



REPORT TO

REGULAR BOARD

## CONSIDERATIONS AND PLANNING FOR DEVELOPMENT OF 2015-18 MYSP

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Proverbs 3:5-6*

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**Review**

[Click here to enter a date.](#)

Loretta Notten, Superintendent of Governance, Planning and Strategic Planning

### 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**

All school Boards are required to develop a three year Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP). The Toronto Catholic District School Board plan was last adopted in 2012 and expires at the end of the 2014-15 school year. The Board has engaged in two public consultations to assess its efficacy against the current MYSP and in the fall of 2014 released a public report card, informed both by stakeholder feedback, staff reports and objective data. The process of developing the 2015-18 MYSP must now begin, building on the foundation of the existing MYSP but allowing for new strategic directions and goals to emerge. This report provides consideration of constraints, assumptions, assessments of our existing six strategic goals, educational challenges and opportunities, and insights regarding other Multi-Year Strategic Plan. With these considerations reviewed, the report makes a proposal regarding how the plan could be developed and recommends beginning the process in earnest in the early fall of 2015. Elements of the proposed plan include focus groups, a broad-based consultation in the fall of 2015 and launch of the new plan by the beginning of the new calendar year.

## **B. PURPOSE**

1. The Ministry of Education has identified for several years its strategic priorities and has held steadfast to the primacy of increased student achievement and well-being, equity of achievement and opportunity for all students, and increased public confidence, which are now re-affirmed within their newest roadmap for education in the province, released this April 2014 (*Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario*). The province has clearly identified its aspiration that Ontario's Educators will be supported in learning continuously and will be recognized as amongst the best in the world. The Toronto Catholic District School Board Multi-Year Strategic Plan has endeavoured to be faithful to these articulated priorities, as well to our Catholic Graduate Expectations and the principles of our Catholic Social Teachings.
2. Within the Board's obligations under the Education Act, the Director of Education is obligated to report on the board's progress in relation to the Multi-Year Strategic Plan, i.e., The Annual Report of the Director of Education. It is arguably the most important document that the board uses to both identify strategic priorities and to subsequently provide a critical filter for

all other decisions that follow. Thus the development of the MYSP should be undertaken in a way that is inclusive and responsive to TCDSB stakeholders, while fulfilling its obligations to Ministry of Education priorities. In this way, ownership of the plan and its ultimate success are more strongly positioned.

3. On February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015 the Board of Trustees approved the following motion:
  - a. *THAT staff provide a report with the following in order to help inform trustees and staff in the development of a “draft” 2015-2018 Multi-year Strategic Plan (MYSP) which, once completed, would go out for consultation:*
    - i. *Constraints and assumptions for the 2015-2018 MYSP*
    - ii. *Strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats to our existing 6 strategic goals*
    - iii. *Known major challenges and opportunities for our Board and for education in the coming 5 to 10 years*
    - iv. *Copies of the latest multi-year strategic plans for the other GTA school boards*

## **C. BACKGROUND**

1. Establishing and monitoring the implementation of the board’s Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) with a budget that supports it, is an important legislated responsibility of the board. The Education Act requires boards to report annually on their multi-year strategic plans. The MYSP provides a compelling vision for the school district with an emphasis on student achievement. The board’s MYSP is its “face” to the community.
2. The Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) 2012- 2015 was approved by the Board of Trustees on April 4, 2012 to guide the decisions and actions of all TCDSB employees. The goals of the plan, with their focus on student achievement and Catholic values, went through several revisions in development, to reflect the input received during the consultation sessions to ensure that the plan would, in its ideal, be one embraced by every member of the TCDSB community—students, parents, staff and trustees.
3. To inform and support the successful implementation of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP), the TCDSB has been committed to gathering

feedback on a cyclical basis. The first outreach for system-wide feedback on the implementation of the MYSP took place in fall 2012-13, largely through an on-line survey, though paper copies were also available. With 1,259 respondents, the results of the survey offered a preliminary picture of perceptions in regards to MYSP successes.

