REPORT TO

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND WELL BEING, CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

SAFE SCHOOLS REPORT 2017-18

Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill and live there in **safety.**
Leviticus 25:19

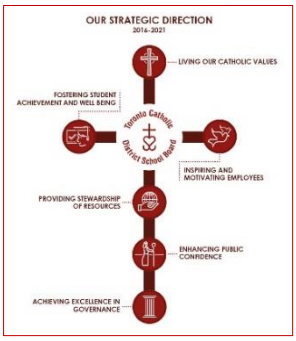
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INFORMATION REPORT

Vision:
At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.

Mission:
The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ.
We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.



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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Safe and healthy learning environments supported by positive school climates continue to be a key goal for the Toronto Catholic District School Board. In our annual Safe Schools Report we continue to examine metrics which promote continued growth in safe, caring and accepting school practices. ***New for the 2017-2018 Safe Schools Report is a section wherein students are asked specifically how safety can be improved in schools.*** Their feedback is collected through surveys and through focus group discussions.

For 2017-2018, both qualitative and quantitative data confirm a continued positive trend toward safe and welcoming school climates in the TCDSB. Behavioural data indicates that suspensions and expulsions over the last 5 years continue to trend downwards. Although overall metrics show positive results, there was an increase in total suspensions for male students in elementary schools; a result identified as an action item for 2018-19. In secondary schools, suspensions are significantly down compared to previous years; in fact, in 2017-18 secondary suspensions were the lowest ever recorded in a Safe Schools Annual Report. Many secondary school principals are attributing the emergence of the Safe Schools Student Ambassador Program as a contributing factor to improved Safe Schools metrics.

Further positive news is also evident in the perceptual data from Safe Schools Climate Surveys administered to elementary and secondary students. These data indicate that an overwhelming number of students (95% in elementary and 92% in secondary) believe their schools are safe places to interact and learn.

Informed by the local Safe and Accepting Schools Teams, all schools will review their local 2017-2018 Safe Schools metrics and make adjustments as needed to their 2018-2019 Safe Schools Plan. The components of the plan will include action items for: Bullying Awareness, Prevention and Intervention; Progressive Discipline; and Positive School Climate.

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 90 hours.

B. PURPOSE

1. The Safe Schools Report for 2017-2018 includes quantitative and qualitative data related to Safe Schools metrics, procedures, programs and other activities designed to create safe, accepting learning environments, and strengthen public

confidence in the TCDSB. In an effort to gain further insights into the data the 2017-2018 Report also includes an embedded gender analysis.

2. The following areas will be addressed in this report, along with actions undertaken to address evidence-informed needs:
    1) Suspension and Expulsion Data
    2) Safe Schools Climate Surveys
    3) Alternative Safe Schools Programs for Students
    4) Professional Learning to Build Capacity within the System
    5) Student Voice on how to increase the level of safety in schools
    6) Proposed Actionable Items from 2017-2018

3. The evidence will highlight those areas of strength and success, as well as areas for growth, resulting in prioritized actions for the 2018-2010 school year.

C. BACKGROUND

The Annual Safe Schools Report to Board has evolved from focusing on Suspension and Expulsion data ten years ago, to a comprehensive review and analysis of established metrics and subsequent action plans for the new school year.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

Sources of Evidence for this report include, but are not limited to:

1. Suspension and Expulsion data;
2. Secondary Safe School Survey and Elementary Safe and Caring Catholic School Climate Survey;
3. Safe Schools alternative programs to support student achievement and well-being;
4. Participation rates of TCDSB staff in professional learning opportunities, workshops and in-services;
5. Student Voice – Survey and Focus Group Discussions

Below are data related to Safe Schools:

SECTION 1: Suspension and Expulsion Data (Appendix A)

An analysis of the five year history of Suspension and Expulsion data at TCDSB (2013-2018) indicate a downward trend in the following areas: number of suspension notices issued; number of students being suspended; number of students receiving multiple suspensions; and the number of days lost to suspension.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS [Comparison with 2016-2017 data]

