

REVISED to include
committee feedback following
PPC on January 31, 2018



Title Director's Response to the Enhancing Equity Task Force Report
To Board of Trustees
Date January 31, 2017
Report No. 01-18-3316

Strategic Directions

- Make every school an effective school
- Build leadership within a culture of adaptability, openness and resilience
- Form strong and effective relationships and partnerships
- Build environmentally sustainable schools that inspire teaching and learning
- Identify disadvantage and intervene effectively

Recommendation

It is recommended that the report regarding the Director's Response to the Enhancing Equity Task Force be approved by the Board of Trustees and that these high-level directions may inform the Board's Multi-Year Plan and the Integrated Equity Framework.

Context

The Toronto District School Board is the largest and most diverse public education system in Canada. Public education is for everyone and it is our goal and responsibility to ensure that each and every student has the tools, resources, supports and opportunities they need to thrive.

Over the past 18 months, the TDSB has focused on advancing equity within our system, and leveraging this advancement to improve the achievement and well-being

of students. In September 2016, we introduced *A Vision for Learning and Service in TDSB* which outlined our organizational goals for school and system improvement. The plan through which we would achieve those goals was outlined within the *Integrated Equity Framework* (October 2016). This multi-year plan intended to align all elements of the Board's work with our equity commitments. It was developed from our past experiences and work, the expertise of our staff and partners and, most of all, from our parents who shared their ideas, perspectives and thoughts on our proposed framework. From the outset though, we recognized this Framework was a fluid plan that would continue to be shaped through continued learning and listening to our diverse communities.

One way that we encouraged dialogue was through the Enhancing Equity Task Force, which was launched in November 2016 and led by an external facilitator. The Enhancing Equity Task Force took a bold new approach to connecting with our parents and students. Their work brought to the surface the systemic barriers that some students are facing in the TDSB and highlighted – and in many cases reinforced – the specific areas we need to focus on in order to achieve large scale system change. The recommendations they developed aimed to address those areas and identify ways to better support students, especially those who have been traditionally underserved and/or marginalized.

We also heard from parents who are very satisfied with their child's school. We learned that our communities have strong, divergent views on how we support students, but there are things we agree on: that every student deserves a great education, that student well-being and learning should be at the centre of every decision we make and that access to opportunities and experiences must be made in an equitable and inclusive manner.

The work of the Task Force is now complete and senior staff have reviewed the recommendations to develop proposed directions to move forward in this urgent and necessary work to support students.

Through this process, we have taken a broad view of the work that needs to happen and identified the areas that will move this work forward. It is critical, therefore, that as we strive to create the necessary changes in the learning environment, create and provide access to the right learning opportunities and redefine the relationship between educator and student, we must also consider – and address – the practices, policies and structures that oppose this direction.

This work will impact all members of our community and while it is necessary for some, it will benefit all students, staff and families. The proposed actions align to our equity goals and will influence innovation in the system, schools and classrooms to support more equitable and inclusive outcomes for all students.

The areas of focus include:

1. Professional Learning

Providing the professional learning opportunities to staff to build capacity and deepen understanding of how to support all students.

The focus of this professional learning for all staff will be:

- Equity, anti-racism and anti-oppression training; and,
- Indigenous Education, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Call to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

Some staff, dependent on their roles, will receive learning to support:

- Student improvement in literacy, numeracy and global competencies;
- The needs of students with identified special learning needs; and
- Leadership development for aspiring and current leaders.

2. Challenging Streaming and Exclusion to Improve Achievement and Well-Being

Setting high expectations for all students and increasing access to programming and supports will improve the outcomes for students. We will consider the impact of:

- Interventions beginning in the Early Years (Kindergarten to Grade 3)
- Special Education, including: changes to the Home School Program and the Individual Education Plan and Identification, Placement and Review Committee processes and work towards addressing inequities of students with special needs
- Suspensions and Expulsions
- Grade 9 and 10 Academic Programming
- Mental Health and Well-Being

3. Examination of our Policies, Procedures and Practices that Impact Access, Opportunity and Outcomes

Ensuring all policies, procedures and practices promote equity, inclusion and human rights. We will review to remove barriers and ensure access to opportunities is increased, to ensure that school communities are inclusive and welcoming and that schools are reflective of the Board's population.

4. Enhancing Engagement and Encouraging Voice

Inviting and welcoming the voices of our students, staff, parents and community members is a critical driver to student achievement and well-being.

5. Equitable Allocation Review

Aligning our resources with our equity commitments to support improved achievement and well-being for all students.

6. Development of a Strategy for Black Student Achievement Excellence

Research shows that Black students are among the least successful in the Board. Developing a focused approach to directly address the persistent achievement and opportunity gaps experienced by Black students is critical.

7. Equitable Recruitment, Hiring, Promotion and Placement Processes Aligned with Principles of Human Rights

Developing, implementing and maintaining employment and promotion policies, practices and procedures that reflect, understand and respond to our diverse population.

This work is important and will lead to intentional systematic and cultural shifts that will make a real difference in schools and classrooms where real change happens. This high-level direction, should it be approved by the Board, will inform strategic planning moving forward, including updating the Integrated Equity Framework and creating the Board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

Finally, approving these broad directions will lead to the development of operational plans for implementation. Where policy needs to be created or revised, we will engage in consultation with our communities and the Board as outlined in the Policy Development and Management Procedure (PR501).

Thank you to all students, staff, families and community members who have shared their voice, experiences, insights and time. This work is important and we appreciate your commitment to and involvement in the process.

Action Plan and Associated Timeline

Action plans will be developed following Board approval of these directions.

Resource Implications

Budget decisions made in 2019-2020 will impact the scope of work outlined in this report. While some of the initiatives described here may require additional funding, most of the work will be done utilizing existing resources, which will be repurposed.

Communications Plan

Regular communications to key stakeholders, including parents and community

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members, will continue to acknowledge key milestones including opportunities for involvement and feedback and any impact to students.

Appendices

- Appendix A: Director's Response to the Enhancing Equity Task Force Report and Recommendations

From

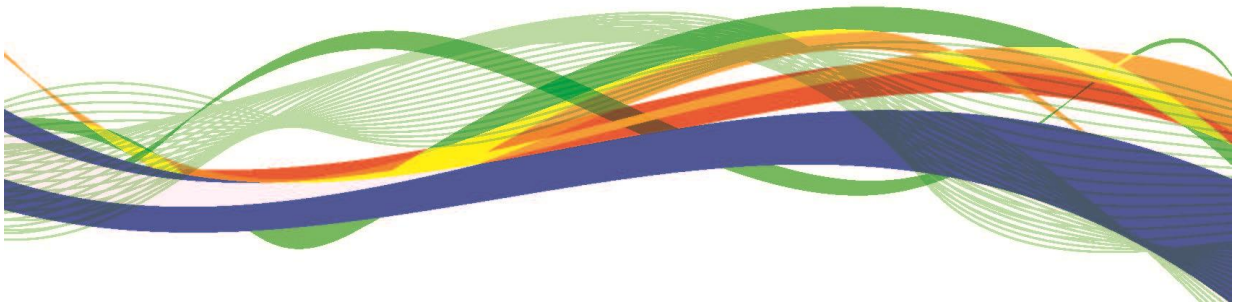
Director of Education, John Malloy at john.malloy@tdsb.on.ca or 416-397-3180.



Helping **all** Students Succeed.

Director's Response to the Enhancing Equity Task Force Report

January 31, 2018



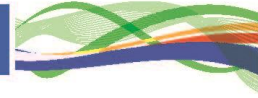


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Introduction

The Toronto District School Board is the largest and most diverse public education system in Canada. Public education is for everyone and it is our goal and responsibility to ensure that each and every student has the tools, resources, supports and opportunities they need to thrive.

Equity is the foundation of everything we do to support student achievement and well-being. We begin by identifying the strengths, interests and needs of our students. When we remove the barriers, raise expectations and create access and opportunity for our students, we not only support those who have been underserved, but we raise the bar for everyone.

