



January 26, 2021

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
315 Front Street, 14th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 0B8

Dear Minister Lecce,

The health and safety of our students and staff is a priority for the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been committed to maintaining the safest possible environments for our entire school community while providing students with regular and meaningful learning opportunities.

This commitment included a significant and urgent shift to remote learning in the spring, including ensuring access to technology for approximately 245,000 learners; opening a Virtual School in tandem with a safe re-opening of in-person schools in September; and supporting students' mental health and well-being as well as providing additional resources to students with special education needs. This necessary work resulted in extraordinary and unanticipated staffing and IT costs which required the Board to use over \$40M of its own resources. Of this, \$29.5M was working funds and other internally restricted reserves to support smaller classes in elementary schools.

While we acknowledge the provincial and federal government's ongoing efforts and the additional COVID-19 related funding to school boards, the TDSB projects that its working fund reserves will be substantially or fully depleted by the end of the 2020-21 school year.

We are strongly advocating for the reimbursement of reserve funds and other pandemic-related costs, so that school boards can maintain their reserves and recover from budget pressures related to unfunded pandemic costs. We are hopeful that the second instalment of federal funding will be announced shortly, and that additional funding will continue into the next school year.

This has been an extraordinary year and ensuring the continued physical and mental health and safety of our students and staff in our schools and classrooms is an absolute requirement.

I appreciate your consideration and attention to these financial matters so the TDSB can continue the important work of safely supporting and educating our students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Brown'.

Alexander Brown
Chair, Toronto District School Board

Cc: OPSBA