



REPORT TO

REGULAR BOARD

TCDSB PARTNERSHIP WITH TAIBU COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

*Peace be to the whole community, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Ephesians 6:23*

Created, Draft

October 26, 2020

First Tabling

November 19, 2020

Review

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

Derek Chen, Superintendent of Equity, Diversity, Indigenous Education, and Community Relations

Michael Caccamo, Superintendent of Nurturing Our Catholic Community, Safe Schools, Continuing Education, and St. Anne Catholic Academy, School of Virtual Learning

INFORMATION REPORT

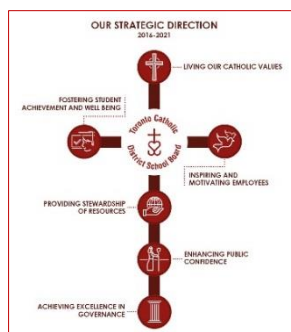
Vision:

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.



Brendan Browne, PhD
Director of Education

D. Koenig
Associate Director
of Academic Affairs

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

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Arising out of a delegation to Regular Board on June 18, 2020, this report provides an overview of TAIBU Community Health Centre's Plug Project, a partnership program to support Black students facing conflict in schools. TAIBU's Plug Project also provides guidance in the development of various workshops to engage students, parents and caregivers, administrators, teachers, and Trustees. TCDSB Senior Staff will take steps to review with its Partnership Development Department and its stakeholder groups the potential of a formal working collaboration with TAIBU and its PLUG Project.

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 18 hours.

B. PURPOSE

1. At the June 18, 2020 Regular Board meeting, the Board of Trustees received and referred to staff for a report exploring TAIBU's request for the TCDSB's participation in TAIBU's Plug Project.
2. This report provides background information on the mandate of the TAIBU PLUG Project.
3. This report outlines steps being taken to review with appropriate TCDSB stakeholders and with the TCDSB Partnership Development Department to inform a decision to enter into a partnership with TAIBU's PLUG Project.

C. BACKGROUND

1. The Manager of Community Services & Systems Change at TAIBU, delegated at the June 18, 2020 Board meeting. The delegation outlined TAIBU's Plug Project, a federally-funded program intended to address systemic Anti-Black racism in the school system by offering workshops to students, parents, teachers, administrators and community, as a preventative measure. The PLUG project also seeks to advocate for students who have been or who are facing suspensions or expulsions from school, by ensuring that their rights under the act are protected.

2. Specifically, the PLUG Project focuses on violence prevention and developing conflict mediation skills for student success, especially for Black and/or marginalized students. Through workshops, students learn how to resolve conflict in a variety of scenarios, develop techniques that de-escalate a situation, work on conflict resolution, and develop strategies for better communication. Parent workshops are available to better support their child.
3. The PLUG project is targeted at “Black youth who are facing barriers in schools through disproportionate expulsions and suspensions”. It provides wrap-around services for Black students and their families, including information and leadership skills building, while also facilitating timely access to legal advice and representation, when necessary. The PLUG is a partnership between TAIBU Community Health Centre (TAIBU) and the Rexdale Community Health Centre, and works closely with the Toronto District School Board and other key stakeholders.
4. According to TAIBU’s PLUG Project, several studies have made it clear that Black students are at a greater risk of facing challenges within the school systems including:
 - Disproportionate Suspensions and Expulsions Rates
 - Higher School Drop-out Rates
 - Lower Academic Achievement
 - Racism and Discrimination
5. While the TCDSB does not yet have statistics on suspension rates for Black students in our Board, evidence from our co-terminus Board indicates that suspension rates at the TDSB are disproportionate to the overall Black student population. The TCDSB acknowledges that it is imperative to consider sociological factors when making progressive discipline decisions, especially those decisions that may result in suspensions.
6. The TCDSB is in its 3rd year of the Equity Action Plan.
7. The following are components and priority actions of the TCDSB Equity Action Plan that could be addressed in collaboration with the TAIBU PLUG Project:
 - School and Classroom Practices: Priority Action #4 - Provide professional learning to combat Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, racism, homophobia and transphobia;

- School and Classroom Practices: Priority Action #6 - Address suspension, expulsion, and exclusion rates;
- School and Classroom Practices: Priority Action #7 – Increase parent engagement in equity and inclusive education;
- Leadership, Governance and Human Resource Practices: Priority Action #7 - Provide professional development focused on equity, inclusion, and human rights.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

1. The PLUG Project Steering Committee is responsible for its overall strategic direction and provides support to the Project’s Evaluation Committee. The Steering Committee is composed of representatives from the various school boards with which TAIBU’s PLUG Project is partnering. The Superintendent of Equity, Diversity, Indigenous Education and Community Relations, the Superintendent of Safe Schools, and the Human Rights and Equity Advisor of the TCDSB have been invited to sit on the Steering Committee for the PLUG Project as “observers” and will do so until such time as it is determined if a formal partnership is to be established.
2. TAIBU’s Plug Project’s Steering Committee will review all suspension and expulsion cases in which the PLUG Project took an active role in supporting administrators and/or families. This will be done in order to assess the impact of the project, though all identifiers will be withheld in order to protect privacy of all involved. Feedback about these cases will be brought to the Equity and Safe Schools departments for further exploration and discussion.
3. The first meeting of this year’s PLUG Project’s Steering Committee was recently held, where the mandate of the committee was reviewed and the Chair and Secretary of the committee were appointed. The Toronto District School Board and the Durham Catholic District School Board have representation on the committee. The TCDSB has been invited to sit on the Steering Committee as “observers” until such time as the decision to enter into a formal partnership is made.

E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Staff will review the mandate of the TAIBU PLUG Project with appropriate stakeholder groups – students, parents, principals, superintendents – in assessing the potential of a formal partnership agreement.
2. Staff serving as “observers” on the PLUG Project Steering Committee will continue to assess the viability of a formal partnership as it relates to the TCDSB.
3. Staff will review with the TCDSB Partnership Development Department and Legal/Corporate Services possible terms of reference or a memorandum of understanding for a formal partnership with TAIBU.

F. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

This report is for the consideration of the Board.