



REPORT TO

REGULAR BOARD

TRUSTEE/STAFF STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSIONS

Mission is never the fruit of a perfectly planned program or a well-organized manual. Mission is always the fruit of a life which knows what it is to be found and healed, encountered and forgiven. Mission is born of a constant experience of God's merciful anointing. -- Pope Francis

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
October 13, 2016	October 20, 2016	Click here to enter a date.

Angela Gauthier, Director of Education

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 uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ.

We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge to lead lives of faith, hope and charity



R. McGuckin
Associate Director of Academic Affairs

A. Sangiorgio
Associate Director of Planning and Facilities

C. Jackson
Executive Superintendent of Business Services and Chief Financial Officer

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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the outcomes of the 3 strategic planning sessions held on January 30th, September 27th and September 28th, 2016 and recommends that next steps include:

1. Building the strategic objectives and priorities into a more detailed and explicit strategic plan for the Board;
2. Ratifying and approving the Principles for Effective Trustee-Staff Relations; and
3. Creating a system of accountability for the Principles for Effective Trustee-Staff Relations.

B. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to summarize the outcomes of 3 strategic planning workshops that senior staff and trustees have participated in since early 2016.

Summary notes prepared by Hugh MacPhie, of MacPhie and Company Inc., are included as Appendix A and Appendix C.

The report also proposes recommendations for further action.

C. BACKGROUND

1. On January 30th 2016 senior staff and trustees participated in a strategic planning workshop which reflected on roles and responsibilities, principles for staff/trustee relations as well as objectives and priorities. This session was facilitated by Hugh MacPhie (Appendix A). A detailed report has already been presented to Trustees summarizing this activity.
2. On September 27th trustees and staff met without a facilitator and addressed the issues of Governance, Renewed Math Strategy, Budget and Communications (Appendix B). These topics were proposed by trustees and staff.
3. On September 28th a third session was held with Hugh MacPhie and delved deeper into the issues of Objectives and Priorities, Principles for Effective Trustee/Staff Relations and Next Steps that were introduced on January 30, 2016 (Appendix C).

D. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1. It is critical that the outcomes of these three sessions form the basis of a go-forward action plan in order that the broader goals of the Multi Year Strategic Plan are successfully met.
2. If Trustees approve, a system of accountability for the “*Principles for Effective Trustee - Staff Relations*” will be developed as per the recommendation of the consultant.
3. A follow up session for May 2017 is recommended and subsequently bi-annual sessions should be held in the fall and late spring of each academic year.
4. The purpose of these sessions would be to assess ongoing progress and concerns and to make changes as required.

RECOMMENDATIONS :

1. That the following categories outlined as Strategic Objectives and Priorities in Appendix C be approved and form part of a detailed strategic plan for the Board.
 - Student Success and Achievement
 - Financial Stability
 - Employer of Choice
 - Facilities and Technology
 - Communications and Relationship Building
2. That the Board ratify the *Principles for Effective Trustee-Staff Relations* as outlined in Appendix A.
 - Remember our cause and ask: “what are we trying to achieve here?”
 - Be kind and show empathy
 - Seek to genuinely understand different points of view
 - Focus on issues and ideas
 - Get to “common ground” within the grey zone
 - Understand implications of individual decisions
 - “Hold the tension” between local and Board goals

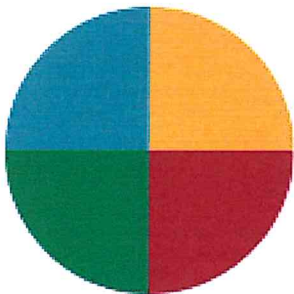
3. That a system of accountability for the Principles for Effective Trustee-Staff Relations be jointly created by staff and trustees.
4. That subsequent meetings for May 2017, Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 be approved.

MacPhie

Toronto Catholic District School Board

Board of Trustees Planning Day
January 30, 2016

Summary



MacPhie

Introduction

On January 30, 2016, the trustees and senior staff of the Toronto Catholic District School Board met to discuss efficient collaboration, planning and short-term issues.

Reflecting the discussion throughout the day, this document is organized into:

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Objectives and Priorities
- Succession Planning
- Next Steps

Roles and Responsibilities

To begin discussion, trustees and senior staff engaged in dialogue about their respective roles and responsibilities. Participants identified a number of important tensions:

Tensions in Trustee-Staff Relations:

Conflicting Demands

Participants identified a set of parameters. On the one hand, trustees must work within legislative frameworks and funding restrictions, while on the other hand they must respond to the expectations of parents and students. Each trustee comes to this role with varying perspectives on how best to address local issues, and issues of the TCDSB overall.

