

Toronto District School Board Submission
to the
Ministry of Education
Consultation: Education in Ontario
December 2018



Table of Contents

Part 1: Introduction	1
Part 2: About Our School System.....	1
Board of Trustees	1
Staff Leadership	1
Multi-Year Strategic Plan Goals	1
Parents, Students and Staff as Valued Partners	2
Demographic and School System Highlights:	2
Part 3: Response to Ministry Consultation Questions	3
How should we improve student performance in the disciplines of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)?	3
How should our schools prepare students with needed job skills, such as skilled trades and coding?.....	4
What measures can be taken to improve provincial standardized testing?	6
What more can be done to ensure students graduate high school with important life skills, including financial literacy?	8
What steps could schools take to ban cellphone use in the classroom?	9
How can we build a new age-appropriate Health and Physical Education curriculum that includes subjects like mental health, sexual health education and the legalization of cannabis?	9
What elements should be included in a Ministry of Education Parents' Bill of Rights?	10
Do you have any other feedback or ideas?.....	12

Part 1: Introduction

This consultation submission is based on a number of Toronto District School Board policies, practices, position statements, approved Board motions, Board research, current curriculum practices in schools and Board-approved system action plans, most of which have been developed with input from parents, students and the Board of Trustees. This submission also uses research from the Ontario Public School Boards' Association.

We also want to draw attention to the [Board's response to the Ministry of Education's Funding Engagement Guide 2019-2020](#), and invite the committee to consider the report that was submitted in December 2018.

This submission responds to the questions posed by the Ministry of Education and, as requested by the Ministry, provides additional recommendations on other areas of interest to the TDSB.

Part 2: About Our School System

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) is the largest and one of the most diverse school boards in Canada. We serve approximately 246,000 students in 582 schools throughout Toronto, and more than 140,000 life-long learners in our Adult and Continuing Education programs. More than 40% of our graduates rank as Ontario scholars and more than 80% of our graduates go on to university or college.

Board of Trustees

TDSB's 22 elected [Trustees](#) and two student trustees represent students and 1,851,266 public school parents/guardians and public school board electors, and ensure their interests are brought to the attention of the Board. Trustees work to ensure that our students have the opportunity to realize their full potential and succeed in school. TDSB Trustees are advocates for fully-funded public education and represent diverse communities with unique urban needs, priorities and educational requirements.

Staff Leadership

The TDSB's leadership team is led by [Dr. John Malloy](#) and supported by a [senior team](#) and school administrators who are responsible for:

- Serving our students and communities
- Improving academic performance
- Managing business services
- Overseeing facilities

Multi-Year Strategic Plan Goals

The TDSB is guided by a strategic plan developed and approved by the Board in May 2018. The key pillars of the plan are to:

- 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

Read the [full plan](#)

Parents, Students and Staff as Valued Partners

The Board has active involvement from parents and guardians at [school councils](#) and through the Board's Parent Involvement Advisory Committee ([PIAC](#)) there is on-going leadership to help build and support parent and community involvement across the school board district. Parents also participate in policy development through Board [advisory committees](#).

We have an active Board-wide [Student Senate](#) that along with student councils ensures student voice is represented at the school and system level. Staff input occurs at the school, [Learning Centre](#) and system level and input is received by the Board's active and engaged unions and staff associations, including:

- Ontario Secondary School Teacher Federation (OSSTF), District 12
- Occasional Secondary School Teachers Association (OSSTF)
- Professional Student Services Personnel, Unit A (OSSTF)
- Occasional Teacher Bargaining Unit (OTBU)
- Elementary Teachers of Toronto (ETT)
- Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)
- Toronto Occasional Teachers (ETFO)
- Toronto Education Workers, Local 4400 (CUPE)
- Toronto School Administrators' Association (TSAA)
- The Schedule Two Network (TSTN)
- Maintenance and Construction Skilled Trades Council (MCSTC)

Demographic and School System Highlights:

