



REPORT TO

REGULAR BOARD

REPORT OF GOVERNANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE ON CURSIVE WRITING POLICY AND KINDERGARTEN PILOT PROJECT

*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
September 23, 2019	October 17, 2019	Click here to enter a date.
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RECOMMENDATION REPORT

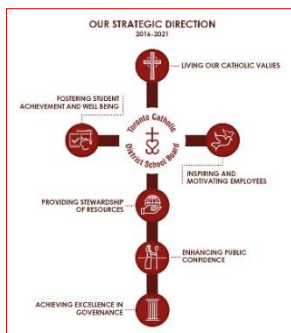
Vision:

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 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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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report recommends the implementation of a cursive writing policy for Grade 3 and outlines a pilot project for cursive writing in Kindergarten for the 2019-2020 academic year in three schools: St Antoine Daniel, Bishop Macdonell, Holy Child.

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 16 hours

B. PURPOSE

1. This report is a response to the motion arising out of the Student Achievement and Well-Being, Catholic Education and Human Resources committee meeting on April 4, 2019 (16g):

“That the Board create a policy that cursive writing will have direct instruction in Grade 3; and that a one-year pilot of cursive writing begin in Junior Kindergarten (JK)/Senior Kindergarten (SK).”

C. BACKGROUND

1. The following motion was approved at the March 6, 2014 Student Achievement and Well-Being, Catholic Education and Human Resources meeting:

“The Board will investigate opportunities in the curriculum to reintroduce the skill of cursive writing to students at the earliest possible grade.”

2. At the Special Meeting of the TCDSB: Student Achievement and Well-Being, Catholic Education and Human Resources on September 11, 2014, the recommendation report written in response to item #1 above, was referred to the Regular Meeting of the Board on September 25, 2014. The recommendations in the report were:

- 1) *“That the curriculum department, during professional learning opportunities, discuss the importance of cursive writing and natural entry points for its introduction and increased usage so that it is used regularly as a learning tool across the curriculum. Resources for the teaching of cursive writing will be shared during professional development sessions.*

- 2) *That at appropriate professional learning opportunities, our resource staff will embed cursive writing using an integrated approach through centrally delivered workshops (e.g. the Arts, Religion, Literacy, etc.) and provide take away tools and programs back to schools.*

- 3) *That the curriculum department encourage the use of cursive writing during implementation of the grade 3 curriculum and support cursive writing as a tool throughout the junior, intermediate and senior divisions across all subjects.*
 - 4) *That the literacy team explore ways of communicating the importance of cursive writing to parents and offer additional supports to parents who wish to have their children practise the skill of cursive writing at home.”*
3. At the regular meeting of the Board on September 25, 2014, the recommendation report was received and the following amendment was passed:
“That an evaluation tool be added to measure the success of Cursive Writing.”
 4. At the February 14, 2019 meeting of the Corporate Services, Strategic Planning and Property Committee, a request for an update was made with regard to the application of cursive writing in elementary schools.
 5. At the April 4, 2019 meeting of Student Achievement and Well-Being, Catholic Education and Human Resources, an Information Report was tabled with regard to #4 above. The report was received and referred to staff to:
 - 1) *“Create a policy that cursive writing will have direct instruction in Grade 3;*
 - 2) *Begin a one-year pilot of cursive writing in Junior Kindergarten (JK)/Senior Kindergarten (SK).”*

D. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

1. The Cursive Writing Policy (Report Appendix A) be adopted and put into action immediately.
2. Cursive Writing Pilot Project
 - a) The pilot project has been developed based on the following:
 - The Kindergarten Program (2016) states “that as children progress through the Kindergarten Program, they:
 - “demonstrate control of small muscles (e.g., use a functional grip when writing) while working in a variety of learning areas...” (Expectation 8.4)
 - “experiment with a variety of simple writing forms for different purposes and a variety of contexts.” (Expectation 10.5)

- In The Kindergarten Program (2016) neither printing nor cursive writing is mentioned.
 - The Kindergarten Program discourages any paper and pencil worksheets.
 - In The Ontario Curriculum Grades 1-8: Language (Revised 2006) the first reference to legible printing is in Grade 2. Cursive writing is not mentioned explicitly as a required expectation, however, it is listed as an option in the specific expectations related to publishing, beginning in Grade 3 (Writing Expectation 3.7)
- b) The 3 schools that have agreed to be part of the cursive writing pilot project in Kindergarten are: St. Antoine Daniel, Bishop Macdonnell, Holy Child.
- c) Within the context of the play based Kindergarten Program, in 3 schools educator teams will:
- participate in a collaborative inquiry designed to build capacity with regard to creating developmentally appropriate activities for Kindergarten, that do not use traditional paper and pencil worksheets.
 - discuss 2 of 4 frames of the Kindergarten Program where there are potential connections to cursive writing:
 - Literacy behaviours;
 - Self-regulation and well-being (hand muscle development).
 - explore implementing common cursive writing related activities within the program, for example:
 - independent exploration using kinesthetic materials (e.g., sand paper, modelling clay, etc.);
 - small group guided instruction using white boards and markers;
 - independent practice for mastery.
- d) The Curriculum Department will document the successes of the pilot project and post useful resources on the Early Years portal page for use by Kindergarten educator teams.

E. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that:

1. the Cursive Writing Policy be adopted immediately; and
2. the cursive writing pilot project as outlined in this report be carried out in the 2019-2020 academic year at St. Antoine Daniel, Bishop Macdonnell and Holy Child; and resources used be shared via the Early Years portal page.