1. **Enhancing Equity Task Force** (previously known as Inner City Task Force)

At a Special Board meeting on January 12th, trustees had a chance to meet and hear from Liz Rykert of MetaStrategies who was hired by the board to help advise and create a process for moving the re-established Inner City task force forward.

Liz highlighted the board’s history in providing leadership to address issues that create inequity in our schools, and she stated the need for bold moves and identifying only a few solid, meaningful and achievable goals.

More information about the Task Force:

**Key Messages:**

* Urban poverty is an issue faced by students in communities across the TDSB. We recognize that more must be done to address marginalization and inequity in our schools.
* The TDSB has established a task force to help address the challenges and remove the barriers faced by students living in urban poverty.
* The Enhancing Equity Task Force puts community and public consultation at the centre of the process working with TDSB Trustees, staff, community advisory committees, parents and students, as well as representatives from many stakeholder groups including community agencies, universities, government and youth.

**Over the coming months, the task force will assess:**

* what the TDSB has done to address the impact of poverty,
* determine what this meant for student achievement and well-being,
* develop recommendations for what must be done now to increase equity.

The participation and engagement of the communities we serve is a critical part of the task force’s work. SEAC will be included in the consultations. I’ve attached the first report of the Task Force below. You may want to send any questions you have to Director of Education John Malloy or to a trustee in advance of more formal participation in the task force. The next stage is to identify, recruit and orient members for 4 (four) task force working groups. SEAC members would be excellent additions to those working groups.

**A final report, with recommendations and actions, will be presented in November 2017**.

Read the Report to Board (January 12th) attached here: [Report #1 Enhancing Equity Task Force](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5C207547%5CALL%20DOCUMENTS%5C207547%20%28tdsbshareshomeadm%24%29%5CALL%20DOCUMENTS%5CCommittees%5CEquity%20EPAC%20-%20ICAC%5CEnhancing%20Equity%20TASK%20Force%5C170112%20Inner%20City%20Task%20Force%202990%20%281%29.pdf)

1. **Learning Opportunities Grant – Demographic Allocation**

On Thursday, January 12th, Social Planning Toronto released a report about the TDSB’s use of the provincial grant known as the Learning Opportunities Grant (LOG). The 22 page report is attached [here](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5C207547%5CALL%20DOCUMENTS%5C207547%20%28tdsbshareshomeadm%24%29%5CALL%20DOCUMENTS%5CCommittees%5CEquity%20EPAC%20-%20ICAC%5CLOG_report-final-web.pdf).

*Family income is one of the most powerful factors affecting student success. Students from economically and socially marginalized conditions face greater external challenges and consequently require the system to adapt to meet their needs. In recognition of this, the Ontario Ministry of Education provides all school boards with the Learning Opportunities Grant of which the largest portion is owed through the Demographic Allocation (LOG-DA). Toronto remains the child poverty capital of Canada and yet the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) only spends about half of the LOG-DA on programs and supports for students living in poverty, according to data they published earlier this year.*

*The LOG-DA is intended to nuance programs such as breakfast programs, homework clubs, reading recovery, and one-on-one support within the classroom, all of which help to level the playing field for marginalized students. However, because of chronic underfunding of the education system by the Province, the Toronto District School Board, like other school boards in Ontario, uses the LOG-DA to balance budget lines not related to the grant’s purpose. This means that the students with the greatest need are failing to bene t from the resources that they are entitled to – about $61 million worth of resources each year.*

*From the Social Planning Toronto website:* [*http://www.socialplanningtoronto.org/missing\_opportunities\_how\_budget\_policies\_continue\_to\_leave\_behind\_low\_income\_students*](http://www.socialplanningtoronto.org/missing_opportunities_how_budget_policies_continue_to_leave_behind_low_income_students)

