



**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:**

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.

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.

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.