



REPORT TO

REGULAR BOARD

## SAFE SCHOOLS REPORT 2016-17

You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble  
and surround me with songs of deliverance.

Psalm 32:7

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
September 6, 2017	September 6, 2017	<a href="#">Click here to enter a date.</a>
Vincent Burzotta, Superintendent of Safe Schools Nadia Adragna, Principal St. Martin Campus Todd Visinski, Vice Principal St. Martin Campus		
<b>INFORMATION REPORT</b>		

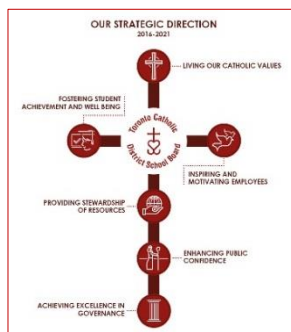
### Vision:

*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.*



Rory McGuckin  
Director of Education

D. Koenig  
Associate Director  
of Academic Affairs

A. Sangiorgio  
Associate Director  
of Planning and Facilities

T.B.D.  
Executive Superintendent  
of Business Services and  
Chief Financial Officer

## **A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Safe and healthy learning environments supported by positive school climates continues to be a key goal for the Toronto Catholic District School Board. In our annual Safe School Report we continue to examine metrics which promote continued growth in safe, caring and accepting school practices. For 2016-17 both qualitative and quantitative data confirm a continued positive trend toward safe and welcoming school climates in the TCDSB. Behavioural data indicates that suspensions and expulsions over the last 5 years continues to trend downwards. Last year's increase in elementary suspensions particularly with females has been reversed. This indicates that last year's elementary female suspension concern was a one year anomaly and not consistent with the trend data. Although there have been some increases in suspensions at the secondary level the long-term system-wide metrics still support a downward trend in suspensions. In addition perceptual data from Safe School Climate surveys administered to elementary and secondary students indicate that an overwhelming number of students (94% in elementary and 90% in secondary) still believe their schools are safe places to interact and learn.

The Safe Schools department continues to invest in the quantity and scope of its professional learning modules offered to members of the TCDSB community to educate staff and students, and provide them with knowledge and skills to create more positive, accepting and safe school environments. Informed by the local Safe and Accepting Schools Teams, all schools will review their local 2016-2017 Safe Schools metrics and make adjustments as needed to their Safe Schools Plan. The components of the plan will include action items for: Bullying Awareness, Prevention and Intervention; Progressive Discipline; and Positive School Climate.

Cumulative Staff time spent on this Report was 105 hours

## **B. PURPOSE**

1. The Safe Schools Report for 2016-2017 includes quantitative and qualitative data related to Safe Schools metrics, procedures, programs and other activities designed to create safe, accepting learning environments, and strengthen public confidence in the TCDSB. In an effort to gain further insights into the data the 2016-2017 Report also includes an embedded gender analysis.
2. The following areas will be addressed in this report, along with actions undertaken to address evidence-informed needs:

(1) Suspension and Expulsion Data

- (2) Safe Schools Climate Surveys
  - (3) Alternative Safe Schools Programs for Students
  - (4) Professional Learning to Build Capacity within the System
  - (5) Special Action Item on Female Suspensions
  - (6) Actionable Items 2016-2017 to consider
3. The evidence will highlight those areas of strength and success, as well as areas for growth, resulting in prioritized actions for the 2017-2018 school year.

## **C. BACKGROUND**

The Safe Schools Report to the Board has evolved from focusing on Suspension and Expulsion data ten years ago, to a comprehensive review and analysis of established metrics and subsequent action plans for the new school year. This report is an annual report as requested by the Board of Trustees.

## **D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS**

**Sources of Evidence for this report include, but are not limited to:**

- 1. Suspension and Expulsion data;
- 2. Secondary Safe School Survey and Elementary Safe and Caring Catholic School Climate Survey;
- 3. Safe Schools alternative programs to support student achievement and well-being;
- 4. Participation rates of TCDSB staff in professional learning opportunities, workshops and in-services.
- 5. Principal Focus Group discussions

Below are data related to Safe Schools:

### **SECTION 1: Suspension and Expulsion Data (Appendix A)**

An analysis of the five year history of Suspension and Expulsion data at TCDSB (2012-2017) indicate a downward trend in the following areas: number of

Suspension Notices issued; number of students being suspended; number of students receiving multiple suspensions; and the number of days lost to Suspension.

