should not be considered a positive strategy in this case. School procedures should include counselling to provide students with understanding and workable solutions for attending school. *(page 449)*
43. Guidance counsellors should meet with students identified as having successfully obtained less than seven credits so as to formulate a plan to obtain lost credits, including enrollment in a credit recovery program. *(page 449)*
44. The TDSB should provide WRAPAROUND programming in schools where there is a significant population of students who are in jeopardy of falling outside of the education system. *(page 449)*
45. Regardless of the direction that the TDSB and the communities take with respect to the issue of "Black-focused" schools, the Panel recommends that the TDSB develop an inclusive curriculum that will allow students to examine their own cultural and historical experiences, and the experiences of living in their communities. Specifically, the TDSB should explore ways to incorporate African-

- centered perspectives and other forms of cultural knowledge in the education of youth. *(page 450)*
46. The TDSB should extend Student Empowerment Programs and Leadership Opportunities for Students. *(page 451)*
  47. The Toronto District School Board, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation should negotiate an increase in teacher supervision duties with an appropriate increase in remuneration to reflect the additional teacher workload. *(page 455)*
  48. Administrators should develop an enhanced hall presence program that ensures that adult supervision is visual during class breaks and during arrival and dismissal. *(page 455)*
  49. Teachers and Hall Monitors should be engaged in an active staff development program emphasizing conflict resolution, crisis intervention and self-esteem building in students within a racial, cultural, and gender sensitive framework. *(page 455)*
  50. The TDSB should provide crisis intervention training to all its teachers. *(page 455)*
  51. The TDSB should develop a code red procedure and staff team for all schools. The code red staff team would be trained to provide crisis management until paramedics, police or firefighters arrive. The procedure should be prepared with input from teachers' federations, parents, police, paramedics and firefighters. *(page 455)*
  52. The TDSB should increase the number of school safety monitors and ensure that school safety monitors have training, qualifications and remuneration in keeping with their counselling, educational and enforcement role. *(page 456)*
  53. The TDSB should allow the Toronto Fire Services and Toronto Public Health to conduct yearly inspections of all its schools, so as, to ensure that each school meets the standards proscribed by the Fire Code, the Electrical Code, and the Occupation Health and Safety Act. The TDSB should prominently display the Report by the Toronto Parent Network entitled, "A report by the Toronto Parent Network based on a review of the Toronto District School Board's Health and Safety Inspection Reports", on the TDSB's website until such time, as all schools comply with the aforementioned codes. *(page 459)*
  54. The Panel finds that selected TDSB schools in marginalized communities should be designated as community hubs. Community Hub schools will become the focus of the neighbourhoods that they serve. Local community organizations and groups will be encouraged to become part of the school community, in order to

facilitate a closer connection between the school and the students, the parents, and the community. *(page 459)*

55. The TDSB should train administrators and school councils in community development and outreach principles and strategies. *(page 459)*
56. The TDSB should restore the community outreach worker position. The Panel recommends that the community outreach worker gather, coordinate, and act as a clearinghouse concerning information about current programs and services provided by the existing community partners and schools. *(page 459)*
57. In order to facilitate in the building of community hubs, the TDSB should review the level of caretaking staff at each school to determine if there is sufficient staff to maintain the schools such that school can serve as a welcoming and positive environment for the community. *(page 459)*

#### **3.06.04 Lack of Youth Activities**

*To the TDSB:*

58. That a wide range of club programs and recreational activities be offered at each school and that the activities be equally distributed for males and females. *(page 462)*

#### **3.06.05 Funding Formula**

*To the Ministry of Education:*

59. The Ministry of Education should increase the benchmark costs for all components of the funding formula (the Foundations Grant, the Special Purpose Grant, and the Pupil Accommodation Grant) so as, to close the gap between funding provided, and actual costs of operations. *(page 468)*
60. The Panel recommends that the Ministry of Education, in consultation with school boards and other members of the education community, should develop mechanisms for annually reviewing and updating benchmarks in the funding formula and for conducting a more comprehensive overall review of the funding formula every five years. *(page 468)*
61. The Ministry of Education should increase the funding of the Demographic Component of the LOG to the level stipulated by the 1997 Expert Panel that studied the creation of the Learning Opportunities Grant - \$400 million (adjusted to reflect inflation). *(page 469)*

