



## **Proposed Strategic Drivers for 2021-22 Budget**

**To:** Finance, Budget and Enrolment Committee

**Date:** 24 February, 2021

**Report No.:** 02-21-4033

### **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 report regarding the proposed strategic drivers for the 2021-22 budget be approved.

### **Context**

The strategic budget drivers and consultation plan report was presented to Trustees at the November 25, 2020 Special Finance, Budget and Enrolment Committee (FBEC) meeting.

In December 2020, staff consulted with the TDSB Community Advisory Committees, SEAC and PIAC and solicited their input on these drivers. An online survey was also made available on the TDSB external website from December 2, 2020 to January 31, 2021, to gather feedback from the community.

The proposed strategic budget drivers, which are based on the drivers identified and approved in April 2019, highlighted seven key areas of importance to student achievement and well-being. Those key areas are:

- Early years
- Differentiated approaches to serve our students, including Indigenous Education
- Student Success
- Staff allocation to support all students
- Modernization and accessibility
- Professional development
- Parent engagement and student voice

Based on feedback received, the 2021-22 proposed strategic budget driver report is presented in Appendix A for consideration and input. The 2019-20 and 2020-21 strategic budget drivers are provided in Appendix B and a copy of the survey responses is also provided in Appendix C for reference.

As discussions around the 2021-22 budget continue, these proposed strategic drivers are a first step in guiding these important discussions that will determine the Board's funding priorities for the upcoming school year.

### **Action Plan and Associated Timeline**

Staff will update the proposed strategic budget drivers based on trustee feedback received at the Feb 24, 2021 FBEC meeting.

### **Resource Implications**

Not applicable.

### **Communications Considerations**

Once approved, the strategic drivers will inform budget-related communications and consultation strategy. Communications will be developed to support discussions and meetings related to the budget.

The final strategic drivers will be posted on the TDSB budget website.

### **Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)**

Not applicable.

## Appendices

Appendix A: Proposed 2021-22 Strategic Budget Drivers

Appendix B: 2019-20 and 2020-21 Strategic Budget Drivers

Appendix C: Survey Feedback on Strategic Budget Drivers for 2021-22 Budget

## From

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### **2021-22 Proposed Strategic Budget Drivers (Draft)**

The Strategic Budget Drivers help inform the development of the TDSB's operating budget by ensuring alignment of resource allocation with the Board's system priorities, including those reflected in the [Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#). The TDSB's budget drivers are updated and approved by the Board of Trustees on an annual basis to ensure that they reflect the most current and up-to-date priorities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way the TDSB operates in many ways, and the 2021-22 Budget Drivers will need to reflect this new reality. In particular, areas such as mental health and well-being supports for students, access to technology, and Early Years supports will continue to adapt as the situation evolves.

Despite all the unknowns facing the TDSB next year, we remain committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. This includes our ongoing commitment to human rights, equity, anti-racism, and our commitment to combatting anti-Indigeneity, anti-Black racism, and all other forms of racism and discrimination. This is the foundation of everything we do and every decision we make, underpins all programming at every grade level, and is incorporated into all of the Budget Drivers listed below.

Please note that the Strategic Budget Drivers listed below are currently in draft form and will be edited and changed based on consultation with key stakeholders. The Budget Drivers are scheduled to be finalized in February 2021.

#### **Early Years**

- Ensure early intervention supports, including early reading for students, child and family centres and early years programming.
- Support reading by the end of Grade 1 and the development of foundational math skills by the end of Grade 2.
- Provide early literacy interventions and math programs aimed at improving student achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Support Pre-Kindergarten Summer Learning and transition-to-school programs.
- Provide professional development for teachers and early childhood educators.

