



Secondary Program Review: Update #2

To: Committee of the Whole

Date: 13 November, 2019

Report No.: 11-19-3777

Strategic Directions

- Transform Student Learning
- Provide Equity of Access to Learning Opportunities for All Students

Recommendation

It is recommended that the second update on the Secondary program review be received.

Context

This second update of the Secondary Program Review highlights ongoing activities and those that have taken place following the 16 October 2019 Committee of the Whole meeting.

1. Access

Revised Procedures

Over the summer months and early in the fall, a system scan revealed inconsistencies in the application of the Optional Attendance Policy. These included discrepancies between some schools' timelines for offers of admission and acceptance dates. The scan also revealed inconsistent practices regarding the management of waiting lists, resulting in ongoing changes to enrolment numbers in other schools. This practice creates challenges for other schools as decisions about the number of sections of each course need to be made in advance of the contractually-negotiated teacher surplus declaration date.

Agenda Page 2

At the 23 October 2019 Governance and Policy Committee meeting, a number of revisions were presented to Trustees for information.

In addition to date changes for the upcoming school year, the following changes were made to Operational Procedure PR545 Optional Attendance:

1. Clarification on the use of wait lists: The revised Procedure specifies the dissolution of waiting lists: “The date no student will be admitted under optional attendance is the first Monday in March being. After this date, schools can no longer offer placements whether on a waiting list or not. All waiting lists become null and void.”

In the section of the revised Procedure that discusses the lottery process, further clarification is provided: “No student will be offered a placement after the first Monday in March.”

2. Clarification on returning to a home school from a Specialized School/Program: The following statement from PR612 (Admission to Specialized Schools/Programs) has been added to PR545 so that the information is more easily accessible: “If the specialized school or program does not fit the student’s needs, the student is free to return to their home school at an appropriate intake opportunity without reapplying through the Optional Attendance process.”
3. Clarification on return to home school from an Alternative School: The following statement has been added to PR545: “If the alternative school does not fit the student’s needs, the student is free to return to their home school at an appropriate intake opportunity without reapplying through the Optional Attendance process.”
4. Clarification on Optional Attendance dates: The revised Procedure includes the following statement: “Optional Attendance forms will be made available on the first Monday of November. Applications may be submitted to the school following the release of Optional Attendance forms, but no offers of admission can be made prior to February 3, 2020. Any offers of admission before February 3, 2020 will be considered null and void.”

The following changes were made to Operational Procedure PR612 Admission to Specialized Schools and Programs:

1. Clarification on Optional Attendance dates: The revised Procedure includes the following statement: “Please refer to the timelines in PR545. Any offers of admission made before February 17, 2020 (elementary) and February 3, 2020 (secondary) will be considered null and void
2. Clarification on applications from outside the City of Toronto: The revised Procedure includes the following statement: “Offers of Admission to students from outside the City of Toronto will only be made after all eligible applicants that reside in the City of Toronto have been offered placement.”

Agenda Page 3

3. Clarification on the use of photos: The following statement has been added to the revised Procedure: “Photographs may be used to verify the identity of a student upon arrival for an admissions test. However, the school must not retain these photographs or use them as part of the admissions process.”
4. Clarification on admissions criteria: The following statement from Policy P013 Optional Attendance has been added to the revised Procedure: “Where identical programs are offered at several locations standardized criteria will exist to select students.”

Access to Specialized Schools and Programs

A meeting was held on 17 October 2019 with all secondary school principals whose schools were listed on the TDSB public website under Specialized Schools and Programs (<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/High-School/Going-to-High-School/Specialized-Schools-and-Programs>).

The invitation to this meeting generated responses from some school principals who indicated that although they were on the list as having a specialized program, it was no longer offered at their school. The website has been updated and now reflects only those schools that still offer a specialized program.

