

Ministry of Education

Minister

315 Front Street West
Toronto ON M7A 0B8

Ministère de l'Éducation

Ministre

315, rue Front Ouest
Toronto ON M7A 0B8



March 23, 2021

Mr. Alexander Brown
Chair
Toronto District School Board
5050 Yonge Street
Toronto ON M2N 5N8
Alexander.Brown@tdsb.on.ca

Dear Mr. Brown,

Thank you for your letter regarding the costs incurred by the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) due to the COVID-19 pandemic and your request to have these costs, including your reserves, reimbursed.

Our government values its strong partnership with the TDSB and recognizes that this school year brings new challenges for school boards related to the COVID-19 pandemic. In consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the COVID-19 Command Table and pediatric experts, the government released its [plan](#) for the safe reopening of schools in September. Our nation-leading plan prioritizes the health and safety of students and staff and contains additional public health protocols to keep students and staff safe.

As Minister of Education, I agree with parents and pediatric experts that in-person learning is essential for the mental health, academic success, social development and overall well-being of Ontario's children. Nothing matters more than the safe reopening of schools, which is why Ontario is making over \$1.6 billion in COVID-19 resources available to school boards to support enhanced health and safety measures in schools.

For the 2020-21 school year, the TDSB is projected to receive \$82.9 million in new funding for COVID-19, including \$9.0 million to enhance public health measures and protection strategies as the community confronted higher rates of transmission. In addition to the funding amount noted, as you know, the government is also providing additional funding allocations from the Safe Restart Agreement.

In February 2021, we announced an additional \$381 million provided to Ontario by the federal government under the Safe Return to Class Fund. This additional funding will support the following:

- \$80 million to support the purchase of additional devices such as laptops and tablets
- \$64.55 million in health and safety funding, included board funded and transportation related personal protective equipment (PPE) costs
- \$62 million in summer learning supports
- \$60 million to support online learning, including developing digital course content and technological supports
- \$50 million for portable HEPA filters and other immediate options to improve air quality and ventilation
- \$33 million set aside for additional measures to support hotspot communities
- \$10 million to support the Student Nutrition Program
- \$10 million to continue to support the mental health of all students and support the implementation of the new School Mental Health Ontario Action Kit
- \$6.45 million to support equity initiatives
- \$5 million to support operators in ensuring the continued success of student transportation

The province also put in place \$400M in stabilization funding this year given enrolment forecasts were unexpectedly adversely impacted by the pandemic. This allocation provided \$44.6 million in funding to TDSB for enrolment that did not materialize, avoiding any further draw on reserves.

As we look forward to the 2021-22 school year, the ministry continues to monitor and work with health experts to assess what education supports are needed, with a real focus on mental health, learning gaps and the continued safety of Ontario schools.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Lecce', written in a cursive style.

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education