

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (PUBLIC)
Report No. 19-112

19 November 2019

Mental Health Strategy 2019-2022

**Key Contact: Peter Symmonds, Superintendent of Learning Support
Services, 613-596-8211 ext. 8254**

PURPOSE:

1. The OCDSB Mental Health Strategy 2019-2022 is presented for discussion.

CONTEXT:

2. A draft Mental Health Strategy was provided for discussion in May 2019. Based on the feedback and further consultations with OCDSB advisory committees, revisions were made.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

3. 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 increased focus on student mental health in schools districts. The foundation of this work is the development, implementation, tracking and monitoring of a Mental Health and Addiction Strategy to support student mental health. The first OCDSB Mental Health and Addiction Strategy was developed in 2014.

In the spring of 2018, a District steering committee was struck. The committee is comprised of central staff, administrators from both elementary and secondary schools, federation representatives and a parent representative. The work of the steering committee involved reviewing the previous strategy, provide input into data collection and reviewing provincial and local data in order to guide the development of the Strategy. In addition, data was collected from a range of OCDSB stakeholders. This included focus groups with professional staff, parents and students as well as a mental health survey that was developed and distributed to staff across a range of employee groups. Based on the information gathered, a draft Strategy was produced.

Further consultations with board advisory committees were held to gather feedback and input on the draft Strategy. Specifically, the draft Strategy was

presented to the Advisory Committee for Equity (ACE) on 23 May 2019 and the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) on 12 June 2019.

Over the summer, additional work was done incorporating the input received. The Strategy with initial revisions was presented to the Indigenous Education Advisory Council (IEAC) on 19 September 2019. Based on all the feedback provided, additional revisions have been made to the Strategy (see Appendix A).

The additions and revisions to the Strategy include:

- The strategic priority areas identified by School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO) have been embedded into the OCDSB cultures of innovation, caring and social responsibility to reflect the direct alignment of the work in mental health with the OCDSB Strategic Plan. As part of the restructuring of the Strategy, the following sections have been added: desired outcomes for students, staff and the system and key performance indicators;
- References have been added;
- More details regarding the factors that influence mental health have been added;
- Recognition that mental health and well-being are influenced by social identity factors (e.g., race, indigenous identity, socio-economic reality, gender, etc.)
- Language has been added to reinforce that supporting mental health from mental health promotion through to intervention for mental health challenges is done through an equity lens in a culturally responsive manner;
- The wording describing the graphic illustrating what students need to build and sustain mental health has been clarified; and
- The Strategy has been formatted by the Communications and Information Service division.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

4. The Ministry of Education provides Grants for Student Needs (GSN) funding for the Mental Health Lead in each school district as well as funding for Well-being, Safe, Accepting and Healthy schools and Mental Health. Additional Priorities and Partnerships Fund(ing) (PPF) supports mental health workers (regulated health professionals) in secondary schools. Mental health is also funded through OCDSB budget.

The development and implementation of the Mental Health Strategy are funded within the envelopes identified above.

COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:

5. In addition to the consultation with focus groups and advisory committees, the Mental Health Strategy will be shared with SMHO. Following that, a communication and implementation plan will be developed to share the Strategy more broadly across the District.

STRATEGIC LINKS:

6. The Strategy aligns with the OCDSB Strategic Plan's Cultures of Innovation, Caring and Social Responsibility. It also aligns with the Framework for Student Well-being.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- Will the Mental Health Strategy help to further the District's commitment to supporting student mental health through promotion, prevention and intervention?
- Do the revisions/additions to the Mental Health Strategy reflect the District's commitment to safe, caring and inclusive practices?

Peter Symmonds, Superintendent of
Learning Support Services

Camille Williams-Taylor
Director of Education and Secretary of
the Board

APPENDICES

Appendix A Mental Health Strategy 2019-2022