



REPORT TO

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

2SLGBTQ+ ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION FOR THE PROCLAMATION OF PRIDE MONTH

“And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Beloved; with you I am well pleased.’” ~Mark 1.11

Created, Draft

April 22, 2021

First Tabling

May 6, 2021

Review

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

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RECOMMENDATION REPORT

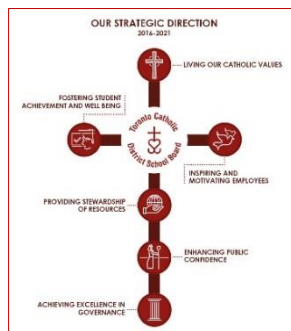
Vision:

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.



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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A delegation requesting the recognition of Pride Month for June 2021 was subsequently referred to the newly established 2SLGBTQ+ Advisory Committee. Based on the Committee's recent discussion of the topic, a recommendation was provided, supporting the proclamation of Pride Month beginning in June 2021, along with raising the Pride flag at the Catholic Education Centre and at all schools in the system.

This report details the chronology of events, outlines some of the discussion points at the Committee's meeting, including the provision of background information on Pride, the flag, and how the proclamation of Pride supports our responsibility as Catholics to respect and value all of God's people.

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 12 hours.

B. PURPOSE

1. This report outlines the 2SLGBTQ+ Advisory Committee's rationale and recommendation for the proclamation of Pride at the TCDSB, along with the raising of the Pride flag at the Catholic Education Centre and at all TCDSB schools.

C. BACKGROUND

1. At the February 4, 2021 Student Achievement and Well-Being Committee Meeting, a delegation requesting proclamation of June 2021 as Pride Month in the TCDSB, along with the use of the Pride flag, was referred to the newly established 2SLGBTQ+ Advisory Committee to make a recommendation.
2. The 2SLGBTQ+ Advisory Committee held two meetings (April 21, 2021, and April 29, 2021). The "Proclamation of Pride" was an agenda item at both meetings.
3. The committee discussed the proclamation of Pride starting June 2021. This was voted upon, and the motion that Pride Month be proclaimed starting in June 2021 was carried.

4. The committee discussed the raising of the Pride flag at the Catholic Education Centre to further emphasize the acceptance, inclusion, and support of 2SLGBTQ+, a historically marginalized community. This was voted upon, and the motion that the Pride flag be flown at the Catholic Education Centre was carried. A further motion specifying that the flag be flown for the entire month of June was also carried.
5. The committee discussed the raising of the Pride flag at every school in the TCDSB. After some discussion, the committee's recommendation is that each school in the system raise the Pride flag to further emphasize the acceptance, inclusion, and support of 2SLGBTQ+. A further motion specifying that flags be flown for the entire month of June was also carried.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

At a subsequent meeting, the 2SLGBTQ+ Advisory Committee offered the following for consideration to support their recommendations:

1. According to the City of Toronto, the Pride flag flies during the month of June at City Hall, and June is proclaimed Pride Month. Raising the Pride flag, and proclaiming Pride Month in Toronto brings Torontonians together to celebrate the history, courage, and diversity of Toronto's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Two-Spirit communities (LGBTQ2S+).
2. All TCDSB schools must continuously be aware of and seek to eliminate any forms of bullying, discrimination, and harassment on the part of all persons. Such actions form part of our building of inclusive communities and awareness of social justice issues. The flying of the Pride flag further emphasizes that 2SLGBTQ+ are welcomed and loved, and will find a safe space for dialogue and support.
3. The colours of the Pride flag represent the following: red means life, orange means healing, yellow means sunlight, green represents nature, turquoise art, blue represents harmony, and violet means spirit. Another version of the flag includes the colours black and brown to include racialized people.
4. According to the City of Toronto's T.O. Health Check report conducted in 2019, suicide was seriously considered by 35% of lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, other, or unsure students compared to 12% of heterosexual

students. An Ontario study cited in the same report found that 35% of transgendered persons reported having considered suicide in the past year. (G. R. Bauer, A. I. Scheim, J. Pyne, R. Travers and R. Hammond, “Intervenable factors associated with suicide risk in transgender persons: a respondent-driven sampling study in Ontario, Canada,” BMC Public Health, vol. 15, no. 525, 2015.)

