

## **Student Nutrition Program: 2018 Operating Budget Request and Program Update**

**Date:** September 11, 2017

**To:** Board of Health Budget Committee, Board of Health

**From:** Medical Officer of Health

**Wards:** All

### **SUMMARY**

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This report outlines a needs-based strategy requested by the Board of Health in April 2016 to apply a health equity lens to assess the eligibility of interested independent schools<sup>1</sup> for municipal student nutrition program funding. Recommended is an objective, clear and comparable assessment method, similar to what is used for public schools, which links student postal code to neighbourhood household income. The additional financial supports and processes that are required to extend municipal funding to independent schools are identified.

This report also outlines a request to increase the 2018 Operating Budget by \$2,748,962 in support of the six-year plan (2013-2018) endorsed by the Board of Health to strengthen and expand student nutrition programs in Toronto. The budget enhancement would increase the City's investment rate to 20%, or \$14,984,941 of total local program costs of an estimated \$76,393,026. This enhancement request also includes an extension of municipal funds to up to 20 new student nutrition programs in public schools serving higher need communities, fewer than originally projected. As well, this enhancement request includes funds to extend municipal funding to student nutrition programs in independent schools which serve higher needs communities and meet program eligibility criteria. The request includes \$40,000 for community capacity building to support program success and municipal oversight of grants.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The Medical Officer of Health recommends that:

1. The Board of Health adopt the request for a net increase of \$1,681,365 included in the Toronto Public Health 2018 Operating Budget Request to be allocated to existing

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'independent schools' is used in this report to refer to elementary and secondary schools which are not funded by the Ontario Government.

student nutrition programs towards the cost of nutritious food to increase the City's investment rate to 20% of total program costs from 17% in 2017, providing a stronger funding base for existing programs;

2. The Board of Health adopt the request for an additional net increase of \$442,773 included in the Toronto Public Health 2018 Operating Budget Request to extend municipal funding towards the cost of nutritious food to up to 20 student nutrition programs which are currently operating in public schools without municipal funding;

3. The Board of Health recognize that all schools in Toronto should be eligible for consideration for municipal funding for student nutrition programs based on need;

4. The Board of Health approve the use of socio-demographic data to assess need in independent schools interested in student nutrition program funding, by linking student postal code to neighbourhood household income in order to achieve objective results comparable to assessments of need in public schools;

5. The Board of Health adopt the request for an additional net increase of \$624,824 included in the Toronto Public Health 2018 Operating Budget Request to gradually extend municipal funding towards the cost of nutritious food to student nutrition programs in independent schools serving higher needs communities, which meet program eligibility criteria, including \$40,000 to support community capacity building and municipal oversight of program grants;

6. The Board of Health forward this report to the Budget Committee with the Toronto Public Health 2018 Operating Budget request for consideration;

7. The Board of Health reiterate its request to the federal government to provide core funding for a national student nutrition program;

8. The Board of Health forward this report to the Premier of Ontario, the Ontario Ministers of Children and Youth Services (MCYS), Health and Long-Term Care and Education, the Federal Minister of Health, the Toronto District School Board, the Toronto Catholic District School Board, le Conseil scolaire Viamonde, le Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud, the Toronto Foundation for Student Success, the Angel Foundation for Learning, FoodShare Toronto and Student Nutrition Toronto.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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The Student Nutrition Program includes funding of \$12,235,979 gross and net in Toronto Public Health's 2017 Approved Operating Budget. When the current plan to strengthen and expand Student Nutrition Programs in Toronto began in 2012, the approved base budget for the Student Nutrition Program was \$3,819,580 (Appendix 1). Toronto Public Health is requesting an increase of \$2,748,962 gross and net in 2018 that will bring total funding to \$14,984,941 gross and net (Table 1).

