



The Ministry of Finance Community Budget Consultations

To: Finance, Budget and Enrolment Committee

Date: 14 October, 2020

Report No.: 10-20-3963

Strategic Directions

- Allocate Human and Financial Resources Strategically to Support Student Needs

Recommendation

It is recommended that The Ministry of Finance Budget Consultations Report be received.

Context

The Ministry of Finance is hosting community budget consultations to hear directly from the people of Ontario.

As the Ministry prepares for the Fall 2020 Ontario Budget, the COVID-19 pandemic has been at the forefront on how Ontarians live, work every day. The Ministry of Finance is welcoming written submissions by residences of Ontario by 16 October 2020. The Toronto District School Board's Draft Submission (maximum 500 words) can be reviewed on Appendix B.

The Ministry of Finance is hosting a virtual discussion in advance of the Fall 2020 Ontario Budget on 15 October 2020. Representing and presenting on behalf of the TDSB will be Associate Director of Business Operations and Service Excellence (Interim), Craig Snider and Attending on behalf of the TDSB will be Director of Education (Interim), Dr. Kathy Witherow. Each testimony will be allotted three minutes of speaking time. The draft speaking notes can be reviewed on Appendix C.

The Consultations will be recorded to better reflect the suggestions that are made.

Ontarians are being asked to complete an online survey to provide their input to the Fall Ontario 2020 Budget, www.Ontario.ca/budgetconsultation. The survey questions are provided in Appendix A.

Action Plan and Associated Timeline

The Virtual discussion will be held on 15 October 2020 at 1:00 p.m. in advance of the Fall 2020 Ontario Budget.

Resource Implications

N/A

Communications Considerations

The Ministry of Finance will be recording the consultations to better reflect the suggestions that are made. The TDSB written submission will be posted on the TDSB external website.

Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)

N/A

Appendices

- Appendix A: Survey: Fall 2020 Budget consultations
- Appendix B: Draft TDSB Written Submission (by October 16, 2020)
- Appendix C: Draft Speaking Notes - Community Budget Consultation October 2020

From

Kathy Witherow, Director of Education (Interim), at Kathy.witherow@tdsb.on.ca or at 416-397-3190.

Craig Snider, Associate Director, Business Operations and Service Excellence (Interim) at craig.snider@tdsb.on.ca or at 416-397-3188.

Survey: Fall 2020 Budget consultations

As we prepare the Fall 2020 Budget, investing in health care and protecting Ontario families and workers remains the government's top priority. Tell us what you want to see in the next phase of Ontario's Action Plan.

Closing date: October 16, 2020

This survey has 8 questions and should take less than 10 minutes to complete.

Section 1: Economic recovery

1. Across Ontario and around the world, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact how we live, work and do business. What should the top priority be for the Fall 2020 Budget as the province continues to fight the pandemic and work towards long-term recovery? (500-word limit)

2. The economic impacts of COVID-19 are being felt in communities across Ontario. As we plan for renewal, growth and long-term recovery, how would you like to see the government make our province a more attractive place for people to invest, work and grow a business? Please rank the following actions in order of importance, with 1 being the most important and 6 being the least important.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Eliminating unnecessary red tape for businesses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lowering taxes for businesses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating new grants and financial support for businesses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making it easier for businesses to access the money they need to grow (for example, from banks, private equity, venture capitalists)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promoting Ontario-Made products and local businesses that make up Ontario's Mainstreet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expediting infrastructure initiatives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Is there anything else the government can do to make our province a more attractive place for people to invest, work and grow a business? Please share your ideas below. (200-word limit)

4. Ontario has made important investments in job training and job creation. What more would you like to see the provincial government do to help people find a good job? Choose all that apply.

