

Support a Fairer Approach to TDSB School Council Fundraising to Reduce Inequities in Public Education

On April 16, 2025, Toronto District School Board trustees will vote on updates to Policy P021: Fundraising. Section 6.2 proposes:

“To facilitate improved equity of resources among schools, a System Priorities Fund will be developed and maintained.”

Currently, school councils can voluntarily contribute to a central equity fund, but this inconsistent approach has failed to address resource disparities. Section 6.2.2 proposes a mandatory allocation of a small portion of parent generated funds to the System Priorities Fund, ensuring a more sustainable and equitable distribution of resources across schools.

“The disparities between Toronto’s affluent and non-affluent schools are clearly visible and impact low-income students and parents’ capacity for self-advocacy, extracurricular activities, access to information and general opportunities” (Teacher, TDSB School)¹

The TDSB's Multi-Year Strategic Plan (2024–2028) clearly affirms its commitment to equity with the statement that *“Equity is a principle that will continue to guide the TDSB in all that it does. Equity will be foundational to all TDSB work and will be embedded throughout the strategic directions.”* This commitment underscores the need for policies that ensure fairer resource distribution across all schools.

Is 1% Too Much to Share?

The *Toronto Star* reported that while the final percentage remains undecided, the suggested allocation to the System Priorities Fund (SPF) is approximately **1% of net income** from parent generated fundraising.² While the final decision rests with TDSB trustees, we as parents and caregivers must voice our support for an initiative that aims to lessen the already stark inequalities across our schools.

Why Does This Matter?

According to *Fighting for Our Future: Child and Family Poverty Report Card, Toronto 2024*, **Toronto has the highest child poverty rate in Canada, at 25.3%**. Child poverty has risen across every Toronto ward since 2020. This increase is, however, not evenly distributed: **in nine wards, 30% or more of children live in poverty**.³ The report also highlights that poverty rates are even higher among communities marginalized by colonialism, systemic racism, and other inequities, with some Toronto neighborhoods experiencing **child poverty rates between 40% and 61%**.

Meanwhile, chronic underfunding of public education by the province⁴ has forced school boards to do more with less. In many schools, parent fundraising helps fill critical gaps, but **a school's ability to raise funds depends a great deal on the wealth of its community**.

Parent Fundraising

Parent generated funds cannot be used to replace public funding,⁵ and they will never be a substitute for proper funding from the Province. However, school council fundraising often covers “extras” that are actually essential for student success, including: nutrition programs, warm clothing banks, enhanced learning opportunities, academic support programs, and Parent engagement initiatives (research shows that parent involvement is a key and accurate predictor of academic success in K-12).⁶

For these above stated reasons, and in keeping with the TDSB’s commitment to equity as a foundational principle, **please add your name to this petition to support the mandatory allocation of a small portion of parent generated funds to the System Priorities Fund**. Tell TDSB trustees that every child in our public system deserves access to the same opportunities and educational outcomes.

¹ Queiser, S. (2017). *Missing opportunities: How budget policies continue to leave behind low-income students*. Social Planning Toronto.

² https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/tdsb-to-vote-on-controversial-fundraising-change-some-call-a-tariff-on-parent-donations/article_11b1b200-e180-4690-9b2b-2696169edf44.html

³ *Fighting for Our Future: Child and Family Poverty Report Card, Toronto 2024*,

⁴ <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/home/ctl/Details/mid/43823/itemid/430>

⁵ <https://www.ontario.ca/page/school-fundraising-guideline>

⁶ Queiser, S. (2017). *Missing opportunities: How budget policies continue to leave behind low-income students*. Social Planning Toronto.