

Good evening trustees and members of the board,

My name is Philip, I'm currently going into my fourth year as a French major with the intention of applying for my master's in education, and during my school years, I was blessed to have been able to participate in the IL program. Given my experience with the program, I'm struggling to comprehend why the board is even thinking of liquidating it.

Not every student is the same, not every student is cut out for learning and thriving in math and science or whatever the topic may be. Many students thrive in learning language, therefore by taking away the IL program you are discriminating against the students who wish to learn language, as well as disadvantaging those students in their academics. Additionally, language is culture, so when learning a language, you are simultaneously learning about the roots and traditions of a said culture. This notion is important because Toronto is one of the most multicultural cities on the globe today, not only this but Canada, the country we live in, is one of the most diverse countries in the world. Our country and cities are comprised of many different people from many different cultures and in the past, the misunderstanding of these cultures has led to prejudice, stereotyping, and sadly, racism.

The skills and knowledge offered by the IL program are more important than ever in the world today because topics such as racism, discrimination, and cultural division are more prevalent than ever. The knowledge students receive about the people that surround them is so important because it can help eliminate the problems I mentioned above, and if the TCDSB are an institution that pride themselves on equality and social justice as they mention in their mission and values, then they should not be considering removing this program as its removal will only further increase the divide between cultures.

In addition to this, the IL program equips students with great communication skills in a third language! Language allows students to communicate in more ways than one and to associate with people from more cultures than their own, bridging the divide between cultures and strengthening their bonds for the future, yet an institution which is responsible for the education of the future of our world (the students) wishes to close the door for these students to learn a new language and about the reality of the world they live in, in turn fuelling prejudice, stereotyping and racism. It makes me sad to think that this is the institution I might be working for when I become a teacher, one that would support misunderstanding among different cultures.

On another note, when I was reading through tonight's agenda, a trustees motion mentions that the IL program deprives their children of the 300 mandated minutes of core curriculum teaching a day. That is false. When I was in school, not too long ago, none of my teachers ever taught for 300 minutes in a day. Kids are unable to sit and focus for 300 minutes and you need to consider the 300-minute day consists of independent work periods where no instruction is being given. As per the dictionary, instruction means teaching and/or educating, therefore, when students are completing work on their own, they are not receiving instruction.

Furthermore, the TCDSB surveyed the parents 2 years ago regarding the IL program and is it not true that the last survey displayed a large majority of the parents were in favour of continuing the program? So, after examining the latter facts, only one question remains, why are we discussing surveying again only two years after. If the majority of the parents want to continue the program, then as a democratic institution, the decision is final and already made, the IL program continues and the minority must adhere to the results of the surveys and that is final, shouldn't it be?

Respectfully,
Philip