*Table 1, 2018 Operating Budget Request*

Focus of Investment	Recommendation	Net Increase
New and Enhanced Budget Submission:  Existing Municipally-funded Programs: Strengthen funding base	Endorse the request for a net enhancement of \$1,681,365 to existing student nutrition programs to increase the City's investment rate to 20% of total program costs in 2018.	\$ 1,681,365
New and Enhanced Budget Submission:  Expanding to New Programs in Public Schools	Endorse the request for a net enhancement of \$442,773 to extend municipal funding to up to 20 student nutrition programs operating in public schools which currently do not receive municipal funding, reaching approximately 7,000 additional students.	\$ 442,773
New and Enhanced Budget Submission:  Expanding to New Programs in Independent Schools	Endorse the request for a net enhancement of \$624,824 to gradually extend municipal funding to student nutrition programs operating in independent schools serving higher needs communities which meet eligibility criteria, including \$40,000 to support community capacity building and municipal oversight of grants.	\$ 624,824
	Total net increase requested:	\$ 2,748,962
	New requested base budget:	\$ 14,984,941

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

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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### **Independent Schools**

On April 25, 2016, the Board of Health requested that the Medical Officer of Health develop a needs-based strategy to provide the Student Nutrition Program to independent (private) schools that meet approved criteria.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.HL11.12>

On October 31, 2016, the Board of Health approved a strategy to apply a needs-based health equity lens to develop an objective and consistent means of assessing the level of need in independent (private) schools with the purpose of determining eligibility for municipal student nutrition program funding, and directed the Acting Medical Officer of Health to report on the outcome of the eligibility assessment in late 2017.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.HL15.7>

### **Municipal Funding Plan**

At its meeting on July 11-13, 2012, City Council endorsed the following vision:

*"That student nutrition programs are delivered in all Toronto schools so that students who would benefit can achieve the positive health, learning and behavioural outcomes that result from this key strategy."*

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.HL15.3>

On September 24, 2012 and October 22, 2012, the Board of Health endorsed a 5-year plan to strengthen core funding of existing student nutrition programs and to expand programs into publically funded schools serving higher need communities

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.HL16.5> and

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.HL17.5>.

On October 26, 2015, the Board of Health endorsed a revised funding plan which extended the timeline by one year to achieve the target municipal investment rate of 20% by 2018 and extending municipal funding to programs operating without municipal funding. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.HL7.2>

On March 31, 2016, City Council directed the City Manager and the Deputy City Manager & Chief Financial Officer to consider including in all post 2016 budgets, the cost of inflation in student nutrition programs funded by the City.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.EX13.21>

## **COMMENTS**

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### **Student Nutrition Programs are run by students, parents and volunteers**

Student nutrition programs are community-based meal programs that operate primarily in schools and a few community sites. Most are breakfast and morning meal programs providing energy and nutrients to students to support their learning and development over the school day. These programs also create opportunities for community capacity building, volunteering and job skills development, which align with City priorities. Student nutrition programs are run locally by students, parents and volunteers.

### **Research links eating breakfast with better student health**

A literature and program review of the Student Nutrition Program<sup>i</sup> in 2012 confirms that students' health, learning and behaviour outcomes are improved when they regularly participate in morning time meal programs. In particular, the review also notes that student nutrition programs are beneficial to students in all socio-economic situations and best operate when all students are able to participate. Evidence demonstrates, however, that children of lower socio-economic status have more irregular breakfast habits than children of higher socio-economic status. Therefore, when funding is limited, the best use of finite resources is to direct funding to higher need school

communities. In 2015, the report to the BOH, *The Unequal City 2015*<sup>ii</sup>, highlighted that social and economic situations influence health, where low income people often have the worst health. Student nutrition programs help to provide a more equitable environment for children and youth at risk for poor nutritional intake through access to safe, adequate and nutritious food at school to help them focus and learn.

### **Student nutrition programs are funded by multiple sources**

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) administers, leads, and provides core funding to student nutrition programs by geographic regions across the province. Toronto is one region. The MCYS allocates a student nutrition program budget to 14 contracted provincial lead agencies and flows its core funding through them. The lead agencies allocate the funding to local programs through a grant process. The Toronto Foundation for Student Success (TFSS) is the provincial lead agency for the Toronto region.

