



REPORT TO

REGULAR BOARD

SAFE SCHOOLS INQUIRY PANEL REPORT

The Lord God is like a sun and shield; the Lord gives us kindness and honour. He does not hold back anything good from those whose lives are innocent.

Psalm 84:11 NCV

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
May 15, 2015	May 21, 2015	May 21, 2015

Angela Gauthier, Director of Education

RECOMMENDATION 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 rooted in the love of Christ. We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge and to lead lives of faith, hope and charity



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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On October 6, 2014, two Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) students were fatally wounded during the lunch period at a property adjacent to Islington Avenue near Don Bosco Catholic Secondary School (Don Bosco). The two students killed were Zaid Athir Youssef from Don Bosco Catholic Secondary School and Michael Menjivar from James Cardinal McGuigan Catholic Secondary School.

In December 2014, the Board of Trustees of the TCDSB approved a motion to create a Panel of Inquiry to investigate the event, conduct a review of the actions undertaken and provide recommendations.

The Panel convened in January to set its terms of reference, outline the workings of the Panel, and to set dates for subsequent meetings. The Inquiry Panel began its investigation on February 10, 2015. Meetings were held in February and March and the report was drafted and reviewed throughout the month of April.

The final report was submitted to TCDSB Director of Education Ms. Angela Gauthier by Mr. Paul Crawford, the Chair of the Safe Schools Inquiry Panel on May 12, 2015, to facilitate public presentation to the Board of Trustees for consideration at the first available Board of Trustees meeting scheduled for May 21, 2015.

The Safe Schools Inquiry Panel Report is dedicated to the memory of Michael Menjivar and Zaid Youssef.

B. PURPOSE

The Panel's primary area of examination was on the events surrounding the shooting and the response of TCDSB staff and Toronto Police Services (TPS). It reviewed the effectiveness of emergency response procedures and protocols that were initiated and followed by staff and TPS personnel

Consistent rules for engagement and discussion were followed at each session. Presenters were allowed to begin with what they believed were important considerations. The Panel's main purpose was to listen and ask questions to deepen their understanding of the events leading up to the incident and its aftermath – not to lay blame.

C. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

A total of eight sessions were conducted. Each session was purposefully structured by theme groupings of invited groups/individuals. This was done to generate more in-depth discussions of common perspectives/themes in order to focus tightly on the critical issues surrounding the incident. Delegates were allocated times slots in order for the Panel to hear multiple presentations during each session.

Full transparency and open access was achieved with three Open Forums which were scheduled geographically at conveniently located school board sites (East, West, and Central).

In order to guide the Panel in its work, the terms of reference were based on the following parameters:

1. The Panel will review the circumstances surrounding the shooting
2. The Panel will consider relevant policies and procedures of the TCDSB. The input from TCDSB staff will be sought as to what additional policies and procedures may be helpful in dealing with similar situations in the future.
3. Seek Input from both TCDSB and non-TCDSB groups whose thoughts and opinions are relevant to the Panel's two main purposes, to provide feedback and recommendations regarding:
 - a. What should be done to assist schools to be prepared to deal with similar events of this nature in the future?
 - b. What prevention strategies can the TCDSB utilize to support vulnerable youth in our community?
4. The Panel provided adequate time for multiple presentations at each session. Five sessions were set aside for groups or individuals requested to testify at the invitation of the Panel, with time also allotted for open presentations to the Panel. Three opportunities were set aside as open public forums in conveniently located sites across the City of Toronto (East, West, and Central) where invitees and the general public can present their views.

The panel was comprised of five individuals:

Paul Crawford (Chair) – A retired Superintendent with the TCDSB with extensive experience in school operations; legal Safe School requirements, and liaison with the Toronto Police Services;

Patrizia Bottoni – Trustee Ward 4, representing the TCDSB Board of Trustees;

Rachel Ferreira – Vice-President Committee of Youth Officers for the Province of Ontario (COYO), a probation officer with extensive experience working with youth in the criminal justice system;

Jana Seymour – Vice – President of Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education (OAPCE) Toronto, representing the parental viewpoint; and

John Yan – Senior Coordinator of Communications, Public and Media Relations with the TCDSB, who as the head of the department brings expertise related to the management of crisis situations.

