

Written Notice of Motion for Consideration as Emergency Business (Trustees Chernos Lin and Kandavel)

From: Denise Joseph-Dowers, Manager, Board Services, Governance and Board Services

In accordance with the Board’s bylaws, emergency business is defined as:

a situation, or the threat of a situation, adversely affecting health, safety and/or well-being, or resulting in significant legal risk or financial damage or loss, which by its nature and seriousness requires an immediate response...

Further,

5.12.7 A matter not on the agenda or directly related to matters arising from discussion cannot be introduced by a trustee at a Board or Committee meeting, or after the notice of agenda has been circulated to members, unless the item qualifies as emergency business and is confirmed by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present.

Remote Learning: Importance of Connecting With Students

Trustees Chernos Lin and Kandavel have submitted the following as a matter of urgency and for consideration as emergency business.

Therefore, be it resolved:

A. That the following matter be deemed as emergency business;

and, if approved (requires a two-thirds majority vote of the members present to be considered);

B. That the following be considered:

Whereas, all publicly-funded schools in Ontario, including those at the TDSB, remain closed to students until at least May 31, 2020; and

Whereas, the City of Toronto is in a state of emergency due to the pandemic of Covid-19; and

Whereas, Covid-19 has created unprecedented and widespread changes for students, resulting in emotional, social, psychological and financial stress; and

Whereas, physical distancing and other safety measures put in place to protect students, families and staff have led to enormous changes in how children experience school; and

Whereas, the longer the pandemic continues and schools remain closed, the risk of gaps in student learning, progress and achievement grows; and

Whereas, currently it is the decision of individual educators how best to engage students and families, but one that would take into consideration student and family circumstances; and

Whereas, while the Ministry of Education sets the hours of work expected per week, in light of the extended closure families have expressed concerns surrounding how there might be more consistent understanding/expectations regarding the connections between teachers and students across grades, schools and the board; and

Whereas, support for excellence in public education is crucial to the health and strength of our society; and

Whereas, research indicates that strong student/teacher connections are at the heart of good learning, leading to better student engagement, greater student success and improved mental health and well-being;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Director:

- (i) facilitate discussions with all employee groups and seek feedback from parents and students to determine best practices for ensuring meaningful, consistent, interactive remote engagement and learning between educators and students, among students, and between parents/caregivers and teachers;
- (ii) provide necessary supports for educators to help implement any changes going forward, if required;
- (iii) present a report to the Board at the earliest opportunity, on next steps with regard to the initiatives at parts (i) and (ii) above.