

Final Report of the Program Area Review Team for New Arts-Focused Central Student Interest Program at Westview Centennial Secondary School

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Program Area Review Team recommends that:

1. A new Arts-focused Central Student Interest Program be established in the northeast at Westview Centennial Secondary School with interest-based admission in accordance with the Student Interest Program Policy (P100);
2. That the existing Arts-qualified teachers support the needs of the Arts program and additional staff be allocated as required by growth;
3. That the new Arts program be implemented for Grade 9 in September of 2024, Grade 10 in September of 2025, Grade 11 in September of 2026, and Grade 12 in September of 2027; and
4. That facility improvements be coordinated with the principal so that school operations, student learning, and student activities are not adversely affected.

BACKGROUND

The following study was identified in the Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy (LTPAS):

Secondary Program Review:

To improve equity of access to programs, staff will also undertake a review to determine two locations for new centralized arts programs.

Over the summer of 2022, central staff reviewed and visited 7 secondary schools. The team evaluated each site through the lenses of facilities, staffing, enrolment, space, access, and equity. The team also considered which schools would provide better access to arts programming for marginalized communities.

A Local Feasibility Team (LFT), made up of TDSB Principals, Superintendents, Trustees, and central staff, was established to select a secondary school to accommodate a new Central Student Interest Program with an Arts Focus to serve

the northwest area of the City of Toronto. The objective of the LFT was to reach consensus to explore arts programming at Westview Centennial Secondary School, and to come up with a recommendation to present to the PART. The LFT also conducted a site visit to identify the facility upgrades and renovations required to host a viable program.

The transition of the LFT to a Program Area Review Team (PART) was approved by the TDSB's Central Accommodation Team (CAT) on March 23, 2023.

The first meeting of the Program Area Review Team was held on Tuesday, April 4, 2023. The PART membership was informed that the objective of the PART was to continue the work of the LFT in evaluating the feasibility of the preferred location. Staff continued seeking advice and feedback from impacted student and parent representatives as well as school staff through the course of 3 working meetings and 1 public meeting.

A rationale for the review was provided to the PART. In addition, the PART was informed of the study process and role as an advisory committee. Staff provided background information to PART members regarding the TDSB's Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy (LTPAS). A description of the LFT's findings including arts programming gaps in the system, criteria used to identify a recommended program site, proposed vision, and proposed implementation plan was presented. An overview of enrolment and facility information for Westview Centennial SS was also provided.

Staff explained the process through which a program vision would be developed, following some guiding principles:

- Shifting from a Euro-centric Arts program to one of inclusion and decolonization;
- Strong inclusion of digital arts in the program (film / design / production);
- Involvement of community partnerships;
- Building connections and pathways to entry in Arts-related industries; and
- Focus on student generated content and the creative process.

Staff facilitated conversation with the following discussion questions:

- What art forms would you like to see at Westview Centennial SS?
- If you could imagine an arts-focus program at Westview Centennial SS, what would it look like?
- What skills should students be developing as part of an arts focus program?

- How could this benefit students in their other classes and in their post-secondary lives?

Student, parent representatives and principal were given an opportunity to discuss each of the questions. Staff encouraged the sharing of information from working meetings with individual school communities and bring back feedback to discuss at the second PART meeting. The student representative, volunteered to conduct a survey. The parent representative committed to gather feedback from the school's parent council at their next meeting. Arts Programming team had coordinated a meeting with school staff to gather feedback and preliminary ideas for the new program structure. Based on PART feedback and discussion, the Arts Programming team will refine the vision for the preferred arts program.

At the second PART meeting held on Wednesday, April 26, 2023, the PART shared community, student, parent, and teacher feedback. The meeting was dedicated to discussion and the comments we have heard to better inform the new program. Programming staff presented on the feedback received from meeting with school staff. Common themes from student, parent/community, and teacher feedback are listed below.

Student:

- A focus on the ideas of:
 - Cultural diversity and inclusivity
 - Social justice
 - More diverse and specialized courses and experiences such as: painting, pottery, music editing and production, digital art, animation, musical theatre and productions, dance performance, mural making, festivals, competitions, art gallery, arts nights, cultural dance
 - Community
 - Business and entrepreneur side of the Arts

Parent/Community:

- Focus on the idea of a career in the arts by giving examples of career pathways and providing co-op opportunities
- Show new Canadians that the Arts offer numerous career opportunities
- Teach time management and financial management skills
- Develop resilience and emotional strength
- Give students the opportunity to experience a variety of artistic media and ability to experiment

- Use Art as a vehicle for peace and joy in the world and community

Teacher:

