



2021-22 Ministry of Education Budget Consultation

To: Special Finance, Budget and Enrolment Committee

Date: 16 December, 2020

Report No.: 12-20-3987

Strategic Directions

- Transform Student Learning
- Create a Culture for Student and Staff Well-Being
- Provide Equity of Access to Learning Opportunities for All Students
- Allocate Human and Financial Resources Strategically to Support Student Needs
- Build Strong Relationships and Partnerships Within School Communities to Support Student Learning and Well-Being

Recommendation

It is recommended that the 2021-22 Ministry of Education Budget Consultation report be received.

Context

On 3 December 2020 the Ministry of Education provided the 2021-22 Education Funding Guide (Appendix A) to school boards for feedback from the sector. They identified that feedback must be submitted by 15 January 2021 to the Ministry. Staff contacted Ministry staff and requested an extension of the deadline to 21 January 2021 to allow the Finance, Budget and Enrolment Committee (FBEC) to review and approve the submission to the Ministry. The Ministry approved staff's extension request.

The Ministry consultation document asks for feedback in the following areas through targeted questions in each area:

- COVID-19 Outbreak Response;
- Online Learning Adjustment;

- Priorities and Partnerships Fund (PPF);
- Reducing Administrative Burden and Red Tape;
- School Board Administration and Governance Grant;
- Managing Information for Student Achievement (MISA);
- Census Data; and,
- Secondary Class Size Compliance.

In each area, many of the questions are operational in nature. Staff are working to prepare responses to these operational questions and will amend these responses based on feedback provided by Trustees and stakeholders.

The Ministry of Education will also be accepting feedback on education funding topics outside the areas identified in this guide.

In Appendix B of this report, is a copy of the budget submission provided by the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) to the 2020-21 budget consultation requested by the Ministry of Education which addresses the areas of focus for the TDSB.

Action Plan and Associated Timeline

Due to the tight timelines provided by the Ministry, staff are recommending that Trustee and stakeholder feedback be provided by 8 January 2021, so that staff can use this feedback to prepare a draft submission and report to FBEC on 20 January 2021. To assist in collecting feedback, staff have prepared the Budget Feedback Survey Tool attached in Appendix C of this report.

The planned consultation schedule will be:

Target Group	Action Plan
SEAC	Presented at SEAC meeting on 7 December 2020
PIAC	Presented at PIAC meeting on 15 December 2020
Community Advisory Committees	Contact the Staff Lead of each Community Advisory Committee to request that the link to the survey tool be shared for feedback, 17 December 2020
Stakeholder Input	Posted to the Board website with link to the survey tool for feedback, open until 8 January 2021
Trustee Feedback	E-mail comments to staff by 8 January 2021

Feedback received during this process will be considered when drafting the response to the Ministry.

In the report back to FBEC, staff will include copies of the actual feedback received from Trustees and stakeholders that informed the final submission draft. The response to the Ministry will be provided to FBEC for review and approval.

Resource Implications

School boards are required to submit a balanced operating budget to the Ministry of Education as outlined in Ministry funding parameters and timelines.

Communications Considerations

The Ministry of Education Budget Consultation Guide and a feedback survey tool will be posted to the Board website to allow stakeholders to provide feedback for consideration in developing the final submission. The survey will be open until 8 January 2021 for stakeholders to provide feedback.

This report and the final submission to the Ministry of Education on the feedback to the 2021-22 Ministry of Education Budget Consultation Guide will be posted on the TDSB Budget website.

Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)

Not applicable.

Appendices

- Appendix A: 2021-22 Ministry Budget Consultation Guide
- Appendix B: 2020-21 Ministry Budget Consultation Submission
- Appendix C: Copy of Budget Feedback Survey Tool

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2021-22 EDUCATION FUNDING GUIDE



INTRODUCTION

All students deserve to have every opportunity to reach their full potential and succeed personally and academically, with access to rich learning experiences that provide a strong foundation of confidence that continues throughout their lives. Schools should be safe and welcoming places where all students have the tools they need to achieve success and follow their chosen pathways to life after graduation including work, college, apprenticeship or university. Educators and school/system leaders need to have the knowledge and skills to create conditions that better support and serve all students. Together with our renewed focus on achievement, equity, and mental health and well-being, Ontario's publicly funded education system will be fairer and more inclusive for all students, educators and staff, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation or any other factor related to individual identity.

