



REPORT TO

**CORPORATE SERVICES, STRATEGIC
PLANNING AND PROPERTY
COMMITTEE**

**OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTS IMPROVEMENT
PROGRAM (ALL WARDS)**

*"I can do all things through him who strengthens me."
Philippians 4:13 (nrsvce)*

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INFORMATION REPORT

Vision:

At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.

Mission:

The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ.

We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.



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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the implementation of the school playground projects that were allocated funding through the 2019-2020 School Playground Reserve.

At the beginning of 2021, Playground Reserve projects that met the eligibility criteria for the Federal COVID-19 Resilient Infrastructure Stream (CVRIS) were transferred from the Playground Reserve funding to the new CVRIS funding and are now being implemented under the requirements and timelines of that program. Playground Reserve funds that had been allocated to these projects, will be returned to the Playground Reserve to fund future projects upon completion of the current projects.

Playground Reserve projects that have been delayed due to the re-deployment of staff resources to COVID-19 priority projects and widespread supply chain issues have been prioritized for spring/summer 2022 construction.

Following a Board amendment that TCDSB allocate funding toward playgrounds annually and not base this on whether there is a surplus, a \$1.2M Outdoor Environments Improvement Program fund shall appear henceforth in the Renewal Plan, starting in 2021-2022.

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 14 hours

B. PURPOSE

1. This report provides the Board with an update on the School Playground Reserve project allocations and implementation over the 2020-2021 year.
2. This report provides information on the future funding source for outdoor improvements in response to a Board amendment to the 2020-21 Second Quarter Financial Status Update.

C. BACKGROUND

1. *In June 2019, the Board approved the establishment of a strategic Ward Priorities Playground Reserve fund of \$1.2M from in-year surpluses (if*

available) amounting to \$100,000.00 per Ward. In November 2019, the Board further approved an allocation of an additional \$300,000.00 for that year to the Playground Reserve from the Equity Reserve to be distributed based on socio-economic rankings of each ward.

2. ***In February 2020, the Board approved the Playground Reserve Criteria and Selection Process.*** The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) aligned with the existing Improvements to Outdoor Environments SOP, in support of the Outdoor Play Environment Policy B.G.01.
3. ***In June 2020, a total of \$1,392,798.00 was awarded to 59 successful applicants for the 2019/2020 Ward Priorities Playground Reserve Fund.*** Kick-off meetings with school principals and outdoor committees were initiated in September 2020, however, due to the re-deployment of staff resources to COVID-19 priority projects and the CVRIS funding application, work on the Playground Reserve projects was put on hold. This delay was communicated to the school communities in October 2020. Meetings resumed on some projects in December 2020.
4. ***On October 28, 2020, the Federal COVID-19 Resilient Infrastructure Stream (CVRIS) funding program was announced.*** Eligibility criteria for this new funding allowed certain Playground Reserve projects to be funded by the CVRIS program. Provided the school site also met certain criteria, Playground Reserve projects to upgrade FDK yards, create outdoor classrooms and install shade structures were transferred to the CVRIS program. Subject to a surplus remaining, following completion of the CVRIS projects, the funding that had previously been awarded for these projects will be returned to the Playground Reserve to fund future playground improvement projects.
5. ***Due to the original December 31, 2021 substantial completion date for the CVRIS program, the development of some projects that remained funded by the Playground Reserve was delayed through the spring and summer of 2021.*** Development of these projects resumed in September 2021. In order to find resource and financial efficiencies, other remaining Playground Reserve were grouped with CVRIS projects for tender. The projects that have been awarded to a contractor are delayed due to the 12-week lead time for armour stone and other landscaping products. The completion of these projects is prioritised for spring and summer of 2022.
6. ***Following the Board's approval of the Audit Committee's recommendation to designate most of 2019-2020 in-year surplus to the Operating***

Contingency Reserve, no new funds were available for the Playground Reserve for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. There was no application or selection process for new Playground Reserve projects carried out in the 2020-2021 fiscal year aside from addressing surplus funding in Ward 1 carried over from 2019/2020.

7. ***On June 8, 2021 a Board amendment to the 2020-21 Second Quarter Financial Status Update, resolved that the TCDSB allocate funding toward playgrounds annually and not based on whether there is a surplus.*** Following review of all available funding sources, staff determined that use of the School Renewal Allocation (SRA) was the most appropriate and available funding source. This funding is now referred to as the Outdoor Environments Improvement Program Fund, and shall appear henceforth in the Renewal Plan, starting in 2021-2022.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

1. ***In response to a Board motion to support social distancing on buses by promoting cycling to school, Staff implemented the supply and installation of 79 bike racks to ensure that every school has at least one bike rack.***
2. ***In response to a Board motion to secure seating to support outdoor classroom set-ups, Staff implemented the delivery of approximately 25 log seats to 64 schools across the Board.*** Free logs were acquired from the City of Toronto and the budget for the collection, cutting to size and installation was from COVID-19 relief funding. Due to budget limits, log seats could not be provided to all schools that requested them. Seats were delivered to the schools that were part of the tent pilot program and then prioritized by the quintile numbers. All Q5 schools that requested logs stools received them and some Q4 schools based on geography.
3. ***In April 2021, following a new application and evaluation process, \$98,349 was allocated to four school projects in Ward 1.*** This funding was the carry-over that remained for Ward 1 from the initial allocation process. These projects are now in design.
4. ***Thirty-three separate projects were transferred from the Playground Reserve program to the CVRIS with an awarded funding value of \$661,582.*** All Playground Reserve projects that were eligible for the CVRIS were transferred to the new funding program. The projects that were transferred are

indicated in Appendix A. The Playground Reserve funding from these transferred projects will be returned to the Playground Reserve program, upon completion of these projects. The new application process will be combined with the application process for the new Outdoor Environments Improvement Program Fund and is anticipated to begin in March 2022.

5. ***Pending approval of the 2021/2022 Renewal Plan, \$1.2M of the School Renewal Allocation (SRA) will be allocated towards the 2021/2022 Outdoor Environments Improvement Program Fund.*** The new application process will be combined with the application process for the remaining Playground Reserve and is anticipated to begin in March 2022.

E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1. ***The status of current outdoor improvement projects funded through the Playground Reserve is shown in Appendix A.*** Appendix A also includes the status of Playground Reserve projects transferred to the CVRIS program.
2. ***In February 2022, revisions to the Outdoor Play Environment Policy B.G.01 and a revised Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) will be brought for Board approval.*** The policy and SOP will be revised to ensure the criteria and selection process meet the requirements of the School Renewal Allocation (SRA) and to incorporate feedback following the previous selection processes.

F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the information of the Board.