#### **Differentiated Approaches to Serve Our Students including Indigenous Education**

- Recognize the importance of teaching Indigenous history and honouring the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations.
- Continue to effectively use all resources provided by the Federal and Provincial governments to support Indigenous education.
- Work to reduce the impact of poverty by using an equity lens
- Understand the impact of low income/poverty on education and respond effectively to our students' well-being and academic needs so all students have the opportunity to succeed.
- Raise achievement and improve well-being among all students and eliminate historically disproportionate low outcomes among specific groups.
- Understand that achievement gaps can be connected to demographic factors such as family income, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability, among others and respond effectively.

- Improve access, opportunities and outcomes for Black students across TDSB through initiatives and programs such as the new Centre for Black Student Excellence.
- Ensure equitable access to interventions, initiatives and programs that promote student well-being and student success.
- Continue to support Newcomers and English Language Learners (ELL) through specialized programming to accelerate the development of their literacy skills in English, if it is not their primary language.
- Ensure Student Nutrition Programs have the resources to support students in school and at home.
- Support programs that provide equitable access to interventions that promote the well-being of students to ensure they have access to the opportunities that will contribute to their success.
- Ensure schools, both in-person and virtual, can access appropriate programs and resources based on the specialized local needs of their students, including students with Special Education needs.
- Support for the inclusion model provided alternate delivery models continue where they best suit student needs.
- Prioritize student mental health and well-being by ensuring the appropriate supports are in place to support all students, with a particular focus on supporting students through the pandemic.
- Ensure the health and safety of students and staff by ensuring the necessary resources, learning and training are in place.

### **Student Success**

- Support Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) initiatives, which promote global competencies.
- Create the conditions and programs in schools for students to personalize their programming choices to best meet their interests, strengths, and long term goals.
- Support teachers to meet the needs of their students experiencing challenges.
- Increase access to programs such as Cooperative Education that provide students with relevant opportunities to apply learning in real-life employment placements.
- Ensure a variety of learning opportunities and specialized programs, such as co-op placements, experiential learning opportunities, and apprenticeship placements are available.
- Advocate for smaller class sizes due to the concerns with larger class sizes and the demands that they place on teachers.

### **Staff Allocation to Support All Students**

- Align staffing resources to support student and staff mental health and well-being.
- Hire qualified staff who represent and identify with the school communities they serve.
- Align staffing resources to support the Multi-Year Strategic Plan and needs arising from the pandemic.
- Support the inclusion of students with Special Education needs.
- Support academic pathways that lead to improved post-secondary opportunities.

### **Modernization and Accessibility**

- Use technology to diversify instruction, assessment, and improve accessibility.

- Focus on the accessibility and affordability of tools, devices, and infrastructure.
- Enhance quality of teaching through technology with professional development.
- Develop modern learning spaces leading to more inclusive environments where educators and students have access to a wide range of digital learning tools, resources and mobile devices.
- Improve access for all by working to remove physical and attitudinal barriers that prevent students and staff with disabilities from accessing services by ensuring all new applications are accessibility compliant.
- Focus on improving operational efficiencies by minimizing the usage of printed material and textbooks and identifying opportunities for automation and digitization in schools and departments.
- Increase access to data to improve organizational decision-making, reduce administrative costs, and provide better access to information and services.
- Continue to modernize and improve TDSB's IT infrastructure by expanding wireless access in our schools, increasing network capacity, and providing a robust, stable, secure, and highly available computing environment.
- Commit necessary financial resources to work towards a 1:1 student to device ratio.
- Continue to enhance the virtual learning environment with access to digital resources.

### **Professional Development**

- Ensure professional development is accessible for all staff members.
- Support system-wide staff professional development, especially in the areas of Equity, human rights, anti-oppression and anti-racism.
- Create opportunities for more in-depth training in specific areas including Special Education Needs, behaviour management, early years, technology integration, STEAM integration, new educational insights, practical classroom applications, student success strategies.
- Continue to develop professional development opportunities and resources to support staff in working in a remote environment.
- Facilitate parent and community engagement and leadership opportunities (e.g. Parent Conferences, workshops, training sessions, interpretation and translation services, etc.)
- Support Community Advisory Committees, school councils and community partnerships.
- Support parents of students with Special Education needs to ensure they are valued partners.
- Support staff training on strengthening relationships and creating environments where diverse identities are valued and all voices are heard and can influence education in the TDSB.
- Ensure that staff have access to the appropriate Health & Safety training, supports and resources.

