



REPORT TO

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

VOICES THAT CHALLENGE 2019 CSLIT: INSPIRING ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

So let a man think of us as Christ's servants, and stewards of God's mysteries. Here, moreover, it is required of stewards, that they be found faithful. (1 Corinthians 4:1-2)

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
September 23, 2019	October 2, 2019	Click here to enter a date.
Taylor Dallin, Student Trustee, CSLIT Co-Chair Kathy Nguyen, Student Trustees, CSLIT Co-Chair Michael Consul, Catholic Student Leadership Resource Teacher Michael Caccamo, Superintendent of Nurturing our Catholic Community, Safe Schools, and Continuing Education		
INFORMATION REPORT		

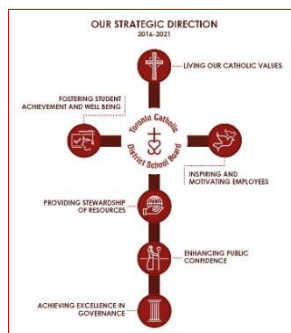
Vision:

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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Director of Education

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Development, and
Chief Financial Officer

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report shares student perspectives on how positive change can be made within the TCDSB community and beyond. It identifies five key pillars on which students have deemed important to take action. This report provides a vision for what the Student Trustees, the Catholic Student Leadership Impact Team (CSLIT) Executive, and the CSLIT General Assembly plan to work on during the upcoming academic year. It includes ideas and examples which address the recommendations brought forward by the outgoing CSLIT Executive Council and Student Trustee Joel Ndongmi. In addition, it includes valuable student input pertaining to the implementation of social justice initiatives relevant to the selected pillars.

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 “*Voices that Challenge*” CSLIT conference.
2. The issues raised within the five pillars represent the collective voice of the students. The opportunity to present these concerns at the Board level allows for direct involvement and needed dialogue regarding relevant issues that impact TCDSB students. The current Student Trustees, Taylor Dallin and Kathy Nguyen, will be seeking further clarification of the recommendations by engaging the entire CSLIT Committee at the first monthly General Assembly meeting on Tuesday, September 24, 2019. This strategy will allow them to prioritize and clarify the recommendations in order to select what specific initiatives to focus on during their term.

C. BACKGROUND

1. On Wednesday, April 10, 2019, Student Trustees Joel Ndongmi and Taylor Dallin held the annual TCDSB Catholic student leadership conference entitled “*Voices that Challenge.*” The 2018-2019 CSLIT Executive Council, under the direction of the Student Trustees, collected input from the participating students and reviewed the recommendations given by the student body. Next, the current Student Trustees, Taylor Dallin and Kathy Nguyen, analyzed the findings and consulted the newly appointed 2019-

2020 CSLIT Executive Council and a cross section of members from the CSLIT General Assembly at the Olympia Sports Camp CSLIT Weekend leadership retreat (August 31 - September 2, 2019). While at the leadership retreat, student leaders provided their own new ideas and prioritized the recommendations in order to develop the pillars for the 2019-2020 year.

2. The Student Trustees plan to present these recommendations to the entire General Assembly at their first monthly meeting on Tuesday, September 24, 2019 so that a wider poll can be administered. This will be extremely useful in ensuring that the opinions brought forward at the “*Voices That Challenge*” conference are still relevant. After the opinions of the wider General Assembly are compiled, the CSLIT Executive Council will further explore and address the recommendations alongside the Student Trustees to serve the students of the TCDSB and show that their voices have been heard.
3. Prioritized issues for CSLIT during the 2019-2020 year as selected by the greater General Assembly will be assigned to the appropriate Executive Members and Subcommittees so that action can be taken to make the vision a reality.
4. The practice of recommending initiatives from the “*Voices that Challenge*” conference through the outgoing Student Trustee and CSLIT Executive Council to the incoming CSLIT Executive Council has become the adopted standard. This allows for the current Student Trustees and CSLIT to adopt and work on the priorities they feel are most relevant.
5. 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 Student Achievement and Well Being, Catholic Education and Human Resources Committee - “*CSLIT: Inspiring Active Citizenship in Catholic Education.*” The Catholic Student Leadership Department and student leaders attending the CSLIT Retreat on August 31-September 2, 2019 agreed to develop specific action plans related to selected student recommendations. Note: the issues listed are not necessarily in order of importance although all are selected as priorities for this year. CSLIT

recognizes that the different issues listed below become a priority at different points in the school year.