- Create incentives for employers to rehire employees laid off due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Extend financial supports to businesses and employees (for example, support for businesses through government grants and loans, interest and penalty-free periods to make payments for provincially administered taxes)
- Invest in the skilled trades and apprenticeship opportunities
- Work with the postsecondary sector to ensure programs are preparing students for the jobs of today and the future
- Other

Section 2: Supporting people

5. COVID-19 has had an unprecedented impact on the global economy. The government has been focused on providing support and relief to people and families struggling as a result. What should the government do to provide additional help to those who have been negatively affected by the global pandemic? Please tell us about your top idea. (500-word limit)

6. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all of us differently. How helpful do you think each of the actions below would be in your recovery from COVID-19?

	Not helpful at all	Not so helpful	Somewhat helpful	Very helpful
Lowering taxes for individuals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing direct financial support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increasing cash flow by offering deferrals for payments (for example, taxes)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helping workers learn new skills for their careers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making it easier to manage personal finances (for example, through learning new skills or tools to save money)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expediting infrastructure initiatives (such as accelerating the construction of critical highway, transit and broadband infrastructure)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Do you have any other idea for how the government can support workers and families during the COVID-19 pandemic? (200-word limit)

8. The provincial budget needs to balance many priorities. Please rank the following in order of importance, with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important.

	1	2	3	4	5
Helping Ontario's economy recover	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting families and workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Outlining a plan to balance the budget	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making new investments in critical public services, like health care, education and long-term care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making additional investments in infrastructure (such as accelerating the construction of critical highway, transit and broadband infrastructure)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Your privacy matters

This is a public consultation. All submissions received are subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and will be considered public.

Your responses will be reviewed and may be used by the Ministry of Finance for consideration as part of the Fall 2020 Ontario Budget. This may involve disclosing some or all comments or materials, or summaries of them, to other interested parts of the Ontario government during and after the consultation. Your feedback may also be used in a summary report about this survey. Feedback will not be attributed to specific individuals.

Please do not include personal information in your responses or any information that identifies you, a friend, family member or other person.

Some of the non-identifying information shared may be used by Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Finance and their service providers to measure website analytics, performance and to improve our services.

Your information will not be placed on mailing lists or released to any third party, except as may be authorized by law. For questions on how personal information collected on this page will be used, please see our [Privacy Statement](#) or contact:

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**Ontario Ministry of Finance – Community Budget Consultation
Written Submission – Toronto District School Board**

In many ways, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way that the TDSB operates, and it continues to have a significant financial impact on our board. As we look ahead to next year, we have significant concerns about the residual impacts of the pandemic and the costs that we will continue to face. The following areas are of particular concern:

Virtual Learning

- The TDSB has ultimately been operating two separate school systems since September – one for in-person learners and one for the more than 80,000 virtual learners we now support.
- This has resulted in an increase in costs due to the duplication of many functions.
- There has also been a significant cost related to ensuring equity of access for all students. This year, the TDSB will spend approximately \$15M to ensure that students have the appropriate technology to continue their learning virtually.

Special Education

- The TDSB has consistently spent more than our full grant to support students with Special Education needs (20-21 estimated at \$59M).
- There are also additional costs associated with ensuring that these students are fully supported during the pandemic.

Mental Health and Well-Being

- Additional mental health and well-being resources are needed to support students and staff during the pandemic, and will continue to be needed as we look beyond this school year.
- We will need additional resources for social workers, Child and Youth Workers, Guidance Councillors, Student Equity Program Advisors, and K-12 Equity coaches.

PPE and Cleaning Supplies

- This year, the TDSB was provided with \$460K in funding for PPE and Cleaning Supplies from the province. Since March, we have already spent more than \$8M dollars on PPE and cleaning supplies to ensure that our learning environments are safe for students and staff.

Supply Teacher Costs

- Current funding levels do not adequately support school boards actual costs in all areas of staffing.
- Collective agreements allow for 130 days of absence with staff only being reduced to 90% of earnings after 11 days of absence.
- There has been an increase in usage of sick time since this new policy was established, and an even further increase this year with COVID-19.

- These costs will continue to increase, and school boards must receive additional funding support to address this shortfall.

