

DSB official says meeting with minister on Jobs for Youth concerns was positive

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The Recorder

ESPANOLA—A recent meeting with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities on the now cancelled Jobs for Youth program was positive, says the CAO of the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board (DSB).

"It was a very positive meeting," Fern Dominelli, DSB CAO, told the Recorder after a board meeting last week. Minister Reza Moridi "is looking at the concerns that have been raised and is looking at other programs. She hopes to make announcements soon on the new initiatives."

Mr. Dominelli met with Minister Moridi recently. "Basically, in the conversation I had with the ministry I raised our concern that the new program in place is for 15-29 years olds (the new Youth Job Connection program, which replaced the Jobs for Youth program) and has been turned to a year-round program. So we went from helping to provide 111 job summer jobs to 20 youth, and it (the new program) is not for those who are aged 15-18. We're not saying that anything is wrong with this program, but the summer component is definitely not as large in terms of numbers and it won't benefit as many youth and businesses as it has in the past in our area."

In his meeting with the minister Mr. Dominelli explained the DSB, "delivers social assistance, children's services, social housing and land ambulance services. As an organization we are fully integrated and we are no stranger to full integration of programs to find efficiencies and deliver the best possible service to our citizens, whether they be a social assistance, child care or social housing client."

"We applaud the province's efforts to streamline, consolidate and integrate programs," said Mr. Dominelli. "We believe that it is the right approach to ensure the citizens of Ontario get the services they need in the most efficient manner while at the same time acting responsibly with our tax dollars."

"Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB has delivered the Jobs for Youth program since 2009. Since 2009, the Jobs for Youth program has placed 474 at risk youth between the ages of 15-18 to attain summer jobs. These were fully subsidized jobs at minimum wage for 35 hours per week for eight weeks," continued Mr. Dominelli.

"Unfortunately, the Jobs for Youth program ended on August 31, 2015 and it seems to have been replaced with the Youth Job Connection program, which began on October 1, 2015," said Mr. Dominelli. "In

2015, the DSB placed 111 at risk youth in summer jobs that lasted eight weeks at minimum wage. The Jobs for Youth allowed up to \$3,150 in direct wages plus provided for mandatory employer benefits."

However, the new Youth Job Connection Program-Summer component allows for 19 youth to be placed for eight weeks with a maximum of \$2,500 per participant to cover placement initiative, employment and training supports and job placement supports, said Mr. Dominelli.

"The DSB and its 18 member municipalities need to understand how the ministry can reduce the number of at risk youth placements from 111 in the summer placement component to 19 summer placements under the new Youth Job Connection. This represents an 81 percent reduction in the number of high risk youth obtaining summer jobs," Mr. Dominelli told the minister. "That means there will be 92 high risk youth who will not get an opportunity for a summer job in 2016 because of the change in MTCU programming."

"The summer component was extremely successful and the DSB partnered with Waubetek-an aboriginal business development corporation. Their funding

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...meeting with minister

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went from 50 youth per summer to 11, a 78 percent reduction and they have chosen not to deliver the program," said Mr. Dominelli.

Mr. Dominelli told the minister, "our DSB is currently in the process of contacting all 474 youth in order to determine the success of the Jobs for Youth program. It is our belief that providing a first time summer job to a 100 percent at risk youth each year will have a dramatic effect on their future prospects. Many of these youth would never have gotten hired on their own. A single person on Ontario Works receives a maximum of \$681 per month or \$8,172 per year plus benefits. A one-time investment in an at risk youth of \$3,150 for their first summer job could save the province over \$8,000 annually."