

Delegation Submission from Joe Di Fonzo for the 2024-04-23 Board Meeting

My name is Joe Di Fonzo.

I am a retired teacher from the TCDSB. I taught for 32 years (7 in elementary and 25 at the secondary level and most of those years teaching Religion and Physical Education). Looking back, I feel very fortunate to have spent those years bringing my students to a fuller understanding and love of the faith we all share and in helping them understand and appreciate the miracle of human life and its fragility.

I think you all would agree that the TCDSB has as its mission in Christ to educate and form young minds in the love of truth and goodness. Too often in our world today truth has become relative to where each individual is able to choose what their truth is. But we cannot circumvent the fact that objective truth does exist. Case in point. The humanity of life in the womb is a scientific fact. We can choose to ignore this fact and justify it in any number of ways, or we can respect that truth and align ourselves with Sacred Scripture, the Magisterium of the Church and with Christ himself who said, “I am the way the truth and the life”.

To lead the young to truth and goodness is indeed a noble mission that I was proud to share in, specifically on this issue. For many years a number of teaching colleagues and I organized for the entire school board a Respect for Life Week during the month of May, always around Mother’s Day and as a lead up to the annual March for Life rally held in Ottawa. Information was presented in a positive, life affirming manner modeling itself in how the wonderful Sisters of Life live out their ministry in supporting both mother and child.

This was fully supported by the school board in various ways:

- ...by promoting this week throughout the entire board to all schools
- ...by helping with the printing of material resources which included daily prayers and teaching resources to be used in the classroom.
- ...by helping finance the cost of guest speakers in schools
- ...and by helping finance buses, transporting students to the annual March for Life in Ottawa

These endeavors were well received and very effective in helping students understand, respect and value all human life, born and preborn, disabled and able, the young and elderly and those in their last days of life.

What came of these efforts? The school board administration thought it best to have this teacher-led initiative passed over to their administration. This made sense as it

was indeed a board wide initiative and several of the teachers organizing it, like myself, were soon to be retiring.

I am not certain what has come of this special week. Perhaps it may be the case that with so many other board initiatives to organize and administer, this issue and this special week has been lost. If that is the case, it is a great shame that this has happened. (But, I am open to being corrected on this.)

However, the proposed motion by Trustee Del Grande can move us back to where we should be. May (the month of Mary) is the perfect month to attest to what we believe in, namely the sanctity of all life. Mary's "yes" to life and our "yes" to life go hand in hand.

The Pro Life flag flown in May will speak to this truth....that every child does matter, including the most innocent and vulnerable child in the womb.

As trustees of Catholic Education for this board, you are to lead all stakeholders in this noble mission of educating our youth in truth and goodness.

How appropriate that on this day, Ann Marie D'Amico Day of Kindness and Love that you have an opportunity to show your kindness and love for the preborn through a vote unanimously in support of this motion.

I am open to any questions you may have.