4. In 2013-14, a comprehensive approach was adopted for the communication and gathering of input. A report was prepared for the spring of 2014 which summarized the extensive feedback of 19,834 TCDSB stakeholders, as well as presenting staff assessments of progress to date. At the request of the Board of Trustees, an additional abridged report card was prepared to summarize the MYSP's implementation plans and system impact. Generally, stakeholders and staff have affirmed that Board practices corresponded with the MYSP. Stakeholder groups offered varying views on potential areas for growth within the Multi-Year Strategic Plan and as a result, they were briefly captured within the "Next Steps" identified in the report card.
5. The current MYSP is defined by six strategic directions. Each direction is further defined by nine 'priorities' that guide the work mandated by the MYSP. Thirty-six goals further illuminate the priorities, outlining the actions that the Board is to carry out in accordance with the MYSP. The following is a summary of the six strategic directions and the related priorities in the 2012-15 TCDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan:
  - i. **Living Our Catholic Values:**
    - *To apply Catholic social teachings to all that we do.*
  - ii. **Fostering Student Achievement and Well-Being:**
    - *To support our students in meeting the Ontario Catholic school graduate expectations,*
    - *To support our students ability to apply critical and innovative thinking in all subjects, and*
    - *To create equitable learning environments*
  - iii. **Strengthening Public Confidence:**
    - *To create enhanced, regular communication with all stakeholders*
  - iv. **Providing Stewardship of Resources:**
    - *To establish integrated decision-making structures and processes to support responsive and responsible allocation of resources, and*
    - *To ensure fiscal responsibility at all levels of the organization*

- v. **Achieving Excellence in Governance:**
  - *To lead and model best practices in Board governance*
- vi. **Inspiring and Motivating Employees:**
  - *To create a learning and work environment that is equitable and diverse and supportive of professional learning, innovation and collaboration.*

6. As a system, we have a strong foundation from which to build the 2015-18 Multi-Year Strategic Plan, but the board would be well served by being open to new ideas and perspectives, and by engaging its stakeholders more broadly in the development of the plan. Strong engagement of stakeholders will lead to empowerment and ownership of the new plan.

## **D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS**

1. There are a number of foundational documents that can be utilized to help in the development of the new Multi-Year Strategic Plan, consistent with practice in the development of the current plan:
  - Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations
  - Catholic Social Teaching
  - Annual Report of the Director of Education
  - Evolving TCDSB Three Year Pastoral Plan
  - Ontario Catholic Leadership Framework
  - Strong Systems and Their Leadership
  - Newly Revised TCDSB Board Learning Improvement Plan
  - TCDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan Report Card 2014
  - Ontario Education Services Corporation Good Governance Guide
  - TCDSB 3 Year Budget Recovery Plan
  
2. **Constraints and Assumptions for the 2015-2018 MYSP:**
  - As stated above, unless there was a strongly supported rationale for changing the TCDSB Mission and Vision which underpins the Multi-Year Strategic Plan, a preliminary assumption would be that the board is not looking to revise these two statements.

- As noted above, there are six Strategic Directions further defined by nine ‘Priorities’ that guide the work mandated by the MYSP. Thirty-six goals further illuminate the priorities, outlining the actions that the Board is to carry out in accordance with the MYSP. It could be argued that any of these are capable of being revised or altered in light of recent developments or feedback received. That said, it is more likely that the six strategic directions will continue to remain and that the priorities and goals, as well as the supporting actions are those items most likely to evolve and change.
- The most significant constraint which has been surfaced in staff’s preparation of this report, and in the early thinking about the MYSP that will inform the next three years, is that of the current budget situation. That said, the convergence of a 3 year strategic plan and a 3 year budget recovery plan could be an ideal opportunity to ensure that the two complement one another, and that funding aligns to strategic priorities.

### **3. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to our existing Six Strategic Directions.**

*A general review of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to our existing six strategic directions reveals the following:*

<b>Strengths of our current MYSP:</b>
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- The overall MYSP (2012-2015) results – both in terms of empirical evidence and in terms of stakeholder feedback are encouraging.
- The current priorities link quite well to the Ministry’s goals of *Achieving Excellence, Ensuring Equity, Promoting Well-Being and Enhancing Public Confidence*.
- The MYSP allows for essential data to be collected to support the attainment of the goals.
- The MYSP has helped drive excellent progress in some domains, such as in the areas of parent engagement and community relations. The development of parent forums, masses, cultural exposes, advisory committees all help to strengthen community engagement.

- Strong practices have been developed to leverage more comprehensive community consultation and engagement on a variety of topics related to MYSP goals.
- Good progress continues to be made in revising and updating TCDSB policies.
- There has been excellent progress within the Board’s Capital Plan, with a number of school additions, new schools, and a number more are “in the cue”, with many portables being removed.
- Within Operations and Maintenance a number of innovations have contributed to fewer people doing the same work with greater efficiency (both human efficiency and systems efficiency).

