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The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

To: Health and Social Services Committee
From: Commissioner of Social Services
Report: #2024-SS-4
Date: May 9, 2024

Subject:

Unbudgeted Provincial funding from the Ministry of Education for the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System

Recommendation:

That the Health and Social Services Committee recommends to Regional Council:

That unbudgeted Provincial funding from the Ministry of Education in the amount of \$4,351,437, be expended in accordance with the 2024 Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Guidelines.

Report:

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide details and seek Regional Municipality of Durham (Region) Council approval to expend unbudgeted revenue provided through the Ministry of Education (MEDU).

2. Background

2.1 The Region is the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) for child care and early years in Durham Region. As the CMSM, the Region is legislatively responsible for implementing the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system for our region.

2.2 On March 28, 2024, Social Services staff received notice from MEDU outlining the Region was to receive an additional \$4,351,437 in funding for 2024 for updates to the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System.

3. Previous Reports and Decisions

3.1 [2022-SS-6](#): Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System

4. Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care Plan Updates

Increases to Wages

4.1 As announced, Ontario has improved compensation for the child care workforce effective January 1, 2024. The Region will receive additional funding, in the amount of \$1,935,070, to raise the wage floor to \$23.86 per hour for Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) and \$24.86 per hour for RECE Supervisors to improve recruitment and retention in the child care workforce.

Professional Learning

4.2 The Region will be receiving additional funding in the amount of \$1,120,425 to fund one paid professional learning day to improve recruitment and retention of RECEs and other program staff working in licensed centre- and home child care and EarlyON Child and Family Centres and to support the implementation of the CWELCC agreement.

Emerging Issues

4.3 On November 30, 2023, MEDU announced emerging issues allocations totaling \$75 million for 2024. To further support the sector, the ministry has increased 2024 emerging issues allocations to \$98.25 million for 2024. The Region is receiving additional funding of \$1,083,942 from this funding to help alleviate licensees' non-discretionary cost pressures from January to March 31, 2024.

Start-Up Grants

4.4 To further support child care space creation under CWELCC for children aged 0 to 5 years, MEDU has increased Start-up Grant funding to \$160.7 million for the 2024 calendar year. The Region will receive an additional \$212,000 to support increased Start-up Grant funding allocations from up to \$7,000 to \$9,000 per centre space and from up to \$1,000 to \$1,200 per home child care space. These new per space Start-up Grant funding amounts are retroactive to January 1, 2024

5. Financial Implications

5.1 Section 11.1 of the Region's Budget Management Policy, Unanticipated revenues in excess of \$1,000,000, and the proposed expenditure plan, require approval of the appropriate Standing Committee and Regional Council prior to the expenditure of funding.

5.2 Funding will be allocated to community child care partners and the Region's directly operated childcare centres, subject to terms and conditions set out in the program funding guidelines.

5.3 There are risks to the Region with upper levels of government funding. In the event that either level of government decreases the funding or does not adjust the level of funding provided to the Region to accommodate inflationary and contractual increases, then the Region's funding costs may need to be increased if there is a request to maintain the same level of service to the community.

6. Relationship to Strategic Plan

6.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:

- a. Goal 2: Community Vitality – To foster an exceptional quality of life with services that contribute to strong neighbourhoods, vibrant and diverse communities, and influence our safety and well-being.
- b. Goal 4: Social Investment – To ensure a range of programs, services and supports are available and accessible to those in need, so that no individual is left behind.
- c. Goal 5: Service Excellence – To provide exceptional value to Durham taxpayers through responsive, effective, and fiscally sustainable service delivery.

7. Conclusion

7.1 It is recommended that the Regional Municipality of Durham receive the additional unbudgeted Provincial funding from MEDU in the amount of \$4,351,437 as supplementary to the approved 2024 Business Plans and Budget and be allocated to eligible costs outlined in the 2024 Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care guidelines.

7.2 This report was reviewed by the Finance Department and the Commissioner of Finance concurs with the financial recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,

Original Signed by

Stella Danos-Papaconstantinou
Commissioner of Social Services

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original Signed by

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair
Chief Administrative Officer