CSLIT 2019-2020 Recommended Actions

1. Rooted in Christ - Growing in Faith

As Catholic leaders, it is important for us to keep in touch with and grow our faith. As we enter the second year of our Board's pastoral plan, we want to make sure everything we do is visibly *Rooted In Christ* as we practice the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectation of a *discerning believer* on a daily basis.

Both the CSLIT and ECSLIT general assembly meet on a monthly basis. Following the elementary lead, CSLIT will be adding a service component within their monthly meetings. Like ECSLIT, secondary students will be asked to collect canned goods, used clothing, and/or socks to bring to designated monthly meetings. These items will be donated to needy families and individuals in Toronto.

The Call to Family, Community and Participation is an important Catholic Social Teaching. As *Discerning Believers* it is important not just to live in faith but to grow in faith. This year, CSLIT would like to expand *Faith Camp* from a one day event to a 3 day program. Chaired by our CSLIT Executive Faith Representative, Faith Camp is an initiative that allows participants to learn, ask questions, share, celebrate, and live out what it means to be Catholic.

The TCDSB was selected to host the *Ontario Catholic Student Leadership Conference* in October 2021. Although this major undertaking will not take place until the following school year, this year's CSLIT Executive and Faith Subcommittee have started the initial planning phases of this province wide event. CSLIT is asking the Board to be aware of this event and to note it for the following school year.

2. Environmental Stewardship

"The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it." (Genesis 2:15).

God has called upon us to take care of His creation, to love and nurture planet earth for future generations to enjoy. This directly relates to the Catholic Social

Teaching *Stewardship of Creation*, which invites us to be active participants in protecting our environment.

One of the greatest issues plaguing our environment is the excessive use of plastic. It is polluting our oceans, lakes, parks, and negatively affecting the ecosystem and animal kingdom. CSLIT would like to spread awareness about this environmental topic and encourage the Board to reduce its overall plastic usage.

Students in Catholic schools strive to be *responsible citizens*. CSLIT encourages the Board to strengthen the implementation of the TCDSB plastic water bottle ban by ensuring that no TCDSB cafeteria sells plastic bottled water and no TCDSB event makes plastic bottled water available. CSLIT is encouraging senior staff including the Director of Education and Chair of the Board to emphasize to the system our Board's stance on this environmental and social justice issue. Some schools need a reminder that the TCDSB is plastic water-bottle free zone.

According to studies, animal agriculture is the leading cause of greenhouse gases, the highest consumer of water, and the largest contributor to the decimation of the rainforest. CSLIT believes that we can further reduce our carbon footprint by implementing *Meat-Free Fridays*.

CSLIT conducted a poll last year (see Appendix A) and was astonished by the number of TCDSB high schools that reported their cafeteria served meat options on Friday's. CSLIT is asking the Board to implement *Meat-Free Fridays* in every cafeteria. Not only is this in line with our Christian tradition, but having one meat free day per week will help combat the negative impact animal agriculture has on the environment and also spread awareness of the issue.

CSLIT and ECSLIT will continue to only order cheese only pizzas for every monthly meeting and Catholic Student Leadership gathering to help lower our meat consumption which, in a small way, positively impacts the environment but, more importantly, sends a message that TCDSB students are active stewards of the earth.

CSLIT plans to also have 2 members of our Executive Council join the Board's eco-committee.

3. Mental Health and Well-Being

Mental health and well-being is a crucial aspect of the human person. It affects everything – physical health, school success, family life, and relationships. Self care is extremely important to fully realize each of the *Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations*.

As students within the Catholic system, we are called to be *reflective, creative, and holistic thinkers*. When safe environments are created, students can be more introspective and self-aware. When no stigma is attached to certain feelings, emotions, or particular states of well being, students will more likely and more openly seek assistance.

Since many strategies and support systems are already available to TCDSB students, CSLIT wants to assist in publicizing and promoting these support options so that more students can utilize what is available.

