

TO: Committee of the Whole

DATE: 06 April 2021

RE: OPSBA 2021 Resolution –COVID Gap Funding

Trustee Boothby has given notice that she will move the following motion at the Committee of the Whole Meeting of meeting of 06 April 2021 for submission to the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) for consideration at the OPSBA 2021 Annual General Meeting.

Whereas, the March 2021 Ontario Budget states “Our loved ones, our economy, our **education system**, our main streets and our communities have all been impacted by the global pandemic.”

Whereas, Minister Bethlenfalvy stated in his Budget Speech to Parliament, “young people have been among those disproportionately impacted by the economic impacts of the pandemic. So, we are protecting students today.... But also investing in their future success for tomorrow”.

Whereas, the March 2021 Ontario Budget recognizes the effects of COVID will be felt and need to be supported beyond the end of the pandemic, as evidenced by the additional and ongoing supports for Long Term Care for 4 years, Tourism for 3 years and Broadband for 5 years.

Whereas, the learning for many students has been significantly impacted by the stressors of COVID including significant amounts of time learning remotely, when remote learning is not the best suited to all students, lack of engagement, missing social interactions and escalation of new or existing mental health challenges.

Whereas, learning gaps that are not immediately identified and immediately remedied with extraordinary measures, will fall further and further behind their cohort and limit the opportunities every student deserves and must have to ensure future success.

Whereas, the current teacher to student ratio will not be adequate to provide the necessary capacity for immediate identification and remediation of COVID created or exacerbated learning gaps.

Whereas, protecting students includes mental health. According to 2020 survey results from Sick Kids Hospital, published February 2021, a larger proportion of children with previous mental health problems are struggling since the pandemic began, and 40 per cent of children with no previous mental health issues have experienced deterioration of their mental health.

Whereas, professional learning for teaching staff has been less available since the pandemic and has not been focused on local needs experienced by pandemic measures.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT OPSBA recommend, the Ministry of Education with the Education Equity Secretariat, as a priority, explore and develop an action plan with the following elements

THAT OPSBA advocate for the Ministry to provide school boards with dedicated funding for an array of much needed supports best configured to meet each board's needs, including but not limited to:

- A. Additional teaching staff to provide immediate evaluation of learning gaps, using tools such as PM Benchmarks;
- B. Additional teaching staff to provide immediate remediation of identified learning gaps;
- C. Additional mental health staff to provide immediate mental health supports; and
- D. Additional funding for professional development for education staff to focus on gap closing and mental health supports.

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

Michèle Giroux
Executive Officer
Corporate Services

Signatures on this Notice of Motion confirm that the Notice was submitted in accordance with Section 12.9 of the Board's By-laws and Standing Rules.