



REPORT TO

SPECIAL BOARD

## USE OF SCHOOLS AS POLLING STATIONS

*And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him – Colossians 3:17 (NIV)*

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August 26, 2021	August 31, 2021	<a href="#">Click here to enter a date.</a>

Paul Matthews, General Legal Counsel

### 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

A. Della Mora  
Associate Director, Academic Services and Chief Operating Officer

D. Boyce  
Associate Director of Facilities, Business and Community Development

R. Putnam  
Chief Financial Officer & Treasurer

## **A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report, for the information of the Board of Trustees, is to advise the Board that five (5) Trustees have requested, pursuant to the Board's Operating By-Law 175, that a special Board Meeting be held to consider whether it is advisable for the Board to agree to a request from Elections Canada to use some Toronto Catholic District School Board schools as polling stations in the upcoming September 20, 2021 federal election.

*The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 3 hours.*

## **B. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to advise the Board of Trustees that at the request of five (5) Trustees, this Special Board Meeting has been called to discuss the urgent issue of whether or not it is advisable for the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) to consent to a request from Elections Canada to use some Toronto Catholic schools as polling stations in the upcoming September 20, 2021 federal election.

## **C. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS**

1. As a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and concerns about the highly transmissible Delta variant, there is concern that it may not be advisable for schools, without restrictions, to be used as polling stations in the upcoming September 20, 2021 federal election.
2. Prior to the pandemic, schools across Canada, including TCDSB schools, have been historically used as polling stations in federal, provincial and municipal elections.
3. The Board of Trustees has the legal authority to restrict the use of schools to purposes authorized by the Board pursuant to Ontario Regulation 474/00. The Ministry of Education has the authority under section 305(1) of the Education Act to make regulations governing access to schools. To date Ontario Regulation 474/00 is the only regulation issued by the Ministry of Education with respect to access to schools.

4. To date, Manitoba and New Brunswick have announced that schools in those provinces will not be hosting polling stations. Alberta has announced that the decision on whether or not to permit polling stations in its schools is a decision left to be made by local school districts.
5. Dr. Kieran Moore has written to the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada, (attached at Appendix A), advising that only schools that meet the following conditions be considered by school boards and Elections Canada for Elections Canada to establish polling stations in schools, particularly in elementary schools:
  - Direct path to location of polling station
  - There must be separate entrance(s) and exist(s); and
  - Must be able to keep students (including children in licensed childcare centres co-located in schools) and staff separate from the public.
6. The facilities department is currently analysing TCDSB school locations to determine the number of schools that could satisfy the conditions Dr. Moore has recommended.

## **D. CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

This report is for the information of the Board of Trustees.