Lastly, the TDSB continues to advocate for additional funding and access to funds in these two areas:

Renewal Funding Backlog

- The TDSB's current repair backlog sits at \$3.5 billion as a result of years of inadequate funding.
- Funding improvements have been made in recent years, allowing the TDSB to address emergency issues in our schools. Unfortunately, the additional funding has not been enough to decrease the TDSB's backlog.
- We ask that the province commit to providing predictable and sustainable funding for school repairs. This has become even more important in light of the pandemic and the TDSB's need to improve HVAC systems in our older schools.

Education Development Charges

- The TDSB continues to advocate for access to Education Development Charges (EDCs).
- We do not qualify for EDCs because we have excess capacity when assessed on a district-wide basis, even though there are significant capacity pressures facing many neighborhood schools.
- If the TDSB qualified, we could expect to have \$500-million over the next 15 years to meet growth-related infrastructure needs.
- We ask that the province modify or remove the restrictions in Section 10 of Ontario Regulation 20/98 to allow all school boards to qualify for EDCs and be able to use those funds for expansion of existing schools or building of new schools.

We recognized that this is an incredibly challenging time in our province, and recovering from the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic will not be easy. However, now more than ever, it is importance that the students of this province are prioritized with strong, predictable and equitable education funding to support their needs.

DRAFT**Appendix C****Ontario Ministry of Finance – Community Budget Consultation****Thursday, October 15, 2020 from 1 – 3 p.m.****Delegate: Craig Snider, Associate Director, Business Operations and Service Excellence,
Toronto District School Board**

Good afternoon. My name is Craig Snider and I am the Associate Director of Business Operations and Service Excellence for the Toronto District School Board.

I would like to begin by thanking the Ministry of Finance for the invitation to take part in today's budget consultation to share the TDSB's key areas of concern as we look ahead to next year's budget.

Like every organization here today, COVID-19 has – in many ways – changed the way that the TDSB operates. COVID-19 has, and will continue to have, a significant financial impact to our board.

As we look ahead to next year and begin to plan and budget, we have significant concerns about the residual impacts of the pandemic and the costs that we will continue to face, even as the effects of the pandemic begin to lessen.

In addition, we also want to highlight areas where pandemic funding has fallen short – such as PPE/cleaning supplies and teacher costs. In terms of teachers, for example, the TDSB has used reserves to fund 280 additional teachers to lower class sizes to keep students and staff safe.

When it comes to the residual impacts of the pandemic, there are five areas that I'd like to highlight today: virtual learning, Special Education, mental health and well-being, PPE and cleaning supply costs, and supply teacher costs.

DRAFT**Appendix C****Virtual Learning**

To begin, I want to highlight the fact that the TDSB, and school boards across Ontario, have ultimately been operating two separate school systems since September – one for in-person learners and one for the more than 80,000 virtual learners we are now supporting.

This has resulted in an increase in costs and expenditures as operating these two models simultaneously means a duplication of many functions, such as school administration, support staff, IT resources and teachers.

There has also been a significant cost related to ensuring equity of access for all students during this pandemic. The TDSB will have spent, for example, approximately \$15M to ensure that students have the appropriate technology at home to be able to continue their learning virtually.

The TDSB is committed to continuing to offer a virtual option for students as long as it is required during this pandemic, but it is imperative that the government recognize the additional costs associated with running both an in-person and virtual option.

Special Education

Next, when it comes to Special Education, the TDSB has consistently spent more than our full grant to support students with Special Education needs.

This year, for example, the TDSB is currently projecting to spend approximately \$59M on Special Education. This is significantly higher than what we are funded for by the province.

DRAFT**Appendix C**

With more and more students requiring some type of special education support, and the additional costs associated with ensuring these students are fully supported during the pandemic with either in-person or virtual support, this overspending will only increase unless provincial funding in this area is enhanced.

Mental Health and Well-Being

Additional mental health and well-being resources are needed to support students and staff during the pandemic, and will continue to be needed as we look beyond this school year.

To make sure that we have the right people in place, we will need additional resources for the following positions: social workers, Child and Youth Workers, Guidance Councillors, Student Equity Program Advisors, and K-12 Equity coaches.

We need to make sure that we are equipped to fully support students and staff during this time.

