



**REPORT TO**

**REGULAR BOARD**

**UPDATE REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION OF FREE MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS TO TCDSB STUDENTS**

*Give, and it will be given to you*  
*Luke 6:38*

**Created, Draft**

November 10, 2021

S. Coray, Senior Manager, Partnership Development

**First Tabling**

November 18, 2021

**Review**

[Click here to enter a date.](#)

**INFORMATION REPORT**

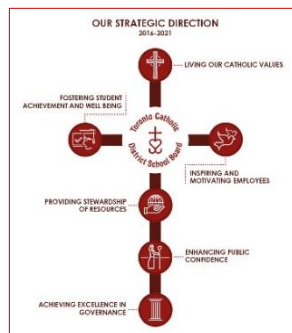
**Vision:**

*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 of Academic Affairs and Chief Operating Officer

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

**R. Putnam**  
Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer

## **A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) is committed to providing all students with equitable access to learning and strives to close the opportunity gap so that the most vulnerable students achieve their full potential. This report provides an update regarding the provision of free menstrual products to female students in TCDSB elementary and secondary schools.

The scope of the work undertaken by staff to date includes exploring partnership opportunities, implementing the provision of free menstrual products in schools, current and future funding options, support and donation from the Ministry of Education, professional development opportunities for school principals and staff, and student educational supports regarding their menstruation.

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

## **B. PURPOSE**

1. At the October 21, 2021 Regular Board meeting, the Board of Trustees:

*“Received and referred to staff for a report:*

- a. Exploring and obtaining partnerships for sanitary products for TCDSB students;
- b. Update on implementation of providing free sanitary products in TCDSB elementary and secondary schools;
- c. Options on funding sanitary products in TCDSB schools in interim (this year) if no Government funding or supplier funding is available;
- d. Providing information to students about periods, period products, and other practical elements of managing their period such as tracking and knowing when and who to reach out to for assistance;
- e. Methods to eliminate the “gatekeeper” in accessing menstrual products in schools; and

- f. Professional development on Period Poverty; and
- g. That a request to the Angel Foundation to consider supporting Period Poverty for TCDSB low-income students be made;
- h. That options for funding menstrual products this year be provided as soon as possible; and
- i. That a line for the funding of menstrual products be included in future budgets.

## **C. BACKGROUND**

1. At Regular Board held October 21, 2021, the Board of Trustees approved a motion for staff to provide an update in terms of partnerships, implementation, funding options, information for students, professional development, student access and current and future funding options regarding providing free menstrual products to TCDSB female students.
2. At its Corporate Affairs, Strategic Planning and Property Committee meeting held October 10, 2019, the Board of Trustees approved:
  - a. *The Director be authorized to enter into a partnership with an appropriate organization to secure access to menstrual products and education materials at no cost to the Board; and*
  - b. *Should a partnership be found, that free menstrual products be provided in all secondary schools where females attend beginning as soon as possible.*
3. Based on staff previous findings, “a partnership with an appropriate organization to secure access to menstrual products and education materials at no cost to the Board” could not be found at that time (October 2019). Recently, staff re-explored partnership opportunities and found that the major firms that market feminine hygiene products have maintained their stance and do not provide free feminine hygiene products to consumers and that partnerships for sanitary products for TCDSB students cannot be found at this time.

4. As a result, staff will provide free menstrual products to TCDSB female students by utilizing dispensers installed in girls' washrooms in elementary and secondary schools at a cost to the Board. The dispensers will dispense two menstrual products (pads and tampons).

	<b>Average Number of Washrooms Per School</b>	<b>Number of Schools</b>	<b>Estimated Number of Dispensers</b>
Elementary	2.4	164*	394
Secondary	7.4	27**	200
Total		191	594

\* Excludes single gender male schools

5. Staff have reviewed funding options for the dispensers and menstrual products and funding for initial installation and supplies until June 2022 will be funded from savings in the 2020-2021 School Operations budget. Beginning September 2022, the cost to support this initiative will be funded through the annual Facilities supplies budget (net of any Provincial funding assistance.)

	<b>Estimated One-time Expense (Source: Uline Canada)</b>
Elementary	\$137,760.00
*Secondary	\$69,930.00
Total	\$207,690.00

\* Excludes single gender male schools

Estimated cost (\$350.00 per unit) is net. Shipping, installation, taxes, replacement, maintenance, etc. are not included.

Note: By installing dispensers that dispense one pad (approximately \$200.00 per unit), a savings of approximately \$88,290.00 can be realized.