At the Elementary level, the data indicate that more students received suspension as a progressive discipline consequence (+75); however, in comparison to 2015-2016 the data indicate that less students received suspension (-20). Some comparisons with the previous year (2016-2017) indicate:

- Increase in the number of Suspension Notices issued to males *(+69)* and slight increase to females (+6)
- Increase in the number of Instructional Days lost to Suspension for males (+227)
- Decrease in the number of Instructional Days lost to Suspension for females (-38)
- Increase in the number of males with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) who were suspended (+8)
- Decrease in the number of females with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) who were suspended (-5)
- Increase in the number of males suspended 2 or more times (+63)
- Increase the number of females suspended 2 or more times (+15)

The above data would indicate that recidivism at the elementary level has shown an increase in comparison to 2016-2017.

- The number of males Suspended Pending Possible Expulsion under Section 310 of the Education Act has increased (+7).
- Decrease in the number of females Suspended Pending Possible Expulsion under Section 310 of the Education Act (-6)
- No Board Expulsions for males (-2) and no Board Expulsions for females (-6)
- Increase in School Expulsions (+6) for males and no School Expulsions for females

Consistent with 2016 – 2017 data, there has been no significant change in the more serious infractions of expulsion. *From the total number of Suspension Pending Possible Expulsion processes initiated (33), very few resulted in expulsions (6). This would suggest principals are using all available sources of information and*

considering mitigating and other factors during their investigations. Although the Fresh Start process is not disciplinary in nature, 6 students were transitioned in elementary for concerns related to safety.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS [Comparison with 2016-2017 data]

The data ***indicate a constant downward trend over the last 5 years in suspensions issued.*** This past year saw a significant decrease (-190) in the number of suspension notices board wide.

Some comparisons with the previous year (2016-2017) indicate:

- Significant decrease in the number of Suspension Notices issued for males (-163)
- Decrease in the number of Suspension Notices issued for females (-27)
- Significant decrease in the number of Instructional Days Lost to Suspension for males (-367)
- Significant decrease in the number of Instructional Days Lost to Suspension for females (-98)
- Decrease in the number of *males* suspended 2 or more times *(-33)*
- Decrease in the number of *females* suspended 2 or more times *(-13)*

The above data would indicate ***that overall recidivism for both males and females has decreased this year***. *This suggests that mitigating factors and intervention strategies appear to correct student inappropriate behaviour.*

- Decrease in the number of *male*s with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) who were suspended *(-32)*
- Decrease in the number of *females* with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) who were suspended *(-1).*

The data ***indicates that mitigating and other factors continue to be considered when issuing Progressive Discipline***.

- Decrease in the number of males Suspended Pending Possible Expulsion under Section 310 of the Education Act (-22)
- Increase in the number of females Suspended Pending Possible Expulsion under Section 310 of the Education Act (+8)
- Decrease for males in Board Expulsions (-4)
- No change for females in Board Expulsions (0)
- Increase in School Expulsions for males (+2)
- Increase in School Expulsions for females (+9)

The 5 year overall trend continues to ***indicate a consistent decrease in suspensions issued (-639) with 2017 – 2018 data being the lowest number of suspensions ever recorded at the secondary school level****. This positive Safe Schools trend is further supported by the decrease in serious student incidents resulting in suspension pending possible expulsion (-14). Although the Fresh Start process is not disciplinary in nature, 36 students were transitioned in secondary for concerns related to safety.*

SECTION 2: Student Perceptual Data

During the 2017-2018 school year, elementary students in Grades 6 and 8 participated in the *Safe and Caring Catholic School Climate* survey, and secondary students in Grades 9-12 participated in the *Secondary Safe Schools* survey. Data gathered from these surveys are reported for individual schools and as a Board.