Our Students

- 173,000 elementary students
- 73,000 high school students
- 2,200 international students
- 140,000 continuing education students
- 29,000 students are enrolled in immersion and extended French programs
- 23% were born outside of Canada
- There are over 120 languages spoken by TDSB students and their families

Our Staff

- 17,000 permanent teachers (11,820 Elementary; 5,180 Secondary)
- 5,800 occasional teachers (3,860 Elementary; 1,940 Secondary)

- 15,500 permanent support staff and 4,000 supply/casual employees (including Designated Early Childhood Educators, professional support workers, caretakers, maintenance staff, IT support, administrators, etc.).

Our Schools

- 471 Elementary schools (including 1 Elementary/Secondary First Nations School, 18 Elementary Alternative schools, 6 Special Education self-contained schools)
- 111 Secondary schools (including 1 Elementary/Secondary Alternative school, 20 Secondary Alternative schools, 4 Caring and Safe Schools Programs, 5 Adult/EdVance Programs, 2 Native Learning Centres, 6 Special Education self-contained schools)

Part 3: Response to Ministry Consultation Questions

How should we improve student performance in the disciplines of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)?

The Board is focusing on strategies to close the gaps that develop in the earlier grades that impede students' long-term success, enjoyment and confidence in mathematics.

Mathematics, like all subjects, requires contextual relevance. Teachers who are successful in teaching mathematics, especially in the secondary level, incorporate students' interests, identities, lived experiences and current events in their teaching to bring relevance to the subject. In this way, they are also preparing students for future jobs and to use math in their daily lives. Financial literacy is a good example of how to bring meaningful context to teaching math.

Additionally, a focus on mathematics needs to challenge forms of streaming in elementary and secondary schools to remove barriers to high-quality math instruction for students from historically and currently marginalized groups (e.g. students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, Black students, students with special education needs). Like other subjects, every effort should be made to teach math in a culturally relevant and responsive manner.

Student proficiency in math requires a multi-pronged approach, including, but not limited to, adequate resources, professional development, differentiated instruction to meet individual students' learning needs, and time on task. Components of TDSB's [Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#) provide greater detail on a number of measures the Board is taking to improve student achievement in mathematics. We are pleased to share highlights of these actions and contribute to an overall provincial strategy to elevate student achievement in math.

Highlights include:

- Training teachers and school leaders to use instructional tools that are proven to work, and to use assessment tools that give a meaningful sense of student learning
- Gathering information to identify strengths, concerns (which students are not achieving the expected outcomes and why), and areas in need of improvement
- Supporting school leaders to help build their capacity in mathematics content knowledge and identify effective mathematics classroom practices
- Supporting Itinerant Student Success Transitions Counsellors to work with classroom teachers to support students in Grades 6 to 8 to close math gaps

- Forming working groups to gather input from a variety of stakeholders to co-develop a system math plan that supports the School Improvement Process and is aligned with the Board's commitment to human rights, equity, inclusion and anti-oppression in mathematics
- Developing math resources for parents and staff on school and Board websites
- Developing a Mathematics Additional Qualifications (AQ) Course and encouraging the participation of school teams
- Focusing on the development of early numeracy skills by ensuring school math plans include strategies focused on early math concepts (K-2)
- Building teacher capacity and addressing student needs through a range of professional learning offerings that focus on mathematics content and instructional practices
- Reviewing existing mathematics assessment tools and providing professional learning on their effective use

The Board continues to support STEM through a number of system-wide initiatives designed to:

- Foster partnerships with organizations and businesses that support the development of global competencies (collaboration, communication, critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, global citizenship) and provide experiential learning experience
- Build educator content knowledge and expand their use of pedagogical practices to foster the integration of coding, computational thinking and robotics across the curriculum
- Provide learning modules and AQs that focus on developing educator content knowledge and use of effective instructional practices in science and STEM
- Implement STEM equity conferences that address participation and gender gaps in the STEM field, promote greater awareness of post-secondary educational pathways in STEM, provide opportunities for students to showcase their learning to parents and enhance public confidence in education
- Provide safety training in the use of power tools and other machines to teachers of science, technology and robotics that support our health, safety and well-being commitments to students and staff

How should our schools prepare students with needed job skills, such as skilled trades and coding?

