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REPORT TO

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

REPORT ON EPAN SCHOOLS

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you.
Psalm 89:14

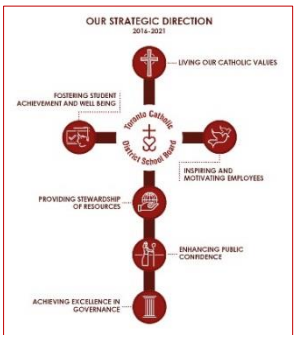
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Derek Chen, Superintendent – Equity, Diversity, Indigenous Education & Community Relations

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.



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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details the origin and evolution of Equity Poverty Action Network (EPAN) schools, and provide clarification as it pertains to EPAN schools and the allocation of equity funds. The report also outlines how some fund allocation anomalies were corrected, and provides a staff resolution that seeks to align the two initiatives while eliminating the possibility of any future gaps. ***The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 12 hours***

B. PURPOSE

1. This report will provide a clarification about EPAN schools and the allocation of equity funds. It will also outline a new process aligning the two programs in order to ensure that all communities be identified as an EPAN school and receive equity funds as appropriate.

C. BACKGROUND

1. At the March 25, 2021 Regular Board Meeting, the following motion was passed: "Be it resolved that in the interest of transparency and recognizing these are public funds, the 2019/2020 block budget equity distributions and the 2020/2021 block budget equity distributions be included in a report to Board highlighting changes made and that staff report back to Board on ways to rectify any prior errors ensuring those communities which were potentially mistreated receive the funds they deserve; and any distribution of these types of funds across the system be made available in public reports moving forward."

2. EPAN schools have been designated in a separate and distinct process than the allocation of equity funds to schools.

   a. The objective of EPAN schools was to provide programming for schools located mostly within marginalized communities.
   b. The allocation of equity funds commenced as a result of recognizing the need to provide extra funds to schools with demographics requiring greater support.

3. The history of EPAN schools is as follows:

a. Originating in 2016, and initially called "Spotlight" schools, the intention of the initiative was to provide professional learning, partnership amongst schools, and parental and parish engagement to schools identified in need based on select criteria. The term Equity Poverty Action Network, or EPAN, was coined in 2018.

b. In 2016-17, 12 schools (9 elementary and 3 secondary) were selected based on socioeconomic status data and EQAO scores, one school per Trustee ward.

c. In 2017-18, the number was increased to 16 schools (13 elementary and 3 secondary) to include 4 more elementary with the highest rate of poverty.

d. In 2018-19, the number was increased to 46 schools (37 elementary and 9 secondary) based on N-tiles (broader criteria included socioeconomic status, EQAO, IEPs, English Language Learners, etc.). Several schools were offered the opportunity to join the initiative even if they were a 6 or 7, as principals expressed an interest in having their schools take part of the professional learning, partnership, and engagement with parents and parish. The original 12 were kept as part of the 46.

e. In 2019-20, the number was increased to 61 schools (50 elementary and 11 secondary) to ensure that all of the schools with the highest needs (N-tile 9s) were included. The goal stated in the MYSP was to have approximately 60 schools as part of the initiative.

4. When the allocation of equity funds began, the criteria for eligibility of these funds was based on schools with scores 6, 7, 8, or 9. This has not changed since inception in 2017.

5. In 2020-21, in order to rectify the allocation of funds to EPAN schools that would not normally receive equity funds, four EPAN schools had their designation removed given that their scores were in the range of 1-5. However, schools with scores 6, 7, 8, or 9 received equity funds, but were not identified as an EPAN school.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

1. The two initiatives (EPAN schools and the allocation of equity funds) have a similar focus, it should be noted that EPAN was intended mainly for

programming, while equity funds were distributed to schools with scores 6, 7, 8 and 9. The two programs were established and evolved in different ways.

2. Following the motion, staff conducted a review of the two programs.

3. The review concluded with the following change: starting with the 2021-22 school year, EPAN schools and equity-funded schools will be merged; that is, all schools with a score of 6, 7, 8, or 9 will be designated EPAN schools and will receive funding based on overall score and school enrollment. In this way, no gaps will exist in schools that require support, and schools identified not in need of support will no longer receive support.

4. Schools that move from 6, 7, 8, or 9 to a score of 5 will continue to receive a one-time amount to support the transition. However, these schools will no longer be designated EPAN schools.

5. Scores will be calculated by the Research department using Trillium data after the October 31 ONSIS submission in any given year.

6. EPAN schools will resume their participation in collaborative inquiries and other programming with regard to culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy and learning, along with an intense focus on dismantling racism and oppression through professional learning in the 2021-22 school year.

E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1. As per the motion, any distribution of equity funds will be made available in public reports.
2. Appendix A and B indicate the equity funds distributions for 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 respectively.

F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the consideration of the Board.