At the Board level, general trends can be identified and serve as a focus for collective inquiry and action. At the school level, the data will be reviewed by the Safe and Accepting Schools Team to gain greater insights into students' perceptions of school safety and school climate, to advise the principal about enhanced safety procedures and programs, and to review and update the local Safe Schools Plan.

COMPARATIVE REVIEW (TREND OVER TIME)

Elementary Schools

In February/March 2018, 10,100 students in Grades 6 and 8 in all TCDSB elementary schools participated in the Safe and Caring Catholic School Climate (SCCSC) Survey.
Overall, elementary students' perceptions of school safety are very positive and remain so over the past 3 years, with ***over 95% of students indicating they feel very safe or safe in school.***

Some highlights on safety (See Appendix B1):
When comparing elementary results from 2015-2016 to 2017-2018, there was very little or no change evident in all areas of feelings safe in and around school and witnessing or experiencing various activities in school.

Consistent over the past three years, elementary students' feelings of safety were very positive:

- over 90% of elementary students felt *safe* or *very safe* in school, in the

classroom, while eating lunch at school, during indoor recess, at dismissal time, in the hallways;
- over 80% felt *safe* or *very safe* in the washrooms, at sports/after school events, on the stairs/in stairwells, and outside during recess.

Likewise, positive results are evident in the percentage of students who report *never* having *witnessed* or *experienced* in school:

- Drug use (94%)
- Gang activity (88%)
- Weapons, harassment based on sexual orientation (85%)
- Relationship violence (82%)

Areas for Continued Dialogue:

- 67% of elementary students have *never* been bullied at school and of these students 71% have told another person about being bullied.
- 62% of elementary students report they have *witnessed* another student being bullied at school.
- For those who have been bullied or have *witnessed* bullying, the most common ways are verbal (name calling, constant unwanted teasing/joking) or social (e.g., being excluded, gossip). Physical bullying was another common form of bullying *witnessed* by elementary students.
- While 71% of elementary students who experienced bullying at school indicated that they told another person about it, only 50% of students who witnessed another student being bullied at school reported it to someone.
- There remains room for improvement for elementary students' perceptions of bullying being a problem in their school: 56% feel it was a small problem or not a problem.

Secondary Schools

In November 2017, 5,144 students in Grades 9 through 12 from all TCDSB secondary schools participated in the Safe Schools Survey. Overall, secondary students' perceptions of school safety are positive and have remained so over the past 3 years, with about 92% of students reporting feeling *very safe* or *safe* in school.

Some highlights on safety (See Appendix B2):

Consistent over the past three years,

- over 90% of secondary students felt *safe* or *very safe* in the classroom, in school, in the cafeteria/lunch time
- about 68% of secondary students indicated that bullying is *a small problem* or *not a problem* in their school

Improvements of 3% to 4% over the past there years on secondary students' feelings of safety:

- over 90% feel *safe* or *very safe* at sports/after school events, in the hallways, on the stairs/in stairwells;
- over 80% feel *safe* or *very safe* in the washrooms, travelling to and from school, in the parking lot.

Strong improvements of 6% to 9% are evident when comparing secondary results from 2014-2015 to 2016-2017 in the following areas:

- 71% of secondary students *never* having *witnessed or experienced* inter-racial conflict;
- Over 80% of secondary students *never* having *witnessed or experienced* harassment based on sexual orientation, and alcohol use.
- 84% of students *never* been bullied since September
- 34% of students *witnessed* another student being bullied at school

Areas for continued dialogue:

- Although there were improvements in the percentage of secondary students reporting having *never* witnessed or experienced verbal abuse, drug use and theft, these remain areas for further dialogue.
- Of the secondary students who have experienced bullying at school (16%), one in five have reported the bullying they experienced.
- Of the secondary students who have witnessed bullying at school (34%), about one in five reported the bullying they witnessed.
- For those who have been bullied or have witnessed bullying, the most common forms are verbal (name calling, constant unwanted teasing/joking) or social (e.g., being excluded, gossip).