There are many ways the Board and schools partner with industry, apprenticeship programs and post-secondary institutions to help raise awareness of the post-secondary pathways to the more than 300 skilled trades and technologies that contribute to our economy. These [experiential learning](#) opportunities include:

- [Ontario Youth Apprenticeship \(OYAP\) program](#)
- Technological education programs in 10 broad-based areas of study
- [Specialist High Skills Major \(SHSM\)](#)
- [Dual credit programs at Toronto's colleges](#)

The TDSB also partners with its skilled trades work force to help deliver valuable exposure and experience to skilled trades through the Pre-Apprenticeship Co-operative Education (PACE) program, which is offered in collaboration with TDSB's Design, Construction and Maintenance department, and its trades union, the Maintenance and Construction Skilled Trades Council (MCSTC).

Students have an opportunity to explore and experience a variety of skilled trades within the construction sector alongside TDSB tradesperson employees. Students earn four credits in co-operative education while developing skills related to construction and gain industry-recognized certifications and awareness training. Under this program skilled trades placement include:

- Electrician
- Carpenter
- Plumber
- Bricklayer
- Millwright
- Sheet Metal Worker
- Heating and Air Conditioning
- Steam Fitter

The Board also has skilled trades partnerships with four Toronto community colleges and TDSB teachers encourage students to participate in a number of national skilled trades competitions.

TDSB has launched a Specialized Trades Exploration Program (STEP) through Cooperative Education. In 2018-19, there are two STEP programs: Construction and Transportation. STEP provides youth with hands-on opportunities to discover the wide range of careers available in the designated sector. The program offers valuable industry experience while allowing participants to earn compulsory high school and college credits at no cost. For 2019-2020, we will be launching the STEP to Hospitality program in collaboration with the hotel sector.

Three hundred students participate in annual Skills competitions in approximately 42 different fields. Approximately 90 advance to the Ontario Tech Skills Competitions and in some years, students advance to the national level.

TDSB also supports the Skills Ontario Women in Trades events. The TDSB OYAP team also runs an annual Young Women in Trades day aimed at Grade 7/8 female students, typically 300 annually. This event is held at a tech-focused secondary school and includes hand-on activities and break-out sessions led by female tradespersons.

All Ontario school boards are likely engaged in similar programs and strategies to help build skilled trades post-secondary pathways. From a provincial perspective, there are several initiatives the Ministry should consider to support the local work of schools boards, schools and their partners. Many were outlined in the submission of the Ontario Public School Board's Association's including:

- A targeted government marketing and communications plan, specifically directed at parents, students and educators, is needed to elevate skilled trades to an accepted, respected pathway. This should include the research and data that shows there are, and will continue to be, many opportunities for well-paid jobs in the future.
- Promotion and awareness of career options in the area of skilled trades should begin in elementary school. Opportunities for commencing various elements of an apprenticeship and the opportunity to earn hours towards an apprenticeship should begin in secondary school.
- The Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario and College/University rules and regulations guiding apprenticeships in Ontario should be reviewed and amended as required to remove any barriers for secondary and post-secondary students to secure apprenticeship positions in the various skilled trades upon graduation (e.g. ratios, staffing numbers).

- Instead of adding more discreet elements to an already crowded curriculum (e.g. coding), educators are continually looking for ways to integrate these types of topics into existing subject areas such as mathematics, science, etc., (see Monograph #69, 2017) to make learning more current, engaging, relevant and applicable. These resources need to be expanded with supportive professional learning opportunities for teachers.

