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April 23, 2024

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

Dear Minister Lecce,

Thames Valley District School Board is grateful for the work the Ministry has done to recognize learning to read as a basic and essential human right. We are pleased with the improvements that have come from the recommendations from the Right to Read report. In particular, the significant shift in reading instruction is a welcome and necessary change.

As a board, we believe we are in need of two additional tools to support our work as a district to improve student achievement in reading: a standardized, universal early screener for reading and reporting on a reading-specific mark, district-wide.

Ensuring the universal early screener for reading is mandatory is important to promoting equity across our diverse district. Since *all* students would be screened, results could be interpreted in a standardized way. Moreover, the board would be more likely to capture the needs of communities that often experience disproportionate outcomes such as multilingual learners, Indigenous students, and students with special education needs. If the universal screener for reading does not become mandatory, we will not have the type of system-wide data we had anticipated to make the necessary decisions to best support students in reading.

Regarding reporting on a reading-specific mark, report cards will include only a single mark for Language. Report card changes will greatly reduce our understanding of how well students are performing in reading, specifically, at the district level. Mandatory reporting on reading achievement throughout the school year allows the district to monitor student success through this data collection.

We hope you will consider supporting mandatory screening and more fulsome reporting so that TVDSB can have the tools and data necessary to best support students' right to read.

Once again, thank you for championing student literacy through the new curriculum.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Beth Mai".

Beth Mai
Chair of the Board
Thames Valley District School Board

cc: Mark Fisher, Director Fisher
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