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Delegations

From: Denise Joseph-Dowers, Manager, Governance and Board Services

The following delegation requests have been submitted in accordance with the Board's procedure for hearing delegations.

Part A. Oral Delegations

re Item 7.2, 2019-2020 Ward-by-Ward Budget Breakdown

1. David Spek, Toronto Education Workers/Local4400

re Item 7.3, Reconciliation of the 2018-19 Actual Results to Budget

2. John Weatherup, President, Toronto Education Workers/Local4400

re Item 7.4, First Quarter Interim Financial Report: 2019-20

3. Colleen Costa, Toronto Education Workers/Local4400

re Item 7.6, 2020-21 Education Funding Engagement Guide Consultation: Final Response

4. Mike Ciarabellini, Toronto Education Workers/Local4400

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re International Baccalaureate Program fees

5. Caitlin Hewitt-White, Etobicoke Collegiate Institute, Teacher and Parkdale Collegiate Institute, Parent
6. Joan Lin, Victoria Park Collegiate Institute
7. Kiran Mirchandani, Parent (see page 6)

re Social Injustice

8. Gordana Milosevic, Parkdale Collegiate Institute

Part B. Written Delegations

re Financial Assistance Application Process for International Baccalaureate Students

1. Adrienne Gordon, Ward 7 parent (see page 3)

re: International Baccalaureate Fees

2. Miranda Cheng (see page 5)

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Attention: TDSB Delegations FBEC Committee meeting Wednesday, January 22, 2020
Subject: Financial Application Process for IB Fees
Date: January 20, 2020

I am concerned about the Financial Assistance Application Process for IB Students.

Since the announcement of the IB Fee of \$3000 on November 23, 2019, disappointed families, educators, and supporters have expressed their concern about the impact of IB fees, and its ability to set a precedent for other specialized programs in the TDSB.

On Friday, December 20, 2019, families received information on the financial assistance application process. This was announced by TDSB schools to families in January, 2020.

I am concerned that the TDSB's Financial Assistance Application Process does not support the families it was designed to serve, mainly low-income families, for whom English may be a second language.

Furthermore, I would like to understand how the TDSB plans to support these families, as the TDSB's process is creating barriers to equal access to education (the IB program) and this process will cause greater inequity in the public education system.

IB schools, like Parkdale CI, are situated in diverse neighbourhoods where languages other than English are common. To date, **the financial assistance application process is only available in English, creating an immediate barrier to access.** When will the TDSB introduce a process that is reflective of the neighbourhood's diversity and supportive of families who do not speak English as their first language?

The application for financial assistance is completely online, therefore the TDSB is following in the footsteps of the Ontario government with its expectation that all families have access to a computer. For many parents who do not have computer access at home (or even at work) this online process is a barrier. What accommodations are being made to support parents who are unable to complete an online application form? And, a parent who requires additional support is required to contact TDSB by email. To date, telephone support has not been introduced.

The use of **TDSB Cash Online to accept payments makes the assumption that all parents have a credit card** that they can use. How are you supporting families who cannot make an online payment by credit card?

I am also concerned that **the TDSB is relying on the student's TDSB email address as a method to communicate with families on the application process.** We have been told that the family will log on to the application form using the student's TDSB email. It appears that this method is for the convenience of the TDSB and not in the interest of the applicant. If I decided to apply for financial assistance, I would not share this with my child (and would not want it shared with other families). I certainly would not choose to use my child's email account to send my financial information, and then rely on my child to relay the result of the application to me.

When we attended the FBEC meeting on November 7, 2019, Dr. John Malloy stated that the TDSB would not create a complex process that would require that families provide tax information. Contrary to Dr. Malloy's wishes, the TDSB has achieved a cumbersome, intrusive and flawed process. In addition to providing a poorly constructed process that is not supportive of the TDSB's equity goals, the number of errors on the application is troubling and need to be fixed.

I am attaching a list of questions on the process which I would hope you will address.

From the outside looking in, it appears that the TDSB has thrown this together, without addressing the needs of TDSB communities. The financial assistance application process is not ready and should not be a requirement until it is no longer a barrier to equal access to IB. Families who need this funding deserve

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a process that is easy to navigate, not reliant on a computer or credit card, and confidential, independent of their child. Just like the IB Fees, the process will not benefit the families it was designed to serve.

Sincerely,

Adrienne Gordon

[REDACTED]

Appendix

Appendix: The Financial Assistance Application Process for IB, Questions and Inconsistencies

