

School Sports On the Cutting Block Risk as TDSB Finance Committee Meets



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sports Fields, Football and Soccer at Risk Due to Education Cuts

(TORONTO, ON) – Today, the **Fund Our Schools Campaign** is announcing new concerns related to provincial government cuts to education as the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) Finance Budget Enrollment Committee meets.

School and community sports like football and soccer that rely on field maintenance are being put at risk due to cuts to education. Facility and capital reporting from school boards spell out how boards are behind on field repairs and out of money. This is on the back of concerns raised last month related to the closures of school pools and music programs, outdoor education and equity programs.

“The Ford Government found money to increase their salaries,” said Helen Victoros, President with Elementary Teachers of Toronto. “But they keep cutting funding to our students and schools. Students are packed in large class sizes, don’t have the special education supports they require, and are losing programs like music, pools, outdoor education and sports programs. This government is underfunding our schools by billions, and our children are paying the price.”

Due to increasing costs from inflation and the governments continued failure to match funding, the majority of school boards around the Province are now operating under a deficit. The funding gap has now reached over \$6 Billion requiring cuts and increased fees to various recreation programs to keep them afloat.

- Sports fields are now at risk of no longer being maintained due to Facility and Capital backlogs
- Last month TDSB Staff put forward several recommendations to address the provincial cuts including:
 - Increasing class sizes to save \$7.5 Million
 - Closing pools and swim programming to save \$12.8 million
 - Cutting music programs to save \$4 Million
 - Cutting student electronic devices for grades 5 & 6 to save \$4 Million
 - Shuttering outdoor education facilities to save \$4 Million

“I know over a dozen school board trustees and they are all terrified. The Provincial government is threatening to take them over if they don’t cut enough and also threatening to take them over if they cut the wrong thing,” said the Toronto & York Region Labour Council Executive Assistant Jennifer Huang.

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The Fund Our Schools coalition, which includes the Toronto & York Region Labour Council, Elementary Teachers of Toronto, OSSTF Toronto, and CUPE 4400 is calling for:

- Increased education funding to restore lost resources
- Immediate action to fix Ontario's crumbling schools
- Better support for teachers, education workers, and students, including special education resources and smaller class sizes

For more information, visit www.fundourschools.ca.

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