62. The Ministry of Education should “sweater” the Demographic Component of the Learning Opportunities Grant so that the funds received by the Board are used solely for providing programs to mitigate socio-economic factors affecting marginalized students. The new Demographic component should include a built-in accountability process mandating that school boards report annually on the programs and services funded by the grant, and on their effectiveness. *(page 471)*
63. The Ministry of Education should reconstitute the Local Priorities Amount as 5% of the Basic Amount of school boards’ Pupil Foundation Grant (updated as per above noted recommendation), and that boards apply the Local Priorities Amount to locally established priorities, programs, and services aimed at the continuous improvement of student learning and achievement with particular focus paid to at risk schools. *(page 472)*
64. The Ministry of Education should require school boards, through their Directors of Education, to consult with principals and school councils for the purposes of developing a plan for the use of the Local Priorities Amount, and to annually review the plans and report publicly to all stakeholders and to the Ministry on the results achieved through the implementation of the plans, in individual schools and in the district as a whole. *(page 472)*

### **3.06.06 Trustee Governance**

*To the Ministry of Education and TDSB:*

65. The TDSB should develop a job description for all trustees. The job description should detail the distinction between policy decisions and school operational decisions. *(page 474)*
66. The TDSB design a code of conduct for trustees. The code of conduct should include, at minimum, the following prohibitions:
- (a) Trustees are prohibited from involving themselves in matters of internal school discipline;
  - (b) Trustees are prohibited from engaging in operational decisions of any particular school;
  - (c) Trustees are prohibited from engaging in any conduct intended to embarrass or intimidate other trustees or staff of the TDSB;
  - (d) Trustees agree to respect the confidentiality of in-camera discussions in accordance with relevant statutes and Board policies; and,
  - (e) Individual Trustees are prohibited from acting in any way that usurps the authority of the Board of Trustees. *(page 475)*
67. Upon election, trustees should be obligated to complete a training course that details their job description and advises them of their obligations pursuant to the

code of conduct. During their term of office, trustees should receive refresher training every year. (page 476)

*To the Ministry of Education:*

68. The Ministry of Education should include in its funding formula adequate funding for the orientation and training of trustees. (page 476)

*To the TDSB and the Ministry of Education:*

69. The Chair of the TDSB should be paid a salary commensurate with the full-time nature of the position, the level of responsibility, and public expectations involved. (page 477)

*To the TDSB:*

70. The Director and Associate Director of the TDSB should be selected by means of a process that includes a broad range of community consultations around the qualifications, background and perspectives of potential candidates. (page 477)

### **3.06.07 Disciplinary Measures in Schools**

*To the TDSB:*

71. TDSB should enact a formal policy advising administrators they are not to engage in the activities detailed above. The policy should explicitly state that Safe School Transfers are not to be used as an alternative to discipline and should only be used in exceptional circumstances. The policy should advise administrators that they are not to encourage police or the judiciary to impose conditions on a student that would require the student to be transferred from their home school. (page 485)

*To the Ministry of Education:*

72. The *Education Act* should be amended to provide statutory authority for a School Board to transfer a student from one school to another. The transfer provisions should only allow for a transfer in the following situation:
- a. Where the student requests the transfer;
  - b. Where the student is subject to a principal's exclusion order pursuant to section 265(1)(m); or,
  - c. When a student is subject to interim release conditions that require a transfer and the administrator is of the opinion that the student poses a direct and real threat, physically or otherwise, to other students at the school.