### **Parent Engagement and Student Voice**

- Continue to promote parent involvement in the School Improvement Process.
- Support the work underway in the area of parent and community engagement.
- Engage newcomers and parents from marginalized or racialized groups.
- Acknowledge the needs of the surrounding communities to authentically engage parents.
- Recognize that different cultural groups may require different engagement strategies, and families may have different levels of engagement possibilities.

- Improve support and relationships with parents with students with Special Education Needs.
- Improve school-to-parent communications.

## **2018-19 and 2019-20 Budget Strategic Drivers**

Subsections within each priority blend together key objectives and outcomes of the driver.

### **Early Years**

- Early intervention supports, including early reading for students and child and family centres and early years programming.
- Reading by the end of Grade 1 and the development of foundational math skills by the end of Grade 2.
- Providing early literacy interventions and math programs aimed at improving student achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pre-Kindergarten Summer Learning and transition-to-school programs.
- Professional development for teachers and early childhood educators.

### **Differentiated Approaches to Serve Our Students including Indigenous Education**

- Reduce the impact of poverty.
- Understand the impact of low income/poverty on education and respond effectively to our students' well-being and academic needs so all students have the opportunity to succeed.
- Raise achievement and well-being among all students and eliminate historically disproportionate low outcomes among specific groups. Achievement gaps can be connected to demographic factors such as family income, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability, among others.
- Equitable access to interventions that promote student wellbeing and student success.
- Newcomers and English Language Learners (ELL) should continue to be supported.
- Nutrition programs are an important component within schools.
- Equitable distribution of these opportunities to all students in all TDSB schools.
- Providing additional resources to specific schools through programs that fund interventions for students experiencing personal and academic challenges.



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- Programs that provide equitable access to interventions that promote the well-being of students to ensure they have access to the opportunities that will contribute to their success.
- Importance of teaching Indigenous history and honouring the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations.
- Providing support to Toronto newcomers such as specialized programming to accelerate the development of their literacy skills in English, if it is not their primary language.
- Ensuring schools can access appropriate programs and resources based on the specialized local needs of their students, including students with Special Education needs.
- Support for the inclusion model provided alternate delivery models continue where they best suit student needs.

### **Student Success**

- Supporting Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) initiatives, which promote global competencies.
- Creating the conditions and programs in schools for students to personalize their programming choices to best meet their interests, strengths, and long-term goals.
- Supporting teachers to meet the needs of their students experiencing challenges. Increasing access to programs such as Cooperative Education that provide students with relevant opportunities to apply learning in real-life employment placements.
- Variety of learning opportunities and specialized programs are critical components of students' learning. Including co-op placements, experiential learning opportunities, and apprenticeship placements.
- Concerns with larger class sizes and the demands that places on teachers.

### **Staff Allocation to Support All Students**

- School based vs central supports for student and staff mental health and wellbeing supports.
- Hiring qualified staff, but also staff who represent and identify with the school communities they serve.
- Where flexibility exists, align resources with the Multi-Year Strategic Plan.
- Student mental health and well-being.
- Inclusion of students with Special Education needs.
- Academic pathways leading to improved post-secondary opportunities.
- Staff who support professional development.

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- Equity, human rights, anti-oppression and anti-racism.

