



REPORT TO

REGULAR BOARD

## ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021: COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

*And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25*

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
September 6, 2021	September 16, 2021	<a href="#">Click here to enter a date.</a>

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### INFORMATION REPORT

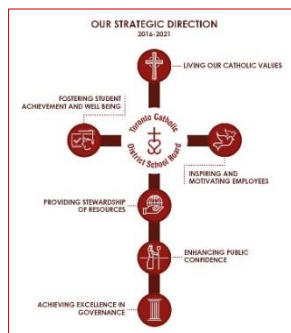
#### Vision:

*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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Director of Education

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## **A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) is committed to enhancing public confidence through timely, accessible and transparent communications and continuous improvement through authentic community engagement. This report highlights key staff-planned, supported, and executed system-wide communications and consultation initiatives, learning opportunities, community and cultural engagement events, and advisory committee undertakings for the 2020-2021 academic year.

The scope of communications and community engagement initiatives undertaken by staff in the 2020-2021 school year is comprehensive and supports all six strategic directions of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan, with particular emphasis on Enhancing Public Confidence, Achieving Excellence in Governance and Living our Catholic Values.

The 2020-2021 year was unique, impacted and affected by labour disruption and a system-wide school closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff endeavoured to organize virtual events and activities to ensure TCDSB stakeholders continued to experience the rich traditions of cultural events, and seek input on matters pertaining to school renewal projects, student learning models, budget consultations, student voice and parent/guardian voice surveys.

*The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 8 hours.*

## **B. PURPOSE**

1. This report is submitted in compliance with mandatory reporting requirements in two policies: Communications Policy A. 37 and Community Engagement Policy T.07.
2. The Communications Policy (A. 37) states:

*The effectiveness of this policy in supporting comprehensive best practice communications across the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) will be evaluated annually. The highlights, analysis and findings will be documented and published in a formal annual report and presented to the Board of Trustees in September of each year for review.*

3. The Community Engagement Policy (T.07) stipulates:  
*A report of the community engagement process as reported by staff is to be reviewed by the Board annually.*
4. The appendices in this report contain the main communications, consultation, community engagement and cultural events, as well as promising practices to promote student achievement and wellbeing undertaken by the Board's various community advisory committees in the 2020-2021 school year.

## **C. BACKGROUND**

1. *Appendices A and B* summarize community engagement activities and consultations within the TCDSB from the 2020-2021 school year.
2. *Appendix C* summarizes promising practices and initiatives undertaken by staff in consultation with the Board's Community Advisory Committees in the 2020-2021 school year.

## **D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS**

1. The TCDSB strives to involve parents/guardians, stakeholders, and community members in meaningful ways on matters under the Board's purview to better understand priorities and community concerns when making decisions. Appendices A, B and C demonstrate the Board's commitment to effective community involvement to foster relationships, promote equity, and garner stakeholder input.
2. In 2020-2021, due to the pandemic community engagement opportunities related to the budget, capital and planning projects, parent/guardian voice survey, student voice survey, return to school surveys and student learning model registration were held virtually.
3. In 2020-2021, learning opportunities afforded through workshops, and monthly cultural and heritage celebrations and events, demonstrated the Board's commitment to creating and sustaining a rich environment of learning, inclusion, equity, diversity, anti-racism, and anti-oppression. Due to the conferences and workshops offered virtually, participation numbered in the hundreds and thousands for many events. Heritage celebrations expanded their scope to include more components focused on education around anti-

racism. During the period of school closures, the workshops and heritage celebrations were held virtually and shared across the system.

4. The [TCDSB Community Consultation webpage](#) continues to provide the public with information about all active TCDSB public consultations and opportunities for involvement.
5. The Equity Department coordinates translations for key parent/guardian communications in the 12 most common languages at the TCDSB and the website offers a Google translate feature.
6. The Communications Department continues to amplify the TCDSB's reputation, profile and reach through the use of various communication tools including:
  - School Messenger: Used regularly throughout the school year to disseminate pertinent information (labour, COVID-19, return to school, vaccination opportunities, etc.) directly to TCDSB parents/guardians;
  - Survey tools like Survey Monkey and Qualtrics have been used when seeking input on learning model registration and the budget. Moving forward Qualtrics will solely be used.
  - Social Media Strategy has been successfully adopted to expand reach on all channels including Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and Youtube;
  - Weekly Wrap-up (targets everyone on exchange);
  - Daily digest of pertinent communications to school administrators and business leaders via Management Matters Forum;
  - Monthly updates for schools to include in their newsletters;
  - Trustee newsletters; and
  - TCDSB website continues to be updated and improved. A Return to School section was created and devoted to providing timely updates on plans, COVID advisory, health and safety measures, ventilation in schools, and FAQs.
  - RFP for a TCDSB website overhaul is underway and closes on September 10, 2021.
7. The Communications Department constantly monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of its strategies, communication tools, including social media platforms and trends to ensure content and messages are received by intended audiences including families, students and staff.

8. Following two years' worth of consultation, the Communications Department has developed the TCDSB's first-ever social media guidelines which are now operational.
9. In the 2020-2021 academic year, advisory committees have worked with Board staff to implement a variety of practices to support student achievement and well-being through cultural responsiveness and equity.

## **E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

1. The outcome/impact of each initiative in community engagement and outreach, communications, and advisory committee undertakings is outlined in a dedicated column in each of the Appendices A, B, C.
2. An important guiding principle of community engagement and consultation at the TCDSB is broad-based accessibility. The Board strives to engage the greatest number of stakeholders meaningfully and authentically. To this end, the Board routinely uses a variety of web-based tools, virtual and actual town-hall forums, face-to-face meetings, workshops, and information sessions.
3. The Communications Department's social media strategy has led to enhanced reach and profile for the TCDSB. Through regular content creation/curation, the use of tools to schedule posts to maintain a constant presence and the use of active content (ie. videos, quality images and graphical interchange formats (GIFs), all TCDSB managed accounts have seen a significant increase in followers and impressions. The use of Facebook and Youtube has enabled TCDSB live stream events including the Lunch with the Director Live Q&A events.
  - a. TCDSB Twitter saw an increase of 1,100 followers since September 2020 (currently there are 47.8K followers);
  - b. The Directors Twitter saw an increase of followers and is currently at 3,650 followers. Each month, Director engagement increases largely due to the monthly Lunch with the Director, led by the Communications Department . Each live event receives approximately 430-960 views.
  - c. Instagram saw an additional 1,146 followers since last year, with a total of 6,203 followers; and
  - d. Facebook (introduced late 2019) now has 1,748 followers, up from 1,516 last September.
2. The Communication Department continues to make updates and improvements to the website by adopting industry best practices and creating and implementing newly created guidelines and protocols. As a result of these initiatives, the TCDSB website has seen increased web traffic and user engagement during the 2020-2021 school year. Some of the highlights include:

- a. The total number of pages viewed increased by more than 20% compared to the 2019-2020 school year.
- b. Due to several search-related improvements, users can find relevant TCDSB web pages through Google much easier, with 700,000 more sessions through Google compared to the same period last year.
- c. The COVID Advisory page, one of the most searched for and visited pages in 2020-2021, was consistently ranked in the top 3 in Google's search results for terms related to COVID cases in Toronto schools.
- d. The previously mentioned Return to School section generated close to 10% of the overall web traffic to TCDSB.org, making it one of the most visited and useful resources for our users in the 2020-2021 school year.
- e. By adopting a more consistent and user-friendly approach to page design and formatting, the TCDSB website improved the level of engagement, with users spending 11% more time on our pages.

## **F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

This report is for the information of the Board.