



REPORT TO

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

VOICES THAT CHALLENGE 2018 CSLIT: INSPIRING ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness. (Psalm 85:15)

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
September 24, 2018	October 4, 2018	Click here to enter a date.
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INFORMATION REPORT		

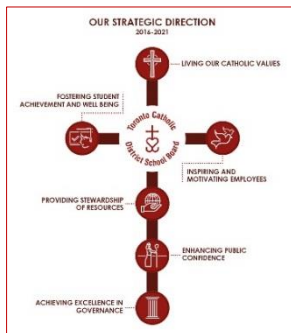
Vision:

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.



- Rory McGuckin
Director of Education

- D. Koenig
Associate Director
of Academic Affairs

- T. Robins
Acting Associate Director
of Planning and Facilities

- L. Noronha
Executive Superintendent
of Business Services and
Chief Financial Officer

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report includes practical activities that schools can perform to support social justice initiatives that would address the recommendations made by outgoing CSLIT Executive and student trustee Rhea Carlisle. The report also includes valuable student input pertaining to the implementation of social justice initiatives and the development of a justice-oriented attitude in our schools.

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 40 hours.

B. PURPOSE

1. This report complies with the requirement of an annual report to the board of trustees based on the CSLIT conference “Voices that Challenge”.
2. Current Student Trustees, Joel Ndongmi and Taylor Dallin decided to seek out further clarification of the recommendations by engaging the entire CSLIT committee at their first monthly general assembly meeting on Tuesday, September 25, 2018. This strategy will allow them to prioritize and clarify the recommendations in order to select what specific issues to focus on during their term. The issues raised represent the voice of the students. The opportunity to present these concerns at the Board allows for direct involvement and needed dialogue regarding relevant issues that impact TCDSB students.

C. BACKGROUND

1. On Thursday, April 19, 2018 student trustees Rhea Carlisle and Joel Ndongmi held the annual TCDSB catholic student leadership conference “*Voices that Challenge*”. The CSLIT (2017-2018) under the direction of the student trustees reviewed the recommendations given by the student body. These recommendations were presented to the then in-coming student trustee Taylor Dallin. After consultation with the CSLIT executive (which were appointed in June 2018) and a cross section of members from the CSLIT general assembly who met at Olympia Sports Camp (September 1-3, 2018), student leaders prioritized their recommendations and developed a plan of action for 2018-2019. CSLIT wishes to present these recommendations to the greater general assembly at their first monthly meeting on Tuesday, September 25,

2018 so that a wider poll can be administered. After the opinions of the wider general assembly are compiled, the CSLIT executive want to further explore and address these recommendations to serve the students of the TCDSB and show that their voices have been heard.

2. Before having staff take action in response to the recommendations put forth at the “Voices That Challenge” Conference held on April 19, 2018, the 2018-2019 CSLIT decided that it would be valuable to capture the student voice of the entire CSLIT General Assembly before prioritizing each recommendation in case original issues raised in the 2017 conference are no longer relevant to this year’s student body. Prioritized issues for the 2018-2019 CSLIT as selected by the greater General Assembly will be assigned to the appropriate Executive Members and subcommittees.
3. The practice of recommending initiatives from the Voices that Challenge conference through the outgoing student trustee and CSLIT executive to the incoming CSLIT executive has become the adopted procedure. This procedure allows for the current student trustees and CSLIT to adopt and work on the priorities they feel are most relevant.
4. The current recommendations put forth by this school year’s CSLIT can be managed administratively with the support of the appropriate program departments.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

1. The following is an action plan regarding the Report to Board - “CSLIT: Inspiring Active Citizenship in Catholic Education”. The Catholic Student Leadership Department and student leaders attending the CSLIT meetings on September 1-3, 2018 agreed to develop specific action plans related to selected student recommendations. Note: The issues listed are not necessarily in order of importance although all selected as priorities for this year’s CSLIT. The CSLIT recognizes that the different issues listed below become a priority at different points in the school year.

CSLIT 2018-2019 Recommended Actions

1. Environmental Stewardship

Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’* calls us to serve and be stewards of our global and local environment by promoting the sustainable use of our natural

resources while keeping in line with our Catholic values.

CSLIT believes that the Bottled Water-Free Initiative should be more heavily enforced within our schools and increasing commercial profit gained from the selling of bottled water should not be supported by the TCDSB. Since there is an enormous amount of resources wasted to extract, bottle, package, ship, and distribute plastic water bottles, CSLIT feels that the use and sale of bottled water at school and staff events is in direct conflict with what it means to be a *responsible citizen*.

CSLIT also recognizes the importance of our carbon footprint on the environment. If animal agriculture is the leading cause of greenhouse gasses, the highest consumer of water, and the largest contributor to the decimation of the rainforest, then as *reflective, holistic, creative thinkers* who want to take care of the earth and God's creation, we need to address the number one contributor to these 3 environmental issues. CSLIT proposes a meatless Friday food program in all TCDSB cafeterias to address these environmental factors.

