



Community Advisory Committee Report

Community Advisory Committee:

Inner City Advisory Committee

Meeting held on:

Thursday January 6, 2011

Time:

2:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Location:

5050 Yonge St., Committee Room “A”

Chair:

Community Co-Chair (interim) Darcy MacCallum
Trustee Co-Chair (interim) Sheila Cary-Meagher

Members present:

Peter Mallouh, Martin Long, Bob Spencer, Don Dippo, Colin Husbands, Darlene Berry, George Martell, Trustee Chris Glover, Cheryl Skovronek, Nathan Gilbert, Paula Jarrett, Janice Gillespie, Lesley Johnston, Michael Shapcott, Verun Desai, Justin Jagdeo

Non- Members present:

Trustee Howard Kaplan, Caitlin French,

Staff Present:

Vicky Branco, Elizabeth Schaeffer, Julie-Ann Baxter, Heather Gollob, Cassie Bell

Regrets:

Manon Gardner, Jann Houston, Sejal Patel, Chris Penrose, Tanya Senk, Laurie Green, Roberta Bustard, Trustee Chris Tonks, Trustee Maria Rodrigues

The ICAC decided to make the following recommendations to the Ministry of Education Representatives in December 2010 and further moved to bring the issue of student fees forward to the PSSC in January 2011:

“Until the Ministry of Education completes a comprehensive funding formula review addressing the ongoing underfunding of key benchmarks, which indirectly lead to a variety of inequitable student opportunities and outcomes as some students and parents are unable to pay course fees and student activity fees; and some schools serve families who do not have the financial capacity to contribute to school budgets through school council fundraising,

AND

Until the Ministry of Education and other key ministries responsible for the health and welfare of children and families in this province create an integrated funding and

policy strategy to address the needs of the 'whole' child, particularly those most vulnerable,

Then, that the Ministry of Education-

- (i) Create a new "Equity in Education" grant, separate from the LOG, which contains targeted and sweated funding to offset all student fees to address the aforementioned inequitable opportunities experienced by our most vulnerable student populations*;
- (ii) Work with school boards, parents and staff to create a sensitive and respectful process for those students/families living in poverty to indicate hardship beyond baseline indices of poverty (i.e., for those students located in 'pockets of poverty').

*In the TDSB, this would mean elementary schools ranked 1-150 on the LOI and 1-30 on the secondary LOI."

Further- ICAC passed this motion:

1. Present background information from December 7th ICAC meeting to the TDSB's PSSC (Program and School Services Committee)*
2. Add the presentation recommendations to take this information to a wider public
3. Add further to recommendations that basic changes in the Funding Formula needed to solve problem of under-funding of public education
4. Throughout this process, students should be involved in all its discussions.

(moved by G. Martell, seconded by M. Shappcott; approved unanimously)

* Please see next page for ICAC presentation/PowerPoint to the Ministry of Education

PEOPLE FOR EDUCATION

AUGUST 2010

PRIVATE MONEY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Ontario schools rely on fundraising, donations, user fees and other charges to augment provincial funding

Ontario school boards report their schools raise over **half a billion dollars** in “school-generated funds,” a combination of fundraising, fees, corporate donations, and things like vending machines and cafeterias.

Despite schools’ reliance on this extra funding, the province currently has no policy covering fees, fundraising or corporate involvement in schools.

Fundraising is the number one activity for school councils

In 2009/10 surveys, the majority of school councils report fundraising as the activity on which they spend the most time. Councils report raising money to cover the costs of everything from field trips to building upgrades. Councils report raising money to cover the costs of everything from field trips to building upgrades, and there is a substantial gap between the top and the bottom fundraising schools. This year, individual schools report fundraising from a low of \$0 to a high of \$200,000.

While parents continue to raise funds for traditional items, such as graduation ceremonies and student awards, over half of councils also report raising funds for basics such as computers, classroom supplies and text books, and 15% of schools report they raise money for renovations, additions or upgrades to their buildings. Other fundraising categories include:

- Field trips – 67% of schools
- Sports – 64% of schools
- Arts or music – 61% of schools
- Classroom supplies, textbooks or computers – 56% of schools
- Library books – 53% of schools
- Playground – 47% of schools
- Renovations, additions and/or upgrades to the school – 15% of schools

User fees continue to climb in high schools

Alongside regular fundraising, and charges for things like field trips, parents across the province pay for everything from student activities to science classes in their children’s schools.