Since COVID-19 has emerged as an unprecedented public health issue, the government has been diligently monitoring the developing situation to protect the health and well-being of all Ontarians. Our number one priority is and remains the health and safety of our students, teachers and staff.

As you are aware, this year's Grants for Student Needs (GSN) is projected to be \$25.52 billion – representing a historic, high level of investment for Ontario's publicly funded education system. In addition, over \$300 million is being provided for the Priorities and Partnerships Fund (PPF).

As the province responds to the COVID-19 outbreak, we continue to modernize education funding so students can succeed in school, life, and beyond, while ensuring investments have the greatest impact in the classroom.

For more information about the current education funding model, please see the [2020-21 Education Funding](#) page of the Ministry of Education's website.

ABOUT THIS CONSULTATION

As in previous years, the government remains committed to discussing education funding reform in Ontario, with education stakeholders through a consultation process that allows stakeholders to provide the benefit of their expertise, experience, and ideas. This year's guide focuses on:

- COVID-19 Outbreak Response
- Online Learning Adjustment
- Priorities and Partnerships Fund (PPF)
- Reducing Administrative Burden and Red Tape
- School Board Administration and Governance Grant
- Managing Information for Student Achievement (MISA)
- Census data
- Secondary Class Size Compliance

You may also submit feedback on education funding topics not outlined in this guide. In order to ensure your feedback is considered, please forward your electronic submission by **Friday January 15, 2021** to: EDULABFINANCE@ontario.ca. If you have questions about this consultation, please send them to the email address noted above.

COVID-19 OUTBREAK RESPONSE

This 2020-21 school year has brought new challenges due to the COVID-19 outbreak. In response, Ontario made almost \$1.3 billion in resources available to school boards to support the safe reopening of schools, which includes \$381 million in federal funds. The government's investments include additional supports for additional teachers and custodians, special education and mental health, technology-related costs, cleaning and safety measures, improved ventilation and HVAC system effectiveness, administrative staff to oversee virtual schools, and flexible funding to support a range of activities based on school board priorities.

Considerations

1. **How do we ensure that the GSN remains agile to continue to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak?**
2. **What's required to successfully help students post COVID-19?**

ONLINE LEARNING ADJUSTMENT

As announced on November 21, 2019, Ontario students will be required to take two online credits to graduate from secondary school, starting with the cohort of students entering grade 9 in September 2020. As part of this transition, for the 2020–21 school year, the ministry has included an online learning adjustment in the Cost Adjustment and Teacher Qualifications and Experience Grant in recognition of the maximum average class size of 30 for online courses.

Each school board's Online Learning Adjustment amount is based on its percentage of secondary credits taken through online learning in the 2017–18 school year, calculated separately for each category (i.e. day school programs for pupils under 21 years of age, adult day school, continuing education and summer school programs) and a cost adjustment for each category to reflect a funded average class size of 30 for secondary online courses.

As a reminder online courses will not be included in the calculation of a school board's secondary maximum average class size requirement of 23 and remote learning is not considered part of online learning.

Considerations:

1. **As future adjustments to the funding methodology for online learning courses are to be confirmed through the 2021-22 GSN, do changes and/or adjustments need to be made to the Online Learning Adjustment in order to be more responsive?**

PRIORITIES AND PARTNERSHIP FUND

The Priorities and Partnership Fund (PPF) provides education funding, supplemental to the GSN, for high impact initiatives that directly support students in the classroom. The funding is evidence-based and outcome-focused while providing streamlined, accountable, and time limited funding that will be reviewed and assessed by the Ministry of Education each year.

To further support the ministry's efforts to streamline funding while also reducing administrative burden for transfer payment recipients, some programs previously funded through PPF have been transferred into the GSN beginning in 2020–21.

The ministry also implemented a consolidated transfer payment agreement for many PPF programs for the first time. The ministry intends to continue to examine opportunities to consolidate and standardize PPF transfer payment administration, including opportunities for streamlining reporting.