#### Weaknesses of the current MYSP:

- Some benchmarks articulated within the MYSP goals require refinement from a research perspective (eg., exceeding the provincial average in literacy and numeracy as measured by EQAO).
- Student achievement in mathematics has not been prominently identified in the 2012-15 version of the MYSP.
- There were stakeholders who did not feel ownership of the current MYSP and would like more involvement from the ground up in order to authentically own the plan.
- Progress toward an annual Governance Plan continues, and ongoing governance review with corresponding capacity building remains an area for continued growth.
- Within Facilities and Planning, timelines and staff resources are all seen as thinly stretched.

## Opportunities Moving Forward:

- The launch of a new TCDSB Pastoral Plan will allow for a seamless alignment to the MYSP.
- Budget constraints in convergence with the planning of a new Multi-Year Strategic Plan create the opportunity to envision a new structure and a new sustainable model to attain stated goals.
- The opportunity to align the MYSP with current foundational documents will provide an opportunity for further alignment regarding initiatives. (The work of Professor Ken Leithwood on *Strong Districts and their Leadership* is a critical new document.) **(Please see Appendix C)**
- There is an opportunity within a new MYSP cycle to increase the voice of the vulnerable and marginalized within our school communities.
- Ministry's investment in technology will support equitable learning environments and offset reductions made in TCDSB due to budget constraints.
- The Boundary Review and Accommodations Review processes could lead to greater efficiency in the system.
- The pending initiation of a renewed Long Term Planning and Program Plan process will bring new opportunities for stakeholder input and alignment of resources.
- The construction of new schools brings new opportunities to create state of the art learning environments.

## Threats

- Trust is likely to be a significant challenge amongst many stakeholders.
- A negative climate based on the current monetary issues could disengage our stakeholders in the development of a new MYSP. This may pose a

particularly strong threat to our Strategic Direction of “*Inspired and Motivated Employees*”.

- TCDSB budget issues will be a major factor to consider. Declining enrolment compounds this threat.
- Provincial budget constraints will have to be considered in the development of priorities and goals for the new version of the MYSP.
- Any legislative changes in regards to Proceeds of Disposition (PODs) will have to be closely monitored, as these funds are critical to current and future capital planning.
- Innovative practices may have to be considered in light of the TCDSB financial situation.
- Monitoring and oversight of priorities and goals is critical particularly in light of a streamlined organization due to a reduction of resources.

4. **Known major challenges and opportunities for our Board and for education in the coming 5 to 10 years.**

*A survey of key recent documents and a short precis of their findings is presented in Appendix A, with an executive summary found below:*

- ***Achieving Excellence A Renewed Vision for Education In Ontario presents the Ministry of Education’s vision*** for education for the next several years to come. The goals articulated are related to high levels of achievement in literacy and mathematics, higher graduations rates, raised expectation for higher order thinking skills such as critical thinking, communication, innovation, creativity, collaboration and entrepreneurship. **The four stated goals are:**
  - ***Achieving Academic Excellence***
  - ***Ensuring Equity***
  - ***Promoting Well-Being***
  - ***Enhancing Public Confidence***
- ***The McKinsey Education Report Shaping the Future: How Good Education Systems Can Become Great in the Decade Ahead*** was published in July 2009 and still is regarded as a key document to help

us identify major challenges and opportunities for the next five to ten years. Authored by Sir Michael Barber and Dr Mona Mourshed it is a report on the International Education Roundtable which explored leading education systems globally, sharing challenges, solutions and lessons learned. The report suggests that a well-educated student with have a combination of knowledge, thinking ability, and leadership, supported by an ethical foundation. Effective leadership development across the system was seen as a very cost-effective way to drive up performance.

- **Ken Leithwood’s work on *Strong Districts and Their Leadership***, published in 2013, is also leading edge work that is informing how educators in Ontario and beyond assess their work. They identify nine key characteristics of strong districts. (**See Appendix C; in brief, page 11 highlights the Nine Critical Features and p. 24-25 highlight successful practices connected to those critical features**) In addition to identifying the key characteristics of Strong Districts, Leithwood’s work is now taking on a practical element. That is, funded by the Institute for Educational Leadership, Professor Leithwood and a colleague Catherine McCullough, are now identifying and celebrating best practices in each of the domains of the initial report. In the realm of *Learning Oriented Improvement Processes* they point to the work of Ottawa Catholic and York Catholic District School board.
  
