



Dear TDSB Trustees

While I understand from Trustee Chernos-Lin's comment on Twitter that it was never the intention to suggest that synchronous learning be implemented between Education Support Workers and students, it would appear that the press attention around the emergency motion related to student engagement that you are set to consider today has, at least in part, resulted in a pronouncement from the Minister that Boards ensure this happen.

On behalf of the Members of Toronto Education Workers/Local 4400 I ask you to consider the following:

1. The President and Vice-Presidents of the Toronto Education Workers/Local 4400 are meeting weekly with senior management at the Board to discuss issues related to emergency-remote learning and other matters. These meetings have been ongoing first informally, and now formally since the week after March Break. During those meetings we have spent hours deliberating how best to ensure that students and Members all feel supported and engaged. To suggest this is not already happening does a disservice to the dozens and dozens of hours we have all put into this already.
2. Among the issues considered is the fact that Members of our Bargaining Units are, like everyone else, working from home. Many have their own children home with them. Some are single parents. Others have partners who are working outside the home and are home alone during working hours with their children. Some have living conditions which afford them little to no private work space. In spite of this all Toronto Education Workers/Local 4400 Toronto Members have made it their mission to work their hardest to connect with students. Phone calls are being made and emails are being sent.
3. Synchronous learning is not something Toronto Education Workers/Local 4400 can or will support as a requirement of emergency-remote learning. The Ontario College of Teachers [professional advisory on use of electronic communication](#) points out the pitfalls that teacher members face, which would result in the same issues for Education Support Workers, particularly where synchronous use of the internet with students is involved. Further, a requirement of synchronous learning has major privacy implications for students

While I understand that parents may have questions about what may appear to some to be an uneven implementation of programming since schools were closed, rather than suggesting - as you do through this motion - that there is something more the Board and Toronto Education Workers/Local 4400 members could be doing to solve this issue, you may want to consider that the Director has repeatedly told parents not to expect there to be a one-size-fits-all approach to emergency-remote learning and know that every single one of the members of Toronto Education Workers/Local 4400 Toronto is already doing their best to support students.

A motion of support and thanks to the employees of this Board who have turned their entire personal worlds upside down to do their best to meet the Minister's ill-conceived approach to school programming during the school closure period might be a good substitute for your current motion, or at the least, should be considered as a partner to it.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

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