



REPORT TO

REGULAR BOARD

RECOMMENDATION TO BOARD FROM THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

We ought therefore to show hospitality to such people so that we may work together for the truth. 3 John 1:8

Drafted

May 22, 2025

S. Harris – Recording Secretary

S. Adaikpoh – Assistant Recording Secretary

Meeting Date

June 12, 2025

RECOMMENDATION 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

This report provides the Board of Trustees with a recommendation from the **SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**.

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 0.5 hours.

B. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Trustees with a recommendation from the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC).

C. BACKGROUND

1. On 2025-05-21, the Special Education Advisory Committee met.
2. At that meeting, there was a recommendation proposed to the Board of Trustees.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

The Special Education Advisory Committee met on 2025-05-21 and a motion regarding Agenda Item 15b) Consideration of Motion from Jennifer Di Francesco, representative of Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada (CADDAC), regarding Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a “Superpower” not a Disability was approved by majority vote.

E. SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Special Education Advisory Committee recommends to the Board of Trustees that the following be approved:

WHEREAS: Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) should no longer be categorized as a "disorder" or "disability" but instead recognized as a cognitive difference within the framework of neurodiversity. By shifting this

label, we aim to reduce stigma, highlight strengths, and promote supportive environments that empower individuals with ADHD to thrive;

WHEREAS: Scientific research increasingly identifies ADHD as a variation in cognitive functioning rather than a pathological condition. Studies highlight that ADHD traits such as impulsivity, hyperfocus, and risk-taking have evolutionary roots, which may have been advantageous in dynamic environments. Viewing ADHD as a difference rather than a deficit aligns with the growing neurodiversity movement, which recognizes diverse cognitive profiles as part of human variation;

WHEREAS: ADHD individuals frequently exhibit traits that can be powerful assets, including creativity, spontaneity, and innovation. Research shows that individuals with ADHD excel in fields requiring dynamic thinking, adaptability, and unconventional problem-solving. Labeling ADHD as a "disorder" focuses disproportionately on weaknesses rather than fostering environments where ADHD traits can be leveraged for success;

WHEREAS: Challenges associated with ADHD often stem from traditional education and work systems that prioritize prolonged focus, rigid routines, and low stimulation settings. ADHD individuals may thrive when provided with flexible structures, engaging tasks, and creative outlets. By framing ADHD as a cognitive difference, institutions can shift from imposing conformity to nurturing strengths;

WHEREAS: The "disorder" and "disability" labels contribute to stigma, reducing self-esteem and reinforcing negative stereotypes. Reframing ADHD as a cognitive difference encourages individuals to embrace their unique abilities and seek environments where they can excel; and

WHEREAS: ADHD should be categorized as a Cognitive Difference under the broader umbrella of Neurodiversity. This terminology acknowledges the unique cognitive profile of ADHD individuals without pathologizing their experiences. ADHD is a Superpower!

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: SEAC recommend to the Board of Trustees to write a letter to the Ministry of Education from the TCDSB Board of Trustees asking the Ministry of Education to recognize ADHD under the Education Act as a disability. Research shows that ADHD individuals have unique strengths—such as creativity, problem-solving, and adaptability—that can thrive in the right learning environments. By implementing inclusive educational strategies, and training teachers, staff, and administration on the research, development, and

evolution in thought on ADHD, we can better support students to reach their full potential.