

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter from the position of a devoted parent and supporter of the TCDSB. My education began at St. Michael's School in the St. Lawrence neighbourhood. (where my mother worked until 2013 as a special education teaching assistant) It was the foundation of a life of Catholic education and the cornerstone of a life path which has brought my wife Larissa and I the fortune of being parents. Our Son Charles Suda is a student at OLPH and we are delighted by the way his daily experience at the school nurtures a positive learning experience and helps to shape his identity as a young Catholic. We can't say enough about how important the TCDSB is in the community and over the years it is clear that many families have recognized the quality of the education putting extra strain on the system. We (the Sudas) like many others truly value the importance of having schooling for our Children that supports family values and serves to provide the utmost in faith based scholastic excellence.

It is on this note that I would like to point to a concern which has arisen as a result of the revisions to admissions policies specifically regarding sibling priority. Given the importance of family values I was surprised to read in the Review of Admission Policy (S.A. 01) and Placement Policy (S.A. 02) that only a minority of parents commented on the need to keep the family unit intact. In our conversations with parents at OLPH there was unanimous concern that this policy would break up families. OLPH is very tight knit school with an excellent rating in scholastics. The socio-economic realities of our community have made the school a desirable option for elementary education. Unfortunately the Board's decision regarding policy won't change the fact that the school will continue to see high applicant to seat ratios and resources will always be at a premium. There will always be a need to displace students out of highly concentrated catchments to those with capacity.

Section D. on Page 4 of the Review of Admission Policy (S.A. 01) and Placement Policy (S.A. 02) states "that every participant had the opportunity to comment and review all of the regulations". Given the amount of backlash we have personally witnessed, I can't imagine this to be as accurate a statement as the authors may have thought when they completed the process. The stark reality is that there is no perfect solution to the problem however it does appear there needs to be a great deal more dialogue, community engagement and thought invested before these policies are set in stone. In the interim We respectfully implore the Board to consider re-instating priority to siblings in order to allow families already in the school pipeline to remain intact. The logistics of having two kids attending different schools are onerous and in some cases impossible. Families with children who do not have siblings will have the option of keeping their kids together at another school. Perhaps in future it should be made clear to new applicants that there will be no sibling priority and thus parents can make their decisions with that knowledge.

Lastly, I would like to point to one of the stated TCDSB Multi-Year Goals that 'Parents will be supported in their integral role of nurturing the relationship between home, school and parish' and take this opportunity to offer a personal example of how the change in policy can drastically affect children and their parents. My wife Larissa lives with Multiple Sclerosis and together with many people who suffer from debilitating illness, she struggles with mobility. The added burden of stress or fatigue resulting from this policy change generally and practically for

the years going forward; could have a significant impact on the severity of Larissa's condition and therefore on our family. I would imagine there are many other examples of people with extenuating circumstances. There are many considerations in making changes to policy when it comes to allocation of school resources in our community and we believe strongly that taking priority away from siblings in our schools will undermine the ability *'to work together as a community of believers committed to putting the values of our faith into practice in the daily life of the school, the home, and in all of society.'* From tcdsb mission statement.

Respectfully Yours,  
David Suda and Larissa Williamson