



Program and School Services Committee
Report No. 82 (Part 1)

PSSC:084A

Wednesday, May 6, 2020

4:30 p.m.

Electronic Meeting

Trustee Members Present Trustees Jennifer Story (Chair), Rachel Chernos Lin, Parthi Kandavel, Dan MacLean, Yalini Rajakulasingam, Anu Sriskandarajah and Chris Tonks

Also Present Trustee Michelle Aarts, Alexander Brown, Stephanie Donaldson, Trixie Doyle, Shelley Laskin, Chris Moise, Robin Pilkey, David Smith and Manna Wong

All trustees participated by electronic means in accordance with [amendments to Section 7 of Ontario Regulations 463/97, Electronic Meetings](#)

Part A: Committee Recommendations

1. French-as-a-Second-Language Community Advisory Committee: Guiding Principles for French Immersion

Consideration of the Committee's recommendation will take place at the next regular Board meeting on May 27, 2020.

2. French-as-a-Second-Language Community Advisory Committee: TTC Support for French Immersion/Extended Secondary Students in Need

Consideration of the Committee's recommendation will take place at the next regular Board meeting on May 27, 2020.

3. Early Literacy, 2019-20 [3879]

Consideration of the Committee's recommendation will take place at the next regular Board meeting on May 27, 2020.

4. Psychological Services: Wait Lists, 2018-19 [3867]

Consideration of the Committee's recommendation will take place at the next regular Board meeting on May 27, 2020.

5. Annual Enrolment in Immersion/Extended French Program, 2020-2021 and Core French Program, 2019-2020 [3873]

Consideration of the Committee's recommendation will take place at the next regular Board meeting on May 27, 2020.

6. Indigenous Education Annual Report [3874]

Consideration of the Committee's recommendation will take place at the next regular Board meeting on May 27, 2020.

7. September as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness Month

Consideration of the Committee's recommendation will take place at the next regular Board meeting on May 27, 2020.

8. Transition Funding Supports

On motion of Trustee Chernos Lin, seconded by Trustee Sriskandarajah, the Program and School Services Committee decided that the matter be deemed as emergency business and discussed.

The Program and Schools Services Committee **RECOMMENDS:**

Whereas, the Government of Ontario announced that, due to the continued spread of COVID-19, all publicly-funded schools in Ontario, including those at the Toronto District School Board, remain closed to students as of March 13, 2019; and

Whereas, although emergency remote learning opportunities are being provided, we know many students are not able to fully participate in the learning for a variety of reasons; and

Whereas, we know emergency remote learning does not replace in-class, teacher-led learning; and

Whereas, research shows that over the summer break, students experience summer learning loss or, what is known more colloquially as “the summer slide”; and, that research also indicates that summer learning loss tends to be more pronounced among students from lower socio-economic groups or who have less opportunity for summer learning opportunities; and

Whereas, the closure of schools and emergency remote learning, when combined with the upcoming summer break from school will likely create an even more pronounced summer slide; and

Whereas, a trauma-informed approach would have our educators and system leaders modify approaches to teaching and learning that help students overcome the barriers to learning that arise from the stress created by negative psychological, social, financial and health impacts of COVID-19 and the global pandemic response; and

Whereas, until there is a vaccine Boards and schools will most likely need to create and implement new procedures for hygiene and distancing that interfere with and/or slow down existing school procedures and may also need to continue some degree of remote learning should further waves of COVID-19 occur; and

Whereas, the current Provincial funding structure through the existing Grants for Student Needs (GSNs) does not provide for funds to address the unprecedented crisis surrounding Covid-19 and the effects listed above; and

Whereas, all of these challenges pose significant threats to the delivery of a strong public education system; and

Whereas, an excellent public education system is the backbone of a healthy, flourishing society, and must be able to deliver under any and all circumstances; and

Whereas, in times of challenge, it is paramount that everyone work collaboratively to adapt to new circumstances, rise to new challenges and provide excellence in education for all students;

Therefore, be it resolved:

- (a) The Chair send a letter to the Minister of Education requesting that recovery funding be provided to school boards through the Grants for Student Needs to ensure students' successful return to the classroom as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, including funding for:**
- i. mental health and well-being supports, including staffing and resources for intensive social work and psychological supports;**
 - ii. additional staffing and resources to address gaps in literacy and numeracy, as well as build educator capacity in digital learning;**
 - iii. transitional staffing resources including additional special education funding;**
 - iv. transitional staffing resources for children with special needs, many of whom will have been without therapy or respite care for an extended period;**
 - v. additional student success teachers to aid students in the transition from elementary to secondary schools;**
 - vi. addressing the substantial information technology gaps in the system, including replacing budgets that boards used to purchase IT and Internet service during the course of this pandemic; provide on-going support to continue supports for IT and Internet; and begin funding IT devices for students at a 1:1 ratio without requiring boards to reallocate funds to purchase IT;**
- (b) That the Ontario Public School Boards' Association be encouraged to advocate for the six points at Part (a) above;**
- (c) That the member boards of OPSBA be copied on the letter from the Chair**

Carried

At the Committee meeting, on amendment of Trustee Chernos Lin, seconded by Trustee Doyle, "including staffing and resources for intensive social work and psychological supports" was added at Part (a) (i), and to "address literacy and numeracy gaps" was changed to "to address gaps in literacy and numeracy, as well as build educator capacity in digital learning", at Part (a) (ii).

9. Remote Learning: Importance of Connecting With Students

On motion of Trustee Chernos Lin, seconded by Trustee Kandavel, the Program and School Services Committee decided that the matter be deemed as emergency business and discussed.

The Program and Schools Services Committee **RECOMMENDS:**

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.**

Carried

Part B: Information Only

10. Call to Order and Acknowledgement of Traditional Lands

A meeting of the Program and School Services Committee was convened on Wednesday, May 6, 2020 from 4:30 to 9:22 p.m., by electronic means, with Jennifer Story presiding.

On motion of Trustee Doyle, seconded by Trustee Kandavel, the agenda was approved.

Part B matters to be received by the Board on May 27, 2020.

Part C: Ongoing Matters

Part C matters to be received by the Board on May 27, 2020.

Submitted by: Jennifer Story, Chair of Committee