The release of the report has generated a lot of media buzz and interest in how the TDSB allocates the LOG-DA grant money. The **Director of Education** responded to the report by saying "*TDSB uses the Learning Opportunities Grant (LOG) appropriately – as required by the Ministry – to support students who may be at risk. I do understand the perspective in the Social Planning Toronto report, as well as the perspective of some members of our Board and community, regarding the need to provide more resources to students who experience poverty. And I understand the perspective of those who believe that the way we are presently using the LOG funds may be most appropriate. In other words, this is a very complex issue for us to work through. School boards have the discretion and flexibility to use these funds to support local needs in their communities. From my perspective, as Director of Education, I believe in the role of school board trustees and in your authority to make decisions based on the realities and the needs of the families we serve. I do not believe it serves the best interests of our students for the Province to take this authority from local school boards. I want to share this opinion with you because I was asked for my opinion today in a radio interview. Here in our Board, I believe you have already shown real leadership by establishing the Enhancing Equity Task Force. We know that poverty is a critical issue that must be addressed. We know it is complex and often intersects with other vulnerabilities. This work will require you to make difficult decisions about where our resources will go and where they can be used more effectively. It may also require us to make choices about how we support vulnerable students who do not experience poverty. Through the work of the task force, in consultation with our communities, and in partnership as staff and Trustees, we can work through these complexities together to establish programming, staffing and services that make a difference for students living in poverty. I look forward to addressing these challenges with you in an authentic and effective way.*"

Funds from the LOG-DA are used to support students who receive Special Education programs. In the next few weeks during the TDSB budget process, trustees will be asking for a detailed breakdown of how the LOG funds are distributed, and I will ensure that all of that budget information (along with other relevant funding for Special Education) is shared with all members of SEAC. It is important for us to understand where provincial grant money is used at the TDBS. Our role in the budget process is to provide recommendations that would positively impact the Special Education programs available to support our students.

Please provide me with any questions or comments you have.

1. **Programs and School Services (PSSC) Meeting January 18th, 2017**

Reports from SEAC and all other advisory committees to the Board are made on a monthly basis to the Programs and School Services Committee. If recommendations or motions made at SEAC, the PSSC committee will consider them and decide whether to receive them and report to Board or take some other course of action before moving them for consideration by the entire Board. I’ve attached the two SEAC reports to the January 18th, 2017 meeting of PSSC. The format of these reports has been streamlined and is much easier to read.

As an advisory committee to the Board, it is important that SEAC recommendations and motions are understood and considered by all 22 trustees at the Board. The current process of reports going through the PSSC committee allows for greater discussion but it can also result in a time lag if items are referred back to SEAC or to staff / Director for further consideration.

All advisory committees are encouraged to take the opportunity to have someone present these reports as timed items (meaning they will be heard by the committee at a specific time in the meeting) at the PSSC meeting. This can offer greater insight and also highlight the importance of an item in the report perhaps resulting in the item being received and sent to Board quicker. Trustees will have an opportunity to ask the deputant (committee representative) questions about the report.

**I encourage SEAC to send someone to every PSSC meeting to outline the important work of the committee and provide greater clarity about the issues being considered. Each person presenting at the committee is given 5 minutes to speak.**

A new process for Deputations to the Board was recently passed and I have included here in this report: [Delegation Procedure PR718](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5C207547%5CALL%20DOCUMENTS%5C207547%20%28tdsbshareshomeadm%24%29%5CALL%20DOCUMENTS%5CCommittees%5CDELEGATION%20PROCEDURE%20PR%20718.pdf).

