



Robin Pilkey

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May 3, 2019

The Honourable Christine Elliott
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

The Honourable Lisa MacLeod
Minister of Children, Community and Social Services

The Honourable Lisa Thompson
Minister of Education

Dear Minister Elliott, Minister MacLeod and Minister Thompson

On behalf of the Toronto District School Board, I am writing you to express our concerns regarding the significant reduction in provincial funding for Toronto Public Health. This decision could affect the programs and services that benefit the health and wellbeing of Torontonians, however, your government has not been clear about the size of the funding reduction and the possible and known impacts.

Specifically, we are concerned about how this funding reduction will impact the supports and programs currently offered to our students and families by Toronto Public Health. Toronto Public Health provides critical supports to the health of TDSB students and families, and provides resources in support of early literacy intervention, disease control and prevention, and student nutrition programs.

We rely heavily on these supports and programs to reduce the impact of poverty on education and increase achievement and well-being levels for our students. For example, we know that students participating in nutrition programs are able to concentrate better, retain and apply information more effectively, and are more likely to demonstrate positive behaviours and relationships with peers ([Feeding Our Future, 2008-10](#)).

In 2018, Toronto Public Health provided service in 800 publicly funded schools, reaching over 344,000 students, including vaccinations for more than 20,000 students, conducted over 32,500 food safety inspections, and completed investigations for more than 400 cases of disease outbreak. The Student Nutrition Program alone serves more than 210,000 meals a day to hungry children. A full list of programs and services that may be impacted by this reduction is available on the [backgrounder](#) (Appendix A, Page 7-12) developed by the City of Toronto and Toronto Public Health.

Firstly, there has been no consultation with the City of Toronto, public health workers or Torontonians of all ages who receive public health services. Secondly, the City of Toronto has already passed its budget and a provincial funding reduction at this time seems punitive.

Lastly, through our budget consultations, we heard from our communities that programs and services supporting the early years of school was among the top priorities.

Therefore, we ask that you put this funding reduction on hold until there can be proper consultation with the City and a full discussion about the known and possible impacts. For us, this information is needed so that we can ensure important programs that our students need for their health, achievement and well-being are not at-risk.

As always, I am happy to discuss this further with you.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robin Pilkey', with a stylized, flowing script.

Robin Pilkey
Chair of the Board
Toronto District School Board

Cc: Toronto MPP's