GENDER BREAKDOWN

For the most part, findings comparing male and female students have remained the

same as in previous years.

Elementary Schools (See Appendix B3)

- Little or no differences between male and female students with regards to their feeling safe in and/or around school.
- More male than female students reported *witnessing/experiencing* physical violence.
- While most students regardless of gender report *never* being bullied or of *witnessing* bullying, female reports of bullying *experienced* and *witnessed* are higher than that of males.
    - *Verbal* and *social* bullying continue to be areas of foci for both genders however, more females reported *experiencing* and *witnessing* social and cyber bullying than males, whereas more males reported *experiencing* and *witnessing* physical bullying.
- More female students have told another person about being bullied.
- More male students indicated that they think bullying is *a small problem* or *not a problem* in their school.

Secondary Schools (See Appendix B4)

- Generally, most male and female students (i.e., at least 79%) report feeling *safe* or *very safe* in the various locations within their respective schools.
    - Female reports of safety in the cafeteria/lunch time, in school generally and particularly in the washroom are higher than that of males.
    - Male reports of safety in the travelling to and from school are higher than females.
- More male than female students reported *witnessing/experiencing* physical violence, theft, weapons, gang activity and relationship violence.
- Most students regardless of gender report *never* being bullied.
- More males than females reported *witnessing* bullying at school.
- *Verbal* and *social* bullying are areas of continued focus for both genders however, more females reported *experiencing* and *witnessing* social and cyber bullying than males, whereas more males reported *experiencing* and

witnessing physical bullying. More males than females also reported *experiencing* verbal bullying.

SECTION 3: Student Voice: How to Increase the Level of Safety in Schools

Survey Responses

On the elementary *Safe Caring Catholic School Climate* (SCCSC) survey and the secondary Safe School Survey, students were asked to respond to respond to the question: *How do you think we can make our schools safer?* This question provides feedback on an actionable item identified in the Safe Schools Report to Board: *"That staff follow up with a report to provide student input on proposed solutions to increase the level of safety in schools".* Reponses were collated and results are summarized below.

Elementary Summary

Many elementary students indicated the schools are already safe. Top responses by students on how to increase school safety were through:

- Better monitoring of students at recess/school
- The promotion of anti-bullying initiatives or assemblies
- Placement of security cameras
- Securing the outside grounds
- Installing a security system, locking doors, having ID card access
- Stricter rules and punishment
- A caring school community; be kind to each other
- Students should report bullying to staff/adult
- Security guard and police presence

Secondary Summary

Many secondary students indicated the schools are already safe. Top responses by students on how to increase school safety were through:

- The promotion of anti-bullying initiatives or social activities
- Staff monitoring
- Police or security guard presence
- Communicating with students
- Stricter rules and punishment
- Placement of cameras

- Paying more attention to safety
- Improvements to the school building
- A caring staff

Secondary students who had a School Resource Officer (SRO) in their schools were also asked on the Safe Schools survey to reflect upon the SRO program in their respective schools.

In the fall of 2017, the SRO Program was active in 20 secondary schools to promote engagement and relationship building. In these schools there was a brief addendum to the Safe Schools Survey, including questions related to the SRO Program to gather feedback to inform continued improvement planning. Student engagement with SROs was varied across all participating schools. Where there was engagement, 82% of students felt the SRO has contributed positively to the safe, caring and inclusive climate in their school. Additionally, the majority of students indicated they felt comfortable talking to the SRO. The reasons for feeling comfortable included that students felt they were listened to and the SROs were perceived to be caring adults and positive role models supporting the schools. Based on this feedback, there have been conversations regarding general awareness and visibility of SROs.