In high school, students not only pay student activity fees, but in many cases they must pay fees for labs and materials and for after-school sports.

Student activity fees range from a low of \$5, to a high of \$100 per student, and they vary from school to school and board to board. The average student activity fee is \$37, a 55% increase since 2001. Participating in athletics costs even more.

User fees Ontario secondary schools 2009	
Subject	% of schools charging fees
Art	56%
Physical Education	36%
Design and Technology	33%
Family Studies	22%
Music	23%
Languages	16%
Science	13%
Business	7%

PEOPLE FOR EDUCATION

AUGUST 2010

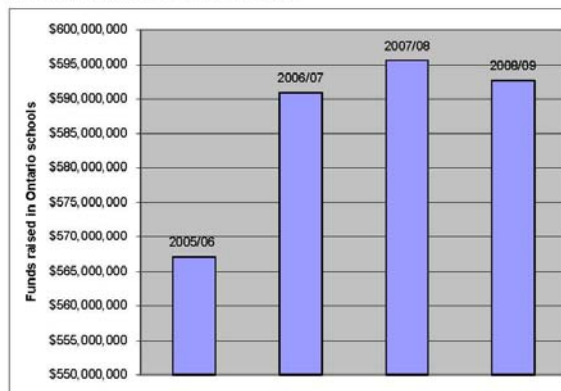
Nearly three quarters of Ontario high schools charge fees for athletics and the top amount charged has doubled since 2002, from \$250 in 2002 to \$500 in 2009.

But fees in high school go beyond student activities; many courses also carry fees – for workbooks, materials, software, instruments etc.

Funds raised at the school level now total over \$500 million

In their 2008/09 audited financial statements, school boards report their [schools raised \\$592 Million](#) through a combination of fees, fundraising, vending machines, donations from businesses and other revenue sources. This represents a 4% increase in school-generated funds since 2005/06, when boards first started reporting on these extra funds.

In recent years many school boards have changed their policies to allow fundraising for capital projects and to allow for recognition of corporate and private donors with things like signage or naming rights. There is no consistency across the province in policies concerning corporate donations or large private donors.



Provincial policy still not in place

In 2005, the Ministry of Education promised to develop a “fundraising policy [that] will guarantee school councils control over funds raised and limit fundraising by ensuring education essentials are provided by the system.” But in 2010, that fundraising policy is still at least 2 years away. The Ministry is now [consulting on guidelines for fees](#) for secondary schools, and has committed that guidelines for fees will be in place for the 2011/2012 school year.

Consultations on [provincial policy for fundraising and corporate partnerships](#) will begin in 2011, and Ontario may have new fundraising policy by 2012/13.

Equity concerns

As school-generated funds become entrenched in school budgets, it will become more and more difficult for schools to go without this private funding. The increased reliance on fees and fundraising inevitably leads to a system of “have” and “have not” schools, as evidenced by the wide range in school fundraising totals – from \$0 to \$200,000. For some parents, the combination of fees and the pressure to participate in fundraising can be experienced as a form of exclusion or built-in inequity. People for Education is once again calling on the province to articulate a vision for education that outlines what things should be available to all students in every school, at no extra charge. Once the overall vision has been established, then it will be possible to identify the “extras” that might be funded by fees, fundraising and corporate partnerships.

www.peopleforeducation.com



student activity

Fees

in the



By the TDSB
inner city Advisory committee
(ICAC)



Definitions



Inner City Advisory Committee (ICAC):

The ICAC advises the TDSB on matters concerning learning opportunities for students in "inner city" communities and on Board policies and programs addressing the socio-economic circumstances of students and families across the system, including the Model Schools for Inner Cities program. The membership is comprised of community resource persons, parents, educators, designated TDSB staff, and trustees appointed by the Board. (TDSB Web, 2010)



Learning Opportunities Index (LOI):

The LOI ranks each school based on measures of external challenges affecting student success. The school with the greatest level of external challenges is ranked #1 and is described as highest on the index. It is important to acknowledge that students in all schools have some external challenges, even those schools that are ranked very low on the LOI. The LOI measures needs in a relative sense that compares all schools on exactly the same set of data collected in a consistent, reliable, and objective manner. There are two indices, one for elementary (including junior high schools) and one for secondary. (TDSB Web, 2010)



Learning Opportunities Index (LOI):

The LOI is composed of variables which are combined into a single index. The variables used are:

1. Median Income
2. Low Income Measure
3. Percentage of Families Receiving Social Assistance
4. Adults with Low Education
5. Adults with University Degrees
6. Lone-Parent Families

Please note the variables described above in 1, 2, 3, and 6 are based on data about families with children.

