

Written Notice of Motion (Trustees Mammoliti and Donaldson)

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

In accordance with Board Bylaw 5.15.2, the following motion is submitted as notice at this time and for consideration at the Planning and Priorities Committee meeting on April 12, 2022.

5.15.2 A notice of motion will be introduced by a member who is present as an advance notification of a matter at Board or Committee, and will be considered at a subsequent Committee meeting. A notice of motion will not be debated at the meeting at which it is introduced...

5.15.2 (b) A notice of motion submitted prior to, or at a Board meeting, will be referred to the appropriate committee...

5.15.2 (c) A notice of motion submitted prior to, or at a committee meeting, will be considered at a subsequent committee meeting...

A Toronto Partnership for the Protection and Well-being of Children and Youth

Whereas, the COVID-19 pandemic has closed the doors of schools and community agencies to children and youth during frequent and prolonged quarantine periods, resulting in serious consequences for many youth: disconnect from positive peer and caring adult relationships, extended time online (gaming, use of social media), often unsupervised, lack of access to recreational programs, decreased youth employment and medical services, increased family poverty, in addition to heightened risk of child maltreatment, such as physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, and exposure to family violence; and

Whereas, a recent Children First Canada document called "[Raising Canada 2020](#)" reported that children and youth may have suffered more than others as the result of pandemic, this report also states that preventable injury is the number one threat to children and youth in Canada, and called violence against children the "hidden crisis" of the pandemic; and

Whereas, Kids Help Phone has reported a doubling of calls from children and youth during the pandemic, and SickKids Hospital has reported a "[staggering rise](#)" in [child and youth mental health issues](#), yet there remains a dearth of available data about the number of children and youth affected by violence during the COVID-19 restrictions; and

Whereas, the Toronto District School Board, in its Pandemic Recovery Plan has [\(in November 2021\) committed additional resources](#) to address the urgent need in its

schools to assist families and children by addressing racialized trauma, providing individual and family brief counseling, supporting food/shelter security and working collaboratively with community partners to support re-engagement, attendance and transitions for students - yet supports available continue to struggle to meet the need; and

Whereas, the TDSB's student data shows a concerning decline in mental health for all students surveyed over each of the three school years affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, an increasing use of 20 day suspensions indicating more serious incidents in schools, and dramatic increases of referrals to social workers and counsellors; and

Whereas, the work of TDSB's support staff and social workers has increased and is primarily supporting crisis in school communities (student deaths, parent/caregiver deaths, racism, tragedies and impact of community violence on students and staff), connecting and supporting families/students to food/financial security resources and culturally responsive mental health community partners, addressing and supporting student anxiety, conducting risk assessments for self-harm, supporting capacity building for positive coping and stress management skills, case managing students who are on wait lists with mental health community agencies, and supporting re-engagement to school of students experiencing mental health concerns; and

Whereas, children and youth are a vulnerable population requiring consistent levels of care and public agencies, including the TDSB, supporting children and youth struggle to meet the diverse needs of this population if funding and structures do not directly support it or are irregular; and

Whereas, every level of government has a responsibility for the protection and well-being of all children and youth; and

Whereas, funding structures are limited, individual public entities cannot address the root cause of societal issues impacting our youth alone, and better outcomes for children and youth can be better achieved through a collaborative and strategic effort;

Therefore, be it resolved:

- (a) That the Chair write to the Prime Minister of Canada, the Premier of Ontario, the Mayor of the City of Toronto and the chairs of Toronto school boards to request the creation of a partnership table between all three levels of government and Toronto school boards to discuss the development of a lasting structure that will:
 - i. combine research and action to address the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, poverty, and violence on children and youth in the City of Toronto;
 - ii. seek to better coordinate and improve access to existing programs for children and youth in the City of Toronto;

- iii. enhance data collection and reporting to strengthen the ability of funders to nimbly target resources to areas of urgent or critical need;
- iv. transparently report community level data on the status of children and youth and the impacts of public services interventions;
- v. leverage the partnership of the Toronto District School Board to ensure the involvement of children and youth in policy-making and the decisions that directly impact their lives.