This meeting provided an opportunity to discuss with principals current admissions practices and criteria, to review the Optional Attendance policy and related procedures as they related to these schools, and to solicit input and feedback on next steps in the Secondary Program Review. The proposed revisions to PR545 Optional Attendance and PR612 Admission to Specialized Schools and Programs were shared with principals. As well, principals shared feedback on admissions practices and the establishment of a steering committee for specialized programs. An invitation was extended to the principals of these schools to participate on this steering committee. A meeting of this committee will be scheduled for the end of November 2019.

Public Consultations: Optional Attendance Policy and Secondary Program Review

Preparations are underway for four public consultation meetings which will take place in November. The meetings aim to seek feedback and input on a working draft Optional Attendance policy and on the Secondary Program Review. Discussion and survey questions have been developed with the Research department, which will assist in gathering and analyzing the responses. The dates and locations are as follows:

November 14, 7 p.m. at Western Technical-Commercial School, 125 Evelyn Crescent, Cafeteria

November 20, 7 p.m. at East Education Office, 140 Borough Drive, Committee Room 3/4

Agenda Page 4

November 26, 7 p.m. at C W Jefferys Collegiate Institute, 340 Sentinel Road, Cafeteria

November 28, 7 p.m. at John Polanyi Collegiate Institute, 640 Lawrence Avenue West, Cafeteria

In accordance with the *Policy Review Work Plan* that was approved in the Spring, the following changes have been proposed in the working draft Policy:

1. Suggested Policy Name: Attendance at Schools Outside of Designated Attendance Area
2. Separation and clarification of provisions related to Optional Attendance requests for regular schools/programs vs. specialized schools/programs: A proposal will be brought to Governance and Policy Committee in January 2020 to develop a *Policy Review Work Plan* for a new Policy on Specialized Programs. The revised Attendance at Schools Outside of Designated Attendance Area Policy (or Optional Attendance) would only apply to Regular schools and schools with French programs.
3. Removal of Alternative Schools from the Policy: The revised Policy would only apply to Regular schools and schools with French programs. Enrolment and admissions practices for Alternative Schools would be clarified in PR584: Alternative Schools.
4. Number of applications to Regular schools: One application for a regular school only. There will be a new Policy/Procedure to specify the application process to specialized programs.
5. Clarity about the requirement to change schools provided when students change residence or withdraw from child care: Students would be able to remain if the following school year is a graduation year.
6. Changes to priority groups. There are currently seven (7) priority groups. The revised Policy includes nine (9) priorities. The changes to priority groups include:
 - Creation of a priority group for students who wish to return to their designated school by address after having moved to a school as an out-of-area student.
 - Priority group for current TDSB students vs. non-TDSB students
 - Feeder school priorities in the existing policy have been combined to eliminate the distinction between students who attend the feeder school as in-district students vs. those who attend as optional attendance students. Currently, students who attend through optional attendance have a higher priority placement than those who are in district to that feeder school.
 - Requiring an out-of-area application for students who register after January 1 in the day care of a school for September admission. Currently, any child registered in the school can automatically attend.

Technical and Commercial Boundaries

Subject to approval of the Long-Term Program & Accommodation Strategy 2019-2028, a Local Feasibility Team will be established to explore options for eliminating technical and commercial boundaries.

The team will include affected Secondary School Principals, Superintendents, Trustees and other central staff, as required. Public consultations will be conducted as part of the process.

Recommendations will be presented to Trustees for approval at the end of this process, which is anticipated to conclude before the end of this school year.

2. Program

Identification of Specialized Program Type in Trillium Database

The meeting held with secondary school principals of specialized programs resulted in the identification of those schools that no longer offer specialized programs. The revised list is now accurate on the Board website. As such, the current types of specialized programs have been clarified.

A meeting was held with staff from the School Information Systems (SIS) team and from the Planning department to develop a critical path for implementation of a change in how students in specialized programs are identified in the Trillium database.

Implementation is expected to begin at the end of November 2019 when secondary vice-principals and guidance counsellors meet with the Central Guidance department to initiate the timetabling process for the upcoming school year. Changes will be made to existing Timetabling and Registration user manuals.

