

January 6, 2015

Dear Members of the Board,

Your new policy regarding sibling priority is disturbing and very concerning to me as both a parent and a catholic parishioner.

The catholic religion has a very strong belief in honouring the family unit. I am a proud Catholic and believe that family togetherness is key in fostering love and unity, especially among children. Since our children spend most of their young lives at school, either in the classroom or on the playground during recess and lunch, it is my belief that separating siblings by placing them in different schools goes entirely against these important values.

I have cherished memories of playing and learning at school, with my older brother at my side lending me a helping hand whenever I would call on him, whether to resolve a playground conflict or by including me in lunchtime soccer matches. I have two daughters and my wish is for them to have these same experiences. My daughters are extremely close and help each other and support one another as my wife and I have taught them to do, and this goes hand in hand with their religious formation.

However, this policy change may well lead to my daughters being separated from one another and going on their separate paths, and at such a tender age. This is an extremely sad outcome and may result in my eldest daughter leaving her current school to attend the same school as her sister. And unfortunately, the local school that they will have to attend, is non-catholic.

I understand that all families in a neighbourhood deserve the chance to send their children to their nearest catholic school, but dividing families who already attend those schools is not the solution to alleviate this problem. It is difficult to understand how new families will sign on to the idea that their children may not be guaranteed to be together.

I pray that the TCDSB recognizes the importance of family, above and beyond all else, and reverses this policy which goes against the idea of family togetherness as promoted by the catholic religion.

Sincerely yours,
Edward Rizk
