



REPORT TO

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

CSLIT: Inspiring Active Citizenship In Catholic Education

The Ontario Catholic Graduate is called to be a Responsible Citizen and “to promote equality, democracy, solidarity, for a just, peaceful and compassionate society”.

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review	Approval	Implementation
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INFORMATION REPORT

Vision

At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.

Mission:

The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community rooted in the love of Christ. We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge and to lead

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A. Executive Summary

On March 10, 2015 Student Trustees Hannah McGroarty and Christopher MacDonald held the annual TCDSB Student Leadership Conference “Voices That Challenge”. The CSLIT (2014-2015) under the direction of Student Trustees Hannah MacGroarty and Christopher MacDonald reviewed those recommendations. These recommendations were presented to the then in-coming student Trustees, Allison Gacad and Karina Dubrovskaya. After consultation with the CSLIT Executive (which were appointed in June 2015) and the CSLIT General Assembly at a meeting at Olympia Sports Camp September 6, 2015, students are prioritizing recommendations and developing a plan of action for 2015-2016. CSLIT wishes to further explore and address these recommendations in order to better serve the students of the TCDSB.

B. Purpose

The report includes practical activities that schools perform to support social justice initiatives in our schools and address the recommendations made by outgoing student trustees Hannah McGroarty and Christopher MacDonald. The report also includes valuable student input pertaining to the implementation of social justice initiatives and the development of a justice-oriented attitude in schools.

The current Student Trustees, Allison Gacad and Karina Dubrovskaya decided to seek out further clarification of the recommendations and engaged the entire CSLIT committee in order to prioritize and clarify specific recommendations that they felt were most important to address during their term as student trustees. The issues raised represent the voice of the students and presenting them at Board allows for direct involvement in issues that impact the students of the TCDSB.

C. BACKGROUND

This report complies with the requirement of an annual report to the Board of Trustees based on the CSLIT conference “Voices that Challenge”.

The 2015-2016 CSLIT decided that the group would like to explore, clarify, specify and prioritize all of the recommendations from the Voices That Challenge Conference, March 10, 2015 before having staff take action in response to the recommendations. Some of the original issues raised in the 2015 conference and subsequent CSLIT meetings are no longer issues of priority for this year’s CSLIT. Relevant issues for the 2015-2016 CSLIT have been assigned to the appropriate Executive Members and subcommittees. The practice of recommending initiatives from the Voices That Challenge Conference by the outgoing student trustee and CSLIT executive to the

incoming CSLIT executive but having the incoming CSLIT select and prioritize from these recommended initiatives has become the adopted procedure. This procedure allows for the current student trustees and CSLIT to adopt and work on the priorities they feel are most relevant.

The subsequent recommendations put forth by the current CSLIT can be dealt with administratively with the support of the appropriate program departments.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH

Students should be stimulated to effect positive change in our world around injustices.

Students feel a calling to live out their faith, involvement in social justice actions allow them to make their faith visible. The current Student Trustees will testify that they support a more in-depth analysis of the relevant issues and wish to engage the CSLIT standing committees so that they can work with staff to address their specific recommendations.

Students feel that at the board level policies must be in keeping with current global social justice issues.

E. IMPLEMENTATION, STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

The following is an action plan regarding the Report to Board - “CSLIT: Inspiring Active Citizenship in Catholic Education”. The Student Leadership Department and student leaders attending the CSLIT meeting Monday, September 6, 2015 agreed to develop specific action plans related to the recommendations. The CSLIT wants to emphasize that while these issues represent the students’ priority issues they are not necessarily in order of priority. CSLIT recognized that different issues listed below become a priority at different points in the school year to allow for a monthly focus.

CSLIT 2015-2016 Recommended Actions

1. First Nations

CSLIT would like to enter into greater dialogue with theologians, government representatives and teachers on issues that they feel are relevant and challenging to them as Catholic students about the issues impacting Canada's First Nation People. In particular but not limited to, students are very concerned about social justice issues related to education, the agreements in treaties being broken, environmental issues, suicides and deaths of First Nation people.

Students could begin these challenging conversations by continuing to invite speakers and government representatives to the CSLIT Executive and General Assembly meetings. A number of TCDSB secondary schools invited bishops from Missions Canada to speak to their students on September 21st and 22nd, 2015.

