

Example letter:

Dear _____:

Toronto is increasingly a city split along income divides. As the middle class disappears poverty is becoming more entrenched among those living in Toronto's poorest neighbourhoods where the majority of the population are people of colour and/or newcomers to Canada. Because of our current system of underfunding education unless special programs are created and financed by Toronto's school boards students from inner city schools are unable to keep up with their peers from wealthier neighbourhoods better able to raise program dollars through fundraising. These fundraising dollars go to everything from arts enrichment to playground equipment, yet fundraising alone cannot compensate for the fact that some students have parents who work more than one job so may not be able to help with homework, or who may not be able to afford enough food for their families – sending their children to school hungry.

Students from economically and socially vulnerable conditions are at higher risk for academic difficulties and require more supports. The Learning Opportunities Grant (LOG) is a Ministry of Education grant established to provide supports for these students. Research from the Toronto District School Board's 2010 *Model Schools for Inner Cities: Three Year Research Highlights Report* demonstrates that when the LOG is used to fund tools that combat inequities, such as remedial reading, breakfast and lunch programs, tutors, mentoring, summer school, literacy and numeracy programs and homework clubs, both the opportunity and achievement gap can be closed. Unfortunately, because of chronic underfunding by the province – that urgently requires some kind of systemic remedy – the LOG is often spread around to cover other funding shortfalls and is not used for its intended purpose.

I am well aware that the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) is facing another funding shortfall for the 2010-11 budget cycle, yet given the current recession I believe it is more important than ever to put the LOG money to its intended use and spend it on programs that have been proven successful.

I, therefore, ask the TDSB to pass the Inner City Advisory Committee's motion which would see:

- 1) A 2% increase, compounded for four years, added to the *Model Schools for Inner Cities* program to cover inflationary increases that have not been adjusted for since the program began in 2006,
- 2) An additional 7.5% the Learning Opportunities Grant, every year for three years beginning in 2011-2012 reaching 22% by 2013-2014, to flow directly to the neediest and most vulnerable students in the TDSB,
- 3) The Board develop a blueprint to address the needs of our most under-served students.

* See full motion [here](#).

I appreciate all the leadership and innovation the TDSB has demonstrated in setting an agenda that addresses the impacts of poverty on education and look forward to further gains in this area as more resources are dedicated to alleviating the harsh impact of poverty on Toronto's neediest students.

Kind regards,