CSLIT encourages the Board to continue supporting various *Stop the Stigma* programs and wishes to play a bigger role in these events by designating 2 members of our CSLIT Executive to be part of the *Stop the Stigma* student planning team.

CSLIT would like to grow our *Destress Night* event which we ran last year and hopes to continue to work with the Psychology and Social Work Departments to expand this initiative.

Lastly, CSLIT hopes to create an online resource to promote mental health strategies and make it accessible to all TCDB students.

4. Multiculturalism and Indigenous Education

Students should always feel proud of their heritage and feel invited to share their unique identity with others, regardless of their racial and cultural background. Students should also have the opportunity to learn about other cultures, for the best way to address ignorance and inequity is through awareness, education and understanding.

The *Promotion of Peace* is one of the Catholic Social Teachings that calls us to be proud of our own culture and accepting of other backgrounds. CSLIT encourages the Board to continue to promote and support the various heritage

months throughout the school year. Literature and resources from all represented cultures should be made available in each school library.

CSLIT would like to continue playing a big role in the Newcomer Student Leadership Conference hosted by the Equity and Inclusivity Department.

CSLIT plans to make cultural education a theme throughout the year so it is not forgotten after each history/heritage month has passed. Student leaders have voiced ideas surrounding evenings of open conversation about race and culture, as well as a multicultural night of celebration.

Another piece of this pillar is the spotlight on Indigenous education. As *collaborative contributors*, we hope to take a collaborative approach in fostering truth and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

Last May, 20 secondary students from across the Board spent one week in Manitoulin Island and immersed themselves in Indigenous culture. CSLIT encourages the Board to continue supporting the *Indigenous Leadership Program* and expand this learning experience to also include elementary students.

5. Respecting Differences, Inclusion and Belonging for our LGBTQ+ Community

In order to fully foster the Catholic Social Teaching of *Solidarity*, it is crucial to remember that we are all part of one human family regardless of our differences.

The Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations tell us to be *caring family members*, which includes loving, respecting and supporting students and staff who have expressed same sex attraction or are questioning their gender identity.

Our schools need to be safe spaces where students feel comfortable expressing their gender identity and sexual orientation. Schools need to continue to be taking active steps to nurture a discrimination-free environment.

One way to continue nurturing a school climate as such is to support schools with existing Respecting Differences clubs. Respecting Differences clubs provide open space for dialogue between those who express themselves as LGBTQ+ and those who do not. Based on a CSLIT conducted poll administered last year (see Appendix B), we found that several schools did not have a Respecting Differences club (also known as SAGA or GSA in some of

our schools). While CSLIT acknowledges that schools are mandated to establish these clubs upon student request, we also recognize that in some school communities, students may not feel comfortable bringing forth such a request. CSLIT encourages the Board to ensure that every school has a safe space for students who express themselves as LGBTQ+ in the form of a Respecting Differences club.

Due to other priorities, over the last 2 years, CSLIT chose not to run its *Inclusion and Belonging Retreat*. CSLIT feels the need to bring back this initiative which was last run in April 2017. It will be an event that helps foster and support marginalized communities in our student population.

In addition, CSLIT is encouraging the TCDSB to explore additional ways to support all students and staff so everyone feels more recognized and valued, including those individuals who express themselves as LGBTQ+. CSLIT invites the TCDSB to have more dialogue with students and staff to come up with ideas to ensure everyone feels that they are welcomed and that *we all belong*.

ADDITIONAL BOARD SUPPORT

1. Each area superintendent to ensure that their high schools are represented at each CSLIT monthly meeting.
 - a. Attendance taken at each meeting and can be shared publicly to Education Council.
 - b. Appendix C has a summary of last year's monthly CSLIT tally.
2. Each area superintendent to have 1 new elementary school join ECSLIT.
 - a. Last year's list of schools in Appendix D.
3. Each area superintendent to have 1 new elementary school join Olympia Leadership Camp (3 camp dates in May).
 - a. Last year's list of schools in Appendix E.

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 ; as such, involvement in social justice actions allows them to make their faith visible. The current Student Trustees will be engaging the CSLIT

Committee and relevant Subcommittees so that they can work with various staff members to address their specific recommendations. Students feel that Board policies must address and be in line with current local and global issues relevant to what they view as important.

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.