5. Our Catholic faith urges us to reach out to those who are marginalized, excluded, discriminated against, or forgotten, and to celebrate their individuality as God’s children. Scripture supports this: “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28) Jesus gladly socialized with people of whom the religious establishment disapproved. (Matt 9:11). As well, Wisdom 11:23, 24a You O Lord, are merciful to all, for you can do all things, for you love all things that exist.
6. Catholic Social Teachings emphasize the importance of “Life and Dignity of the Human Person”, “Rights and Responsibilities”, and “Solidarity”. The proclamation of Pride may help support these teachings.
7. The Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations compel Catholic school boards to instil in their students the following concepts according to the Institute for Catholic Education’s Flipbook 2019:

-A Responsible Citizen: One who witnesses Catholic social teaching by promoting equality, democracy, and solidarity for a just, peaceful, and compassionate society, and who respects and affirms diversity and interdependence of the world’s peoples and cultures.

-A Discerning Believer: One who respects the faith traditions, world religions, and the life-journeys of all people of goodwill; and one who develops attitudes and values founded on Catholic Social Teaching and acts to promote social responsibility, human solidarity, and the common good.

-A Collaborative Contributor: One who finds meaning, dignity, fulfilment, and vocation in work which contributes to the common good.

8. TCDSB Mission Statement:

Our 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.

Our Catholic Values: We believe in the worth and dignity of every person; We believe in the critical role that our Catholic schools play in promoting Gospel values, social justice, environmental responsibility, human solidarity, and the common good.

The proclamation of Pride aligns with the values of the TCDSB; specifically, as a community where all are welcomed, recognized for who they are, and supported always.

9. The TCDSB's Equity Action Plan includes a foundational goal of equity: that "all schools will ensure that systemic barriers are removed for students from low-income environments, racialized students, Indigenous students, students who identify as LGBTQ or Two-Spirited, children and youth in care, students with disabilities, and students with special education needs." With proclamations of celebrations and events honouring nearly all such groups, the 2SLGBTQ+ community must also be included. Authentic equity calls for intentional application of resources and support be given to marginalized communities.

10. Within the Catholic Church, the month of June is dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The Sacred Heart of Jesus reminds us and encourages us to always be inclusive of all persons, particularly those who may have or who are experiencing any kind of injustice, exclusion, marginalization, oppression, or discrimination. In the TCDSB, we are to be welcoming communities of everyone, as Jesus was, and as we are all called to be.

That June also be proclaimed Pride Month implores us to be compassionate, welcoming, and inclusive of marginalized people, including 2SLGBTQ+, as an example of our faith in Action.

11. The Ontario Human Rights Code (the Code) makes it against the law to discriminate against someone or to harass them because of their sexual orientation, their marital status, and/or family status. This right to be free from discrimination and harassment applies to the Toronto Catholic District School Board as a public service provider of education in Ontario. While the code does not require public service providers to explicitly fly the Pride flag or to formally recognize Pride Month, the proclamation of Pride Month may lead to greater inclusivity for 2SLGBTQ+. This recognition is intended to contribute to a reduction of incidences of harassment and discrimination against 2SLGBTQ+.

E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Staff will investigate operationalizing any decision made by the Board of Trustees.

F. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The 2SLGBTQ+ Advisory Committee recommends the following:

- a. Pride Month be proclaimed every June starting in 2021;
- b. The Pride flag be flown at the Catholic Education Centre from June 1-June 30; and
- c. Every school in the TCDSB raise the Pride flag from June 1-June 30.