



REPORT TO

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

TORONTO PUBLIC HEALTH (TPH) HEALTH CHECK REPORT 2019 - REFERENCE TO THE 2014 TORONTO PUBLIC HEALTH STUDENT SURVEY

“O Lord, by these things people live, and in all these is the life of my spirit. Oh, restore me to health and make me live!” (Isaiah 38:16)

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
February 24, 2020	March 5, 2020	Click here to enter a date.

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INFORMATION REPORT

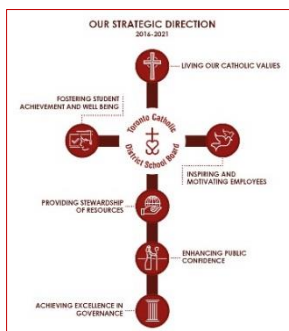
Vision:

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.



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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Toronto Public Health (TPH) conducted surveys in 2014 at all four Toronto-area school boards. This report addresses the question regarding Toronto Catholic District School Board's (TCDSB) participation in this initiative. There was strong participation from TCDSB students (1,742 in total).

Following extensive dialogue within TCDSB and with TPH some content was revised in the TCDSB-version of the TPH survey. The Grades 7-8 version of the TPH survey contained 112 items (the TCDSB-version contained 109); and the Grade 9-12 version of the TPH survey contained 120 items (the TCDSB-version contained 109). Items not included in the TCDSB version related to two topics: suicide ideation and self-harm as well as sexual activity and gender identity.

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 15 hours

B. PURPOSE

1. On January 9, 2020, Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health for the City of Toronto, shared the Toronto Public Health (TPH) Presentation and Health Check 2019 Report at the Student Achievement and Well-Being Committee meeting. In their presentation, TPH made reference to the 2014 Toronto Public Health Student Survey. A Trustee raised a concern that TCDSB did not participate in this survey (based on a few of the slides) and a motion was passed that the report be received and referred to Staff to address the question as to why we were not part of the student survey.
2. At the January 9, 2020 Student Achievement and Wellbeing Committee, The Toronto Health Check Report by Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Health Officer for Toronto was received and referred to staff for a report as soon as possible.

C. BACKGROUND

1. Toronto Public Health (TPH), in their T.O. Health Check 2019 Report, referenced the *2014 Toronto Public Health Student Survey*.

2. TCDSB was among the four Toronto Area Boards that participated in the 2014 TPH Student Survey:
 - a. Toronto District School Board (TDSB)
 - b. Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB)
 - c. Conseil scolaire Viamonde
 - d. Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud (whose name has since been changed to CSC Mon Avenir).
3. Students from Grades 7-12 were included in the study. There were two (2) versions of the survey (Grades 7-8 and Grades 9-12).
4. In the overall Toronto sample there were 6,053 students. From 165 schools in the TCDSB, there was participation from 1,742 students which constituted 28.8% of the overall sample. TCDSB students were from 26 elementary schools and 21 secondary schools.
5. As described below there were a few items that were not included in the TCDSB version of the surveys: a decision that was guided by our shared values. The study also involved two additional components: direct physical measures of weight and height completed by Toronto Public Health Nurses, and oral health completed by Dental Hygienists.
6. The purpose of the 2014 Student Survey was to describe the health of Toronto students in Grades 7 – 12, identify factors related to good health among youth, and understand how the social determinants of health affect youth.
7. The 2014 Student Survey was extensive including topics on: well-being and mental health; bullying and violence; physical activity; eating behaviours and healthy weights; tobacco, alcohol and other drugs; sexual health; injury prevention; sun exposure; and dental and oral health.
8. Following a review and consultation (e.g., with TCDSB staff in the Curriculum, Health, Religion and Special Services departments) along with collaboration with TPH, a revised TCDSB version was developed excluding some items based on the following:
 - a. Consistency with “living our Catholic values”.
 - b. Participants were anonymous; therefore there was concern about any questions/responses related to suicidal ideation and/or self-harm. At the

