



REPORT TO

**STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND WELL-
BEING, CATHOLIC EDUCATION, HUMAN
RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY (IWD)

"She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue."

Proverbs 31:20-21

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review	Approval	Implementation
September 24, 2012	October 4, 2012			

Josie Di Giovanni, Superintendent of Learning, Student Achievement and Well-Being

INFORMATION REPORT

A. Gauthier
Associate Director of Academic Affairs

A. Sangiorgio
Associate Director of Planning and Facilities

S. Pessione
Associate Director of Business Services,
Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer

Bruce Rodrigues
Director of Education

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Schools in the TCDSB continue the practice of promoting celebrations as opportunities to reflect, educate and learn collaboratively and in partnership with all stakeholders. Our initiatives capture the diversity within our parent, student, staff and stakeholder groups. This practice is congruent with our Catholic Gospel Values, Catholic Social Teachings and the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations. The TCDSB has much to celebrate in terms of our current practices and celebrations.

Arising out of a trustee motion on April 4, 2012, March 8 was declared International Women's (IWD) day in the TCDSB. Staff was directed to address ways of implementing IWD in our Board. This report provides strategies for the implementation of IWD; identifies issues, particularly gender inequality; and suggests possible ways of educating and celebrating the economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future.

B. PURPOSE

1. To communicate that March 8th has been declared IWD in the TCDSB.
2. To introduce IWD in the TCDSB as part of our inclusive education strategy in a Christ-centered community of Faith, Hope, and Charity.
3. To provide a sample planning template for school communities (**Appendix A**) and examples of activities (**Appendix B**) for example:
 - mass and cultural expose checklist/budget templates
 - guest speakers
 - presentations
 - community partnerships and celebrations
 - displays of female icons and their contributions
 - assemblies
 - readings and announcements
 - essay/poetry writing
 - art displays
 - dramatic presentations
 - short films
 - fundraising for selected women's cause
4. To support schools as they collaborate on a plan that provides educational opportunities to highlight the needs and concerns of women on a local, regional, national, and global arena. The activities selected should be suitable for elementary or secondary students and will allow all students to witness and experience first-hand the need to build awareness and support for this initiative.
5. To raise awareness and applaud women's achievements as well as highlight gender inequalities, violence and other issues facing women.

6. To build student self-esteem; promote positive student self-image and school climate; and expose staff and students to responsive pedagogy that promotes safe and healthy learning environments within our schools.
7. Promotes inclusivity in our Catholic schools with a particular focus on the worth and dignity of women.

C. BACKGROUND

1. This initiative was adopted by our Board of trustees at the April 4, 2012 special meeting of the Board and: “Referred to staff to report back on IWD and how it can be implemented in our schools.”
2. Globally, IWD has been observed since the early 1900’s with an original focus toward equality and universal suffrage. It is now an official holiday in many countries around the world.
3. March 8 marks IWD, every year and provides an opportunity for schools to pay tribute, celebrate and recognize women’s achievements.
4. The focus of the celebrations around the world ranges from celebrations of respect, appreciation and love towards women to a celebration of women’s economic, political and social achievements
5. On IWD, the struggles of women worldwide are put on the global agenda and are examined in a hopeful way. Since the early years, for example: provisions have been made for enjoying human rights with no discrimination for gender; literature has been published to alert women of their rights; violence against women is recognized as a violation of women’s rights; and programs and policies more frequently incorporate gender perspectives into programs and policies.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH

1. The congruency of Catholic Gospel values, curriculum, school and community engagement in the enhancement of women’s identity are manifested in the commemoration of women around the globe.
2. IWD speaks to our mission: “The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community rooted in the love of Christ. We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.
3. Our Multi Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) aims to create equitable, safe, healthy learning environments for all students. IWD directly aligns with two areas of our MYSP:
 - a. Living our Catholic Values;
 - b. Fostering Student Achievement and Well-being;
4. Policy Program Memorandum 119, *Developing and Implementing Equity and*

Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools, 2009 outlines 8 areas of focus required for a comprehensive board Equity and Inclusive Education policy. Three areas of focus are directly related to the IWD initiative:

- a. School-community relationships;
 - b. Inclusive curriculum and assessment practices;
 - c. School climate and the prevention of discrimination and harassment.
5. After the first year of implementation schools will be surveyed about their experiences with the celebration of IWD. The feedback will assist in establishing a healthy bank of resources for the system and might include:
- a. planning templates;
 - b. activities and initiatives;
 - c. community engagement strategies;
 - d. curriculum resource materials.
6. Use the results of a system-level parent school climate survey, now mandated by ***Bill 13, Accepting Schools Act***, to provide more perceptual data about the status of equity and inclusion in our schools with a specific focus on gender.

E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Ensure the EIE strategy is reflected in the action plan and that our Gospel values are pivotal to the planning
2. All schools will be encouraged to participate in locally planned IWD activities
3. Central staff will support school-level planning committees by providing planning materials and resources.
4. The Curriculum and Accountability department will review resources as they become available and share these with schools.
5. Community partnerships and parental engagement will grow.
6. School staff will collaborate to identify pedagogically relevant resources to support the implementation of the plan.
7. All stakeholders understand and endorse the plan including their role in the implementation of the plan.
8. Engage parents in the planning to build relationships that support student achievement.

F. IMPLEMENTATION, STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

1. Current planning templates and resources will be reviewed and updated regularly.

2. Communications Department will continue to inform schools, communities and media about our IWD celebrations and highlight some of these events on our portal.
3. Reminders to schools to highlight some of their activities on “It Starts In Schools.”

G. STAFF RECOMMENDATION OR CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is provided for the information of the Board of Trustees.

(Sample planning template)

International Woman's Day – Mother Daughter Wellness Tea

Team Members:

Principal

The team hosts a yearly event on International Woman's Day, in March to educate students and female parents or significant others about social and emotional health and spiritual health through healthy relationships and respect. The goals of the evening are to provide opportunities for communication and interaction between the two. To encourage and support the mutual engagement of parents, students, staff and community in co-operative efforts and attain and maintain total well-being of all. There will be a Health and Wellness Fair with informational booths and interactive activities for the first part of the evening, followed by a served Tea. This will promote our Catholic values of family; achieve student's relationships and well being, strengthening public involvement in the school community by participating in the life of the school.

1. Description of the group project/program.

- a) The team hosts a yearly event on International Woman's Day, in March to educate students and female parents or significant others about social and emotional health and spiritual health through healthy relationships and respect. The goals of the evening are to provide opportunities for communication and interaction between the two. There will be a Health and Wellness Fair with informational booths and interactive activities for the first part of the evening, followed by a served Tea. This will promote our Catholic values of family; achieve student's relationships and well being, strengthening public involvement in the school community by participating in the life of the school.

- b) Invite motivational speakers that address adolescent's emotional needs by motivating them to be more confident women.
- c) Timelines are September to June. Include planning, evaluation and execution.
- d) Websites and Resources: Barankin, T. and Khanlou, N. (2007). Growing Up Resilient: Ways to build resilience in children and youth. Toronto: Centre for Addictions and Mental Health. Hoffman, J. (2010). Kids Can Cope: Parenting g Resilient Children at Home and at School. Canada: the Psychology Foundation. www.sfwellness.org.
- e) Enhance a variety of communications vehicles to our students by providing opportunity to participate in interactive / hands on health related displays and workshop between parents in the community, agencies, community members and stakeholders at large
- f) proactive community engagement by inviting mothers and significant females of female students to discover and engage in health initiatives of the school
- g) We are using available resource from the community to maintain a sustainable budget
- h) The evening stresses a spiritual approach to health and wellness of relationship and physical well being.
- i) Students will learn how to have a balanced approach to their academic career by maintaining a spiritual, emotional and physical well being.
- j) Students are involved in all levels of planning, implementation and evaluation.
- k) Staff, students and parents work collaboratively in a culture of respect and mutual support to create a successful event.