Personal Relationships

Participants identified the very real and very important interpersonal challenges that exist. Participants expressed a desire for creative thinking and new approaches to building trust. Participants also identified the importance of building confidence – in themselves, each other, and in those tasked with carrying out their strategy.

Clarity of Role

Participants expressed a desire for further clarity with respect to roles. Often, the roles of trustees and staff become blurred. By determining who should and should not deal with certain issues, and which issues to deal with, TCDSB will be better equipped to move quickly and decisively on issues as they arise. One participant suggested the development of a mechanism that would help staff and trustees to quickly and respectfully identify incursions into operational territory and issues that fall beyond the purview of TCDSB.

MacPhie

Competition for Resources

Participants identified that many of the issues above are further intensified by lack of resources. At the micro level, staff and trustees lack the necessary time to consider high-level, strategic issues, let alone relationship management. At the macro level, the TCDSB must divide its limited financial resources among myriad conflicting priorities.

Principles for effective Trustee-Staff Relations

Participants then identified a number of principles that can allow trustees and staff to work together more effectively. These principles include:

- 1) Remember our cause, and ask: “what are we trying to achieve here?”
- 2) Be kind and show empathy.
- 3) Seek to genuinely understand different points of view.
- 4) Focus on issues and ideas.
- 5) Get to “common ground” within the grey zone.
- 6) Understand implications of individual decisions.
- 7) “Hold the tension” between local and Board goals.

Participants agreed that these principles should serve as a guide for trustees and staff, and act as ground rules for our ongoing interactions.

Objectives and Priorities

In order to achieve the TCDSB overarching Vision and Mission, participants discussed long-term objectives and short-term priorities. Participants were encouraged to thinking boldly, loftily, and aspirationally, and then to drill down into each of the objectives. Ultimately, each of the objectives will help the TCDSB to holistically develop its students, while deepening their connection to catholic values. A number of important themes emerged, which include:

- Student Success and Achievement
- Financial Stability
- Employer of Choice
- Facilities and Technology
- Communications and Relationship Building

Additional guidance on each of the objectives and their corresponding priorities is captured below:

MacPhie

Student Success and Achievement

Participants asserted that the primary strategic goal of the TCDSB must always be to help students achieve better results. While there are many ways to approach this lofty goal, identifying it as an overarching priority helps to align and remind us all of our very important obligations. Participants identified catholicity and innovative teaching pedagogy as central to how the TCDSB will continue to differentiate itself.

In the short term, participants identified the following particularly salient priorities:

- Math results
- Equitable access to programming
- Improving academic achievement among the bottom 25% of students

Financial Stability

Participants recognized the importance of regaining financial stability and identifying mechanisms for improving financial performance in the long-term. Adequate funding and intelligent cost control both play an important part in TCDSB's continued success.

In the short-term, participants identified important goals to be:

- Follow through on the multi-year recovery plan
- Transition to a comprehensive financial sustainability plan

Employer of Choice

Participants identified the important connection between top-employer status, and top-talent acquisition and retention. One participant encouraged us to embrace a 'culture of courage' in an effort to empower trustees, staff, and students to be innovative, and to celebrate diversity.

In the short-term, participants identified the following priorities:

- Nurturing a sense of security and stability within the Toronto Catholic District School Board
- Building trusting relationships between union and management representatives
- Enhancing local professional judgment

Investing in Facilities and Technology

Participants recognized the link between attractive and effective learning 'spaces' and student success. These include both physical and virtual spaces. The spaces where students and teachers learn and interact provide an important frame for positive and productive relationships, and act as a launch pad for creative and critical thinking.

MacPhie

In the short-term, participants expressed a desire to:

- Pilot student and teacher-driven programs that enhance the effectiveness and attractiveness of spaces
- Continue with the development of a coordinated, Board-wide program plan

Communications and Relationship Building

The TCDSB has many successes to celebrate – including consistently higher academic performance than comparable school boards in the region. Sharing these successes broadly, while effectively communicating our needs, can turn public affinity into tangible resources.

Participants identified a number of important first-steps, which included:

- Developing a comprehensive strategic communications plan
- Developing a targeted communications plan to address the implementation and progress of the Multi-Year Recovery Plan
- Nurturing healthy relationships with key stakeholders including government and MPPs
- Identifying, leveraging and empowering an ‘army of ambassadors’ through student and parent engagement
- Partnering with the Archdiocese to better achieve our shared aims
- Creating an engagement strategy for key internal stakeholders including principals and teachers. This broader thematic stemmed from the initial idea of engaging principals by offering to satisfy one ‘wish’.

