

Toronto District School Board

Policy P067

Title: **LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES INDEX**

Adopted: February 11, 2009

Revised: **June 17, 2015**

Reviewed: June 2013

1.0 OBJECTIVE

To provide direction to staff regarding the use of the Learning Opportunities Index

2.0 RESPONSIBILITY

Director of Education

3.0 DEFINITIONS

Learning Opportunities Index: A Board-designed tool that ranks schools based on a range of indicators that measure external challenges affecting student success. Many of the indicators reflect levels of poverty. There are two indices, one for elementary schools (including junior high schools) and one for secondary schools.

The index measures external challenges in a way that compares each school to all other schools. It applies exactly the same set of consistent, reliable, and objective measures to each school and removes the subjectivity that may enter into the perceptions held about individual schools.

The index lists schools according to ranking. The highest ranking (number 1) indicates the school with the greatest external challenges to student success. The index also provides a score for each school. A higher score leads to a higher ranking.

External challenges Conditions that are outside the control or influence of the school or Board and that have an impact on student success.

Resources Funds, staffing, goods, and services allocated to schools in order to help students succeed.

4.0 POLICY

- 4.1. The Board recognizes that the Learning Opportunities Index is an effective tool for measuring external challenges to student success.
- 4.2. The Board recognizes that all students can learn and succeed. A ranking on the index shall not be used as a negative label for a school or its students.

- 4.3. In order to provide a more equitable distribution of resources, the Learning Opportunities Index shall be used when resources are being allocated to schools, except where the need for an appropriate exception can be demonstrated.
- (a) An exception to this direction is permitted where allocations are directed to all students and schools to meet basic needs (such as essential learning resources, heating and lighting) and to meet standards in legislation and collective agreements (such as teachers to meet class size requirements).
 - (b) Another exception to this direction is permitted where allocations are directed to needs that can be more appropriately measured by other means. (Examples of more accurate measurements include resources for English Language Learners based on students' countries of origin, resources for Special Education based on students' identified needs, and resources for major capital repairs in schools based on measures of facilities' condition).
- 4.4. Applications of the Learning Opportunities Index in determining allocations to schools shall result in a greater concentration of resources in schools that have greater need.
- 4.5. Whenever feasible, the scores of schools on the index shall be used in preference to the rankings of schools when determining the amount of an allocation.
- 4.6. The index may be used in a variety of ways, including the use of cut-offs, stepped cut-offs, scaling, or a combination of these approaches. Information shall be made available to Board employees and the public outlining how to use the Index for best results.
- 4.7. The index is used in allocations among specific schools. As a result, nothing in this direction shall prevent decisions about allocations before they are distributed among schools. For example, an allocation may be directed only to students of a specific grade, and, once that direction is determined, the index would be used in decisions about distribution among schools with those grades.
- 4.8. The most recent version of the index shall be used when determining the allocation of resources.
- 4.9. The most recent index and explanatory information shall be easily accessible in the Board's communications vehicles that provide information to staff and the public.
- 4.10. The factors used to calculate the index shall be reviewed every five years to ensure that they reflect current research concerning external challenges to student success and take account of changing availability of valid, reliable, and consistent data.
- 4.11. The index shall be recalculated and republished every three years.

- 4.12. An analysis shall be generated every three years to assess the impact of the use of the index in allocation of resources to schools during the previous 36-month period. The analysis shall be presented to the Board and its advisory committees.

5.0 SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES

The Director is authorized to issue operational procedures to implement this policy.