

## **Student Nutrition Program: Governance Update**

<b>Date:</b>	June 29, 2016
<b>To:</b>	City Council
<b>From:</b>	City Manager
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Reference Number:</b>	

### **SUMMARY**

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This report provides an update on the City's progress towards the development of a renewed governance structure for Student Nutrition Toronto. It provides a summary of the current governance model and recommendations from an independent governance review commissioned by the partnership which currently oversees Student Nutrition Toronto. Key findings and recommendations from an independent provincial review of Ontario's Student Nutrition Program are also included as they provide future opportunities for alignment with the City of Toronto.

### **RECOMENDATIONS**

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**The City Manager recommends that:**

1. City Council request the City Manager, in consultation with the Medical Officer of Health, to report to City Council during the Fall 2016 on an enhanced governance model for Student Nutrition Toronto.
2. City Council request the City Manager to forward this report to the Toronto Board of Health, the Ontario Minister of Children and Youth Services, the Toronto District School Board, the Toronto Catholic District School Board, le Conseil scolaire Viamonde, le Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud, Toronto Foundation for Student Success, Angel Foundation for Learning, and FoodShare Toronto.

## **Financial Impact**

There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

The Deputy City Manager & Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

On January 15/16, 2013, City Council requested the Medical Officer of Health and the Board of Health to review the accountability framework for the City's financial investment in student nutrition programs. On September 30, 2013, the Board of Health received a report confirming that adequate accountability mechanisms were in place. At this meeting, the Board of Health requested a report on options to strengthen the governance of the student nutrition programs to enhance future capacity for fundraising, accountability, efficiency, and quality assurance, and to best position the program for future growth and success in achieving program objectives.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.HL24.5>

At its May 7/8, 2013 meeting, Council adopted a report from the City Manager which outlined accountability and controllership regarding City contributions to student nutrition programs by the Toronto Foundation for Student Success, the Student Nutrition Toronto partner which administers the majority of the City's student nutrition investment.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.EX31.5>

On October 26, 2015, the Medical Officer of Health provided an overview to the Board of Health of the current governance model for Student Nutrition Toronto. The report described the process undertaken by this partnership to review its governance model and highlighted key findings aimed at building capacity to support future program growth.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.HL7.1>

On February 17, 2016, the City Council requested the Medical Officer of Health to report back to the Budget Committee on the financial implications of the Student Nutrition Program's Governance review in time for the 2017 Budget process.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.EX12.2> . A report-back is anticipated Fall 2016.

On May 3-5, 2016, City Council directed the City Manager to assist the Medical Officer of Health in his ongoing collaboration with the Partners for Student Nutrition to develop a new governance model for Student Nutrition Toronto that builds upon the existing strengths of growth in the program, builds capacity in the program for improved fundraising and provides greater community engagement. Additionally, Council requested the City Manager to report on the result of these efforts to the July 12, 2016 meeting of City Council in advance of the 2017 funding agreements.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.HL11.4>

## ISSUE BACKGROUND

Student nutrition programs are community-based meal and snack programs that operate primarily in public schools. Programs are locally operated by students, parents and volunteers with in-kind support from partner organizations. Funding for Toronto programs is through a partnership model which includes City of Toronto, Province of Ontario, parent contributions, community and school-board fundraising initiatives, and corporate donations. The City provides funding for food purchases, while provincial funding is dedicated to food costs, administration, community development, and equipment. Programs also depend on food, product and equipment donations, volunteer time and effort, in-kind use of space, and free training opportunities.

Stimulated by policy and investment directions by the City of Toronto and the Province of Ontario, there has been unprecedented growth in the number of student nutrition programs in Toronto since 2007 (see Table 1). In 2008 and 2013, the provincial government increased its investment in the Ontario Student Nutrition Program supporting recommendations from the Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy and the Healthy Kids Panel. In 2010, 2012, and 2015, the Toronto Board of Health endorsed a multi-year funding plan towards the cost of food to strengthen and expand student nutrition programs in Toronto within the context of a shared partnership funding framework.

