

# 2019-20

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## Budget Community Survey

An Opportunity  
For Public Input

March 2019



# Community Survey

On the next page, you will be asked to read the description of each Budget Strategic Driver and answer the question that follows. Before that, we ask you to read these bullet points that provide context for our budget process:

## CONTEXT

- About 94% of the TDSB's funding comes from the Ministry of Education. The other 6% represents such things as visa students, bank interest, cafeteria sales, leasing revenue and permits.
- Traditionally, we won't know the amount of funding from the Ministry until late March or early April.
- Our Multi-Year Strategic Plan has already made it clear that the status quo is not possible, in terms of funding everything that we currently do.
- Any funding reductions from the Ministry will make our budget decisions more challenging.
- We may not be able to afford everything we are currently doing and we may choose to not provide funding to some current programs and services in order to fund others.
- Therefore, the Board needs to give staff direction that will guide the building of the Operational Budget. Your input will help the Board develop this direction.
- These Budget Strategic Drivers, once approved, will provide this direction.
- We recognize that it is too early to predict what the provincial funding will look like for the 2019-20 Budget. However we are committed to providing greater and more equitable access to school programs and learning opportunities.
- We remain committed to providing great schools and programs in the TDSB.

***(Please note that the TDSB has a \$3.9 billion backlog of school repairs. While making those repairs is a key priority for the TDSB, the repairs are part of our Capital Budget, not the Operating Budget. That is why the backlog does not appear in the following list of Operating Budget Strategic Drivers.)***

**Reminder: The deadline to submit your completed survey is**

**Tuesday, April 2, 2019.**

**1. Different Approaches to Serve our Students**

Students have different learning needs and may require different instruction or a variety of programs to be successful. Our goal is to raise achievement and well-being among all students and to eliminate historically disproportionate low outcomes among specific groups. These gaps can be connected to demographic factors such as family income, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability, among others.

Toronto has the highest rate of children and families living with low-incomes in Canada. It is critically important that we 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.

To reduce the impact of poverty, this driver includes:

- providing additional resources to specific schools through programs that fund interventions for students experiencing personal and academic challenges;
- 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; and
- 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.

We are also focused on ensuring schools can access appropriate programs and resources based on the specialized local needs of their students, including students with Special Education needs; and supporting nutrition programs in schools where the need is high.

*Please indicate the level of importance for this area of TDSB work: Different Approaches to Serve our Students*

Low Importance  High Importance

*Question: Please add anything additional that you feel is important in relation to this area:*

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## 2. Early Years

The early years, birth through age eight, are recognized as being critically important in supporting children's physical and psychological development, which is the focus of the mission and values of the TDSB.

We know that young children are capable of developing to their full potential and can form a strong foundation for future success when educators and parents work together to create optimal, inclusive, learning conditions.

As children get older, achievement gaps are harder to close. The TDSB's Multi-Year Strategic Plan makes specific commitments to reading by the end of Grade 1 and the development of foundational math skills by the end of Grade 2.

This driver includes:

- 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;
- child and family programs; and
- and professional development for teachers and early childhood educators.

*Please indicate the level of importance for this area of TDSB work: Early Years*

Low Importance  High Importance

*Question: Please add anything additional that you feel is important in relation to this area:*

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## 3. Hiring Staff to Support All Students

The hiring of school-based and administrative employees must support the needs of all students. While we are committed to that, these decisions are largely determined by factors that are outside the control of the TDSB, or they cannot be changed unilaterally. For example, provincial regulations such as class size caps require us to hire a predetermined number of teachers and other staff.

For the hiring of employees where there is flexibility, emphasis is placed on those resources most aligned with our Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

This driver includes our intention to focus on:

- 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; and
- equity, human rights, anti-oppression and anti-racism.

*Please indicate the level of importance for this area of TDSB work: Hiring Staff to Support all Students*



*Question: Please add anything additional that you feel is important in relation to this area:*

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**4. Indigenous Education**

The impact of colonization (the action or process of settling among and establishing control over the Indigenous people of an area) and residential schooling on Indigenous communities is ongoing, and there remain knowledge gaps among staff and students about the history, culture and contemporary reality of Indigenous peoples in Canada. This work will be guided by “Education for Reconciliation” as outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s, Calls to Action, #62 and #63.

