Monday, December 5th, 2022

TDSB Director of Education
5050 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ontario M2N 5N8

York Memorial Student Demands

Dear Colleen Russell-Rawlins,

We are writing to you as students within the Toronto District School Board to name the systems abuse and neglect of the TDSB that is contributing to the unsafe learning environment at York Memorial Collegiate Institute.

On Friday, December 2nd, 2022 you publicly said you will listen to students, and work with us to meet our demands and ensure our school - and all schools in the TDSB are safe for students (specifically, Black, Indigenous, and racialized students).

Our demands are as follows:

1. Conduct a formal inquest into systemic abuse at York Memorial CI
    a. Interview students about their experiences of racism from teachers. Identify teachers who use racial slurs and/ or discriminate against racialized students, and remove them from teaching at our school.
    b. Publicly release statistics documenting how many times police have been called to our school since the beginning of this school year, what they have been called for, and what calling them has resulted in.
    c. Publicly release statistics for how many times students have been suspended or expelled since the beginning of this school year. We would like to know the reasons for suspensions and if students were given any alternative to suspension. Are there any alternatives to suspensions in this school?
    d. Provide us and our parents information on all the mandatory training that teachers had to do prior to the merger, and any training they've received this year.
    e. Provide us and our parents information on the plan that the TDSB has in place, to increase students' motivation, and opportunities for us to engage in developing a safer school community?

2. Allocate More Resources to our School

a. Publicly release information regarding what resources both schools had prior to the merger, and if and by how much those supports have been increased since the YMCI student population tripled.
b. Publicly release the distribution plan and timeline for allocating new resources to our school.
    i. What is the allocation process for resources? Who decides what resources each school needs?
c. Hire a parent counselor who reflects the student population at our school so our parents can advocate for us.
d. Provide us with teachers who have experience working in our communities, and understand the lived realities that we face outside of school. We want teachers who care. We ask that you hire more teachers who represent our student population.
e. Publicly release the budget for our school. How much money was allocated to York Memorial CI this year? How are funds being allocated, and who is deciding where funding should go? We demand that student voices are part of this conversation!
f. Implement more leadership development programs, and more emotional regulation workshops for students?
g. Hire more representative CYWs and Social Workers.

3. <u>NO Police Presence in Our School</u>
    a. Provide teachers, and administrative staff who know how to speak to us and engage with us respectfully as students. Teachers need to know how to de-escalate and support students without calling the police.
    b. We want more training for teachers!
        i. racial literacy, harm reduction, de-escalation practices, self-defense and non-abusive intervention in physical confrontations
    c. Provide prevention and intervention programs for students; find ways for students to account for missteps and use suspensions as the very LAST resort.
    d. Do not call the police except; in the most exceptional and severe circumstances. We want to create a school community that takes care of one another. The police are not members of our community.
        i. If police are ever called to our school, we want them to come WITHOUT guns. We do not want them entering our school unless there is no other option available.

4. <u>TDSB Implement a Public School - Student Union</u>
    a. Staff the union with independent liaison officers who will support and advocate for the best interest of students

b. Staff the union with educational lawyers, student & family advocates, non-partisan educators, community members, residence groups, confronting anti-black racism unit (city).
    i. Students and community members appoint who is on the board.
    ii. Voting system done by community
c. Have a steward in every TDSB school where students can report abuse without fear of retaliation or repercussions.

5. Listen to Students & Act on our Needs
    a. Implement bi-weekly/monthly student consultations at each grade level. Our needs are different and all students should be heard.
        i. This should be done by guidance counselors.
        ii. Bring back external guidance counselors facilitated by youth-led organizations.
            1. Bring in community members that youth already have relationships with and trust.
    b. Publicly release a budget and timeline identifying what resources and supports will be implemented in our school and when.

We demand that the TDSB publicly responds with a detailed document that provides solutions and a plan to address the aforementioned issues. We are requesting the TDSB complete this document by **Monday, December 19th.**

Sincerely,

Frustrated York Memorial CI Students