



We Are More Concerned

An update on changes in education in the TDSB by the Education Committee of Northern School Council



“Strong” vs “Weak” Parenting

“Strong” - work together, with one another and child, to use all perspectives to determine best understanding and solutions for child

“Weak” - won’t work together (for various reasons), make unilateral decisions, no discussion or meaningful collaboration to reach decisions for child

Problem with “Weak” parenting: it is likely to miss best solutions for all parties involved.



“Good” vs “Bad” Policy

“Good” policy - programs that increases student well being, raise academic success, are readily available

“Bad” policy - programs that decrease student well being, lower academic success, are not readily available

We think there are some “bad” policies being proposed and implemented in the TDSB



“Equity” according to the TDSB

Equity, according to the TDSB, is being interpreted as “everybody getting the same thing”.

“One size fits all” - TDSB is giving everyone a size 9 shoe, but what if your child wears size 6 or 12?

“One classroom fits all” - inclusion (putting all special education students in the same regular classroom), destreaming (placing all academic abilities in the same regular classroom)



IF, THEN

Destreaming:

IF students who are three grades below grade level are put in an academic level class without adequate supports, THEN they will fail.

IF they are passed in an academic course with a 51, THEN they will not have achieved mastery enough to achieve success in college or university level courses in Grades 11 and 12.

IF students do not experience sufficient success in their grades 9 and 10 courses, THEN their failure to achieve a high school diploma are dramatically increased (16 credits by 16).

Destreaming without sufficient supports is “Bad” Policy, and it actually doesn’t solve at least one of the problems it is trying to address (racial bias).



“Equity” according to parents and province

We believe equity is giving everyone equal opportunity to reach their potential: provincial law states this is the purpose of education.

Furthermore, not providing the proper tools to learn is considered a potential violation of a child’s human rights, and the Ontario Human Rights Commission is currently investigating school boards on issues like this for reading.

“On October 3, 2019, the OHRC announced a public inquiry into potential human rights issues that affect students with reading disabilities in Ontario’s public education system.”

(OHRC Survey: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en>)



The question of “Fit”

In secondary schools especially, students are ready, interested and need to find their “fit” - for academics, career path, socially, and emotionally.

Being with like-minded peers (of interest, ability, subject matter) matters critically in their development and well-being.

Like plants, we don't all thrive in the same environment, and putting all plants in the same environment will not allow all to flourish.



The question of “Feedback”

Unless the needs of students are known and understood, how can “good” policy be planned for them and the impact of changes be beneficial?

In making changes to policy that directly impact the classroom in the TDSB, there is a pattern of not engaging in meaningful, transparent, widespread feedback from major stakeholders: students, parents, teachers, and principals.



TDSB “Equity” on a Large Scale

“One classroom fits all”

- Inclusion
- destreaming

“One school fits all”

- “right sized schools” with the “same” programming for everyone
- “neighborhood schools” - no choice to attend outside your neighborhood, and therefore no option to seek a “better fit”
- this will most impact the kids who don’t live in the “right” neighborhood



Could “One School Fits All” happen?

Take 1: EETF (tried to cut specialty programs and optional attendance in 2017),

Take 2: changes to optional attendance policy, specialty program policy (to come), secondary school review, boundary changes (no consultation), capacity changes (no consultation)



What TDSB won't say...

In speaking with parents, teachers, administrators, and trustees, we do not have any answers to our questions that are more specific than this:

“The vision of the Secondary Program Review, which will address both under and over-utilized schools, includes fewer schools with strong programming and increased access to courses that support all pathways.”



They say they want our feedback BUT...

The TDSB says:

“We are looking for your input and suggestions on how to re-imagine the current secondary school experience for all TDSB students. We want to hear what is working, what could work better, and your innovative ideas for addressing challenges described in the [Secondary Review Report](#).”

BUT:

“More specifically by June 2020, the Board of Trustees will have received pertinent information on Access, Program, Location and Facilities as they support our Secondary Vision and will be in a position to approve a long term implementation plan of 8-12 years.”



Our “Only Hope” is Feedback

The TDSB does seem to respond to strong, voluminous, specific feedback:

- EETF
- Gifted cuts
- Proposed cuts to programs in June 2019 budget
- Ceramics technician at Northern
- ARTS Junction



Feedback Counts NOW!

Surveys and Deadlines:

Secondary School Review: January 31: [TDSB Secondary Program Review - Public Feedback](#).

Optional Attendance: February 3: [TDSB Optional Attendance Policy - Public Feedback](#)

Email for both topics: secondaryreview@tdsb.on.ca

Use the comment boxes or email to say what really matters to you!



Tips for Strong Feedback

- Send comments on one topic at a time
- Share personal stories of impacts (positive or negative) of that policy
- Use specific language

TOP REQUESTS:

Demand new feedback opportunities for and from ALL stakeholders on concrete, detailed, transparent, understandable plans for change in secondary schools -

Demand that all feedback received be publicly available

Demand that decisions be postponed until such feedback can be reviewed properly



Newly added feedback opportunities

Virtual Consultation:

The TDSB will hold parallel consultations on both the Secondary Program Review and Optional Attendance Policy (P013). Two virtual public consultation meetings described below are scheduled for Thursday, January 30, 2020 at 1 p.m. and 7 p.m.

“We will be having a similar format as the French Program online information sessions. We will provide some background information about the Review and changes proposed to Optional Attendance, and then there will be an opportunity to send in questions. We will respond via web chat on-line, in real time. The entire feed will be available in a transcript after the session and we will post it on our site. The online session will last one hour. Access is available through the Secondary Program Review page.”

**Staff will choose which handful of questions will be answered,
But can the questions for 246,000 students be answered in 1 hour?!**



Live and In Person!

John Malloy will be speaking at a ward forum with Shelley Laskin and Rachel Chernos-Lin about the Secondary School Review, other issues, and Q and A

Where: North Toronto CI, 17 Broadway Avenue, Toronto

When: Thursday, February 6, 2020 6:30-8:30



Will you help?

- Send feedback
- Tell your friends and family to engage
- Contact your trustee: email and ask to speak in person
- Go to TDSB meetings
- Offer tech support, research help, speak to the Board directly (depute), etc.

Together we can make a difference!!!

For questions, contact us: nss.school.council@gmail.com