**Agenda for PSSC:**  [January 18th, 2017](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5C207547%5CDownloads%5CPSSC%20Agenda%20JAN%2018%202017.pdf)

**SEAC Reports to Programs and School Services: January 16th, 2017:**

[November 7th, 2016](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5C207547%5CALL%20DOCUMENTS%5C207547%20%28tdsbshareshomeadm%24%29%5CALL%20DOCUMENTS%5CCommittees%5CSEAC%5CReports%20to%20PSSC%5C5%28vii%29%20SEAC%20Nov%202016.pdf)

[December 5th, 2016](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5C207547%5CALL%20DOCUMENTS%5C207547%20%28tdsbshareshomeadm%24%29%5CALL%20DOCUMENTS%5CCommittees%5CSEAC%5CReports%20to%20PSSC%5C5%28vii%29%20SEAC%20Dec%202016.pdf)

1. **Proposed City of Toronto Cuts to Childcare Funding**

As part of the [City of Toronto Budget 2017](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__www1.toronto.ca_City-2520Of-2520Toronto_Strategic-2520Communications_City-2520Budget_2017_Analyst-2520Notes_Operating_Childrens-5Fop-5FDec6-5F1134.pdf&d=DgMFAg&c=c-XDUEBMlCu6ouXKbes97DX3NGgHUVcdcr0RZVK3Djs&r=d3fokD7DcqQub7pxyGZ3sJxgkIGVvGojiovhZEemnnY&m=3_u4B34sJZ6k4Rbwgj8BuOooM_hHw12q1Fvn-x8VMjw&s=DV9zSWgMDFjo8BgESK7g-T6glyL-I8gYjCQ3DXhSgyg&e=), Child Services is recommending phasing out the Occupancy Grant to school boards to support childcares. The budget also includes a proposed subsidy freeze. This would mean that 75 new fee subsidies that were approved in the 2016 budget would not be implemented in 2017.

The City of Toronto provides funding to childcares located within schools for leasing costs. Without this occupancy grant, school boards will have to recover costs directly from childcare centres. In turn, this will result in fee increases for parents, as childcares will have to recover costs directly from families.

According to information included in the City budget, the reduction will total $2,266,000 for the four school boards in Toronto.

In addition, the budget proposes a $700,000 cut to student nutrition programs and the elimination of funding to support three pools located in TDSB schools.

**FACTS**

The elimination of the City of Toronto childcare occupancy grant and a freeze to subsidized spaces will have a direct impact on affordability, accessibility, and quality of childcare in Toronto.

* **Affordability**: With the removal of the occupancy grant, fees will increase further, making childcare even more expensive. A recent study showed that 75 percent of families in Toronto already find licensed childcare unaffordable.
* **Accessibility:**Increasing costs for childcare will result in spaces becoming even less accessible for many families. Licensed childcare is already inaccessible for many families in Toronto due to high fees and lack of availability of subsidies. There are currently over 18,000 children on the waitlist for subsidies in the City of Toronto.
* **Quality:**An increase in operating costs will put additional administrative stress on childcares, make less money available for improving and expanding programming, while putting financial strain on families.

The City of Toronto needs to work with the Province and school boards to continue to provide childcare that is accessible and affordable for all families. TDSB Trustees are working within their communities to to urge city councillors to reject these cuts. [Read the Board decisions.](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5C028345%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CChildcare%20%26%20FDK%5CSummary%20Decisions%20CHILD%20CARE%20motion%20City%20of%20Toronto.pdf) (pages 5-7)

**Student nutrition programs:** The budget proposes a $1.58 million cut to public health spending. This includes a $700,000 cut to student nutrition programs. There is a direct relationship between healthy nutrition and academic achievement for students. Nutrition programs are vital to support all children and youth to be ready and able to learn in our classrooms.

**Elimination of funding for 3 pools:**The budget proposes eliminating funding to support three pools located in TDSB schools. This is in addition to last year’s city funding reduction for three other TDSB pools. Swimming is a key part of physical education and supports students’ social, physical, mental, emotional and academic well-being. Cutting funding to more pools will reduce opportunities for more children and families.

**ACTION**

Share this information. If you are concerned about the City of Toronto’s elimination of the childcare occupancy, the freeze to childcare subsidies, reductions in student nutrition funding and the elimination of funding for three TDSB pools share this information and speak with friends, family and other parents in your network and encourage them to take action. Connect with your TDSB Trustee for more information.