Considerations:

1. **Are there further opportunities to improve the administration of transfer payment agreements to continue supporting a reduction in administrative burden?**
2. **Are there other PPF initiatives that should be transferred to the GSN?**
3. **What potential areas of overlap exist within currently funded programs? What opportunities might there be to streamline funding, and to streamline reporting?**

REDUCING ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN AND RED TAPE

The government is eliminating burdensome, outdated and unnecessary regulation to help restore Ontario's competitiveness, retain high-quality jobs and attract investment.

The Ontario government has taken more than 100 actions to modernize and streamline regulations, reducing overlap with the federal government and municipalities, updating old requirements and simplifying complicated rules.

In 2020-21, the ministry has transferred five Priorities and Partnership Fund (PPF) allocations into the GSN to support the ministry's ongoing efforts to streamline reporting.

The ministry continues to look for ways of reducing administrative burden and aligning program implementation with ministry priorities, while ensuring strong accountability and value for money.

Considerations

1. **Are there opportunities to reduce the number of non-financial reports and PPF reports school boards currently submit to the ministry?**
2. **Are there areas of overlap or duplication in the current reports school boards submit to the ministry?**

SCHOOL BOARD ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE GRANT

The School Board Administration and Governance Grant (SBAGG) provides funding for administration and governance costs such as operating school board offices and central facilities, board-based staff and expenditures, including supervisory officers and their administrative support.

Amongst other changes, in 2020-21, the Program Leadership Allocation (PLA) was moved from the SBAGG to become its own grant – Program Leadership Grant – as part of a realignment that better delineates funding for the development and delivery of student programming.

The school board administration and governance enveloping provision requires that a school board's net administration and governance expenses in a fiscal year not exceed the administration and governance limit. It is the ministry's expectation that school boards be in compliance with the enveloping provision within SBAGG.

Considerations:

1. **Are there areas of overlap between this grant and other grants within the current funding formula to support school board administration and governance? Are there opportunities to streamline funding to eliminate duplication and find savings?**
2. **How can compliance with the enveloping provisions of this grant be consistently measured across school boards?**

MANAGING INFORMATION FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT (MISA)

Funding for MISA Local Capacity Building is intended for activities to help school boards build capacity and better manage information and evidence to inform school board decisions around school administration and classroom practice.

MISA funds are used to sustain and advance local capacity to use quality evidence, by targeting funds in at least two of the following four priority funding areas:

1. Build and sustain capacity by continuing work on high priority common core activities to achieve/maintain level(s), as set out in the MISA Common Core Capacities Continuum.
2. Create more collaboration at the classroom, school, board, and/or professional network level(s) in activities related to identifying, analysing, implementing, monitoring, and/or evaluating improvement strategies/initiatives.
3. Promote prioritized availability and usability of information for end-users (e.g. teacher, principal, superintendent), while having regard for privacy protection.
4. Data quality management projects that will improve the timeliness, accuracy and completeness of school board data/information submitted through the Ontario School Information System (OnSIS).

The funding is based on a fixed amount of \$35,000 for each school board and \$0.35 per Average Daily Enrolment (ADE). The MISA Local Capacity Building Allocation is \$3.2 million in 2020–21.

Considerations:

1. **How can the ministry better support boards in their annual MISA plans and final reporting template submissions?**
2. **Boards currently have discretion to utilize MISA funding in alignment with the 4 priority funding areas (above) – how relevant are these priorities areas for boards moving forward?**
3. **Are there other funding priority areas where MISA funds could be directed to maximize impact?**

CENSUS DATA

The formulas for the GSN allocations that provide funding for specific education priorities include various measures of “need” – that is, they rely on quantitative data to indicate what level of need there is for a particular set of programs and services. Currently, census data is a significant input in the measurement of need. Approximately 14 per cent of total funding for the supplemental grants within the GSN are dependent (all or in part) on census data.

While several allocations within the GSN still rely on 2006 Census data and socio-economic indicators, the ministry continues to review the impacts of updating the census information for the upcoming school year and beyond. Any updates to the census data would require a redistribution of funding between school boards in recognition of increasing needs.

