



REPORT TO

REGULAR BOARD

MULTI-LANGUAGE CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Acts 2:4

| Created, Draft | First Tabling | Review |
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| RECOMMENDATION 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 lives of faith, hope and charity.



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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report recommends that the feasibility study of the varied components essential for the successful implementation of a Multi-Language Catholic Elementary School in North Scarborough for September, 2016 continues.

B. PURPOSE

The TCDSB is studying the feasibility of a Multi-Language Catholic Elementary School in North Scarborough for September 2016. With the closure of 4 Catholic elementary schools in North Scarborough (St. John Fisher, St. Maximilian Kolbe, Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Our Lady of Good Counsel) and two Board Approved School Accommodation Review Clusters (SARC), this multi-language specialty school could present a viable school option for parents of Catholic children and also increase the Catholic service factor for this particular area. This report highlights the results of a survey conducted to gauge interest and outlines future considerations and actions in support of continued investigation of the viability of such a school.

C. BACKGROUND

1. Context and introduction

The initiative has been introduced in various communications as follows:

The Toronto Catholic District School Board is considering the feasibility of a Multi-Language Catholic Elementary school in North Scarborough. The proposed school would be located at 100 Fundy Bay Boulevard (former site of St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic School).

This French Immersion school would also provide opportunities for students to learn two to three additional languages throughout the week (possibly German, Spanish and Mandarin).

The proposed school may include the following elements:

- *French Immersion Programming*
- *Classes in 2 to 3 additional languages throughout the week, including the possibility of an after-school International Languages Program*
- *International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programming: This program "nurtures independent learning skills, encouraging every student*

to take responsibility for their learning. The programme incorporates local and global issues into the curriculum, asking students to look at six related, trans-disciplinary themes and to consider the links between them." (www.ibo.org)

- *No boundary restrictions for admission (no transportation services would be provided).*
- *Should there be sufficient interest from the community, and the Board proceeds with the opening this school, space would be limited to the first 75 eligible Kindergarten students.*

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

1. Research Literature

There are a number of potential benefits associated with learning to speak more than one language. A search of Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC), EBSCO Host Research Databases, and websites suggests cognitive benefits like improved memory, focus, and the ability to identify pertinent information. Strong English language skills may also result from repeatedly attending to the mechanics of language (e.g., grammar). Enhanced problem solving and the ability to bridge cultures are other prospective advantages, as are open mindedness, increased empathy, and gains in long term health.

This body of research sheds a positive light on the potential impact of multilingualism within the context of schools and has been foundational in the promotion of multi-lingual education. Indeed, there are models of multi-lingual schools especially in Europe, which is a leader in developing policies to support this approach to education within the context of a linguistically and culturally diverse student population.

2. Survey

An electronic survey was created and made available on the Board website on April 23rd, 2015 to gauge parent/guardian interest in a multi-language school program. A press release was issued by the Board's Communications Department on that date, informing the public of the survey; the closing date for responses was May 15th, 2015. There were 258 responses to the survey from members of the public living in a wide geographical area (Appendix A). Some respondents to the survey indicated that they do not have any children, but wanted to respond to the survey questions.

Among the respondents, 216 members of the public indicated that they are interested in enrolling their child into a Multi-Language Catholic Elementary school, as described in the survey. For this group of respondents, there are 94 children who would be of age to attend Junior or Senior Kindergarten in September 2015, and 83 children who would be of age to attend Junior or Senior Kindergarten in 2016. Ten of these members of the public did not indicate if they have any children, and 15 live outside of Toronto.

Among the respondents, 154 parents indicated that they would want to enroll their child in a Multi-Language Catholic Elementary school, even if there are no plans to offer transportation for students enrolled in this school. Of these 154 parents there were 75 indicated the school in which their child/children are currently enrolled or will enrol in September. Of these 75 parents there were 46 that indicated their child would be attending a TCDSB school and 29 that would enrol in a non-TCDSB school. There were 79 parents that did not respond as to which school board their child/children would attend. Of the 154 parents, there are 69 children who would be of age to attend Junior or Senior Kindergarten in September 2015, and 72 children who would be of age to attend Junior or Senior Kindergarten in 2016.

Members of the public offered a large number of program suggestions; the most commonly recommended language for daytime instruction was Mandarin; the most commonly recommended language for after-school instruction was Ukrainian.

E. ACTION PLAN

The research survey results supports that there is a solid interest base for a Multi-Language Catholic Elementary School to be opened in North Scarborough.

The viability of such a school requires further investigation in regards to the following:

- a) Additional discussions with the Ministry of Education to obtain approval for such a pilot school in Ontario.
- b) Contractual requirements as determined by the various employee sector groups.
- c) Timetable options and constraints.
- d) Partnerships to support the delivery of the curriculum such as, but not limited to, The Learning Partnership, Consulates and Education Departments of the target languages and school twinning.
- e) In order to increase the number of non-TCDSB students attending this school, a marketing campaign targeting this specific group of parents (i.e. Catholic parents or baptised children not considering a TCDSB school) would be essential.

- f) The upgrading of the facility to meet FDK specifications and associated costs would need to be identified as part of the feasibility study.

F. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Summaries of findings from the study of each of the above areas will be compiled by December, 2016 with a target school start date of September, 2016.
2. Based on the summary of findings a recommendation report will be presented to Board in January, 2016.

G. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That staff continues to pursue the study of the various components necessary for the recommendations for approval and successful implementation of the multi-language school for September, 2016.