



Model Schools for Inner Cities Update 2019-20

To: Program and School Services Committee

Date: 13 January, 2021

Report No.: 01-21-4009

Strategic Directions

- Transform Student Learning
- Provide Equity of Access to Learning Opportunities for All Students
- Build Strong Relationships and Partnerships Within School Communities to Support Student Learning and Well-Being
- Create a Culture for Student and Staff Well-Being

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Model Schools for Inner Cities (MSIC) Update 2019-20 Report be received for information.

Context

Update of MSIC:

Please note this is only an update for the MSIC program. This report is not an evaluation of what occurred in schools in the program as MSIC based work was significantly disrupted for all 150 schools in the program during the 2019-20 school year.

The 2019-20 school year saw extreme disruptions in relation to the work usually done within the MSIC program for schools. In the fall through to early winter, TDSB teachers were on Work to Rule which inhibited work done in schools with students and amongst faculty beside the core time spent in classroom lessons. As all five essential practices involve work drawn from a variety of areas and integrated into classrooms as well as across schools, engaging the robust form of programming was affected. Therefore, the MSIC program in the 2019-20, focused more on community-centred programming.

Starting in March, Toronto along with the rest of Canada faced a pandemic which shut all schools in the TDSB. While schools re-opened on April 6th for remote learning, the remote learning platform took an enormous amount of focus and attention, which again inhibited the capacity for the MSIC program to provide the same level of support as previous years.

Due to this crisis, MSIC funds were re-allocated to critical areas to support communities and students through innovation and an initial focus towards equity of access.

MSIC 2019-20 Budget Description and Temporary Reallocation:

Funds from the MSIC program were used differently this past year.

Schools received MSIC budget allocations in October 2019. \$2.8 million were allocated to schools using a formula that includes a base allocation by size of school (small, medium or large), as well as the placement of the school on the Learning Opportunities Index (1-50, 51-100, 101-150).

As in previous years, the MSIC budget breakdown consisted of the following:

Part 1: Base Amount Allocation (week 3 student enrolment)

Small School	0-300 students	\$11 000
Medium School	301-500 students	\$13 000
Large School	500+ students	\$15 000

Part 2: Weighted allocation

Schools by LOI	% of Funds Per Pupil & Total	Per Pupil \$ Allocation
1-50	50% = \$470 500	\$29.97
51-100	30% = \$282 300	\$17.16
101-150	20% = \$188 200	\$10.13

Funds from central and school-based budgets, approximately \$480,000, were reallocated to support the following:

- Community-based parent engagement sessions
- Virtual summer school
- Non-digital remote learning packages
- Literacy, numeracy and technology resources for MSIC students
- School-based professional learning opportunities in anti-oppression and anti-racism

In addition, central MSIC budget supported the following key programs:

- Research \$400,000
- Summer Programs \$450,000

Key Components of the MSIC Program

- **Innovation in teaching and learning practice and school structure**

Support improved academic performance through enriched experiential learning opportunities, creativity and critical thinking emphasis, social justice curriculum, and culturally relevant and responsive pedagogies.

- **Support services to meet students' physical, social, and emotional needs**

Improve the physical and mental health and well-being of students by creating learning environments that are equitable, safe, engaging and inclusive. Partner with internal and external stakeholders to enhance students' sense of belonging. Ensure students' identities are represented positively in schools by partnering with students, families and community stakeholders.

- **School as the heart of the community**

Establish active partnerships with parents, community members, and community organizations. Engage and implement practices that strengthen and impact students, families and community relationships.

- **Research, review, and evaluation of students and programs**

Engage in data collection, summative evaluation and reporting to drive continuous school improvement, and support priorities as outlined in the Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

- **Commitment to share successful practices**

Share successful innovative strategies, initiatives, and structures as a way to mobilize educators at the classroom, Learning Centre and system levels, and external stakeholders for student achievement, well-being and equity.

During 2019-2020 academic year, the MSIC program engaged in the following actions to support the five essential components:

1. Innovative Teaching and Learning Practices

Non-Digital Learning Packages

MSIC school communities were impacted in many different ways by the COVID-19 pandemic and school closures. In order to support many families across the TDSB that were affected by virtual schools and programming, the MSIC budget was used to offset some of the costs for the over 20,000 non-digital learning packages that were provided to families in need.

