

OAPCE Toronto Delegation:

**TCDSB Student Achievement and Well Being Catholic
Education and Human Resources Committee**

November 7, 2019



Mr. Gary Tanuan, Chair, Student Achievement Committee

Mr. Rory McGuckin, Director, TCDSB

Trustees TCDSB

Associate Directors, Staff and Parents.

OAPCE Toronto, is the voice of parents with children enrolled in Catholic Education in the TCDSB and as such obligated to represent their views regarding revisions to the Board's Code of Conduct Policy.

First, in regard to the Catholic Education and Living Our Catholic Values Sub-Committee, the mandate of this committee from the onset has not only been unclear but was and continues to be confusing to many parents. Especially as we stand here tonight in front of the Board's Student Achievement and Catholic Education Committee.

DO we need a committee of a committee? How can parent engagement be the focus when the first meetings were at 1 pm -

In the middle of the work day, making it inaccessible to most parents. In May of 2019 we formally requested that OAPCE Toronto be allowed to sit on this committee, in light of the fact other organizations were asked to join.

We are the only recognized parent association by the Ministry of Education through Regulation 612 to represent the parents in the TCDSB and the province, yet we were told “Your Parent Group is an external organization and independent of the Board, you can make deputations at all committee meetings and our public meetings are open to all.” OAPCE sits at the ICE Table, our President represents the parents from across the province on it, and any input that we can offer as parents would have been beneficial to this most recent process to say the least.

Secondly, we are very concerned that there has been no formal communication from this committee or the Board in regard to the proposed changes, new motions or discussion regarding the Code of Conduct. Unless a parent is tuned into social media, or news media, they are not aware of where things stand currently. Believe it or not, there are many parents who do not engage in social media or pay attention to the news. We lead busy lives with family responsibilities, and we have received countless emails, phone calls and messages from parents with questions.

OAPCE Toronto has always ensured that the parent voice is heard, but unless you inform the parents how can they engage? We drown ourselves with surveys and consultations, yet, there is has been not one piece of communication sent to our PARENTS – and we emphasize PARENTS. The amount of delegations up until today can reiterate this as the majority have been from external organizations voicing their opinions.

Thirdly, once again, as partners with ICE, with a formal seat the ICE Table, we ask that the TCDSB refer to and accept the monograph that was that explores the issues related to supporting students in our Catholic schools – it was introduced based on feedback from the Bishops of the Education Commission, and the feedback provided by the ICE partners.

We all working to benefit, promote and preserve PUBLICLY funded Catholic Education – the Chair of the OHRC has stated that as a public system we need to abide by the laws of Ontario. No one is above the law.

To question what has been created by our own Education Partners, our own Bishops is questionable in itself, we respectfully ask that the TCDSB trustees ensure that as the monograph states “Catholic Schools should consciously create an environment where students who feel marginalized, rejected or vulnerable can experience safe, nurturing inclusive, communities of faith”.

Furthermore, we appreciate the tireless work that some of our Trustees, has done in the months to ensure that we parents are informed and understand that as the TCDSB we need to be inclusive, and most importantly, follow the law.

Our students represent a new generation of diverse, dynamic, open-minded young Catholics who will determine the future of not only Catholic Education, but our Catholic Faith. Please protect their hopes, dreams and aspirations so they can reach the full potential of who they are what they want to be.

We cannot fail them. We ask that as Trustees, you stand together and recognize all human rights as enshrined in the laws of Ontario.

OAPCE Toronto