



REPORT TO

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

SAFE SCHOOLS ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill and live there in safety.
~Leviticus 25:19

Drafted

September 23, 2024

Meeting Date

November 7, 2024

Michael Caccamo, Superintendent of Nurturing our Catholic Community, Safe Schools, Continuing Education, Religious Accommodations

Nadia Adragna, Principal of St. Martin Catholic Schools and Safe Schools Department

INFORMATION REPORT

Vision: *IN GOD'S IMAGE: Growing in Knowledge, with Justice and Hope.*

Mission: *Nurturing the faith development and academic excellence of our Catholic learning community through the love of God, neighbour, and self.*



MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN
2022 - 2025

IN GOD'S IMAGE: Growing in Knowledge, with Justice and Hope



Brendan Browne
Director of Education

Adrian Della Mora
Associate Director of Academic Affairs & Chief Operating Officer

Derek Boyce
Associate Director of Corporate Services and Chief Commercial Officer

Ryan Putnam
Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The nurturing of safe and caring learning environments, supported by positive Catholic school climates, continues to be a key goal for the Toronto Catholic District School Board. The Safe Schools Report and Action Plan outline priorities and actions that foster safe, caring, and inclusive environments, rooted in the love of Christ. These priorities are informed by various data sources listed in Section C of this report.

There was a decrease in severe incidents, board expulsions and school expulsions, and a significant decrease in suspensions among students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Various factors examined in Section C below provide contextual insight on suspension and expulsion data and inform our priorities and action items for 2024-2025.

In addition, all schools review their local Safe Schools metrics with their Safe and Accepting Schools Teams. This review is used to inform each school's 2024-2025 Safe Schools Plan. The components of each plan include action items for Bullying Awareness, Prevention and Intervention, Progressive Discipline, and Positive School Climate. Area Superintendents and the Safe Schools Department review monthly suspension and expulsion data of schools and support principals as needed.

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 110 hours.

B. PURPOSE

1. The 2023-2024 Safe Schools Report reviews key metrics, programs, and activities aimed at creating a safe, inclusive learning environment.
2. Information in the following areas will be shared in this report:
 - i. Action Items for 2024-2025 (Appendix A) responding to needs identified through the review of data.
 - ii. Review of 2023-2024 Action Items (Appendix B)
 - iii. Alternative Safe Schools Programs for Students (Appendix B)
 - iv. Suspension and Expulsion Data (Appendix C)

C. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

When comparing 2023-2024 data to 2022-2023, we have noted a decrease in the severity of incidents occurring in our schools which is reflected in the decrease in the number of suspensions pending possible expulsion issued. In addition, there was an overall decrease in the number of board expulsions and school expulsions approved

in the 2023-2024 school year. A significant decrease in the number of students with an IEP suspended in 2023-2024 is also noted which indicates that mitigating and other factors are being considered by principals when making important decisions related to progressive discipline. The percentage of students suspended under Section 306 of the *Education Act* remains unchanged in comparison to previous years excluding Covid years.

In addition, when reviewing data from SCALE, a trusted collaborative partner coordinating analytics activities for SafeTO, an increase in the number of youth (12-17) engaging in some violent activities across the city was also noted for the 2023 – 2024 school year. The Safe Schools Department has also considered this information in determining priorities for the 2024-2025 school year.

While in 2023 – 2024 most students engaged in in-person learning, some students continue to recover from the impacts of the pandemic and school closures. The pandemic has affected children’s social, emotional, and physical development and may continue to have an adverse impact on some students’ behaviour and decision-making. This impact, as well as others, continues to be considered when determining priorities for the 2024 – 2025 school year.

Most students in the Student Voice Survey reported feeling safe at school. Both elementary and secondary students report feeling safe in school and most areas in and around school. Responding to incidents of bullying continues to be an area of focus, and action items relating to dealing with this serious issue center on inclusion, celebrating diversity and emphasizing the dignity and worth of everyone as a child of God.

The Fresh Start process is non-disciplinary in nature. Please see Appendix B for additional information pertaining to student transitions related to concerns of safety.

Data sources for this report include, but are not limited to:

- i. Summary of Suspension and Expulsion Data
- ii. School Climate Surveys 2022-23 (administered every two years as mandated by the Ministry of Education)
- iii. The Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)
- iv. Safe Schools’ alternative programs to support student achievement and well-being.
- v. Information shared by SafeTO/SCALE

2024 – 2025 Safe Schools Action Plan

The Safe Schools Department has identified several action items for the 2024 – 2025 school year following a review of various data sources listed here in Section C of this report and in consultation with various TCDSB departments including Indigenous Education, Equity and Community Relations Department, Special Services Department, Nurturing Our Catholic Community Department, Research Department and Curriculum Leadership and Innovation Department. (See Appendix A.)

This Action Plan has been intentionally developed to promote healthy relationships within the context of a safe, positive, respectful, and caring Catholic school climate. The plan promotes inclusion, addresses discrimination, and adopts a trauma-informed, culturally relevant approach grounded in Catholic values.

This Action Plan aligns with the priorities in our Multi-Year Strategic and Pastoral Plans: “In God’s Image: Growing in Knowledge, with Justice and Hope”, Mental Health Action Plan, and Equity Action Plan.

Through the implementation of various strategies and interventions including restorative practice, consideration of mitigating and other factors, staff professional learning, student leadership and voice, parent and community engagement, the Safe Schools Department remains committed to supporting students in adopting more positive and pro-social behaviours.

In addition, all schools develop a Safe Schools Plan to address local needs and to identify initiatives and strategies that promote a positive school climate in their respective communities. Each year Safe and Accepting Schools Teams review the outcome of their Plan to celebrate successes and identify areas of continued focus.

Safe Schools Alternative Programs

St. Martin Catholic School

St. Martin Catholic School supports expelled students and participants in the Voluntary Intervention Program (VIP). The school serves elementary students in grades 6- 8 and secondary school students in grades 9-12. (See Appendix B)

The Voluntary Intervention Program has become an increasingly important option for secondary students who are struggling with academic engagement and regular school attendance.

Transitional Intervention Program for Suspended Students (TIPSS)

The long-term suspension program offers programming to students serving a suspension of 6-20 days in length. For students receiving a suspension between 6-10 days, academic programming is provided. For students serving a suspension of 11-20 days, social work assistance is provided in addition to academic programming. Parents are not obligated to accept TIPSS support although participation is strongly encouraged.

Students are served by TIPSS teachers at sessions in Toronto Public Library sites and/or virtually. In circumstances where the parent/adult student chooses not to attend TIPSS, the school provides the student/family with work packages. In all cases, students are afforded the opportunity to continue with their learning while on long-term suspension. (See Appendix B)

D. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Throughout the 2023-2024 school year, the Safe Schools Department has collaborated with other TCDSB departments to implement various aligned action items. A summary of Safe Schools' action items and initiatives is included in Appendix B. Area Superintendents and Safe Schools Department review monthly suspension and expulsion data of schools and support principals as needed.

E. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the information of the Board of Trustees.