

Many Priorities and Partnerships Funding (PPF) announcements are directly related to current initiatives that benefit students, parents and stakeholders. To access the PPF funding, a very prescriptive Transfer

needs of our students. For example; a vision claim requires multiple devices, such as cameras, iPad, laptop, and additional software; students with Autism require special equipment to support daily programming.

The largest component of the special education grant is based on the total enrolment of a school board and does not factor in the actual number of students that require special education programs and services. Incident rates at school boards vary based on many factors. There should be recognition for the ratio of students requiring special education services and resources compared to total enrolment.

Additional Feedback:

Benchmarks and Inflation

The Board Administration and Governance Grant has not kept up with average salaries for highly skilled workforce positions. Average salaries for certified professionals in finance, human resources, employee relations, planning, technology and communications exceed the benchmark funding determined by the Ministry. School boards are losing experienced staff to other sectors because of the dramatic difference in job-related salaries. Recruitment of skilled professionals is also becoming increasingly difficult as school boards cannot compete with current levels of compensation. Funding of full-time equivalent staffing has also not kept pace with increasing complexity and volume of accountability, transparency, and reporting requirements. A review of the benchmarks would benefit all school boards, given the enveloping requirement not to overspend the grant.

The Ministry needs to address inflationary pressures coming through technology and software costs, audit services, legal services and salaries. Some software costs have increased as much as 50% year over year for core systems that would be very costly to convert to an alternative provider at short notice, so Boards are left to absorb the higher pricing for key systems. Inflationary pressures also apply to maintenance, construction and health and safety requirements which are also lagging in corresponding funding adjustments.

Legal Costs

The Uniform Code of Accounts requires all legal expenses to be mapped to Board Administration and Governance despite no identifiable source of funding within the grant model. As a large urban school board within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), there are significant legal issues, with outcomes that can be precedent setting on a provincial basis. Human rights and special education legal concerns are increasing exponentially. There should be a funding source specific to legal issues.

Cybersecurity and Protection of Information

In recent years, school boards have had to manage security issues and threats. Targeted funding is needed specifically for safety and security in schools and board offices: cybersecurity protection and insurance, improvements to public address (PA) and video surveillance systems, door access systems, security in response to issues or threats, media/communications resources to draft system messages and monitor social media posts related to Board activities.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity

Providing funds to broaden the capacity of administration and teaching personnel in the area of equity and inclusivity would help address the needs that are coming forward from communities and advocacy seeking groups. Enhanced funding would target equity strategies to monitor the impact of DPCDSB priorities on equity seeking groups.