**Table 1: Growth of the Student Nutrition Program in Toronto**

		2007	2016
<b>Reach of Municipal Investment</b>	Number of children/youth	85,000	182,700
	Number of program sites	350	565
<b>Municipal Investment</b>		\$2.8 M	\$9.9 M
<b>Provincial Investment</b>		\$1.4 M	\$8.6 <sup>1</sup> M
<b>Combined Municipal and Provincial Investments</b>		\$4.2 M	\$18.5 M

Student Nutrition Toronto (SNT) is the partnership which provides overall program oversight. It strives to balance emerging needs as it coordinates existing funded programs and manages this significant program growth. The partnership is working to evolve its current governance model to take on new investment opportunities in the student nutrition program for Toronto.

As the City of Toronto is a significant funder of student nutrition programs operating in Toronto school communities, the City supports a governance model for SNT which builds upon the existing strengths of the program, is disentangled from operational responsibilities, responds to future growth, builds program capacity for improved fundraising, and provides greater community engagement.

<sup>1</sup> The 2016 investment from the Province of Ontario has not been confirmed to date, but is not expected to be less than 2015.

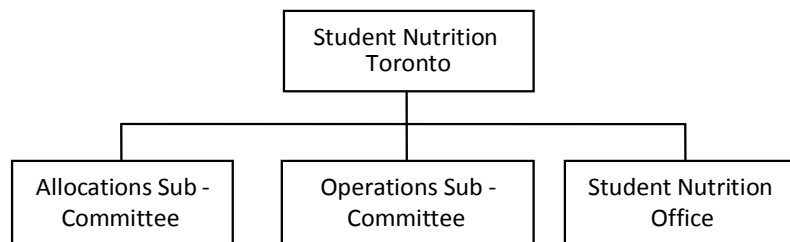
## COMMENTS

### Overview of Current Governance Model, 2016

Student Nutrition Toronto (SNT) is a collaborative partnership which oversees provincially and municipally funded student nutrition programs in Toronto. Since first forming in 1998 under the direction of the Board of Health and City Council, the mandate of the partnership includes approving municipal and provincial allocations to student nutrition programs, ensuring program quality and accountability, and strategic planning for future growth and long-term sustainability. Student Nutrition Toronto member organizations include Toronto Public Health, Toronto District School Board, Toronto Catholic District School Board, Conseil Scolaire Viamonde, Toronto Foundation for Student Success (TFSS), Angel Foundation for Learning (AFL), and two community members – one being FoodShare Toronto, while the second is currently vacant.

The partnership carries out its mandate through a governance model comprised of two sub-committees and a central coordinating office (Figure 1). The partnership is chaired by the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) or designate, while the sub-committees are co-chaired by a member of the SNT partnership and a staff member from one of the partner organizations.

**Figure 1: Student Nutrition Toronto – Current Governance Model, 2016**



The *Allocations Sub-Committee* oversees the application and review process. It recommends the municipal and provincial funding allocations, based on criteria and funding formulae established by SNT as well as municipal and provincial grant requirements. Both the TFSS and the AFL are the contracted lead agencies to administer the municipal grant. The TFSS is also the contracted lead agency to administer the provincial grant to all Toronto student nutrition programs.

The *Operations Sub-Committee* oversees the implementation of policies and procedures established by SNT with an emphasis on operational support for programs through training, material/resource development, as well as regular site-visits and consultations. Through this Sub-Committee, each partner organization takes a lead role to provide in-kind operational support to local programs (e.g., infrastructure, fundraising, volunteer recruitment, community development, training, etc.).

The *Student Nutrition Toronto Office* coordinates general administration, reporting, and communications functions, as well as the partnership's food and logistics initiatives. The staff team of this coordinating office is employed by the TFSS and funded through the MCYS investment directed towards student nutrition program administration.

## **Student Nutrition Toronto Governance Review**

In November 2014 the SNT partners received a report and recommendations from an independent consultant which completed a governance review aimed to better position the partnership to accommodate future program growth. The report highlighted key strengths of the current governance model, including a shared commitment, a strong working relationship, an ability to leverage resources, good accountability mechanisms to allocate and manage government funding, and a good understanding of operations with quality mechanisms to support local programs.