In 2017, the province invested \$8,487,808 in Toronto programs. The City, through the Toronto Public Health (TPH) operating budget, invests in student nutrition programs by providing annual grants (for food only) to the TFSS and the Angel Foundation for Learning (AFL). The 2017 Toronto budget has an investment of \$12.2 million. The combined provincial and municipal funds are not sufficient to cover all the program costs, therefore additional funds come from parents/students contributions, community and school-board fundraising, and corporate donations. Funding from non-government sources is variable. When funding is limited, programs do not operate at optimal levels, which impacts program sustainability and achievement of program benefits for students.

### **Student Nutrition Toronto administers funding and provides program oversight**

Administration of funding and program oversight and support are provided by Student Nutrition Toronto (SNT), whose mandate includes reviewing policy and funding priorities to help manage community demands for limited government funding. SNT is comprised of TPH, Toronto District School Board (TDSB), Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB), TFSS, the AFL, Conseil scolaire Viamonde and FoodShare Toronto. The TFSS is contracted to administer the municipal grant for student nutrition programs within the TDSB and community sites. The AFL is the contracted agent to administer the municipal grant for the student nutrition programs within the TCDSB. A new governance model has been established with the addition of the SNT Strategic Cabinet which will provide vision and recommendations at a strategic level for student nutrition programs operating in Toronto schools and school communities. It will be reviewed in 2019.

## ***Independent Schools***

### **Independent schools in Ontario are diverse**

Most independent schools in Ontario are governed by an elected board and operate as autonomous not-for-profit organizations or businesses; they are subject to the legal requirements of the Education Act. They are not regulated, accredited, or funded by the Ministry of Education<sup>iii</sup>. In contrast, five Canadian provinces<sup>2</sup> provide between 35-60% of the funding for the education component of independent schools.

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<sup>2</sup> British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec

A 2013 survey of Canadian independent schools found that 5.5% of Ontario students in grades K-12 attended independent schools<sup>iv</sup>. Ontario has 954 independent schools: 457 reported a religious affiliation and 315 were classified as 'specialty schools' defined by teaching/learning styles, curriculum focus or serving students with special needs. Less than 5% of independent schools in Canada fit the stereotype of the elite preparatory school.

### **Some independent school students are from families with financial needs**

The family income of students attending Canadian independent schools is, on average, higher than that of public school students<sup>v</sup>. In British Columbia (BC), a study found that when students from 'elite' schools were removed from analysis, family incomes of students of independent and public schools were roughly comparable<sup>vi</sup>; however, BC provides 35-50% per-child government funding to independent schools, unlike Ontario<sup>v</sup>. A 2007 study<sup>vii</sup> of the parents of children who attended independent schools in Ontario found great diversity in levels of education, income, religious affiliation and occupations. The study reported that "parents who choose religiously-defined schools reported notably lower income levels than those choosing academically-defined schools"<sup>ix</sup>.

Independent schools rely on fees paid by parents, fundraising and philanthropy in order to fund their programs. A 2015 scan of the websites of independent schools in Toronto indicated that annual tuition varied widely (from \$4,000 to \$38,000), with religion-affiliated schools generally charging less than specialty schools. Independent schools may also charge additional fees for items such as uniforms, activities and room/board.

Many schools have needs-based financial support, such as sibling discounts and sliding scales based on family income, so that family income is not a barrier to attendance. Some federal tax credits and exemptions exist for families with children attending independent schools, for a portion of tuition paid considered a charitable donation<sup>viii</sup>.

### **Some Toronto independent schools currently operate student nutrition programs**

While most student nutrition programs funded by the City are located in public schools, there are four 'grandfathered' independent schools in faith centres funded in 2017. These independent schools have been operating student nutrition programs with municipal financial support prior to 2007 when SNT imposed a moratorium on all new student nutrition programs. At that time, though community interest and need for student nutrition programs was increasing, the proportion of government funding relative to need had been decreasing. The moratorium on new programs was imposed to ensure that each funded programs received an adequate amount to support the purchase of nutritious food.