As a Board we also recognize that skilled trades are changing. The work place is far more complex as it adapts to new technology, automation, digital and IT applications meaning that basic skills must now be linked to strong foundations in math and science and with new global competencies including communications, critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, citizenship, character and an understanding of environmental suitability. The curriculum and teacher training needs to integrate these essential skills if students are to be prepared for the changing workforce.

Additionally, there is an under-representation of companies, employees and students from specific demographic groups (e.g. Indigenous, women, Black) in the skilled trades. This continues to be a barrier for many students considering this work. Intentional efforts to address these barriers with students through specialized classes and outreach programs have shown positive results.

Among the TDSB's [Multi-Year Strategic Plan actions](#) there includes an emphasis on the importance of global competencies. The Board's plan is to blend them into the curriculum in the following ways:

- Help schools understand, identify and create the learning conditions required for Global Competency learning and provide increased Global Competency-based learning opportunities to students in K-12.
- Enhance staff knowledge, learning and leadership through educator networks including Digital Lead Learners (DLL), Digital Lead Administrators (DLA), Network 4 Learning Group (N4L), Learning Coaches and the Exploration Classroom teachers.
- Solidify the Board's international partnership with Global Cities Education Network, a world leader in Global Competencies, to provide a practical and useful framework to help teachers and administrators build understanding and determine next steps in the area of Global Competencies.
- Explore additional experiential learning opportunities (co-operative education) to ensure Global Competencies are incorporated into placement options.

To further help equip young people to seize the new expectations of the work place, the TDSB is beginning a three-year phased plan that will support the majority of our students to study at the [academic level for Grades 9 and 10](#).

Research has found that students who study at the Applied level in Grade 9 are less likely to graduate and have fewer post-secondary opportunities. This is one significant way of addressing the inequity in educational outcomes and the achievement, opportunity, and participation gaps that exist for certain groups of students in our system. Where necessary, students will have access to additional supports. This process will align with Ministry of Education curriculum policies.

What measures can be taken to improve provincial standardized testing?

The TDSB is committed to continuous improvement and student assessment. For the TDSB, provincial standardized assessment is a critical component of a diverse suite of student assessment information. Assessment information is used to inform school improvement processes and the Board's strategic plans. The diagnostic value of this data allows schools and the Board to pinpoint areas for improvement in:

- Student achievement
- General student success
- Allocation of resources
- Policy and program effectiveness
- Targeted professional development
- Longitudinal strategy through ongoing monitoring and responsiveness to changes in achievement levels year after year

If removed, a key diagnostic tool for teachers, schools and the Board that supports school improvement and a standard and consistent means to report progress in student achievement to parents and students, would be lost.

Improving communication to parents to help them clearly understand the purpose of EQAO assessments is very important. The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) Discussion Paper on EQAO and Large-Scale Testing in Ontario, 2016 offered a number of recommendations relating to how assessment results are reported and communicated to parents and students, which continue to need attention by the EQAO and the Ministry. These include:

- Providing clarity about the role of EQAO and what purposes it can and cannot fulfil
- Clarifying that:
 - EQAO is a process to provide provincial data on student achievement at a specific point in time, and to provide informative tracking of student cohorts over time
 - a key purpose of EQAO is to determine effectiveness of implementation of the Ontario curriculum and any necessary adjustment of curriculum expectations
 - EQAO assessments are designed to fit into the instructional routines of the classroom and should not be a source of anxiety or stress for students
 - a key purpose of EQAO and the board-by-board data generated by EQAO assessments is to provide boards and schools with information that helps them identify strengths and gaps in curriculum implementation and allows the school board to incorporate strategies for improvement and allocate relevant resources

Perhaps most importantly, when reporting results to parents, EQAO must take greater effort and care to communicate in clear language that assessments offer a one-time snapshot of student achievement. In terms of student evaluation and reporting on a student's progress during the course of the year and from grade-to-grade, teachers' classroom observation and evaluation, in-year tests and assignments, exams and in-year and final report cards provide a far more complete and comprehensive measurement and evaluation of a student's achievement and performance.

