



REPORT TO

REGULAR BOARD

VOICES THAT CHALLENGE 2017 CSLIT: INSPIRING ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

The Ontario Catholic Graduate is called to be a Responsible Citizen and “to promote equality, democracy, solidarity, for a just, peaceful and compassionate society”.

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
September 25, 2017	October 19, 2017	Click here to enter a date.
<p>M. Consul, Student Leadership Resource Teacher, CSLIT (Catholic Student Leadership Impact Team).</p> <p>L. DiMarco, Superintendent of Curriculum, Leadership & Innovation</p> <p>G. Iuliano Marrello, Superintendent of Student Success</p>		
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.



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

On Monday, March 20, 2017 Student Trustees Rhea Carlisle and Karina Dubrovskaya held the annual TCDSB Catholic Student Leadership Conference “*Voices That Challenge*”. The CSLIT (2016-2017) under the direction of Student Trustees Rhea Carlisle and Karina Dubrovskaya reviewed the recommendations given by the student body. These recommendations were presented to the then in-coming student trustee Joel Ndongmi. After consultation with the CSLIT Executive (which were appointed in June 2017) and the CSLIT General Assembly who had a meeting at Olympia Sports Camp (September 2-4, 2017), student leaders prioritized their recommendations and developed a plan of action for 2017-2018. CSLIT wishes to further explore and address these recommendations in order to better serve the students of the TCDSB.

B. PURPOSE

The report includes practical activities that schools can perform to support social justice initiatives that would address the recommendations made by outgoing CSLIT Executive and student trustee Karina Dubrovskaya. The report also includes valuable student input pertaining to the implementation of social justice initiatives and the development of a justice-oriented attitude in our schools.

Current Student Trustees, Rhea Carlisle and Joel Ndongmi decided to seek out further clarification of the recommendations by engaging the entire CSLIT committee. This strategy allowed them to prioritize and clarify the recommendations in order to select what specific issues to focus on during their term. The issues raised represent the voice of the students. The opportunity to present these concerns at board allows for direct involvement and needed dialogue regarding relevant issues that impact TCDSB students.

C. BACKGROUND

This report complies with the requirement of an annual report to the Board of Trustees based on the CSLIT conference “*Voices that Challenge*”.

Before having staff take action in response to the recommendations put forth at the Voices That Challenge Conference held on March 20, 2017, the 2017-2018 CSLIT decided that they would like to explore, clarify, and prioritize each recommendation. Some of the original issues raised in the 2016 conference and subsequent CSLIT meetings are no longer issues of priority for this year’s CSLIT. Relevant issues for the 2017-2018 CSLIT have been assigned to the appropriate Executive Members and subcommittees.

The practice of recommending initiatives from the Voices That Challenge Conference through the outgoing student trustee and CSLIT executive to the incoming CSLIT executive has become the adopted procedure. This procedure allows for the current student trustees and CSLIT to adopt and work on the priorities they feel are most relevant.

The current recommendations put forth by this school year's CSLIT can be dealt with administratively with the support of the appropriate program departments.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH

Students should be stimulated to effect positive change in our world around injustices. Students feel a calling to live out their faith, thus involvement in social justice actions allow them to make their faith visible. The current Student Trustees will be engaging the CSLIT standing committees so that they can work with various staff to address their specific recommendations. Students feel that board policies must address and be in line with current global social justice issues relevant and important to students.

E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The following is an action plan regarding the Report to Board - "CSLIT: Inspiring Active Citizenship in Catholic Education". The Student Leadership Department and student leaders attending the CSLIT meetings on September 2-4, 2017 agreed to develop specific action plans related to the recommendations. Note: The issues listed are not necessarily in order of importance although all selected as priorities for this year's CSLIT. The CSLIT recognized that the different issues listed below become a priority at different points in the school year.

CSLIT 2017-2018 Recommended Actions

1. Student Governance

This year, the students of CSLIT have expressed interest in learning about the political process and the role the board has in the implementation of policies that most affect them. CSLIT feels that this is important knowledge crucial to being an informed and active student. CSLIT recommends that the board works more closely with TCDSB Student Councils to better capture student voice within board policies and promote active student involvement to ensure accurate representation of student voice is heard at the board level.

CSLIT encourages the continued support for student professional development within various events such as the annual **President's Council Conferences**. Professional development like this allows for Student Councils to understand the structure of the board and levels of student governance. These conferences also encourage participation from younger students who are interested in learning more about the role Student Councils play in making changes to their local school communities.

Supporting student governance helps TCDSB students become *Responsible Citizens* who participate in important discussions regarding board policies and political activism using a Catholic lens.

