



Operation of the EarlyON Child and Family Programs [3813]

To: Program and School Services Committee

Date: 16 January, 2020

Report No.: 01-20-3813

Strategic Directions

- Transform Student Learning
- Create a Culture for Student and Staff Well-Being
- Build Strong Relationships and Partnerships Within School Communities to Support Student Learning and Well-Being

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board receive the Report on the Update on the Implementation May 2019 Board Decision Pertaining to the Operation of TDSB's EarlyON Child and Family Programs.

Context

The purpose of this report is to provide a response to the May 22, 2019 Board Decision which states: "Whereas, the Toronto District School Board is facing unprecedented financial pressures, including a \$500,000 projected deficit in the EarlyON program for the 2019-20 school year; Therefore be it resolved that the City of Toronto be requested to assume all aspects of the EarlyON child care programming as soon as possible."

EarlyON Child and Family Centres provide free, inclusive programs that promote healthy child development and respond to the local needs of children and adults who visit the program. Provincially, these programs are operated by municipalities, district school boards and/or third party operators. The TDSB is the largest EarlyON Child and Family Program service provider in The City of Toronto, representing nearly a third of the EarlyON sector. There are currently 75 TDSB-operated EarlyON Centres located in schools throughout the TDSB.

Toronto Children's Services Response to the TDSB's Board Decision

Since the May 22, 2019 Meeting of the Board of Trustees, TDSB staff and the City of Toronto Children's Services Staff have had several discussions about the operation and the structural deficit of the TDSB's EarlyON Child and Family Centres. There were several outcomes of the Board's Decision.

Firstly, The City of Toronto Children's Services Report to Economic and Community Development Committee (October 1, 2019) entitled *Equity-Based Planning for EarlyON Child and Family Centres (Appendix A)* states their response to the Board Decision.

The following is an excerpt from the aforementioned report:

In response to the TDSB motion, Children's Services has communicated that it is unable to assume direct service responsibility for the TDSB EarlyON Centres or staff, as Children's Services does not directly operate any EarlyON Centres. In addition, Children's Services does not currently fund nor have the available resources to pay for rental costs, currently covered by the school board, for all 75 EarlyON Centres (rental costs of \$11.77/sq. ft.), the existing structural deficit of approximately \$200,000, and future incremental wage and benefit increases. (p.5)

Secondly, TCS acknowledged the structural deficit attributed largely to the differences between the TDSB's employee compensation (e.g., salary, benefits) costs, establish through the collective agreement, and the Salary Schedule outlined in the EarlyON Child and Family Centres 2019 Operating and Business Practice Guidelines. This past fall, staff was informed that the supplemental one-time funding (defined as an exemption) to recognize full salary, benefits and supply costs in 2019 was extended to December 31, 2020. This additional funding reduced the anticipated budget deficit for 2020 calendar year to approximately \$351,000.00. In January 2020, the exemption was extended once again to December 31, 2021.

Lastly, City Council adopted a number of decisions on October 29, 30, 2019 related to EarlyON Child and Family Programs (Appendix B). The following direction was given to The General Manager of Children's Services and references future discussions with TDSB staff:

- a. *Continue to work closely with the Toronto District School Board to identify potential solutions for the School Board to continue operating EarlyON Centres*

The aforementioned outcomes are a positive result of the Board Decision however, it does not fully address the cost to the TDSB for operating 75 EarlyON Child and Family Programs.

Action Plan and Associated Timeline

Staff recommends that at a future date, the Board reflect on the risks and opportunities of continuing to serve as a service provider based on two years of information on the formal transition from TDSB's Parenting and Family Literacy Programs to EarlyON Programs and current information about the new model, future directions outlined in the transformation documents and financial projections.

Communications Considerations

Not applicable.

Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)

Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP).

Appendices

- Appendix A: The City of Toronto Children's Services Report to Economic and Community Development Committee (October 1, 2019) entitled *Equity-Based Planning for EarlyON Child and Family Centres*
- Appendix B: Economic and Community Development Committee Item 8.15 – Equity-Based Planning for EarlyON Child and Family Centres

From

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