Focus Group Responses

Another forum which provided feedback on increasing school safety was focus groups. During the February 2018 ECSLIT and CSLIT meetings, feedback from students was also collected regarding safety in schools and how safety in schools can be increased. The information informs the Board's Safe Schools Plan and provides feedback on an actionable item identified on the Safe Schools Report to Board: *"That staff follow up with a report to provide student input on proposed solutions to increase the level of safety in schools"*.

Students were asked to break up into smaller groups and assign a note taker and facilitator. The facilitator read each question and ensured that all voices from the student group are heard. The note taker, recorded the key points of the conversation. These were collected and summarized. Top responses by students on how to increase school safety were: placing security cameras in school; promoting anti-bullying or mental health initiatives; promoting more safety measures to and from school; creating a safe and inclusive environment; placement of more guidance counsellors in school and locking doors and improving the school structures.

A short summary by elementary and secondary panel is provided below:

Elementary

Total Group Responses: 27 groups (86 students)

1. How safe do you feel in your school?

Very Safe	Safe	Not Safe
70.4%	25.9%	3.7%

2. How can we increase the level of safety in our schools?

Top responses:

- ✓ Place security cameras in schools
- ✓ Promote anti-bullying initiatives
- ✓ Provide more safety measures to and from school
- ✓ Place guidance counsellors in schools
- ✓ Lock school doors

Secondary

Total Group Responses: 18 groups (116 students)

1. How safe do you feel in your school?

Very Safe	Safe	Not Safe
44.4%	38.9%	16.7%

2. How can we increase the level of safety in our schools?

Top responses:

- ✓ Promote safety to students to create the safe and inclusive environment
- ✓ Promote mental health initiatives
- ✓ Place more guidance counsellors or caring adults in school
- ✓ Improve the building structure

SECTION 4: Safe Schools Alternative Programs

The TCDSB operates programs through the Safe Schools Department. The Monsignor Fraser College programs at St Martin and Our Lady of Lourdes support students who have received a board expulsion as a result of a safe school incident.

1. The Expulsion Program

The Expulsion Program is a short term support program for students who have been expelled from all schools of the TCDSB. The program serves elementary students grade 6-8, and secondary school students, grades 9-12. Program staff work in a multidisciplinary team to address student strengths, needs and triggers with an aim to provide individualized academic programming and individual support at school. Once students have transitioned from their home school, the goal for all students is to successfully complete the demission requirements and return to a different TCDSB school. While in the program some students are able to meet graduation requirements and proceed to post-secondary education while others look to access community programs or the world of work upon program completion.

In 2017-2018, there were no students in the elementary program.

In the secondary program 35 students (31 Board Expulsion & 4 Voluntary Intervention Program) were served at different points during the school year. Program staff work diligently to develop community partnerships across the GTA so that students and their families can access local community support and resources.

2. TIPSS (Transitional Intervention Program for Suspended Students)

The long-term suspension program offers programming to students serving a suspension of 6-20 days in length. For students receiving a suspension between 6-10 days, academic programming is provided. For students serving a suspension of 11-20 days social work assistance is provided in addition to the academic programming. Parents are not obligated to accept TIPPS support although we strongly encourage participation.

In 2017-2018, ***82% of eligible suspended students were served by TIPSS teachers*** at sessions in Toronto Public Library sites. In situations where adult students/parents have chosen not to attend TIPSS, the school provided the student /family with work packages. In all cases students were afforded the opportunity to continue with their learning while on long-term suspension.

SECTION 5: Professional Learning for TCDSB Stakeholders

In 2017-2018, the Safe Schools Department offered professional learning on diverse safe schools topics to students, parents, TCDSB staff members and community partners.

2017-2018 Activities are listed in Action Items found in section E.