(TDSB Web, 2010)



Student Activity Fees:

Student Activity fees are voluntary amounts that are used to enhance a student's school experience through materials and activities such as student agendas, student recognition programs, yearbooks, extracurricular activities, school dances, theme days or other school council activities. If students are able to pay but choose not to, they may not have access to these additional activities or materials. (Draft Fees Policy, Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2010)



student
Model
member
person
trustee

Enhanced Programming:

Enhanced Programming represents an enrichment or upgrade to the curriculum or co-curricular activities. For example, in some performance and production courses (for example, music, woodworking), students may wish to use a superior product or consumable than that provided by the school, in which case they may be asked to pay the additional cost of that upgrade. Similarly, schools may offer voluntary field trips or excursions as curriculum enhancements. Where students choose not to access the enhanced programming, an alternative must be available as essential course materials are to be provided at no cost to students for any regular course leading to graduation. (Draft Fees Policy, Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2010).



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Educ

Specialized Programming:

Specialized Programming is optional courses or activities that students normally choose to attend through an application process, with the knowledge that these programs are beyond the core curriculum. Examples include International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement and Hockey Canada Skills Academy programs. (Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2010)



Data



Child Poverty and Ontario:

- About 412,000 children or one in six live in poverty
- One in three visible minority children were poor in 2005
- 30% of poor children live in families with at least one parent working full time, full year
- 44% of children of single mothers are poor
- Almost half of those receiving social assistance today are single parents
- A single parent on welfare with one child lives \$9,771 below the poverty line today
- Almost 150,000 children used food banks in the past year
- Almost 142,000 households were waiting for affordable housing in May this year, including about 55,000 families with children

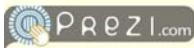
("Child Poverty up in Ontario", Toronto Star, November 24, 2010, Laurie Monsebraaten)



Education, Poverty, and Ontario:

- Number one predictor of risk in education is socio-economic status
- The Learning Opportunities Grant (LOG), intended to support students whose socio-economic status puts them at risk of struggling in schools, was cut by over \$130 million in 2005
- There have been some increases to LOG since then, but it is now intended to cover the cost of a wide range of general programs....the grant is neither protected, nor targeted at programs for disadvantaged students..[and] is insufficient to support programs that would alleviate the affects of poverty
- Currently there is no policy to protect low-income students and families from high fees
- Fees for athletics can be as high as \$500.00

(Take from: People for Education Media Release December 2, 2010;
"Poverty Reduction Strategy Falling Short on Education Front")



Money raised in breadth in the GTA:

Amounts schools boards across Greater Toronto raised in 2008-9 through fees, fundraising, vending machine revenue, totals as well as amount broken down by enrolment:

Durham public: \$19.1 million (\$288 per student)

Durham Catholic: \$6.9 million (\$299 per student)

Halton public: \$20.3 million (\$411 per student)

Halton Catholic: \$9.7 million (\$355 per student)

Peel public: \$34.4 million (\$247 per student)

Dufferin-Peel Catholic: \$25.9 million (\$313 per student)

Toronto Catholic: \$22.5 million (\$261 per student)

York public: \$34.2 million (\$323 per student)

York Catholic: \$21 million (\$404 per student)

(People for Education from school boards' audited statements, 2009)



Toronto District School Board: \$44 million (\$183 per student)



TDSB Secondary Schools:

Student Activity Fees for customary secondary programs range from as low as \$20.00 to as high as \$145.00, with an average between \$50.00-\$65.00.

(68 Schools surveyed by TDSB Inclusive Schools Department through Equity Training for Student Councils, 2010)



Example:

One Secondary School in midtown Toronto:

- "1. Payment of \$50 SAC fee: The compulsory student fee of \$50 will be collected at registration. The student fee is in support of co-curricular activities and includes a yearbook, a student ID card and lanyard, an Agenda book and 150 pages of printing on network computers;
2. Payment of \$25 voluntary School Council fee;
3. A limited no. of locks will be available for purchase for \$5 (\$8 for a heavy duty lock). Payment of locks cannot be included with other fees- please pay for locks separately;
4. TTC student cards cost \$5.25 payable at time of photo."