If an administrator is not of the opinion that a student poses a direct and real threat, physically or otherwise, to other students at the school, then the legislation should obligate an administrator to contact a court liaison worker to assist the student in revising the interim release conditions. The legislation should include an appeal procedure as well as obligating school boards to provide programming to students prior to their transfer. *(page 485)*

*To Stakeholders in the Criminal Justice System:*

73. A Standing Education-Justice Committee, made up of high-level representatives from all Toronto school boards, Youth Court Judges, Youth Court Justices of the Peace, the Criminal Defense Bar, Crown Attorneys, the Toronto Police Service as well as a representative of a court liaison officer should be established. The committee should meet twice a year to analyze and take action on issues relevant to the interplay between youth education and the criminal justice system, including the issue of Safe School Transfers. The committee should meet within 60 days of the date of this report. *(page 486)*

*To the Toronto Police Service:*

74. The Toronto Police Service should create a position of Staff Superintendent – Executive School Safety, with the responsibility for liaising and working with the Toronto Police Service with respect to policing issues that affect students. *(page 486)*

*To the TDSB:*

75. The TDSB should offer A2S, the Support Program for Expelled Students and Strict Discipline School programs (or the equivalent after Bill 212 comes into force) for all Safe School Transfers irrespective of whether the interim conditions requiring the transfer were a result of conduct that occurred on or off school property. *(page 487)*
76. All schools should set up a Safe School Transfer Team that would meet prior to receiving a Safe School Transfer to determine the needs of the students. The Safe School Transfer team should include the administration of the school, the head guidance counselor, school social worker, youth counselor, or Child and Youth Worker (“CYW”). Parents of the students should be invited to a safe school transfer team meeting so as to assist in developing a plan for addressing the needs of the students. The needs of the student will include determining whether the student requires alternative education programming and/or access to a social worker, psychologist, and/or psychiatrist. *(page 488)*
77. Where a safe school transfer is required, the transferred student, prior to attending classes, should be placed into an orientation program, so as, to better acclimatize the student to the new surroundings. This orientation program should include

explaining the rules of the school to the student and discussing with the student the plan developed by the safe school transfer team. (page 488)

*To Stakeholders in the Criminal Justice System:*

78. When considering whether to release a young person who has been charged with a criminal offence, police officers, Justices of the Peace and Judges should consider the impact that the proposed conditions, such as “no-contact with co-accused”, will have on the young person’s education. Conditions that have the effect of impairing a student’s ability to attend school should be avoided unless they are necessary in the public interest. A condition that requires a student to be removed from their home school should only be imposed in extreme circumstances, where the student poses a direct and real threat, physical or otherwise, to other students at the school. (page 489)

*To the Federal Department of Justice:*

79. The Federal Department of Justice should study the feasibility and advisability of creating judicial interim release provisions specific to the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, which would require a court to consider the impact that the decision may have on a young person’s access to education. (page 489)

*To Stakeholders in the Criminal Justice System:*

80. There should be education provided to Crown Attorneys, Justices of the Peace, and Judges to inform them regarding the impact of the criminal justice system, including judicial interim release and sentencing dispositions, on access to education. (page 489)

*To the TDSB:*

81. Where a student is required to transfer schools because of conditions imposed by a police undertaking or judicial interim release, the administrator at the home school should determine whether a transfer is in the best interest of the student. The principal should start from the presumption that a transfer is not beneficial to the student. Where it is determined that a student should not be transferred, the administrator should contact the TDSB court liaison officer to assist the student in varying the police undertaking or judicial interim release conditions, as soon as possible. (page 490)
82. The TDSB should allocate at least one court liaison officer for each of the three Toronto youth courts. The role of the court liaison officers should be expanded beyond issues of judicial interim release to restorative justice. (page 490)

83. The Panel recommends that Board Policies be amended to provide that where a school has a suspension rate of 10% or higher, the Superintendent responsible for the school must report the school to the “Well-Being and Equity Department” (see recommendations 112-113). Working in concert with the Superintendent, and the Administrators, the Well-Being and Equity Department is to conduct a Needs Assessment and provide the school with an integrated multi-disciplinary support team to assist in addressing whatever health issues may present themselves in respect of the school environment. The support team will consider whether it is necessary to conduct anonymous student and teacher surveys to identify safety concerns at the school. *(page 499)*
84. Once a student has been suspended, a student’s guidance counsellor should be responsible for ensuring that the student receives his or her school work during the suspension. If the student has entered an A2S site, then the teacher at the A2S site should liaison with the guidance counsellor. *(page 500)*
85. The Panel recommends that upon a student’s second suspension, a multi-disciplinary team of administrators, social workers, teachers, CYC, and CYW should meet with the student and his or her parent(s) to determine whether the student requires alternative education measures and/or counselling. For students, who habitually misbehave, the multi-disciplinary team should consider whether the student should be placed in an A2S site for a full semester or longer depending on the needs of the student and their progress in the alternative education program. *(page 500)*
86. After February 1, 2008, the TDSB, upon a decision to expel a student, should refer the student to a Support Program for Expelled Students site for a transitional period prior to returning to a non-Support Program for Expelled Students site. *(page 504)*
87. The TDSB should enact a policy prohibiting principals and teachers from sending children home as a form of punishment. *(page 505)*

