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2014 OPERATING BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

2014 Student Nutrition Program Operating Budget Request

Issue/Background:

On December 10, 2013, the Budget Committee requested BU50.1, item # 1.m., "The Medical Officer of Health - briefing note that lists which municipalities offer student nutrition programs."

Key Points:

- Ontario Municipalities which Provide Financial Support to Student Nutrition Programs

Government funding for student nutrition programs across Ontario is administered according to 14 geographic regions. Besides the City of Toronto, the following municipalities/regional governments provided financial support towards their local student nutrition programs in 2012: Algoma District Services Administration Board (\$16,500), City of Ottawa (\$86,000), Oxford County (\$40,000), District of Sault Ste. Marie Social Services Administration Board (\$27,905), City of Windsor (\$100,000), and York Region (\$120,000). By comparison, the program reach in these municipalities/regions is significantly less than that in Toronto (i.e., in 2012: 24,500 participants in York Region and 11,300 participants in Ottawa, compared to 132,000 participants in Toronto).

- The 2014 Recommended Operating Budget for Toronto Public Health includes \$5.300 million gross and net in base funding for Student Nutrition Program in Toronto. The provincial contribution for Student Nutrition Program in Toronto is \$5.337 million for 2013-2014 school year.

- Prioritized Funding

Municipal and Provincial funding for student nutrition programs is prioritized to higher need schools that have a significant proportion of students who come from low income families, according to school board data (e.g., Learning Opportunities Index used by the Toronto District School Board and N-tiles Index used by the Toronto Catholic District School Board). Students are not individually means tested for participation in the program since this has been found to deter participation by students most in need.

The level of need varies by school. School board data shows that even in schools considered 'lower need', there is a 20% (or 1 in 5) poverty rate.

Parental contribution levels vary by school, as does the amount of local fundraising a school community can achieve. In 2012, parental contributions alone ranged from 0% to 30% of total program costs, with the average about 6-7%. Programs in wealthier school communities receive more funding from parents and local fundraising, and therefore, receive less municipal and provincial government funding.

As summarized in *Nourishing Young Minds: Toronto's Student Nutrition Programs* (2012) <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.HL15.3>, an international review of student nutrition programs in 19 countries identified stable core government funding as critical to the ability of school nourishment programs to achieve their nutrition and education goals. The 5-year plan to stabilize and expand student nutrition programs in Toronto supports balancing government funding with financial contributions by parents, local fundraising, and corporate donations.

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