As COVID-19 affected MSIC schools in a more definitive way, the MSIC program played a pivotal role in partnering with various Centrally assigned departmental teams in developing, reviewing and delivering offline learning packages for students in kindergarten to grade 8. The learning materials were designed for students who may

not be able, or want to, participate in online learning. The package contained approximately 4 weeks worth of learning tasks based on curriculum and expectations from the Ministry of Education. Non-digital learning resources were developed and delivered to students' homes. The resources helped support students and families stay connected and engaged during those exceptional times.

Equity in Remote Learning Settings (Professional Learning)

The pandemic required the MSIC program to engage educators in remote professional learning experiences. The MSIC program partnered with the Equity, Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression Team to offer 377 educators professional learning experiences. Some of these professional learning opportunities included:

- Building Relationships and Maintaining High Expectations while working Remotely
- Toolkit for Equity and Culturally Relevant and Responsive Resources: "I found this great resource, but wait, have I checked it for..."
- Deepening our Understanding of Critical Consciousness
- Taking the Neutrality Out of Mathematics Education
- Equitable and Inclusive Teaching Practice

2020 Summer Learning Program (Grades 3-8)

In collaboration with Continuing Education, summer learning experiences for students in grades 3 to 8 were offered virtually in 24 MSIC sites. Nearly 5,000 students engaged in this virtual learning opportunity. To further support the curricular experiences, students and families had the opportunity to engage in rich and relevant learning with community-based arts educators. Each site participated in virtual African Drumming, Storytelling, Visual Arts and Reggaecise sessions where children were able to extend their understanding of self and explore methods of creative expression. The MSIC program partnered with the Toronto Public Library (TPL) to provide MSIC students with a virtual classroom visit. The visits were hosted by a TPL Children's librarian and deepened community-school connections and literacy skill

2020 Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten to grade 2 Summer Learning Program

In collaboration with the Early Years Department and the Equity, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression team, a new summer learning experience for pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and grade 2 students were offered. Over 300 students ages 3 to 7 participated in the remote Journey to Success Early Years Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten Summer Learning Program across ten TDSB sites. Eight of these sites were MSIC schools. Journey to Success connects play and learning to children's identity and interests, while affirming families and their communities as partners within the learning journey. This summer learning experience focused on embedding strong literacy and numeracy practices for student development through Africentric and Culturally Relevant and Responsive frameworks.

A special component of this remote learning program was a resource package that each participating family received centred around their child(ren)'s unique lived experiences, identity and culture. This resource package included a variety of picture books and materials to support literacy and numeracy development through play and inquiry. Alongside the curricular experiences, Journey to Success students and families had the opportunity to engage in rich and relevant learning with community-based arts

educators. Each site participated in virtual African Drumming, Storytelling, Visual Arts and Reggaecise sessions where children were able to extend their understanding of self and explore methods of creative expression. Throughout the summer learning, capacity-building sessions were provided to educators to deepen their understanding of Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP), principles of Africentricity, teaching and learning using online platforms, and establishing responsive relationships through remote learning environments.

Literacy, Numeracy and Technology Resources for MSIC Schools

The MSIC program recognized that it was an exceptional year with schools facing barriers to effectively spending their MSIC budget. The MSIC program honoured the needs of the school communities by centrally purchasing for schools a choice or combination of the following resources:

- technology (i.e., chromebooks, iPads, etc.)
- leveled literacy resources
- numeracy resources

These resources were purchased centrally and continue to be delivered to schools in support of student learning and academic achievement.

Leadership Professional Learning for administrators on anti-Oppression and anti-Black racism

The pandemic resulted in virtual professional learning opportunities being offered to MSIC school-based leaders. The MSIC program subsidized MSIC administrators' participation in the *4 Big Questions on Racial Justice in Education: A 4-Part Interactive Webinar*. This webinar was facilitated by Kike Ojo-Thompson, Pamala Agawa, Dr. Debbie Donsky and Paul Gorski.

In the four-part, interactive, dialogue-based webinar series, educators deepened their thinking around racial justice in the Canadian education system. The following are questions that guided the webinar:

- What are the biggest barriers to racial justice in education?
- What can we, as individuals, do to disrupt racism within education? What does action look like?
- What does accountability with respect to racial justice look like in education?
- What is the role of relationship, community, and partnership in racial justice work?

The session facilitated dialogue among the session facilitators and participants.