2. Other agencies, support personnel, universities, colleges, local community organizations, private sector, etc. if appropriate.

- a) Toronto Public Health
- b) Ontario Cancer Society
- c) George Brown Fitness and Lifestyle Management Program
- d) Humber College Spa
- e) Breast Cancer Awareness, Sunnybrook Hospital
- f) Avola College
- g) Curves Etobicoke Central
- h) Zumba Dance
- i) Dr. C. McLean Spinal Health Center
- j) CAMH
- k) Humber Vale Chiropractic and Wellness Dr. J.Crescenzi
- l) Intuitive Hand Massage
- m) Another Story Book Store
- n) Gamilla Gill (Author Keynote Speaker)
- o) School Media Art Student Art Works

3. Assessment and evaluation strategies used

- a) Pre and post evaluation has been applied by the committee
- b) The Grade 12 Lifestyle P.E. class will complete leadership hours by working with the committee to organize the evening's events and facilitate pre event discussions with other students.

- c) Students along with the committee design and apply evaluation questionnaire
- d) Wellness committee reviews feedback from participants.
Participants will complete Feedback sheets to help the committee assess the success of the evening and recommendations for next event.

4. Strategies used to communicate and share to the community.

- a) The program goals are communicated through presentations, announcement, art projects, and news articles. Through the following avenues:
- b) Community News Letter
- c) School Staff
- d) Class room Presentations
- e) PA Announcement
- f) Art work by student, staff, and media arts.
- g) Church Bulletin
- h) Directors Bulletin
- i) Community Newspaper
- j) Participants receive a keepsake of a photograph of student and significant member of family.

The project has already been implemented in our feeder school, through collaboration between administration of feeder school, our co-op students, and our liaison public health.

It has been a privilege to work with this dedicated team of volunteers to celebrate female success, achievements and challenges in a positive light. Over the last three years, International Women's Health and Wellness Tea has grown from humble beginnings into an eagerly anticipated occasion among our community. Our amazing speakers, comprising of a doctor, a social worker, a religion expert and an author have fully embraced our goal to inspire our young women and encourage them to meet their full potential. It is important that we also raise money for both local and international organizations working to support women. As a result of our fundraising efforts, we have supported The Sisters of St. Joseph's Orphanage in Haiti, Breast Cancer Research, Free the Children, Kisurni All Girls School Kenya. We look forward to carrying on this important tradition in our school.

APPENDIX B

TCDSB CATHOLIC EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY: H.M. 24: REGS 1-12

THEME: CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY

DISPLAYS

- Prepare a display of literature in commemoration of International Women's Day (e.g., books, magazines, newsletters, videos).
- Locate display in a prominent place in your school or work site (e.g., library. Display case, office).
- Showcase contributions from women of various Diasporas (i.e., multicultural, racial, ethnocultural backgrounds) through pictures, posters, photographs, etc...
- Provide resources in staff rooms and libraries to assist, where necessary.

EDUCATION through ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Set aside three to five minutes a day for a public announcement in schools and worksites on the contributions of women to the world, Canada, Ontario, Toronto, etc...throughout the day.
- Designate a student and staff to read a spiritual reflection in commemoration of International Women's Day.
- Research and articulate information pertaining to the life and times of female Saints or clergy.

CURRICULUM INITIATIVES

- Engage students and staff in research on female icons and their contributions to the world, Canada, Ontario, Toronto, etc...
- Have students analyse the significance of these outcomes and the impact on our society.
- Review Canadian settlements where women created transformational outcomes.
- Develop an interactive game show (e.g., W5H, reach for the Top) through 'friendly' competition based on historical facts involving women throughout the world.

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

- Host a Mass and Cultural Expose in Commemoration of International Women's Day.
- Invite female guest speakers to share their expertise on the contributions of women to society.
- Contact bookstores, The Consular Corps Association and local media to assist with sharing knowledge on the contributions of women to our society which increasing awareness.