### **3.06.08 Detection and Deterrence**

*To the TDSB:*

88. The Toronto District School Board should take immediate steps to ensure that adequate security measures are employed to ensure all potential storage areas for weapons (including lockers) are the subject of regular non-intrusive searches, including consideration being given to the random usage of TDSB-owned canine units that specialize in firearms detection. The manner of selection of schools must be random and must be based on express policy input from the equity experts from the TDSB. *(page 512)*

89. All Toronto District School Board school doors, apart from the front door, should be locked from the outside. Entry and exit from the school doors should be monitored by an adult, at all times, that the school is in use. *(page 513)*
90. The Toronto District School Board should amend “Policy P.042 SCH: Appropriate Dress” such that school uniforms are presumed unless School Councils opt out. School uniforms should comply with the Ontario Human Rights Code and should be affordable. The Toronto District School Board should have an easily accessible program for subsidizing the cost of school uniforms, where necessary. *(page 514)*
91. All Toronto District School Board secondary schools should implement a student identification card (“lanyards”) system. Students should be required to wear identification cards around their necks for the purposes of quickly identifying students and intruders. *(page 515)*

*To the Toronto Police Service:*

92. The Toronto Police Service should ensure that its data recording system can categorize incidents by school name to allow for ease of extraction and analysis of trends at individual schools. *(page 516)*

### **3.06.09 Support Services for Student Success**

*To the TDSB:*

93. Schools with high suspension/expulsion rates, high drop-out rates, high absenteeism rates and a high number of grade nine students who have achieved less than 7 credits, should be staffed with a full time social worker, a full time child and youth worker (“CYW”) and a full time child and youth counsellor (“CYC”). *(page 521)*
94. The TDSB should hire 20 new full-time social workers. *(page 521)*
95. The 20 new full-time social workers should be dedicated to high priority schools determined by the Board based on criteria that includes drop-out rates, high absenteeism, suspension/expulsion data, LOI ranking and number of Safety Incident Reports. *(page 521)*
96. The Panel recommends that the 20 new full-time social workers dedicated to high priority schools should not be assigned to more than 2 schools each. *(page 521)*
97. The TDSB should hire 20 additional child and youth counsellors. *(page 521)*

98. The 20 youth counsellors should be dedicated to high priority schools determined by the Board based on criteria that includes drop-out rates, high absenteeism, suspension/expulsion data, LOI ranking, and number of Safety Incident Reports. *(page 521)*
99. The Panel recommends that the 20 additional youth counsellors dedicated to high priority schools should not be assigned to more than 2 schools each. *(page 521)*
100. The Panel recommends that the TDSB should hire 24 additional attendance counsellors to meet the needs created by the mandatory learning to 18 provisions of Bill 52. *(page 523)*

### **3.07.02 Aboriginal Education at the TDSB**

*To the TDSB:*

101. The Toronto District School Board should ensure that all students and parents are informed that the Board offers Native Language instruction as an alternative to French, and that all students who wish to enroll in Native Language education have the right to transportation to the closest school that offers that course of instruction. *(page 527)*

### **3.07.03 First Nations School of Toronto**

*To the Ontario College of Teachers:*

102. The Ontario College of Teachers should require faculties of education to enhance the knowledge and skills of teacher candidates and teachers in the field to better prepare them to work with Aboriginal students. *(page 530)*
103. The Ontario College of Teachers should develop a Native Counsellors Qualification Program. *(page 530)*

