

CANADA

YORK

YCDSB, un po' di ossigeno per la lingua italiana

Staff

TORONTO - Lo YCDSB sembra aver raggiunto una tregua sulla questione degli studi delle lingue straniere - l'Extended Day Language Program.

C'era il pericolo che ventitré delle scuole che offrono corsi di italiano a 8.500 alunni delle elementari non potessero più farlo. Lo staff e alcuni trustee minacciavano di tagliare l'Extended Day Program nel tentativo di ridurre il deficit del Board.

Il Centro Scuola ha offerto una lettera di garanzia fino a 500mila dollari all'anno fino al 2020

Il bilancio complessivo del Board per quest'anno è di 660,9 milioni. L'ED Program, già in parte finanziato dal Centro Scuola (un surrogato del governo italiano per l'insegnamento della lingua in Canada), costa al Board circa 295.000\$ all'anno. Riceve anche un sussidio dal governo provinciale.

Tra maggio e giugno di quest'anno il Board, forse incoraggiato dall'apparente fervore del trustee Cathy Ferlisi nell'eliminare il programma, aveva imposto un ultimatum. Sembrava dire che se la comunità lo voleva, poteva pagare.

Venne approvata una mozione che in effetti fissava una scadenza entro cui la comunità do-

veva procurare 1.000.000 dollari come garanzia che il programma non sarebbe stato chiuso nei prossimi quattro anni.

Un banchiere/genitore, un aspirante politico e diplomatici da Ottawa, Toronto e Montreal si sono adoperati per soddisfare le richieste di "o paghi o niente" del Board e in particolare dei trustee Ferlisi e Ciaravella.

Il Centro Scuola ha presentato a riguardo una "lettera di patronage" - una "garanzia" - offrendo fino a 500.000 dollari l'anno per coprire i costi del programma.

La lettera (pubblicata in questa pagina) era stata messa all'ordine del giorno insieme a un Report del direttore sull'argomento, ed era stata accettata dal Board.

Nel frattempo era stato chiesto al governo dell'Ontario di considerare l'inclusione dello studio delle lingue straniere nel Curriculum. Tale considerazione potrebbe ormai essere "fuori discussione".

Il console generale, raggiunto via email, riguardo alla questione ha dichiarato che il Centro Scuola riceve dalle autorità italiane 200.000 dollari da trasferire allo YCDSB e che il direttore avrebbe con ogni probabilità chiesto un prestito per coprire la differenza finché il Ministero degli Affari Esteri non avesse di sposto i fondi.

Sia lo York Catholic District School Board sia il direttore di Centro Scuola Domenico Servello - contattati dal *Corriere* - hanno confermato che il programma è salvo grazie a questo impegno finanziario.



CENTRE FOR ITALIAN CULTURE AND EDUCATION
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CENTRO SCUOLA E CULTURA ITALIANA

www.centroscuola.ca

August 31st, 2016

Mrs. Patricia Preston, Director of Education
York Catholic District School Board
320 Bloomington Road West
Aurora, Ontario L4G 0M1

Dear Mrs. Preston:

I'd like to start by thanking you very much for your support and interest in the Italian extended day program. I am pleased to advise you that Centro Scuola's annual contribution to the Extended Day Italian Program, will be up to \$500,000.00 in order to overcome the challenges for the delivery of the Italian Program.

This additional funding should guarantee effective delivery of the Extended Day Italian Program until 2020. The program budget should focus on meeting the needs of the students in their International Languages instructional classes. We look forward to a mutually agreeable implementation of this budget, and to a continuation of the good cooperation enjoyed between the Board, the families in the community, and Centro Scuola.

With thanks for your continuing support, and best wishes for a healthy, relaxing summer, I remain

Domenico Servello,
Director
Centro Scuola e Cultura Italiana

ENGLISH VERSION

Some Oxygen for the Italian Language in Catholic Schools

Staff

TORONTO - The YCDSB seems to have struck a truce on the issue of International language studies - the "Extended Day" language program.

Twenty-three schools that offered Italian language classes to 8,500 children in elementary schools were in danger of losing this service. The Staff and [some] Trustees threatened to cut the Extended Day Program as part of its effort to reduce the Board fiscal deficit.

The Board's total budget approved this year was \$660.9 million. The ED Program, already financed in part by Centro Scuola (a surrogate for the Italian government on language instruction in Canada) costs the Board approximately \$295,000 per year. It also receives a subsidy from the Provincial government.

In May - June, of this year, the Board, perhaps emboldened by the apparent fervour of Trustee Ferlisi to eliminate the program, issued an ultimatum.

If the community wants, they

can pay for it, they seemed to say. They passed a motion that in effect outlined a deadline for the community to provide \$1,000,000 in guarantees for the next four year of the program would end.

A Banker/parent, a political aspirant and Diplomats from Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal seemed to "rally" to satisfy the "pay or else" demands of the Board and Trustees Ferlisi and Ciaravella in particular.

Centro Scuola presented a "comfort letter" - a "guarantee" - to this effect. It offered up to \$500,000 per year to cover the costs of the program.

The letter (reprinted on this page) was presented as an Agenda item, along with a Report by the Director on the issue, and accepted by the Board.

In the interim, the government of Ontario had been asked to consider including International Languages Study as part of the Curriculum. That consideration may now be "off the table".

The Consul General when contacted on the matter by email offered the following: Centro Scuola receives \$200,000 from Italian authorities for transfer to YCDSB; the director will in all likelihood taken out a line of credit to cover the difference until the Ministry of Foreign Affairs can allocate the balance.

YCDSB and Centro Scuola's Director Domenico Servello, contacted by *Corriere Canadese*, confirmed that the Program will continue thanks to additional funds provided by Centro Scuola.

York Catholic District School Board

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September 28, 2016

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As you may be aware, the International Language Extended Day Program was identified for review during our budget development process as the expense to operate the program in the extended day format exceeded the Ministry funding revenue. It is our role as trustees to effectively manage our resources, and the Board cannot continue to operate programs without sufficient funds. The Board required additional financial resources in order to maintain the International Language Extended Day program.

I am happy to inform you that Centro Scuola has provided the Board with a letter confirming their financial commitment to fully fund the program until 2020. I thank Centro Scuola sincerely for their commitment to supplying the additional funding.

I recognize that the potential cancellation has caused concern amongst the 23 schools in our board that offer the International Language Extended Day program, and in particular to the St. Cecilia school community. Please know that I was always confident that the Italian community would rally and find an approach to financially support the International Language Extended Day program.

In addition, I am happy to support the implementation of the revised International Language Extended Day Advisory Committee. I am impressed that the committee will be charged with reviewing the program pedagogy, aligning the program with the Board's mission, vision and strategic commitments and identifying potential cost efficiencies.

I am certain that with this 'refreshed' and 're-calibrated' partnership between Centro Scuola and the YCDSB - the International Language Extended Day program will continue to flourish in a fiscally responsible and pedagogically sound manner.

Sincerely,

Cathy Ferlisi
YCDSB Trustee
Attachments - 3

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