Succession Planning

Director of Education, Angela Gauthier, then led discussion on succession planning. A number of principles for TCDSB’s succession planning emerged, including the importance of:

- Fairly considering both internal and external candidates.
- Incorporating the principles identified in “Outstanding Practices in Succession Planning”
- Encouraging a shift toward ‘succession management’, which acknowledges the need to invest in talented staff over the long-term.

The current succession management approach includes:

- A mentorship program down to the level of manager
- A formalized performance appraisal mechanism
- A secondment program for high-potential staff

MacPhie

Priority development areas for TCDSB's succession planning model include:

- Easing the transition from teacher to administrator
- Retaining highly skilled vice principals, given the two-year rotating door reality
- Providing younger staff with formal and informal leadership opportunities
- Formalizing and communicating more broadly the succession management process

Next Steps

Following this planning day, next steps might include:

- Confirming the principles for trustee-staff relations
- Refining the long-term and short-term priorities
- Developing clear action plans to ensure follow through on each of the TCDSB's objectives
- Conduct further dialogue on the roles and responsibilities of trustees and staff

STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION
SEPTEMBER 27, 2016
A G E N D A

Opening Prayer

7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Governance Update from the Parliamentarian

8:00 p.m. – 8:45 p.m. Renewed Math Strategy

8:45 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Break

9:00 pm. – 10:00 p.m. Budget

10:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. Communications

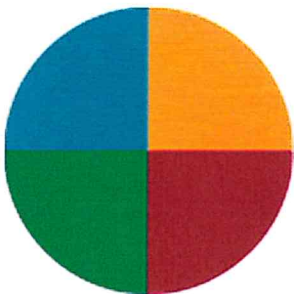
MacPhie

Toronto Catholic District School Board

Board of Trustees Planning Meeting

September 28, 2016

Summary



Introduction

On September 28, 2016, trustees and senior staff of the Toronto Catholic District School Board met to continue discussing efficient collaboration and strategic planning priorities. Building upon work that had been completed earlier in the year, trustees reviewed the draft Objectives and Priorities, and Principles for Effective Trustee-Staff Relations that had been previously drafted.

Reflecting the structure of the planning session, this document is organized into:

- Strategic Objectives and Priorities
- Principles for Effective Trustee-Staff Relations
- Next Steps

Strategic Objectives and Priorities

Trustees and senior staff reviewed and reflected on the Strategic Objectives that had been drafted in the previous planning meeting. These Strategic Objectives were:

1. Student Success and Achievement
2. Financial Stability
3. Employer of Choice
4. Facilities and Technology
5. Communications and Relationship Building

For each of the five strategic objectives, the following summary provides:

- An overview of each Strategic Objective and the initial Priorities that had been established for each,
- A synopsis of the most salient points from the September 28th discussion, and
- Any edits and changes that were therefore proposed.

1. Student Success and Achievement

The primary strategic goal of the TCDSB must always be to help students achieve better results.

- Priorities include:
 - Equitable access to programming
 - Improving academic achievement among the bottom 25% of students
 - Encouraging and supporting leadership among our teachers and principals

MacPhie

Summary of Discussion:

The discussion of this objective and its corresponding priorities affirmed its value. There was agreement that student success and achievement should remain the top priority.

There were suggestions made to sharpen the wording provide guidance related to the meaning of the Strategic Objective:

Firstly, the TCDSB does not simply want to help students achieve better results; we want to help students to achieve *their best* results. Although success might look different for each student, it is our role to help them maximize their potential.

Secondly, this objective must be viewed through the Catholic lens. Student success and achievement is a function of the Catholic values they learn through our schools – which create a heightened sense of responsibility, and result in well-rounded students.

The following change was therefore proposed to the explanatory text describing the strategic objective:

Original:

- The primary strategic goal of the TCDSB must always be to help students achieve better results

Updated:

- The primary strategic goal of the TCDSB must always be to help students achieve their potential, in their academics, in their faith, and in life.

The final improvement was to emphasize the importance of teachers and principals when it comes to delivering this particular vision of student achievement. The leadership and innovation provided by front-line staff is important to the success of the TCDSB, and must be explicitly encouraged and supported.

As a result the following priority was added:

- Encouraging and supporting leadership among our teachers and principals

2. Financial Stability

Regaining financial stability and identifying mechanisms for improving financial performance in the long-term both play an important role in TCDSB's continued success.