This initial scope was widened after it became clear during presentations by the Toronto Police Service, TCDSB crisis response personnel (social workers, school administrators, and teachers), union partners, and external psychology experts in youth behaviour, that community resources, societal attitudes towards safety, and the challenges of social media on school safety also required the Panel's attention.

These areas of concern were further underlined in presentations by community agency representatives, and the mother of one of the slain students. As a result the Panel determined that TCDSB Safe School Policies and Procedures, student engagement, communication during and after a crisis, were all relevant to the main goals of the Panel and any recommendations would need to assess these perspectives if they were to be of value and relevant for the entire Toronto Catholic District School Board community.

Based on a comprehensive analysis of these presentations and testimonials, the Safe Schools Inquiry Panel Report has identified a total of 33 recommendations for consideration and implementation

D. RECOMMENDATION

That the Safe Schools Inquiry Panel Report be received and referred to Board Staff for a report on the 33 recommendations presented and options for implementation.



TORONTO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Safe Schools Inquiry Panel Report

In Memory of
Michael Menjivar
(1999-2014)

Zaid Youssef
(1997-2014)

May 2015



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BACKGROUND

On October 6, 2014, two Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) students were fatally wounded by gunfire that erupted during the lunch period at a property adjacent to Islington Avenue near Don Bosco Catholic Secondary School (Don Bosco).

The two students killed were Zaid Athir Youssef from Don Bosco Catholic Secondary School and Michael Menjivar from James Cardinal McGuigan Catholic Secondary School. This tragic event shocked the entire TCDSB community and the City of Toronto.

According to police reports of the incident, the students were at the location to support a mutual friend who was having a conflict with another student from Don Bosco, which had escalated during the preceding weekend over social media.

The deaths created a great sense of loss for the families and the school communities in which the students attended. Crisis support teams coordinated by the TCDSB Social Work Department, supported by direct involvement of the Director of Education and other senior Board officials, were deployed at the schools to help students and staff cope with the aftermath of this tragedy. Memorials for both students were held at their respective schools.

In December 2014, the Board of Trustees of the TCDSB approved a motion to create a Panel of Inquiry to investigate the event, conduct a review of the actions undertaken and provide recommendations.

The panel was comprised of five individuals:

Paul Crawford (Chair) – A retired Superintendent with the TCDSB with extensive experience in school operations; legal Safe School requirements, and liaison with the Toronto Police Services;

Patrizia Bottoni – Trustee Ward 4, representing the TCDSB Board of Trustees;

Rachel Ferreira – Vice-President Committee of Youth Officers for the Province of Ontario (COYO), a probation officer with extensive experience working with youth in the criminal justice system;

Jana Seymour – Vice – President of Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education (OAPCE) Toronto, representing the parental viewpoint; and

John Yan – Senior Coordinator of Communications, Public and Media Relations with the TCDSB, who as the head of the department brings expertise related to the management of crisis situations.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Inquiry Panel was mandated to investigate and review the factors and circumstances that contributed to the tragic events in October, 2014. In order to guide the Panel in its work, the terms of reference were based on the following parameters:

1. The Panel will review the circumstances surrounding the shooting
2. The Panel will consider relevant policies and procedures of the TCDSB. The input from TCDSB staff will be sought as to what additional policies and procedures may be helpful in dealing with similar situations in the future.
3. Seek Input from both TCDSB and non-TCDSB groups whose thoughts and opinions are relevant to the Panel's two main purposes, to provide feedback and recommendations regarding:
 - a. What should be done to assist schools to be prepared to deal with similar events of this nature in the future?
 - b. What prevention strategies can the TCDSB utilize to support vulnerable youth in our community?
4. The Panel will meet on eight different occasions with adequate time allocated for multiple presentations at each session. Five sessions will be set aside for groups or individuals requested to testify at the invitation of the Panel, with time also allotted for open presentations to the Panel. Three opportunities will be set aside as open public forums in conveniently located sites across the City of Toronto (East, West, and Central) where invitees and the general public can present their views.

