

January 6, 2015

To the Toronto Catholic District School Board,

This letter is in regards to the TCDSB FDK admission policy regarding Siblings.

Siblings, living in the catchment area, should be guaranteed registration into the TCDSB FDK program.

My brothers, sister and I grew up in the TCDSB. My mother is a retired teacher in the TCDSB and my father a Deacon in Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto. My husband and I now have three children and want to raise all three children in the Catholic Church and the Toronto Catholic school system. We live in the OLPH catchment area and go to church at Our Lady of Perpetual Help (OLPH) every Sunday.

I would like to say we bought our house in our area for the school system (like many people have), but we didn't. We moved to the area, 8 years ago, not knowing anything about the local schools. However, it was always assumed, our children would go to our local catholic school and be brought up in the catholic faith.

When it was time for our son to enroll in FDK (Full day kindergarten), we naturally looked to our local catholic school, OLPH. Therefore, last January at the stroke of midnight, my husband and I were both on our laptop computers, trying desperately to enroll our son, Eamon, in FDK at OLPH Catholic School. That same night, we were supposed to be in Punta Cana Dominican Republic, but had changed our travel plans so we could be at home, on our computers, enrolling our son in our local catchment area catholic school.

After a few glitches with the computer program, SOAR, we luckily got through and registered Eamon for the program. Going through the process, we never felt that the admission policy, guaranteeing sibling registration, was "unfair" or "unfounded" – allowing siblings first priority in registration made sense. We knew that there were only a few spots available, after siblings, and we had to follow the registration guidelines to ensure Eamon was enrolled. We also knew that we only had to do this once and both Eamon's younger brother and sister would be enrolled.

1 year later, it is very upsetting to find out that, in fact, Eamon's sblings (Fiona and Ben) are not guaranteed spots and could potentially not attend our local area catholic school.

It is not an option to send our three children to different schools or to an out-of-district Catholic School. Therefore, Eamon and his siblings will be denied a Catholic education, if one of his siblings is not accepted into the FDK program at OLPH Catholic School.

We completely disagree with the admission policy that siblings are not guaranteed spots in the FDK program (if they live in the catchment area). It is completely absurd that the TCDSB would allow families to be split up and make children from the same family attend different schools.

Siblings, living in the catchment area, should be guaranteed registration into the TCDSB FDK program.

Thank you for your time,

Nuala (and Dave) Zietsma