<b>Estimated Menstrual Products Annual Cost (Source: Shopper's Drug Mart)</b>	
*Elementary (grades 5 - 8)	\$165,016.50
Pads	\$139,722.00
Tampons	\$25,294.50

**Secondary (grades 9-12)	\$219,217.20
Pads	\$151,013.40
Tampons	\$68,203.80
Total	\$384,233.70

\*10 months

\*\* 12 months (takes into consideration summer school)

Estimated annual cost is net. Shipping, installation, taxes, replacement, maintenance, wastage, etc. are not included.

ESTIMATED QUANTITY OF PRODUCTS CONSUMED					
	*Current Number of Female Students	Frequency/ Usage (Source: Period Purse)	Monthly	10- Month	12- Month
Elementary (grades 5 - 8)					
Pads	9,636	5	48,180	481,800	n/a
Tampons	2,409	5	12,405	120,450	
Secondary (grades 9-12)					
Pads	8,119	5	40,595	n/a	487,140
Tampons	5,413	5	27,065	n/a	324,780

\*Source: TCDSB Research Department

- The purchase of dispensers and menstrual products (pads and tampons) will be carried out in accordance with all applicable Board policies and procedures and any other statutory acts or regulations. Subsequently, dispensers and menstrual products (pads and tampons) are to be acquired through a publicly advertised competitive bidding process to obtain maximum value from the expenditure of public funds. A request for proposal (RFP) is being developed and to be published as soon as possible. The targeted date to begin the installation of the dispensers is early-January 2022.
- November 3, 2021, staff met with Ministry of Education staff regarding TCDSB allotment of the donation of menstrual products by Shoppers Drug Mart [TCDSB will receive 93,327 pads annually (280,880 in total) and 53

dispensers over the next three years]. The Ministry's staff advised TCDSB staff that the dispensers are prototypes, and the actual units will be available later in 2022 (date TBD) and they are in the process of finalizing details of the menstrual products (available in December).

8. Since the final details of donation from the Shoppers Drug Mart have not been set out, it is prudent that when received, the menstrual products and dispensers will be blended into the program and board expenditures may be reduced accordingly. For example, since the dispensers provided by Shopper's Drug Mart dispense one menstrual product (pads), the dispensers can be used as replacements and/or additional units allocated to schools based on need.
9. Staff have met with secondary school female students to gain their insights and feedback into menstrual products, access to menstrual products at schools, when and how to reach out for assistance, etc. Staff are developing educational opportunities for students including focus groups, short films, videos, access to Canadian Public Health Association student resources, etc. to support and educate students on how to manage their menstruation. Additionally, staff met with TCDSB Student Trustees and enlisted their support regarding their ongoing advocacy for free menstrual products in schools.
10. The installation of dispensers will eliminate the need for students requiring menstrual products having to ask school staff (gatekeepers) for menstrual products, and the embarrassment of identifying themselves as in need.
11. Staff have developed and implemented Period Equity and Education program for principals to discuss and seek input on educational supports and resources for students and staff about period equity to help eliminate stigma that is associated with menstruation. Principal focus groups will be used to gain feedback and input about the implementation of the provision of free menstrual products and how to best support students. The initial principal focus group is scheduled for November 16, 2021.
12. Staff met with Executive Director of the Angel Foundation regarding and discussed the request to the Angel Foundation "*to consider supporting Period Poverty for TCDSB low-income students.*" The mandate of the Foundation compels it to focus its resources on student nutrition and the basic needs (food, shelter, and clothing) of TCDSB families. Although ensuring TCDSB female

students have access to feminine hygiene products is a worthy initiative, the Foundation is required to direct its funds in alignment with its mandate and cannot divert its funds to other deserving causes.

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

1. TCDSB staff (Business Services, Environmental Support Services, Facilities, Planning, Curriculum Leadership & Innovation; and Academic Information & Communications Technology and Partnership Development) are engaged in the provision of free menstrual products to female students in TCDSB elementary and secondary schools.
2. This initiative will be led by the Partnership Development Department, and monitored by TCDSB staff (Business Services, Environmental Support Services, Facilities, Planning, Curriculum Leadership & Innovation; and Academic Information & Communications Technology and Partnership Development).

#### **E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

1. It was determined that TCDSB staff will develop and publish a Request for Proposal (RFP) to purchase the dispensers and menstrual products (pads and tampons) as soon as possible.
2. Staff will continue to monitor the availability of TCDSB allotment of the donation of free menstrual products and dispensers from Shopper's Drug Mart and ensure these resources are received.

#### **F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

This report is for the information of the Board.