



REPORT TO

REGULAR BOARD

CREATING AWARENESS ABOUT FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER (FASD) AND TORONTO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD (TCDSB) SUPPORTS

Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' (Mt 25:45)

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Linda Maselli-Jackman, Superintendent of Education, Special Services

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
Director of Education

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Associate Director
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Associate Director of Facilities,
Business and Community
Development, and
Chief Financial Officer

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report contains information about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), the actions that the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) is now undertaking to provide supports to students with FASD, as well as future plans to create awareness and help more of our students with FASD.

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

B. PURPOSE

This report will provide information to TCDSB Trustees, staff and stakeholders about FASD, its prevalence, and effects on students served within the TCDSB. It also provides information about ways in which TCDSB staff support students with FASD, including strategies and resources for promoting their wellbeing within the educational context.

C. BACKGROUND

1. This information report is on the Order Paper for the 25 March 2020 Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) meeting as a result of a motion recommended at the October 16, 2019 SEAC and carried at the December 5, 2019 Student Achievement and Wellbeing Committee (SAWBC): *That staff bring back a report in March 2020 on what the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) is doing now and how it can help more of our FASD students.*
2. Arising out of a Board motion, an annual FASD Awareness Day was established for the TCDSB with the first observance being held on September 9, 2019.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

1. **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) – Overview**
FASD is a neuro-developmental disability that occurs in individuals who were exposed prenatally to alcohol. It is a lifelong disability for which there is no

cure. This disorder can be prevented by avoiding alcohol during pregnancy. More detailed information about this disorder can be found in **Appendix A**.

2. **Bill 172: Education Statute Law Amendment Act (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder) and Bill 43: Sandy's Law:**

The prevention of FASD is supported by Bill 172 (Education Statute Law Amendment Act (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder) and Sandy's Law: (Liquor Licence Amendment), 2004, S.O. 2004, c.12 – Bill 43, a provincial requirement for establishments selling or serving alcohol to post signs warning women of the risks of consuming alcohol during pregnancy. (See **Appendix B**)

3. Current Special Education supports and services for students with FASD include:

- behaviour management classroom supports
- speech and language pathology (by internal TCDSB providers and/or Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) partners)
- physical therapy (LHIN partnership) and
- mental health and other education supports.

4. Furthermore, TCDSB Intensive Support Programs (ISPs) can be accessed if a student with FASD, like any other, has met the criteria for identification with any of the following ministry indicated exceptionalities:

- Autism
- Behaviour
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- Language/Speech Impairment
- Learning Disability
- Mild Intellectual Disability, or
- Multiple Exceptionalities/Developmental Disability.

5. In order to promote awareness among stakeholders of the TCDSB the Board approved a motion to establish an FASD Awareness Day, with the first annual observance being held on September 9, 2019. The Communications Department shared information via social media, website, E-News and the Weekly Wrap-up, focusing on staff, students, parents and other stakeholders. Additionally, communications were sent to all schools and Catholic School Parent Council (CSPC) chairs via the monthly update for school newsletters.

6. Suggested additional strategies for TCDSB stakeholders to engage in order to provide further support of students with FASD are the following:
 - a) Continue to engage and consult with the FASD representative on SEAC as well as any related FASD organization(s):
 - i. for evidence-based teaching/learning strategies;
 - ii. to engage, for additional information, lived experience with children/families with FASD, and
 - iii. to help inform TCDSB Special Education and Safe Schools policy direction and alignment.
 - b) provide opportunities for professional learning regarding FASD that:
 - i. will promote the building of healthy and resilient learning communities;
 - ii. enable TCDSB staff to further improve the address of students' complex needs; and
 - iii. enhance public confidence in the services being provided to students with FASD.
 - c) provide services to students with FASD with a level of intensity that:
 - i. matches a student's needs;
 - ii. provides choice and flexibility, and
 - iii. ensures that it is responsive to individual student needs.

E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Special Services staff will meet with the FASD Representative on SEAC in order to strategize about developing a deeper understanding about the most appropriate supports for students with FASD, as well as about viable professional learning opportunities for staff.
2. The Superintendent of Special Services will meet with Special Services staff to determine appropriate means for the provision of professional learning opportunities for TCDSB staff, including Special Education service providers.
3. Special Services staff will provide an update regarding the efficacy of existing and proposed strategies for serving the needs of students with FASD, as well as regarding any professional learning opportunities provided for staff supporting students with FASD.

F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the consideration of the Board.