Considerations:

1. **How should allocations within the GSN be adjusted to reflect updated census data based on the re-distributed impacts to school boards? Should any updates be phased-in? If yes, what is an appropriate phase-in period and why?**

SECONDARY CLASS SIZE COMPLIANCE

The Class Size Regulation (O. Reg. 132/12) sets out class size requirements for all grades. In 2015–16, the ministry announced a framework to ensure compliance with the kindergarten and primary (generally grades 1 to 3) provisions of the class size regulation. In 2017–18, this compliance framework was expanded to apply to the junior-intermediate (grades 4 to 8) provisions of the regulation.

The current compliance framework requires boards to submit a class size compliance management plan in the first year of non-compliance. Where a board is non-compliant for two or more years, the ministry will implement reductions in the funding envelope for school board administration and governance. This is effectively a requirement to re-direct funds to the classroom to assist with compliance with the class size regulation. When a school board demonstrates compliance with the limits set out in the relevant sections of the class size regulation, the compliance measures may be lifted.

Considerations:

1. **What are the benefits and/or challenges of implementing a compliance framework for secondary class size?**

CONCLUSION

The ministry would like to acknowledge once again the ongoing, tireless efforts of school board teams to support students, families and the broader community. We have seen our education system rise to the challenge and provide innovative, flexible solutions in the best interest of students. We are grateful for your partnership and look forward to our continued collaboration going forward. The ministry continues to depend on school boards and trustees, and their knowledge of the needs of their communities, to make decisions that best support students and schools.

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide, and we look forward to your feedback.



Introduction

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) is Canada's largest and most diverse school board. Every day, we welcome more than 246,000 students to 582 schools across the City of Toronto. We also serve more than 140,000 life-long learners in our Adult and Continuing Education programs.

As the largest and most diverse school board in the country, we have a unique set of needs when it comes to what is required to best support our students and communities. To ensure we are best supporting our students, we developed the Multi-Year Strategic Plan to set direction and identify system goals. The focus of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan is to ensure that every student receives a great education by having equitable access to programs and resources and increased opportunities to lead to success.

The Multi-Year Strategic Plan consists of five pillars. Each pillar has measureable outcomes that are confirmed through our student census data, student academic achievements, and strategic allocation of resources:

- [Transform Student Learning](#) – We will have high expectations for all students and provide positive, supportive learning environments.
- [Create a Culture for Student and Staff Well-Being](#) – We will build positive school and workplace cultures that support mental health and well-being — free of bias and full of potential.
- [Provide Equity of Access to Learning Opportunities for All Students](#) – We will ensure that all schools offer a wide range of programming that reflects the voices, choices, abilities, identities and experiences of students.
- [Allocate Human and Financial Resources Strategically to Support Student Needs](#) - We will allocate resources, renew schools, improve services and remove barriers and biases to support student achievement and accommodate the different needs of students, staff and the community.
- [Build Strong Relationships and Partnerships Within School Communities to Support Student Learning and Well-Being](#) – We will strengthen relationships and



continue to build partnerships among students, staff, families and communities that support student needs and improve learning and well-being.

Measuring our success is critical to knowing if we are making a difference for students. Our expectation – and our goal – is that everyone improves. We expect to:

- Close the achievement and well-being gaps while keeping expectations high for all students because we are providing access to the programs, resources and learning opportunities that students require, while removing systemic barriers that may exist for them.
- Transform student learning to ensure students improve in literacy and math and strengthen essential skills including critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, citizenship and character (known as global competencies).
- Increase engagement of students, staff, parents and communities because we are honouring voice, experience, identity and expertise, and we are willing to adjust our directions and plans because of this engagement.

Real change happens in the classroom and with this coordinated and strategic approach, we are confident that each and every student will be successful. For example, in the Special Education section of the plan, we outline how the TDSB is committed to outcome-based planning to support our most vulnerable students.

We would like to focus on the following areas of interest for the TDSB:

- Transportation;
- Renewal Funding Backlog;
- Education Development Charges;
- Class Sizes;
- E-Learning;
- Challenging Streaming;
- Supply Staffing;
- Special Education; and
- Reducing Red Tape and Administrative Burden.