This driver includes:

- building relationships with Indigenous communities to address the knowledge gap that exists among staff about Indigenous peoples;
- working with Indigenous communities to close those gaps through professional development for trustees and staff; and
- creating culturally-safe and trauma-informed schools so that staff is better able to support the achievement and well-being of all students through changes in professional practice. Trauma-informed schools support Indigenous students and their families impacted by colonization and the legacy of residential schools by focusing on Indigenous wellness through the mind, body, spirit and heart.

Please indicate the level of importance for this area of TDSB work: *Indigenous Education*



Question: Please add anything additional that you feel is important in relation to this area:

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**5. Modernization and Accessibility**

Today’s modern learners require the knowledge and tools that help them compete effectively in a globalized, interconnected and technology-infused world. A technology modernization and accessibility strategy will explore ways to digitize, automate and streamline administrative and classroom systems to better support student achievement, well-being and equity.

This driver includes:

- developing 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;
- improving 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;
- focusing on improving operational efficiencies by minimizing the usage of printed material and textbooks and identifying opportunities for automation and digitization in schools and departments;
- increasing access to data to improve organizational decision-making, reduce administrative costs, and provide better access to information and services; and
- 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.

Please indicate the level of importance for this area of TDSB work: *Modernization and Accessibility*



Question: Please add anything additional that you feel is important in relation to this area:

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**6. Parent Engagement and Student Voice**

Parent/caregiver engagement is a key factor in the enhancement of student achievement and well-being. When schools, families, and communities are actively engaged, students are more likely to be motivated, earn higher grades, have better behavioural and social skills, and continue their education to a higher level.

This driver includes:

- facilitating parent and community engagement and leadership opportunities, i.e., Parent Conferences, workshops, training sessions, and interpretation and translation services;
- supporting Community Advisory Committees, school councils and community partnerships;
- supporting parents of students with Special Education needs to ensure they are valued partners; and
- 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.

Please indicate the level of importance for this area of TDSB work: Parent Engagement and Student Voice



Question: Please add anything additional that you feel is important in relation to this area:

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**7. Professional Development**

**Professional development** helps school board staff to improve their skills and respond to students’ learning needs. For school administrators, superintendents and school board managers, professional development can improve their leadership skills and the ways they share knowledge and experience with their employees.

Generally speaking, when the TDSB invests in improving the skills of its employees, no matter where they work, we help them to be more successful in the jobs they perform. Everyone’s contribution is important.

This driver includes:

- training that will help remove barriers to student learning and create classrooms and work environments that are more inclusive and reflective of the diversity in our school communities; and
- this training will focus on human rights, equity, anti-racism and anti-oppression, anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, anti-Asian racism, and other forms of racism and discrimination against racialized groups.

Other areas of training will focus on Special Education and inclusion; student and parent engagement; conditions to support the mental health and well-being of students; student academic pathways to post-secondary opportunities, math and global competencies, supported by technology.

*Please indicate the level of importance for this area of TDSB work: Professional Development*



*Question: Please add anything additional that you feel is important in relation to this area:*

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**8. Student Success**

Student Success Initiatives (SSI) focus on learning experiences for students in Grades 7-12 that include both school-based interventions and system-wide student program opportunities. They include Dual Credits, Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM), Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP), Special Education Experiential Learning (SPEEL), and experiential learning. These offer students the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills through hands-on experiences in authentic workplace and learning locations.

School-based student success teams work with students, parents and community to create these learning experiences that TDSB data show greater levels of engagement, increased credit accumulation, increased graduation rates and increased post-secondary opportunities.

This driver includes:

- 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; and
- increasing access to programs such as Cooperative Education that provide students with relevant opportunities to apply learning in real-life employment placements.

*Please indicate the level of importance for this area of TDSB work: Student Success*

Low Importance  High Importance

*Question: Please add anything additional that you feel is important in relation to this area:*

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**Additional Question**

*Please feel free to add any additional thoughts that are important to the Toronto District School Board's 2019-20 Budget.*

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**Thank you for your comments.**