- ***Uplifting Leadership: How Organizations, Teams and Communities Raise Performance*** – authored by Andy Hargreaves, Alan Boyle and Alma Harris, the book examines how organizations they study have dramatically improved their performance against unfavourable and even overwhelming odds. The conclusion presented after analysing hundreds of interviews and thousands of pages of case reports, is “uplift” – that is, the process of sustaining things in an upward direction based on uplifting leadership.
  
- Further – **TCDSB’s Budget challenges** will provide a major challenge for the next three years. That said, careful and strategic, aligned and coherent planning can position this challenge as an opportunity for the TCDSB.

- Finally – the province is currently in the midst of **Provincial Bargaining**. The terms and conditions negotiated provincially and subsequently locally could provide further constraints or challenges, or similarly may provide an opportunity to influence the work of the MYSP.

**5. Copies of the latest multi-year strategic plans for the other GTA school boards:**

- The following school board Multi-Year Strategic Plan are linked to this report in **Appendix B**:
- - **Dufferin Peel Catholic** District School Board *Strategic System Plan 2014-2019*
  - **Durham Catholic** District School Board *Discovery 2020: Strategic Plan 2014-2019 Excellence/Equity/New Evangelization*
  - **Halton Catholic** District School Board: *Achieving...Believing...Belonging Fulfilling the Promise: Strategic Directions 2010-2015*
  - **York Catholic** District School Board *Planning Our Future Together Strategic Commitments*

**E. VISION**

VISION	PRINCIPLES	GOALS
To develop a Multi-Year Strategic Plan that best serves the needs of the Toronto Catholic District School Board and that helps the board in fulfilling its Mission and Vision to the fullest extent possible.	Strengthening Public Confidence is most related to the development of the MYSP, but all of the MYSP priorities are relevant in this situation.	To achieve broad-based engagement in the development of the 2015-18 MYSP.  To achieve ownership by the highest number of TCDSB stakeholders in the 2015-18 MYSP.  To develop a forward

VISION	PRINCIPLES	GOALS
		thinking MYSP that places Toronto Catholic at the forefront of Catholic Education in the province of Ontario.

**F. ACTION PLAN**

1. Given the current financial situation, the most prudent course of action would be the development of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan in-house.
2. The process of development would be well served by a series of targeted focus group sessions with key stakeholder groups on a “*Stop-Start-Continue*” process, complemented by the key considerations of “*SWOT*” – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats” to our current MYSP. Such an exercise could be connected to the following key groups to garner an initial baseline:
  - a. Representative group of students
  - b. Representative group(s) of parents
  - c. Representative group from all staff stakeholders
  - d. Representative group from the elementary and secondary Principals
  - e. Senior Staff and Trustees

Examples of individuals who could fulfil the roles identified in b) through e) above could include: CSLIT student reps and delegated students from representative schools, Association and federation presidents, Leading Student Achievement (LSA) Principals, from each superintendent area: 1-2 representative (secondary) administrators, teachers, support staff and parents, as well as CPIC and OAPCE representatives. It is recommended that there be one focus group per stakeholder group, preferably in a central location such as the Catholic Education Centre.

3. Once a baseline of consultation feedback is achieved to surface new ideas and feedback on current priorities, strategic directions and goals, a broad-based consultation could take place with an open link on the TCDSB website to encourage feedback from all TCDSB stakeholders. Face to face consultation session could also be hosted as deemed appropriate. This work is better positioned in the fall, given the current focus on the budget.

4. **A sample timeline of a potential development strategy is found below:**

Month	Milestone
March 2015	Report to Board on Development
Late September/ October 2015	Stop-Start-Continue Focus Groups
November 2015	Broad-based Consultation
December 2015	Analysis of Feedback
January 2015	Draft Plan for Consultation and Refinement
February 2016	Finalize & Launch Plan

## **G. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

1. With a strong response from all stakeholders, with multiple opportunities for input, from a variety of stakeholders, TCDSB can develop a 2015-18 MYSP that reflects the needs of our Catholic community, balances our fiscal responsibilities and positions us to lead in the area of Catholic education in the province.
2. The TCDSB has a solid foundation from which to reflect on the past three years and upon which to build for the next cycle of the MYSP.

## **H. IMPLEMENTATION, STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

1. Communication regarding the process of formulating the new MYSP can begin immediately upon adopting a development process, using all of the means available to us to ensure maximum involvement and knowledge about the development strategy.

## **I. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

That the Board of Trustees adopt the implementation Action Plan outlined in this report as a strategy for developing the 2015-18 TCDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan. `