



REPORT TO

CORPORATE SERVICES, STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

CONSULTATION RESULTS: PROPOSED DRAFT CHANGES TO SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY

Psalm 24:1

The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains, The world, and those who dwell in it.

Created, Draft	First Tabling		Review
May 30, 2017	June 8, 2017		Click here to enter a date.
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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

1. The Board of Trustees, at the April 6, 2017 meeting of the Student Achievement and Well Being, Catholic Education and Resources Committee, approved the Secondary School Admissions Policy in principle, and specified proposed policy changes for public consultation at the level of “consult”.
2. A comprehensive three-week consultation process to engage school communities began on May 1, 2017 and concluded on Tuesday, May 23, 2017. Consultations included both an online survey, face to face meetings and presentations to major stakeholder groups – CPIC, OAPCE-Toronto, and Catholic School Parent School Councils (CSPCs). Parents and stakeholders were invited and given the opportunity to submit individual comments on the proposed draft secondary school admissions policy changes.
3. Further localized consultation sessions attended by Trustees and staff were held up until June 1, 2017 to gather input from Catholic School Parent Councils and parents in elementary and secondary school communities.
4. Trustees and staff received numerous e-mail messages and letters from stakeholders presenting local perspectives and offering suggestions about the proposed changes to the Secondary Admissions and Placement policy.
5. Detailed results of the online survey (**Appendix A**) and sampling of the comments received (**Appendix B**) are provided in the Report. Over 3,000 comments were received from 2,931 online survey respondents.

Not inclusive of the time spent by TCDSB staff in facilitating face-to-face consultation sessions, this Report required 40 person-hours to consolidate and review the data provided during the consultation process.

B. PURPOSE

1. This Report outlines the results of the community consultation. The feedback and comments received from TCDSB stakeholders will help inform Trustees as the Board considers next steps or final deliberations regarding the proposed draft secondary school admission policy changes.

C. BACKGROUND

1. Following the Board of Trustees decision at the April 6, 2017 meeting of the Student Achievement and Well Being, Catholic Education and Resources Committee, regarding the proposed draft changes to the Secondary School Admissions Policy, a comprehensive three-week community consultation process was conducted from May 1, 2017 to Tuesday, May 23, 2017.
2. Consultations comprised of online and face to face opportunities for community feedback and input from all TCDSB stakeholders including CPIC, OAPCE-Toronto. An online survey and dedicated mini-web site was launched on May 1, 2017. A special “Consultation in the Round” facilitated by Board Staff served as unique face-to-face engagement session at the Catholic Education Centre on the evening of May 8, 2017.
3. Presentations and information sessions were also conducted at a number of CSPC meetings attended by Board staff and local Trustees beyond May 23, 2017.
4. Trustees and staff received numerous e-mail messages and letters from stakeholders presenting local perspectives and offering suggestions about the proposed changes to the Secondary Admissions and Placement policy.
5. There was significant participation and response throughout the consultation process, featuring close to three-thousand survey responses (2,931) and thousands of online comments, summaries from the face-to-face consultation, discussions at CSPC meetings, delegations at Board meetings, emails and written submissions.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

ONLINE SURVEY

1. The online survey outlining the major proposed draft changes to the secondary school admissions policy was launched online on May 1, 2017 and available for feedback and input until May 23, 2017.
2. A total of 2,931 survey responses were submitted (**Appendix A**). Based on the high response rate, survey results are considered accurate 95 percent of the time with a margin of error of plus or minus 1.8 percent.

3. Stakeholders were also invited to submit comments regarding the proposed draft policy changes. A representative sample of comments received is provided (unedited) in **Appendix B**. The complete 228-page compilation of raw comments was also sent to Trustees in PDF. Comments recorded during the May 8, 2017, special face-to-face consultation session held at the Board office is listed in **Appendix C**.

FACE TO FACE CONSULTATION IN THE ROUND

4. Over 80 parents attended the Consultation in the Round session at the Catholic Education Centre on May 8. After a plenary overview of the proposed policy changes, parents rotated through six groups representing the 6 major proposed changes to regulations within the policy.
5. Comments were recorded by staff at each of the six discussion tables, and participants were provided the opportunity to submit their own written comments to the group facilitator. Staff assessed the comments as part of the comprehensive consultation.

LOCAL PRESENTATIONS TO GROUPS OF CSPCs AND PARENTS

6. Three separate sessions were held by Trustees and staff to Catholic School Parent Councils and parents in a variety of schools. In most cases, parents from 2-3 elementary schools affected by the proposed changes to regulations assembled to present questions and offer suggestions about the proposed policy changes.
7. Staff recorded the suggestions and incorporated it into the comprehensive consultation.

MARY WARD COMMUNITY LETTER TO THE DIRECTOR

8. Mary Ward CSS offers a unique, self-directed learning program in grades 9 to 12, and is one of a handful of schools across Canada to offer this unique method or program delivery. Self-directed learning is offered across all program pathways, and has operated as a community school that offers the program to students at local elementary schools and to students beyond the regular catchment area who desire the self-directed approach to earning an Ontario Secondary School diploma.
9. Given the unique nature of its program, the Mary Ward community has recommended status quo so to avoid mandating self-directed learning for all

local grade 8 students, allowing for the opportunity to attend a secondary school for a regular program.

E-MAIL MESSAGES AND LETTERS TO TRUSTEES AND STAFF

10. Students, parents and stakeholders sent numerous messages to local Trustees and staff expressing a variety of perspectives on the proposed changes.

CONSULTATION THEMES

11. Throughout all forms of consultation, five (5) salient themes emerged.
 - i. **Theme One** expressed support for the proposed changes, primarily to ensure that the local secondary school (co-educational or single gender) would be able to provide an education for students who reside in the immediate neighbourhoods around the school.
 - ii. **Theme Two** discussed the need to preserve choice for grade students so as to ensure they have the opportunity to receive the educational program, be it regular program, single gender program, or specialty program, in the school they want and not be directed to secondary schools that has had minimal historical connection to the elementary school.
 - iii. **Theme Three** reported concern over the number of International students studying in oversubscribed schools. Data suggest that the impact of International students on grade 9 enrolment in 4 oversubscribed schools is negligible.
 - iv. **Theme Four** expressed the need for the TCDSB to apply its current policy and specialty program offerings more stringently. The TCDSB should implement innovative programs across the city to allow for easier access for local school communities. It was opined that should this course of action be followed it has potential to balance enrolment across all secondary schools.
 - v. **Theme Five** expressed that while there is a general appreciation that secondary school boundaries need to be considered to balance enrolments at all TCDSB secondary schools, more time was required to comprehensively analyze the data and engage parents more deeply in the process.

E. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the consideration of the Board.