SCOPE OF THE INQUIRY PANEL

The Panel's primary area of examination was on the events surrounding the shooting and the response of TCDSB staff and Toronto Police Services (TPS). It reviewed the effectiveness of emergency response procedures and protocols that were initiated and followed by staff and TPS personnel.

This initial scope was widened after it became clear during presentations by the Toronto Police Service, TCDSB crisis response personnel (social workers, school administrators, and teachers), union partners, and external psychology experts in youth behavior, that community resources, societal attitudes towards safety, and the challenges of social media on school safety also required the Panel's attention.

These areas of concern were further underlined in presentations by community agency representatives, and the mother of one of the slain students. As a result the Panel determined that TCDSB Safe School Policies and Procedures, student engagement, communication during and after a crisis, were all relevant to the main goals of the Panel and any recommendations would need to assess these perspectives if they were to be of value and relevant for the entire Toronto Catholic District School Board community.

The Panel convened in January to set its terms of reference, outline the workings of the Panel, and to set dates for subsequent meetings. Meetings were held in February and March and the report was drafted and reviewed throughout the month of April.

The final report was submitted to TCDSB Director of Education Ms. Angela Gauthier by Mr. Paul Crawford, as the Chair of the Safe Schools Inquiry Panel in May, 2015, to facilitate public presentation to the Board of Trustees for consideration at the first available Board of Trustees meeting which was scheduled for May 21, 2015.

METHODOLOGY

The Inquiry Panel began its investigation on February 10, 2015, with the intended goal to complete a full 360-degree review of the incident.

To achieve this, a total of eight sessions were conducted. Each session was purposefully structured by theme groupings of invited groups/individuals. This was done to generate more in-depth discussions of common perspectives/themes in order to focus tightly on the critical issues surrounding the incident. Delegates were allocated times slots in order for the Panel to hear multiple presentations during each session.

Full transparency and open access was achieved with three Open Forums which were scheduled geographically at conveniently located school board sites (East, West, and Central).

Consistent rules for engagement and discussion were followed at each session. Presenters were allowed to begin with what they believed were important considerations. The Panel's main purpose was to listen and ask questions to deepen their understanding of the events leading up to the incident and its aftermath – not to lay blame.

Written submissions by presenters were optional, but Panel members readily accepted into evidence any that were provided to them. The Panel was grateful for the courageous and emotional appearance by Mrs. Jina Samouie, the mother of Zaid Youssef, to personally address and present her list of recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

SAFE AND CARING SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

The Panel heard many considerations from presenters that dealt with both the physical and social state of today's school environment. The physical issues revolved around the TCDSB's ability to provide appropriate technology that could assist in their mission to keep students and staff safe, as well as ensuring that TCDSB schools remain essential community hubs for both educational and extra-curricular activities.

Options identified included Key Card entry systems for staff that could serve to ensure that staff are able to enter the school and not be locked out during a *'Hold and Secure'* situation, as was the case on October 6, 2014.

School security surveillance/video cameras that are well maintained, and corrected for deficits in covering certain halls and stairwells, were offered as immediate steps that would serve to increase the confidence of staff and students that inappropriate behavior in these areas would be recorded for follow up investigation or intervention. These technological measures were not in place at Don Bosco.

The mother of one of the slain students proposed the installation of metal detectors and implementation of random searches of students as ways to ensure school safety. However, the Toronto Police Service and many student representatives appearing before the Panel argued that this not be part of the recommendations, for practical, social and legal reasons. After careful deliberation, Panel members did not recommend these actions in this report.

Presenters gave Panel members many different viewpoints related to the importance of staff, program models and expectations that assist schools in providing supports for students. All principals who presented to the Panel talked about the importance of Child and Youth Workers (CYWs) who monitor and support the most vulnerable youth attending TCDSB schools.

The impact of the TCDSB's Fresh Start Policy on school environments was a significant topic of discussion during the presentations to the Panel. Social Work follow-up with students who have been the subject (either as a perpetrator or a victim) of a critical incident, as well as with students who have been moved away from their original school during the academic year, has always been seen as an integral part of the Fresh Start Policy. Other vulnerable youth in TCDSB schools also rely on these invaluable Social Work support services. The Chief Social Worker's summary of the caseloads that his staff face point out that this service needs to be maintained at its current levels.

