



The TDSB Could Make Better Choices to Reduce Costs

(Toronto, June 19, 2025) – The Progressive Contractors Association of Canada (PCA), whose members build major capital and infrastructure projects across Canada is urging the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) to support “open tendering” to help address its chronic funding shortfall.

“It seems irresponsible for the board to close swimming pools, and cut music and outdoor education programs when there’s another cost cutting measure it chooses to ignore,” said Karen Renkema, VP Ontario at PCA. “It’s time the board put students first, by reducing costs through open tendering.”

Each year, the TDSB spends millions of dollars on repairs and related projects. For years, the board has awarded repair contracts to the same companies affiliated with select unions. By restricting competition, repair costs have risen dramatically. For example, the installation of a school’s front lawn sign: \$19,000. An electrical outlet in a school library: \$3,000. There was also the \$143 bill to install a \$17 pencil sharpener.

Open tendering is a procurement process that allows all qualified contractors and their workers to bid on, and build publicly funded construction projects. Union affiliation is not a prerequisite. Back in 2019, the TDSB voted to opt out of provincial legislation that would have allowed it to openly tender school construction work. According to the independent Cardus think tank, the move would have saved the board approximately 21 percent on construction work, which translates into a \$77.7 million savings annually.

The Toronto District School Board recently passed a plan to balance the budget and eliminate its \$34.4 million deficit. The Ontario government is currently investigating the TDSB’s finances, which Education Minister Paul Calandra says points to a “pattern of mismanagement and misplaced priorities.”

About the Progressive Contractors Association of Canada (PCA)

PCA is a national association of leading construction companies that build major infrastructure and capital projects. Its members employ more than 40,000 unionized construction workers who are represented primarily by CLAC. PCA advocates for a fair, open and competitive construction market.

For further information, contact:

Danna O’Brien, Danna@obriencommunications.ca 416-500-0699