



***Maria Rizzo***  
***Trustee Ward 5***

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Summer is officially here, flowers bloom, children move from schools to pools, and the Provincial Government makes decisions about what they will be able to allocate in the coming year for education. Unfortunately, though it may be beautiful outside, it is no picnic for the Toronto Catholic District School Board who is faced with a potential deficit of \$31 million.

Although the Provincial Government has made progress to improve education in Ontario, the job is far from complete. For a number of years, the Toronto school boards have faced a number of financial pressures. These include the escalating cost of transportation, the costs associated with leasing many of our school facilities, and a shortfall in the funding of teacher salaries and benefits which amounts to approximately \$7000 per teacher. The Toronto Catholic District School board employs 5,700 teachers.

In its most recent budget announcement, the Ministry of Education increased the flexibility of the funding model, but has not provided any new money to offset the cost of teacher salaries, which means that money will have to be diverted from other areas to offset the actual cost. This will mean significant cuts in the budget - that our students can ill afford - especially at a time when the pressure on schools to “produce” is greater than ever.

It is said that God often tries us with a little to see what we can do with a lot. Our board has historically managed with less and despite under funding has been successful in providing a quality educational program for our students. The Toronto Catholic School Board has alerted the Provincial Government to the issues we now face and we continue to work with the Ministry of Education to address our continuing funding challenges.

We must focus on what students need and how the present education funding formula fails them. In the past, The Toronto Catholic District School Board has generally complied with what the government has asked. Unfortunately, if the board were to act in accordance with the province’s demand to balance the budget our children’s education will suffer. Wise investment in education is to our children as spring showers are to blooming flowers.

Over the summer, there will be public discussions about school board finances. I will ensure that you are consulted prior to making decisions with respect to the budget. Information will be published on the board’s website at [www.tcdsb.org](http://www.tcdsb.org) later in the summer. In the meantime, if you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

I thank you for your continued commitment to Catholic education and I wish you and your family a safe, restful and happy summer.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maria Rizzo", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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