



Durham District School Board
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January 25, 2019

Hon. Lisa M Thompson, Minister of Education
 Ministry of Education
 Mowat Block
 Queen's Park
 Toronto, Ontario M7A 1L2

Dear Minister Thompson,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the members of Durham District School Board's (DDSB) Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). Our SEAC includes seven Parent Associations, who represent thousands of families in Durham Region.

During our September meeting the members of our SEAC discussed the funding changes announced by the Deputy Minister of Education on August 24, 2018. Collectively we are dismayed by the Ministry of Education clawing back the increase to the Special Incidence Portion that was previously announced for the 2018/2019 school year.

The DDSB already allocates 3 million dollars more money than given in Special Education Grants to Special Education services. The Local Priorities Grant is one of the grants the DDSB uses to cover the deficit in Special Education. The Local Priorities grant is a two-year grant that will end this school year.

Our SEAC has previously expressed our concerns that the amount the Ministry of Education provides for the Special Incidence Portion (SIP) is inadequate. The claw back of the SIP increase announced for the 2018/2019 school year and reallocation to Special Education Per Pupil Amount has resulted in a net decrease in funding, further increasing the DDSB's Special Education deficit. As the Auditor General Report highlights, the Ministry of Education's "funding formula uses out-of-date benchmarks and is due for a comprehensive external review." Our SEAC is extremely concerned by the direction this government is taking. The probable loss of the Local Priorities grant, coupled with the decrease in Special Education funding, will likely result in cuts to services for our most vulnerable students.

Our SEAC is also troubled by the Ministry of Education allocating Special Education funding where the Ministry perceives the need to be, rather than where the need has been identified by school boards. We are concerned that this will create inequity in funding among exceptionalities.



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We urge the Minister to evaluate the true costs associated with SIP claims to support our students and increase funding accordingly. We request that the Ministry of Education not favor one exceptionality over another by creating inequity in funding. The Auditor General has illustrated that 79% of school boards are spending more than their allocated Special Education funds on programming to support its students. We echo the Auditor General as we continue to request that the Special Education funding model be reviewed and changed to accurately reflect the increasing and more complex needs of students with special needs.

Sincerely,



Eva Kyriakides
SEAC Chair
Durham District School Board

cc: Chairs of Ontario Special Education Advisory Committees
Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy, MPP
Lorne Coe, MPP
Jennifer French, MPP
Lindsay Park, MPP
Hon. Rod Phillips, MPP
Hon. Laurie Scott, MPP



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