



Chair of the Board:
Lori-Ann Pizzolato

Trustees:
Carol Antone
Dave Cripps
Leeanne Hopkins
Marianne Larsen
Beth Mai
Sherri Moore
Arlene Morell
Leroy Osbourne
Lori-Ann Pizzolato
Sheri Polhill
Meagan Ruddock
Christian Sachs
Bruce Smith

Student Trustees:
Jana Anan
Frederick Nicholas
Savrup Saran

Director of Education:
Mark Fisher

Education Centre
1250 Dundas Street
London, Ontario
N5W 5P2

519-452-2000 Ext:
20219

www.tvdsb.ca

November 7, 2023

Hon. Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
5th Flr, 438 University Ave.
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8
Via email: minister.edu@ontario.ca

Dear Minister Lecce,

At the September 26, 2023, Board Meeting, Thames Valley District School Board Trustees passed the following motion:

THAT the Chair write a letter to the Minister of Education to make the Minister and his office aware of the challenges to respond to directives by school boards, the system, and educators based on the timing and communication of decisions and timelines for implementation, particularly as it pertains to capital planning submissions for 2023-2024, the release of Grants for Student Needs, and curriculum updates and implementation timelines.

With regards to the Capital Priorities Program, the Board appreciates the Ministry's updates to the process with the goal of expediting the approval and construction of much-needed schools and school renovations.

With the additional upfront information that the Ministry is requesting of Facility Services and Capital Planning staff, who are also managing conflicting priorities such as but not limited to ongoing attendance area reviews, a building condition assessment program, year end reporting, additional ad-hoc Ministry reporting submissions and ongoing construction projects, Trustees kindly request that staff be given as much time as possible in the next round to complete the submission process.

Trustees have noted similar challenges with regards to Grants for Student needs. The Board appreciates the complexity of the Grants for Student Needs (GSN) funding announcements and recognizes the reasons for delays during the pandemic. We would like to request that the timing of the announcement return to pre-pandemic timing of late March, or earlier, to allow Boards to plan appropriately for the upcoming budget year.

With staffing related deadlines in early spring, a GSN release that is later than March becomes extremely problematic and reduces the flexibility to adapt to any funding changes. Internal school staffing processes are disrupted when new GSN funding is released after March. Schools experience challenges filling newly vacant positions with experienced, qualified teachers, as they will have missed the established hiring rounds and must adhere to collective agreement hiring timelines. Late GSN releases can lead to extended hiring into the summer months when we would hope to have already finalized our schools' staffing for September.

An earlier GSN release would mean minimized disruption at the beginning of the school year and allow for additional time where needed to find qualified teachers in challenging areas such as French Technological studies.

Finally, we wish to echo the sentiments of other school boards, which are having challenges implementing curriculum updates within the given timelines.

We appreciate your consideration of this matter and any steps that can be taken to alleviate pressures on staff as they work diligently to support our students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "L. Pizzolato".

Lori-Ann Pizzolato
Chair of the Board
Thames Valley District School Board

cc: Mark Fisher, Director Fisher
Trustees
Student Trustees