



REPORT TO

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

**MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING ANNUAL
REPORT 2018-2019**

Be strong and bold; have no fear or dread of them, because it is the Lord your God who goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you. Deuteronomy 31:6

Created, Draft

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Review

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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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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A significant focus within the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) Multi-Year Strategic Plan is fostering student achievement and well-being. This is accomplished in part, by creating equitable learning environments. Equitable learning environments strive to ensure that the physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual needs of all students are met. This is best achieved with the school board and the community working in collaboration; and TCDSB values collaborations with parents, parish and community. Student Mental Health and Well-Being nurtures those relationships and thus strengthens public confidence.

Efforts to create mentally healthy school environments for students are evidenced in many ways. Progress with the Student Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy September 2015-June 2019 has been made across each of the TCDSB priority areas:

- a) Building Foundations,
- b) Fostering Skills and Knowledge,
- c) Supporting Well-Being and Decreasing Stigma,
- d) Engaging Families, and
- e) Partnering with the Community.

Opportunities for increased understanding of mental health and well-being continue to be created for all employee groups as well. Presentations, workshops and initiatives to raise awareness of mental health and well-being have been offered to staff, students, and the parent community.

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 30 hours

B. PURPOSE

1. This Mental Health and Well-Being 2018-2019 Annual Report will include both qualitative and quantitative data related to student mental health and well-being procedures, programs, and professional development related to the creation of mentally-healthy learning environments, and the strengthening of public confidence in the TCDSB. This report serves the requirement of the Board for an annual review and update.

2. The TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy aligns with the Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) priority action #4: *To create welcoming, healthy, and equitable learning environments for all students*. Goals B4.1 and B4.2 articulate the intent of the TCDSB to provide all students with equitable access to learning so that the most vulnerable students achieve to their full potential; and, furthermore, to ensure that the physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual needs of all students are met.
3. When students feel good about themselves, their achievement improves. In view of the MYSP goals for fostering student achievement and well-being, the Mental Health Strategy and its implementation team has assisted schools with the development of their Well-Being Plans as part of their School Learning Improvement Plan (SLIP).
4. In 2019-2020, this mandate continues to be expanded to include a focus on the well-being of TCDSB staff.
5. The following areas will be addressed in this report:
 - 1) TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy 2015-2018
 - 2) TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Policy (S.03) and associated guidelines
 - 3) Professional Learning to build capacity within the System
 - 4) Service Delivery – Board level
 - 5) Service Delivery – Inter-ministerial agreements
 - 6) Actionable items 2018-2019

C. BACKGROUND

1. The TCDSB Mental Health and Well-being policy (S.03) was adopted in June 2013 and the TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy in January 2016. This is the sixth annual review and update report. The new Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy 2019-2022 was presented to the Special Education Advisory Committee on June 12, 2019 and approved by Board on September 19th.
2. The Mental Health and Well-Being Policy contains the following metrics on the annual reporting of the Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy:
 - *Special Services personnel will annually review the Mental Health Response Guidelines, the Suicide Intervention Guidelines, and the*

Mental Health Crisis Response Guidelines and assess their effectiveness.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

1. The following priority areas form the basis of the TCDSB Student Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy 2015-2018:

- **Engaging Families**

Optimal mental health for students while in school cannot be achieved without engagement of parents and families. When caregivers are engaged, students demonstrate increased motivation, higher grades, and better behaviour. TCDSB will continue to incorporate the family's voice in all aspects of mental health and well-being plans and programming.

- **Fostering Skills and Knowledge**

Create ideal conditions for mental health and well-being by building and fostering skills and knowledge of resilience and fortitude. Our Catholic faith teaches us compassion for one another and as a community we can flourish as we build our awareness and understanding of mental health and well-being.

- **Supporting Well-Being and Decreasing Stigma**

Acknowledging that we all have mental health, just as we all have physical health, will assist in tearing down barriers built by stigma. A focus on Supporting Well-being and decreasing stigma will promote wellness and help to combat the debilitating impact of stigma. Student mental health occurs along a continuum. Our supports for student mental health will mirror that continuum.

- **Building Foundations**

Building Foundations refer to the development of the organizational conditions which are key in effective school mental health. The foundations range from commitment, to a clear and focused vision, ongoing quality improvement, clear protocols directing our work and

care, and collaboration. TCDSB will continue to focus on the integration of student Mental Health and Well-being into all aspects of school life and improvement. Student mental health and well-being underpins optimal conditions for academic life and achievement.

- **Collaborating with the Community**

It is essential to recognise the importance of a shared responsibility for mental health and well-being between family, school and community including parish. Community children and mental health collaborators assist in building success for our students. TCDSB continues to work towards equitable and sustainable community memorandums of understanding.

