

## BLESSING AND OFFICIAL OPENING OF SCHOOLS POLICY & DRAFT WORK PLAN

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Date: April 2, 2024

### **POLICY INFORMATION**

**Policy:** Blessing and Official Opening of Schools

**Section:** Communications and Information Technology

**Last reviewed:** May 2018

**Lead department:** Communications

### **Phase I. INITIATE POLICY REVIEW**

This workplan will be discussed at the Governance and Policy Committee (GAP) meeting on: April 2, 2024.

Proposed Content Changes:

- Policy to be reformatted into the updated branded policy template
- Reference the Ministry of Educations' Communications Protocol: Public Communications, Events and Signage document
- Consider incorporation of content from School Events Communications and Invitee Protocols Policy
- Reflect best practices in the sector

The proposed content changes are due to the following reason(s):

- Legislation
- Government directives/policies
- Board decisions
- Operational requirements
- Simplify and/or update language
- Other: A motion\* passed at the December 2023 board meeting referred the policy to GAP for review.

WHEREAS: Policy S.08 Blessing and Official Opening of Schools provides some funding for celebrations;  
WHEREAS: A budget of \$600 per school community under 500 students and \$750 per school community over 500 students are allocated to cover some of the costs of the blessing and official opening;  
WHEREAS: A maximum annual budget of \$10,000 is allocated board wide;  
WHEREAS: Policy S.08 does not address school anniversaries;  
WHEREAS: The Board provides schools with \$500 for milestone anniversaries including 50, 75 and 100;  
WHEREAS: The Board does not provide any funding for other significant events;

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WHEREAS: Costs have increased exponentially and the Policy should be revised and updated; and

WHEREAS: Policies in general should not include dollar amounts.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT: This motion be referred to the Governance and Policy Committee for a policy review (Consideration of Motion from Trustee Rizzo regarding Policy S.08 Blessing and Official Opening of Schools).

### **Phase II.        ENGAGEMENT**

Are external engagements applicable to this Policy?

Yes

External engagement will include:

CSPC Chairs and Principals.

Timing required for engagement:

- 1-2 months (due to nature of CSPC meeting frequency)

### **Phase III.        DRAFTING, REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

- Present engagement feedback to GAP for review & consideration; and GAP to provide staff with direction on revisions to the policy, if required on: June 4, 2024.
- Staff draft updated policy with GAP feedback, and present to GAP for review, input and approval on: September 3, 2024.



POLICY SECTION: SCHOOLS  
 SUB-SECTION:  
 POLICY NAME: BLESSING AND OFFICIAL OPENING OF SCHOOLS  
 POLICY NO: S.08

<b>Date Approved:</b> October, 1967	<b>Date of Next Review:</b> May, 2024	<b>Dates of Amendments:</b> May, 2019, March, 2013, 14 Dec 92; 18 Jun 92; 19 Oct 89; 16 Oct 86, Oct.67
<b>Cross References:</b>		
<b>Appendix</b>		

**Purpose:**

The policy outlines the manner in which the Toronto Catholic District School Board can provide support concerning blessings and official school openings.

**Scope and Responsibility:**

The Director of Education with the support of the Communications Department and respective superintendents will provide support to the Principal during events celebrating official openings and blessings.

**Alignment with MYSP:**

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Living Our Catholic Values

Strengthening Public Confidence

Providing Stewardship of Resources

### **Regulations:**

The following procedure shall be adopted with respect to solemn blessings and official openings of new schools and sod turnings for new schools.

1. The Principal will consult with the area trustee, pastor and superintendent to determine a suitable date and time for the event. A planning committee will be established locally, including the principal, school staff, Catholic School Parent Council (CSPC) and student council, with support from the Communications Department.
2. The official guest list will include:  
  
the Archbishop/Cardinal, Chair of the Board, local trustee, parish priest, senior board officials, architect, contractor, the Minister of Education, the Mayor (if city partnership), the local city Councillor, the local member of provincial parliament and the local member of parliament.

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3. The order of speakers on the program will be as follows:
  - a. Local Trustee
  - b. Chair of the Board
  - c. Archbishop/bishop/parish priest (blessing)
  - d. Principal of the School/Director of Education (if no Principal)
  - e. Minister of Education/ member of provincial parliament designate
  - f. Local Member of Parliament (no speaking role unless project involvement)
  - g. Mayor/ Councillor designate (if city partnership)
  - h. CSPC Chair/ President of the student council (where applicable)
4. If the event is to celebrate the opening/blessing of an addition to an existing school, or the sod turning for a school addition, the official guest list will include:

The Trustee, local parish priest, area superintendent, architect, contractor, local city Councillor (if city funding) and local member of provincial parliament.

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5. The order of speakers on the program for the opening of an addition to an existing school will be as follows:
  - a. Local Trustee
  - b. Chair of the Board
  - c. Pastor
  - d. Principal of the school
  - e. Local member of provincial parliament
  - f. Local member of parliament—no speaking role unless involvement in the project
  - g. Local city Councillor (no speaking role unless involvement in the project)
  - h. Superintendent
  - i. Chair of Catholic School Parent Council
  - j. President of the student council, where applicable
6. Others to be invited to attend sod turnings, openings and blessings of new schools and additions can include students, parents, pastor(s) of neighbouring parish(es), former principals of the school, principals of neighbouring

Catholic and public elementary and secondary schools and the Director of Education or designate.

7. The ceremony for the blessing of the school will be planned in consultation with the pastor.
8. An annual budget of \$600 per school community under 500 students and \$750 per school community over 500 students will be set for the costs of the blessing and official opening of schools up to a maximum of \$10,000 per year.

**Definitions:**

**Evaluation and Metrics:**

The effectiveness of the policy will be determined by measuring the following:

The Director of Education, supported by the Communications Department, shall ensure compliance with the invite protocol and overall maximum budget allocation.