As noted in EQAO's submission to the Ministry's public consultation on education, Supporting Student Learning Through Assessment and Accountability, December 2018:

Teachers know their students best, and classroom assessments will always have the most direct impact on student learning and well-being. While provincial assessments yield multiple benefits, they can't replace teachers' assessments and observations. Classroom and large-scale assessments are complementary and enrich each other. In addition, it will always be important for parents, guardians and educators to analyze large-scale assessment data alongside information from other sources (e.g., report cards, other questionnaires, attendance records, teacher observations) to get a full understanding of student learning.

Parents must also be aware that EQAO assessment data can be misused or mistaken to inform ‘overall school quality.’ As EQAO notes on its website:

Unfortunately, the availability of the data they yield has led some groups to place distorted value on the results or to use them to rank school performance and make judgments about overall school quality. EQAO both appreciates and advocates for the importance of considering a wide range of achievement data. The agency also opposes the ranking of schools using EQAO data. EQAO has always been committed to building capacity for the appropriate use of evidence and data among education professionals, parents and the public. Such capacity building is accomplished through transparent reports that include a contextual profile of the school community.

As assessment data is reported to parents and students, EQAO should be sure to alert them to the potential for over-simplistic and out-of-context use of the data that can lead to inaccurate judgements about schools.

Collecting and analyzing data is an integral part of the school improvement process. The context and unique conditions present in each school must be reported and taken into account when using data. This includes information related to specialized programming options (e.g. French Immersion, Gifted, Arts, etc). Analyzing and interpreting EQAO data also needs to take into account demographic data connected to school communities and the identities of students. The TDSB gathers and reports on such data through [student, staff and parent perception surveys](#).

This information, combined with EQAO data, gives schools and the Board a more complete picture of the overall school climate. When developing school improvement plans, this information can help identify and remove barriers to learning and inform where schools need to allocate and mobilize resources and supports for teachers and students.

As noted OPSBA’s discussion paper, EQAO must ensure that assessment questions are not culturally biased. Staff and communities continue to raise questions about assessment bias and the possible advantages of some students in reading and writing based on their lived experiences.

What more can be done to ensure students graduate high school with important life skills, including financial literacy?

Financial literacy is now in the school curriculum in most Canadian provinces. Ontario has been upgrading its [financial literacy curriculum](#) covering everything from the study of economic systems to the practical aspects of personal finances with the aim of having it part of the mainstream curriculum in Grades 4 to 12.

The TDSB also embeds financial literacy into curriculum and the Board’s professional library staff promotes the popular curriculum among TDSB teachers by recognizing [financial literacy month](#) each November.

Library staff also review and profile resource materials for teachers to use in their teaching and learning strategies. In November 2018, for example, the theme was “Invest in Your Financial Well-Being” and was supported by an impressive list of resources available on the TDSB’s online Professional Library.

We would recommend that the Ministry of Education continue with plans to further develop and support the financial literacy curriculum.

What steps could schools take to ban cellphone use in the classroom?

The TDSB does not support a system-wide ban on cell phones in schools or classrooms. Cell phones and other technological devices can be used to enhance learning, though teachers' permission is required before they are allowed to be used in class. Information provided to students at the start of every school year offers the following guidelines, which also addresses the responsible use of cell phones and social media platforms:

- Technology is used in classrooms to engage, enhance and support student learning. The TDSB is focused on enabling more technology-based learning tools by adding Wi-Fi in schools to help improve student learning in the digital age.
- Students may choose to bring their own devices to school (such as smartphones and laptops). This can be an important way for parents and caregivers to stay connected and engaged with their child's learning, as well as a way to connect, when necessary.
- It is important to make sure that technology is used responsibly, does not interfere with learning, and respects the rights of others at all times.
- Social media can enhance learning and networking for the future when used in a positive way, but don't forget that online behaviour matters. As part of digital literacy, students will be taught strategies to engage responsibly on social media platforms.

