

## **Stephanie Turner – Planning for Return to School – 9 July 2020**

Members of the Board, thank you for your time today. I come on behalf of parents and families throughout this city who are terrified that the best you have to offer them come September is a plan to have kids in school two days a week. This plan won't work.

Your plan provides little relief for tired parents who have been required to work, care for and teach their children at home through the last 4 months of pandemic. We are exhausted. This situation is leading to burn out and mental health issues for families all over this district.

The current part time school ideas will not work unless the board or the government have another plan to provide additional daycare or other financial resources to working parents. It also won't reduce the spread of the virus as children will have to be shuffled around to all sorts of different caregivers to make this plan work.

We cannot continue to be expected to work, care for and school our children. It is not a sustainable model. It takes a village. We all know that. If you truly care about families, you will do something now to ensure we are not left to fend for ourselves in the fall.

Please consider the following seriously.

“A truly responsible, proactive plan for the fall would include hiring more teachers and early childhood educators and working with municipalities to free up additional physical spaces, like community centres, that could be used for small-group learning. A truly ambitious, forward-thinking plan might involve experiments in outdoor education or other experiential non-classroom-based learning. If our government is actually concerned about children and families, it needs to invest now to avoid a cascade of further public health, education and economic crises in years to come.”

Also please consider that the vast majority of care work for children is still provided by women. We are finally talking about systemic racism, let's also talk about systemic sexism. Your plan assumes that women will step up as they always have to care for our children FOR FREE. Our labour is not free.

I beg you to work with the Ministry to find the funds necessary to put a better plan in place. Thank you.