2. Support Services for Students' Emotional, Social and Physical Well-Being

Pediatric Clinics

Four MSIC schools currently host Pediatric Health Initiative Clinics. These clinics allow for timely and informed access to health care. MSIC actively promotes and engages in community outreach to support this health initiative. In partnership with community health partners and hospitals, current clinics are hosted in the following schools: George Webster ES, Sprucecourt PS, Willow Park Jr. PS and Nelson Mandela Park PS.

Model Schools' Pediatric Health Initiative Clinics offer a range of services. For example, with an appointment, some primary care providers offer the following services:

- general physicals,
- immunizations,
- seasonal flu clinics,
- referral for hearing assessments,
- referral for vision screening and eye exams,
- access to dental services,
- developmental supports, and
- any health issues.

Upon the onset of the pandemic, the Pediatric Health Initiative Clinics, like those hosted at Nelson Mandela Park PS and Sprucecourt PS, continued to serve MSIC students and families remotely and with a modified schedule.

Partnership with the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM)

In partnership with the Royal Ontario Museum, the MSIC program offered free guided visits to 2 classes from each MSIC school. 103 schools took up this opportunity. Starting in Fall 2020, students and educators participated in the following learning experiences:

- two 90-minute guided visits led by a museum educator, topic of your choice;
- self-guided exploration time in the permanent galleries (special exhibits are not included); and
- travel subsidies (subject to school need).

The pandemic resulted in the halt of all face-to-face school visits to the ROM. As a result, students and educators had opportunities to access the ROM's online exhibitions.

Partnership with the Meridian Arts Centre (Nelson Mandela Exhibition)

The MSIC program partnered with the Meridian Arts Centre and TOLive to offer select MSIC schools (LOI 1-50) travel and admission subsidies to the Nelson Mandela Exhibition. The exhibition supported students and educators critically exploring the apartheid system in South Africa and the colonial and racist treatment of Indigenous peoples in Canada. To support such critical learning, students and educators engaged in interactive elements of the exhibit:

- Audio stations/Short films with headphone
- Replica of Mandela's prison cell students could touch and enter
- Replica of living room set and camera where Mandela filmed a video in hiding
- Various artifact replicas students could touch (i.e., Mandela's passport)
- Make-Your-Own-Protest-Poster – activity on a touch screen
- Letter writing station

This opportunity was offered between November and January 2019.

Hearing and Vision

The Model Schools program partnered with McMaster University, SickKids and Toronto Foundation for Student Success, to provide students in Model Schools with vision and

hearing screenings, as well as eye exams. In partnership with the *Gift of Sight and Sound Program*, MSIC students undergo vision and hearing screenings. MSIC worked with McMaster University and SickKids to provide grade 2 students in identified MSIC schools. The pandemic required a halt to all vision and hearing screening, as well as eye exams in March 2020. Despite the pandemic, through the Gift of Sight and Sound Program, MSIC students received the following services:

Vision Screening

- Number of students screened: 11,911
- Number of referrals: 2,995

Optometry Clinics

- Number of students who attended the optometry clinic: 1,565
- Number of students who received glasses: 1,132
- Number of prescription upgrades: 553
- Number of first-time wearers: 579

Hearing Screening

- Number of students screened: 349
- Number of students referred: 50

3. School as the Heart of the Community

Community Sessions with Dr. Carl James

Dr. Carl James facilitated sessions in MSIC schools across the Learning Centres as a way to further engage families, community and educators in discussions on improving the experiences and opportunities of Black students. This session entitled, “***How to Navigate the School System for Black Student Success, K-12***”.

Participating families received York University's resource, *The Engaged Parent: Navigating School Systems for Black Student Success*. This resource supports partnerships between parents of Black children, their teachers and the school system. The bilingual information sheets provide parents of Black children with tips to help ensure their child's success and wellbeing. Co-written by Dr. Carl James and Tana Turner, the information sheets were created in response to ongoing research around the experiences of Black parents and their children in schools across the Greater Toronto Area. Although developed for parents, the information sheets provide school administrators with insights on working with families and community members for Black student success and excellence, as outlined in TDSB's Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

Due to labour and pandemic disruptions, the face-to-face sessions were halted and postponed. MSIC school communities continued to have online access to *The Engaged Parent: Navigating School Systems for Black Student Success* resource and for the 2020-21 school year, Dr. James will continue to provide access to this session for the schools that were affected.