### **Provincial and Municipal policies change the landscape for student nutrition programs**

A series of provincial and municipal funding expansion policies from 2008 to 2015 significantly changed the landscape of student nutrition programs in Ontario and Toronto. In 2008, the provincial government provided new student nutrition program funding focusing on breakfast/morning programs for public schools serving higher need communities. In 2009, the Board of Health recommended that the City align its student

nutrition program funding with the provincial approach and endorsed a funding plan to extend municipal funding to provincially funded programs. In 2013, the Board of Health again endorsed a plan to align funding to the provincial approach. In 2014, the province implemented another expansion for their student nutrition program funding, explicitly stating that eligible schools must be publicly funded<sup>ix</sup>. These policies prompted SNT to lift its moratorium for locations approved in provincial and municipal expansion plans. With limited municipal funds available, and to maximize its investment, the City directed expansion funds to where there was the greatest need, largely determined by family income of students (aggregated at the school level).

There has been recent community pressure to fund student nutrition programs in independent schools which serve higher need communities. In April 2016, the Board of Health directed the Medical Officer of Health to develop a needs-based strategy to provide student nutrition program funding to independent schools that meet approved criteria. The BOH endorsed a strategy in October 2016 to study the characteristics of independent schools, establish interest and apply a needs-based health equity lens to assess need and eligibility for municipal funding. This report provides a summary of the community consultations and recommended assessment method. Pending approval of the recommendations, an assessment and applications process for 2018-19 grants will be established in coordination with SNT.

### **Assessing needs of all student nutrition programs is part of the funding process**

As there are limited government funds available for student nutrition programs, the funding process includes a needs assessment component in order to direct funds where they are most needed. Need for student nutrition programs in Toronto's public schools within the TDSB is based on the Learning Opportunities Index; need within TCDSB schools is based on an n-tile algorithm. The Ministry of Education also produces an Education Opportunities Index (EOI) which ranks relative need of all publically funded schools in Ontario including public, Catholic, and French boards.

Essentially, these indices of need rank each public school based on measures which look at external challenges that impact student success. These indices reflect a complex combination of socio-demographic data, including household income, adults with low level of education completion, and lone parent families. These indices are based on tax-filer and census data linked to postal code of each student registered at each school. Students' postal codes are used instead of school postal codes because a school may be located in a relatively affluent City neighbourhood, but its students may reside in other areas where the socio-demographics may be very different (e.g., students bused to school or a school that operates a special program drawing students from many areas of the City). Using student postal codes determines the aggregate need of the student body. Schools with a lower rank number have a greater number of students which experience greater level of external challenges.

Every three years, the TDSB calculates and posts on their website the LOI for each of its schools. The Ministry's EOI and the TCDSB's n-tile algorithm are not published. The TDSB reports<sup>x</sup> that the LOI is an objective measure related to achieving equitable academic opportunities. The TDSB also indicates that the LOI "helps to ensure that children who have access to fewer resources at home and in their neighbourhoods, have increased access to available resources in their schools. The LOI assists with

steering additional resources to the schools serving students who face greater challenges".

The Board of Health relies on the province's list of public schools to establish the list for funding and expanding student nutrition programs in Toronto. The list from the province is based on the EOI. This type of index does not exist for independent schools.

### **Objective measurement of need in independent schools is complex**

Assessing need for independent schools is more complex than it is for public schools. Independent schools are not affiliated or funded by the Ministry of Education. As such, the Ministry does not receive registration data from these schools and does not calculate the EOI for them. Furthermore, individual independent schools vary in their capacity to gather data and there is no overarching administrative body to collate it. This absence of data presents an added challenge to assessment.

Many factors were considered in Toronto Public Health's investigation of how to best assess need in independent schools. The recommended method outlined below is reliable, objective, and applies best practice for population level income assessment. It is also consistent across all independent schools and enables comparison of independent schools with public schools receiving municipal funding towards a student nutrition program. Finally, it balances the need to collect a limited amount of data from independent schools with the ability for the City to manage the analysis in a cost effective manner.