### **ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS [Comparison with 2015-2016 data]**

At the Elementary level, the data indicate that significantly less students received suspension as a progressive discipline consequence (-95). Some comparisons with the previous year (2015-2016) indicate:

- Decrease in the number of Suspension Notices issued to males (-41) and decrease to females (-54)
- Significant decrease in the number of Instructional Days lost to Suspension for males (-91)
- Decrease in the number of Instructional Days lost to Suspension for females (-26)
- Decrease in the number of *males* with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) who were suspended (-21)
- Decrease in the number of *females* with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) who were suspended (-11)
- Decrease in the number of *males* suspended 2 or more times (-23)
- Decrease in the number of *females* suspended 2 or more times (-26)

*This data would indicate that males' recidivism continues to decline (-42 over last 2 years) and female recidivism has also decreased (2015/16 increase of +25 and 2016/17 decrease of -26).*

- The number of *males* Suspended Pending Possible Expulsion under Section 310 of the Education Act has remained constant.
- Slight increase in the number of *females* Suspended Pending Possible Expulsion under Section 310 of the Education Act (+3)
- Slight increases in Board Expulsions (+1) for *males* and no change for *females* in Board Expulsions
- Slight decrease in School Expulsions (-1) for *males* and slight increase for *females* in School Expulsions (+1).

*Overall there has been no significant change in the more serious infractions of expulsions. From the total number of Suspension Pending Possible Expulsion processes initiated (32), very few resulted in expulsions (3). This would suggest*

*principals are using all available sources of information and considering mitigating and other factors during their investigations.*

## **SECONDARY SCHOOLS [Comparison with 2015-2016 data]**

The data also indicates a constant downward trend over the last 5 years in suspensions issued. This past year saw a slight increase (+56) in the number of suspension notices board wide but still significantly lower than 3 years ago (-365).

Some comparisons with the previous year (2015-2016) indicate:

- Slight increase in the number of Suspension Notices issued *for males* (+11)
- Increase in the number of Suspension Notices issued *for females* (+45)
- Increase in the number of Instructional Days Lost to Suspension *for males* (+85).
- Increase in the number of Instructional Days Lost to Suspension *for females* (+93)
- Slight increase in the number of *males* suspended 2 or more times (+4)
- Increase in the number of *females* suspended 2 or more times (+31)

*This data would indicate that overall recidivism for both males and females has slightly increased this year but when compared to trend data over the last 3 years, there has been a significant decrease in students suspended more than once (-213). This suggests that mitigating factors and intervention strategies appear to correct student inappropriate behaviour.*

- Decrease in the number of *males* with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) who were suspended (-29).
- Slight increase in the number of *females* with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) who were suspended (+8). However, there is a decrease in suspensions of female students with an IEP over the last 3 years (-28).

*Although there is a slight increase in suspensions of female students with an IEP and continued decrease in suspension of male students with an IEP, a three year trend data confirms a downward trend of suspension of students with IEP (-78).*

*This further supports the notion that Mitigating and Other Factors are being considered when issuing Progressive Discipline.*

- Decrease in the number of *males* Suspended Pending Possible Expulsion under Section 310 of the Education Act (-4)
- Decrease in the number of *females* Suspended Pending Possible Expulsion under Section 310 of the Education Act (-10)
- Decrease for *males* in Board Expulsions (-3)
- Decrease for *females* in Board Expulsions (-1)
- Increase in School Expulsions for males (+9)
- Decrease in School Expulsions for *females* (-12)

*Although we have had 56 more suspensions in secondary, this one year increase is attributed to isolated incidents that have skewed the data. The 5 year overall trend, however, continues to indicate a consistent decrease in suspensions issued (-462). This positive Safe Schools trend is further supported by the decrease in serious student incidents resulting in suspension pending possible expulsion (-14).*

## **SECTION 2: Student Perceptual Data**

During the 2016-2017 school year, elementary students in Grades 6 and 8 participated in the *Safe and Caring Catholic School Climate* survey, and secondary students in Grades 9-12 participated in the *Secondary Safe Schools* survey. Data gathered from these surveys are reported for individual schools and as a Board.

At the Board level, general trends can be identified and serve as a focus for collective inquiry and action. At the school level, the data are reviewed by the Safe and Accepting Schools Team to gain greater insights into students' perceptions of school safety and school climate, to advise the principal about enhanced safety procedures and programs, and to review and update the local Safe Schools Plan.

## **COMPARATIVE REVIEW (TREND OVER TIME)**

### **Elementary Schools**

In February/March 2017, 10,382 students in Grades 6 and 8 in all TCDSB elementary schools participated in the Safe and Caring Catholic (SCCSC) Survey. Overall, elementary students' perceptions of school safety are very positive and

remain so over the past 3 years, with over 94% of students indicating they feel *very safe* or *safe* in school.