Evidence-based data and ongoing discussions with our students and communities have demonstrated again and again — as illustrated in the report of the Enhancing Equity Task Force — that lack of access to programs and learning opportunities is a barrier that prevents a significant number of students from achieving.

The Task Force took a bold new approach to connecting with our parents and students. Their work illuminated the systemic barriers in the TDSB that many students face. The report highlighted and reinforced the specific areas we need to focus on to achieve effective large-scale system change. The 37 recommendations developed by the Task Force aimed to identify ways to better support students, especially those who have historically been underserved and/or marginalized.

The Task Force organized its recommendations to:

- Ensure equitable educational access, experiences and opportunities for all students in all schools;
- Effectively address school incidents and complaints, making students “whole”;
- Ensure equitable access to funding and resources among schools;
- Meaningfully engage students, families and communities in building a culture of equity at school;
- Ensure equity in staff employment, transfer and promotion; and,
- Provide professional learning on equity, anti-racism, and anti-oppression for all.

Some of the work proposed in the recommendations is already in progress, including examining practices that result in inequitable access to specialized programs; reviewing curriculum based on equity, anti-oppression, and human rights principles; and delivering systematic and comprehensive professional learning for all educators to examine bias, power, and privilege.

Through the Enhancing Equity Task Force, we heard from thousands of community members. We learned that our communities have strong, divergent views on how we support students. While our communities may not agree on everything, there emerged a strong consensus that every student deserves a great education; that student well-being and learning should be at the centre of every decision we make; and that access to opportunities and experiences must be made available in an equitable and inclusive manner.

The Task Force noted clearly – and we strongly agree – that every decision made in the TDSB should be guided by student voice and our principles of equity, which are to:

- Support each and every student with an equitable and inclusive learning culture;
- Identify, confront and eliminate barriers;
- Ensure that all local schools and programs have the resources they need;
- Share leadership and build staff capacity; and
- Empower staff, students and community members to contribute their voices and perspectives.



The work of the Task Force is now complete. Senior staff have reviewed the recommendations and are now bringing to the Board a proposed direction that, should the Board approve it, will inform our Integrated Equity Framework and our new Multi-Year Plan, as well as all the work plans that flow from these.

We believe this strategic and coordinated approach will lead to the thoughtful, intentional systemic and cultural shifts necessary to make an enormous difference in schools and classrooms. Meanwhile, innovation and action at the school level will ensure that each student is thriving in an accessible, inclusive and engaging environment.

We recognize that many families are satisfied with their experiences in our schools, while many others are not. This does not mean taking away the rich learning experiences from those who are thriving, but it means ensuring that these programs, opportunities and experiences are available and offered to everyone.

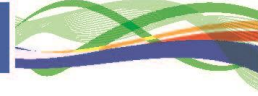
We will:

- Continue to offer choice through specialized schools and programs and improve access to the programs that all students need;
- Continue to support students with special education needs, including Gifted, through parent choice of placement in the home school or congregated site; and
- Continue to study the impact of our programs, practices, and structures on the achievement and well-being of our students.

With this in mind, school staff members should each ask themselves the following questions with regard to every student: "What do I know about you? How will that help me provide learning opportunities that play to your strengths and interests and that honour your experiences? What biases might I have that may affect your learning? How do I counter these biases?" The answers to these questions will help staff teach and lead in ways that are relevant and engaging for our students.

Staff members should be prepared to answer the questions parents and caregivers may ask of them: "What do you know about my child? How do you respond to their needs?" In answering these queries, we demonstrate our commitment to include and listen to student voices, and to teach and lead in ways that value the lived experiences of our students and their families.

This work is urgent and involves staff, families, and communities. The actions proposed below are intended to work together. They are in keeping with our equity goals and will influence innovation in the system, schools, and classrooms that will, in turn, lead to greater success for all students.



1. Professional Learning

Effective and knowledgeable leaders throughout the Board, regardless of position or title, are the backbone of a strong school system. Ongoing professional learning is essential for staff to build capacity and an understanding of how best to support students and create inclusive and equitable schools, classrooms, and workplaces.

2. Challenging Streaming and Exclusion to Improve Achievement and Well-being

Setting high expectations and increasing access to programming and supports is critical to the success of all students. These principles must begin with our youngest learners and extend to changes to special education programming, transitions to secondary school, Grades 9 and 10 programming, and student discipline.

3. Examination of the Policies, Procedures, and Practices that affect Access, Opportunities, and Outcomes

We must continually review and assess our policies, procedures and practices to ensure that they promote equity, inclusion, and human rights and make changes where necessary.

4. Enhancing Engagement and Voice Towards System Change

Student and parent voice and engagement are critical; they are key drivers of student achievement and well-being. When schools, families, and communities work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer and enjoy school more. Staff engagement and effective collaboration with our union and leadership partners is critical to our equity, anti-oppression, anti-racism and human rights work. Staff should also feel safe, valued, and able to contribute to the best of their ability.

5. Equitable Resource Allocation Review

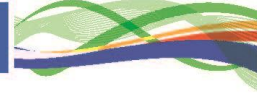
Our system must align its budget with our strategic priorities and must build operating budgets that consider the barriers and system biases that currently affect student achievement and well-being. As a school board, we need to realign budgets to ensure that all schools and departments have the resources they need to create the conditions that allow for the success of all our students.

6. Development of a Strategy for Black Student Achievement and Excellence

It is critical that the TDSB acknowledge the achievement and opportunity gaps that currently exist for Black students and that it develop a focused approach to close those gaps. This strategy is necessary to make the fundamental change that is needed: changes to staff bias and mindset as well as structural changes to policies, procedures and budget allocations.

7. Equitable Recruitment, Hiring, Promotion, and Placement

The TDSB is committed to developing, implementing and maintaining employment and promotion policies, practices and procedures that result in and sustain a workforce that at all levels reflects, understands and responds to our diverse student population.



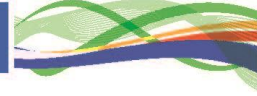
This work will continue to build on the strong foundation of equity in the TDSB. Nearly two years ago, our Vision for Learning set out the Board's commitment to a system improvement plan built on the principles of equity and inclusion for all, service excellence, shared leadership and focused improvement. The Integrated Equity Framework that followed further detailed the actions necessary to specifically address our equity commitments. The Enhancing Equity Task Force has helped us deepen our understanding of how to best adjust and revise our focus on the seven areas identified in the Board's Integrated Equity Framework, including: policy, budget, school improvement, access and secondary programs, leadership capacity plan, inclusion and special education and employment equity.

This report — the Director's Response to the Enhancing Equity Task Force — is the next step of our equity commitment. Its proposed direction is based on the Task Force's final recommendations. It will inform Years 2 and 3 of the Integrated Equity Framework and become the foundation for the Multi-Year Plan, both of which will come to the Board for discussion by June 2018.

Each and every one of our students deserves a quality education that meets their specific needs, honours their voices, and effectively prepares them for life after high school. The voices of our students should be at the centre of everything we do as an organization. The decisions that we make in our schools, in our service departments, and in our Boardroom should be based on the best interest of all of our students.

Equity work is critical to ensure that the TDSB provides excellent education and pathways to high achievement and well-being for all our students. We must and we will make the TDSB work as well for historically marginalized students as for those who currently thrive. We will maintain standards of excellence in education for all our students as we undergo the necessary changes.

We are asking the Board to affirm the directions outlined in this report; as we move forward with specifics, we will return to the community for consultations. Together, we will work to make the TDSB a global model of equitable education.



Professional Learning

Targeted professional learning for staff is essential to ensure that staff are equipped with strategies, tools and resources to make the systemic transformation that will address achievement gaps, improve access to opportunities and change outcomes for underserved students. Such learning is also a critical part of building a culture of shared leadership.