2. Indigenous Education

As devoted Catholics, our students are concerned about the lack of education surrounding Indigenous history in our Province and the various social injustices facing our Indigenous youth. Some of these issues include limited access to educational opportunities, environmental inequality, and the lack of mental and physical health supports.

As it is Canada's 150th anniversary, it is important for us to recognize the history of our country and the important role of Indigenous culture. CSLIT would like to explore the possibility of implementing a board-wide Indigenous Awareness Week centered around the celebration of Indigenous arts, culture, and history within Canada. This would give our students, both elementary and secondary, a deepened respect for the unique Canadian Indigenous culture and a better understanding of Indigenous history.

This year, CSLIT is passionate about continuing to strengthen and expand the

partnership with the Superior North Catholic District School Board as it allows for first-hand exposure to the beautiful traditions and culture of our Indigenous population. The Superior North service trip provides our students the opportunity to travel to Thunder Bay, Ontario and experience a culture that is rooted deep in Canada's history. Our students will work as *Collaborative Contributors* to learn about and participate in the rich culture of our Ontario Indigenous youth. As an extension to last year's trip, participants from the Superior North leadership program will be asked to offer workshops to elementary students to help spread their newfound awareness and share their experience.

3. Student Well-Being

Healthy minds and active living are essential aspects of being a successful student. CSLIT would like to work collaboratively with the board to continue prioritizing the mental and physical well-being of our students. By broadening the definition of well-being, we are able to expand supports for TCDSB students and provide them with the tools necessary to be successful in their education.

CSLIT requests the continued support of various mental well-being initiatives such as **Stop the Stigma**, and **the De-Stress Week**. These initiatives provide our students with adequate coping mechanisms such as practicing mindfulness and becoming *Effective Communicators*. In addition, these programs create an open and comfortable dialogue regarding the various topics surrounding mental health and well-being that is crucial to establishing a support group. Prayer and meditation can also provide students with valuable coping outlets for day-to-day stresses and in turn strengthen our relationship with God and deepen our faith. It is imperative that students are able to communicate efficiently about these matters in order to reduce the stigma that comes along with the topic of mental health.

A safe school environment also has a significant impact on the mental and physical health of a student. CSLIT would like to maintain its support for our **Safe Schools Policies** which help contribute to a healthy learning environment for all our students.

4. Environmental Awareness

Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si'* calls us to serve and be stewards of our global and local environment by promoting the sustainable use of our natural resources while keeping in line with our Catholic values.

This year, CSLIT would like to better promote our board's **Bottled Water-Free Initiative**. By doing so, students will recognize the importance of becoming

environmentally aware. As mentioned in “Laudato Si”, “*there is a growing tendency, despite its scarcity, to privatize this resource, turning it into a commodity subject to the laws of the market*”. CSLIT believes the increasing commercial profit gained from the selling of bottled water should not be supported by the TCDSB community and that the **Bottled Water-Free Initiative** should be more heavily enforced within our schools. In our Catholic faith, water is sacred and a human basic right therefore, it should be available to all.

Being the *Year of the School* in the TCDSB’s three-year pastoral plan, CSLIT recommends that the board work together with each of our schools to ensure that they have access to composting bins within their school, provide adequate resources to our staff and students on how to be environmentally sustainable in the classroom, and work towards certifying our TCDSB schools as *Ontario Eco-Schools*. In working towards an environmentally conscious community, CSLIT hopes to encourage the entire student body to answer our Catholic call to serve, protect, and sustain our planet and its resources through environmental stewardship.

5. Inclusion and Belonging for all Students

As *Discerning Believers*, it is crucial we apply our Catholic values with compassion, respect, and sensitivity to all students (LGBTQ+, international students, newcomers, students in financial need). All student groups should have a sense of belonging and feel comfortable within their school community. CSLIT encourages that the TCDSB support inclusion for all our students through various initiatives and programs.

In addition to this, the annual *Inclusion and Belonging Retreat* also creates an atmosphere of inclusivity in our board. This conference allows for a collection of students from across the board to come together, discuss the various challenges they face within their own communities, and create a list of solutions that can be applied to each situation.

As many of our international students face challenges transitioning to life in a new country, it is important that these students are able to embrace their unique cultures while taking part in their school community. CSLIT recommends implementing workshops and conferences celebrating our international students and newcomers to ensure they feel welcomed in our board. The creation of a **Newcomers Conference** will help ease this transition.

Poverty is also an issue many students within our board face and can often become a cause of isolation. CSLIT is committed to ensuring all students feel

they are loved and that they all belong regardless of their financial situation. **The Angel Foundation for Learning's** Breakfast Program promotes a healthy learning environment and contributes to providing equitable access to opportunities for all our students.

This year, CSLIT would like to better promote and support the various Angel Foundation initiatives running this year so that more students can be served through the Angel Foundation charity.

F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the consideration of the Board.