



January 27, 2021

Bill McKinnon, Chair
Thames Valley District School Board of Trustees
1250 Dundas Street
London, Ontario
N5W 5P2

Dear Chair McKinnon,

We are writing today to express our continued disappointment with the Board's lack of meaningful consultation and collaboration with its union partners. We and our members have consistently brought to the attention of the board and to the attention of members of senior administration that communication with us and our members is lacking and at times appears to take a back seat to communication with the public.

Whether it is our members reading about a change in the schedule in the news, or important memos about expectations being shared with our members without any opportunity for unions to review them, the Board has failed to consider its employees and unions as important partners.

As union leaders we have consistently been treated as an afterthought. The Board makes all of its important decisions and then contacts us for "consultations" moments before proceeding, often without providing the relevant documents for us to review. The most recent example of this is with regards to the Remote Learning Update of December 30th. Included in this memo was the Board's decision to allow some students who could work remotely to be provided with in-person instruction. This appears to contradict the direction of the Ministry of Education. The Board had the option to limit in-person instruction to students with a demonstrated need. It was not lost on union leadership that the Board chose not to prioritize the wellbeing of students and staff. While we had a brief conversation with a superintendent in a meeting called with very short notice regarding this direction, we had no opportunity to reflect or consult before the memo was distributed, nor were we provided with a draft copy of the memo. The School Board received direction from the Ministry on December 21st but waited to "consult" its union partners until December 30th, about an hour before acting. This is not consultation and it is certainly not collaboration.

This is not an isolated incident, but a method of operation that fails to honour the voice of front-line workers and their representatives. We are calling on you and your administration to involve your union partners at the time that decisions are made not just attempt to provide the appearance of consultation.

Sincerely,

Union Council

c. Trustees