Some highlights on safety (See Appendix B1):

Consistent over the past three years, over 80% of elementary students report feeling *safe* or *very safe* in the washrooms, at sports/after school events, on the stairs/in stairwells and outside during recess.

As in previous years, a large majority of elementary students (over 80%) report they have *never witnessed* or *experienced* in school weapons and relationship violence.

Improvements (an increase of 3 to 5%) are evident when comparing elementary results from 2014-2015 to 2016-2017 in the following areas:

- the percentage of students who feel *safe* or *very safe*
  - in school, in the classroom (now at 96%)
  - while eating lunch at school, during indoor recess (now at 94%)
  - at dismissal time (now at 92%)
  - in the hallways (now at 91%)
- the percentage of students who report *never* having *witnessed* or *experienced* in school:
  - Drug use (now at 95%)
  - Gang activity (now at 89%)
  - Harassment based on sexual orientation (now at 86%)

Continued dialogue:

- Unlike secondary students, elementary students feel more comfortable reporting incidents of bullying experienced and witnessed.
- For those who have been bullied or have witnessed bullying, the most common ways are verbal (name calling, constant unwanted teasing/joking) or social (e.g., being excluded, gossip).
- While there remains room for improvement, overall, nearly 60% of elementary students indicated bullying in their school is *a small problem* or *not a problem*.

Secondary Schools

In November 2016, 4,943 students in Grades 9 through 12 from all TCDSB



secondary schools participated in the Safe Schools Survey. Overall, secondary students' perceptions of school safety are positive and have remained so over the past 3 years, with about 91% of students reporting feeling *very safe* or *safe* in school.

#### Some highlights on safety (See Appendix B2):

Consistent over the past three years,

- over 90% of secondary students felt *safe* or *very safe* in the classroom, in school, and at sports/after school events;
- over 80% felt *safe* or *very safe* in the cafeteria/lunch time, at dismissal time, in the hallways, on the stairs/in stairwells, in the washrooms, and travelling to and from school.

Improvements are evident when comparing secondary results from 2014-2015 to 2016-2017 in the following areas:

- the percentage of students:
  - *never* having *witnessed or experienced* alcohol use in school (now at 80%; an increase of 4%)
  - indicating that bullying is *a small problem* or *not a problem* in their school (now at 70%; an increase of 6%)
  - *never* been bullied in the past year (now at 84%; an increase of 10%)
  - *witnessing* another student being bullied at school (now at 35%; a 12% decrease)

#### Continued dialogue:

- Although there were improvements in most areas of unsafe actions witnessed or experienced in school, there remains room for continued dialogue and possible interventions.
- Although elementary students feel more comfortable reporting incidents of bullying, secondary students are more reluctant (Don't Snitch Ethos) to report incidents of bullying experienced or witnessed. We hope that the implementation of the Anonymous Reporting App will mitigate this reluctance to report.
- For those who have been bullied or have witnessed bullying, the most common forms are verbal (name calling, constant unwanted teasing/joking) or social (e.g., being excluded, gossip).

### **GENDER BREAKDOWN**



For the most part, findings comparing male and female students have remained the same as in previous years.

### **Elementary Schools** (See Appendix B3)

- Little or no differences between male and female students with regards to their feeling safe in and/or around school.
- More male than female students reported *witnessing/experiencing* physical violence.
- While most students regardless of gender report *never* being bullied or of *witnessing* bullying, female reports of bullying *experienced* and *witnessed* are higher than that of males.
  - *Verbal* and *social* bullying continue to be areas of foci for both genders however, more females reported *experiencing* and *witnessing* social and cyber bullying than males, whereas more males reported *experiencing* and *witnessing* physical bullying.
- More female students have told another person about being bullied.
- More male students indicated that they think bullying is *a small problem* or *not a problem* in their school.

### **Secondary Schools** (See Appendix B4)

- Generally, most male and female students (i.e., at least 75%) report feeling *safe* or *very safe* in the various locations within their respective schools.
  - Female reports of safety in the washroom and in school generally are higher than that of males.
  - Male reports of safety in the travelling to and from school and in the parking lot are higher than females.
- More male than female students reported *witnessing/experiencing* physical violence, weapons, theft and gang activity.
- Most students regardless of gender report *never* being bullied
- *Verbal* and *social* bullying are areas of continued focus for both genders however, more females reported *experiencing* and *witnessing* social and cyber bullying than males, whereas more males reported *experiencing* and

*witnessing physical bullying.*

### **SECTION 3: Safe Schools Alternative Programs**

The TCDSB operates programs through the Safe Schools Department. The Monsignor Fraser College programs at St Martin and Our Lady of Lourdes support students who have received a board expulsion as a result of a safe school incident.

