



## REPORT TO

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

## MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

*Be strong and bold; have no fear or dread of them, because it is the Lord your God who goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you. Deuteronomy 31:6*

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
December 19, 2022	January 12, 2023	Click here to enter a date.

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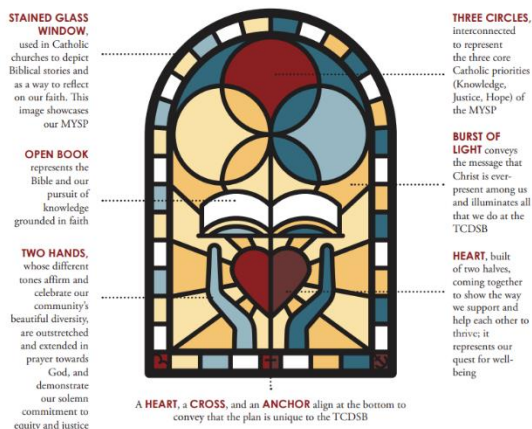
## INFORMATION REPORT

### 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.*



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## **A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

One of the pillars within the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) Multi-Year Strategic Plan is Well-Being: Growing in Knowledge with Justice and Hope. This means strengthening an environment rooted in Gospel values that nurtures hope and well-being. This is accomplished in part by continuing to use evidence-based well-being strategies and resources to create and sustain mentally healthy classrooms and schools for students that focus on the development of the whole person. Mentally healthy learning environments strive to ensure that the physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual needs of all students are met. This is best achieved through the valued and deliberate collaboration between TCDSB and its community partners. By involving students, parents, and parishes in this integral work, we will better address community Mental Health and Well-Being and nurture trusting relationships to guide our ongoing efforts.

Efforts to create mentally healthy school environments for students are evidenced in many ways. Progress with the Student Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy 2019-2022 has been made across each of the TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Pillars. The focus on creating a mentally healthy school environment has taken on a heightened relevance and has been extended to include the virtual school environment during the pandemic. This focus extends to all employees as well in better supporting a work-life balance for all staff that nurtures spiritual, emotional, physical, and social well-being since a focus on employees' well-being has a direct impact on students' wellness and achievement. To build both awareness and capacity, presentations, workshops, and mental health and well-being initiatives have been offered to students, staff, and the parent community.

*The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 32 hours.*

## **B. PURPOSE**

This Mental Health and Well-Being 2021-2022 Annual Report will include data related to student mental health and well-being procedures, programs, and professional development related to the creation of mentally healthy learning environments. This report serves the requirement of the Board for an annual review and will address the TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy 2021-2022 Feedback on the three stipulated pillars and several identified priority areas.

## C. BACKGROUND

The TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being policy (S.03) was adopted in June 2013. The TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy 2019-2022 was presented to the Special Education Advisory Committee on June 12, 2019, and approved by Board on September 19, 2019.

The Mental Health and Well-Being Policy includes the following metrics on the annual reporting of the Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy: Special Services personnel will annually review the Mental Health Response Guidelines, the Suicide Intervention Guidelines, and the Mental Health Crisis Response Guidelines and assess their effectiveness.

## D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

The following Mental Health and Well-Being Pillars form the basis of the TCDSB Student Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy 2019-2022:

- **Within Us** - “I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13). The TCDSB will continue to support and develop the fundamentals for everyday mental health and well-being for each and every student.
- **Between Us** - “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:12). As healthy relationships are one of the most critical protective factors that support positive mental health, the TCDSB will continue to support and strengthen these relationships.
- **Around Us** - “A friend loves at all times, and people are born to share adversity” (Proverbs 17:17). Healthy environments support each community member, and, thus, the TCDSB continues to be committed to creating mentally healthy environments.

The following related legislation and policy govern the TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being strategy:

- Open Minds, Healthy Minds Ontario’s Comprehensive Mental Health and Addiction Strategy, June 2011

- Ontario's Well-Being Strategy for Education: A Discussion Document, 2016
- TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being (S.03)

## E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

### **TCDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy 2021-2022 Feedback on the Three Pillars**

During the 2021-2022 school year, the pandemic continued to present unique challenges for Special Services staff to adopt flexible strategies to support the well-being of students, staff and their TCDSB families. Throughout the school year, the Mental Health Action Plan was used to address the continued need to serve TCDSB students, families, and staff.

Highlighted below are some key strategic responses that have supported our students, staff, and families, beginning in September 2021 and continuing through to August 2022. They are organized by priorities identified in 2021-2022.

#### **Priority #1: Supporting mental health and social-emotional literacy to create mentally-healthy classrooms and schools**

- In early September, the mental health team facilitated a webinar and launch of the **Student Re-Engagement Kit** for all school staff to raise awareness of mental health literacy and resources.
- Several **calendars of wellness activities** were created and distributed throughout the school year (i.e., September, Christmas, January return, Bell Let's Talk week, March break, Mental Health Awareness Week in May) for easy implementation of social-emotional learning activities in the classroom.
- In collaboration with the Equity, Diversity, Indigenous Education Department staff, messaging around **Black Mental Health Week** was sent to system with calendar events for the week.

- Developed the **Decision and Support Tool** to help local school teams to make informed decisions around student presentations of a sensitive nature.
- The Social Work department designated a special role for a staff member to support Ukrainian newcomers. The staff member helped facilitate consultations for families, delivered a workshop on Stress and Coping and prepared **300 Coping Kits** with wellness activities and toys for students over the summer break.