2. The following related legislation and policy govern the TCDSB mental health strategy:

- Open Minds, Healthy Minds Ontario's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addiction Strategy June 2011¹
- Ontario's Well-Being Strategy for Education: A Discussion Document 2016²
- TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Policy (S.03)

E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The following sources of data support the TCDSB Mental Health Strategy:

Building Foundations

- The TCDSB Mental Health Advisory Council (MHAC) met regularly in the past school year (2018-19). The Council which is comprised of various stakeholders (**Appendix A**) included all of the following: collective bargaining units, trustees, parents, students, and community.

¹ www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/ministry/publications/reports/mental_health2011/mentalhealth_rep2011

² <http://www.edu.go.on.ca/eng/about/WBDiscussionDocument.pdf>

- The Stop the Stigma Secondary School Students Mental Health Advisory Council (SMHAC) was consulted regularly throughout the school year. This council is comprised of secondary students who have volunteered to participate on the council. These students helped to deliver the Stop the Stigma training and education events both for elementary and secondary schools. The SMHAC students advised the mental health team and helped inform the new Student Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy 2019-2022.
- The TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Policy and associated guidelines such as the Mental Health Response Guidelines, the Suicide Intervention Guideline and the Suspected Child Abuse Reporting Protocol were shared at various Administrator meetings throughout the school year.
- Social Work and Psychology staff continued to deliver school staff presentations regarding the TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Policy.

Fostering Skills and Knowledge

- A continued focus on the document, *Supporting Minds* was provided by Social Work, Psychology staff and the Mental Health Team through the delivery of various modules including Anxiety, Depression and the Mentally Healthy Classroom, in both secondary and elementary schools. The mental health team offered targeted in-services to Guidance Counsellors, Student Success teachers, Assessment and Programming Teachers, Programming and Assessment Teachers as well as the Autism team.
- Social Work staff facilitated 281 group sessions to students, delivered 294 presentations related to mental health and well-being including 153 classroom presentations, 24 school presentations to staff, and 117 presentations outside of the classroom to various stakeholders.
- Furthermore, Psychology staff delivered 151 presentations related to mental health and well-being including 105 presentations to staff, 35 sessions to students and 11 to parents.

- From April to June 2019, the 6 Mental Health professionals from the mental health team facilitated 58 student classroom sessions in 6 high schools.
- Evidence-based professional development was delivered to educators at both panels on professional development days including FRIENDS, an anxiety prevention program, and Stress Lessons, a program focused on building students' resiliency.
- Expert level professional development for school social work and psychology staff was provided on topics related to wellness, mental illness and counselling interventions (e.g. Brief Intervention for School Clinicians, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training).
- Since the implementation of the first TCDSB Student Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy in 2013, the number of TCDSB staff training in SafeTALK, a suicide awareness program, has grown to over one thousand with 180 staff attending workshops in 2018-2019. A total of 60 staff members were trained in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST).

Supporting Well-Being and Decreasing Stigma

- All Secondary Schools continued their involvement in the *Stop the Stigma* initiative. In addition, the number of elementary schools participating in *Stop the Stigma* grew to 53. (Each year an increased number of elementary schools is brought into this expanding initiative). A survey at the end of the school year indicates the many initiatives and campaigns that took place across our 85 *Stop the Stigma* school teams (**see Appendix B**).
- School Social Work staff provided individual counselling to 5,577 students and facilitated 281 group sessions. Suicide Intervention Risk Reviews using the ASIST format were provided to 755 students during the 2018-2019 school year.
- Psychology staff responded to a total of 943 referrals, including conducting 620 psychoeducational assessments. All of these assessments include an evaluation of students' social-emotional profile. Psychology

staff also provided individual counselling to 333 students and facilitated 207 group sessions. Suicide Intervention Risk Reviews using the ASIST format were provided to 155 students.

- From April to June 2019, the 6 Mental Health Professionals provided individual counselling to 35 student. Suicide Intervention Risk Reviews using the ASIST format were provided to 6 students.
- From April to June 2019, the 6 Mental Health Professionals delivered social-emotional program, Stress Lessons, in 12 classrooms (Grade 9-12) in 6 high schools. The percentage of students (total of 186), that felt they could not cope with all the things they had to do, went down from 45% at pre-test to 34% at post-test.
- TCDSB teachers successfully piloted a social-emotional resource, Faith & Wellness, in 3 classrooms. Faith & Wellness is a collection of everyday social-emotional activities for the classroom. The resource was co-developed by OECTA and School Mental Health Ontario.

Engaging Families

- Mental Health Newsletters continued throughout the 2018-19 school year. Feedback suggested that the newsletters provided timely information regarding current mental health and well-being trends. Topics addressed included transition back to school and to summer vacation, good sleep hygiene, tips for parents to help children handle difficult emotions.
- Parents continued as members of the Mental Health Advisory Council which convened four times in the last school year. This council provides an opportunity to provide parent voice to the TCDSB Mental Health Strategy.
- Presentations related to well-being were held at the annual Special Services and Community Resources Fair including a presentation on supporting mentally healthy and resilient children. During Children's Mental Health Week in May, Alyson Schafer presented on Anxiety and Your Tween, Your Youth to about 300 parents at Senator O'Connor College School.