PPE and Cleaning Supplies

This school year, the TDSB was provided with \$460K in funding for PPE and Cleaning Supplies from the province. In reality, since March, we have already spent more than \$8M dollars on PPE and cleaning supplies to ensure that our learning environments are safe for students and staff. It is imperative that the funding provided by the government recognizes the reality in our schools.

Supply Teacher Costs

And the final issue that has been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic that I would like to mention today is around supply teacher costs.

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As you know, the current funding levels do not adequately support school boards actual costs in all areas of staffing.

Collective agreements allow for 11 sick days at full salary plus 120 days at 90% salary (plus any additional top-up from last year's 11 days) with appropriate medical documentation.

There has been an increase in usage of sick time since this new policy was established, and an even further increase this year as staff manage the requirements associated with testing and self-isolation related to symptoms of COVID-19. We expect that these costs will continue to increase.

It is more imperative than ever that school boards receive additional funding support to address this shortfall.

And lastly, two issues – unrelated to the pandemic – that I must nevertheless bring forward today are the TDSB's Renewal Funding Backlog and continued advocacy for access to Education Development Charges.

Renewal Funding Backlog

The TDSB's current repair backlog sits at a staggering \$3.5 billion as a result of years of inadequate funding.

Funding improvements have been made in recent years, allowing the TDSB to address emergency issues in our schools. Unfortunately, the additional funding has not been enough to decrease the TDSB's repairs backlog.

We ask that the province commit to providing predictable and sustainable funding for school repairs so that the TDSB can continue to implement our long-term plan for renewal, lower our current backlog

DRAFT**Appendix C**

and modernize our schools. This has become even more important in light of the pandemic and the TDSB's need to improve HVAC systems in our older schools.

Education Development Charges

And lastly, the TDSB continues to advocate for access to Education Development Charges.

As you know, the TDSB does not qualify for Education Development Charges because we have excess capacity when assessed on a district-wide basis, even though there are significant capacity pressures and challenges facing many neighborhood schools. Other Ontario school boards collect Education Development Charges and this puts the TDSB at a disadvantage.

If the TDSB qualified for EDCs, we could expect to have \$500-million over the next 15 years to meet growth-related infrastructure needs.

We ask, once again, that the province modify or remove the restrictions in Section 10 of Ontario Regulation 20/98 to allow all school boards to qualify for EDCs and be able to use those funds for expansion of existing schools or building of new schools.

In conclusion, I would once again like to thank the Ministry of Finance for giving me the opportunity to share these issues on behalf of the TDSB.

I know that this is an incredibly challenging time in our province, and recovering from the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic will not be easy. However, now more than ever, it is important that the students of this province are prioritized with strong, predictable and equitable education funding to support their needs. Thank you.

Written Notice of Motion for Consideration (Trustees Laskin and Donaldson)

From: Denise Joseph-Dowers, Manager, Board Services, Governance and Board Services

In accordance with Board Bylaw 5.15.2, notice of the following motion was provided at the regular Board meeting on September 23 2020 and is therefore submitted for consideration at this time.

5.15.2 A notice of motion will be introduced by a member who is present as an advance notification of a matter to be considered at a subsequent Board or Committee meeting. A notice of motion will not be debated at the meeting at which it is introduced...

5.15.2 (c) A notice of motion submitted prior to, or at a Board meeting, will be considered at a subsequent Board meeting or will be referred to the appropriate committee...

Exemptions From P076, Community Planning and Partnerships to Allow for a Capital Improvement to the Former Vaughan Road Academy School Building at 529 Vaughan Road

Whereas, the Board makes decisions about partnerships through the approval of partnership agreements in the form of leases according to Policy 076, Community Planning and Partnerships; and

Whereas, in the fall of 2018, the Board voted to retain the school building at 529 Vaughan Road in its property portfolio as a “holding site” for public education for children and youth from other communities whose schools were in transition (housing Davisville Public School/Spectrum Alternative Senior School from September 2018 to June 2021 during construction of the new build); and

