

Toronto District School Board

Policy P067

Title: **LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES INDEX**

Adopted: February 11, 2009

Effectuated: February 11, 2009

Revised: June 17, 2015, [upcoming date 2024]

Reviewed: June 2013, [upcoming date 2024]

Authorization: Board of Trustees

1. RATIONALE

Public education is designed to give all children an equitable opportunity to succeed. The TDSB recognizes that students face varying degrees of challenge which can impact their opportunity to achieve high educational outcomes. Educational research has demonstrated that children from lower income families, through no fault of their own, face more significant barriers in achieving high educational outcomes.

The Learning Opportunities Index Policy (P067) (the “Policy”) affirms the TDSB’s commitment to achieve equitable academic opportunities. This Policy will assist with steering additional resources to schools serving students who face greater challenges and make sure all students have access to educational resources.

2. OBJECTIVE

- To support student learning experiences through equitable allocation of resources to schools.
- To provide direction to staff regarding the use of the Learning Opportunities Index (LOI).

3. DEFINITIONS

Board refers to the Toronto District School Board, which is also referred to as the “TDSB”.

Learning Opportunities Index (LOI) refers to a Board-designed tool that ranks schools based on a range of indicators that measure external challenges affecting student success. Many of the indicators reflect levels of poverty. There are two indices, one for elementary schools (including junior high schools) and one for secondary schools. The index measures external challenges in a way that compares each school to all other schools. It applies exactly the same set of consistent, reliable, and objective measures to each school and removes the

subjectivity that may enter into the perceptions held about individual schools. The index lists schools according to ranking. The highest ranking (number 1) indicates the school with the greatest external challenges to student success. The index also provides a score for each school. A higher score leads to a higher ranking.

External challenges refers to conditions that are outside the control or influence of the school or Board and that have an impact on student success.

Equity refers to the equality of opportunities and outcomes for all by responding fair and proportionality to the needs of individuals. Equity is not the same as equal treatment because it recognizes a social-cultural power imbalance that unfairly privilege some while oppressing others and therefore focuses on redressing disparity - meeting individual needs to ensure fair access, outcomes and participation that results in equality, acknowledging historical and present systemic discrimination against identified groups and removing barriers, eliminating discrimination and remedying the impact of past discrimination and current oppression. Equity practices ensure fair, inclusive and respectful treatment of all people, with consideration of individual and group diversities and Intersectionality of multiple social identities, access to privileges and impacts of oppression. Equity honours and accommodates the specific needs of individuals/ groups. (Equity Policy - P037).

Resources Funds refers to staffing, goods, and services allocated to schools in order to help students succeed.

TDSB is the Toronto District School Board, which is also referred to as the “Board”.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

The Director of Education holds the primary responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Policy.

Within the Director’s Office, the responsibility for the day-to-day management and coordination of the Policy is assigned to the Associate Director, Instructional Innovation and Equitable Outcomes.

5. APPLICATION AND SCOPE

This Policy applies to staff, including TDSB executives, administrators, principals, superintendents, and school personnel involved in the establishment, administration, resource allocation, and managing of the Learning Opportunities Index (LOI).

This Policy also impacts students, parents/guardians/caregivers, and school community members.

6. POLICY

- 6.1. In accordance with the Equity Policy (P037), the Board affirms the principles of equity within this Policy, in providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students.
- 6.2. This Policy supports the Board's commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Actions and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for reconciliation.
- 6.3. The Board recognizes that the Learning Opportunities Index (LOI) is an effective tool for measuring systemic external challenges to student success and resource allocation. For a breakdown of variables included in the LOI, please see Appendix A.
- 6.4. The Board recognizes that all students can learn and succeed. A ranking on the index will not be used as a negative label for a school or its students.
- 6.5. The Learning Opportunities Index is only one of a variety of tools and processes that support and inform strategic and resource allocation decisions.
- 6.6. The Learning Opportunities Index should be used at the discretion of staff for equity related decisions. While the index is a useful tool to map out systemic external challenges among schools, it is not a mandatory component for all decisions that TDSB staff might make in relation to learning opportunities and resource allocation for schools. School, community, and province context as well as staff expertise are important elements for decision making.
- 6.7. Decisions made about discretionary resources and opportunities for schools need a rationale that is clear and explainable to the community and its stakeholders.
- 6.8. To provide distribution of resources based on principles of equity, the Learning Opportunities Index will be used when additional resources are being allocated to schools beyond base allocations to all schools, except where the need for an appropriate exception can be demonstrated. Please see details in Appendix B.
- 6.9. An exception to this direction is permitted where allocations are directed to all students and schools to meet basic needs (such as essential learning resources, heating and lighting) and to meet standards in legislation and collective agreements (e.g., class size requirements).
- 6.10. Another exception to this direction is permitted where allocations are directed to needs that can be more appropriately measured by other means. (Examples of more accurate measurements include resources for English

Language Learners based on students' countries of origin, resources for Special Education based on students' identified needs, and resources for major capital repairs in schools based on measures of facilities' condition).

- 6.11. Applications of the Learning Opportunities Index in determining allocations to schools will result in a greater concentration of resources in schools that have greater need.
- 6.12. Whenever feasible, the scores of schools on the index will be used in preference to the rankings of schools when determining the amount of an allocation.
- 6.13. The index may be used in a variety of ways, including the use of cut-offs, stepped cut-offs, scaling, or a combination of these approaches. Information will be made available to Board employees on how to use the Learning Opportunities Index appropriately. As well, information will be made available to the public outlining how the Learning Opportunities Index is used. Please see details Appendix B.
- 6.14. As the LOI is recalculated every 3 years, the most recent LOI will be used when determining the allocation of resources.
- 6.15. The most recent index and explanatory information, including individual school level variables, will be easily accessible in the Board's communications vehicles that provide information to staff and the public.
- 6.16. The factors and methodology used to calculate the index will be reviewed after the policy review (a minimum every five years). In between review cycles, ongoing research will continue to ensure the LOI reflects current research concerning external challenges to student success and take account of changing availability of valid, reliable, and consistent data.
- 6.17. The index will be recalculated and republished every three years. Technical documentation of the variables and calculation will be made available to the public after each cycle. An inventory of how the Learning Opportunities Index was used will be conducted after the year of recalculation.

7. SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES

The Director of Education is authorized to issue operational procedures to implement this Policy.

8. EVALUATION

This Policy will be reviewed as required, but at a minimum every five (5) years

9. APPENDICES

Appendix A [tbd]

Appendix B [tbd]

10. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Legislation:

- *Education Act*

Policies:

- Equity Policy (P037)

Procedures:

- Learning Opportunities Index Procedure (PR526)

Other Documents:

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Actions
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Ontario Human Rights Code