



## REPORT TO

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

## VOICES THAT CHALLENGE 2022 CSLIT REPORT – INSPIRING ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

*So let a man think of us as Christ's servants, and stewards of God's mysteries. Here, moreover, it is required of stewards, that they be found faithful. (1 Corinthians 4:1-2)*

### Drafted

September 26, 2022

### Meeting Date

October 6, 2022

S. De Castro, Student Trustee, CSLIT Co-Chair

D. Beshai, Student Trustee, CSLIT Co-Chair

A.M. Jorge, Catholic Student Leadership Resource Teacher

M. Caccamo, Superintendent of Nurturing our Catholic Community, Safe Schools, Continuing Education, Monsignor Fraser Alternative and Adult Secondary School, and Orientation Centre

### INFORMATION REPORT

**Vision:** *IN GOD'S IMAGE: Growing in Knowledge, with Justice and Hope.*

**Mission:** *Nurturing the faith development and academic excellence of our Catholic learning community through the love of God, neighbour, and self.*



MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN  
2022 - 2025

IN GOD'S IMAGE: Growing in Knowledge, with Justice and Hope



Brendan Browne  
Director of Education

Adrian Della Mora  
Associate Director of Academic  
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Derek Boyce  
Associate Director of Corporate  
Services and Chief Commercial Officer

Ryan Putnam  
Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer

## A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report shares student perspectives on how positive change can be made within the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) community and beyond. It identifies five key pillars of focus that students have deemed relevant and important. This report provides a vision for what the Student Trustees, the Catholic Student Leadership Impact Team (CSLIT) Executive, and the CSLIT General Assembly will strive to achieve during the upcoming academic year, including proposals which address the recommendations brought forward by the outgoing CSLIT Executive Council and outgoing Student Trustee. In addition, this report reflects and fortifies student voice pertaining to the implementation of social justice initiatives.

**The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 40 hours.**

## B. PURPOSE

1. This report complies with the requirement of an annual report to the Board of Trustees based on CSLIT's "*Voices that Challenge*" conference which occurred on April 22, 2022.
2. The areas of focus raised within the five pillars represent the collective voice of students across the board. The opportunity to present these concerns at the Board level ensures direct involvement and necessary dialogue regarding relevant issues that impact TCDSB students.
3. The Catholic Student Leadership Impact Team embodies all of the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations as developed by the Institute for Catholic Education:
  - (a) A Discerning Believer;
  - (b) An Effective Communicator;
  - (c) A Reflective, Creative and Holistic Thinker;
  - (d) A Self-directed, Responsible, Lifelong Learner;
  - (e) A Collaborative Contributor;;
  - (f) A Caring Family Member
  - (g) A Responsible Citizen.

## C. BACKGROUND

1. During the previous academic year, CSLIT's annual *Voices that Challenge* conference was held in-person, at the Ontario Science Centre on Earth Day on April 22, 2022, with 392 TCDSB students in attendance. (Seating capacity was 400) This conference featured innovative content on Environmental Stewardship and Indigenous Education. During this event, students were given the opportunity to advocate for social justice issues.
2. On Friday, September 2, 2022, 33 student leaders from 16 different secondary schools participated in a Catholic Student Leadership excursion to Olympia Sports Camp. The newly appointed 2022-2023 CSLIT Executive convened to review student data collected from the *Voices that Challenge* conference. During this weekend event, student leaders focused on the second year of our TCDSB Pastoral Plan, Walking with Christ with hearts of kindness and love, gathering as a community of believers to plan the 5 Pillars of Focus with 3 action items each for the upcoming school year.
3. During the first CSLIT meeting of the year, held on Tuesday, September 27, 2022, at the Catholic Education Centre, the new 5 pillars of focus derived from the *Voices That Challenge* student conference were presented to the student leaders. This General Assembly presentation allowed the Student Trustees to prioritize and create new action plans conducive to this year's educational climate.
4. To foster student success, the pillars of focus and the action items associated with each pillar will be assigned to appropriate CSLIT Executive members and subcommittees.
5. The practice of recommending initiatives from the *Voices that Challenge* conference through the outgoing Student Trustee and the previous CSLIT Executive Council to the incoming CSLIT Executive Council has become the adopted standard. This allows the current Student Trustees and CSLIT Executive to build upon the success of last year's Executive while developing new priorities enhancing the collective student voice.
6. The current recommendations put forth by the 2022-2023 CSLIT Executive will be more successful with the assistance of different departments and appropriate staff.

## D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

1. A summary of CSLIT's 2021-2022 actions based on the Pillars of Focus from the 2021 Voices that Challenge Report can be found in the Appendix.
2. The following are CSLIT recommended actions for 2022-2023 (*"For nothing will be impossible with God."* – Luke 1:37):

### **Pillar of Focus #1: Supporting Special Education**

As a community, it is important that we recognize our differences and our similarities. To ensure our Catholic student body continues to uphold a welcoming school environment, we must support our peers with special needs and students in Special Education programs. Regardless of exceptionality, it is important that every student has access to the same resources and opportunities.

This year, CSLIT will place an emphasis on ensuring our events and activities are accessible to all students, including those with special needs. As leaders, we seek to remove obstacles from social and educational environments that frequently prevent students with multiple exceptionalities from participating. In continuing to support this pillar of focus from last year, CSLIT will collaborate with staff from the Special Services department.

Further, we would like to bring CSLIT initiatives and events directly to Special Education programs in schools all across the Board.