The TDSB recommends that the Ministry follow a provincial policy approach that promotes the thoughtful, equitable and inclusive use of technology in the classroom that will help ensure students develop both digital fluency and the ability to build healthy relationships with classmates and adults, and promote responsible use on social media platforms.

How can we build a new age-appropriate Health and Physical Education curriculum that includes subjects like mental health, sexual health education and the legalization of cannabis?

The TDSB implemented the 2015 Health and Physical Education Curriculum (HPEC) Grades 1-8 when it came into effect. The Board's monitoring of the implementation and ongoing discussion with parents, principals, teachers and students found that, for the most part, parents and students were supportive of the revised HPEC. It had been 17 years since the curriculum was updated and there was widespread understanding that in that time the world had most definitely changed: the diversity of our population has changed, access to materials online has significantly increased and research has shown that puberty is beginning at an earlier age.

Our assessment was that the Ministry had done a reasonable job of providing information and resources for parents to learn more about the revised curriculum. In fact, there was more detail on the HPEC than is readily available on the curriculum for math, science and most other subjects.

During implementation, some parents had questions and concerns and our teachers and principals did an admirable job at the school level to answer their questions and, where we could, resolve concerns.

There were, of course, some parents who had serious objections to the revised curriculum. As time went on though, most parents realized that TDSB's teachers are skilled professionals who know their students well and are committed to teaching in a professional and respectful manner that is both developmentally and age-appropriate.

They also realized that TDSB schools have made and do make accommodations for students based on their religious beliefs and practices, and this would continue if parents felt that strongly about the revised curriculum. However, what we could not do then and we believe we cannot do today, nor would we want to do, is permit students to opt out of lessons or classroom discussions about gender identity or sexual orientation.

Since the government first decided to review the 2015 HPEC and temporarily put in place the re-issued 2010 HPEC, the TDSB has been vocal about its concern with regards to the inclusion of important topics such as online safety, gender identities, sexual orientation, and consent. The TDSB believes that every student has a right to attend schools that are safe and inclusive. We have a responsibility guided by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Ontario Human Rights Code, the *Education Act* and supported by TDSB policies, to ensure that every student, such as LGBTQ students, feels included and reflected in our schools and classrooms and that the HPEC ensures the inclusion of the perspectives, experiences, rights and needs of historically and currently disenfranchised groups and communities.

Teachers know their students and can make informed decisions about how to best teach them in ways that are relevant and engaging. This means that learning about real-world topics relevant to today's students must continue in the classroom and teachers need support to do this. This remains a priority in the TDSB and we hope it is for the Ministry of Education as well when it announced its new HPEC. As we have continued to communicate with parents and students that they can approach their teachers or Principal to discuss what is being taught in the classroom.

Mental health and well-being are also important components of the HPEC and are essential to student success. One in five Ontario students has a mental health problem and we also know that schools can promote positive mental health, identify and intervene early to prevent the onset of problems and respond to children and youth in distress. Improving student mental health and well-being is a key part of the Board's [Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#).

In response to the legalization of recreational use of cannabis in Canada and the new legislative requirements as outlined in the Ontario's Cannabis Act with regard to use, purchase, possession, cultivation and distribution of recreational cannabis in Ontario, the Board recently approved a new policy -- [Restrictions on Alcohol, Drug and Tobacco Use Policy, Phase 1](#). The Board also believes that the TDSB should be consulted on the location of cannabis stores in Toronto and recently wrote to the Premier and Minister of Education with this request.

What elements should be included in a Ministry of Education Parents' Bill of Rights?

The TDSB believes that education is a shared responsibility among parents, guardians, caregivers, students, teachers, school administrators, trustees, board staff, community agencies, interest groups, and the provincial government (its policies and funding) and its agencies.

