SECONDARY SCHOOL SAFE ARRIVAL PROCEDURES FOR ISP STUDENTS

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INFORMATION REPORT

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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

This report summarizes the information collected with respect to the safe arrival procedures of students in ISP in secondary schools.

B. PURPOSE

1. Arising out of the February 2017 SEAC a recommendation was made to the Board of Trustees *that they should examine the Safe Arrival Policy to see how it can protect Special Needs students up to the age of 21 or until graduation.*

2. This is a preliminary report intended to review existing secondary school procedures with respect to the safe arrival procedures and its application to secondary students who are usually transported to schools on school buses.

C. BACKGROUND

All secondary schools were contacted to provide information with respect to the safety plan being followed with respect to the safe arrival of students to ISP programs and the confirmation of the student's attendance.

Students in Intensive Support Classes (ISP) often remain in the secondary schools until the age of 21. Thus, although in age they are adults, their cognitive function is below average and they require closer supervision.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

1. All secondary schools have attendance procedures in place for their student population.
2. Administrators and Special Education Department Heads in Secondary schools, were contacted to elicit information with respect to their ISP students' safe arrival procedures.
3. Staff reported their usual procedures with respect to the arrival and dismissal of students. The question posed was open ended, thus the information collected was varied in nature.
4. 100% of Secondary Schools with ISP classes responded to the request for information with respect to these students.

E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1. 24 school responses were analysed and used to inform this report.
2. School responses were analysed. Four emerging themes were observed in the responses:
   1) Support staff greet students at the bus
   2) Attendance taken at the bus
   3) Attendance communicated to office
   4) Parent is contacted

3. Results will be communicated with respect to the four themes listed above.

Theme 1
All schools indicated that their support staff meet the students at the bus drop off locations.

Theme 2
88% of school responses indicated that often the knowledge regarding attendance begins with a conversation with the bus driver. Bus drivers can often confirm if the student was picked up and whether the parent cancelled the pick-up. Sometimes messages are relayed to the school's staff from the parent through the bus driver.

Theme 3
Although all schools have processes with respect to student attendance, approximately 80% of school responses specifically indicated that there is a process to communicate the student absenteeism to the office.

Theme 4
Approximately two thirds of the responses indicated there is a process to communicate with the student's caregiver. Contact with the parent/caregiver was made in a variety of ways:
   i. Contact is made by the attendance secretary
   ii. Contact is made through an automated calling process
   iii. Contact is initiated by the support staff
   iv. ISP teacher contacts the parent
   v. The parent calls the school
   vi. The parent emails the school

4. Furthermore, some schools reported using a chart to track attendance that was used at bus pick up, while others wrote the names of absentee students on a white board. Teachers report these absences to the office.

5. Some of the variability in responding to the question arose due to the open ended nature of the question. It is important to note that schools were not prompted to offer more information due to the short turn-around time required to collect the information, thus it is believed that these results are of a general nature.

6. Additionally, in some schools with a higher number of ISP students, processes were more complex and well established while in schools with single class programs, procedures naturally flowed in a less complex manner due to a smaller staff that was familiar with the entire group of students made it easier to track student attendance.

7. Each school community is different but would benefit an enhanced process to both communicate attendance procedures with families of students attending ISP classes to continue to ensure student safety.

F.   CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the consideration of SEAC.