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November 2, 2023

Hon. Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
900 Bay St. 22nd Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

RE: [Bill 98](#), *Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, 2023* - Directors Performance Appraisal

Dear Minister

We understand that the Ministry has requested feedback from stakeholders on Directors of Education Performance Appraisals, specifically to “ensure that more consistent approaches that consider performance in relation to provincial priorities.”

We believe that proposals to standardize the process for Directors of Education performance appraisals through regulation, including mandatory elements and requirement for school boards to engage the Minister in the Directors of Education appraisal process, may lead to an erosion of local decision-making and undermine the independence of Boards of Trustees to appraise the work of our sole employee, the Director of Education (DoE).

That being said, the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) does welcome the opportunity to provide feedback related to the Director of Education Performance Appraisal (DEPA). We agree that potential benefits for school boards may be obtained through standardization and welcomes additional resources to assist the Board of Trustees. TVDSB is looking forward to a more consistent and effective appraisal process and the opportunity to learn from additional best practices.

Based on current TVDSB policy and procedures, we recommend that the DEPA:

- Aim to strengthen school boards, making them more cohesive, accountable, and proactive in serving the needs of students and the broader school board community.
- be conducted on an annual basis with regular (i.e., quarterly) updates on progress of annual goals as articulated in the Multi Year Strategic and related Operational Plans to the Board of Trustees
- be conducted in collaboration between the DoE and Board of Trustees

The criteria upon which performance is to be appraised should be based on and align with: the DoE’s duties as outlined the Education Act and Regulations, Ontario Human Rights Code, Occupational Health and Safety Act, Ministry Directives, Board of Trustees Policy, the Board of Trustees’ Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP), Board Improvement and Equity Plan, Operational Plan, any other duties assigned by the Board of Trustee, as well as the Ontario Leadership Framework.

The performance appraisal process should:

- be facilitated by the Chair of the Board with participation of by the Board of Trustees.
- be standardized, transparent and communicated to the DoE in a timely manner.
- combine both quantitative and qualitative inputs and measures.
- Include input from a wide range of Board of Education interested party.
- provide opportunities for feedback and discussion about professional growth, clarification of job expectations and priorities, evidence of performance, and identification of areas of performance.
- be confidential and conducted in private in accordance with the Education Act, Section 207(2)
- Include a clear and transparent process following an unsatisfactory rating when there are identified needs for performance improvement.

Our experience has shown value in using the services of external consultancy firms to support the Board of Trustees in conducting the Performance Appraisal. However, both the use of external services and professional development for Trustees comes at a significant cost to the board. Therefore, additional funding should be considered. Finally, accountability and reporting should remain in control of Trustees.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide feedback, on behalf of the TVDSB Board of Trustees, we look forward to future collaboration on this matter.

Sincerely,

The Thames Valley District School Board of Trustees