

February 9, 2010

Bruce Davis
Chair
Toronto District School Board
5050 Yonge Street
Toronto ON M2M 5N8

Dear Bruce Davis:

I am writing with respect to the decision taken by the Board at its February 3, 2010 meeting to use the first professional development day of 2010 to hold a conference for teachers at the Air Canada Centre. Regrettably, the decision was made by the Board without the benefit of knowing whether the teachers for whom the conference is intended deem it to be the best use of their time, or of the Board's resources.

This unfortunate situation has come about due to a serious failure in the consultation process which was in place between the Board and its employee groups concerning the calendar for 2010 – 2011. The School Year Calendar Committee had met on January 25, 2010, and ended with agreement that a number of the items discussed, including the date of and program for the first professional development day, would be the subject of information gathering with stakeholder groups, and further discussion at the committee's next meeting, scheduled for February 2, 2010.

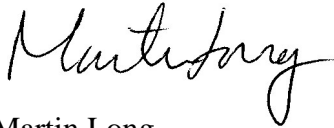
On January 29, 2010 we received notice that the February 2, 2010 meeting had been cancelled and rescheduled for February 11, 2010 "...to enable (sic) committee members with additional time to conduct their consultation process." It therefore went beyond irony and into the realm of insult to employees engaged in good faith in this consultation process, for the Board to have rushed into a hasty decision on this one significant item the very day after the committee was to have met.

Given that the process leading up to the decision made concerning the conference was so prejudiced, I am now in the position to advise you that it is the unanimous recommendation of the ETT Executive, representing the Board's 11 000 elementary teachers, that the best use of the first day of 2010 – 2011, as it was last year, is for teachers and other school staff to engage in professional development activities in their schools and worksites to prepare for the year ahead. There is an ever-increasing burden of new initiatives, mandatory training, new forms to be filled out and new ways of doing it, and there is huge value to being able to address these nuts and bolts issues in a timely way.

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We recognize, none the less, the importance of having a vision of where public education in Toronto, and Ontario, is heading, and can only wish we could ratchet down the tension caused by the EQAO regime in all its manifestations and be able to reflect in depth on an alternative shared vision for the future. ETT has expressed our willingness, eagerness even, to participate in dialogue with the Board and senior administration regarding developing a vision for the future, and will continue to do so.

Yours truly,



Martin Long
President

C: TDSB Trustees
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ML/dd