

Sydney M. Written Delegation

August 4, 2020

To the trustees of the TDSB,

My name is Sydney Mak. I am writing in support of the motion proposed by Trustees Patel and Pilkey to reverse the board's decision to impose fees for the International Baccalaureate program. I urge you all to vote to cancel these fees. There are numerous reasons why implementing IB fees is NOT a good idea. It proves that it is not a good idea from the getgo. Charging fees for IB will not save the board as much money as originally planned (as determined by the Finance, Budget, and Enrollment Committee). There are multiple students, which I've seen first hand, dropping out because of these fees. I'm in the IB program and many of my friends have dropped as you have already seen a huge decline in enrollment. The offer from financial aid is not enough to stop this from happening. As well, COVID-19 has placed a financial strain on the whole country and many families. Paying for education is not a top priority as it should be free. COVID-19 has made it less reasonable and attractive to pay for the IB fees. I know countless families, including mine, who have lost their jobs or have reduced hours during this difficult time. This places numerous students and families in an uncomfortable situation. Having to pay for IB places us even further into confusion and discomfort as we do not even have an option to pursue IB because of the economic strains. The IB program provides many opportunities for students which is necessary and amazing. However, multiple students cannot access these opportunities because of these fees. Choosing to go to the IB program was the best decision I have made, but that decision will be cut short for me as I have to consider my family's hard-earned money and what I have to do to repay them. At the beginning of the summer, I wished to look for a job to pay for these IB fees so my parents would not have to worry about me. Though, common places are not looking to hire because of the many cutbacks that COVID-19 has caused. I went into the IB program knowing that there would not be fees and I've worked so hard to get to this point. I hope that my hard work will not go to waste because of the fees that are out of my control. Furthermore, the majority of TDSB IB schools are situated in working-class neighbourhoods, where it provides educational opportunities that would not otherwise be available. This is extremely crucial and important for the students of the future. The IB programs provide countless eye-opening possibilities to all but if fees are registered, many students will turn a blind eye to it as they cannot afford to pay for education. If the fees are implemented permanently, some students will not even consider the program as a choice because of the fees. Moreover, IB fees will privatize parts of public schools, creating deep divides within the school community. The TDSB stands for equality and inclusion yet introducing these fees WILL create separation between students. Finally, imposing fees for IB violate the TDSB's own Equity Foundation Statement: "The TDSB will ensure that our school system is built on the principles of anti-Oppression, Anti-Racism, Non-discrimination, equitable and Inclusive

Education, which...g.iii identifies and eliminates barriers; *All students and staff are supported equitably through the identification and removal of discriminatory Bias and or Barriers, whether individual, systemic or intersecting, that limit their ability to equal access, participation and/or outcomes in schools and workplaces and achieve their full potential.*" I urge you to please reconsider this motion and abolish the IB fees for all these reasons. Toronto and the TDSB is a place for diversity and inclusion. Establishing these IB fees will take away from the inclusion that many students wish to experience. This will impact the lives of many families across the TDSB and hopefully restore IB to its position as a rigorous, two-year program, equally available to all students who meet the academic qualifications across the TDSB, not just those who can afford it.

Sincerely, Sydney Mak