### **Recommended assessment method applies needs-based health equity lens**

Toronto Public Health recommends an assessment method for independent schools similar to that used by the Ministry of Education, the TDSB and the TCDSB to assess level of need among public schools. The method estimates the percentage of families with school-aged children living below the low-income measure after tax in each student's neighbourhood by linking student postal code to income data from Statistics Canada's Family Tax file. The data are then aggregated at the school level to provide a measure of need based on income within each school. In doing so, a proxy for the EOI will be created. Similar to the EOI, this method will require TPH to contract service from Statistics Canada to access and analyze relevant tax-filer data.

Toronto Public Health requested a legal opinion on the needs assessment in terms of compliance with human rights legislation. The City Solicitor's opinion is contained in the companion report from the City Solicitor.

### **An initial assessment has been conducted**

TPH is coordinating with Statistics Canada to complete the analysis of 70 student postal code data sets from independent schools using confidential tax-filer data and applying it to the recommended assessment method. The analysis will help to determine the relative need among these 70 independent schools compared to public schools.

In the interim, a small in-house pilot has been completed, using a modified version of the assessment method to analyze need among a sub-set of 20 independent schools. Student postal code data sets were obtained from four independent schools which have declared interest in receiving student nutrition program funding. In addition, student



postal code lists from 16 independent schools were extracted from a database that TPH maintains for another purpose, one of which already receives student nutrition program funding. All were religion- or culturally-affiliated and were selected from neighbourhoods across the city, including affluent and high-needs neighbourhoods based on the Neighbourhood Equity Index. The 20 independent schools are not a representative sample of this sector as they were only selected from schools for which TPH had complete postal code data.

This analysis identified small pockets of need within independent schools, as all schools assessed had at least some students living in what could be considered lower-income neighbourhoods. When the independent schools were ranked relative to public schools in the city, 17 out of 20 ranked among the most affluent group of schools (the top 20%). One was evaluated as having higher need, comparable to many public schools currently receiving municipal funding. It is expected that the planned in-depth assessment conducted by Statistics Canada will slightly, but not significantly, affect these findings.

### **Consultations with independent school representatives were held**

Toronto Public Health invited a number of key stakeholders to focus groups and follow-up meetings to help explore level of need and how need is assessed and supported within this sample of independent schools. The feasibility of collecting student postal codes was also considered. Some consented to participate in a pilot of the assessment method.

Stakeholders included principals and parent committee decision-makers from not-for-profit, religion-affiliated independent schools which are currently offering student nutrition programs, interested in offering student nutrition programs or which have previously applied for municipal funding for student nutrition programs. Representatives from community-based organizations with mandates to support the needs of students attending independent schools were also consulted. The consultations were held in fall 2016 and spring 2017.

### **Stakeholders see a need for municipal funding for their student nutrition programs**

Stakeholders currently operating student nutrition programs noticed positive effects on student's health, learning and behaviour as a result of their student nutrition program. Stakeholders expressed that they depended on funding to offer a student nutrition program to support students at their schools whose families may face challenges. Stakeholders described situations where students did not eat breakfast, did not bring lunch or brought unhealthy inexpensive food to school. At schools without a program, stakeholders indicated that they tried to give some food to students with the limited funds they had available.

Stakeholders indicated that their annual tuition rates ranged from \$4,000 to \$17,000, depending on the school. Some stakeholders described that families rely on tuition subsidies from a community social service agency, with up to 80% not paying the full tuition, but these subsidies were not available to all schools. Several stakeholders indicated that in order to remain accessible to families, they offered low tuition rates, while others provided sibling discounts.

Stakeholders were divided when asked whether they anticipated issues with using an assessment method which compares student postal code data against Statistics Canada income measure data. Although some were amenable to using aggregated student postal code data, there was a pocket of concern raised that postal codes did not fairly reflect their need, especially if after-tax individual family expenses were not factored into the analysis.

### **Interest among independent schools must be confirmed**

It is not clear how many independent schools are interested in municipal funding for their student nutrition programs. For 2017-18, 8 independent schools applied for first-time municipal funding to serve 1,747 children and youth. If approved to proceed with the strategy as planned, TPH will hold community open house information sessions in spring 2018 to inform independent schools about eligibility, program guidelines and possible municipal funding. This will help to estimate the number of interested independent schools. If there are independent schools which are deemed eligible to apply for municipal student nutrition program grants, applications could be accepted as soon as October 2018 and considered for funding in January of the 2018/19 school year.

