

December 19, 2018

An open letter from the Director of Education, Manny Figueiredo:

Each year, the Ministry of Education allocates funding to the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board through multiple granting streams identified as the Grants for Student Needs (GSNs). The Board of Trustees applies this core funding and considers local priorities to approve a balanced budget. In addition, school boards also receive grants called Education Program Other (EPO), which is funding determined by the Ministry of Education and focused on additional programs and services.

On Friday, December 14, 2018, the Ministry of Education shared information that confirmed in-year EPO grant funding. HWDSB can confirm that approximately \$3.1 million of the EPO funding from the Province has been or will be received for the 2018-19 school year. The funding from these grants will ensure that a number of additional programs and services will continue such as mental health supports, special education services and community engagement, for example.

We can also confirm our disappointment that approximately \$270,000 impacting eight programs and services, at this point, within the 2018-19 EPO grants have been eliminated. The Board recognizes the impact these additional programs will have on students, including our more vulnerable and marginalized populations. Staff will review our core funding from the GSNs to ensure the most needed programs and services will continue to be provided for the 2018-19 school year.

The following programs associated with the EPO grants that are eliminated include: Innovation in Learning Fund; Indigenous Focused Collaborative Inquiry; Student Success Leaders Supporting Racialized Students; Pilots on Ensuring Equitable Access to Postsecondary Education; Re-engagement 12&12+ Initiative; Daily Physical Education Funding for Elementary Schools; Speak Up Grants; and Teacher Learning & Leadership Program.

The Province also confirmed that Focusing on Fundamental Math (RMS) will not be renewed beyond the current school year. We believe there will be a new Math EPO grant to come. If there is not, this will greatly impact our goal in the strategic directions to improve mathematics. The previous grant was in the amount of \$1.6 million and provided professional learning opportunities for staff to support math instruction and assessment.

In the New Year, Trustees and Executive Council will engage staff and the community in the budget development process as we become informed by the Ministry of Education about the core funding (GSNs) and EPOs for the 2019-20 school year. We will remain focused and ensure that resources are grounded in our strategic directions. The priorities include Positive Culture & Well-being, Student Learning & Achievement, Effective Communications, School Renewal, and Partnerships.

HWDSB is committed to supporting our students and families as we monitor enhancements and reductions in education funding. We will continue to allocate resources in the areas that benefit our students and that lead to improved outcomes in achievement and well-being.