*To the TDSB:*

104. The Toronto District School Board should work with the Ontario College of Teachers towards providing full-time Native Counsellors in all elementary and secondary schools that have a five percent or greater Aboriginal student population, within two years. *(page 530)*
105. The Board should immediately recruit, from external sources, a full-time Family and Youth Counsellor, with expertise in serving the Aboriginal community, to co-ordinate and provide culturally sensitive, healing, counseling and support to the students and families of the First Nations School of Toronto. Preference should be given to Aboriginal candidates. *(page 531)*

106. The Toronto District School Board should fund a Vice-Principal position to be assigned to the First Nations School of Toronto. The new Vice-Principal position should have responsibility for curriculum and student academic success, and should have knowledge of, and sensitivity to Aboriginal issues, with a preference given to Aboriginal candidates. *(page 531)*

**3.07.04 Disciplinary Measures and Aboriginal Justice at the First Nations School of Toronto**

*To the TDSB:*

107. The Toronto District School Board should immediately hire an external consulting agency to examine the needs of the students at the First Nations School and to develop an Aboriginal-specific conflict resolution and restorative justice program for the school. The external consulting agency should be a community Aboriginal agency with expertise and experience providing culturally appropriate conflict resolution programming for young Aboriginal people. *(page 536)*
108. The Toronto District School Board should move the First Nations School of Toronto into its own building, so that it need not share space with another school. *(page 536)*

**3.07.05 Oversight of Aboriginal Education in the TDSB**

*To the TDSB:*

109. The Toronto District School Board should establish the position of “Central Principal - Aboriginal Education” as a permanent position and should provide a budget sufficient to allow the Principal to develop curriculum and programming initiatives and to liaise with community Aboriginal agencies. *(page 537)*

*To the Ministry of Education:*

110. The Ontario Ministry of Education should “sweater” all funding allocated for Aboriginal education initiatives. *(page 538)*

**3.08.06 Reuniting Safety with Equity – The Well-Being and Equity Department**

*To the TDSB:*

111. The Panel recommends the dismantling of the “Safe School Culture” and the removal of the “Safe Schools” moniker from all of its policies and department designations. It is imperative that the TDSB send the clear message to affected

- communities that the vestiges of the past, in the form of safe school/zero tolerance initiatives have been truly abandoned. *(page 545)*
112. The Panel recommends that the personnel who staff the current Safe and Caring Schools Department be part of a new department known as the Well-Being and Equity Department. This Well-Being and Equity Department will represent a partnership with the current equity team at the Board. The purpose of this reorganization is to ensure that equity considerations properly infuse all of the Board's decision making concerning the discipline and safety of students. The Well-Being and Equity Department would combine the expertise of both the Board's Safe Schools and Equity personnel, and would constitute an institutional recognition of the relationship between safety and equity. The Panel recommends that the organization of the Well-Being and Equity Department be in accordance with the proposed organizational chart as set out in the Final Report [see Appendix "G"]. *(page 546)*
  113. In order to fulfill the mandate envisioned by the herein recommendations, it is essential that the Well-Being and Equity Department be understood as a partnership between safety and equity. Accordingly, the Panel recommends that steps be taken by the Board to reunite the various equity specialists in the Board with a view to reinventing the Equity team in a fashion that it is capable of fulfilling the mandate contemplated for the Well-Being and Equity Department. *(page 546)*
  114. The TDSB should publish an annual report setting out its progress in implementing the Equity Foundation Statement with reference to the Action Plan, and the results of its Equity auditing procedure. *(page 546)*
  115. The Board's Equity personnel be charged with the responsibility of identifying best practices that emerge at the school and district level, and disseminating them throughout the Board. The Board should dedicate sufficient resources, including human resources, to ensure that it takes full advantage of the initiative and expertise of its staff, who implement equity at the local level. *(page 546)*
  116. The TDSB should ensure that all schools have a School Equity Committee made up of staff, students, parents/guardians, and community representatives. This committee will develop an equity focus of school improvement planning and identify the policies and practices that act as barriers to inclusion. *(page 546)*
  117. The TDSB should recognize and support the development of a professional association of African-Canadian educators. The purpose of the association would be to promote opportunities for professional development, mentoring and networking, and career counselling and support. *(page 546)*
  118. The TDSB should establish a separate office for concerns and issues about Safe Schools (and other areas of community interaction) during the transition period to