### **Independent schools would need additional operational support**

Consultation with SNT has indicated that student nutrition programs in independent schools will need additional operational supports if deemed eligible for new municipal funding. Currently, student nutrition programs in Toronto receive significant in-kind supports from the public school boards and their foundations, as well as capacity building and oversight through community development and administration funding provided by the Province of Ontario for currently funded programs. These supports are crucial not only to program success, but to oversight and accountability of government grants. Without provincial funding, these programs, if funded by the City, will not have the same level of stable government funding and community capacity building support as currently funded programs do. The request includes \$40,000 in community capacity building support for independent schools receiving municipal support for their student nutrition programs, to support program success and municipal oversight of grants.

## ***Budget Update***

### **Impact of 2017 municipal investment**

The municipal funding plan to strengthen and expand student nutrition programs is a 6-year plan to incrementally achieve a 20% municipal investment rate by 2018 and expand to public schools serving higher-needs communities. In 2017/18, 600 school communities will receive municipal funding to deliver 802 programs reaching 197,785 children and youth each school day<sup>3</sup>. These figures include 48 student nutrition programs reaching over 13,000 students which received municipal funding for the first time in 2017. A summary report highlighting the impacts and reach across the full 6 years will be prepared in 2018.

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<sup>3</sup> These numbers may change once the late application and appeals process concludes December 31, 2017.

### **Government funding is key to the success of student nutrition programs**

Reliable core funding from government sources is a critical success factor for student nutrition programs. The partnership funding model combines stable government funding with contributions from parents/communities and corporate sources.

The municipal investment increased from \$3,819,580 in 2012 to \$12,235,979 in 2017. Annual increases have provided an incremental increase in the municipal investment rate from 9% to 17% of total program operating costs, and funds for program expansion.

In fact, the City's investment per elementary student breakfast increased from \$0.09 in 2012 to \$0.20 of an estimated \$1.18 total food cost, by 2017.

### **The Province continues its investment in student nutrition programs**

The provincial funding for student nutrition programs in Toronto is \$8,487,808 in 2017. Provincial student nutrition provincial expansion is now complete and efforts have shifted to stabilizing and supporting existing programs. There are continued efforts by TPH, key community stakeholders, organizations and decision makers across Canada to build support for a national school food program with federal financial support. Presently, there is no federal funding for student nutrition programs.

### **The 2018 Operating Budget Request**

The enhancement request in the 2018 Toronto Public Health Operating Budget submission supports the last year of the 6 year municipal funding plan endorsed by the Board of Health, to develop a stronger funding base for existing student nutrition programs and expand funding to new programs. The Operating Budget request for 2018 includes an increase of \$2,748,962 added to the 2017 approved base budget (\$12,235,979), with a new requested base budget to \$14,984,941 for 2018 (see Table 1). The budget enhancement would increase the City's investment rate to approximately 20%, or \$14,984,941 of total local program costs of an estimated \$76,393,026. Investment in student nutrition programs is an important element of Toronto's Poverty Reduction Strategy.

### **Cost of Food Adjustment**

No net increase for an inflationary adjustment has been included in Toronto Public Health's 2018 Operating Base Budget submission. Adjustments are based on the annual Nutritious Food Basket survey, which will be reported to the Board of Health in October 2017. 2017 results indicate minimal change.

### **Existing programs strengthened to provide more nutritious meals**

An enhancement of \$1,681,365 net to the 2017 Operating Budget is requested to bring the municipal investment rate for existing municipally-funded student nutrition programs to approximately 20% of total program costs (from 17% in 2017), or \$0.24 per elementary student per morning meal each school day.

### **Expand to new programs in publically funded schools**

An enhancement of \$442,773 net to the 2017 Operating Budget is requested to extend municipal funding to up to 20 student nutrition programs operating in publically funded schools serving higher need communities. Initial projections for the 6th year of the municipal funding plan estimated that up to 48 public schools serving 15,000 children

and youth would be operating student nutrition programs without municipal funding in 2018/19, however, this number has been revised. The total number of children participating in the programs initiated through the provincial expansion exceeded original provincial targets, therefore additional new programs were not added. This change leaves potential flexibility in the 2018 Operating Budget request to fund student nutrition programs in eligible independent schools.