Finally, we would like to advocate for the return of the TCDSB Special Olympics where CSLIT student leaders will exemplify love of self and neighbor, as witnessed through our Pastoral Plan and revealed by the prophet Micah...

*"Act Justly, Love Tenderly, Walk Humbly with our God."* -Micah 6:8

### **Pillar of Focus #2: Mental Health and Well-Being**

*"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."* -Matthew 18:20

A student's mental health and well-being are crucial towards their education and personal success. Raising awareness and removing the stigma around mental health within our community can further encourage students to become *reflective, creative,*

*and holistic thinkers.* Providing TCDSB students with the proper resources and offering mentoring opportunities can be beneficial.

Exam season can be quite stressful for high school students, which is why we intend to organize brief activities that will allow students to briefly disengage from their studies and divert their attention from anything that might be causing them tension or anxiety. We will collaborate with the Board's Mental Health staff to create relevant and worthwhile programs that support mental health and balance.

### **Pillar of Focus #3: Cultural Appreciation and Diversity**

“Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.”  
-1 Thessalonians 5:11

At the Toronto Catholic District School Board, our student body is made up of diverse cultures from all around the world which makes our school environments unique. All students should embrace, feel proud of their heritage, and be comfortable sharing who they are.

This year, to celebrate culture and diversity as a unified student body, we plan to host a Board-wide multicultural diversity day where secondary students can share their culture through clothing, foods, traditional dances and talents.

Furthermore, CSLIT will continue working closely with the Equity, Diversity, Indigenous Education and Community Relations Department to support events.

We also encourage the Board to continue to promote and support heritage months throughout the school year and host monthly celebration events to embrace various cultures. We will integrate diverse keynote speakers in our General Assemblies to inspire and educate our student leaders.

### **Pillar of Focus #4: Environmental Stewardship**

“The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it.” -  
Psalm 24.1

Catholic Social Teaching calls on us to be *responsible citizens* by promoting peace, justice, and sacredness of human life. As stewards of God’s creation, it is our responsibility to take care of the earth and its natural resources. Throughout our daily lives we must be mindful of the choices we make and reflect on both the short

and long-term impacts they can have. It is essential that we practice a sustainable way of living.

In order to achieve this, CSLIT will commit to environmentally friendly policies. Single use plastic water bottles will not be provided, and we will encourage bringing reusable containers for meals etc. Furthermore, as we endeavour to move towards a paperless reality, we will stray away from mass printing for conferences and assemblies.

Complementing our *Equity and Accessibility* pillar, we want to create opportunities to reuse school supplies that are gently used such as binders, school bags, notebooks, uniform items, shoes, lunch bags, etc. for students who can find use in them. By doing so, we not only provide resources, but we also decrease the amount of school supplies that end up in landfills.

Lastly, CSLIT will encourage school communities to conduct consistent garbage cleanups in their local communities. We will lead by example by having at least one cleanup session done by each subcommittee in different locations of our city. This will equate to a minimum of five local community cleanups throughout the school year.

#### **Pillar of Focus #5: Equity and Accessibility**

“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.” -Galatians 6. 10

As *collaborative contributors* we are centered on a vocation that respects the rights of all and fosters work that supports the common good. It is imperative that we identify and eliminate barriers that hinder student success. An equitable and accessible education allows all students to thrive with equal opportunities regardless of socioeconomic status, cultural background, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or level of exceptionality.

Coming out of the pandemic, we understand the difficulties families may be facing, including financial stress. Working together with Board staff, external organizations, and school communities, we want to provide resources that support the financial aspects of transportation for students in need. As most students take public transit everyday to get to and from school, transportation costs can accumulate.

Every year, many students who are looking to apply to colleges, the trades industry and universities are the first in their families to do so. First and/or second

generation students feel as if they have minimal support and understanding on how to tackle applying to post-secondary institutions, apprenticeships, etc.. This year, CSLIT plans to host seminars for high school students with TCDSB alumni and post-secondary staff from diverse backgrounds who may provide deeper insight into the process. This will equip our graduating students with the knowledge and representation they may lack access to.

Finally, as we return to full time in person learning and students experience de-streaming, we want to ensure that students are equipped with learning supports. We want to work with school communities to implement and enhance peer to peer tutoring programs. This will serve as a learning experience for both the tutors and tutored.

#### **Additional Board Support**

1. The goal is to have every TCDSB secondary school represented at our CSLIT monthly meetings. We ask that all Area Superintendents take the initiative to reach out to each of their secondary schools to encourage them to participate in our CSLIT monthly meetings. Monthly attendance can be provided to Area Superintendents to monitor if their region is being properly represented.
2. The goal is to have a minimum of 16 new schools join ECSLIT. That is 2 new schools from each superintendency. We ask that all Area Superintendents take the initiative to reach out to each of their elementary schools to encourage them to participate in our E-CSLIT monthly meetings. Monthly attendance can be provided to Area Superintendents to monitor if their region is being properly represented.

## **E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

1. Students should be motivated to create positive change in the world and not ignore any forms of injustice. Students feel a calling to live out their faith; as such, involvement in social justice actions allows them to make their faith more visible. The current Student Trustees will be engaging the CSLIT Executive and relevant subcommittees so that they can work with various staff members to address their specific recommendations. Students feel that Board policies must include student voice and perspective when addressing current and relevant local and global issues.
2. The Student Trustees and CSLIT will report annually to the Board on the impact of their initiatives.

## **F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

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