*How the largest publicly funded Catholic school board in the world is learning about the challenges that face one in six of its students and finding ways to fulfill the promise of helping them to meet its high expectations.*

Toronto Catholic District School Board

# A JOURNEY OF HOPE:

## *UNDERSTANDING POVERTY IN OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS*

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# A Journey of Hope

## *Understanding Poverty in Our Catholic Schools*

Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) is the largest publicly funded Catholic school board in the world. Its 168 elementary and 31 high schools are home to almost 90 000 students. With the current poverty rate in Ontario estimated to be 1 in 6, we know that over 15 000 of our students are currently experiencing the effects of poverty in their day to day lives. Stressors which families face can impact all aspects of the child's life.

*Poverty is not just about not having enough money. Poverty is about lack of dignity, respect, choice and opportunity. Literacy is about more than just reading and writing, which are only tools for participation. Literacy develops naturally when people participate fully and equally in their society. If we want a more literate society, we must make a commitment not just to more literacy training but to social and economic justice as well."* Movement for Canadian Literacy Fact Sheet #9

*A human without hope who has stopped trying to reform himself or excel herself, has a very hard time being fully human. You can't force hope on a person. But looking at the world around us, we see the need for all the hopefulness and resolution that each of us can muster. We need all the commitment to change we can stir up for the years ahead*   Justice Marvin A. Zucker, **The Future of Our Children**

As Catholic administrators, our mission is to foster student achievement, well-being and engagement and find ways to support students and families living in poverty



**Kids come here, and they are offered hope in this place.**

**Principal, Peters Street School**
*Poverty and Schools in Ontario:  How Seven Elementary Schools are Working to Improve Education*

# *Who Are the People Affected by Poverty?*

> **The majority of those living in poverty are working poor - not welfare recipients.**
> *Honourable Ed Broadbent*
>
> **There are more working poor: 40 per cent of low-income children live in families where at least one parent works full-time year round, up dramatically from 33 per cent in the 1990s.**
> *Campaign 2000: 2009 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Canada*

There is a growing gap in Canada between the highest and the lowest earners. In simple terms, the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer.

Income disparity's widening gap means that often high income parents have more access to enrichment activities (lessons, classes and hobbies) outside of school than their low income counterparts since they have the funds to do so. Lack of food security, access to child care, availability of transportation, adequate housing and low wages put pressure on families to focus on survival rather than the enhancement of their children's public education. Full day Kindergarten in Ontario provides a solid start to lessen the achievement gap at entry level education. The ensuing difficulty is to maintain that equilibrium for families who lack additional resources by providing enrichment in the school through remedial or add on programming.



### Richest Group Accounts for the Largest Share of Canadian National Income, 2010
(share of national adjusted after-tax income by income quintile, per cent)

- 7.3 — Bottom quintile
- 12.8 — Second quintile
- 17.6 — Middle quintile
- 23.2 — Fourth quintile
- 39.1 — Top quintile
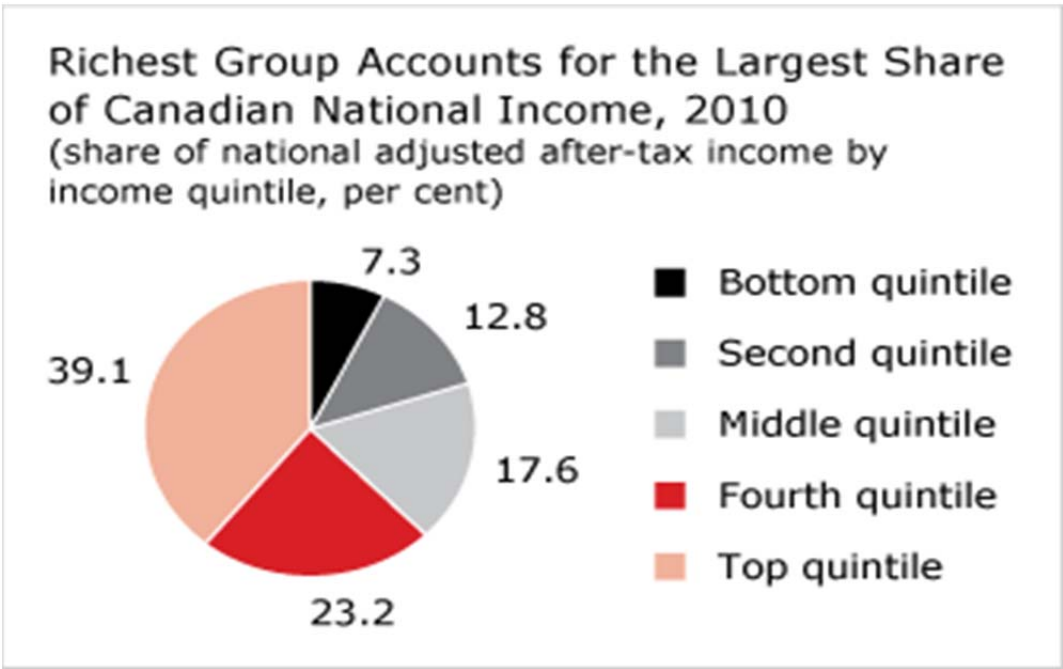
*Campaign 2000: End Child and Family Poverty in Canada*

## Does race or immigration enter the equation?

Racialized families are **three times more likely to live in poverty.**

Racialized workers face higher unemployment in Ontario: In 2005 the unemployment rate was 8.7 per cent for racialized workers compared to 5.8 per cent for the rest of Ontarians.