Family Adventure Passports

Families across the Model Schools Program have the opportunity to engage in community experiences across the city. The Model Schools Program partnered with

local institutions, such as the Bata Shoe Museum, the Rouge Valley Conservation Centre, Toronto History Museums and Ripley's Aquarium of Canada, to offer discounted opportunities for families to rich community experiences.

The pandemic resulted in MSIC families being unable to participate in the many community learning opportunities offered in the Family Adventure Passports.

Parents as Partners Annual Conference

The MSIC program helps to support TDSB's annual Parents as Partners conference. The conference offers sessions on special education, mental health and well-being, anti-Black racism and engagement. Due to the pandemic the *Parents as Partners* was postponed to this academic year, October 2020 and redesigned as a virtual conference.

4. Research, Review and Evaluation of Students and Programs

CAT4 assessment results from October 2019

The annual Canadian Assessment Test 4, given to grades 2-8 (excluding grade 3) shows that at the outset of this past year students across grades performed at no significant difference than the previous two years in the literacy and numeracy skills that are assessed by the CAT4.

	<i>Fall 2017</i>			<i>Fall 2018</i>			<i>Fall 2019</i>		
	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Writing</i>	<i>Math</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Writing</i>	<i>Math</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Writing</i>	<i>Math</i>
<i>Gr. 2</i>	<i>58%</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>48%</i>	<i>54%</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>47%</i>	<i>54%</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>46%</i>
<i>Gr. 4</i>	<i>56%</i>	<i>56%</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>53%</i>	<i>54%</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>54%</i>	<i>52%</i>	<i>75%</i>
<i>Gr. 5</i>	<i>65%</i>	<i>71%</i>	<i>82%</i>	<i>64%</i>	<i>69%</i>	<i>79%</i>	<i>63%</i>	<i>68%</i>	<i>78%</i>
<i>Gr. 6</i>	<i>67%</i>	<i>69%</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>69%</i>	<i>70%</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>68%</i>	<i>67%</i>	<i>74%</i>
<i>Gr. 7</i>	<i>74%</i>	<i>63%</i>	<i>79%</i>	<i>73%</i>	<i>63%</i>	<i>78%</i>	<i>73%</i>	<i>61%</i>	<i>78%</i>
<i>Gr. 8</i>	<i>70%</i>	<i>70%</i>	<i>78%</i>	<i>70%</i>	<i>68%</i>	<i>77%</i>	<i>69%</i>	<i>67%</i>	<i>77%</i>

5. Commitment to Share Successful Practice

Touching Base with MSIC Schools Around Remote Learning Experiences

The MSIC program provided consistent communication to share resources, program ideas, and opportunities for students and staff.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and school closures, in April 2019, the MSIC program organized and facilitated meetings in each of the Learning Centres with MSIC principals, vice-principals and superintendents. At these meetings, MSIC administrators discussed the impact of COVID-19 on MSIC school communities. MSIC administrators also collaborated around ways to deepen relationships with families and strengthen student engagement during the pandemic. The information from these meetings helped shape the 2020 MSIC Summer programming.

Action Plan and Associated Timeline

As we move forward, the actions and programs within the MSIC program will continue to be responsive to the five essential components, with the aim to address the goals within the Multi-year Strategic Plan. Actions for the 2020-21 School Year include:

- Align school-based actions with School Improvement Planning (SIP) goals
- Continue to support the actions related to student physical and socio-emotional well-being, which includes the pediatric clinics and work done alongside external health partners such as SickKids, UofT, McMaster University and TFSS
- Monitor and document the learning of MSIC schools that are part of larger system initiatives:
 - Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement
 - Academic Pathway
 - Special Education Inclusion
 - Black Students Success & Excellence
 - Math Strategy Schools
 - Engage in an internal review with Research Department on the program to identify best practices, leverage learning and review the research

Resource Implications

Schools will continue to use their school MSIC budgets in support of the Five Essential Components of the MSIC program:

- Innovation in teaching and learning practice and school structure
- Support services to meet students' physical, social, and emotional needs
- School as the heart of the community
- Research, review, and evaluation of students and programs
- Commitment to share successful practices

Communications Considerations

BSACAC (Black Student Achievement Community Advisory Committee) and EPCAC (Equity Policy Community Advisory Committee) are updated.

Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)

Multi-Year Strategic Plan – Action Plans

[Protecting and Promoting Human Rights and Addressing Discrimination in Schools for Students, Parents and Families](#)

[Policy P037 – Equity](#)

Appendices

N/A

From

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