



Title: Implementation of The Parents Reaching Out Grant 2019-2020
To: Program and School Services Committee (PSSC)
Date: 6 November 2019
Report No. 11-19-3785

Strategic Directions

- Build Strong Relationships and Partnerships Within School Communities to Support Student Learning and Well-Being

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Parents Reaching Out Grant allocation of \$133,405.00 be utilized as described in Appendix A.

Context

The Ministry of Education has announced that the Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grant will continue. The Parents Reaching Out Grant provides funding to district school boards and school authorities to lead projects with a focus on the identification and removal of barriers that prevent parents and families from participating and engaging fully in their children's learning.

Changes to the program were made for the 2019-20 school year from an application-based funding model to an allocation-based grant provided to each school board. School boards received a predetermined funding amount for parent engagement projects.

The TDSB was allocated \$133,405.00 for projects that demonstrate a commitment to respecting the role of parents in students' educational experiences. The agreement allows for boards to take a 10% or a maximum of \$25,000 for an administration fee excluding staffing costs. The spending deadline is June 30, 2020 and the final report is due July 15, 2020.

Projects will be required to demonstrate a commitment to respecting the role of

parents in students' educational experiences by working with parents or seeking parent input on how schools can:

- Provide a safe and welcoming school environment;
- Maintain open communication with teachers;
- Respect parents as valued partners within the education system in relation to decisions about their child's education;
- Parents are informed about the content of the Ontario Curriculum Guidelines.

As stipulated by the Ministry, the Board sought input from the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC) on allocation options for the funds at their meeting on October 22, 2019. While the committee expressed concerns around the limited consultation timeframe they were able to share the following key points for consideration. In discussion with the Co-Chairs it was determined that the plan Parents Reaching Out Grant should:

- Support Learning Centre or Learning Network (LN) parental engagement initiatives that build the capacity of school councils and families
- Avoid duplication of funding in areas that already receive additional engagement initiatives (e.g. MSIC).
- Avoid equal distribution across schools/school councils because of the small allocation that would be given to each school.

Staff recommends that the majority of the PRO Grant should be assigned to Learning Centre and/or Learning Network parent engagement activities and the remainder to the annual Parents as Partners Conference. Staff is not recommending that any of the funds be used for administration although it is acceptable under the terms of the grant. Details of the staff recommendation are outlined in Appendix A .

Action Plan and Associated Timeline

Once a decision is made by The Board of Trustees, staff will develop a plan for implementation.

Resource Implications

It is recognized that the change in administration of this grant from the Ministry of Education to district school board results in considerably more staff time being devoted to ensuring appropriate use of these funds. Similarly, the model proposed may also require funding from additional sources depending on the type and scale of the activities.

Communications Plan

Staff will work with Communications to inform PIAC, families and school councils of the decision made by the Board of Trustees. Each Learning Centre or Learning Network will develop a plan for notifying trustees, school councils and families in their local communities of the activities that will be taking place.

Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)

PO23-Parent and Community Engagement Policy
PR558-Parent and Community Engagement Procedure

Appendices

- **Appendix A – Parents Reaching Out Grant Recommended Allocation**

From

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Appendix A – Parents Reaching Out Grant Recommended Allocation

Options & Estimated Allocation	Description
Learning Centre/Learning Network (LC/LN) Engagement (\$103,000)	LC/LN will create sessions on the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting and enhancing school council capacity • Enhancing the efficacy of families around mental health and well-being, equity or achievement and/or; • Engagement of diverse families and school councils in the School Improvement Process (e.g. workshops/training for families)
	Opportunity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continues the legacy of supporting school council and building parent efficacy at the local level while furthering the work of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan. • Builds local connections between and among families in a community/ward. • Engagement activities can be personalized to the needs and interests of families in Learning Network, Ward or Learning Centre.
	Challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will require staff time at the LC/LN where there have been significant reductions.
Parents as Partners Conference (\$30,000)	Support the delivery of the annual Parents as Partners Conference organized in collaboration with PIAC, Special Education Advisory Committee, Community Advisory Committees (CACs), Mental Health and Well-Being Parent Committee and staff.
	Opportunity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reach and engage a large number of families from across the system (conference reaches over 800 families annually). • Engages PIAC, SEAC, CACs, and staff in a planning process for supporting families.
	Challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting an event that may be perceived as a Board initiative.