



REPORT TO

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

### REQUEST FOR RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS 2018-2019

*All these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the Lord your God  
Deuteronomy 28:2*

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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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Chief Financial Officer

## Executive Summary

This report provides the number and type of requests for Religious Accommodations within the Toronto Catholic District School Board schools in the school year from September 2018 to June 2019. Data for this report was collected through the use of a survey and interviews with school principals. Since 2012, there have been relatively few formal requests for religious accommodation, including exemptions, and this pattern continues for this school year.

*The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 19 hours*

### **A. PURPOSE**

1. This report fulfils the obligation in the TCDSB Religious Accommodation Policy S.22 (<https://www.tcdsb.org/Board/Policies/Documents/S22.pdf>) that ‘the consistent application of religious accommodation requests will be monitored and reported in an annual report to the board of trustees’.
2. The obligation for honouring requests for religious accommodation is also articulated in the TCDSB Opening and Closing Exercises Policy S.S.02 (<https://www.tcdsb.org/Board/Policies/Documents/SS02.pdf>).

### **B. BACKGROUND**

1. Arising from an Ontario Human Rights Tribunal case, the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board published its Practice and Procedure around Religious Education Exemptions. The TCDSB received this document on October 16, 2017. As recommended by the Ontario Catholic School Trustees’ Association, the TCDSB reviewed the document and confirmed that its own policies and procedures meet all statutory requirements.

### **C. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS**

1. Although the number of requests for religious accommodation has increased, the number continues to be low. A total of 19 schools reported requests for religious accommodation in the 2018-19 school year. There were 55 requests in total for the 19 schools, with the greatest number being in the area of religious dress and dietary accommodations.

2. A summary of all requests is provided in the *Appendix*. Accommodations have been made in accordance with the *TCDSB Religious Accommodation Policy* S.22 and within the provisions of the Education Act, Section 42(11) and 42(13)(<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90e02#BK50>)
3. When requests for religious accommodation are received, principals engage in discussions with students and parents/guardians. In addition, principals consult with their area superintendent as well as the Superintendent of Student Success.

#### **D. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

1. Principals will dialogue with their area superintendents and, when necessary, consult with the Superintendent of Student Success regarding requests for religious accommodation.
2. In June, principals will be asked to provide data on religious accommodation requests received in the current school year.
3. Senior Staff will report to board annually in the early part of the next school year, regarding the June data collected regarding religious accommodation requests.

#### **E. CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

This report is for the consideration of the Board.