The submission by the African Canadian Coalition of Community Organizations (ACCCO) a group dedicated to “attempting to break the cycle of alienated, invisible, criminalized drop outs” underscored the reality that schools need to work with agencies (like ACCCO) to avoid duplication and share information since many parents of at risk youth trust these agencies.

A presentation by a former student who had been expelled stood out as an example of how these essential support resources in the Toronto Catholic District School Board – from the CYW who mentored him and supplied TTC tickets to his social worker and school principal – all form critical components of an intervention continuum of caring adults that permitted him to break the cycle of criminal behaviour. The leadership roles his school offered through the TCDSB’s Camp Olympia program, peer tutoring, and the expectations of teachers and coaches taught him the importance of empathy. Combined with his personal drive, leadership and determination to succeed, he emerged from being a vulnerable youth who had been charged with assault as a young teen, incarcerated, expelled and seemingly headed for failure in the school system. He is now a proud Toronto Catholic District School Board graduate in the biotechnology program at the University of Toronto.

This was contrasted by the realities facing administrators because of the “*Don’t Snitch*” ethos that permeates throughout today’s school environment and reflected community and cultural attitudes. The principal of Don Bosco, the Toronto Police Service, school staff, and almost every student group who presented to the Panel commented on this significant challenge to school environments and safety.

Students admitted that they did not want to be labelled as “snitches” or “rats” and that getting labelled as such is such a strong social taboo that it stops students from reporting information that could help keep the school safe. Several students reported they do not trust the confidentiality of the “222-TIPS” telephone reporting line, since it is run by the police. This is an obstacle to delivering a strong message by students to students that they have a stake in keeping the school safe.

Dr. Joanne Cummings, a psychologist with PREVNet, (an organization dedicated to student safety through promoting relationships and eliminating violence), said in her submission that youth need to be taught to tell someone. “With young people we teach that reporting ... is not tattling, because reporting is what you do when you want to get someone out of trouble; tattling is what you do to get someone in trouble.” She also stated that we should use youth-to-youth messaging in order to be most effective. This further highlighted the importance of any opportunities that schools can provide for student leadership.

Recommendation 1: Controlled Access at Secondary Schools

All Secondary School staff should be provided with security card access to the school. This will facilitate the locking of exterior doors during a *Hold and Secure*.

Recommendation 2: Placement and Maintenance of Security Cameras

The School security cameras should receive regular maintenance, inspection and upgrades to ensure proper functioning and placement.

Recommendation 3: Liaising with Community Support Groups

It is recommended that Administrators, teachers, and school support staff consult with various community groups who may offer partnerships, strategies, and support to assist the School in dealing with vulnerable and marginalized youth, so that services for students are rationalized and information is shared.

Recommendation 4: Secondary School Child and Youth Workers

It is highly recommended that the current allocation of Secondary School Child and Youth Workers (CYWs) be maintained. CYWs play a crucial role in dealing with students who have behavioural and other social challenges.

Recommendation 5: Secondary School Social Workers

The Toronto Catholic District School Board should maintain or increase current Secondary School Social Worker staffing levels. Secondary School Social Workers provide essential supports to students on a Fresh Start, as well as other vulnerable youth.

Recommendation 6: Student Leadership

All Toronto Catholic District School Board schools should be encouraged to learn about and support programs and practices which build individual leadership skills in students to help keep schools safe.

Recommendation 7: After-School Access to Schools by Students

The Toronto Catholic District School Board should permit students to use School facilities after regular School hours. This will allow students to remain in the safe environment of the School. This is especially important in high-risk neighbourhoods of the City.

Recommendation 8: “Don’t Snitch” Ethos

All students should be encouraged to report School safety concerns to a trusted adult in the School in a timely manner. The “Don’t Snitch” ethos is a significant barrier to School safety.

Recommendation 9: Catholic Expectations of Students

The Toronto Catholic District School Board should declare that it is a fundamental expectation that students in our Catholic Schools will follow the ethic of our Catholic faith, where empathy, care for others, and respect for life dominate, by adhering to the following principle, which should be noted in all Student Agendas:

“If you are aware that a student or group of students is in a dangerous situation, then you should tell a caring adult in the school community immediately”.