The possibility of an outreach program to the Superior North Catholic School Board in collaboration with some of the Dioceses of the Bishops of Missions Canada is also being explored. A 21st century learning and leadership program in partnership with TCDSB student leadership already exists with this board.

A meeting was held with the Director of Superior North Catholic School Board about the possibility of an outreach program to the Catholic schools near Thunder Bay. This program is in the planning stages for May 2016.

2. Mental Wellness

According to the students, one of the most common mental health issues they are facing is stress, particularly due to academic demands at semester's end.

CSLIT hopes to plan a week of relaxing activities and education on how to cope with stress prior to final examinations in high schools.

Time management skills are needed and the students are seeking these skills to be taught as part of the curriculum for all students.

CSLIT is looking to support and partner on the great work that is being done in this area by our board through the Mental Health Lead.

CSLIT recommends TCDSB places guidelines in regards to the timing of assigning Independent Study Units and tests. Many students spoke of having large projects, major tests, and ISUs due too close to the date of final examinations, leaving relatively little time to prepare for them.

3. L'Arche

L'Arche has been a major partner with CSLIT ever since World Youth Day 2002, when CSLIT and student leadership hosted 10,000 pilgrims at The Ricoh Coliseum with Jean Vanier as leader of one of the catechistical sessions. CSLIT would like to be intentional about highlighting its partnership with L'Arche and celebrating this milestone including:

Dance In The Shadow—a curriculum for secondary students about former TCDSB student Rebecca Beanni.

A CSLIT retreat to L'Arche currently planned for November 3rd.

A CSLIT-led month of awareness, through the use of social media platforms, will take place throughout October 2015 including interviews with L'Arche employees and messages from Jean Vanier.

Student leadership formation through continuing to expand opportunities to promote student leadership with students of differing abilities through programs such as the **PAST leadership training** at Camp Olympia (October 14, 15 and 16).

4. Inclusion and Belonging for All Students

Last year a retreat was held for TCDSB students who participate in clubs that promote equity and respect for all students. The speakers and discussions were excellent, aligned with Catholic values and the Catholic Graduate expectations, particularly to be a **Caring Family Member**. The students left the retreat with a much stronger feeling of inclusion, belonging, safety and support. In the OCSTA document "Respecting Differences" it states that "the entire aim of a Catholic School is to create a loving and positive learning environment consistent with Catholic teaching."

In this spirit, **CSLIT would like to continue its support** for individuals who are dealing with sensitive and complex issues so that all are to be treated with sensitivity, respect and compassion. CSLIT will investigate ways to share best practices to enhance the inclusion of all students.

5. Support For TCDSB's International Students and Refugees

As the number of international students in TCDSB has increased so has the need to support these students. In alignment with the Catholic Graduate Expectation ***to be a Collaborative Contributor*** CSLIT requests that TCDSB is even more intentional about creating a warm, welcoming and nurturing home environment that allows for international students and refugees to grow and get involved with school and community life while still retaining their unique cultural identities.

Many international students face challenges while coping with their new life in Toronto and CSLIT is concerned that many need help and support.

CSLIT is suggesting some programs or initiatives that might make the transition easier for international students as well as support Development and Peace in addressing the refugee crisis.

6. Environmental Issues

It is expected of TCDSB students that they achieve all of the Catholic Graduate Expectations and CSLIT would like to highlight the following expectation for this year: ***to graduate as responsible citizens*** who take care of our environment. Pope Francis's recent Encyclical letter *Laudato Si* (Praise be to You) centers around the concept of integral ecology to describe the relationships of each of us: with God, with one's self, with other human beings, with creation. He calls each of us to broaden our examination of conscience, to reflect seriously on how we are living in communion, not only with God, others, and ourselves, but also with all creatures and with nature as a whole.

Tackling issues such as global warming and the repercussions of climate change will intentionally be woven into the CSLIT and ECSLIT conferences and other student leadership opportunities. A major focus for student leadership for this year would be Earth Day (April 22 2016). CSLIT is looking to partner with a number of organizations during this month.

Students are looking to plan and initiate conferences with support from CSLIT, such as Robert Adragna of Bishop Allen. Robert is in the process of planning a conference specific to the polar regions of our world, entitled "Our Poles, Our Planet".

CSLIT recommends the TCDSB continue to encourage Eco-clubs throughout

schools, as well as promote the use of composting as a means of waste management.

F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is provided for the consideration of the Board.