- The letter sent home with PCI students on Nov. 23, 2019 regarding IB Fees says "Students currently enrolled in Grade 11 will be required to pay \$1500 by June 2020". This contradicts information posted on the TDSB website that reads "Starting next school year there will be a fee of \$1500 per year for Grade 11 and Grade 12". Is there a correction notice/clarification for this misinformation?
- The TDSB website states "All students who qualify based on family income level will receive financial assistance". The online application which says "Some students may be eligible for fee subsidies if their family income is \$75,000 or below". Which is correct?
- The TDSB website says "To apply for financial assistance ... please ... submit a copy of your 2018 T1 personal income tax return". Yet, the online application form states the "TDSB may request copies of your T1 Notice of Assessment, Reassessment or Personal Tax Return". We all know that there are language and literacy barriers to filing income tax for many low-income families.
- The online application form continues "If supporting documentation cannot be provided upon request...". Given the deadline to submit the application is Jan 22 and parents will be notified of their financial assistance status by Jan 24, 2020, how would this work in a practical sense?
- The TDSB is basing financial assistance on family's 2018 income, for a fee that is due in June 2020 for a program that begins in September 2020. What accommodations are being made for families income and employment situations that have changed since the 2018 tax year?
- The Online application form asks "Who are you purchasing this for?" The information caption then states "This should be the name of the person who will be collecting this item when purchasing it for someone else." Does this mean the student?
- The online application form asks "How many children do you have aged 16 or younger (as of Sept 1, 2020)?" and the email sent to parents from PCI on Dec. 20, 2019 stated "...families (whose income is \$75,000 or less) with three or more children (dependants under the age of 16) are eligible to receive \$500 of additional financial support". Typically, a student in year 1 is already 16 years of age, so this would benefit families who have one child in IB and three other children. Is this your intention? Also, given that the birthdate tied to school admission is always January 1, is the 16 or younger as of Sept. 1, 2020 an error?

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TDSB
Finance and Budget Committee

Dear TDSB Trustees,

I am writing with regards to the proposed IB fees for the 2020/21 academic year. [REDACTED]

When [REDACTED] entered the pre-IB program 2 years ago, we were never informed of the possibility of a significant fee for the IB program. All TDSB programs we were reviewing (ESA, TOPS and IB) did not have any significant fees associated.

I am very disappointed with the lack of transparency with regards to the implementation of the IB fees. Parents were not informed until late fall 2019 and very little details were available. There was no consultation with stakeholders (ie. students and parents) and the implementation timeline is very short.

I work with students at the post-secondary level and I see first-hand the benefits of the IB diploma. IB graduates are well prepared and ready to manage post-secondary work level. An additional benefit of IB is that many IB graduates will receive transfer credits for their IB courses. These transfer credits are particularly helpful for those students who are the first in their families to attend post-secondary studies. The transfer credits allow them flexibility in course selection and also the possibility of taking a reduced course load without falling behind in year 1.

By implementing fees to enter the IB program, TDSB is retreating from its' own mission of equity. IB program allows students from many different backgrounds opportunities to measure themselves against other IB students from all over the world.

I urge the trustees of TDSB to re-consider the fees for the IB program.

Sincerely yours,

Miranda Cheng
[REDACTED]

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I am a parent of a child in [REDACTED] at Parkdale Collegiate. First I want to say that I see myself as a strong supporter and ally of the TDSB and have written several times to the Ford government objecting to their attack on education. While I recognize the difficult position the de-investment in public education has put the TDSB in, I am extremely disappointed in the decision of the board to step away from fundamental commitments to equity and public education at this trying time.

Specifically, the introduction of fees for the public IB program is both short-sighted and unnecessary. First, this is a relatively tiny program, and by introducing fees, the TDSB will reduce its deficit by about 1%. Hardly a significant dent. But at a very significant ideological cost because it would give rise to public education classrooms where there are some fee paying students. There are the many problematic hierarchies that this seeping privatization will create.

But mostly I want you to think about the optics of this particular fee in the context of Toronto. The IB program in Toronto is unique because it has more than 85% immigrant students, and about 85% racialized students. These students are thriving. Given the equity goals within the TDSB, is this really the right program to target? There was some suggestion made by the Minister that this is a high income group but this assertion is false because it was based on TDSB data that just showed that these were people who were in professions where they could potentially earn high incomes, not that they actually earned high incomes. In fact, many of us know the communities which IB students belong to. They are not uniformly wealthy people who can shell out \$1,500 per year for their childrens' education. The fees will especially hit those who earn just above the cut-off wage of 75,000 which I should say is not a high income if one is paying for local credentialization and supporting a family of 2 or 3 children and 3 or 4 parents as is the case with many immigrant families. Financial assistance forms are all in English, have very tight timelines, and require the revelation of personal information which make those who are applying for immigration or refugee status feel policed.

You as Trustees have been informed by your research staff that the all other Boards in Ontario charge fees for the IB and the fees the TDSB has proposed are as high as those in other schools. However I want to inform you that your research department is incorrect and I would be happy to provide you with a list of schools in Ontario which charge no fees, and a list of schools which charge less than half the fees you have proposed. And these are schools which do not have immigrant and racialized students in their IB program, unlike the TDSB.

Overall, the specific targeting of this group for fees is effectively a form of racism. It targets students of colour negatively based on inuendo that this is a wealthy group and the presentation of no data justifying this. Given the many ways in which schools in the TDSB have failed students of colour, it makes no sense to attack a program which is serving them well.

Four years ago the issue of IB fees was squarely rejected by the TDSB and if you look back at the transcript of your meetings, Trustees of the day did so to defend public education. This is not a principle that can be abandoned just to save 1% of a deficit! I urge Trustees to reverse this decision.

Kiran Mirchandani, Parent [REDACTED].