



TO: Dr. John Malloy and Trustees

Cc: Manon Gardner, Dr. Kathy Witherow, Colleen Russell-Rawlins, Vanessa Barnett, Jim Palmer, Kim Snider

Dear Dr. Malloy and TDSB Trustees,

We can only imagine the challenges facing you as a result of provincial cuts to education, and we appreciate the difficult decisions you have had to make. We are writing to you with a simple but meaningful request from our three ARTS provincial subject associations and our memberships.

We understand that you have amalgamated what were separate Music and Arts (Dance, Drama and Visual Arts) departments. We are challenging the naming of this department and urge you to reconsider its organization. We urge you to rename it: **The Arts: Dance, Drama, Music and Visual Arts**.

The name of this department in your Coordinator posting was *The Arts and Music*. Interestingly, it has been referred to as *Music and The Arts* by many with whom we spoke. The arts are not divided this way anywhere else in public education. All of the arts have been in the curriculum since the late 1990s. These four distinct arts, recognized by the Ministry, OTF, and the Arts subject associations, are listed alphabetically by the Ministry of Education in all communication but not by the TDSB.

This TDSB naming signals a hierarchy of the arts that does not align with TDSB equity commitments and stated values. Organizational structuring, and the naming of those structures, telegraph what is valued by the institution. Separating Music out from the other Arts signals a prioritization of **one** of the Arts, whereas evidence-based studies demonstrate that of **all** of the Arts, Dance, Drama, Music and Visual Arts, are “essential to students’ intellectual, social, physical growth, and emotional well-being” (The Ontario Curriculum: The Arts, p. 3). Resource allocation inevitably reflects priorities; it is therefore important to dismantle any structure that privileges one art form or way of knowing over others. All students deserve equitable access to all of the arts. All of the provincial Arts subject associations – CODE, OAEA and OMEA are unified in agreement on this matter.

Each of our provincial associations is a fierce subject leader advocating passionately for our specialized arts discipline from JK to Grade 12. We also work together on behalf of all of the arts in education. We support and collaborate in our work wherever possible.

Together, we also urge you to ensure that there is qualified subject leadership within the department for each of Dance, Drama, Music and Visual Arts: specialist leaders working side by side alongside other team members prioritized by the specific local needs of the TDSB.

We continue to be grateful for the outstanding work that dance, drama, music and visual arts teachers do in your board. They strive for excellence in their teaching and they support their students to develop their creative and critical thinking as well as the artist within each of us. We submit this to you with full respect and gratitude for all that you do on behalf of public education for our children, and on behalf of Dance, Drama, Music and Visual Arts.

Sincerely,

Council of Ontario Drama and Dance Educators (CODE) - President Jane Deluzio

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J Deluzio".

Ontario Art Education Association (OAEA) - President Michele Kleinschuck

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M Kleinschuck".

Ontario Music Educators Association (OMEA) - President Isaac Moore

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