### **Modernization and Accessibility**

- Use technology to diversify instruction, assessment, and improve accessibility.
- Accessibility and affordability of tools, devices, and infrastructure.
- Technology is used as a tool to enhance quality teaching.
- Develop modern learning spaces leading to more inclusive environments where educators and students have access to a wide range of digital learning tools, resources and mobile devices.
- Improve access for all by working to remove physical and attitudinal barriers that prevent students and staff with disabilities from accessing services by ensuring all new applications are accessibility compliant.
- Focus on improving operational efficiencies by minimizing the usage of printed material and textbooks and identifying opportunities for automation and digitization in schools and departments.
- Increase access to data to improve organizational decision-making, reduce administrative costs, and provide better access to information and services.
- Continuing to modernize and improve TDSB's IT infrastructure by expanding wireless access in our schools, increasing network capacity, and providing a robust, stable, secure, and highly available computing environment.

### **Professional Development**

- PD needs to be more accessible for all members of staff.
- Importance of system-wide training related to equity, anti-racism, anti-oppression.
- More in-depth training in specific areas including Special Education Needs, behaviour management, early years, technology integration, STEAM integration, new educational insights, practical classroom applications, student success strategies.
- Facilitate parent and community engagement and leadership opportunities, i.e., Parent Conferences, workshops, training sessions, and interpretation and translation services.
- Support Community Advisory Committees, school councils and community partnerships.
- Support parents of students with Special Education needs to ensure they are valued partners.
- Staff training on strengthening relationships and creating environments where diverse identities are valued, and all voices are heard and can influence education in the TDSB.

**Parent Engagement and Student Voice**

- Improving parent involvement in school improvement process.
- Significant work underway now at TDSB in the area of parent and community engagement.
- Important work is needed to engage newcomers and parents from marginalized or racialized groups.
- Acknowledge the needs of the surrounding communities to authentically engage parents; different cultural groups may require different engagement strategies; and, understand that there are different levels of engagement possibilities for different families.
- Improve supports and relationships with parents with students with Special Education Needs.
- Improve school to parent communications.

**Appendix B**

**Survey Feedback on Strategic Budget Drivers for 2021-22 Budget**

<b>BUDGET DRIVER RATING SUMMARY</b>								
<b>Survey Response Submitter</b>	<b>Early Years</b>	<b>Differentiated Approaches to Service Our Students including Indigenous Education</b>	<b>Student Success</b>	<b>Staff Allocation to Support Students</b>	<b>Modernization and Accessibility</b>	<b>Professional Development</b>	<b>Parent Engagement and Student Voice</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Legend: 1: Not Important 2: Moderately Important 3: Very Important</b>								
Alternative Schools Community Advisory Committee	2	3	3	3	1	1	1	2
Environmental Sustainability	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2
Inner City Advisory Council	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	1
Thornccliffe	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
PIAC	2	3	3	3	2	1	3	2
DNA	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Community Member	3	1	3	1	2	1	1	2
Environmental Sustainability	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3
Community Member	3	1	2	3	3	3	2	3
Community Member	3	1	1	1	3	3	2	3
UICAC	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Community Member	3	1	2	3	3	3	2	3
Community Member	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	3
<b>Average Score</b>	<b>2.69</b>	<b>2.38</b>	<b>2.54</b>	<b>2.62</b>	<b>2.62</b>	<b>2.31</b>	<b>2.31</b>	<b>2.54</b>

