

MOVED BY:

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Toronto Catholic District School Board

TOPIC: Changing the voting age to 16 years of age for Ontario school board trustee elections

WHEREAS: The Mission of the TCDSB is, “at Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.”

WHEREAS: Student trustees, who sit with us around the horseshoe as respected colleagues, are themselves 16 and 17 years of age.

WHEREAS: Currently, at 18, many young people leave their home to attend college, university or search for work. Lowering the voting age will give the vote to students who have roots in their community and an appreciation for their local school board issues.

WHEREAS: Studies show that if citizens begin voting earlier, and get into the habit of doing so earlier, they are more likely to do so throughout life. Parent voter turnout is also expected to increase as it increases the whole family's interest in voting.

WHEREAS: Young voters have a unique opportunity, through our grade 9 and 10 civic classes, to come to the polls with a solid understanding of what they're voting on.

WHEREAS: Teenagers have high levels of volunteerism and community service, yet many feel turned off by politics. Lowering the voting age gives youth a real stake in their futures, making them more likely to become involved and active in the political process.

WHEREAS: Arguably, the role of school board trustee is the elected position which most impacts the daily lives of our students and yet they do not have a voice in their election.

WHEREAS: Countries including Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Cuba and Scotland have already lowered the voting age to 16. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has actively encouraged member states to consider lowering the voting age to 16 in their jurisdictions. The New Brunswick legislature will soon be dealing with a Bill to lower the voting age. And, state legislators in Massachusetts, New York and New Mexico are currently dealing with electoral reform legislation that would lower the voting age in their respective states.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The Chair and Director, on behalf of all trustees of the board, write the Premier, Minister of Education and Minister of Municipal Affairs, copying trustees, OCSTA, and all Toronto MPPs and City Councillors, advocating that under the Ontario Municipal Elections Act the voting age to be an elector at a school board trustee election held in a local municipality be lowered to 16 years of age.