



REPORT TO

REGULAR BOARD

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS– TEACHER SURVEY

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.

Jeremiah 29:11

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
February 10, 2020	February 20, 2020	Click here to enter a date.

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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.



Rory McGuckin
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Development, and
Chief Financial Officer

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This information report provides a summary and analysis of the International Students Teacher Survey, and actions that will be taken to address teacher concerns on how to better support our International Students.

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 60 hours

B. PURPOSE

1. At the December 5, 2019 Student Achievement Meeting, the International Education Department presented an overview of International Education at the TCDSB (Appendix A).
2. At this meeting the following motion was passed:
 - That the international student team develop a feedback survey to be distributed during January 2020 to those teachers at the local level who work directly with international students providing them an opportunity to highlight elements of the program they feel are valuable or areas of improvement;
 - That the results be presented in a report to the Board at the February 20, 2019 Regular Board Meeting.

C. BACKGROUND

1. The TCDSB began accepting International Students in 2008.
2. There are approximately 1206 International Students currently enrolled in the TCDSB.
3. International Students are accepted at all of TCDSB – both secondary and elementary.
4. In secondary schools, international students are not placed in Grade 9 unless the school is undersubscribed, or they apply with an elementary cohort.
5. International students arrive from 28 countries and 6 continents.

6. The TCDSB is currently partnered with three Custodian/Homestay providers which service approximately 25% of our International Students. These three companies are expected to meet TCDSB standards for Custodian accountability and Homestay care. Parents are not obligated to choose a board-approved Custodian/Homestay provider. They may also rely on a family member or family friend to provide Custodian and/or Homestay services.
7. Revenue generated from International Students is primarily used to fund teaching staff.
8. The TCDSB's approach to International Student education aligns with the provincial approach as outlined in Ontario's Strategy for K-12 International Education.
9. A significant number of International Student are working toward gaining admittance to a post-secondary Canadian institution. For many International Students, enrolment in Ontario schools is seen as a pathway to citizenship.
10. International Students provide significant cultural, social and economic benefit to Canadian society.

D. ANALYSIS

The results of the International Student Teacher Survey can be found in Appendix B.

1. There were 243 staff members responded to the survey. Of these 199 have taught International Students.
2. Results reveal that respondents are not fully aware of the different supports available for international students, and the nature of these supports.
3. The majority of respondents are not aware of the existence of the Teacher Advisor Program (TAP) for International Students, however the majority of respondents who are aware find the program to be very or somewhat helpful.
4. The majority of respondents feel that Custodian support and Homestay support is helpful or somewhat helpful to the success of students. However,

the majority of respondents feel that the Custodian and Homestay are an extreme or moderate barrier to the success of international students. In particular, respondents indicate that it is difficult to contact the Custodian or Homestay.

5. The majority of respondents are not aware of eNotice – the newsletter for International Students, and as a result are not aware of many of the social supports and community events in place for these students.
6. The majority of respondents feel that a lack of English Language Skills is an extreme or moderate barrier to the success of International Students. As with all students who come from non-English speaking countries this is to be expected.
7. Respondents indicate that other extreme barriers to the success of international students are a lack of motivation, isolation and poor student attendance.
8. Respondents reported that additional resources are needed to support International Students. In particular respondents indicate that International Students could benefit from peer mentors/tutors, a dedicated staff member, proper course/level placement, additional ESL support, more social/mental health supports and more guidance counsellors.

Currently all schools with a significant International Student enrolment are allocated additional ESL teaching staff. In addition, the Teacher Advisor Program, where offered, provides added support in English Language acquisition.

9. Concerns about International Student being isolated and lacking motivation were also expressed. However, when comparing similar questions on the My School, My Voice Survey and the TCDSB International School Survey (both administered in Spring 2019), a greater percentage of International Students indicated that they liked their school. International Students felt the same as non-international students that their school encouraged contact among all students and that they were able to participate in extracurricular activities. Despite having similar results on both surveys in the interest teachers took in them and the positive feedback they received from their teachers, only 54% of International Students felt strongly that their teachers had high expectations

for them. In contrast 82.3% of non-international students felt strongly that their teachers had high expectations.

