

06 May 2021

Dear Trustees of the Toronto Catholic District School Board,

As the largest parents stakeholder group in the province, with over 90K+ supporters, many of whom are members of the Toronto Catholic District School Board community, we are writing to ask you **not to vote in favour of raising the Pride flag over TCDSB schools or to celebrate Pride month during the month of June.**

We represent parents and families who seek to reinforce parental rights and parental choice in a culture that increasingly disregards them.

Parents -Catholic and non-Catholic- who choose to send their children to Catholic schools expect that their children will be receiving an education consistent with Catholic moral teaching. They rely on all partners within the system to keep the Catholic faith at the forefront of everything they do, and not to introduce ideologies from external groups that confuse children about what the Catholic moral teaching. If Trustees choose to promote moral teachings contrary to the faith, they are also violating parental choice.

As the spiritual authority for the Toronto Archdiocese, Cardinal Thomas Collins released a statement on May 4, 2021 that indicates what symbol he believes both unifies the community and symbolizes inclusivity:

“In that regard, the appropriate symbol that represents our faith, and the inclusion and acceptance of others, is the cross, which is visible at the entrance of every Catholic school.”

It is unnecessary to have other secular symbols of inclusivity, such as the Pride flag, according to the Cardinal’s statement: **“There is a belief among some that unless one embraces secular symbols, one cannot be inclusive or accepting. This is simply not true.”**

The Cardinal’s statement approves of flying only the Canadian flag as a prudent way to keep the school boards out of battles over diverse causes.

“Practically, we also know that there are any number of groups working to advocate for many diverse causes. For this reason, many school boards wisely fly only the Canadian flag out of a sense of equity for all.”

Please, trustees, accept the guidance that has been offered by the Cardinal.

When trustees are asked the question in candidate interviews, “What would you do if you didn’t know the answer to a religious problem?” the answer that we hear time and time again is “I would ask the diocese.” It’s time to recognize that the oath you took as trustees binds you now to stand by the authoritative teaching of the Church on this matter.

Please be courageous and put the faith first when you vote, and don't play politics with our children. Support parents who choose Catholic education for their children and choose you to steward it. Don't fly the Pride flag or celebrate Pride Month this June.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Teresa Pierre". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Teresa Pierre, Ph.D., President
Parents as First Educators