



## Secondary Program Review: Update #3

**To:** Committee of the Whole

**Date:** 29 January, 2020

**Report No.:** 01-20-3823

### Strategic Directions

- Transform Student Learning
- Provide Equity of Access to Learning Opportunities for All Students

### Recommendation

It is recommended that the third update on the Secondary Program Review be received.

### Context

This third update of the Secondary Program Review highlights ongoing activities as well as those that have taken place following the 13, November 2019 Committee of the Whole meeting.

#### 1. Access

##### Consultation Evenings on the Optional Attendance Policy Review and Secondary Program Review

The following public consultation evenings were held in November 2019:

November 14 - Western Technical-Commercial School

November 20 - East Education Office (140 Borough Drive)

November 26 - CW Jefferys Collegiate Institute

November 28 - John Polanyi Collegiate Institute

Attendance at the sessions ranged from 30 participants to over 100 participants, with an estimated total of 240 participants. Participation at these meetings was diverse, and included parents, students, TDSB staff and members of the community.

The consultation evenings were divided into two components: Optional Attendance Policy Review and the Secondary Program Review. Staff provided a brief history of the Optional Attendance policy, its successes and challenges, and the current reality in terms of its impact.

Staff then explained the purpose of the Secondary Program Review, the current landscape of our secondary schools, and anticipated challenges the TDSB will face due to demographic change, aging buildings, and changes to class size by the provincial government.

Following the presentation, participants were led through a series of questions, both on Optional Attendance and the Secondary Program Review in table groups. Table discussions were led by a group facilitator, supported by a note-taker to transcribe comments, suggestions and feedback.

On 7, January 2020, a similar presentation was made for representatives from the Toronto District School Board's Community Advisory Committees, including Alternative Schools (ASCAC), Black Student Achievement (BSACAC), Community Use of Schools (CUSCAC), Early Years (EYCAC), Equity Policy (EPCAC), French-as-a-Second Language (FSLCAC), Parent Involvement (PIAC), Special Education (SEAC) and Urban Indigenous (UICAC). There were twelve attendees at this consultation session.

In addition to notifications through School Connects and in school newsletters, a message encouraging participation in both the Optional Attendance survey and the Secondary Program Review survey was sent to all elementary and secondary school council chairs with the support of the Parent and Community Engagement Office in mid-January. As of January 20, there have been 493 responses to the Optional Attendance survey and 1,693 responses to the Secondary Program Review survey.

Staff from the Research department and the School Operations department are currently reviewing all notes from the consultation sessions, survey responses and e-mail feedback submissions. A future report will be drafted that will include an executive summary, a summary of consultation themes, and a summary of recommendations/suggestions made by stakeholder groups.

Please refer to Appendix A for the presentation by staff at the consultation evenings.

#### *Steering Committee: Specialized Schools and Programs and Optional Attendance*

As indicated in the previous Secondary Program Review Update #2, a steering committee for specialized schools and programs and Optional Attendance was struck. Membership is made up of both elementary and secondary principals and vice principals.

Due to current labour sanctions, a face-to-face meeting has not been possible. However, an online video conference was held on 28, November 2019. The meeting provided an opportunity for committee members to review proposed changes to the Optional Attendance policy, and to provide input into the work plan for a new Specialized Schools and Programs policy.

#### *Specialized Schools and Programs Policy Development Work Plan*

In June 2019, the Board of Trustees approved a policy review work plan for the Optional Attendance Policy (P013). The work plan recommended the separation of the provisions for regular schools and specialized schools/programs. The working draft policy for Optional Attendance (P013) proposes the removal of certain sections in the policy, including specialized schools and programs.

At the 8, January 2020 Governance and Policy Committee, a work plan for the development of a new policy for Specialized Schools and Programs was presented for the Committee's consideration and approval. The work plan included a preliminary draft of provisions for the development of a new policy, as well as a scan of selected school boards/jurisdictions.

At this meeting a question was asked about collection of data from this year's Optional Attendance process with respect to the number of applications, acceptances and rejections to specialized schools and programs, including address information of applicants. Although our current paper process makes it difficult to collect this data, a request has been made to all secondary schools to retain a spreadsheet of applications so that the Research department can analyze the information and share findings as part of a future Secondary Program Review update.

This report to the Governance and Policy Committee, including the policy development work plan, the preliminary draft of provisions, and the scan of other boards/jurisdictions can be found on the Agenda and Minutes page on the TDSB site:

<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Leadership/Boardroom/Agenda-Minutes>

#### *Update on Implementation of Changes to PR545 and PR612*

As reported in an update to Committee of the Whole on 13, November 2019, changes to PR545 and PR612 were presented for information to Governance and Policy Committee in October 2019. Messaging about adherence to timelines and the revised procedures was sent by email to all school principals, superintendents, and elementary and secondary guidance counsellors. As well, similar messaging was shared through System Leaders' Weekly.