Whereas, for the last number of years, local residents, community organizations, local city councillors and school trustees have discussed the need for social and economic development in the Oakwood-Vaughan neighbourhood with a particular concern about the lack of health and community services in the area, especially with respect to certain populations such as low income families, children and youth, seniors and newcomers; and

Whereas, the Oakwood Vaughan Community Organization (OVCO), a non-profit organization incorporated on October 20, 2017 (#1976377) and registered as a charitable organization has assumed the responsibility for collaboration with the TDSB to pursue the goal of initiating community services in space reserved for it at the former VRA, which OVCO has characterized at this time as the “nub of a hub”; and

Whereas, over the last several years, the TDSB has advertised two adjacent rooms on the third floor of 529 Vaughan Road are reserved for community use; and

Whereas, the rooms reserved for community use are not being used as accessibility for program participants with physical and mobility challenges is a barrier; and

Whereas, OVCO has identified a funding opportunity with the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) which has a capital projects policy and has a funding stream that is available to community organizations for capital improvements to community sites serving community groups in OTF's priority outcome areas (eligible community organizations can apply for capital grants up to \$150,000); and

Whereas, OVCO leadership has discussed with an OTF capital grants program officer whether a project to install an elevator in a school facility for creating access to community programming space would be considered eligible for an OTF capital grant and the consistent response in three consultations since October 2019 is that such a proposal on its face would qualify as a capital grant application (success would depend on satisfying the criteria of the OTF adjudication process for all submissions); and

Whereas, OVCO would like to apply for an OTF capital grant to install an upgraded Disability Lift or a LULA elevator in the location of the current elevator as a capital improvement to the school facility at 529 Vaughan Road; and

Whereas, a critical requirement for an OTF capital grant application is as follows: "Proof of ownership or a five-year lease agreement is required for all renovations or improvements to land or property" and this is contrary to the TDSB's current policy requirement that lease agreements with community partners be subject to termination notice of six months should a school require the community space for educational purposes; and

Whereas, in the Guiding Principles for Community Use of Board Facilities it states "Neighbourhood schools must be hubs of the community. These facilities are the product of long-term public investment in neighbourhood and community infrastructure. Their value must be broadly recognized, not narrowly defined, and the use of these assets should be maximized to further both educational and community objectives."; and

Whereas, in procedure PR713, Community Planning and Partnership, under 6.6 it states "Opportunities for Co-Building with Community Partners - a) The Board shall evaluate capital projects such as the construction of a new school, a major addition or renovation on a case-by-case basis to determine whether partnerships may be appropriate or beneficial."; and

Whereas, the community sees this partnership with OVCO as beneficial and whereas the Board would benefit from a capital improvement to 529 Vaughan Road;

Therefore, be it resolved:

- (a) That an exemption be made under clause 6.6 of policy P076, Community Planning and Partnerships to allow for a five-year lease to Oakwood Vaughan Community Organization, without a six-month termination notice, as the former Vaughan Road Academy facility has enough space to designate two classrooms for community use¹;
- (b) That under clause 6.4, Partnership Compatibility of policy P076, Oakwood Vaughan Community Organization be allowed to facilitate the use of the leased rooms with other community partnerships but that the provisions of clause 6.4 would still apply;

¹ Current policy - facility partnerships shall include a provision that the partnership agreement may be terminated by the Director or designate with six months' notice. The Board shall consider longer-term leases when partners make significant capital upgrades to their space

- (c) That the Director write to the Minister of Education to request an exemption from their Fund Raising Guidelines (2012) “Examples of Unacceptable Uses of Fundraising Proceeds - Facility renewal, maintenance, or upgrades funded through provincial grants such as structural repairs, sanitation, emergency repairs, or replacing flooring due to wear and tear”¹.

¹ The rationale – Ontario Trillium Grants come from government – and if used for capital improvement would be in service to community access to space for youth programming not directly operated by the school board, which would seem to be a reasonable exception to usual restrictions. The additional accessibility benefits that students with mobility challenges whose classrooms are on the second and third floors are welcome, but ancillary, to OVCO’s main purpose.