



PCA Renews Call for Competition to Help TDSB Fund Repairs

(Toronto, May 31, 2024) - The Progressive Contractors Association of Canada (PCA), whose members build major capital and infrastructure projects across Canada, believes the Toronto District School Board could easily reduce its multi-million repair backlog, by supporting open tendering.

“This is a problem the TDSB should solve,” said Karen Renkema, VP Ontario at the PCA. “If the school board supported open tendering, more repairs could be carried out at a far lower cost.”

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. Unfortunately, the TDSB awards all of its construction work to an oligopoly of contractors and their affiliated unions.

The advocacy group Fix Our Schools, is calling on the province to help fund the maintenance and repair backlog at the TDSB.

Last year the board says it spent a record \$370 million on repairs and related projects. For years, the TDSB 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.

“The Toronto District School Board does students a great disservice by leaving schools in such a sorry state of disrepair,” added Renkema. “Groups advocating for school repairs should be asking the TDSB why it continues to ignore the obvious solution.”

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.

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.

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