#### **1. The Expulsion Program**

The Expulsion Program is a short term support program for students who have been expelled from all schools of the TCDSB. The program serves elementary students grade 6-8, and secondary school students, grades 9-12. Program staff work in a multidisciplinary team to address student strengths, needs and triggers with an aim to provide individualized academic programming and individual support at school. Once students have transitioned from their home school, the goal for all students is to successfully complete the demission requirements and return to a different TCDSB school. While in the program some students are able to meet graduation requirements and proceed to post-secondary education while others look to access community programs or the world of work upon program completion.

In 2016-2017, 1 student accessed the elementary program and 35 students were served in the secondary program. Program staff work diligently to develop community partnerships across the GTA so that students and their families can access local community support and resources.

#### **2. TIPSS (Transitional Intervention Program for Suspended Students)**

The long-term suspension program offers programming to students serving a suspension of 6-20 days in length. For students receiving a suspension between 6-10 days, academic programming is provided. For students serving a suspension of 11-20 days social work assistance is provided in addition to the academic programming. Parents are not obligated to accept TIPPS support although we strongly encourage participation.

In 2016-2017, 75% of eligible suspended students were served by TIPSS teachers at sessions in Toronto Public Library sites. In situations where adult students/parents have chosen not to attend TIPSS, the school provided the student/family or in some cases detention centre with work packages. In all cases students were afforded the opportunity to continue with their learning while on long-term suspension.

#### **SECTION 4: Professional Learning for TCDSB Stakeholders**

In 2016-2017, the Safe Schools Department offered professional learning on diverse safe schools topics to students, parents, TCDSB staff members and community partners.

2016-2017 Activities are listed in Action Items found in section E.

#### **SECTION 5: Special Action Item from 2015-16 Safe School Report**

1. In the Safe Schools report to Regular Board on September 22, 2016, it was reported that in 2015-2016 (in comparison to 2014-2015) there was an increase in the number of females suspended 2 or more times. Based on this result, the following actionable item was identified for 2016-2017: *To examine data, and where appropriate develop strategies, to address the increase in elementary suspensions issued to female students.*

2. As a first step, the school-by-school results were reviewed for the past 2 years (2014-2015 and 2015-2016) to see which schools showed an increase in the number of female suspensions. We learned that this was not a trend system-wide. In fact, for many schools there was either *no change* or a *decrease* in the number of female suspensions. Only eight elementary schools showed an *increase* in female suspensions.

3. The data for the eight elementary schools showed that the most common type of descriptor for which an increase in suspensions for females was observed was: “Conduct injurious to the moral tone of the school or to physical or mental well-being of others”.

4. Based on these preliminary analyses, it was decided to conduct a focus group with principals to learn about their perceptions regarding female suspensions, what behaviours resulted in suspensions and what schools are doing to support students. Two focus groups were conducted; in total, 18 principals

participated. Key themes regarding the perceptions of principals are summarized below:

- When principals were asked *what in their view may have contributed to this increase*, they shared the following perceptions:
  - Communication and Social media: cyberbullying is done primarily by girls (e.g., name-calling and disrespect)
  - Societal issue: socialization and society play a role in what it means to be a female (e.g., tough as boys, “Mean Girls”, “Pretty Little Liar”, etc.); there seems to be an increased sense of entitlement among females (e.g., what is expected, “I know my rights”)
- All principals noted that over the years they have experienced increasing challenges in the behaviours of female students.
- When asked *what actions are taken to mitigate the trend or to support students*, principals indicated the following:
  - Teacher capacity is key: they know their students and can sense when to intervene before issues can get out of hand; teachers are best able to deal with subculture of girls
  - Building staff capacity: a whole school approach, to build capacity and training on how to support students
  - Support of Child Youth Worker (CYW), social work, guidance
  - Reach out to CYW students at Humber College or Ryerson University: these students are available to do articling (apprenticeships) at schools and run amazing programs from October to April, addresses positive social skills, turn taking, manners
- When asked to *identify what actions are taken to support the school community*, principals identified educating parents through presentations (offered in multiple languages), as well as, parental engagement as key approaches.
- When asked *what supports they need to help with their efforts in the area of safe schools*, principals indicated:
  - Encourage teachers to attend Safe School Modules

- CYW support – they hold small group interventions, social skills program
- Increase staff (e.g., vice principals, guidance, psychology staff for further support); schools with small enrolment and a sole administrator have difficulty dealing with problem behaviours