Professional learning is integral to school improvement that focuses on student achievement and well-being. Professional learning must incorporate an understanding of equity, anti-racism and anti-oppression; strong instructional strategies; inclusive classrooms and schools; and global competencies, supported by technology.

Professional learning provides the ability for all of us to collectively challenge and address persistent opportunity and outcome gaps, and to create a system and school culture that is responsive, reflective, and engaging of the individual identities and experiences of our students.

Research indicates that professional learning alongside necessary system changes can lead to significant improvements in student achievement and well-being (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2012). Professional learning is key to helping staff integrate and include the voices of all students into their work.

All staff, including those who do not work directly in a school, will be provided with professional learning to be able to support our students with more individualized support.

We are committed to providing all staff with professional learning in:

- Equity, anti-oppression, anti-racism, and human rights, alongside our leadership and union partners;
- Indigenous education, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We are committed to providing some staff with additional professional learning, as connected to their roles, in:

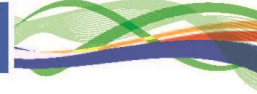
- Student improvement in literacy, numeracy, and global competencies;
- Supporting the needs of students with identified special learning needs;
- Intentionally supporting the mental health and well-being of students; and,
- Providing the leadership development necessary for current and aspiring leaders in formal leadership roles.

More specifically, professional learning will cover these areas:

Professional Learning for Equity, Anti-Oppression, and Human Rights

Persistent achievement and well-being gaps continue to be a reality in our system (TDSB, Enhancing Equity Task Force, Appendix B, 2017). This requires us to take a targeted approach and to understand how identity, power, and privilege shape our interactions and our policies/structures in ways that permit these gaps to endure.

It requires us to understand the ways that marginalization, oppression, anti-Black racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, anti-Asian racism, homophobia, transphobia, the discrimination faced by students with physical and intellectual disabilities, and other forms of historic institutional discrimination can be the unintended impact of attitudes and behaviours and system processes. It also requires us to have a deep



understanding of human rights and to ensure that we honour the rights of all stakeholders. And it requires us to ensure that there is no discrimination according to the 17 grounds protected by the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Professional learning based on biases and barriers, anti-oppression and global competencies is critical to achieve the goal of creating equitable learning environments for all students from early years to post-secondary pathways and to eradicating persistent gaps in achievement and well-being.

Professional Learning for Indigenous Education, TRC Calls to Action, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Guided by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, all TDSB staff will engage in learning about Indigenous perspectives, histories, contemporary contexts, cultures, contributions and achievements.

This will include treaty education, the impact of colonization, the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous law, and Crown-Indigenous relations. This reflects our commitment and responsibility to work with and learn from Indigenous peoples to rebuild relationships based on trust and respect with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

Professional Learning for Literacy, Numeracy, and Global Competencies

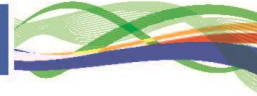
We must prepare our students for life in a rapidly changing world with a model for teaching and learning that incorporates the global competencies: creativity, inquiry and entrepreneurship, global citizenship and character, collaboration and leadership, critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication, assisted by the integration of digital learning tools and resources. We will ensure that students have access to the necessary technologies to achieve this goal.

Through professional learning, teachers will learn how to differentiate and adapt materials and choose resources appropriately for all their students. This learning will also help teachers transform their classrooms and provide learning opportunities that allow students to engage in their learning, collaborate with classmates and engage in real life problems in their school, community and society. We expect this learning to help reduce gaps in Early Years reading, ensure better access to academic programming in Grades 9 and 10, and improve graduation rates. We also expect to see increased achievement, expanded opportunities, and improved well-being for identified learners, regardless of placement.

Professional Learning for Special Education

Professional learning that fosters inclusion for all students with special education needs is a collaborative process. We will continue to support staff to meet the individual needs of students so that they can achieve their highest potential. This learning will lead to improved support for students, staff, and families and to provide them with greater access to opportunities and improved outcomes.

We will incorporate into all appropriate professional learning opportunities at the school and system level, effective instructional and assessment practices for students with special needs which will also support all students. We will provide learning opportunities for teachers and staff who may be supporting a student in a placement in their home school who may have historically been placed in an ISP program.



We will provide professional learning for at least one teacher in every school to support the capacity-building of all staff with regard to teaching strategies to support all learners, including assessment and evaluation, assistive technology and creating an inclusive classroom.

We will provide mandatory professional learning for all principals and vice-principals with regard to Special Education processes, including school support team meetings, individual education plans, and Identification, Placement and Review Committees. Opportunities will be provided for school-based support staff, teachers, principals and vice-principals to participate in professional learning with regard to specific learner profiles and how to improve outcomes for these students.

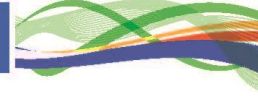
Professional Learning for Leadership

All staff will gain a deeper understanding of the impact of equity which will allow them to focus on the achievement and well-being of all students, and especially, those who have traditionally been marginalized.

We expect staff to hold high expectations for all students. To that end, we will provide staff with the knowledge and tools to better support underserved students. Specifically, all staff will be asked to identify their own power, bias, and privilege to better assist them in their support of students who are most underserved and/or not achieving at the provincial level. This learning will allow staff to better identify and understand those students and their experiences and to better support them. The ability to centre students' lived experiences, stories, histories, gifts, assets, strengths, and abilities will go an enormous way to challenging historic power imbalances and to changing the dynamics that have often stood in way of some students' success.

Specifically:

- Principals and staff will be able to articulate the complex demographics of their school communities and identify the appropriate supports that have been put in place to improve achievement and well-being;
- Every classroom will promote critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, entrepreneurship and citizenship because learning opportunities start with each student's strengths and needs
- Principals and staff will have a greater awareness of Indigenous histories, perspectives, contemporary contexts, and cultures;
- Students will have increased understanding of different cultural ways of knowing and understanding and mutual trust;
- Each school will be able to identify which students are well-supported and the changes needed to support those who are not yet successful;
- We will see improved achievement for all students, including for groups and social identities that have historically been marginalized;
- The well-being of students will improve; and
- We will experience a reduction in complaints from students and families tied to discrimination and/or marginalization such as, but not limited to, anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Black racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, transphobia, homophobia, or ableism.



Challenging Streaming and Exclusion to Improve Achievement and Well-Being

Academic streaming or tracking refers to the practice of assigning students to instructional groups on the basis of ability. Streaming into particular pathways has an enormous impact on a student's potential outcomes in the educational system (Parekh, 2013). We will confront and address patterns of academic streaming with the aim of creating more equitable outcomes for all students. The issue of streaming may be addressed by examining the bias and barriers in areas including the Early Years, Special Education, disciplinary processes in suspensions, expulsions and exclusions and academic programming and the impact of these on students' mental health and well-being.

Research clearly indicates that streaming contributes to inequitable outcomes for students and particularly disadvantages specific groups of students — including those who are racialized and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. (Zheng, 2015; Zheng, S & De Jesus, 2017). This work takes on greater urgency in light of growing economic disparities within our city, illustrated by the stark reality that the annual, combined family income of 49% of TDSB families is below \$50,000 (TDSB, Student and Parent Census, 2012).

"Demographic data from EQAO, along with 2006 Census data, show that schools with higher percentages of students from low-income families also have higher proportions of students in applied mathematics. And, a recent TDSB study found that only six per cent of students from the highest income neighbourhoods took the majority of their courses as applied courses, compared to 33 per cent of students from the lowest income neighbourhoods." (People for Education, 2015).

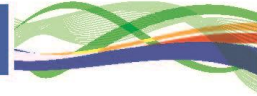
Early Years

The pathway to different outcomes for our students begins even before they enter Kindergarten. Disparities in student achievement based on social identities (e.g., gender, race, or socioeconomic status) begin to appear soon after children enter school as four-year-olds. An achievement gap in the early years, if unresolved, may ultimately contribute to illiteracy, innumeracy, and under-achievement, especially among students with historically disadvantaged social identities.

