



REPORT TO

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

2019 CURSIVE WRITING UPDATE REPORT

The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved upon the tablets.

Exodus 32:16

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
March 25, 2019	April 4, 2019	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

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 Associate Director
 of Academic Affairs

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 Associate Director of Facilities,
 Business and Community
 Development, and
 Chief Financial Officer



A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update to the Cursive Writing Report dated August 2014.

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 20 hours.

B. PURPOSE

1. The information in this report is presented in order to respond to the following: Inquiry from a Trustee regarding Writing Programs in Schools received and referred to staff for a report regarding the status of the application of teaching cursive writing in our schools.
2. Information for this report was gathered via a survey to all elementary schools in order to get an update on practices regarding cursive writing (Appendix A)
3. Information based on “The Ontario Curriculum Grades 1-8 Language” (revised 2006) and “The Kindergarten Program” (2016) is also provided.

C. BACKGROUND

1. At the February 14, 2019 meeting of the Corporate Services, Strategic Planning and Property Committee a request for an update was made with regards to the application of cursive writing in elementary schools.
2. The Kindergarten Program (2016) states “that as children progress through the Kindergarten Program, they: demonstrate literacy behaviours that enable beginning writers to communicate with others”. Neither printing nor cursive writing is mentioned.
3. In The Ontario Curriculum Grades 1-8: Language (Revised 2006) the first reference to legible printing is in Grade 2. Cursive is only listed as an option beginning in Grade 3.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

1. The results of the survey conducted with all elementary schools in the TCDSB, indicate that grade 3 and 4 is when cursive writing is taught most

often, through in-class direct instruction. One third of these teachers teach cursive writing through direct instruction. Other teachers rely on indirect/informal instruction, in-class practice, in-class exposure to sample cursive work, and homework. (Appendix A – survey questions, Appendix B – summary of school survey results)

From a curriculum standpoint this is appropriate, as the first reference to cursive writing within the language curriculum document can be found within the grade 3 expectations

2. Practice packages can be shared with families by the school so that this becomes a take home activity as opposed to taking valuable class time required for exploring complex curriculum expectations.
3. Specialty cursive writing programs (e.g. “handwriting without tears”) are used in some schools and in particular by occupational therapy staff members to meet the needs of a specific sub-group of students who are having difficulty with fine motor skills.

E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1. As a result of the August 2014 report to Board (Recommendation #4), the Literacy Team developed a page on the TCDSB website that highlights ways cursive writing may be used in classrooms as well as providing resources for parents to engage with their children at home to further practice cursive writing.
<https://www.tcdsb.org/ProgramsServices/SchoolProgramsK12/Literacy/Pages/Cursive-Writing.aspx>
2. The Literacy Team continues to discuss the importance of cursive writing at professional learning sessions and during the implementation of the grade 3 curriculum. This is challenging for teaching staff as grade 3 is an EQAO year and the curriculum’s overall and specific expectations are significant.

F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the consideration of the Board.