SAFE SCHOOLS IN A SOCIAL MEDIA-CENTRIC WORLD

The weekend preceding the shooting was one where Twitter was being used as an active social media tool to watch, continue, and escalate the conflict. Dr. Cummings noted that youth live in a wired world and “connecting with peers and feeling a sense of belonging and an affirmation of their value and dignity has always been a defining need for adolescents. Social media enables this need and is now part of their operating systems. As a direct result, teaching safe and healthy use of social communication technology is the responsibility of educators.”

She also stated that we need to teach youth to think before they act. “[Youth] respond to emotional messages with emotion and press send instantly. Conflict can escalate very quickly. It is essential to teach youth to think before responding emotionally. When making decisions, youth need support in learning to anticipate and evaluate consequences.”

Underpinning this is the notion of healthy relationships. Many of the students spoke of the respect they have for certain staff/teachers in their schools. One of the Secondary School Chaplains who presented summarized it by saying that all the effective relationships are at the “micro level”.

Dr. Cummings noted that “the majority of adolescents manage to negotiate the adolescent years safely. It is normative to engage in more risk taking. Healthy relationships at home, at school, and in communities are essential to keep adolescents safe, monitor their activities, and to support them when problems arise. When adolescents have problems, they will turn to adults only if the trusting relationships are already in place. Ideally, all students have at least one adult to whom they can turn in a time of need.” It is not only in class that these essential

relationships are nurtured, but also in sports, the arts, and any other out-of-class interaction that a young person can form the trust bond that is essential in keeping them safe.

To acknowledge the fear that students have for their personal safety in the non-wired or non-online world, some manner of anonymous reporting -- either traditional (suggestion box) or smart phone/technology-based -- is needed. This was recommended by the mother of one of the slain students, and several students who presented their views before the Panel.

Recommendation 10: Responsible Use of Social Media

All Schools in the Toronto Catholic District School Board should teach, encourage and support policies and programs that teach students responsible use of social media. Irresponsible use of social media can create or escalate conflict in a School.

Recommendation 11: Acceptable Use Policy

All schools of the Toronto Catholic District School Board should review students' use of electronic devices in school and determine whether students are complying with the Board's Acceptable Use Policy A. 29, and to initiate a Board-wide awareness program if required.

Recommendation 12: Anonymous Smart Phone Reporting

The Toronto Catholic District School Board should investigate the feasibility of developing a smartphone-based application that would permit students to anonymously report school-related safety concerns.

SAFE SCHOOLS DEPARTMENT PROGRAMS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

In order to obtain a full picture of how students are placed in Toronto Catholic District School Board schools following expulsions and Fresh Starts, and the documentation and expectations that follow in such cases, the Panel heard from Principals, Safe Schools staff, teachers, the Toronto Secondary Teachers Union (TSU), as well as from a student who had gone through the expulsion process and emerged as a success story.

The Panel also received information from the Toronto Catholic District School Board's Occupational Health and Safety Department, from TSU, and from a number of Secondary School Principals on the sharing of information in such cases. A divergence of opinion was noted on the issue of disclosure of information. The integrity of the process was being called

into question due to inconsistent application of certain key elements. The recommendations in this section are made with a view to maintaining the consistency of the practices that follow Safe Schools policies and legislation that come to bear in these situations.

The Panel heard from a wide range of student leaders from different Toronto Catholic District School Board schools. Their responses regarding areas of concern in keeping schools safe were insightful, honest, and forthright. A number of these student leaders were not aware that there was a Safe and Accepting Schools Team in their School; nor could they describe the role of these Teams. Students were aware of the need they had and the importance of their cell phones to their minute-by-minute social connections and the importance of having adults in their school listen to them.

The Safe Schools Department has initiated a Safe Schools Ambassador Program to train secondary students on their School's Safe and Accepting Schools Team on key issues, such as identifying worrisome behaviours and establishing healthy relationships on- and off-line and through social media. However, level of awareness and active participation is uneven across the Board. As of the writing of this Report, over 20 of the 32 Toronto Catholic District School Board Secondary Schools have students who have attended training. PREVNet is working with the Safe Schools Department as students work to present videos they have created on positive school climate.