Students who struggle with math and reading are at greater risk of not graduating and/or becoming disengaged from school. Research has demonstrated that the achievement gap is harder to close as children get older.

Literacy is an important indicator of success in both school and work environments. Research shows that literacy experiences in the early years are a means to improve children's later achievement (McNaughton, 2002; Nuttall & Edwards, 2007; Roskos & Christie, 2007). This is also true of early math experiences. Supporting the development of young children's mathematical knowledge contributes to their long-term success in school (The Kindergarten Program, 2016, p. 75).

Our goal is for all students, regardless of social identity, to be able to read at level by the end of Grade 1 and to possess the required math skills by the end of Grade 2.
The end of Grade 1 is critical for a child's reading to be at level because by Grade 2:



- A gap or deficit requires additional time and resources to fill;
 - Corresponding gaps usually emerge in other areas of the curriculum; and
 - Negative consequences for the child's well-being, engagement, and confidence in school may emerge.
- (Adapted from Clay, 2005, p. 28)

In order to achieve our goals, appropriate interventions will be put in place to support students who are struggling in reading and math in Kindergarten through Grade 2, including:

- Professional learning in oral language development, reading instruction, equitable assessment practices, and early mathematics;
- Professional learning that demonstrates how literacy acquisition is a social activity and therefore must be taught with a focus on equity and an awareness of bias;
- Strategies in school teams to ensure students receive the support they require to be successful when they enter school and transition through the primary grades; and,
- Superintendents ensuring that teachers and students have access to a variety of interventions and resources to close gaps and accelerate learning in early math and early reading. Additional support, where appropriate, will be made available outside school hours and in the summer months.

Teachers in the Early Years must engage in learning that will:

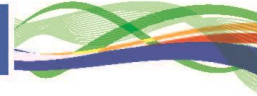
- Create learning environments that are engaging and reflective of students' experiences;
- Support system-wide standards with regard to what interventions are possible and expected;
- Assist in fulfilling the commitment that all students are reading by the end of Grade 1; and,
- Ensure a seamless transition into school, supporting pre-kindergarten programs where appropriate and necessary.

Special Education

The issue of streaming students must also be addressed in relation to special education delivery models, including Intensive Support Programs (ISPs), the Community Based Resource Model (which includes the Home School Program), and the Secondary Resource Program. ISPs are special education classes that have been designed to support communities of exceptional students who have similar kinds of instructional program and resource needs. Home School Program (HSP) is a special education class available in most elementary schools that provides needs-targeted instruction for a mix of exceptional and non-exceptional students. We will confront and challenge the deficit thinking that organizes students by perceived ability. We will continue to offer ISP placement options. We will continue to look at more inclusive models in the delivery of the Grade 4 to 8 Home School Program.

Additionally, we will review our Individual Education Plan (IEP) and Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) processes to ensure greater clarity, transparency, and accountability so that parents, guardians, and students feel valued and included. We will examine our practices with the following question in mind: "Is this IPRC process providing equity of access, opportunity and outcome for all students with special education needs, especially for those who have complex learning needs?"

We do not recommend phasing out Gifted programs or congregated school sites.



Changes to the Home School Program

We will phase out Home School Program for students in Grades 2 and 3 at the end of the 2017-2018 school year, as was communicated in a parent/guardian letter distributed in May 2017.

We will also examine how to be more inclusive and effective in Grades 4-8, realizing that we may need to have some support for students with special needs in the school but away from the regular classroom for short, defined periods of time. The goal is to ensure that students are most often with their peers in the classroom, supported by staff, programming, and technology (Ability Grouping, Mitchell, 2010).

We believe in parent choice and voice in this process. Some families want their child in their home school while others want congregated schools and program placement. Through our IPRC process, we are committed to offering both home school or congregated placements for those who want it for their children. We will continue to measure the impact of all Special Education placements on the achievement and well-being of our students.

We will encourage schools to help students, staff, families and communities to use Home School Program (HSP) resources in more inclusive ways. For example, staffing allocations previously given for HSP will remain in place but may be used differently.

We will ensure that all Learning Centre supports are working together (e.g., Special Education consultants and co-ordinators, early reading and renewed math strategy coaches, Professional Support Services) and that staff have regular opportunities to confer and collaborate.

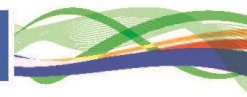
More students with special education needs will transition out of the Home School Program and be successfully taught within the regular class at their neighbourhood school. We expect that the achievement and well-being of these students will improve when they experience more inclusive classroom environments.

Individual Education Plan and Identification, Placement and Review Committee Processes

Parents and guardians perspectives will be honoured in the Individual Education Plan and Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) process. Parents and guardians of students with special education needs who desire a local neighbourhood school placement with appropriate accommodations, modifications, and/or alternative programming will receive this placement through the IPRC process. They will have increased voice and input into placement options. Parents and guardians will feel that their voices have been heard and their preference of placement has been honoured. We will continue to provide special education programs and schools for students with special education needs as a necessary and differentiated approach to supporting all students.

The important perspectives of staff will be considered in the IPRC process but parent preference will be accommodated. This means the culture of our IPRC process may need to change. To guide this process, an IPRC Procedure has been developed.

We will clearly explain the IEP consultation process for parents, guardians, and students. Disagreements between parents/guardians/students and school staff should be addressed to the school principal, as per the Parent Concern Protocol. If the disagreement persists, the Superintendent of Education will intervene, always focusing on the student and with the aim of maintaining respectful relationships. This will also provide further opportunities to identify areas of concern and find solutions.



Suspensions, Expulsions and Exclusions

Student discipline proceedings and processes also act as a powerful vehicle towards “streaming” students towards specific pathways and outcomes. Research indicates that identified special education students tend to be suspended, expelled or excluded from school at a greater rate than their peers; that students who experience less success in school are more likely to be suspended or expelled; and that students who are suspended or expelled from school are more likely to be enrolled in Applied level courses. Data also indicate that certain groups of students are highly overrepresented in suspension and expulsion data compared with their representation in the overall school population, specifically Black and Indigenous students (Zheng, 2017). To address these disparities, we must examine and rework the manner in which we deal with student discipline in the Board, especially with respect to suspensions, expulsions and exclusions.

We will support concrete change in the area of Caring and Safe Schools to ensure that all students have equitable opportunities to succeed. We will:

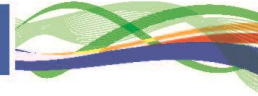
- Promote and foster changes in attitude and behaviour and a shift in culture as well as an examination of our own biases;
- Review and revise our policies, procedures, practices, and structures to decrease suspensions, expulsions and exclusions, as well as to address the disproportionate number given to racialized students, especially those who are Black and Indigenous;
- Only suspend Kindergarten students as a last resort and only after all other possible actions have been exhausted; and
- Be more specific and concrete when imposing suspensions, expulsion or exclusions in order to lend greater transparency and accountability to our processes.

Additionally, if we are to respond appropriately and effectively to behavioural issues, we need to understand why certain behaviour occurs and the messages students are communicating through their actions. Disciplinary action should only be taken after these factors have been taken into account. We know that to address issues like systemic racism, anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism, and issues of poverty, this work must begin with the learning that the adults in the system must do. It will require putting in place different processes to support change, such as creating a culture of restorative practices, with a focus on cooperative ways of resolving conflict. Our school-based staff will require professional development and training to apply these practices.

Student input will be critical as we create a more accountable and responsive system. We must engage and empower all of our students in unique and creative ways. In doing so, we will ensure that their perspectives on identifying, confronting, and removing barriers are helping us to shape more equitable and inclusive learning cultures.

