



REPORT TO

REGULAR BOARD

NEW POLICIES AND GUIDELINES, JANUARY 2017— BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS

*“Instead, we were like young children among you. Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, so I care for you.”
1 Thessalonians 2: 7-8*

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INFORMATION 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.



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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Beginning September 2017, school boards in Ontario are required to ensure the provision of before and after school programs in each elementary school for children from Kindergarten to Grade 6, where there is sufficient demand and/or viability (as per, Part IX.1 of the Education Act, Regulation 221/11).

This report will provide an overview of the Ministry of Education document: “Before and After School Programs Kindergarten – Grade 6, Policies and Guidelines”, January 2017 – **Appendix A**) along with anticipated impact and action plans for the Toronto Catholic District School Board.

B. PURPOSE

1. To provide a summary regarding the new (January 2017) Ministry of Education policies and guidelines for before and after school programs, for children from the ages of 4 – 12, in Ontario schools.
2. To outline the anticipated impact of these policies and guidelines for the Toronto Catholic District School Board.
3. To describe action plans to address the mandate and anticipated impact.

C. BACKGROUND

1. In September 2010, Full Day Kindergarten was first introduced by the Province, phased in over 5 years, with the requirement of Extended Day/Before and After School Kindergarten Programs where there was sufficient demand and offered on a cost-recovery basis.
2. In 2013, the ‘*Ontario Early Years Policy Framework*’ was written to outline a provincial vision for, “...a system of responsive, high-quality, accessible and increasingly integrated early years programs and services that contribute to healthy child development today and a stronger future tomorrow.”
3. In 2014, ‘*Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario*’, the Ministry of Education focused upon a greater integration between child care, early learning and education services.
4. In December 2014, the **Child Care Modernization Act** was proclaimed which included the overhaul of an outdated, almost 70 year old ‘*Day Nurseries Act*’ into the ‘**Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014** (CCEYA, 2014).

5. The Child Care Modernization Act, 2014, included an amendment to the Education Act to require Ontario school boards to ensure the provision of before and after school programs for students in Grades 1 – 6, in addition to Kindergarten (at sites with sufficient demand and/or viability).
6. In 2014, a provincial resource guide, “How Does Learning Happen”, was released for all early years’ settings (Kindergarten, child care, family support programs and more). The emphasis is on four foundations for optimal learning and development—Belonging, Engagement, Expression and Well-Being for Children, Families and Educators.
7. “*Building a Better Future—A Discussion Paper for Transforming Early Years and Child Care in Ontario*” was distributed in late 2016 to seek input from families, early years agencies and child care partners.
8. And, in January 2017, the finalized, “**Before and After School Programs, Kindergarten – Grade 6, Policies and Guidelines for School Boards**” was released and required to be implemented effective September 2017 (referred to as ‘the document’ in the information below).

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

1. The new policies and guidelines for before and after school programs, Kindergarten – Grade 6, include the duty of school boards to provide before and after school care where there is sufficient demand and/or viability.
2. School boards may directly operate programs or enter into agreements with third party operators—either (qualified) non-profit or municipally-run licensed child care (for before and after school care, Kindergarten & 6 – 12 year olds) **OR** authorized recreational and skill building programs (after school only for 6 – 12 year olds).
3. School boards are required to work in collaboration with co-terminus boards (in our case the Toronto District School Board) and the Consolidated Municipal Services Manager (CMSM; City of Toronto, Children’s Services) in assessing the need for B & A programs in schools and in the development of service plans. This is noted as the ‘Duty to Cooperate’ within the document and CCEYA, 2014 Act.
4. Consultation with community partners including operators of existing child care and authorized recreation programs, parents with school-age children and indigenous organizations is required as part of the planning and review process.

5. The policies and guidelines specifically define what is deemed an ‘authorized recreation program’—providers include municipalities (eg. ARC—After School Recreation Care), the YMCA Boys’ and Girls’ Clubs of Canada and Ontario’s After School Program funded by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport.
6. Other recreation programs or informal types of after school programs may also have to meet various provisions within the CCEYA, 2014 (Refer to: “Parents and Providers—What you need to know about recreation programs” on the Ministry of Education’s website: Ontario.ca/childcare)
7. A significant mandate within the document sets out new programming requirements and expectations for authorized recreation programs such as, minimum staff qualifications and adult-to-child ratios; vulnerable sector checks for all staff; consistency with “How Does Learning Happen?” Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years. (pages 12 – 17 in the document, Appendix ‘A’).
8. Another significant obligation states that where school boards choose to enter into an agreement with an authorized recreation provider, a number of programming requirements and conditions must be included within the agreements (eg. Ensure agencies provide healthy and nutritious food, vulnerable sector screening and certified in first aid/CPR for all staff, training in WHMIS and conflict resolution, etc.).
9. The difference between licensed child care programs and authorized recreation programs is that the latter is not overseen nor monitored by any government body. Authorized recreation programs self-monitor at this time. Licensed child care is inspected by the Ministry of Education, Licensing Unit and assessed by the municipality (if the agency has a subsidy agreement in place—‘Purchase of Service Agreement with the City’).

E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Although the Ministry has not mandated that surveys to all parents be employed to determine interest in before and after school programs, TCDSB determined that it was the most efficient and effective way to reach all parents to assess need for B & A programs in our schools.
2. Online surveys were made available to TCDSB parents of children from Kindergarten to Grade 6 in every TCDSB elementary school as of January 18, 2017. Paper surveys were to be distributed to parents of currently-enrolled Kindergarten students. Survey results were due February 17, 2017 and are in the process of being tallied.

3. Sufficient interest will require a minimum of 20 positive surveys for both before and after school Kindergarten and/or 25 positive surveys for both before and after school School-Age (Grades 1 – 6) at any one school site.
4. A joint TCDSB/TDSB and City, Children’s Services B & A work group has been meeting since the Spring 2016 to work through the Ministry of Education’s new requirements (which were in draft format at the time) with the goal of working in collaboration to identify gaps where B & A programs could potentially open. This work is on-going and multiple factors will be considered before decisions on opening new programs are made (e.g a sufficient number of positive survey responses, neighbourhood demand and viability of operating a program etc).
5. Consultations with child care agencies and authorized recreation programs, about before and after school program demand and viability, took place in December 2016 and in January 2017 with about 100 people in attendance.
6. Consultations with indigenous agencies occurred in February 2017 at the Aboriginal Advisory Committee table.
7. Feedback has included concerns about the short timelines to implement the ‘duty’; concerns about programs sharing space with school staff; worries about staffing B & A programs with a shortage of Early Childhood Educators who are willing to work a split shift (before school & after school); concerns about insufficient fee subsidies for families etc.
8. The work group acknowledges the concerns and will continue to work together to try to address the concerns wherever possible.
9. The TCDSB (Legal, Planning, Facilities & Child Care Services) is reviewing the agreement requirements in relation to authorized recreation programs and will soon determine whether the Board will enter into such agreements. This requires more discussion and evaluation.
10. One after school recreation program (ARC—Operated by the City of Toronto) has requested that the TDSB and the TCDSB not require them to sign an agreement as per Ministry policies. ARC has informed that they are currently unable to meet the requirements. This situation will be brought forward by TCDSB to Ministry representatives for direction.

11. Based upon B & A survey results, TCDSB Child Care Services will pursue the opening of new programs where there is sufficient demand and/or viability in consultation with our partners in the work group. Third party agencies will be offered the opportunity to open these programs.

F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the information of the Board.