**BUDGET DRIVER FEEDBACK**

<b>Survey Response Submitter</b>	<b>The areas that additional written feedback will be provided</b>	<b>Feedback around the selected budget drivers</b> <i>(Responses are presented as submitted)</i>
Alternative Schools Community Advisory Committee	Staff Allocation to Support Students	<p>Staff allocation is the critical piece that has been missing in discussion of how the board responds to crises such as covid. If staffing were more flexible—and that includes building redundancies into the system—we would be better able to provide safe, inclusive spaces for student success.</p> <p>Instead, staffing appears to be built on a just-in-time model, with every school competing against every other school for enrolment, and particularly small schools decimated by the slightest downturn. It's important to have the right fit, and to have school staffing levels be sustainable. Teachers aren't just interchangeable widgets; we need time to build programs and relationships with a school community. This is particularly evident in alternative schools, where the loss of one teacher can have drastic impacts on student success.</p>
Thornccliffe	Early Years, Differentiated Approaches to Service Our Students including Indigenous Education, Student Success, Staff Allocation to Support Students, Modernization and Accessibility, Professional Development, Parent Engagement and Student Voice, Cradle to Career	n/a
PIAC	Differentiated Approaches to Service Our Students including Indigenous Education, Parent Engagement and Student Voice	<p>We have a complex student body that wants and/or requires specialized approaches to learning with consideration given to neurodiversity, gifted and special education, Indigenous ways of knowing, etc. This needs to be equitably available across the Board, so that regardless of geographic area, students can access this programming reasonably within their locale in the city.</p> <p>The TDSB needs to improve its engagement with parents and students - the approach currently feels like 'lip service', a box to tick off vs. actual active listening to the parent or student perspective. Listening to the feedback of stakeholders is something every organization needs to do, and the TDSB needs to improve how staff engage with parents at the Board level to increase transparency and accountability.</p>
DNA	Parent Engagement and Student Voice	great
UICAC	Student Success	I see everything the UIEC does that contributes to student success from

**BUDGET DRIVER FEEDBACK**

Survey Response Submitter	The areas that additional written feedback will be provided	Feedback around the selected budget drivers <i>(Responses are presented as submitted)</i>
		food, to student support to student engagement.
Community Member		<p>For these points in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Hire qualified staff who represent and identify with the school communities they serve.</li> </ul> <p>Our school community like many others - perhaps all in Toronto - is <i>*very*</i> diverse in terms of ethnic backgrounds, languages spoken at home, religions observed (or not), whether parents are living together or apart, whether parents or children in the home live with disabilities, and so many other factors. I oppose efforts to "match" teachers to a given school on any of these bases. I don't know what it means to say a teacher or staff person "represents" or "identifies" with a given neighbourhood ... even if they were born and raised in it, precisely because urban neighbourhoods are by definition diverse and tend to change over time anyway. Good teachers of any background can be good teachers of any child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Support the inclusion of students with Special Education needs.</li> </ul> <p>Inclusion is not always appropriate or sought by parents or their children. Many children are better served by congregated classes.</p>
Environmental Sustainability	Differentiated Approaches to Service Our Students including Indigenous Education, Parent Engagement and Student Voice, Climate Crisis	<p>Climate crisis: The climate crisis is going to REQUIRE school boards to inform and support communities as cities strive to meet emissions requirements. Staff will need PD, but leadership to encourage schools to provide networking opportunities for communities will not require deep funds and will empower students and link communities deeply. ESCAC is linked to many people who have the guidelines for what this would look like.</p> <p>Differentiated approaches and parent engagement/student voice: the energy and ability in the community, if we can patiently bridge the gap between parents/teachers/students/administration, is incredible. Even just helping teachers feel comfortable and safe to listen to parents and what they know about their students and to feel that we are working together rather than in opposition will make a big difference. I would love to see a campaign to help shift the dialogue between groups, to change the language from 'marks' to 'learning' and to shift from coercion to opening the value of education to the thirsty learner.</p>
Community Member	Student Success, Staff Allocation to Support Students, Modernization and Accessibility, Professional Development	Destreaming within Academic Class Caps is disingenuous in terms of student success. If the school board is to destream English and Math classes all classes should at the very least adhere to Applied class caps; otherwise it is simply the board trying to save money by increasing class size caps.
Community	Psychologists/ Councillors for	All good! All important!

**BUDGET DRIVER FEEDBACK**

<b>Survey Response Submitter</b>	<b>The areas that additional written feedback will be provided</b>	<b>Feedback around the selected budget drivers</b> <i>(Responses are presented as submitted)</i>
Member	Mental Health	

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