We will create a Student Concern Protocol to provide clarity on how student concerns are addressed within our system. In addition, we will learn from other jurisdictions how they have used reporting applications to support more timely reporting and tracking of student concerns. We will introduce this type of application in our Board to more effectively respond to student concerns.

While we continue to affirm our expectation that each and every student has a caring adult within their school setting, we will strengthen the impact that student voice has on our policies, procedures, decisions, learning environments, and learning opportunities (e.g., course options and e-learning).



We will examine our human resources, within the schools and beyond, to ensure responsiveness to student voice and to promote student mental health and well-being. We will leverage all staff, including guidance counsellors, professional support services staff, mental health leads, student success teachers, itinerant elementary counsellors, ESL teachers and counsellors, social workers, student equity program advisors, and school-based safety monitors, in support of more equitable outcomes for all students. To this end, in consultation with students, staff, and union partners, we will also explore the feasibility of creating new positions.

The data that is collected through our Caring and Safe Schools data base, our student and parent census, and our school climate surveys will allow us to effectively monitor our progress.

Grades 9 and 10 Academic Programming

Closely connected to the concept of “streaming” is Grade 9 and 10 programming, the secondary school “level of study” destination for students. Research has found that students who study at the Applied level in Grade 9 are less likely to graduate and have fewer post-secondary opportunities (Burriss 2014; Clandfield et. al., 2014).

Global research clearly indicates that streaming contributes to inequitable outcomes for students and particularly disadvantages specific groups of students, including those who are racialized and those who come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2012).

The current streaming structure under Academic, Applied, and Essentials has led to inequitable outcomes, particularly for students from marginalized, underserved groups. In some cases, it also has the potential of limiting post-secondary pathways (Structured Pathways: An Exploration of Programs of Study, School-Wide and In-School Programs, as well as, Promotion and Transfer across Secondary Schools in the Toronto District School Board, Parekh, 2013).

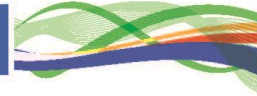
Based on a three-year phased schedule, we will begin to support the majority of our students in academic level programming for Grades 9 and 10. To support the special needs of some students, Applied and Locally Developed programming may be offered. Detailed plans will be developed based on further consultation. This is one significant way of addressing the inequity in educational outcomes and the achievement, opportunity, and participation gaps that exist for certain groups of students in our system. Where necessary, students will have access to additional supports. This process will always align with Ministry of Education curriculum policies in the province of Ontario.

Transition Team support for staff will involve:

- Professional Learning teams for Grades 7 through 10. Teams will include curriculum leaders and Grade 7 and 8 teachers. They will focus on differentiated instruction through demonstration classroom and job-embedded opportunities. This will assist in helping staff see themselves as jointly responsible for Grades 7 through 10.
- Focus on the role of the Guidance Counsellors and Student Success Teachers in their respective roles at the elementary and secondary levels as integral to more effective transitions for all students.

There will also be increased support for students:

- We will examine class size to better meet the needs of the students. Staff in Employee Services will seek input from school principals and superintendents on how to best realign resources so as to provide support for class sizes that are smaller than the current maximum in our collective agreement for Grade 9 and 10 academic level programming. Employee Services will work collaboratively with Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation in reviewing these parameters in order to support successful academic programming for the majority of Grade 9 and 10 students.



We expect that the persistent gaps in achievement that have existed for specific groups of students will begin to shrink. The major premise of this work is that we should have high expectations for all students from the outset of their school experiences. When we are able to combine these high expectations with appropriate teaching strategies and more inclusive curriculum, the outcomes for all students will improve. We expect to see:

- Improved overall achievement and student well-being correlated with improved reading and math achievement (demonstrated in classroom and school assessments and report card marks);
- More parity in Reading and Math achievement among schools;
- Lower rates of suspension in the primary grades correlated with improved reading and math achievement;
- Uniformly higher levels of reading and math achievement with little or no differences, over time, among specific groups of students; and,
- Improved post-secondary choice at the work, college, apprenticeship, and university levels for all students.

Teaching all students at the academic level does not mean lowering standards. It requires effective transitions to high school, effective teaching strategies, more inclusive curriculum and higher expectations.

Mental Health and Well-Being

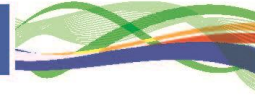
Students who are experiencing mental health challenges may feel excluded from their school community. Preliminary data gathered from secondary school students as part of the 2017 Student Census indicates that we must pay closer attention to the mental health and well-being of our students.

Through the TDSB's Mental Health Strategy, we know that mental health and well-being is essential to student success. Schools can promote positive mental health, identify and intervene early to prevent the onset of problems and respond to students in distress.

Every student in every school must feel the presence of a caring adult. We will create the conditions for this to happen by providing educators with a deeper understanding of how they can enhance the well-being of students individually through relationships and in classrooms, curriculum, and school environments. The well-being of students must be taken into account in all aspects of our work, including how we teach, assess, support, and relate to students.

This is essential to student success and achievement. Student mental health and well-being is the responsibility of everyone. In decreasing stigma and increasing understanding and awareness of mental health, we are confident that students, families, and TDSB staff will be better able to identify concerns and know what to do when they, or someone they know, needs help. Privilege, power, biases, racism, discrimination, and other barriers all affect the mental health and well-being of students: solutions must take these into consideration.

Our strategies must be connected to our School Improvement Processes. Every school in our Board is focused on well-being. We will be able to measure our progress through our census and school climate surveys.



Examination of our Policies, Procedures, and Practices that Affect Access, Opportunity, and Outcomes

The TDSB has been offering specialized programs that have changed the concept of “neighbourhood schools” by providing more choice to families and resulted in some students leaving their home neighbourhoods. The TDSB’s optional attendance policy allows students to apply to attend a program/school of their choice. Twenty-two per cent of elementary school students and 47% of secondary school students attend schools outside of their “regular program” neighbourhood school (as determined by the junior, intermediate, and secondary school boundaries) to attend, for example, specialty programs/schools or French immersion programs. The TDSB is committed to ensuring that every school is welcoming, inclusive, and accessible to all students, regardless of specific program offerings, areas of specialization, or tracks.

While program choice can result in students’ needs being better served, it can also segregate students by ability, income, or ethnic and racial background.

Research has indicated that in some areas our policies and procedures are serving students well but in others they do not reflect our student population. TDSB research, including *Programs of Choice in the TDSB: Characteristics of Students in French Immersion, Alternative Schools, and Other Specialized Schools and Programs (2010)* and *Structured Pathways: An Exploration of Program of study, School-Wide and In-School Programs Across Secondary Schools in the Toronto District School Board (2013)* has demonstrated that, with few exceptions, students who attend French Immersion and other specialized schools and programs such as Gifted, the Elite Athlete program or the International Baccalaureate are more likely to come from families with a higher socioeconomic status, a two-parent structure, and parents with a higher level of education. Enrolment in programs such as Special Education is more likely to be disproportionately represented by students from historically marginalized populations.

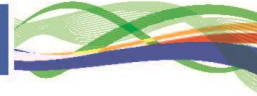
In addition, program choice can create divisions between schools. The flight of students from some neighbourhood schools can result in low enrolments, which affects programming for the remaining students. Some community members believe that they do not have access to the learning environments, learning opportunities, or programs they need. We have heard resoundingly from thousands of students, families and community members who feel that the TDSB should improve access to programming for all students.

We do not recommend phasing out optional attendance, specialty schools/programs, gifted programs or congregated school sites. However, we will examine our policies, procedures, and practices to determine whether they are creating and/or exacerbating inequity and we will work to increase access and opportunity so that those programs are more reflective of the TDSB student population.

In particular, we will review policies and procedures with an anti-oppressive approach to understand how our policies may be inadvertently creating barriers and perpetuating the outcomes we are dedicated to challenging and changing. We will engage our community as a part of the process of changing policies, including those related to:

- Admissions to specialty schools and programs and optional attendance; and
- French programming.

