



REPORT TO

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

NAMING OF TCDSB VIRTUAL SCHOOL 2020

*He determines **the number** of **the stars**; he gives to all of **them** **their** names. [Psalm 147:4](#)*

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August 17, 2020

First Tabling

September 3, 2020

Review

[Click here to enter a date.](#)

Lori DiMarco: Superintendent, Curriculum Leadership & Innovation; Academic ICT

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

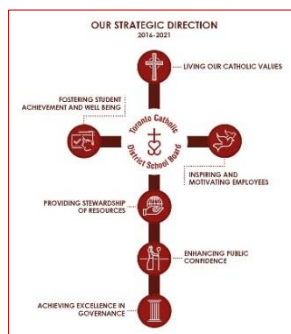
Vision:

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.



Brendan Browne
Director of Education

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Development, and
Chief Financial Officer

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report recommends that TCDSB's Virtual School be named St. Isidore Catholic Academy, School of Virtual Learning.

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 2 hours.

B. PURPOSE

1. The COVID-19 pandemic has created a need to provide rich online learning to students across the province and within the TCDSB for the 2020-21 school year.
2. Parents were surveyed and were asked to register their child(ren) in one of two learning options. The first option involves a return to school with increased protocols to address student safety. The second option involves enrolment in a virtual classroom. Students and their parents have selected one of these two options for returning to school in September 2020.
3. This report outlines the reasons for the creation of and naming of the TCDSB virtual school.

C. BACKGROUND

1. On August 14th, 2020, the Ministry of Education issued Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 164: Requirements for Remote Learning providing direction to all boards for implementing remote learning for students.
2. PPM 164 states that "During full or partial school closures, or under any other periods of remote learning, it is crucial to keep students engaged in their learning. Students should have access to a school community, a support network and authentic educational experiences in order to continue progress in their learning."
3. The PPM also provided boards with the opportunity to establish a virtual school with a unique identifier that would allow it to function as an independent school to provide students with an alternative to in-person learning. (Students are still able to remain connected to their in-person school.)

4. In the document, “Leading Mentally Healthy Schools for Administrators: Tip Sheet” provided by School Mental Health Ontario, it states: “School connectedness is the sense of being cared for, being valued, and belonging. It is a powerful protective factor in mental health, and is central to creating mentally healthy schools.” The TCDSB recognizes the inherent need to belong to a community as outlined in our pastoral plan “Rooted in Christ: we Believe, we Belong, we Become”. As such, we remain committed to ensuring our students are afforded the opportunity to develop a sense of belonging in their learning environment.
5. The virtual school along with the in-person school will collaborate to ensure that all students have access to unique opportunities for academic, social and faith-filled engagement. The TCDSB Virtual School will ensure that opportunities will be provided to allow students to remain connected to their in-person school while establishing a Catholic community in their virtual learning environment. Activities will be planned to enable students to honour the connection to their in-person school in their schoolwork. Efforts will be made to relay pertinent information about opportunities to participate in school activities at the in-person school, where appropriate.
6. The TCDSB Virtual School administration will be working closely with the staff of all TCDSB schools to ensure that students continue to connect with Special Services, Guidance, Social Work and Chaplaincy staff with whom they have worked in the past.
7. Establishing a namesake for the school provides a focus for building a sense of school connectedness for students who have been brought together in difficult times and have been physically separated and socially distanced.
8. The School Names Policy S.07 outlines the process for naming a new school. Although these processes are in place for addressing local community school needs and priorities, the TCDSB virtual school has distinguishing characteristics.
 - a. The school does not have one pastor, but rather all pastors across the diocese.
 - b. The school does not have a Catholic School Advisory Council, and the parents of the school will be from across the city of Toronto.
 - c. The virtual school includes stakeholders from all schools, thus the virtual school will engage all superintendents and trustees.

D. EVIDENCE/ANALYSIS

1. The Superintendent of Curriculum, Leadership and Innovation consulted with the Chair of the Board to determine a process by which to address the naming of the virtual school due to the short timelines to create, staff and schedule students.
2. A committee was asked to research saint names that may be suitable to the new virtual school. Two names were proposed.
 - a. St. Anne, born in Bethlehem, Palestine, as a parent of Mary, was the model of virtue to all charged with the education of children. All parents have the principal duty of the holy education of their children. God entrusted to St. Anne the task of raising Our Lady in a holy and virtuous home, and from a very young age Mary looked to St. Anne to learn about God and how He works in the lives of those who love and serve Him.
 - b. St. Isidore of Seville, Spain realized that if he kept working at his studies, his seemingly small efforts would eventually pay off in great learning. He never limited his pursuit of knowledge, wanting to learn about everything. He founded schools that taught every branch of learning. Isidore wrote numerous books, including a dictionary, an encyclopedia, and a history of the world—beginning with creation. He was sometimes called “The Schoolmaster of the Middle Ages” because the encyclopedia he wrote was used as a textbook for nine centuries. For this reason he was suggested as the patron of the internet, although it has never been recognized by the Vatican.
3. Adhering to the spirit of the School Names Policy, the following steps were/are being taken:
 - a. The Superintendent of Curriculum Leadership & Innovation, along with the Chair of the Board consulted on potential names for the school.
 - b. The Archbishop of the Toronto Diocese was consulted as to the suitability of the names being considered.
 - c. Catholic School Parent Councils (CSPC) Chairs, Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (CPIC) members and the Ontario Association of

- Parents for Catholic Education (OAPCE) Reps from across all schools were provided the opportunity to vote for the school name.
- d. All trustees and superintendents were provided the opportunity to vote for the school name.
4. The results of the survey are as follows:
- a. 104 people responded to the survey;
 - b. 2 responses were blank;
 - c. 60.8% of the 102 survey responses recommended St. Isidore as the namesake for the school; and
 - d. 39.2% of the responses recommended St. Anne as the namesake of the school.

E. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That TCDSB's Virtual School be named St. Isidore Catholic Academy, School of Virtual Learning.