E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

2016-2017 Metrics	Evidence/Deliverables (2016-17 Metrics)
1. Continue to diversify and expand Safe Schools professional learning.	• 24 different topics delivered in 2017-2018 Professional Learning Modules Series: o 879 participants (social workers, CYW, educational assistants, teachers, psychologists, administrators, support staff) • Interdisciplinary professional learning opportunities with various TCDSB stakeholders: o New Teacher Induction Program – 57 new teachers o Joint TSU/Safe Schools Training – 52 TSU Members o Administrative Professional Development – 532 principals/vice principals/superintendents o Newly Appointed Principal and Vice Principal In-services – 35 (Succession Series) and 35 (Head Start) o Safe Schools Student Ambassador Symposiums including Bullying Awareness and Prevention Month Launch – 652 secondary students, staff, trustees, community partners o Resolution Conference and Mediation Circles: o 87 participants (social workers, CYW, educational assistants, teachers, police officers) o Threat Assessment Training and Related Workshops: o 61 participants (social workers, CYW, educational assistants, teachers, psychologists, administrators, support staff, police officers)

	○ Elementary School Social Worker Presentation - 30 participants ○ Training to Toronto Police Service – 65 police officers ○ Niagara University Teacher Candidate In-services – 155 teacher candidates ○ CPCO PQP Training – 25 aspiring administrators ○ SEAC Presentation – 20 members ○ OAPCE Presentation – 30 members ○ Conference for the Association of Educational Researchers of Ontario – 90 participants ○ LOYOL – 21 TSU teachers ○ Osgoode School Conference – 65 participants ○ School Presentations – 105 staff & parents ○ Toronto Public Library Presentation – 23 librarians ○ Committee of Youth Officers Conference – 350 participants ○ Waterloo Catholic District School Board Principal/Vice Principal/Superintendent Presentation (90) participants
2. Initiate a pilot Intervention Program (Voluntary Intervention Program, VIP) to support students who are in risk of engaging in serious student behaviours that may lead to expulsion.	• 4 students participated in the Voluntary Intervention Program (VIP) during the 2017-2018 academic school year. • Students were supported with ongoing individualized academic programming and social/emotional support to address gaps and needs.

3. Monitor the implementation of the 33 recommendations resulting from the Safe Schools Inquiry Report.	• At the January 2018 regular Board meeting a report was received updating the current status of the 33 recommendations. The monitoring team had identified that the majority of the recommendations fell within the continuum of Routine Use. Furthermore, no recommendations fell under Awareness and hence the Safe Schools Inquiry recommendations can be considered implemented. Any issues pertaining to the recommendations will be updated as needed in the Safe Schools Annual Report.
4. As a result of the focus group discussion regarding female suspensions, Safe Schools Department will: a) Receive professional learning from TPS on current and emerging social media issues. b) Safe Schools staff will augment existing professional learning modules on social media c) School communities will implement new learning and facilitate activities at the local level	a) Toronto Police Service provided Safe Schools staff with current and emerging social media issues. TPS also co-presents with Safe Schools staff on various modules including "Cyberbullying and Internet Safety". b) A new module entitled "Digital Footprint Navigation" was co-developed and co-presented by Safe Schools staff and Information Technology staff. This module examines various social media platforms and strategies for students & staff to protect themselves from vulnerabilities. c) Participants who attend the Safe Schools Professional Learning Modules Series return to their home school to work with their Safe and Accepting Schools Team to implement new learning and activities within their local community.

F. ACTIONABLE ITEMS FOR 2018-2019

1. Expand the *Safe Schools Professional Learning Modules Series* to include new modules: "De-Escalation" and "Connecting with Parents and Caregivers".

2. Safe Schools/St. Martin will produce training videos on various topics related to Safe Schools and Promoting Positive School Climate. School communities will be able to access these videos to share with staff, students and parents.

3. Promote the Voluntary Intervention Program (VIP) to support more students who are in risk of engaging in serious student behaviours that may lead to expulsion.

4. Examine data and, where appropriate, develop strategies to address the increase in elementary suspensions issued to male students.

5. Based on Student Voice feedback the Safe Schools Department will host a Safe Schools Student Ambassador Symposium for both elementary and secondary students to address topics identified by students.

G. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the consideration of the Board.