Admission criteria to some of the specialized programs and schools may not be responsive to the wide range of talents and skills that our students have. This results in some students being excluded from certain programs. For example, Arts programs may not recognize all forms of dance under current admission criteria.



Data, including student census data, enrolment data, and school climate information, will be used to review and establish an equitable admissions policy, including admission/audition requirements for our specialty schools and special programs. We will also create operating procedures and monitoring mechanisms for this policy to ensure system-wide consistency. We will review all specialized schools and programs to ensure equitable access, increased opportunities, and improved outcomes. These programs will be expanded where necessary to reflect current and future student needs. Alternative Schools and Elementary Alternative Learning Opportunities (Academies) will be included to ensure equitable and increased access and admission to students based on need.

Equitable access to programs and opportunities should result in an increase in diversity and inclusion in these schools and programs. We expect to see greater access for those members of our community who are underserved and are reporting that they are not able to access the learning environments, opportunities, and programs they need. Over time, French, alternative and/or specialized schools/programs should reflect and be consistent with board-wide demographic data.

As approved at the Board in June 2017, we will conduct a review of our French Programming in spring 2018 to ensure the effectiveness of the program and to better understand how resources are used. This action will involve further consultation with staff and community. The review will look at the challenges and successes of all French programs in the system, including Core French. It will provide a status update in many areas, including staffing implications, program viability, entry points, opportunities, equity of access, child care and transportation.

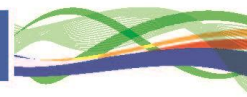
In schools where we have multiple programs, e.g., ISP, French, and programs for students who live within the boundary, programming sometimes operates as a “school within a school” as opposed to operating as one inclusive school community. In other words, we will create schools where all students have the opportunities to know one another and parents and staff have the opportunity to work together regardless of the program the student in which the student is enrolled.

Our commitment to succeed will be evidenced by a robust school improvement plan reflective of the data from the Task Force report. All our revisions will be based on the equity principles outlined in the introduction.

We will also respond to the perspectives we have gathered from secondary students regarding the type of high school experience they desire and the types of learning opportunities they need. Realizing that the size of a secondary school affects what can be offered and how it can be offered, we will analyze our current reality in secondary schools vis-a-vis what our students are asking for and bring this analysis to the Board for their consideration. Suggestions may include changing school configuration (semestered or full year), campus model, year-round schooling, or virtual high schools.

These suggestions will be recorded in the Board’s Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy. This strategy, which is a pivotal planning process that considers student enrolment trends, program, and space needs across the TDSB, will also need to be reviewed from an equity perspective. It has served as a roadmap for addressing program and accommodation issues for the past four years. Staff will determine whether access barriers exist in terms of the types and locations of various programs. The program drivers that guide this process will also be examined to ensure that they meet TDSB’s equity principles. Any changes to program placement drivers will be brought to the Board for approval.

We are committed to strong unifying schools that are welcoming, diverse, inclusive, effective, and caring. As such, we will rigorously pursue structures and strategies for all students, family, and staff that promote a sense of belonging to the school rather than to any single program. To do this we must acknowledge gaps school by school and identify what we will do to transform the culture, focusing on effective instructional strategies while simultaneously addressing anti-racism, poverty, and marginalization.



Enhancing Engagement and Voice Towards System Change

The focus of all our engagement efforts in the TDSB must be directed towards improving student achievement and well-being. All of our work must centre on the needs of students, which includes effectively capturing and integrating student voice and input.

Our students will be actively involved in their own learning and in the decisions made about their learning. We will move beyond traditional initiatives and structures and continue to increase the role of the student census and student forums, to capture student voice, and to support students in influencing and shaping their school communities. While we will continue to use the Student SuperCouncil and Student Trustees, we will also go further to connect directly with students whose voices have been left out or discounted. The Student Equity Program Advisors are in the ideal position to undertake this work and we will explore new possibilities to encourage student engagement. One of our goals in this area will be for school programming to be more effectively driven by student choice and voice.

Parent/caregiver engagement is a key factor in the enhancement of student achievement and well-being. When schools, families, and communities work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and enjoy school more. We will support our staff to deepen understanding and enhance opportunities for this work to happen in our schools. Furthermore, students are more likely to be motivated, earn higher grades, have better behavioural and social skills, and continue their education to a higher level when their parents are actively engaged in supporting their success at school (Cole-Henderson, 2000; Harris & Goodall, 2007; Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski, & Apostoleris, 1997; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Reynolds, 1989; Sheridan & Gutkin, 2000; Taylor, Hinton, & Wilson, 1995).

Parents can, and should, be engaged in a number of ways. Their relationship to the school must extend into the school improvement process so that their voices and perspectives may inform the work. Parents and caregivers are perfectly positioned to help staff answer the following questions:

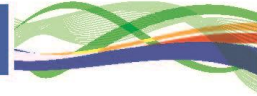
- What barriers exist in the school that might be keeping students from achieving?
- What biases might staff hold with regard to what certain groups of students are able to achieve?
- What needs to change in terms of the instruction, the environment in the school, and the relationships in the school to improve achievement and well-being for all students?

Parent and caregiver voices are critical to our understanding the experiences and lived realities of our students. The more we engage with parents and the more culturally aware and responsive to our students' lived realities that we are, the more likely we are to understand and effectively respond to their voices and needs.

We must engage our parents through traditional means such as our Advisory Committees as well as through more community-based channels, supported by our Community Support Workers. Our Parent and Community Engagement Office will lead the work of supporting principals to more effectively include parent/caregiver voice in the school improvement process.

Encourage Mediation and Restorative Practices for Conflict Resolution

We will improve our communication about the Parent Concern Protocol and support staff to resolve conflicts in creative ways by using mediation and restorative practice strategies as required.



The Parent and Community Engagement Office of the Board will collaborate with parents and school administrators to develop a communication plan to create a broader awareness of the protocol and how it is used to address and resolve conflicts. The Board will also introduce a position with a mediation/restorative practice focus to more effectively support staff in responding to and resolving conflicts. Principals and superintendents will have greater knowledge of how to resolve human rights issues through conflict resolution strategies and will be able to access other resources to help them resolve conflict situations.

This work will support staff's capacity to address situations and will help parents be more attuned to how their concerns are addressed within the system and what to do when they have reached an impasse.

Develop Community and Family Engagement Standards

We will develop Community and Family Engagement Standards that will strengthen the relationship among the school, the family, and the community and support the achievement and well-being of all students. The Community and Family Engagement Standards will be collectively constructed by parents/caregivers, community members, and staff, specifically the Educational Partnership Office and the Parent and Community Engagement Office. Our partners must be able to demonstrate their ongoing commitment to these standards and to the equity goals of our Board.

These standards will include how we partner with community agencies and other community groups to serve our students and their families. They will also acknowledge that the school is often the centre of the community and that community access to the school is important.

As part of our policy review schedule, we will review the Parent and Community Involvement Policy (P023), Community Use of Board Facilities (Permits) (P011), the operational procedures (PR558), Parent and Community Involvement (PR558), and Community Use of Board Facilities (Permits) (PR666), to update the Board's framework for building and supporting parent and community involvement in the Board. Emphasis will be placed on ensuring equitable access to partnerships with community groups/agencies representing communities that have been historically marginalized or underserved. The intended outcome is to create more equitable access to the Board for all potential partners while optimizing the opportunities available to our students and schools. The Community Advisory Committees of the Board will also contribute to the development of these standards in support of the governance structure of the Board.

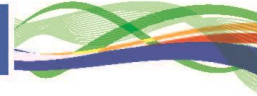
We will effectively track and monitor our progress through annual updates provided by our Advisory Committees. We will measure the impact of our partnerships through review cycles as part of our partnership agreements.

Our staff engagement efforts include continuing to foster positive working relationships with our leadership and union partners. Further, staff engagement and well-being are important. We will use our staff census and data collected through our Vision for Learning surveys to strengthen staff engagement through shared leadership where staff in every school and department learn in teams.