Partnering With the Community

- TCDSB continued collaborating with 13 Children’s Mental Health organizations. These valued collaborations provide an opportunity for TCDSB students to receive supports within community settings which can often be facilitated in a more seamless manner. This results in a more direct method of access for students and families and a less convoluted process in navigating community supports.
- TCDSB staff continued to be leaders in the community including being a Board member of The Ontario Psychological Association, as well as participation on the Section of Psychology in Education committee.
- TCDSB staff provided presentations at various conferences on topics related to school mental health.
- The Ministry of Children and Youth Services Priority Access Program accepted 164 referrals for individual and family counselling support. The program enables School Social Workers and School Psychology staff to refer families directly to designated children’s mental health organizations.
- Toronto Central Community and Care Access Centre (TC-CCAC) Mental Health and Addiction Nurses completed 178 referrals during the 2018-19 school year.

F. ACTIONABLE ITEMS 2019-2020

1. Rollout of Student Mental Health Strategy 2019-2022:

- Develop a communication campaign for system-wide reach (i.e., updated video, updated information on website, newsletter highlighting the strategy, presentation of strategy to principals and other stakeholder groups).
- Video showcase of the work of a Mental Health Professional worker.

2. Highlight the connection between Mental Health and Well-Being and our Catholic Faith Values:

- Support the expansion of the Faith and Wellness program in partnership with School Mental Health Ontario and OECTA.

- Continued collaboration with our Nurturing Catholic Community Department.
- Inclusion of Catholic faith elements in the Mental Health Newsletter.

3. School Well-Being Teams:

- Implementation of pilot teams in 20 schools by February 2020.
- Delivery of PD to representatives from the 20 pilot schools.
- Support teams in implementing mental health goals (incorporated into the School Learning Improvement Plan where possible).
- Support the teams in championing local initiatives based on identified needs (e.g. through student surveys).

4. Continued implementation of Mental Health Professional Workers in secondary schools, with a focus on:

- Student mental health literacy (Tier one) classroom programs such as *Stress Lessons*.
- Targeted individual counselling using a brief model such as the Brief Intervention for School Clinicians (BRISC).
- Professional learning opportunities for school staff.

5. Implementation of *Stress Lessons* research evaluation project:

- Provide support to 6 teachers to implement the program.
- Work collaboratively with the TCDSB research department and Ryerson University for the purpose of measuring program effectiveness.

6. Addition of the Supporting Minds Module “ADHD” to the roster of modules available to schools for staff presentations:

- Social Work and Psychology staff will be in-serviced fall/winter 2019, with availability to schools 2019-20.

7. Annual review of the TCDSB Student MH Policy and associated guidelines with all principals:

- Principals will be encouraged to enlist support from Social Work/Psychology staff to facilitate reviews with all school staff.

8. Continued delivery of suicide awareness (SafeTALK) and suicide intervention (ASIST) professional development for targeted groups:

- This is a retraining year for all Social Work and Psychology staff.

9. Continue to work with School Mental Health Ontario to rollout **additional training for our mental health service providers** (e.g. BRISC training, CBT):
 - Implementation support for clinicians receiving the training.
10. By focusing on areas of targeted need, pursue the development of more **Mental Health Memorandums of Understanding** with mental health agencies.
11. Continue the expansion of the **Stop the Stigma** student mental health awareness program from 53 to 71 elementary schools; ongoing support provided to all existing school teams:
 - “On-boarding” of new teams in the fall, Student Symposiums in early winter (elementary and secondary), and training days in early spring.
12. Continue to **engage students** in mental health initiatives (e.g. consultation with the Student Mental Health Advisory Council - SMHAC, training for Stop the Stigma teams, training for student groups on mental health awareness and pathways to care).
13. Continue to offer professional development using School Mental Health Ontario’s ***Supporting Minds Modules*** at various system-wide Professional activity days and upon request by various staff groups (e.g., Autism team, Guidance Counsellors, Student Success, etc.).
14. Mental Health initiatives will support and enhance the Mental Health and Well-Being of all TCDSB students with special attention paid to ensure that underserved populations, as outlined in the TCDSB Equity Action Plan, are supported.
15. Continue to engage the **parent community** with respect to student mental health (e.g., consultation with parent representatives on the Mental Health Advisory Council; TCDSB Mental Health Newsletter, etc.).
16. In collaboration with all stakeholders, implement a Staff Well-Being Committee with representatives from all employee groups. The committee will inform the development and implementation of the TCDSB Staff Well-Being Strategy focusing on the 13 Psychological Safety Standards.

G. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the consideration of the Board.