

## **Student Achievement Delegation**

### **Stephanie De Castro**

Good evening trustees, staff, and attendees. I am grateful to be able to express my opinions and student voice tonight. As a present student in the Toronto Catholic School Board, I believe that the teachings of this community have shown the utmost importance that we, as Catholics, should be inclusive to all peoples, regardless of religion, beliefs, and faith. I find it unjust that students who have different beliefs and upbringings are restricted opportunities to further their achievement within this board. Defining a student solely by their faith and not their capabilities to represent themselves with integrity and passion as a leader is robbing them of future opportunities and endeavours they could possibly have taken a hold of.

The elected student trustee represents over 94,000 voices in this board. Every single one of these students all come from different and diverse backgrounds. It is evident we promote and accept inclusivity and diversity. But when the time comes to see this representation with a position on the board, we often struggle to seek past this barrier. The definition of diversity is understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences. I ask for your support in putting the motion through to encompass our catholic values as a community as we strive to give each student equal chances and opportunities.

Being a hopeful candidate in the upcoming student elections myself, I do not believe faith is an important factor whether it be an advantage or disadvantage as long as our board values are being represented. I am appalled that other candidates must overcome issues such as this in order to run. Standing alongside other student leaders in the coming months with these rules imposed does give an uneasy feeling that there is a barrier between us. It feels unfair to both parties participating. With that being said, I ask that we open our hearts and minds to empower students who wish to create change in our school communities. Thank you so much for your time.