



Parents Advocating for Safe, Well-Maintained Schools
in the Toronto District School Board (TDSB)

SUBJECT: Please consider the following as you formulate your recommendations

May 26, 2015

Dear Barbara, Briony, Jennifer, Patrick, Richard, Shirley and Vicki,

As the TDSB Governance Panel consultations come to a close and you begin to formulate recommendations, Fix Our Schools urges you to please consider the following:

1. **A change in the TDSB Staff organizational structure (as opposed to the TDSB Trustees) to increase efficiency, effectiveness and decision-making capabilities.** Peel DSB is often cited as a large yet efficient, effective school board in Ontario. Is there something to be learned from looking at the organizational structure for staff at Peel DSB?
2. **A change in the hiring criteria for Directors of school boards in Ontario such that a larger pool of candidates can be considered for these critical positions.** Replacing Director Chris Spence was challenging. The pool of eligible, interested candidates was small, given the current hiring criteria. Could these hiring criteria be updated to allow for candidates from outside the school system to be considered for future hiring decisions? Leadership is key to good governance so having the right person leading the TDSB is critical.
3. **A clarification of the roles of TDSB Trustees and TDSB Staff; and the communication/working relationships between these separate sides of the TDSB.** TDSB Trustees, eleven of whom are still new to this important yet part-time position, and TDSB Senior Staff could all likely benefit from clarifying their respective roles, responsibilities; and communication/working relationships.
4. **A clarification of the communication/working relationships between the TDSB Trustees/Staff with Provincial Politicians/Staff.** To resolve current issues at the TDSB requires a functional relationship between the TDSB and the Province. At the moment, this key relationship seems dysfunctional and almost hostile. 246,000 TDSB students have been penalized long enough. The grown-ups in charge must start to get along.
5. **A clarification of the communication/working relationships between the TDSB Trustees/Staff with Municipal Politicians/Staff.** To realize schools as community hubs, an effective working relationship is integral between school boards and municipalities. Integrated decisions must be made between these two levels of government about community hubs and school closures in order to ensure good overall community planning.

We also strongly recommend that you **refrain from splitting up the TDSB into smaller school boards.** Given the immense challenges facing the TDSB, a degree of stability is imperative at this time. Parents have real concerns that should the TDSB be split into several smaller school



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boards, years of realignment would ensue, detracting from the urgent need to find funding solutions to issues such as the \$3.3-billion repair backlog.

It is worth noting that every one of Ontario's 72 school boards has a capital repair backlog for a total of \$14.7-billion. Surely if every school board is plagued by these problems, it suggests that something in the overall governance and of public education in this province is simply not working and that additional funding sources must be found?

It is also worthwhile noting that voters in the recent municipal election sent a clear message to the TDSB by voting in eleven new Trustees. Please make recommendations that support this new board of Trustees in coming together as an effective, efficient team by considering the points made in our letter rather than any drastic changes that would further detract from the more urgent issue of funding.

Kind regards,
Krista Wylie – on behalf of Fix Our Schools