As a result of our work we expect:

- Deeper parent/caregiver involvement in the school improvement process;
- Student voice integrated into all elements of work that occur in the Board;
- Workplaces where employees are committed to learning in teams;
- Higher rates of job satisfaction among our staff; and,
- Safer, more positive, and more inclusive schools and workplaces.

We will continue to measure our success by collecting data through our student and parent census, staff census, and other methods.



Equitable Resource Allocation Review

Facilities

The TDSB operates 583 schools which have an average age of 60 years and significant capital needs. As of September 2017, the TDSB has a renewal backlog of \$3.7B, which represents the amount of outstanding work required to bring our buildings into a state of good repair. In 2017-18 the TDSB received \$300M to address this backlog. It is against this backdrop that we look at how we can more equitably allocate capital funding.

Schools in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are perceived to not be well supported by the system. With respect to facility improvements, there have been several issues that have contributed to this perception, including:

- Ministry requirements to use funding for specific purposes;
- A requirement to make Health and Safety issues a priority;
- A focus on infrastructure versus aesthetic work;
- Political and community pressures in more affluent neighbourhoods; and,
- Lack of a process to review equity as a criterion for allocating capital funds.

Staff will review existing data to determine the validity of the perception that schools in disadvantaged areas are not supported to the same extent as those in affluent neighbourhoods. Should this perception be confirmed, we propose to dedicate a portion of capital funding to be allocated to schools using an equity-based approach. Staff will develop a clear and transparent process for this capital allocation, using equitable criteria to ensure that the needs of schools are met. This would be in addition to the current allocation of discretionary capital funding provided to each school to assist with local decision-making. Project schedules will be reviewed to ensure that there is an equitable distribution of work in all areas of the Board. Finally, we will review project schedules specifically related to accessibility projects to ensure that equity is taken into account in the decision-making process.

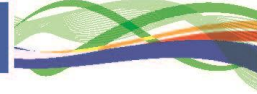
Physical environment plays an important role in student success. Many of the schools in disadvantaged neighbourhoods show signs of disrepair. Our actions are expected to improve the physical environment at identified schools, resulting in better learning environments for all students. We will be able to measure the impact of this work through feedback from our communities, as well as through quantitative data connected to our capital renewal backlog and inspections of our building conducted by Facility Services.

Discretionary Operating Funding

The Grant for Student Needs (GSN) provides funding for the TDSB. The use of some of these funds is directed either by Ministry regulations or labour agreements.

The remaining funds that school boards have the ability to allocate based on local needs to support their students are referred to as discretionary funding. Although attempts have been made through various initiatives to allocate discretionary funds in a more equitable manner, this goal has not been achieved as several of our resource allocation methods have been subject to historic political pressures. Current resource allocation processes and practices are not equitable; there are some schools and programs that benefit from supplemental funding that is not available to all. For example, in some cases, additional financial resources are provided to support specialty programs and schools. In addition, bussing is provided for some programs and not for others.

Staff are not currently recommending changes to specific resource allocations, but rather are proposing that we look at our current resource allocation methods and processes to ensure that more equitable opportunities and outcomes for students are achieved.



We will also address inequities connected to school fundraising. Schools have two sources of funds to support their work: school budget allocations and fundraising. Many affluent communities have the ability to raise significant amounts of money to pay for playground enhancements and technology upgrades, among other things. This type of fundraising may not be possible in less advantaged neighbourhoods, which results in further inequities. While Ministry guidelines do not allow fundraising dollars to be used to support operating costs covered by the Grant for Student Needs, some schools have access to significant fundraised dollars and others do not. We will examine methods to address the inequity of funds available to schools as a result of their fundraising ability. Ideas such as Board-wide fundraising campaigns, policy changes, or the development of a central equity fund to support individual students will be examined. Recommendations resulting from the analysis will be brought forward to the Board for consideration. Having said all of this, we are not limiting fundraising in our schools in any way.

Funding from such grant allocations as the Learning Opportunities Grant, English as a Second Language, and French as a Second Language provide flexibility to support student achievement. Staff will identify all sources of funds that have flexibility in their use to allow for local decision-making in support of student achievement and well-being. We will also provide an analysis of how these funds are allocated to support all students equitably. Where we find the funds do not address student achievement or well-being equitably, we will report back to the Board with recommendations on how to better serve all of our students across the system.

As part of this work, staff will also review the uses of the Learning Opportunities Index (LOI), which is a tool that ranks schools based on measures of external challenges affecting student success, to ensure it is achieving an equitable distribution of resources. If the review reveals a need to update/change the tool, in terms of its measurement of need or its use, staff will bring forward recommendations to the Board.

Resource allocation will be conducted in a transparent manner that is linked clearly to student needs and to ensure that students are supported in an equitable manner, within the constraints of TDSB's finite resources. We are committed to ensuring that students have the opportunity to succeed in whatever paths they choose. We will know we have achieved this when all students' academic results improve across the system, especially those from groups with current and historic achievement gaps.

Staffing

Our staff are our greatest asset. Given our limited human resources and the context within which we work, we must ensure that staffing allocations are deployed where needed to provide the best possible outcomes for all students.

The processes by which our human resources are allocated across the system attempt to consider the external challenges that might affect student achievement and well-being so as to ensure that our allocation models are equitable as opposed to "equal." However, the goal of equitable allocation has not yet been achieved because resource allocation methods are often based on historic initiatives and legacy practices. For example, some schools have access to staffing resources that are not available to other schools. These allocation methods do not address current student needs and as a result exacerbate the inequitable use of TDSB's limited resources.

We propose to consider three key areas of our staffing allocation distribution processes to determine if we can more equitably allocate human resources:

- We will review sources of information and data beyond the Learning Opportunity Index, such as student achievement results, to help allocate staffing resources.
- In an effort to ensure that resources are closer to schools, and where flexibility exists, we will make staffing allocation decisions locally as opposed to on a system-wide basis.
- Finally, we will conduct a thorough examination of historical/legacy resource allocation practices using an equity-focused approach so as to determine their suitability to meet current student needs.

These actions will allow us to better support students in each of our schools. We will know we have achieved our goal when staff allocations result in greater student achievement for all students.



Development of a Strategy for Black Student Achievement and Excellence

Black students – in particular Black boys – continue to be the least successful demographic in our school system. Key data show these students are overrepresented in suspensions and expulsions and underrepresented in such areas as Gifted identification. As a group, they continue to experience a lack of access and opportunities. A targeted and focused approach to address Black student achievement and excellence will aim to address these gaps.

As the Enhancing Equity Task Force Report indicated:

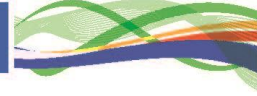
Black students in general are less satisfied with their overall school experiences, more likely to report being bullied physically, and have less positive relationships with adults and peers in school (Yau et al., 2015). School safety data show that they have higher suspension and expulsion rates than other students (Zheng, 2013, Zheng et al., 2017). By the time Black students finish high school, 42% have been suspended at least once, compared with 18% of other students (James and Turner, 2017). Of the 200 students who were expelled between 2011 and 2016, nearly half self-identified as Black. The Ontario Human Rights Commission's 2017 report, which supports that statistic, notes that "racialized students receive harsher treatment or punishment than their White peers for similar behaviour."

... Moreover, a greater proportion of Black students are streamed to the "lowest academic level classes," specifically, Applied or Essential programs in secondary school: 48%, versus 19% of White students or 21% of others. A greater percentage of Black students are identified as having non-gifted exceptionalities, unidentified special needs, and/or in need of an Individual Education Plan requiring special education support: 26%, as opposed to 16% of White students or 9% of others. As James and Turner state, "behind [these] numbers are families who have dreams for their children, and Black children who are ambitious, excited about learning, and deserve the education offered to other children..." (Enhancing Equity Task Force report, 2017, p.37).