1. Transportation

Transportation service in many urban school boards is an increasing challenge. In the City of Toronto, the service challenges are compounded by traffic congestion and road construction.

The driver shortage issue continues to be a concern of boards as carriers struggle to maintain a sufficient number of core drivers (as well as spare drivers) to cover absences for vacation, illness, religious observances and other unexpected/planned absences. The Transportation department continues to leverage technology to improve the level of service for our communities. Parents have high service expectations and the demand for service is outstripping the supply of available drivers. School boards that try to amend their current model of service levels face incredible push back from parents who rely on the service.

In the absence of provincial funding benchmarks for transportation, school boards have no guidance to support a change in service expectations and the inequity among coterminous boards is left unaddressed because boards will continue to use transportation as a means to compete for students. In addition, the TDSB is advocating that transportation for students with special needs be identified and funded separately. The TDSB is the largest provider of transportation services for students with special needs in the province. These are our most vulnerable students, with the greatest service needs and for whom the cost per pupil is significantly higher than standard transportation.

In order to address the issue of driver retention, the Ministry of Education has implemented a driver retention bonus based on service benchmarks. Our concern is that the program is only guaranteed to continue for the current year. There is concern in the industry, as well as concern from school boards, that we may face a larger than normal number of retirements and/or staff movement to other jobs with steadier work conditions. This is of significant concern given that we are already dealing with a driver shortage.

The Ministry's review of transportation services and funding that started three years ago, has not reported out on its findings yet. We urge the province to complete this review and report on its findings to make changes that would address these concerns.



2. Renewal Funding Backlog

The province has provided multiple years of additional funding for school repairs, which has allowed the TDSB to address emergency issues in our schools. Unfortunately, the additional funding has not been enough to decrease the TDSB's repairs backlog.

Currently, the TDSB faces a staggering \$3.5 billion repair backlog as a result of years of inadequate funding. If additional funding provided over the last 4 years (SCI) is discontinued and/or reduced, and no additional funding is provided, we estimate that the TDSB's renewal repairs backlog will grow approximately \$0.6 billion per year. It is imperative 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 \$3.9 billion repair backlog and modernize our schools. Current industry standards are that 2 to 4%¹ of the replacement value of buildings should be budgeted for renewal expenditures. Costs in high density urban boards for maintenance and construction work are significantly higher than either suburban or rural boards and this should be taken into consideration in establishing construction benchmarks.

3. Education Development Charges

While other school boards in Ontario are allowed to collect EDCs, the TDSB does not qualify because it has excess capacity when assessed on a district-wide basis, regardless of significant capacity pressures and challenges faced in many neighborhood schools. This puts the TDSB at a disadvantage.

EDCs are a critical funding tool that would help the TDSB meet growth-related infrastructure needs. Many of our schools are over capacity as a result of significant residential intensification in certain areas.

Lack of sufficient space in local schools in some areas of the City has forced the TDSB to adopt different accommodation strategies for managing enrolment growth, including redirecting students from new residential developments to other TDSB schools located outside the area, the use of portables, and program and school boundary changes.

¹ Reversing the Cycle of Deterioration in the Nation's Public School Buildings, Council of the Great City Schools, October 2014.



In our view, the same way that developers pay for services such as roads, transit, water, sewer infrastructure and community centres, they should also contribute to education. In other words, growth should pay for growth.

For all school boards, including the TDSB, it is vitally important to assess and plan for long-term student accommodation on the basis of neighbourhood needs, not on a jurisdiction-wide basis. Section 10 of Ontario Reg. 20/98 does not serve the purpose of either the *Education Act* or the original purpose of EDC funding, which was meant for new developments to fund new school sites.

Without the restrictions found in Section 10 of Ontario Reg. 20/98, the TDSB would qualify for EDCs and generate revenue of approximately \$400 million over the next 15 years, which would help us meet growth-related infrastructure needs. Given the invaluable role that schools play in each community, such an investment would benefit all citizens of Toronto.

Recommendation: 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.