- Staff are excited about this opportunity for students to showcase their creativity and express their voices through the arts
- The school is interested in a strong connection to post-secondary institutions, community arts organizations, and arts industry to support pathways in the arts
- Staff are looking forward to collaborative projects integrating across the curriculum
- Staff are keen to promote the program to feeder school students
- Staff are asking for additional funding to support arts opportunities that can be out of reach to their students (i.e., resource intensive art supplies, digital technology, visiting artists, arts excursions etc.)
- Interest in a social justice focused program

The virtual public meeting for this review was held on Tuesday, May 9, 2023. A Zoom webinar platform was used. Registrants were also given the option to participate via telephone. Approximately 27 people registered for the public meeting (exclusive of the PART members and central supporting staff).

Staff provided background information regarding the review and presented the current recommendations of the PART to solicit feedback from the broader community. Attendees were invited to submit written questions/comment via a 'Q and A' window in the Zoom webinar. An option to ask live questions was also provided to participants. Staff provided answers to the questions posed by members of the PART as well as members of the school communities.

A feedback survey was opened on Tuesday, May 9, 2023, to solicit feedback regarding the public meeting and proposed recommendations, as well as any additional questions and comments regarding the review. The feedback and comments received post public meeting were in support of the new arts program, primarily to benefit the school community.

The third PART meeting was held on Tuesday, May 16, 2023, to review the scope of work proposed for the school, to review the comments and feedback received at and post public meeting, and to finalize the PART's recommendations.

The PART reviewed the scope of work associated the new program. The TDSB Architectural Coordinator explained the Westview Centennial SS floor plans as currently drawn up for changes and improvements discussed at the site visit. Eight building locations of focus were identified: the cafetorium, Art Classroom 126, Art

Classroom 128, Music Room 135, Theater Arts Room 137, Room 217, Room 219, and Dance Studio Room 248. Significant renovation work was proposed for the cafetorium in which, a new stage floor and acoustic retrofitting would be required. In the Music room and Theater Arts room, millwork would have to be replaced. The Dance Studio would require a new sprung dance floor. The remainder of the classrooms required cosmetic and minor upgrades (window replacements, paint, etc.).

The timing for some improvements was estimated to begin in June of 2024. The Principal raised concerns at the meeting about the impacts of beginning renovation and classroom upgrades during the school year. She expressed that it may affect student learning, and that noise and disruption should be kept to a minimum. A recommendation regarding the scheduling of facility upgrades was created to ensure that students are not disrupted.

The PART reviewed the feedback and questions gathered from the survey. The feedback indicated support for the new Arts program.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Program Area Review Team

School/Organization	Name	Role
Westview Centennial SS	Rosalie Griffith	Principal
Westview Centennial SS	Brandon Zoras	Vice-Principal
Westview Centennial SS	Student A	Student Representative
Westview Centennial SS	Student B	Student Representative
Westview Centennial SS	Sahle Robinson	Parent Representative
Virtual Learning and Re-Engagement	Diana Panagiotopoulos	System Superintendent
Learning Network 11	Kurt McIntosh	Superintendent of Education
Learning Network 11	Cindy Kim	Administrative Liaison
TDSB Trustee	Matias de Dovitiis	Ward 4

Staff Resource

Organization	Name	Role
TDSB – Planning	Fatima Bhabha	Planner
TDSB – Planning	David Paltser	Manager, Accommodation Planning
Trustee Services	Wilmar Kortleever	Shared Services Liaison
Secondary Program & Admissions	Reiko Fuentes	Centrally Assigned Principal
Mathematics, Science/STEM & The Arts	Mervi Salo	Centrally Assigned Principal
The Arts	Mary Moynihan	Program Coordinator
Design Services LC2 & LC3	Viktor Kuslikis	Manager
Design Services LC2 & LC3	Greg Patterson	Architectural Coordinator

Meeting Details

Meeting Type	Date	Time
PART Working Meeting 1	Tuesday, April 4, 2023	6:00-7:00 pm
PART Working Meeting 2	Wednesday, April 26, 2023	6:00-7:00 pm
Public Meeting	Tuesday, May 9, 2023	6:30-8:00 pm
PART Working Meeting 3	Tuesday, May 16, 2023	6:00-7:00 pm

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Throughout the course of our discussions, parent and student representatives of the PART and staff members were excited about establishing a new Arts program at Westview Centennial SS.

There was a consensus to proceed with the creation of a new Secondary Arts Program at Westview Centennial SS.

The PART supports the use of the interest-based admission policy to specialized secondary programming as outlined by the Student Interest Program Policy (P100).