The Board has many policies, protocols and practices which outline what parents can expect from the Board and its schools, including:

- Information parents need to support their child's education
- Involvement in decisions which affect their child's education and school
- Opportunities for parents to participate in the creation of broader policies of the school system through advisory committees, consultation and the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC)

- Access to educational information needed by diverse parents and communities that helps facilitate two-way communication between parents and schools, and among parent groups
- Support in the form of community outreach programs to school communities, which experience significant challenges in promoting and sustaining the involvement of parents in their children's education and in their schools
- A school council at every school and assistance to fulfil its role as the official organization to represent the interest of parents at the school
- An engagement/consultation policy that will guide and help facilitate two-way communication and dialogue between the Board and its internal and external stakeholders including students and their parents/guardians
- A clear complaint resolution protocol that offers parents a step-by-step process for raising concerns about their child's education or their school and, where required, escalate those concerns from the classroom teacher, to the principal up to the superintendent and trustee
- The opportunity to participate in a regular school board census to offer their perceptions of their school and their children's education and the opportunity to review the census information for their school and the data on a system wide basis
- An opportunity to participate in the School Improvement Process
- Support and advocacy of their school trustee and assistance in navigating a large urban school system and accessing programs and services
- A code of conduct for schools
- A student dress code for school
- Policies and practices that promote student and staff safety and well-being
- Policies and practices that promote anti-racism, anti-oppression, human rights and equality and equity of opportunity.

More specifically, when it comes to parental expectations directly related to their child's day-to-day education, parents also have rights and expectations. Some are set out in government legislation and regulations (applicable to all Ontario parents or for example parents of Special Education students) while others are based on Board/school policies and practices. Examples include:

- Receive reports on their child's progress in school
- Request a time to visit their school and meet with their child's teachers to discuss their child's progress in school
- Meet with other school professionals who are interacting with their child's education such as coaches, counsellors and school administrators
- Meet with or speak with the school's Superintendent
- Review their child's school academic records
- Be notified when medical services are being offered to their child at school
- Be notified if their child is hurt, injured and needs to receive medical attention
- Be notified if their child is absent from school
- Be able to request religious accommodations
- Be notified if their child received disciplinary action such as a suspension
- Have the right appeal to suspensions and expulsions and have the right to participate and have representations in expulsion hearings.

Regularly updating the policies that stipulate these expectations and communicating them to parents is an ongoing communications priority at the TDSB.

Given the number of parental rights and responsibilities outlined in both school board policies and the *Education Act*, it is not clear whether an additional parent “bill of rights” would be helpful or create confusion.

Finally, the TDSB is increasingly mindful of student expectations and student voice. Most of the Board’s consultation and engagement strategies now have a student component to it.

However the government decides to move forward with the notion of a “bill of rights” considerations should be given to including the important role of democratically elected school trustees and their responsibility to represent parents and all publicly funded school electors/taxpayers and also where and how students fit into to this initiative.

Do you have any other feedback or ideas?

Parents Reaching Out Grants

TDSB school councils and the TDSB Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC) are very concerned that the Ministry has placed the Parents Reaching Out Grants on hold.

These grants are, according to the Ministry, “designed to support parents in identifying barriers to parent engagement in their own community and to find local solutions to involve more parents in support of student achievement, human rights and equity, and well-being.” The TDSB strongly recommends that the Ministry continue with these grants.

Funding for School Repairs

The provincial repair backlog stands at over \$15 billion and most recent figures have the [TDSB school repair backlog](#) of approximately \$4 billion.

School boards need adequate and predictable funding levels to ensure schools are in a good state of repair.

Education Development Charges (EDCs)

[If the TDSB qualified for EDCs](#), it would generate revenue of approximately \$350 million over the next 15 years to help with growth-related enrolment pressures and ease over-crowding in many TDSB schools.

We recommend that the Ministry:

- Amend the Education Development Charges Regulation - Ontario Reg. 20/98 under the *Education Act* to allow the TDSB to collect Education Development Charges and modify Section 7 to provide more flexibility in determining enrollment capacity.
- Expand the definition of “education land costs” in the *Education Act* to include construction costs for new buildings or additions to existing schools to meet growth related demand, not just acquire an interest in land for school sites.