Current structures and attempts to address the realities of anti-Black racism and its underlying systemic issues have been unsuccessful at making a significant impact on the experiences of Black students in our system. To this end, a strategy for Black Student Achievement and Excellence will provide a targeted and focused approach to address excellence and success for Black students in all areas.

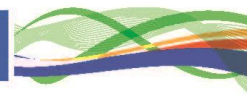
A strategy to support Black students will operate within the context of our equity, anti-racism and anti-oppression work until we are able to make meaningful gains for Black Students in the areas of Early Years reading, graduation rates, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions, access to academic programming, and changes to trends in Special Education and to family and community engagement.

A requirement of this strategy is to ensure that, in all areas, including professional learning, policy updates and creation, hiring practices, and school improvement planning, we consider the impact on access, opportunities, and outcomes for Black students. We welcome key voices at the table to help us consider these realities. The impact must be actively monitored and measured and be built on the understanding that these strategies, while necessary for some, will ultimately be beneficial for all students.



In classrooms and schools it will require a targeted look at the learning necessary to support Black Student Excellence and the transformation of classroom practices, curriculum materials, and school environments so that Black students can thrive and reach their highest potential. This learning will be embedded explicitly in our system-wide professional learning.

Success in this area would result in an increase in achievement rates of Black students, specifically in the areas of Early Years literacy and numeracy; an increase in Black students taking Academic level programming in secondary school; improved classroom curriculum and learning opportunities that reflect the lived experiences, cultures, and histories of Black communities; improved graduation rates for Black students, in particular Black boys; a reduction in the suspension and expulsion of Black students; and increased engagement of the parents and families of Black students.



Equitable Recruitment, Hiring, Promotion, and Placement Processes as Aligned with Principles of Human Rights

The TDSB has a strong history of examining and reflecting on recruitment, hiring, promotion, and placement processes from an equity and human rights perspective. The Board's Employment Equity Policy (P029) affirms our commitment to the development, implementation, and maintenance of employment and promotion policies, practices, and procedures that result in and sustain a workforce that, at all levels, reflects, understands, and responds to our diverse population.

As we continue to engage in this work, our goals will be:

- To measure how effective our employment practices are at supporting equitable hiring, mentoring, retention, promotion, placement, and succession planning;
- To ensure that all our employees have equitable opportunities for advancement; that their skills and knowledge are valued and used appropriately; and that they have equitable access to available support for their professional development needs;
- To support the creation of schools and workplaces where all staff feel valued and safe so that they can work to their full potential;
- To identify workplace factors known to have a strong impact on organizational health and the health of individual employees (e.g., organizational culture, workload management, engagement, growth and development, recognition and reward, etc.);
- To consider how the means by which we welcome and assist new staff in understanding their work within the TDSB relates to the significant work we are doing with respect to equity;
- To build upon positive relationships and include the voices of our various federations, union, network, and association partners by effectively collaborating on our work in equity and anti-oppression.

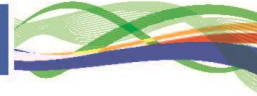
Equitable Recruitment, Hiring, Placement and Promotion Practices

To further support the objective of creating schools where students feel welcomed, included, and heard, we will work towards a culture in schools where students see themselves reflected in the staff. This will include a review of current recruitment, hiring, promotion, and placement processes as part of building on our work to better reflect the diversity of our students and communities. This will help students see themselves reflected in their learning environments by learning with staff who reflect their own identities and experiences.

We will provide learning opportunities to those involved in hiring processes so that an equity competency and anti-oppression stance is explicitly embedded throughout the entire process and its weight as a competency will play a significant role in determining hiring, promotion, and/or retention. We will hire staff who demonstrate competency related to Board's equity, anti-oppression, and human rights principles. And, while we are mandated to follow existing provincial regulations regarding teacher hiring, we will continue our efforts to hire teachers who reflect the diversity of our community.

We will provide training to all staff involved in hiring and promotion to build capacity about equity and anti-oppression and to build knowledge of how their own biases may affect selection processes, as well as how to best address this reality.

We will collaborate with faculties of education and other professional colleges/training bodies to ensure that pre-service training assists in the elimination of many conscious or unconscious biases.



If we are successful, we will continue to see an even more diverse work force that is representative of the communities we serve.

Improvement of Staff Well-Being

Staff need to feel a sense of safety, support, and commitment from the Board. While our staff may generally have very positive experiences in the work environment, we must develop a deeper understanding of their overall positive connection to the TDSB as a whole and intentionally support their well-being. The recent staff census collected well-being data for the first time and we are currently reviewing and analyzing the results to determine areas of focus and ways in which we can be more supportive to staff in collaboration with union and non-union groups.

Effective Orientation to our Organization

Even with recruitment and hiring practices that enable us to attract and then select the best applicants, their success in their role is dependent on our providing them with a robust understanding of our complex organization, our priorities, and how their individual work directly supports our collective work.

We will strengthen our onboarding and orientation strategies so that new TDSB staff will be able to successfully fulfill their responsibilities in the context of our strategic directions and our commitments to equity. The work of our Professional Learning Unit and many central departments to support aspiring leaders and new administrators also ensures a perspective that focuses on these same areas.

Connecting our new staff to key learning upon entry to the TDSB establishes a two-way commitment between employees and the Board. They will understand that we have a desire to provide deep support during this transition into the organization and they will also have a better understanding of what learning is required.

We expect to see a more prepared workforce within the Board that feels supported and has an increased ability to meet the challenges of their roles.

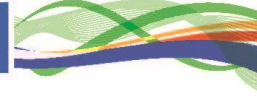
Effective Partnership and Collaboration with our Unions, Federations, Associations, and Networks Regarding Equity, Anti-Oppression, Anti-Racism, and Human Rights

The TDSB values positive relationships with our union, federation, association, and network partners and prioritizes effective collaboration with them on our equity, anti-oppression, anti-racism, and human rights-based learning.

We will continue to work with our partners to provide individualized feedback to staff as a way of promoting professional growth. Respecting our unique and different roles, we will review the results of our most recent staff census together with our union partners to identify gaps and areas of need and to create learning opportunities to address these.

Furthermore, we will engage in meaningful dialogue and brainstorming with our unions with regard to how to create staffing models and processes that result in equitable staff placements that reflect the diversity of the communities served by the TDSB.

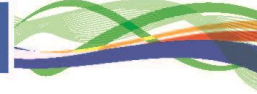
Through mutual understanding and collective problem solving, we will develop best practices to improve equity, anti-oppression, anti-racism, and human rights learning and the consistent implementation of that learning. Collaboration with all employee groups will result in increased engagement and motivation of our staff and ultimately a stronger commitment to these priorities and their impact on student achievement and well-being.



As a result of this work we expect to:

- Develop recruiting, hiring, promotion, and placement practices that addresses bias and removes barriers;
- Create safer and more welcoming workplaces for all staff;
- Provide effective induction support to all new employees; and,
- Be seen as an employer of choice within the city and across the country.

Various data collection points will allow us to track our progress. We will use employee data collected at the point of application as well as the point of hire. Our staff census will be an important source of information. We will collect feedback from our staff as they participate in different types of professional learning. We will also pursue the goal of being named Canada's Top Employer with respect to diversity.



Conclusion

We are committed to helping each and every student succeed. It is about providing them with the tools, resources, supports, access and opportunities they need to thrive.

For the past two years, guided by our Vision for Learning, we have taken a bold approach to improve the achievement and well-being of all students while closing the persistent achievement, opportunity and participation gaps that have existed for some.

Through the voices and experiences of our community, the Enhancing Equity Task Force, and our continued listening and learning, we will revise our Integrated Equity Framework to keep this work moving forward.

Thank you to all students, staff, families and community members who have participated in this process. We appreciate your commitment and involvement in the process.

Together, we will make the necessary changes to ensure that each and every one of our students can reach their full potential.