4. Class Size

The government's class size increase is concerning to the TDSB on a number of levels, most importantly its impact on students. At both the elementary and secondary level, we have heard concerns from parents, students and staff on the negative impact of larger class sizes on student learning, and we share these concerns about student achievement. At the secondary level, larger class sizes and less teachers means a reduction to the course offerings, especially in smaller schools. In the first year of this increase, many TDSB schools experienced this course offering reduction. This situation will be further exasperated in future years due to the large number of small schools in the board. Until the Program Area Review process is re-established by the Ministry, the TDSB has no way of reducing the impact of increased class sizes on program offerings in schools.

From a financial perspective, the TDSB is concerned that the Ministry did not account for restrictions under teacher collective agreements that prohibit some boards, including the TDSB, from increasing class sizes. For example, when the Ministry increased class sizes in Grades 4 to 8 and reduced the number of funded elementary teachers, the TDSB, and other boards, were



financially penalized. For the TDSB, this financial penalty amounts to \$9.6 M for the 2019-20 school year.

We urge the Ministry to:

- Commit to listening to the results of the Ministry consultation on secondary school class size and pay close attention to the analysis you are now getting regarding the impacts on programs, course offerings and student supports;
- Put on hold the decision to increase average class sizes in high schools and put on hold the reductions to high school teachers until such time that there is system wide and school-board-by-school board data on the impact on high school programs and course options and the concern school boards have with regard to the potential negative impact on graduation rates; and,
- Compensate boards, including the TDSB, whose collective agreements require a smaller average class size in Grades 4-8 than the average class size level being funded by the Ministry of Education.

5. E-Learning

The TDSB has serious concerns with the government's plan to introduce mandatory e-learning courses for all secondary students. Since the plan was announced, school boards have not received any further information, which has raised many questions and concerns by parents/guardians, students and our own staff, including how the plan will be implemented and how it will be equitable for all secondary students.

The TDSB is not against e-learning, recognizing that it plays an important role in our system. We are, however, concerned about the mandatory nature of this plan, the timing and the general lack of information available for parents/guardians, students and staff.

In just a few short months, secondary students will begin selecting courses that will lead them to graduation. We concern is that the lack of information on mandatory e-learning courses and the increase in class sizes could harm our students' achievement and well-being levels and, ultimately, hinder their graduation and post-secondary education plans. This is a major concern considering our most recent census data tells us that students are already expressing challenges with mental



health, belonging and accessing a caring adult in schools and the role of technology in relation to their overall well-being.

We also know that our current e-learning program is mostly accessed by higher achieving students and that means we know little about how students with more learning needs may fare in a program that is about to become mandatory. We would like some clarification as to how the issue is being addressed by the government's plan.

To ensure we are reflecting the concerns of our students, parents/guardians and staff, we will be consulting our school communities about mandatory e-learning courses for all secondary students. We value the input of our communities and feel an obligation to provide your government with this information. The results of our research will be available this upcoming winter. We hope to hear more from the government about the plan to implement mandatory e-learning as soon as possible.

6. Challenging Streaming

The TDSB is committed to setting high expectations and increasing access to programming for all students. These principles must begin in the early years and include changes to special education programming and student discipline, transitions to secondary school and Grades 9 and 10 programming.

Establishing a strong foundation in early literacy and numeracy is an essential component of TDSB's approach to challenging streaming. We are committed to working with our youngest learners to ensure that all students in Grade 1, regardless of their social identity, will be able to read with confidence, fluency, understanding and enjoyment. Similarly, we are working to ensure that all students in Grade 2 will acquire the foundational skills and concepts in mathematics so that they may continue to be successful in later grades.

We are transforming the way we provide special education programs and services to be more inclusive. Our model of inclusion recognizes diversity within all educational cohorts and embraces the opportunity to meet individual students' needs as locally as possible in neighbourhood schools. Inclusion also means the continuation of having congregated classrooms to meet the needs of some students with exceptionalities that are beyond the scope and expertise of a regular classroom. We will continue to serve all of our students in the most appropriate learning environments.