- Priorities include:
 - Following through on the multi-year recovery plan
 - Transition to a comprehensive financial sustainability plan
 - Creating demand for our service through investment in differentiating programming and resources

Summary of Discussion:

This objective was viewed as an enabler for student success. The more effective we are with our finances, the better enabled we will be to achieve our other goals. One improvement was suggested:

Being financially stable involves creating demand for what you offer. In order to foster long-term success the TCDSB must continue to attract students and be sharply differentiated from TDSB and private schools.

Accordingly, the following priority was included:

- Creating demand for our service through investment in differentiating programming and resources

3. Employer of Choice

Achieving top employer status and acquiring and retaining top-talent are correlated. The TCDSB should empower its trustees, staff and students to be innovative and celebrate diversity.

- Priorities include:
 - Nurturing a sense of security and stability within the TCDSB
 - Building trusting relationships between union and management representatives
 - Enhancing local professional judgment
 - Connecting directly with teachers to understand where they are succeeding and where they face challenges

MacPhie

Summary of Discussion:

The focus of this conversation was the complexity of the relationship between the Board, staff, and the teachers' union. The various roles and interests of these three parties can create tension. In order to best manage this tension the trustees and staff made the following recommendation:

To create a more productive and honest dialogue, we should seek to communicate directly with our teachers. By informing the union – but not going through the union – we can work to create a stronger connection with our teachers.

The following priority was added:

- Connecting directly with teachers, to understand where they are succeeding and where they face challenges

4. Investing in Facilities and Technology

It is important to recognize that attractive and effective physical and virtual learning “spaces” provide an important frame for positive and productive relationships.

- Priorities include:
 - Pilot student and teacher driven programs that enhance the effectiveness and attractiveness of spaces
 - Continue with the development of a coordinated, Board-wide program plan

Summary of Discussion:

There was consensus that this objective interrelates with student success. Having quality facilities and technology create a more dynamic learning atmosphere and allow for the best student performance.

No changes or amendments to the existing wording of the strategic objective or its corresponding priorities were suggested.

5. Communications and Relationship Building

Sharing the value of Catholic education by highlighting TCDSB's successes, while effectively communicating our needs, can turn public affinity into tangible resources.

- Priorities include:
 - Developing a comprehensive strategic communications plan
 - Developing a targeted communications plan to address the implementation and progress of the Multi-Year Recovery Plan
 - Nurturing healthy relationships with key stakeholders including government and MPPs
 - Practicing clear communication, to deliver the most important information more effectively

Summary of Discussion:

The discussion of this objective revealed it to be an important pillar for the TCDSB. Being able to build good relationships and deliver effective communications will allow the TCDSB to demonstrate its value to a wider audience. Two important points were made:

Firstly, our communication must go beyond our students and parents. We need to highlight the value of Catholic education to a larger audience. This involves both connecting with Catholics to re-establish the profound belief in the value of a Catholic education, as well as connecting with non-Catholics in order to gain their respect.

Consequently, the following change was made:

Original:

- Sharing the TCDSB's successes, while effectively communicating our needs, can turn public affinity into tangible resources.

Updated:

- Sharing the value of Catholic education by highlighting TCDSB's successes, while effectively communicating our needs, can turn public affinity into tangible resources.

Secondly, in our communication we must strive to achieve simplicity. Unnecessarily complicated communication will make our audience less receptive to our message. Accordingly, the following priority was added:

- Practicing clear communication, to deliver the most important information more effectively

Principles for Effective Trustee-Staff Relations

The second agenda item of the planning meeting was a review of the draft guiding principles that had been developed in the previous meeting:

1. Remember our cause, and ask: “what are we trying to achieve here?”
2. Be kind and show empathy.
3. Seek to genuinely understand different points of view.
4. Focus on issues and ideas.
5. Get to “common ground” within the grey zone.
6. Understand implications of individual decisions.
7. “Hold the tension” between local and Board goals.

There was a positive and enthusiastic response to the first six principles: the one principle that created the most discussion was Principle 7.

As Trustees, each member of the Board has a fiduciary responsibility to serve the greater good of the organization as a whole – rather than the regional interests of a local area. It was agreed that trustees can and should thoroughly advocate on behalf of their constituents, ultimate decisions cannot be made at the expense of the Board as a whole. Therefore, it is not a matter of “holding the tension”, but instead a matter of prioritizing responsibilities correctly.

Principle 7 was updated to be:

- Seek local success within the success of the entire Board, not at the cost of it.

Next Steps

Following this planning meeting, next steps include:

- Presenting the results of the planning sessions at a formal Board meeting, refining them further, and adopting them in principle
- Building the strategic objectives and priorities into a more detailed strategic plan for the Board
- Creating a system of accountability for the Principles for Effective Trustee-Staff Relations