Question:	My School, My Voice (Spring, 2019)	International Student Survey (Spring, 2019)
How do you feel about school? (Love or Like school)	62.7%	78.7%
I am able to participate in extracurricular activities at my school. (Strongly Agree or Agree)	73.7%	71.3%
Teachers in my school have high expectations for me. (Strongly Agree or Agree)	82.3%	54.1%
Teachers in my school are interested in me as a person. (Strongly Agree or Agree)	60.1%	62.6%
Teachers in my school notice when I am doing a good job and let me know about it. (Strongly Agree or Agree)	73.6%	73.5%
My school encourages contact among students of different backgrounds and beliefs (race, religion, politics, etc.) *Very much, Quite a bit / Strongly Agree or Agree	69.9%	68.6%

10. Despite concerns raised that International Students are struggling to succeed and are absent more often, the data indicates the following:

	2017-18				2018-19			
	Student Average -Earned Credits	Average Absences	Average Credits Taken	Average Credits Earned	Student Average -Earned Credits	Average Absences	Average Credits Taken	Average Credits Earned
International Students	82.6%	15.39	6.67	6.04	82.35%	16.4	6.86	6.22
Non-International Students	79.9%	15.15	7.3	6.9	79.7%	14.87	7.5	7.1

- International Students are absent a little above average. This may be accounted for as a result of travel back home to see family during the holidays.
- On average, International Students take fewer credits because there are a greater proportion of these students in the senior grades. Students in Grade 11 or 12 do not typically take 8 full credits.
- International Students have a 91% success rate in the credits they attempt. Non-International Students have a 94% success rate in the credits they attempt. However, International Students on average are taking senior courses which are more demanding academically.
- In the credits earned, International Students have a mark average approximate 3% greater than non-International Students.

E. ACCOUNTABILITY/ACTION ITEMS

1. The International Education Department will create an online repository of support resources that can be accessed by teachers as needed. The repository will be updated as additional resources become available.
2. The International Education Department will create a teacher manual that will be posted on the online repository and emailed to teachers at the start of each semester. A draft copy is included in Appendix C. The manual will include:
 - a. A list of all resources available to support international students, and how these resources can be accessed.
 - b. A clear description of the various support structures and procedures of the International Student program (i.e. Custodian, Homestay, Orientation Centre, Teacher Advisor Program, etc.)
 - c. A list of answers to frequently asked questions. For example, “Who do I call when a student is struggling academically?” “Who do contact if a custodian is not responding?” “Who can I call in the International Education Department if I have a concern?”
3. As a result of inputting errors that occur when international student first register at their school, contact information for custodians and homestay is often incorrect or incomplete in our student information system. This makes

it difficult for teachers to properly contact the custodian and/or homestay with concerns.

- a. The International Education Department will centrally input all student information on initial registration to ensure accuracy.
 - b. The International Education Department will work with ICT/Trillium services to ensure that International Students are clearly identified and that the contact information is readily available to teachers on the Webmarks platform.
4. The International Education Department will further publicize the availability of the TAP and work with our secondary schools to promote the creation of TAP in all school. Participation in the TAP program will offer students additional support in the areas of language acquisition, isolation, mental health and socialization.
 5. The International Education Department will work to increase the number of approved Custodian/Homestay providers.
 6. During the initial application process, information will be provided to all parents of International Students clearly outlining the advantages of choosing a Custodian approved by the TCDSB, as well as a list of approved providers.
 7. During the initial application process, information will be provided to all parents of International Students on what standards they should expect from the Custodian/Homestay—whether or not they are approved by the TCDSB.
 8. The International Education Department will work with Catholic Student Leadership Impact Team (CSLIT) to recommend the creation of an International Student representative on local Student Advisory Councils.
 9. eNotice, the International Student newsletter, will be made available to all teachers in order to raise an awareness of what activities and supports are provided to our International Students.
 10. The International Education Department will work with other school boards and the TCDSB Chief of Mental Health to explore additional mental health resources to better support International Students.

11. Results of this survey will be shared in a presentation to the Secondary School Principals' Association.

F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the consideration of the Board.