And:

5. Two T-shirts and shorts for Physical Education, \$60.00;
6. Music Theory book, \$5.00;
7. Initial field trip fee, \$20.00;
8. Instrument Upkeep Fee, \$25.00.

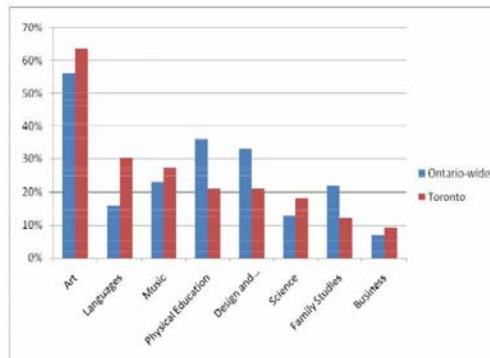


Total:

\$195.25



User fees by subject: Ontario secondary schools 2009 survey

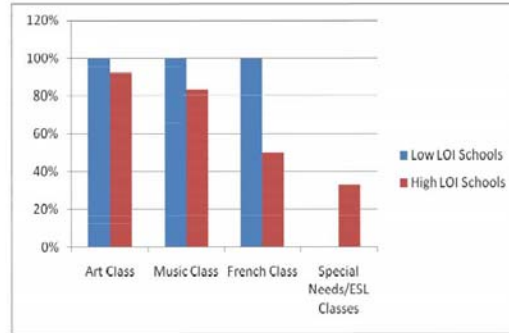


(People for Education, 2010)

*In Toronto schools 71% of surveyed schools reported charging students materials fees for at least one class. Of the schools collecting class fees an average of \$18,400 was coming into each school in the form of dollars paid by students to cover their classroom materials costs. (People for Education, 2010)



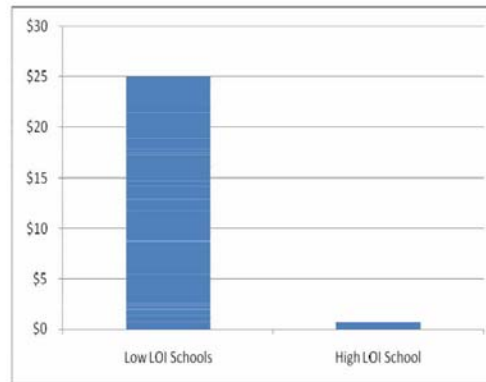
Classes available in high vs. low LOI schools



SPT, 2010



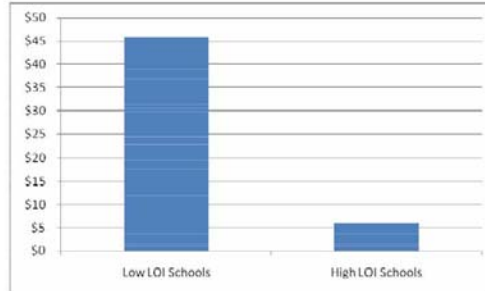
Average fees charged in TDSB schools for visual arts classes



SPT, 2010



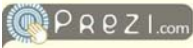
Average fees charged in TDSB schools for Phys Ed classes



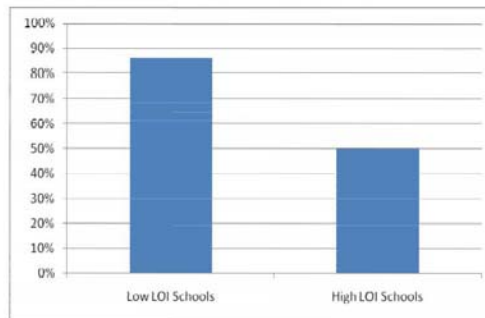
SPT, 2010

*Phys Ed fees can run between \$5 and \$150 (SPT, 2010)

- In addition to course fees there are also student activity fees, not to mention fees for extracurricular activities and non-academic school fees i.e. field trips



Percentage of high vs. low LOI schools charging fees for extracurricular activities



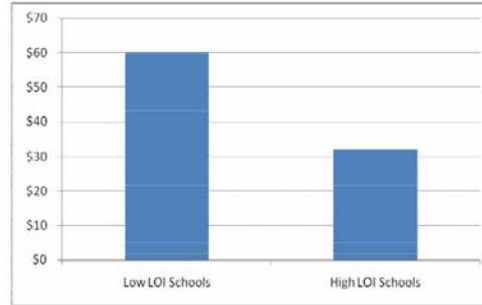
SPT, 2010

Fees can run as high as \$350 for leadership camps

(When no fees are charged does program quality suffer; are fewer programs offered?)