Recommendation 13: Placement of Expelled Students and Students on a Fresh Start

The Toronto Catholic District School Board should review placement protocols for expelled students and students on a Fresh Start to ensure that:

- The Ontario Student Record ("OSR") is at the receiving School before a student can be accepted;
- The necessary academic and social work supports, including a *Transition Plan*, are in place, and that there is documentation to support this, including a checklist of critical documentation and steps;
- Administration ensures appropriate staff are advised of the supports provided and the concerns surrounding the student;
- A particular school does not receive too many placements of expelled students and students on a Fresh Start.
- In addition, placement protocols for expelled students and students on a Fresh Start should be published on the Toronto Catholic District School Board's web site.

Recommendation 14: Hearing Deadlines in Student Discipline Cases of Principal Recommendation for Board Expulsion

When dealing with a Suspension Pending Possible Expulsion, and the deadline for holding an expulsion hearing has been extended by agreement, a specific new hearing deadline date (rather than an indefinite extension) should be established, except in cases of student incarceration.

Recommendation 15: Exclusions under Section 265(1)(m) of the *Education Act*

Documentation must be included in the Ontario Student Record that explains the reasons why a student was excluded from a school pursuant to section 265(1)(m) of the *Education Act*. This should be an integral part of the documentation available to principals through the Toronto Catholic District School Board Safe Schools Platform.

Recommendation 16: Safe and Accepting Schools Teams

- a) The Toronto Catholic District School Board should review and clarify the Terms of Reference of the Safe and Accepting Schools Teams and ensure that a Safe and Accepting Schools Team is operational in all schools.
- b) Secondary Schools are encouraged to ensure that their student representatives attend the Safe Schools Ambassador Program.

Recommendation 17: Safe Schools Training for Principals and Vice-Principals

All Principals and Vice-Principals in the Toronto Catholic District School Board should annually receive mandatory training on Safe Schools matters, including, but not limited to:

- Reviewing Lockdown, Hold and Secure, and Shelter in Place policies and procedures;
- Developing strategies for attaining staff cohesion, trust, and understanding when dealing with problem youth;
- Learning mediation skills as a vehicle for effective and safe resolution of conflict between students;
- Forming effective community partnerships in order to enhance safety in schools;
- Reviewing crisis response Do's and Don'ts;
- Setting up effective Safe and Accepting Schools Teams;

- Building trust with the parents in the community;
- Building trust with students in the school (e.g., encouraging student presentation be made to staff regarding safety matters, and encouraging older students to mentor younger ones); and
- Conducting a Safe Schools audit.

Training on many of these topics could be led by TCDSB Administrators who have shown themselves to be successful and respected by their peers. Sharing of best practices and the resulting discussions are a proven learning tool.

Recommendation 18: Guidelines for Parents and Guardians Regarding Lockdowns, Hold and Secure, and Shelter in Place

The TCDSB should prepare a booklet to be provided to all parents and guardians of students of the Board that provides advice on dealing with Lockdown, Hold and Secure, and Shelter in Place situations at their child's school.

Parents and guardians can assist in keeping their children safe by:

- Encouraging their children to follow all instructions from school staff and police with respect to emergency response procedures;
- Stressing the importance to their children of not using cellphones during a school emergency so as not to interfere with school and police communication;
- Not calling the school or their child during a school emergency so as not to interfere with school and police communication;
- Not coming to the school until after the school emergency is over.

The booklet should provide the Toronto Catholic District School Board Communications Department telephone number that a parent or guardian can call for information in case of a School emergency.

CRISIS RESPONSE

The Panel heard from the affected Schools that the Crisis Response Team from the Toronto Catholic District School Board's Social Work Department had a very beneficial effect on the schools as they tried to cope with the deaths of the students. As a Catholic school board, the Chaplaincy team and the faith lens this group provides is always an essential component of the Board's crisis response resources. Schools directly and indirectly impacted by the tragic events appreciated the efforts of TCDSB Senior Staff – from the Director of Education down – who attended at Schools to talk to staff and students and to liaise with the Toronto Police Service. The TCDSB's Chief Social Worker acknowledged that in many cases, the trauma associated with such an event may not be felt until months after the actual tragedy.