more preventative measures, in the form of an ‘Ombudsperson Office’. The Ombudsperson Office should have staff funded by the TDSB, but who report directly to the Chair’s Committee of the Board of Trustees. It will be the mandate of this office to vet complaints and advocate on behalf of students and their families. There should be an assessment of this office after two years. (page 547)

### **3.09 Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth**

*To the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth:*

119. The Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth should conduct a “systemic review” (as defined in the *Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Act, 2007*) of the First Nations School of Toronto, to provide an independent voice for its students, to elevate their voice and to provide a vehicle for concerns to be brought forward to the Legislature of Ontario. This systemic review should be done in collaboration with Aboriginal community-based agencies providing programs for Aboriginal students and youth. (page 548)
120. The Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth should conduct a “systemic review” (as defined in the *Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Act, 2007*) of Westview Centennial Secondary School, to provide an independent voice for Westview students, to elevate their voice and to provide a vehicle for concerns to be brought forward to the Legislature of Ontario. This systemic review should be done in collaboration with community-based agencies providing programs to students and youth in the neighbourhood surrounding the school. (page 549)
121. The Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth and the Implementation Task Force should work together to propose regulatory changes to the *Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Act, 2007* that would extend advocacy services to the education sector, for children and youth who already have a right of access to advocacy services pursuant to paragraphs for 15 (a) – (e) of the *Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Act, 2007*. (page 549)

*To the Education System:*

122. Schools boards, legislators and, educators need to develop mechanisms to enhance and encourage meaningful participation of children and youth in the creation and maintenance of a safe school environment and to elevate the voice of children and youth in the school in accordance with Article 12 of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child. (page 549)

*To the Minister of Education:*

123. The Ontario Minister of Education should strike an independent Implementation Task Force to respond to the recommendations of this report, to oversee their implementation and to, where appropriate, apply the principles and

recommendations Province-wide. The implementation group will report quarterly to the Minister of Education. The independent Task Force shall be comprised of the following membership:

- (a) Chair: Professor Judith Finlay;
- (b) Member: Current Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, Agnes Samler;
- (c) The remaining membership to reflect a broad section of respected community members and youth academics. (page 550)

### **3.10 The Need for a Coordinating Body**

*To the Provincial Minister of Education, the Honourable Mayor for the City of Toronto and the Chair and members of the Interdivisional Committee on Integrated Responses to Priority Neighbourhoods, :*

124. The Panel recommends that an effective inter-agency body, including representatives from the TDSB and other school boards, the City of Toronto, the Toronto Police Service, the United Way of Greater Toronto, Toronto Community Housing Corporation and the Province of Ontario, be instituted to coordinate the institutional response to marginalized youth and communities. The representatives to the inter-agency body should be the institutional heads or their designates, to ensure that it is invested with full decision-making authority for member agencies. The inter-agency body would have line authority to make decisions binding on its member agencies. The Panel recognizes that the Interdivisional Committee on Integrated Responses to Priority Neighbourhoods was intended to satisfy a coordination function. The Panel recommends that this Committee be re-invented, such that the membership is streamlined and its powers to allocate resources enhanced. (page 553)
125. The Panel recommends that the inter-agency body develop a Strategic Plan, along with measurable goals, accountabilities and timetables. The Panel is of the view that this Plan can be developed through a review of existing reports, studies and past consultation processes, as opposed to a fresh round of community consultations. If additional public consultations are considered advisable, the Panel urges that any such consultation not delay immediate and necessary action. (page 553)

*To the TDSB:*

126. The Panel recommends that principals who accept positions at schools in priority communities (municipally defined) do so on the basis that the position involves, at minimum, a five year commitment to remain in the position. Such commitment is subject to the ongoing discretion of the Board on the appropriateness of the administrator's assignment. (page 557)