

NOTICE OF MOTION

Subject: Addressing Rising Food Insecurity Facing Children and Youth

MOVED BY: Trustee Maria Rizzo,, Ward 5

SECONDED BY: Trustee Markus de Domenico, Ward 2

WHEREAS: Ontario, along with all regions of Canada and North America are experiencing a cost-of-living crisis, with food inflation at 10.6% (more than double the overall inflation rate) as of February 2023 causing severe food insecurity; and

WHEREAS: Nearly 6 million Canadians, including 1-in-4 children (1.8 million), face food insecurity according to the Public Health Agency of Canada Report (2021).

WHEREAS: A July 2023 Canadian medical study showed that kids living with food insecurity have 55% more mental health or substance use disorders, and have a 74% greater number of emergency department visits and hospital admission, resulting in an estimated \$15.8 billion annually in preventable healthcare costs; and

WHEREAS: UNICEF ranks Canada 37th out of the 41 wealthiest nations in providing healthy food for children; and

WHEREAS: Pope Francis, in his statements and teachings as part of Laudato Si, has stated that healing the planet by ensuring the right to food for all is central to human dignity, declaring malnutrition and hunger as a “scandal” whose crime violates basic human rights; and

WHEREAS: The TCDSB is Canada's largest publicly funded Catholic school board whose responsibility and experience educating 90,000 students has shown that a hungry student cannot learn; and

WHEREAS: School nutrition programs (SNPs) like the 187 initiatives in 164 schools funded by the Angel Foundation for Learning (TCDSB's official charity) serves 1.2 million meals per month in the feeding of over 60,000 students daily has proven successful in enhancing overall physical, mental and long-term health, academic achievement, school performance, attendance, and social interaction; and

WHEREAS: Despite \$6.3 million in annual support, with an additional \$270,000 in emergency top-up funding to SNPs over the last 6 months of the 2023 school year (January to June 2023), many programs have had to eliminate or reduce certain nutritious food groups or meals served to students in order to avoid the risk of closing operations: and

WHEREAS: School SNPs can take the pressure off parents having to make the decision between paying for rent or food, Toronto food bank usage is being accessed in historic numbers by an average of over 275,000 families or individuals each month (an four-fold increase from 67,000 per month pre-COVID); and

WHEREAS: The Toronto Youth Cabinet (TYC) is calling on the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada to provide universally funded and accessible school nutrition programs to all students in Toronto, Ontario and Canada; and

WHEREAS: The Toronto Youth Cabinet (TYC) has been successful in demonstrating we are all stronger together by obtaining unconditional support from over 60 school boards across Ontario to adopt motions throughout September and October formally endorsing the need for universally funded student nutrition programs;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT: The Chair of the Board write a letter to the Ontario Minister of Education; Ontario Minister of Children, Community and Social Services; and the Federal Minister of Families, Children, and Social Development; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT: Such letters be forwarded to the TYC no later than October 16, 2023.