- time, the provincial, school-based Mental Health (MH) Strategy was in its seminal stage.
- c. Questions on sexual identity, sexual practices, and safe sex practices were also omitted (see Appendix A).
9. A Recommendation Report was presented to the Student Achievement and Well Being, Catholic Education and Human Resources Committee on May 30, 2013. The report was entitled *Toronto Public Health Survey* and included the TCDSB versions of the survey as appendices. The Staff Recommendation was “Taking into consideration our past practice regarding municipal and provincial large scale initiatives, it is recommended that TCDSB participate in this TPH initiative”. This Report was approved.
 10. Upon study completion and analysis, TPH shared the following reports which were disseminated to key staff within TCDSB:
 - d. In a memo dated February 23, 2015 from the Medical Officer of Health, the overall Toronto report and results, entitled *Healthy Futures 2014: Toronto Public Health Student Survey* were shared. In these documents, it outlines that all four Toronto-area boards participated.
 - e. Board-specific reports were prepared and shared by TPH:
 - i. Toronto Public Health Student Survey: Toronto Catholic District School Board-Specific Reports:
 1. *Volume 1 – Mental Health and Well-Being* (May 2015, revised October 2015)
 2. *Volume 2 – Physical Activity, Eating Behaviours, Body Mass and Sexual Health Resources* (September 2015, revised October 2015)
 3. *Volume 3 – Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drugs* (February 2016)

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

1. The 2014 TPH Student Survey had two versions: one suitable for Grades 7-8 and the other for Grades 9-12.
 - a. The chart below outlines the topics and number of questions included for each in the TPH Student Survey. Within each question, there were a number of items:

Topic	Questions
About You	Q1-11
Well-Being and Mental Health	Q12-15
Physical Activity and Body Size	Q16-24
Eating	Q25-30
Tobacco	Q31-39
Alcohol and Other Drugs	Q40-50
Violence and Bullying	Q51-58
Injury Prevention	Q59-61
Dental and Oral Health	Q62-64
Sun Exposure	Q65-66
Sexual Health	Q67-68 (Grades 7-8) Q67-76 (Grade 9-12)

- b. TPH Survey for Grades 7-8: In the full version of the TPH Student Survey, there were 68 questions (some with subsections and 112 items in total). In the TCDSB version (109 items), one of these subsections (consisting of 3 items) related to suicide and self-harm was not included.
 - c. TPH Survey for Grade 9-12: In the full version of the TPH Student Survey, there were 76 questions (some with subsections and 120 items in total). In the TCDSB version (109 items), there were the same 68 questions as the elementary version. The one subsection (3 items) that related to suicide and self-harm was not included. Additionally, eight questions related to sexual activity and identity were not included. The section entitled “Sexual Health” was retitled to “Understanding Sexuality” in the TCDSB version.
 - d. **Appendix A** identifies the items that were not included in the TCDSB versions of the 2014 TPH Student Survey.
2. There was a period of dialogue between TPH and TCDSB staff regarding the questions on the survey. In considering and reviewing the survey proposed by TPH, input was requested from TCDSB staff in the areas of Special Services (e.g., Psychology and Social Work), Curriculum (e.g., Health and Physical Education, and Religion) and Research (as per Policy S.19 *External Research*

Conducted in the TCDSB). Two areas of concern were identified, as described below:

- a. **Suicide and Self-harm** questions: There was concern that, for some students, the ‘act’ of completing a survey might make them feel that they have actually ‘reported’ about their distressed state, and, therefore, might not follow up further to seek help. As the surveys were anonymous, there were concerns that one would not be able to identify or support these students. Specific statements in the documents support this:
 - “It will not be possible to identify you from your responses on the survey. This means that we cannot contact you to offer any individual support.”
 - “Please do not write your comments or concerns on the survey as we will not be able to know who you are.”
- b. **Sexual Activity and Gender Identity** questions: A set of eight questions on the full version of the TPH Student Survey for Secondary Students (Grades 9-12) focused on sexual activity, gender identity and sexual orientation. These questions were omitted in the TCDSB version to be consistent with our Catholic values. Furthermore, the title of this section was changed from “Sexual Health” to “Understanding Sexuality” on the TCDSB version.

E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1. The review and approval of this survey involved extensive dialogue and feedback which took several years:
 - a. Phase 1 – Pilot Survey, Dialogue and Feedback: A pilot was conducted in TCDSB to review the process for implementation and finalize the content.
 - b. Phase 2 – Report to Board: A Report to Board was presented on May 30, 2013, for information and approval of the study.
 - c. Phase 3 – Implementation: The TCDSB-specific versions of the TPH Student Survey were implemented in paper version in 2014.

2. Reports were received from TPH. There were three TCDSB-Specific Reports, as well as the overall Toronto Report. These were disseminated to Staff within TCDSB.

F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the consideration of the Board.