Student discipline also plays a role in success in school and in streaming students towards specific pathways and outcomes. We are committed to reducing the number of suspensions and expulsions and addressing the over-representation of some groups who are suspended and expelled, while maintaining safe, positive and welcoming schools. We are addressing key issues like systemic racism, anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism and poverty by putting different processes in place to support change, such as creating a culture of restorative practices, with a focus on cooperative ways of resolving conflict.

Academic pathways is a plan to support the majority of Grade 9 and 10 students to study at the academic level. Research shows that students in an academic program of study generally experience more positive outcomes than those in an applied program of study and experience higher achievement in courses beyond Grade 10. Students also have greater success in post-secondary programs and maintain increased pathway options beyond high school (e.g. college, university, apprenticeship, workplace) when they study at the academic level. Overall, an academic program of study provides more opportunities for students, which is why we are committed to this important work.

It is important that the Ministry commit to providing additional funding in these areas so that we and other boards can continue to increase student achievement and help students to be successful in their chosen academic program.

7. Supply Staffing

The 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 the new policy was established. School boards need further funding support to address this shortfall.

8. Special Education

The TDSB has consistently spent more than its full grant on Special Education. Last year, the TDSB spent approximately \$47.8M more on Special Education than we were funded by the



province. This means that we are using resources from other areas of the budget to ensure that we meet the needs of students who require special education support. This is a theme across the province, with most Boards in Ontario overspending in special education. The TDSB, like other school boards across Ontario, urges the province to recognize this significant funding shortfall and provide adequate funding for special education.

At the TDSB, we believe in the inclusion model for special education, where appropriate. We welcome and support all students with special education needs within well-resourced neighborhood schools. The TDSB is committed to ensuring that all students learn in a supportive and inclusive environment where all voices are valued and heard. The inclusion model, however, requires significant financial investment, including classroom teacher training, that we ask the province to recognize and fund.

The bottom line is that special education is not funded appropriately by the province. In order to ensure that all of our students receive the support they need, we urge the province to reconsider the special education funding model and make the appropriate enhancements to meet the financial needs of school boards and the educational needs of the students of Ontario. This is becoming even more essential as the demand for special education continues to grow. The number of students requiring special education support becomes greater each year and this puts even more financial pressure on school boards that require adequate funding to support their needs.

9. Reducing Red Tape and Administrative Burden

The TDSB actively looks for administrative efficiencies on an ongoing basis to ensure that as many dollars as possible reach the classroom and support students. As part of last year's budget process, for example, the TDSB cut \$17 million from central administration, senior team and centrally-assigned staff. This was done to limit the impact of budget reductions on programs and services for students and schools.

With increased reporting demands and requirements, finding these administrative efficiencies is becoming more and more difficult. An example of this is the Ministry requirement for reporting of major maintenance and capital projects into their databases. The TDSB believes that additional Information Technology resources could lead to improved efficiencies. We therefore recommend



that the province enhance funding in this area to help school boards streamline administrative operations.

Delays in approval to proceed on construction project adds to the administrative burden as school boards have to revise work plans, keep updating stakeholders and updating construction costs. TDSB believes that if approval to proceed were provided in a more timely basis it would assist to the amount of time spent and improve efficiencies.

DRAFT

2021-22 TDSB Education Funding Consultation Feedback Form

On December 3, 2020 the Ministry of Education released the 2021-22 Education Funding Guide to school boards with the deadline of January 15, 2021 for submission to be completed.

We would ask that feedback be submitted through this survey form by January 8, 2021, so staff can incorporate any feedback into the draft submission for review and approval at a January FBEC meeting prior to the deadline submission. Thank you.

Email address *

Valid email address

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This form is collecting email addresses. [Change settings](#)

1) Your First Name and Last Name

This is an optional field. If you want to remain anonymous, please leave this field blank.

Short answer text

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2) If this is a response on behalf of a TDSB Advisory Committee, please provide the name of the Committee. If you are not part of an Advisory Committee, please put N/A.

Short answer text

.....

3) Based on the questions asked in the consultation documents, please provide your feedback, if any, on the education funding topics outlined in the document.

Long answer text

4) Please provide any other initiatives not outlined in the Education funding consultation guide, or any other comments, for consideration in the board's budget consultation submission to the Ministry.

Long answer text