### **Expand to new programs in eligible independent schools**

An enhancement of \$624,824 net to the 2017 Operating Budget is requested to gradually extend municipal funding to student nutrition programs in independent schools which serve higher needs communities and meet program eligibility criteria. The request includes \$40,000 for community capacity building to support program success and municipal oversight of grants.

To ensure equitable access to municipal funding, enhancements to all new programs are factored at the same funding rate as for all existing programs (i.e., proposed 20% municipal investment rate). In total, it is projected that the 2018 proposed municipal investment will reach over 820 programs, providing a nutritious meal to over 205,000 children and youth each school day, which will be adjusted after eligibility by independent schools is confirmed.

### **Conclusion**

The City of Toronto is a leader in advocating for and investing in student nutrition programs, demonstrating its vision of an equitable environment in which all children and youth can grow, learn and succeed. A call to action to other funding partners, including the federal government, is imperative to ensure sustainable programs. A small contribution of \$0.24 per meal per student per school day contributes to long-lasting health, learning and social development benefits for children, youth and the communities which support student nutrition programs. Since 2008, City funding to expand Toronto's student nutrition programs has been directed to publically funded schools to maximize the benefits of the partnership funding model. Recently the Board of Health recognized that there may be some independent schools that have a student base with a similar level of need to some public schools. The extension of municipal funding for student nutrition programs in Toronto to independent schools serving higher needs communities will allow more children and youth to benefit from access to healthy foods during the school day.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Dr. Eileen de Villa  
Medical Officer of Health

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Appendix 1: Toronto Student Nutrition Programs - Summary of Municipal and Provincial Funding 1998-2017

## REFERENCES

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- <sup>i</sup> Toronto Public Health, *Nourishing Young Minds: A Review of the Student Nutrition Program in Toronto*, 2012
- <sup>ii</sup> Toronto Public Health. *The Unequal City 2015: Income and Health Inequities in Toronto*. April 2015. <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2015/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-79096.pdf>
- <sup>iii</sup> Ontario Ministry of Education, web page. *Private Elementary and Secondary Schools*, accessed on May 9, 2017 <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/privschr/>
- <sup>iv</sup> Derek J. Allison, Sazid Hasan, and Deani Neven Van Pelt. *A Diverse Landscape: Independent Schools in Canada*, The Fraser Institute, June 2016. <https://www.fraserinstitute.org/studies/a-diverse-landscape-independent-schools-in-canada>
- <sup>v</sup> Marc Frenette, Ping Ching Winnie Chan. 2015. *Academic Outcomes of Public and Private High School Students: What Lies Behind the Differences?* Statistics Canada. 11F0019M, no. 367, March 2015.
- <sup>vi</sup> Jason Clemens, Sasha Parvani, and Joel Emes. 2017. *Comparing the Family Income of Students in British Columbia's Independent and Public Schools*. Research Bulletin. The Fraser Institute. March 2017.
- <sup>vii</sup> Deani A. Van Pelt, Patricia A. Allison, and Derek J. Allison. *Ontario's Private Schools: Who Chooses them and Why?* The Fraser Institute, May 2007. <https://www.fraserinstitute.org/sites/default/files/OntariosPrivateSchools.pdf>
- <sup>viii</sup> Canada Revenue Agency, web page. *Tuition Fees and Charitable Donations Paid to Privately Supported Secular and Religious Schools*, accessed on May 9, 2017, <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pub/tp/ic75-23/ic75-23-e.html>
- <sup>ix</sup> Ministry of Children and Youth Services, Child and Youth Development Branch, *Ontario Student Nutrition Program Guidelines*, September 2014, page 5, footnote 5.
- <sup>x</sup> Toronto District School Board, web page. *Learning Opportunities Index (LOI)*, accessed on August 30, 2017 <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/research/Research/LearningOpportunitiesIndex.aspx>