Average TDSB student activity fee in high vs. low LOI schools



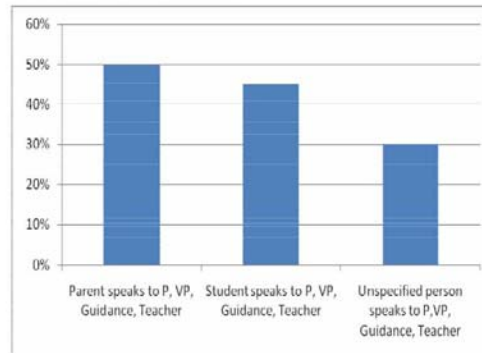
SPT, 2010



*100% of Ontario schools offer a fee subsidy program for students who cannot pay, for at least course and student activity fees (People for Education, 2010)

Fees may be waived, families can arrange to pay off the costs over the year, if parents cannot pay some schools will for them to volunteer in the school – but in all cases – in order to qualify for the subsidies either parents or students were required to speak to a teacher or a school administrator in order to demonstrate need. Some schools even reported teachers fundraising in order to help students cover the costs of fees. (No Pathways to Education students pay school fees.)

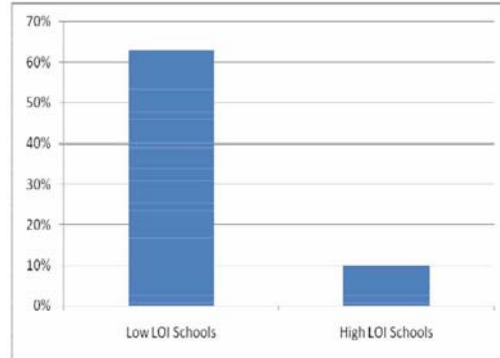
Procedure to arrange for school fees to be subsidized



SPT, 2010



Parent Councils engaging in fundraising activities



SPT, 2010

*2 of the top 8 LOI schools surveyed said their alumni had established school foundations



concerns





"It is not always easy to come up with these funds."
Parent of student, TDSB (2010)





"Dear Madam,

I am proposing some of my thoughts to you as I do not wish our children to go through hardships or psychological difficulties for the sole purpose of being financially challenged. I feel you being a female would relate a mother's concerns better.

The Lunch / Snack programs initiated by the TDSB are based on each school community's financial standing and /or 'Colour of Poverty' report (Correct me if I am wrong). There are a number of schools that have a higher percentage of families living under 'poverty line' or belonging to Afro-American / new immigrant groups. When requests are made by school administration to bring additional money for these programs especially when the amounts are in excess or when a family has more than one child it becomes a concern for the respective parents; it becomes a form of embarrassment for the child in front of the more affluent classmates and a worry for the parents as they feel their child will be marginalised by the school administration. If schools are feeling that the funding is inadequate

1. Why not limit the number of days during which this facility is offered;
2. Request for higher funding based on the number of kids at school; OR even
3. Request parents to make a contribution on a month to month basis so that the child's family will not feel the pinch of it.

Another concern of mine (also most parents from my kid's class) is when the school arranges outdoor activities using private transportation the costs become three - four times higher and parents keep their kids at home or at a relative's place due to the financial concern, jeopardizing the learning opportunity of not only the outdoor activity but also that day's teaching at school. We feel if the outdoor activities are of educational significance a nominal fee could be requested from parents and the balance could either be borne by the school or the School Councils.

Isn't it also a better way to acknowledge payments to a specific account created for that particular purpose to maintain accountability without requesting 'CASH ONLY'? Most of us parents feel why the school does not provide a receipt or even return at least a slip acknowledging the receipt of payment.

With the soaring cost of living and the new HST we find it difficult to meet our ends, and do not wish our child's learning to be affected due to the economic hardships. After all they are going to be the pillars of tomorrow's Canada.

I trust my identity will remain confidential."

Parent of student, TDSB (2010)



"I do not wish our children to go through hardships or psychological difficulties for the sole purpose of being financially challenged."