Despite these strengths, the report confirmed that the ‘informal partnership’ structure, with a dependence on in-kind resources and limited administrative funding, limits the capacity of the partnership to manage the current scale of program operations and significant growth. The report emphasized that SNT should formalize its governance structure. The consultant recommended that an incorporated collaborative model established through a Memorandum of Agreement among the partner organizations would provide the needed increased capacity and would build on the strengths of the existing governance model. In particular, the consultant identified key actions required to support the new governance model, including the creation of a common strategic vision with program priorities geared to specific impact and outcome measures, as well as the redefining of governance roles, functions, and responsibilities. The proposed model incorporated a staff Secretariat with the capacity to implement the strategic direction and the systems available to manage the increased requirements for more rigorous transparency, accountability and communication among stakeholders.

The MOH has hosted several strategic governance meetings which have included the Directors of Education for the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic District School Board, and the Board of Director Chairs for the TFSS and the AFL. During these meetings, the partners received the findings and recommendations of the independent consultant's SNT governance review, and subsequently considered governance options to better support the program.

At the June 2016 strategic governance meeting, the creation of a Strategic Cabinet which would provide strategic oversight to SNT was discussed. Key functions of the Strategic Cabinet could include establishing vision and overall direction, approving major policy directives, advocating, developing and maintaining strategic partnerships, and establishing a strategic financial growth plan.

Membership of the Strategic Cabinet could include:

- Board of Director Chairs for Toronto Foundation for Student Success, Angel Foundation for Learning, Toronto District School Board, Toronto Catholic District School Board, and the Board of Health,
- Directors of Education for Toronto District School Board and Toronto Catholic District School Board,
- Medical Officer of Health,
- senior staff of le Conseil scolaire Viamonde and le Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud (the public French School Boards),
- senior staff of Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS), and

- senior staff from the private sector (e.g., food industry, financial, etc.).

Each partner organization would continue to have responsibility to its own governing body and the responsibility of TFSS as the provincial lead agency for Toronto, and of both TFSS and AFL as the municipal lead agencies, would remain. Norms and processes will need to be created in order to facilitate strategic oversight between the Cabinet and the boards of the partner organizations. Detailed terms of reference and implementation steps for the SNT governance model will be developed at future strategic governance meetings convened by the Medical Officer of Health and will need to be discussed with the Boards of each organization represented before a new governance structure can be agreed to.

### **Provincial Program Review of Ontario's Student Nutrition Program**

Recently, the MCYS contracted Deloitte Inc. to conduct an independent review of Ontario's Student Nutrition Program. The December 2015 report analyzed six themes: program administration and governance, funding, data collection, collaboration with charitable partners, food and logistics, and private sector partnership and fundraising. In exploring these themes, Deloitte Inc. considered opportunities to increase efficiencies, promote sustainability, promote innovative partnerships, and demonstrate outcomes for children and youth.

The consultant did not recommend a large systemic or transformational change, recognizing that programs are well-delivered at the ground level. However, it was recommended that MCYS consider focusing future investments on program sustainability rather than further expansion. An examination of the Lead Agency Model, through which the provincial funds are transferred, confirmed that Lead Agencies demonstrate a number of effective practices in administering funds to program sites such as collecting monthly financial data from sites and consolidating external funds. The report recognized that the Ontario Student Nutrition Program Network (OSNPN), a network of the 14 provincial Lead Agencies, has emerged as a sector leader, acting as a strategic and operational forum carrying a strong unified voice when liaising with charitable funders and the private sector.

Recommendations from the consultant focused on key opportunities within the current model such as supporting sector collaboration, refining the resource allocation model, and improving data management. MCYS is in the process of establishing a three year work plan in collaboration with the OSNPN, with MCYS committing up to \$250,000 each year of the three years (2016-17 through 2018-19) to OSNPN to support implementation.

The outcome of this review may well result in opportunities for the City of Toronto to align its requirements with that of MCYS in the areas of data management and performance reporting.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is clear that both the Government of Ontario and the City of Toronto share a common desire to ensure their investments in the Student Nutrition Program are utilized within efficient and accountable frameworks, and continue to demonstrate positive health and learning outcomes for children. In the coming months MCYS will establish its three year work plan to bring greater efficiency, sustainability and innovation to the province-wide program. Simultaneously, the City Manager and the Medical Officer of Health will continue to work with the student nutrition partners to develop an agreed upon enhanced governance model for SNT and will report back to City Council in fall 2016.

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## **SIGNATURE**

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