

EX33.16.3

City of Toronto -- Executive Committee: July 3, 2013

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Hello, I am Catherine Soplet, very pleased to be here to speak to the Motion EX33.16

In my efforts to boost literacy in public education, I consider that parent grants in public schools are a key prosperity response to poverty reduction. I am a member of Peel Poverty Action Group. The work I do in public schools is based out of Mississauga, out of Peel and extends to elsewhere.

My work was recognized in 2013 with Award of Excellence by Ontario Public School Boards Association for boosting literacy in schools. Schools are a mechanism for Social Economic Development. Parent grants boost literacy, schools boost literacy. Literacy is the top line and restores fiscal balance.

The proposed Task Force charts a course suggested in June 2013 policy paper discussed at the recent meeting of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. The policy paper is for Intergovernmental Partnerships.

A smaller scale of the proposed Task Force can be found in the work for Stronger Neighbourhoods and its connection with public schools. I want to tell you a little story of promise and hope in the priority neighbourhoods which can be replicated and brought into play when the City-Schools Task Force is created.

Since 2010-11, I connect with TDSB Model Schools on a literacy project which strengthens youth outcomes, benchmarks improved literacy and reduces crime. The model schools locate in Toronto's identified priority neighbourhoods. The Stronger Neighbourhoods supports made it possible in 2010 for 71% of schools -- 80 of 112 -- to access a microfund Parent Reaching Out grant. Many of the schools got the grant for the first time.

2010-11 EAQO scores processed for Fraser Institute 2012 Report Card. It showed that 13 secondary schools located in the priority neighbourhoods pivoted .5 or better improvement on a scale of 10, in the first year of widespread uptake of the grants. Link

Three years later, grant penetration is 98%. Overall crime rates are reported to be reduced, despite the unfortunate spike in fatal shootings.

The City of Toronto-School Boards Task Force thus could offer a Stronger Neighbourhoods framework to encompass the whole city. Using the best practices from TDSB Model Schools, schools that are not yet able to access the grants will have help so they will be able to get them. The Task Force will be an invaluable table by which to make progress on the Youth Action Plan and its augmented strategic framework "Stepping UP" announced on June 25 my Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

595.50 deputation ends.

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2013 Award of Excellence, Ontario Public School Boards' Association