

Notice of Possible Emergency Business

Committee of the Whole

August 18, 2020

Trustee Donaldson, seconded by Trustee Story, might move the following as an item of emergency business for consideration by the Committee of the Whole on August 18, 2020

More Nurses for a Safe and Staggered School Re-Opening

Whereas, the Board's bylaws define emergency business 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;

and;

Whereas, Trustees Donaldson and Story 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, the TDSB has prepared an operational plan for re-opening schools during the COVID-19 pandemic that provides learning in multiple modes (fully remote, in-class, hybrid);

Whereas, Public Health Canada has released COVID-19 guidance to administrators for schools Kindergarten to Grade 12¹ that outlines measures, such as a phased-in return to school, that would increase the safety of students and staff;

Whereas, Toronto Public Health has recently highlighted improvements to the Province's plan for re-opening schools that would make Toronto schools safer, such as:

- (i) Ensuring that class sizes are limited to allow physical distancing of 2 metres between all students;
- (ii) Strongly encouraging masks for younger students (below Grade 4) where possible;
- (iii) Prioritizing resources for schools in high-transmission and high-needs areas;
- (iv) Piloting a saliva-based testing option that could be used in homes and schools;
- (v) Implementing active daily screening practices; and

¹ Public Health Canada, "COVID-19 Guidance for Schools Kindergarten to Grade 12", <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/guidance-schools-childcare-programs.html>

- (vi) Encouraging a later start the school year or having staggered start dates for students in order to allow school boards and schools time to prepare and incorporate public health recommendations.

Whereas, the Province's intention to hire "up to 500 public health nurses" lacks detail about how many nurses Toronto Public Health will be able to hire for the 850+ schools in our city;

Whereas Toronto has had the highest COVID-19 total case count of any area of the province since the pandemic began, and whereas Toronto Public Health is gathering and transparently providing neighbourhood-level data about the incidence of COVID-19 cases that are prevalent in particular areas of the city; and

Whereas additional school-based Toronto Public Health nurses in Toronto schools could aid in a safe return to school buildings, assist with health measures and protocols (such as screening) in the first few weeks of school, and play an important on-the-ground role in outbreak management.

Therefore, be it resolved:

- (a) That the Chair write to the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health to request:
 - (i) the immediate hiring of additional of public health nurses for Toronto schools to provide support needed for a safer return to school, and in particular, schools within high incidence areas,
 - (ii) implementation of a saliva-based test to be piloted with the TDSB and Toronto Public Health, and scaled up as needed, to minimize disruption to student learning that could be impacted from having to repeatedly shut down in-class instruction.
- (b) That the Director of Education report back to the Board about:
 - (i) a staggered start to the in-class re-opening of schools to ensure the highest degree of success in implementing safety protocols for students, staff and visitors entering, moving around within, and exiting schools,
 - (ii) a regional approach to prioritizing our own resources to schools within the highest incidence areas, in coordination with Toronto Public Health's neighbourhood-level data about COVID-19 activity.