Early feedback in our Secondary Review Process has been about the discrepancy in offer dates made to students who have applied through Optional Attendance to both regular and specialized schools and programs. For this year's process, a request has been made to all secondary school principals to delay notification of the outcome of Optional Attendance applications to the week of 10, February 2020, where possible. This will assist in addressing the unintended consequence of stress and anxiety this process creates for students and their families when they receive notification from one school but then wait up to two weeks for the results from the other school(s).

#### *Technical and Commercial Boundaries*

With the approval of the Long-Term Program & Accommodation Strategy 2019-2028 at the 12, December 2019 Board Meeting, a Local Feasibility Team will be established in January 2020 to explore options for eliminating technical and commercial boundaries.

The team will include secondary school principals, superintendents, trustees and other central staff, as required. Public consultation will be conducted as part of the process.

Recommendations will be presented to trustees for approval in May 2020.

## **2. Program**

### *Identification of Specialized Program Type in Trillium Database*

All schools currently running specialized programs now have the capability in our School Information System (SIS) to identify students who are in such programs. In the month of January, schools were provided with step-by-step instructions on how to change a student's program for the upcoming 2020-2021 school year.

Assistance has been provided by the SIS team to schools, and the Planning department will follow up with schools over the next few months to ensure that all pre-registered students in a specialized school or program have been identified as such in SIS.

The ability to track students enrolled in specialized programs will enable Planning staff to better track the number of students enrolled in specialized programs, and understand where those students reside. Moving forward, this data could lead to refinements in the annual enrolment projection process where the specialized program could be distinguished from the regular track. At present, the two are combined.

### *System Alignment in the Use of the 6th Character for Course Codes*

Over the 2019 summer months, a system scan of existing secondary schools and programs, as well as course offerings at each site, was conducted. Although the TDSB has guidelines for the use of the 6th character for secondary course codes, *Coding 101*, consistency of practice was identified as a concern.

In December 2019, in collaboration with the Coordinator for Guidance, Career Development & Well-Being and with the SIS team, *Coding 101* was reviewed and updated. In a webcast for all secondary school guidance counsellors and timetabling vice-principals, the changes to *Coding 101* were presented. Identified schools have made changes to their course codes for 2020-2021 so that practice is consistent across the district.

The alignment of practice is necessary to better track student interest in specific courses and course types, and understand how schools are able to provide specific course offerings. Similarly, it will allow for comparison of similar data sets that have been, until now, misidentified.

## **3. Location**

There are no updates to this section for this month's report.

## **4. Facilities**

### *Meeting with Toronto Lands Corporation*

On 28, November 2019, a meeting was held with the Toronto Lands Corporation (TLC) to review the mandate of the Secondary Program Review, and to share updates on the work conducted thus far. Given the TLC's mandate to manage all Board wide real estate interests, the TDSB and TLC will continue to work together for the shared goal of providing opportunities that ensure the accommodation and well-being of our students.

## **Action Plan and Associated Timeline**

Other consultation opportunities continue to be planned, including focus groups with students, trustees, senior team, teachers and administrators.

The following consultations are planned for the end of January:

30, January 2020 - Two online consultation meetings (1 p.m. and 7 p.m.)

30, January 2020 - Consultation with the Toronto School Administrators' Association

31, January 2020 - Consultations with students at the Urban Indigenous Education Centre

A meeting for trustees will be confirmed for the end of May 2020 where staff will share findings from the Secondary Program Review consultations and respond to questions about the activities that have taken place since the Review was initiated last June. This will also assist staff in identifying areas that may require further clarification or description in advance of the final report to be presented in June.

## **Resource Implications**

Not applicable.

## **Communications Considerations**

Information about the 30, January 2020 online consultation meetings has been shared through the TDSB public website, TDSB Connects, Trustees' Weekly, System Leaders' Weekly, DirectLine and Twitter. School Council Chairs and Vice-Chairs, as well as school principals, have been asked to share this information with their communities.

The webpage for the Secondary Program Review continues to be updated as reports are approved at Board Meetings. As well, the Question and Answer page is updated on a regular basis as new questions are received to the Secondary Program Review e-mail address ([secondaryreview@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:secondaryreview@tdsb.on.ca)).

## **Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)**

P013 - Optional Attendance

PR545 - Optional Attendance

PR612 - Admission to Specialized Schools and Programs

## **Appendices**

- Appendix A: Presentation by staff at Public Consultation meetings

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