The Panel heard from Saleha Nahdi, a Community Development Officer for Crisis Response from the City of Toronto. Her Department rose from an initiative started in response to the City of Toronto's "Year of the Gun" in 2005. She explained that Toronto Crisis Response Teams are organized to assist in neighbourhoods that are experiencing a crisis, as well as to assist neighbourhoods identify what is making their area unsafe and develop a plan to handle and resolve it.

A settlement worker who works in the Rexdale area of Toronto noted that many parents in the Iraqi Community were very apprehensive about sending their children to any school after the shooting, and she took many calls from those concerned parents. A meeting at Fr. Henry Carr Catholic Secondary School, hosted by the Principal, alleviated some of these concerns as the parents had a chance to air their fears and be acknowledged.

Recommendation 19: **Social Work Crisis Response**

The Toronto Catholic District School Board should maintain the current Social Work Department led "team approach" to respond to a crisis in Schools.

Recommendation 20: **City of Toronto Community Crisis Response Program**

It is recommended that the Safe Schools Department, on behalf of the Toronto Catholic District School Board, arrange and coordinate representation and regular communication with the City of Toronto Crisis Response Program to ensure that the Program can provide crisis response resources in the event of an emergency at a TCDSB school anywhere in the City of Toronto.

Recommendation 21: Post-Crisis Consultation/Support

- a) The Toronto Catholic District School Board should ensure that school and other Board staff directly dialogue with parents and guardians of students who have experienced a school crisis. The purpose of the dialogue is to enhance school safety and provide reassurance after a crisis has occurred.
- b) The Toronto Catholic District School Board recognizes that trauma from events such as these can be manifested many months after the fact. Having support staff aware and available to support students and staff is crucial to their long-term mental health.

EMERGENCY SAFE SCHOOL PROCEDURES

The Toronto Police Services Superintendent for 23 Division felt that the School Administration and School Staff acted very responsibly. They did their jobs in a manner which protected Staff and Students once it was clear that there was a possible threat to safety. However, upon reflection, there was some use of incorrect terminology in the heat of the moment that created a need to examine the understandings of the differences between a 'Lockdown' and a 'Hold and Secure'. Communication to surrounding schools (Catholic, Public, and Private) also arose as an issue in the chaos surrounding the event. The Toronto Police Service recognizes these issues and is working towards a centralized solution through TPOC (Toronto Police Operations Centre).

A presentation by the Vice-Principal of Monsignor Percy Johnson Catholic Secondary School on an effective Lockdown drill his School conducted at lunchtime, and the multitude of considerations that were taken into account for this situation, highlighted to the Panel that this sort of planned activity is necessary for all Schools. It should be noted that on the day of the shooting, the staff at Don Bosco – who faced the issue of the 'open-view cafeteria' – made the same judgement that their students needed to be moved from that area.

Recommendation 22: Emergency Procedures During Lunch or Recess Period

All TCDSB schools should conduct at least one of their mandated twice-yearly Lockdown drills during a lunch or recess period so that staff and students are aware of the emergency response procedures to be followed when not all staff and students are in a classroom.

Recommendation 23: Alternate Safe Place

All TCDSB schools should have an alternate "safe place" in addition to a neighbouring school. An alternate "safe place" is needed to address situations where the neighbouring school is unavailable for use as a safe place because the neighbouring school is in a Hold and Secure.

Recommendation 24: School Staff Crisis Response Training

All staff in TCDSB schools must be trained in Lockdown, Hold and Secure, and Shelter in Place procedures. The TCDSB should develop a training video on these emergency procedures and the video should be available on the Board's web site. The video will assist in ensuring training consistency across the Board.

Recommendation 25: Emergency Procedures Described in Student Handbook

All student Handbooks should fully described the procedures to be followed when the school is in a Lockdown, Hold and Secure, or Shelter in Place, and these procedures should be reviewed with students by School Administration.

Recommendation 26: Approaching a School in Lockdown

All TCDSB schools should develop and implement a visual cue which can be quickly displayed to alert students and staff approaching a school that the school is in Lockdown. When the cue is displayed, students and staff must not try to enter the building, but instead go to the designated safe place.