2. Anti-Sweatshop Uniform Policy

As Catholic Leaders we believe in the equality of workers across the world. We witness Catholic social teaching by promoting equality, democracy, and solidarity for a just, peaceful and compassionate society where no young adult is forced to work in substandard conditions.

TCDSB students have expressed interest in learning about the sweatshop industry and curious about the providers and the production process of their uniforms. As *responsible citizens*, partnering with organizations like Ontario Catholic No Sweat Network, will help students investigate uniform providers and find the truth surrounding the ethics of uniform production.

CSLIT encourages the board to continue to invite students to Anti-sweatshop committee meetings and inviting more keynotes speakers about this project at CSLIT General Assemblies and at student leadership conferences such as the Voices That Challenge and iLITE.

3. Student Well-Being

As Catholic leaders, it is essential that we take care of ourselves before serving others. Part of this includes maintaining healthy minds and positive mental well-being.

CSLIT would like to place a greater focus on mental health and promote schools as a place where students can openly seek help without fear of judgement. Students should feel comfortable initiating such conversations and never feel stigmatized for trying to be *effective communicators*.

It is important that the various pre-existing mental well-being initiatives/resources continue to be supported (e.g. the Stop the Stigma).

CSLIT also wants to create a new initiative called De-Stress Week (close to exam period). Providing students with the adequate resources to connect with other students about mental health and teaching them how to develop positive coping strategies is crucial to overall well-being.

4. Creating Safe and Inclusive Schools

In order to be a *collaborative contributor* a student needs to feel safe. With the growing usage of social media, online safety is becoming an increasingly prevalent issue. The anonymity of online bullying facilitates the progression of such behaviours to a point where it can become a source of isolation for certain students.

CSLIT would like to work towards eliminating barriers to an inclusive school environment by continuing to collaborate with the Safe School Department, Safe Schools Advisory committee and play a more prominent role in the Safe Schools Symposiums.

CSLIT would like to further promote resources for students in times of difficulty such as the Anonymous Alerts App.

5. Inclusion and Belonging for all Students

As this year's pastoral theme is "Rooted in Christ, We Belong", it is crucial we apply our Catholic values with compassion, respect, and sensitivity to all

students (LGBTQ+, international students, newcomers, students in financial need).

CSLIT recognizes the value of school programs like Big Brother, Best Buddies, and The Annual Inclusion and Belonging Retreat. Student leaders urge the TCDSB to continue to support these initiatives and expand them into schools where these programs are not offered.

CSLIT would like to continue and grow last year's inaugural Newcomer Student Leadership Conference to further integrate international students into the fabric of the TCDSB community.

Poverty is also an issue many students within our board face and can often become a cause of isolation. The Angel Foundation Charity for Learning's Breakfast Program should continue to be supported for it provides nutrition for all students which allows them to better succeed at school.

Through open consultations, students have mentioned the importance of hiring staff that represent the diversity of the student body. A more diverse school staff and board personal, positively contributes to an inclusive environment where every feels welcomed and the notion that "you are not alone."

6. Substance Abuse and Body Image

As Catholic leaders, one way to embrace our faith is keeping away from harmful practices. Substance abuse is a very current issue that is negatively impacting students.

CSLIT would like to dedicate more time addressing substance abuse as it hinders students' capabilities to be productive in the classroom and affects their academic performance. Students need to be more aware of the physiological effects of such actions and how it will impact their future.

This connects with the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectation to be a *discerning believer*. Rather than using substances to escape, students can utilize prayer as a very effective method of coping with stress.

7. Practical Skills Learning

CSLIT recognizes the importance of a well-rounded education. As *self-directed, responsible lifelong learners* who positively contribute to their community, students need to acquire a broad knowledge base that will prepare them for the 21st century.

CSLIT wants to advocate for the integration of more practical skills taught within school. Students want increased access to learning opportunities such as cooking, managing finances, and post-secondary pathways.

Board resources should be devoted to programs that promote acquiring these often forgotten practical and important skills. Supporting the formation of such clubs gives students the opportunity to be more prepared for life outside of the classroom. Guest speakers at iLITE, Voices that Challenge, Camp Olympia, CSLIT and ECSLIT can be organized so that students are exposed to these skills.

E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Students should be stimulated to effect positive change in our world around injustices. Students feel a calling to live out their faith, thus involvement in social justice actions allow them to make their faith visible. The current Student Trustees will be engaging the CSLIT standing committees so that they can work with various staff to address their specific recommendations. Students feel that board policies must address and be in line with current global social justice issues relevant and important to students.
2. The Student Trustees and CSLIT will report annually to the Board on the impact of their initiatives.

F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the consideration of the Board.