## **Priority #2: Support student well-being**

The Mental Health, Psychology and Social Work teams work together to support student well-being at the TCDSB. A team of over 70 Social Workers, 48 Psychology service providers and six Mental Health Professional Workers actively engaged in providing counselling services, conducting psychological assessments, facilitating mental health workshops to various stakeholders (i.e., educators, students, and parents) and providing suicide and crisis interventions. Below is a summary of the data gathered over the 2021-2022 school year:

- Mental Health Professional Workers facilitated 29 mental health literacy workshops in various secondary schools reaching over 5,000 students and 300 staff members. Social Work staff facilitated about 360 classroom presentations throughout the school year. Psychology staff delivered 73 mental health workshops and 35 learning-based presentations to schools.
- Social Work, Psychology, and Mental Health team members provided clinical support and team consults as follows. Individual counselling referrals: social workers supported 11,367 students, psychology service providers supported 342 students and mental health professional workers supported 347 students, totalling 12,056 students overall.
- Over the summer months, Special Services continued to provide clinical support for 61 students.

**Priority #3: Continue to build capacity among staff to help them better support students' mental health and well-being**

- In collaboration with the Health and Physical Education (HPE) lead, the mental health team facilitated a webinar to raise awareness of **social-emotional learning** for HPE teachers, as well as for St. Anne educators.
- Facilitated an information session to all school administrators on **mitigating factors** impacting progressive discipline and decisions about student behaviour.
- During the **Pastoral Day of Care**, provided classroom resources to support student well-being to 125 secondary school administrators and chaplains.
- In collaboration with Safe Schools, HPE, Nurturing Catholic Community (NCC) and Mental Health facilitated a series of presentations on **cannabis** for school administrators to raise awareness about cannabis and to offer resources for educators.
- In collaboration with The Canadian Centre for Child Protection, facilitated an information session on **sex trafficking** for all administrators.
- In collaboration with Safe Schools, Equity, NCC and Mental health, facilitated a workshop for supporting students who identify as 2SLGBTQ+ with Father James Martin to all school administrators.
- Individual Social Work and Psychology staff members \completed a certificate program from School Mental Health Ontario, entitled **Centering Black Youth Well-being** that provides foundational knowledge to cultivate practices that challenge and combat systemic anti-Black racism.

- A total of four mental health workshops were delivered to 149 new TCDSB teachers through the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP).

#### **Priority #4: Student engagement.**

- Continued the implementation of the *Stop the Stigma* student mental health awareness program in 74 elementary schools and 32 secondary schools. The virtual Stop the Stigma Symposium on **The Power of Community** reached 300 Grade 7-12 classrooms live. The session was recorded and accessed by another 500 viewers.
- In collaboration with Safe Schools staff, the Mental Health team presented on the **Mental Health Benefits of Hope** at their symposium.
- A total of 6 students from the Student Mental Health Action Committee, Catholic Student Leadership Impact Team and student trustees created 3 short videos entitled, “**How can staff support students’ mental health?**” that were later distributed to all schools.
- **Newcomer resources** were prepared by mental health professionals for newcomer students.

#### **Priority #5: Continue to build students’ safety nets by providing suicide awareness and intervention training to staff.**

- Delivered two **SafeTalk Suicide Awareness** workshops to 27 support staff at both panels to empower them with strategies on how to recognize and respond to students who may be struggling with suicidal ideation.
- Offered the **START suicide prevention program** (asynchronous webinar) in conjunction with a live session to contextualize the training and review our TCDSB guidelines to 25 elementary support staff.
- Delivered a two 2-day **Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training** (ASIST) to 31 Social Work, Psychology and Guidance staff. Suicide Intervention Risk reviews are completed using the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) model.



#### **Priority #6: Parent engagement in supporting student mental health**

- Special Services hosted ten **Parent Engagement presentations** on various mental health topics including Helping Teens Navigate Emotional Times, Supporting Gifted Students and Supporting Students with Anxiety, reaching hundreds of parents.
- Distributed seasonal **Mental Health Newsletters** (i.e., September, Christmas, Mental Health Awareness Week in May, summer) for parents.

#### **Priority #7: Memorandums of Understanding with children and youth mental health agencies**

- The social work and psychology departments continued the partnership with community mental health agencies for mental health services in the community. This partnership allows families to access service more quickly than typical wait list times. The Social Work and Mental Health Professional Workers teams referred 2,709 students to outside agencies with about 50 student referrals being part of Priority Access.
- In collaboration with the Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy, Safe Schools, NCC, HPE and Mental Health, an information workshop on cannabis for educators at both panels was facilitated.
- TCDSB maintained the existing Mental Health Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with 13 mental health agencies, who provided services to students.
- Social Work, Psychology and Mental Health Professional staff continued to work collaboratively with Mental Health and Addiction Nurses through Toronto Central Community and Care Access Centre (TC-CCAC) and referred 216 students to this service.



**Priority #8: Support staff well-being for all employee groups through various professional development opportunities.**

- System **messaging on Gratitude** shared with business and academic leaders.
- **Professional Development** on Staff Well-Being facilitated for 70 Assessment and Programming Teachers and Autism staff, as well as for 75 new teachers through the New Teacher Induction Program and with support staff at both panels throughout the year.
- Two **Masterclass in Stress Management** workshops offered to 200 elementary support staff throughout the year.
- Provided **information and strategies regarding** Staff Well-Being during Pastoral Day of Care to 125 secondary school administrators and chaplains.
- A workshop with Asante Haughton, offered to 30 staff members on **Deep Responsibility: Building Safer Spaces for Inclusion and Empowerment**.

**F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

This report is for the information of the Board.