

February 17, 2021

The Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education
Ministry of Education
315 Front Street West, 14th Floor
Toronto, ON, M7A 0B8

Dear Minister Lecce,

At its meeting on January 25, 2021, the Board of Trustees for the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) agreed to write to you to express our support for the Ontario Public School Boards Association (OPSBA) [Submission regarding the 2021-2022 Grants for Student Needs](#), asking for flexible and responsive education funding for Ontario school boards.

Trustees recently held a discussion on the 2021-2022 Education Funding Consultation at the January 11, 2020 Committee of the Whole meeting. The funding priorities for the WRDSB were all captured in the OPSBA submission highlighting the WRDSB's need for investment in the following areas:

- COVID-19 Pandemic-Related Funding Pressures
- Capital and Facilities
- Indigenous Education and Anti-Racism Initiatives
- Special Education
- Children and Youth Mental Health

From the Board of Trustees' perspective, the entirety of OPSBA's submission in response to the Education Funding Consultation is applicable to our Board.

As we navigate the ongoing impact of the pandemic, it has become clear that these issues will continue to be felt through the coming year. The additional staffing, personal protective equipment, and operational costs funded this year will continue to be needed next year to address learning gaps and to ensure health and safety measures can be maintained until COVID-19 is no longer a pervasive threat. We will soon begin to make decisions for the 2021-22 school year which may include both in person and distance learning. The sustainability of the WRDSB's operations, including offering two modes of learning, is contingent on the Ministry's ability to continue the pandemic related funding offered in the 2020-21 school year.



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In the Waterloo Region District School Board, our students are first - each and every one. We need sufficient funding and local flexibility to implement programs that will close learning gaps and promote student achievement and well-being. Public education has never been so important. We ask you and the Ministry for your support of the funding priorities highlighted by the OPSBA submission and look forward to seeing them reflected in the next provincial budget.

Sincerely,



Joanne Weston
Chairperson of the Board of Trustees
Waterloo Region District School Board

CC:
MPP Belinda Karahalios
MPP Laura Mae Lindo
MPP Amy Fee
MPP Michael Harris
MPP Catherine Fife
OPSBA
Ontario Public School Boards

Sent by email: minister.edu@ontario.ca



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