The ability to track students enrolled in specialized programs will enable Planning staff to better track the number of students enrolled in specialized programs, and understand where those students reside. Moving forward, this data could lead to refinements in the annual enrolment projection process where the specialized program could be distinguished from the regular track. At present, the two are combined.

Facilitating Access to Skilled Trades

Consultation on the proposed Facilitating Access to Skilled Trades (FAST) program has begun. Information has been shared with members of the Secondary Principals Advisory Committee, a committee chaired by the Senior Manager of Employee Services. This committee is made up of two principal representatives from each Learning Centre, and principal representatives from other types of schools or departments including Caring and Safe Schools, Alternative Schools, Special Education

congregated sites, Adult Learning Centres and the Toronto School Administrator Association (TSAA).

As well, as this program would align admission with the Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) program, the FAST program was shared with teachers, guidance counsellors, and administrators that attended the SHSM Symposia on 22 October 2019 (East) and 29 October 2019 (West) that were organized and facilitated by the Experiential Learning staff of the Leadership, Learning and School Improvement department.

3. Location

There are no updates to this section for this month's report.

4. Facilities

Part of the work of the Secondary Program Review will be to identify schools and programs that would benefit from renewal and upgrades to existing facilities to ensure viable program delivery.

Investing in technological education and computer facilities, for example, aligns with the Multi-Year Strategic Plan as these programs help develop deeper learning in Global Competencies and STEM through problem-based contextualized learning. These facilities also support the delivery of Ministry of Education funded programs in the Skilled Trades (e.g., OYAP, SHSM) as well as the implementation of the Creating Pathways to Success policy document by ensuring access to programs in all pathways.

On 1 November 2019, a meeting was held with members of the Experiential Learning and Facilities teams to determine a process to better allocate funding for renewal and repair of existing shops and classroom spaces. Given the reduction to the TDSB budget, a new process to identify system needs is required. These teams will continue to meet to identify which classroom and technological education spaces will receive financial investments, while keeping in mind that the map of the school board will be drawn over the next 10 years, pending Board approval of the recommendations provided through the Secondary Program Review.

Action Plan and Associated Timeline

Four public consultation meetings on a revised draft Optional Attendance policy and the Secondary Program Review will take place beginning November 14.

Staff will implement the review of the policy in accordance with the Policy Review Work Plan that was approved in June 2019. The working draft policy will remain posted on the TDSB website for public feedback for 90 days (until February 3, 2020). An online survey on the working draft policy is available on the Policy Consultations page of the TDSB website and will remain open for the duration of the consultation period.

Agenda Page 7

On November 14, an online survey on the Secondary Program Review will be available.

Other consultation opportunities are being planned, including focus groups with students, Community Advisory Committees, Trustees, senior team, students, teachers and administrators.

Resource Implications

Not applicable.

Communications Considerations

A webpage for the Secondary Program Review has been created on the Toronto District School Board's public website: <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/High-School/Secondary-Program-Review>.

This page is easily found on the landing page of the public site with its own promotional 'button' provided. Background information as well as a Question and Answer page have been included so that interested parties can learn more about the purpose and vision of the Review.

Information about public consultation meetings and other activities have been posted. As well, a link to the Policy Consultation site has been provided as the review of the Optional Attendance policy is also underway. As with the Secondary Program Review, a 'button' for Optional Attendance Consultations has been provided on the TDSB landing page for users to easily navigate to this site. The Secondary Program Review site will be updated regularly, and will include upcoming events and past reports.

Information about the four public consultation meetings has been shared on the Secondary Program Review site as well as through other avenues including Trustees' Weekly, News You Can Use, System Leaders' Weekly, Twitter, and TDSB Connects.

An email address has been created so that all questions, input, comments and feedback can be shared through a central vehicle: SecondaryReview@tdsb.on.ca.

Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)

P013 - Optional Attendance

PR545 - Optional Attendance

PR612 - Admission to Specialized Schools and Programs

Appendices

Not applicable

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