## **E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

2016-2017 Metrics	Evidence/Deliverables (2016-17 Metrics)
<p>1. Continue to diversify and expand Safe Schools professional learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 22 different topics delivered in 2016-2017 Professional Learning Modules Series: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 925 participants (social workers, CYW, educational assistants, teachers, psychologists, administrators, support staff)</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Interdisciplinary professional learning opportunities with various TCDSB stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ New Teacher Induction Program – 150 new teachers</li> <li>○ Joint TSU/Safe Schools Training – 31 TSU Members</li> <li>○ Administrative Professional Development – 320 principals/vice principals/superintendents</li> <li>○ Newly Appointed Principal and Vice Principal In-services – 30 (Succession Series) and 30 (Head Start)</li> <li>○ Bullying Awareness and Prevention Month Launch – 210 secondary students, staff</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Grey Cup Festival (Bullying Prevention Week) – 400 elementary students and staff</li> <li>○ School Presentations – 800 participants</li> <li>○ Toronto Occasional Teacher Local (TOTL) – 60 participants</li> <li>○ Resolution Conference and Mediation Circles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 85 participants (social workers, CYW, educational assistants, teachers, police officers)</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Threat Assessment Training and Related Workshops: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 87 participants (social workers, CYW, educational assistants, teachers, psychologists, administrators, support staff, police officers)</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Training to Toronto Police Service – 70 police officers</li> <li>○ York University/OISE/Niagara University Teacher Candidate In-services – 225 teacher candidates</li> <li>○ CPCO PQP Training – 20 aspiring administrators</li> <li>○ SEAC Presentation – 25 members</li> <li>○ OAPCE Presentation – 40 members</li> <li>○ I-LITE Conference – 2, 400 participants</li> <li>○ Smile Camp – 200 participants</li> <li>○ LOYOL (Trends in Female Behaviour)– 20 TSU teachers</li> <li>○ Toronto Public Library Presentation – 30 librarians</li> <li>○ Sunday Lockdown Training – 10 participants</li> </ul>
2. Continue and expand the Safe Schools Student Ambassador Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Three Safe Schools Student Ambassador Symposiums were held focusing on 3 themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ November 17, 2016 - <b>Stand Up:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Focus on Bullying Awareness and Prevention</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ February 28, 2017 – <b>Speak Up:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Focus on the Importance of Reporting &amp; Introduction of <i>Anonymous Alerts App</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ April 25, 2017 – <b>Be Outstanding:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Focus on Student Networking, Sharing Promising Practices, and Celebrating Safe Schools Student Ambassador Local Initiatives and Successes</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3. Examine data, and where appropriate develop strategies, to address the increase in elementary suspensions issued to female students.	Please see Section 5 of the Evidence and Research Analysis for a detailed analysis on data, strategies, to address the increase in elementary suspensions issued to female students.
4. To monitor the implementation of the 33 recommendations resulting from the Safe Schools Inquiry Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Safe Schools Implementation Monitoring team met 3 times during the 2016-17 academic year.</li> <li>○ As of June 30 the status of the implementation of 33 items appears below:</li> </ul> <p><b>Awareness:</b> Staff have knowledge of issues and strategies; no evidence of implementation across the system. Total of recommendations-<b>4</b></p> <p><b>Early Implementation:</b> Ongoing professional learning among stakeholders; initial implementation is observable Total of recommendations- <b>1</b></p> <p><b>Implementation:</b> Evidence of regular implementation across system. Total of recommendations <b>-4</b></p> <p><b>Routine Use:</b> Consistent evidence of implementation. Total of recommendations-<b>24</b></p>
5. Prepare a Report on the interim status of the 33 Recommendations of the Safe	An Interim Report on the Safe School's Inquiry Implementation was presented to Board in January 2017. An updated Report will be presented in January 2018.



## **F. ACTIONABLE ITEMS FOR 2017-2018**

1. Expand the *Safe Schools Professional Learning Modules Series* to include new modules: “Practical Tools to Enhance Students’ Social and Emotional Skills” and “Understanding and Addressing Aggressive Relationships”.
2. As a result of the focus group discussion regarding female suspensions, Safe Schools Department will:
  - Receive professional learning from TPS on current and emerging social media issues.
  - Safe Schools staff will augment existing professional learning modules on social media
  - School communities will implement new learning and facilitate activities at the local level
3. Monitor the implementation of the 33 recommendations resulting from the Safe Schools Inquiry Report.
4. Initiate a pilot Intervention Program (Voluntary Intervention Program, VIP) to support students who are in risk of engaging in serious student behaviours that may lead to expulsion.

## **G. CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

This report is for the consideration of the Board and.