Recommendation 27: Emergencies when Principal and Vice-Principal(s) are Away from the School

All School Principals should authorize selected staff member(s) as delegates to initiate emergency response procedures when the Principal and Vice-Principal(s) are away from the school.

TORONTO POLICE SERVICE RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

The TCDSB continues to have excellent relations and communications with Toronto Police Service, as a key community partner. Despite fiscal challenges and budget constraints that impact available resources on the part of our organizations, the commitment to student and community school safety relationships remains strong.

The presence of TPS School Resource Officers in our schools was reported by all presenters as positive and an essential "visible" component of the school as a safe and caring environment.

Recommendation 28: School Resource Officer (SRO) Program of the Toronto Police Service

The Trustees of the Toronto Catholic District School Board should approve a motion that indicates the Board's endorsement of the SRO Program and its desire to have the Program continue, as it is a highly effective program that assists in keeping Schools safe.

Recommendation 29: Communication with Students by Toronto Police Service

Subject to the Toronto Police Service - Toronto Catholic District School Board Protocol, it is recommended that when investigating a serious criminal event, Toronto Police Officers be permitted to address students to encourage them to provide a trusted Police Officer, or the confidential 222-TIPS phone line, with information that might assist the Police investigation. By doing so, the Toronto Catholic District School Board would show that it is not encouraging the belief system held by many youth that Police are not to be trusted.

COMMUNICATIONS DURING EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

In any emergency situation, communications becomes a critical component to ensuring accurate information is provided in a timely manner without compromising the safety of those involved, including the work of First Responders and law enforcement. This is further complicated by both the intensive and intrusive nature of today's media as they strive to meet the instantaneous, real-time demands of online and 24-hour television news reporting.

During this tragic incident, a Trustee of the Toronto Catholic District School Board spoke publicly in the media, repeatedly and without authorization, about the crisis situation. By identifying the specific students' schools in advance of Toronto Police confirmation, the Trustee created personal safety risks for all students at the affected schools.

These concerns were also brought to the attention of the Panel on behalf of the James Cardinal McGuigan Catholic Secondary School parent community by the principal and students during their formal testimony.

Recommendation 30: Official Spokesperson during Crisis Situations

Toronto Catholic District School Board Communication Policy A. 37 provides that the Director of Education, or his/her designate, will be the official spokesperson of the board during crisis situations, and on matters of academic program, administrative, human resource, and education matters, and in the application of a Catholic lens to all educational issues.

It is strongly recommended that the Board of Trustees determine and define disciplinary measures against any member of the Board of Trustees, as permitted under the Toronto Catholic District School Board Trustee Code of Conduct, for violating TCDSB Communications Policy A.37.

SAFE SCHOOLS AS A COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

The Panel heard from the current and former Principals of Don Bosco Catholic Secondary School on the challenges of being situated across the street from the two apartment buildings that are known as havens for illegal activity. The Toronto Police Service corroborated this view of the buildings as having drug activity and gun-related issues. The media have also reported extensively on this location as the site of other murders and violent crimes. The notion that having a gun means you have respect is a misguided idea that many youth have.

Recommendation 31: **Hand Gun Control**

The Board of Trustees of the Toronto Catholic District School Board should approve a motion to support the Federal Government, the Police, and community groups in doing everything possible to eliminate all illegal hand guns in Canada.

Recommendation 32: **Toronto Community Housing Authority**

The Board of Trustees of the Toronto Catholic District School Board should petition Toronto Community Housing Authority to assert its responsibility as landlord to keep the buildings at 2063 and 2067 Islington Avenue, Toronto, safe for the community who live at those addresses and for other people in the neighbourhood.

IMPLEMENTATION AUDIT

In order to do justice to the comments and testimony of all those who appeared before the Inquiry, Panel members believe that implementation of the recommendations made in this report should be monitored.

This commitment to accountability is central to ensuring the continued engagement and trust on safe school issues on the part of parents, students, staff, and all of TCDSB's partner communities.

Recommendation 33: **Implementation of Recommendations**

The Toronto Catholic District School Board should appoint a team to monitor and ensure that progress is made on the implementation of the recommendations made in this Report. The Director of Education should prepare an annual report to the Board of Trustees on the status of the implementation of these recommendations.