



MEMORANDUM

Memo No. 19-072

TO: Trustees
Student Trustees

FROM: Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary of the Board
Peter Symmonds, Superintendent of Learning Support Services

DATE: 24 May 2019

RE: **Draft Mental Health Strategy**

In 2011 the Province of Ontario released “Open Minds, Healthy Minds” Ontario’s Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. This multi-ministerial strategy was designed to create a more integrated and responsive system of care. Through the Ministry of Education’s commitment, there has been an increased focus on mental health in school districts. The foundation of this work is the development, implementation, tracking and monitoring of a Mental Health and Addiction Strategy.

The first Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) Mental Health and Addiction Strategy was developed in 2014. The strategy was based on input from focus group and resource mapping involving various stakeholder groups, with priorities being identified in three areas (i.e., organizational conditions, capacity building and evidence-based mental health promotion and prevention programming), which were identified by the Ministry of Education and the provincial implementation team, School Mental Health ASSIST.

The District is currently developing a new Mental Health Strategy for 2019-2022. For the current strategy, six priority areas have been identified that align with the provincial work of School Mental Health Ontario (formerly School Mental Health ASSIST). These are:

- Organizational conditions;
- Capacity building;
- Evidence-based mental health promotion and prevention programming;
- Supporting specific populations;
- Enhancing system coordination; and
- Youth engagement.

To begin work on the new strategy, a District steering committee was struck in the spring of 2018. The committee is comprised of central staff, administrators from both elementary and secondary schools, federations representatives and a parent representative. To date, the work of the steering committee has involved reviewing the previous strategy, providing input into data collection and reviewing provincial and local data in order to guide the development of the strategy. Data was collected in various forms from a range of

stakeholders, including focus groups with professional staff, parents and students, and a mental health staff survey.

Based on a review of the data and input from the steering committee, a draft strategy has been developed (see Appendix A). We will be building a diverse working team representative of the full diversity of our school population. At this point we are seeking feedback from the perspective of various advisory committees.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Peter Symmonds at peter.symmonds@ocdsb.ca or at 613-596-8254.

cc Senior Staff
 Manager Board Services
 Special Education Advisory Committee
 Corporate Records