

Delegation Statement (2 mins) to OCDSB SEAC

September 9, 2020

Good evening.

My name is Claudine Santos. I am the parent of a 7-year old blind son and serve as President of the Ontario Parents of Visually Impaired Children, formally known as VIEWS for the Visually Impaired.

I thank the committee for the opportunity to appear before you this evening.

Public/Program Memorandum 164 on remote learning establishes minimum requirements for engaging students during remote learning and synchronous learning, as well as protocols for delivering remote learning; and protections for the student's privacy and online safety.

Outside of Kindergarten students, PPM 164 establishes a minimum of 225 minutes of synchronous learning for Grades 1-12 with some variation for secondary students.

Synchronous learning, as defined by the Ministry of Education, is

Learning that happens in real time. Synchronous learning involves using text, video, or voice communication in a way that enables educators and other members of the school- or board-based team to instruct and connect with students in real time. Synchronous learning supports the well-being and academic achievement of all students, including students with special education needs, by providing educators and students with an interactive and engaging way to learn. It helps teachers provide immediate feedback to students and enables students to interact with one another.

On September 1, teachers of specialized classes in OCDSB schools were informed that they will be required to concurrently teach the in-person and online classes for their students. Mainstream students will, in contrast have dedicated online teachers.

As a concerned parent and advocate, I ask: how can teachers be expected to provide the required 225 minutes of synchronous learning for online learners, while also providing the same level of support and instruction for their in-person students? Why are mainstream students given a dedicated online teacher, while the most at-risk students are left with a teacher whose attention is decidedly divided? Is this practice in line with the guarantee to fair and equal access to publicly-funded education as established under Ontario's *Education Act*, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*?

I have reached the end of my two minutes, but the accompanying email outlines my concerns further and I look forward to your questions and discussion.