

March 23, 2023  
Delegation-revised  
TCDSB Board Meeting

Good evening

My name is Ira-Maria Koulik. I am a 3rd generation Canadian Ukrainian parent of many students at St. Josaphat Cathedral Catholic School located in West Toronto, a co-chair of the CSPC of St. Josaphat Catholic School and the OAPCE Representative. I am a strong advocate for rights and equality and would like to discuss a few points of information, through you Mr. Chair to the TCDSB, if I may. I would like for you to understand that we are here because we listen, we are passionate and we have a deep love for our kids and our school community.

As parents of the school, we have reached out to get support not only for our students, but for our administration, our school building and resources for our families. At the beginning of the school year, we had sent Emails to TCDSB Superintendents, principals, Trustees. We had received support for administration, additional teachers and classrooms. We were told that our school was averaging below class average of 23 students per class.

Now things are very different.

Our first delegation to the board was at the Student Achievement Committee 2 March, 2023. We had requested a report by senior staff. The report presented to the board 22 March 2023, against board policy which allows for public receipt of report minimum 72 hrs before presentation to address concerns. We have sent emails to the Ministry Of Education, to which we received a reply stating that any funding provided by MoE is for the School Board to allocate.

Our 2nd Delegation was to be yesterday to respond to the staff report to the board. The same report we only received yesterday.

Today I am here to delegate, a delegation that was written by me before the report to the board about St. Josaphat was received, as per TCDSB delegation guidelines, for the parents of St. Josaphat for a 3rd time. I have accepted and changed my delegation, per the conditions of me being allowed to delegate tonight. I would like us, the CSPC of St. Josaphat to continue our open discussions with TCDSB, about the Concerns of Our very much cherished School, St. Josaphat Cathedral Catholic School, the Students, the parents and families, the teachers and staff, the administration and the Community as a whole.

My concerns are outlined as follows:

1. Financial: There was money allocated specifically for CUAET students and families
2. Equity: Our students are looking for their educational and security needs to be met, and,
3. Inclusion: Language and culture is the door to any society.

Grants for Student Needs (GSN) aka "Funding Formula" paid by Ministry Of education, as stipulated in The Education Act, a legal document outline the rules, policies and laws attributable to public schools and funding.

St. Josaphat Student population has grown from 150 students in June 2022 to 408 students today and

growing. Most of the new 250 students coming to Canada via CUAET program and now comprise the majority of our school. The response in the email from the MoE, dated 10 March 2023 indicated commitment to providing additional funding for Students from CUAET Program, which would be in addition to the GSN funding. The CFO TCDSB, at the Student Achievement meeting, dated March 3rd, indicated the funding is not specifically being allocated to a student population because of previous debts and encumbrances. In the TCDSB budget framework presentation, nowhere was CUAET student population requirements mentioned nor even considered. Funding meant for and allocated to, the students and community population in dire needs, those students and families fleeing war, such as those that comprise well over 60% of the school at St. Josaphat, was not mentioned anywhere.

The MoE indicated for 2021/2022 & 2022/2023 additional Funds for CUAET Students

TCDSB and Ministry of Education, both claim that funding is provided for the supports, however, those funds were and continue to blatantly not be spent on the intended purposes. In a response to our letter to the board in October 2022, we were told there was an increase to the block budget of \$10,000. Yesterday we learned another \$20,000 was to be allocated to our school. we have accepted another 200 students since that time, that block budget increase should at the minimum be 500% more. If we consider the GSN, as previously mentioned, at an average of \$12,000 per student, that is an increase of  $(\$12,000 \times 250) = \$3,000,000$ . An increase to the block budget of \$10,000/\$3,000,000 is not even 1%.

Inclusion- the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized. Our student population and their families are looking to fill basic human needs, not wants- they need security and accessible education.

The Ministry of Education stated, "Our government has funded hiring of 7,000 additional education workers in our schools to better meet the needs of Ontario Students" in their Letter dated 10 March 2023. We have asked repeatedly for additional in school support. Providing additional online educational supports is great however it does not help a population that cannot access it due to either language or technological barriers. Our school barely has enough computers for 2 classrooms- much less 16 full classrooms.

Language barriers are not being adequately addressed with ESL and Spec Ed in the school. It is difficult for anyone to translate and listen and learn all at the same time, much less young kids who are suffering from PTSD, culture shock and daily reminders of being unsettled from their home. And the principal, bless her heart, who child and gives them the attention and security they crave, all while attending to her administrative duties; well it's just impossible. The load that she has borne and continues to on her own shoulders is just too much.

We have listened to you.

Now please hear us.

The following are actionable items by the board that can be initiated right away.

1. Ensure funding given to TCDSB meant for CUAET students is allocated to the schools where they have the most CUAET student registration and is a priority item recognised by the TCDSB budget.
2. Follow the TECT recommendations for teaching support requirements for our special needs (CUAET) student population.

3. We would like a better understanding as to why the CUAET program newcomers are not considered in the budget.

Lastly, I would very much like to thank you, the TCDSB for acting so quickly and definitively regarding the building environment health and safety concerns we delegated about at the Student Achievement committee earlier this month and in October 2022. During March Break, the school building had undergone a Spring clean-up; including, but not limited to, bathrooms being painted, floors being washed and waxed, desks all disinfected. It was immediately noticed by the students and staff and greatly regarded by the parents, who regaled many stories from their kids about the fresh smell and the pink washrooms. Many health and safety concerns were acted upon, very quickly, and we are very grateful for the attention to these issues.

“Walking with Christ: with eyes of faith and hope, with hearts of kindness and love, with minds of justice and peace.”

Thank you

I will take questions, if any.

St. Josaphat,

Pray For Us

Ira Koulik

Co-Chair CSPC

[k2swim@gmail.com](mailto:k2swim@gmail.com)