



## **OAPCE Toronto Report to TCDSB on CSPC Fundraising and Services-In-Kind.**

OAPCE Toronto is pleased to share this report with you, thank you for the opportunity to provide input into this important item. We have had many open discussions with OAPCE representatives and parents over the past several weeks and have decided to provide input using direct comments from some parents. We have asked CSPC's to provide feedback on the questions that were presented to us:

### *Background:*

*On August 23, 2018, a report to Board presented the results of a Board-wide survey conducted to gauge interest from our Catholic school communities to redistribute proceeds of local fundraising efforts to other school communities.*

*The approved motion asked staff to come back with a "report on a community market or similar 'services-in-kind' approach as an enhancement for fundraising and donations in an attempt to close the wide gap that currently exists between our schools related to learning enhancements available for our students".*

1. *On August 23, 2018, a report to Board presented the results of a Board-wide survey conducted to gauge interest from our Catholic school communities about whether to redistribute proceeds of local fundraising efforts from on school community to another. Highlights include:*
  - a. *Majority of schools do not currently share funds raised with other schools;*
  - b. *Majority of respondents indicated they would want to select the school to help;*
  - c. *70% of parents and 76% of CSPC members believe sharing of fundraising should be optional;*

- d. *64% of CSPC members do not support centrally administered redistribution of funds; and*
  - e. *50% of respondents indicated interest in sharing or contributing non-monetary services.*
2. *A total of 644 survey responses were received. There were over 350 raw comments. Commentary included:*
- a. *Sharing is consistent with Catholic values;*
  - b. *Explore if schools with higher fundraising dollars are willing to donate clothing, books, instruments no longer in use;*
  - c. *Fundraising mentorship for parent communities;*
  - d. *Serviced-in-kind by way of parents mentoring/tutoring students with lower achievement rates;*
  - e. *Hosting broader school community events, i.e. swim meets, BBQs, and local business engagement.*
3. *There are a number of opportunities for schools and school councils to voluntarily contribute to schools in need. Services-in-kind or community markets may offset these inequities and could include the following activities:*
- a. *Communities of schools may work together to hold an annual market/ fun fair designed to lend a hand in the community. Volunteers may sell baked goods, art or crafts. Local partners may be interested in donating services-in-kind that are sold at a reduced rate. Opportunity to sell raffle tickets. Profits from the event and half of the raffle funds may be distributed among all participating schools or to one school.*
  - b. *Affluent school communities may be willing to donate gently used clothing or books to schools in need.*
  - c. *School communities may coordinate a book drive to generate additional library books for schools in need.*
4. *Other ideas include the creation of an online portal where schools can publish local needs/fundraisers and all TCDSB parents will have the ability to help/donate directly if they choose to do so. I.e. winter coats, books, etc.*

We provide you direct responses from some of the CSPC's that have commented:

- 1) "Schools regardless of CSPC income should be given the option of having a sister or brother school if they so choose. Nothing should be forced or even strongly suggested—it is just adding another layer and there are so few already doing a lot of work not just for school but for home parishes as

well. Asking parents for a portion or percentage of their fundraising dollars is not ok. Many communities already contribute to organizations like The Angel Foundation etc., on their own (my school CSPC generously donates every year). I like the idea of donating used books/school learning equipment/uniform clothing/sporting goods etc. I agree that the board would need to manage this and not throw it on to parents - we truly are already over worked as volunteers.

Another response:

- 2) Our view is that each school council should decide what to do with the money that is raised by that school community.

It would be good to have a centralized communication strategy that schools can reference re: how to donate some of their fundraising dollars to other schools (in form of cash or subsidy/support of initiatives/needs). It would be very valuable to have someone create an annual summary identifying schools that are most in need of support and in what areas/aspects.

We **definitely** do not think that the board should in any way play a role in “centralized distribution of funds”. It has to be optional and voluntary.

And, let’s not minimize that the reason there is great disparity amongst schools is because the board is doing a TERRIBLE job of providing the necessities for quality education and parent councils are feeling the pressure to bridge those gaps! All schools have needs- those where parent community has the means, do better.

One other response:

- 3) Although the gesture is a good one, I do not feel that the redistribution of fundraising funds would work. Fundraising involves a lot of time and effort from parent volunteers, as well as attendees. The knowledge that

the funds would be benefitting their children's school is what keeps them going. My experience at the elementary school level is that there was quite a bit of fundraising/volunteering fatigue and my concern would be that if the funds were being redistributed, then there would be less incentive from the parent volunteer groups, and the overall fundraising would dwindle.

Rather than reallocate the funds, my recommendation would be:

- Evaluate the root cause for the low fundraising schools (e.g. poverty? Lack of fundraising expertise? Lack of administration support, etc.
- Provide the low fundraising schools with mentoring and guidance on fundraising
- Pair the schools with a high fundraising school for an event and fundraise on that day specifically for the school. That way, the school community is aware of where the funds would go.

As an overall response to this item OAPCE Toronto believes that in order to reduce the fundraising gap, we need to revisit why are schools raising funds in the first place? We have noticed a huge increase in the past several years, this may be that for the last 4 years all schools have been operating with block budgets that have been reduced by 30%. Cost of operating schools has increased, and no efficiencies have been given to school administrators by the board to do the same job with less money. So, to respectfully state it, the buck gets passed onto the parents.

In areas where the parent community can contribute fundraising and reach levels of \$100,000, and in others where raising \$10000 is a grand feat, this is where the inequity is created – so the question is where this money is being used arises, the block budget has its purpose and money raised through fundraising has its purpose. Most notably in terms of technology, we know of parent councils that

are raising thousands and thousands of dollars to bring in more of it into their classrooms. If the two start to overlap the idea of having equity in our school board is a lost cause – which is where we are today.

As well, as Catholics charity is one of our fundamental beliefs and how we live our faith, we teach our children to be like Jesus and give to those who cannot, however, putting parents in the position to have to choose if they want to share their fundraised money is very unfair. Many schools with less funds from fundraising will look for efficiencies and be very money conscience during spending, while those that can raise a lot more may spend with less thought in mind.

As noted in the comments above, and through other written and verbal submissions we have received, the comments have all been consistent: The board needs to stop leaning on the parent in order to repair the financial problems it has – the financial restraints that comes from the TCDSB affects parents in the most negative way at the local level as we are pushed to provide for our children what the board does not.

OAPCE Toronto recommends that the TCDSB needs to find efficiencies and promote a more balanced fundraising plan. Equity will never be achieved as long as a wealth imbalance in society exists, but by providing parameters in this may help to alleviate some of the imbalance.

The board should not be putting our parents in a position that any decision they make would bring an unfair judgement towards them if they decide not to give to others.

We need to provide parents with guidance and support, help them in their volunteer roles at their schools and create a culture that CSPC's are not there to "add to" what the board cannot provide, but are there to help ensure that their child's success is achieved, whether they can raise money or not.

Respectfully,  
Annalisa Crudo-Perri  
OAPCE Toronto President