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COMMISSION DE LA CULTURE ET DE
L'ÉDUCATION

Déposé le : 3 décembre 2019

N° : CCE-039

Secrétaire : Olivier Champagne

November 30, 2019

On behalf of the St Thomas High School Governing Board, we would like to thank you for taking the time to read our points concerning Bill 40, as well as the opportunity to share them with you.

The St. Thomas High School Governing Board has consistently reflected a strong community base that includes 8 parents, 8 teachers, 2 community reps, 2 student reps, as well as administration. With Bill 40, the governing boards will take on more responsibilities with less people, resulting in an increased burden on volunteers. Additionally, we are concerned that the members may not always have the proper skills to be fully effective in the execution of their tasks. It is also concerning that the added requirements of the proposed bill would result in less parental representation on the governing board.

We have outlined the following points for consideration.

In regards to Bill 40:

1. We do not see anything concrete in the document that will enhance student success, notwithstanding the added section regarding the "Commitment to Student Success committee".
 - a. There is no allocation of extra funding and/or resources to support student success
 - b. There is no mandate for the support of skills that are necessary in today's world (i.e.: computer coding, time management, good online citizenship, etc...).
 - c. There is a concern that the additional responsibility for supporting student success will fall onto the parents, who may not always have the information or qualifications to make objective educational choices.
2. We are concerned that the changes in Bill 40 will negatively affect student success.
 - a. There is a great deal of heterogeneity in the effective implementation of student success strategies as the responsibilities are being moved from the school board to individual schools, which may not all have the same philosophy, context or resources.
 - b. There is a concern about the lack of clarity regarding the degree of direction and guidance from the service centre to each governing board, regarding critical decisions that impact their school and students.

3. We recommend the retention of the current Governing Board composition in order to continue to foster a collaborative school environment.
 - a. St Thomas High School has 1300 students and having 20 members on the Governing Board has worked well for us in terms of equal representation and collaboration.
 - b. We strongly believe that, at the high school level, there is a need to continue to have 2 student members as it encourages participation and leadership.
 - c. To successfully have a fruitful collaboration with school administration, teachers and parents, we must ensure an equal number of parents and teachers/staff.
 - d. It is our recommendation to retain community representation (up to 2 members) to ensure that the schools reflect the local environment.
 - e. It is recommended that each school be given the flexibility to choose the size of the governing board, based on a government mandated minimum and maximum guideline that reflects the size of the school.
4. The additional tasks mentioned in Bill 40 will place an increased burden on parents currently volunteering which may lessen the level of engagement and efficacy. Required training should be made available to volunteering parents at their own convenience and schedules (ie: online) rather than mandatory “in person” training sessions.

Given the window of opportunity that Bill 40 affords us, we would like to see amendments that would include wellness, community service, sustainable green initiatives and climate change/environmental awareness components in the curriculum. We believe the aforementioned points would strengthen the links between the schools and the community.

Thank you for your attention.