Parent of student, TDSB (2010)

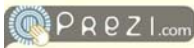


"Isn't public education meant to be of high quality for everyone?"
Parent of student, TDSB (2010)



I am a parent of a [two students] in the TDSB. I am aware that the administration at both [...] schools attempt to keep the costs down at the beginning of the school year. I appreciate this. However, I am continually concerned at the "small extra" costs that seem to come along. Last week my [child] had to buy a \$15 display board and another \$2 in poster board for a project. the cost of glue, marker, paper, etc. is difficult to evaluate as it is an ongoing cost. I have, at times, spoken to the teacher involved in a particular project. I am always assured that the students don't have to complete such elaborate presentations. While the students are told to "be creative" and "you don't have to spend a lot of money" they are shown sample presentations which involve purchasing supplies. They are told that a level 4 report would involve certain materials or display options. I have trouble telling my [child] to settle for a lower mark because we just don't have money to spend on that right now.

Parent of student, TDSB (2010)



"To Whom It May Concern:

Who would have thought? I was university educated, known to thousands of people around the region, a spokes person of sorts, in the media eye, someone to whom others come to for strength and reassurance, yet, I couldn't manage. I sat in the parking lot of my daughter's high school knowing I had to go in, it was the right thing to do, it was the only thing to do. Grade nine, I was so proud of her, but I lacked the \$55 in student fees so she could participate in student activities. I had called a friend who was involved with the school board, she assured me the school had a fund to cover the cost, she assured me I would be treated with dignity, she assured me I was not the first, and wouldn't be the last to ask for help.

But I still sat in the parking lot.

Six months previous I had lost my job, lost part of my identity. Despite a strong resume freelance work was all I could find. The two of us had couch surfed, homeless with a roof over our heads, with family for four months. Two weeks previous I had finally started a new job. Only 3 days a week, but enough to get us our own roof over our heads and to start all over again.

But the budget was tight, very tight. Too tight for \$55 of fees.

I screwed up the courage and went into the office. A writer, and I could barely get the words out of my mouth to explain my need. Ushered quickly and quietly into the Vice Principals office, all those teenage memories of pushing the envelope came back, I was 16 again and in trouble. The Vice Principal was respectful, demanded no paperwork, no explanation, which was good because I could barely express myself. I felt useless, small and incompetent, feelings I thrust upon myself.

"Done" he declared turning from his computer, shook my hand and smiled reassuring, "no one will know, it's just marked paid in the computer." I thanked him profusely and returned to the parking lot. I returned to my new office, and promised myself that when the time was right, I'd pay that \$55 back, so it would be there for another student, whose mom was sitting in the parking lot.

Since then that daughter has graduated high school, college and is back in college for a 1st year and a 2nd diploma. She's awesome. I told this story as part of EFTO's One in Six documentary, and then I had to tell my daughter, as she never knew, and the documentary was going to be 'public'. From that point forward she refused to participate in any school activity that required fees because it would exclude student. At one point the school was invited to be the audience for the final dress rehearsal for the local theatre's production of Hamlet. She was prepared to go, but the school insisted on bussing the students the 6 blocks and slapped a \$5 fee to cover the cost, liability was to blame.

At her urging, her grade 12 drama class staged "Danny King of the Basement", specifically chosen as it highlighted issues of poverty. That then spurred further poverty activism in the community. But not all children are like my daughter, with an activist family, support and a voice of her own. At her small northern college she is the 'go to' person for issues and crisis, and continues her efforts to represent issues on all fronts.

We need to be clear, with our schools, with our parents with our community, that to break cycles of poverty, making school a positive and inclusive community is fundamental.

I am six years from that dark year of 2004, I have been fortunate to work in a field of passion and have known great success. But that moment, of sitting in that car, is still vivid to me. And as a United Way we do a back to school supply drive, and I have parents in tears on the phone because they have to ask for help, because they cannot give their children the basics, I tell them I've been there, they are not alone, and we will get through this, together.

Thank you,

Parent of student, Owen Sound, Ontario (2010)



recommendations



Recommendations:

Until the Ministry of Education completes a comprehensive funding formula review addressing the ongoing underfunding of key benchmarks, which indirectly lead to a variety of inequitable student opportunities and outcomes as some students and parents are unable to pay course fees and student activity fees, and some schools serve families who do not have the financial capacity to contribute to school budgets through school council fundraising,

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Thank you

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