

TDSB chair calls for multi-party solution to child-care funding^[1]

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EXCERPTS

While Mayor John Tory's announcement that the City of Toronto won't be cutting the school-based child care occupancy grant this year came as welcome news, the Toronto District School Board has put out a call for a long-term solution.

Tory acknowledged the city would not go ahead with planned cuts to child care, noting that costs in Toronto are already putting undue stress on the budgets of too many families. The city funds occupancy grants to school boards that offer child-care spaces, and it looked for a time that Toronto's budget crunch could see those funds cut.

The decision not to slash those funds will help the families of some 8,000 children.

TDSB chair Robin Pilkey released a statement in the wake of Tory's announcement on Monday, Feb. 6, in which she lauded the city's decision to leave the child-care grant in this year's budget. Because the announcement did not suggest the funding would remain in perpetuity, however, Pilkey acknowledged the need to prepare for the worst.

She noted that "there needs to be a long-term solution, as these cuts would mean higher child-care costs to parents, which we know many already cannot afford."

"We agree that the City, the TDSB, child-care operators and the Ontario government should develop a sustainable funding base for Toronto's child care services."

Pilkey said the province should come through with funding to help defray costs for families, particularly in light of the Wynne government's plan to add 100,000 new child-care spaces over the next five years.

The TDSB chair added that the city should continue to fund school pools, which have been under fire in recent years and which are also facing cuts in the city's budget. Three school pools were listed for possible closure as a means to save funds, as the province's education funding does not cover their operating costs.

"As with child-care funding, we need to work together and with other levels of government to develop a sustainable funding strategy before cutting funding and before closing pools," she said.

-reprinted from Inside Toronto

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Tags: child care funding^[4]

affordable child care^[5]

base funding^[6]

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