They got paid less: Racialized women earned 53.4 cents for every dollar non-racialized men got; 83.7 cents for every dollar non-racialized women got.

Gap exists despite education: First-generation racialized Ontarians aged 25-44 who have a university education still get paid less than non-racialized immigrants. For instance, racialized women make only 47 cents for every dollar male, non-racialized immigrants make.

*CCPA: Hennessy's Index, April 2013*

*Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA): Growing Gap*
*http://www.policyalternatives.ca/projects/growing-gap*

**Urban Poverty in Canada**

*"Ethno-racial minority group members (people of colour) make up over 13% of Canada's population; by the year 2017, this number will rise to 20%; ∗ by the year 2017, more than half of Toronto's population will be people of colour; ∗ nearly one in five immigrants experiences a state of chronic low income, which is more than twice the rate for Canadian-born individuals;∗ Ethno-racial minority (ie.non-European) families make up 37% of all families in Toronto, but account for 59% of poor families; ∗ between 1980 and 2000, while the poverty rate for the non-racialized (i.e., European heritage) population fell by 28%, the poverty among racialized families rose by 361%; and 32% of children in racialized families, and 47% of children in recent immigrant families in Ontario live in poverty."*

*www.colourofpoverty.ca*

## How does poverty affect new Canadians?

Most of our new immigrants came to Canada through the points program. This program admits people with skills that are deemed to be in demand by businesses in Canada. Many of these skills require a diploma or degree. In fact, more immigrants than people born in Canada are likely to have a university degree. (84% have a certificate, diploma or degree)

According to the National Council of Welfare's Poverty Profile Special Addition (2006): Of the people who immigrated between 2001 and 2006, 41% of racialized persons and 26% of non-racialized persons live in poverty. Between the years 1996 to 2000 the rates were 20% of racialized persons and 12% of non-racialized persons. For both groups, the statistics have doubled in the last six years!

Most immigrants are of working age and participate in the labour force at the same rate as their Canadian born counterparts. Yet, the poverty rate is five times that of the Canadian population. For many new Canadians who come to this country with hope and the promise of a profession that matches their skills and education, disillusionment and hard times are the only future ahead of them for many years to come.

Schools can help families by putting them in contact with Settlement Workers, Family Resource Centres and others in the community who can offer the much needed support.

# What about child poverty?

Below are the findings of the 2009 *Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (*OECD)
Report on Education:

*"At 15.1 per cent, Canada's child poverty rate is over four percentage points higher than the 17-country average. More than one in seven Canadian children lives in poverty. Canada ranks 15th on this indicator and scores a "C" grade. The Nordic countries—Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden—have the lowest rates of child poverty, with less than 7 per cent of children living in poor households. The relationship between social spending and poverty rates has become more obvious over time, so it is no surprise that the leading countries boast strong traditions of wealth redistribution."*

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### Is the child poverty rate declining in Canada?

### Not according to the latest statistics from the OECD …

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*"In 1989, the Canadian House of Commons unanimously resolved to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000, and there was some initial success; the child poverty rate fell from 15.8 per cent in the mid-1980s to 12.8 percent in the mid-1990s. Since then, however, the rate has increased—to 15.1 per cent in the late 2000s—reversing earlier progress. Of the 13 countries for which historical data are available, Canada had the third-highest jump in the child poverty."*

### For more detailed information regarding child poverty in Ontario, see:

### www.beststart.org
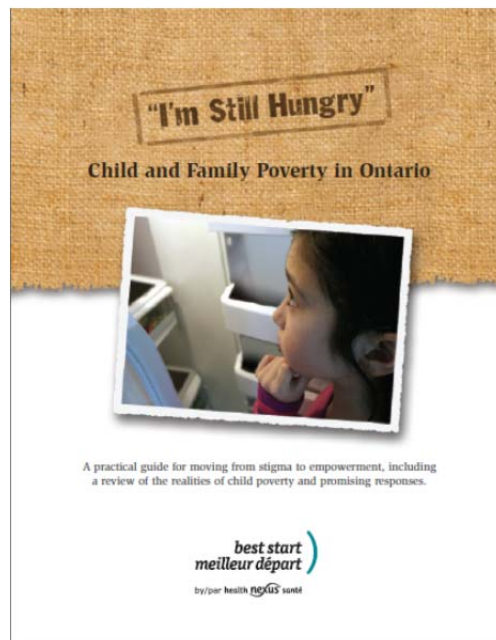
## *Who are homeless youth?*

According to Covenant House, they are:

Young men: 64% of homeless youth (youth are under 25) are male. 91% of these men and 72% of females are between the ages of 19 and 25. Studies have shown that these youth generally leave home around the age of 15.

- Poorly educated: Most men - 56% have grade 11 or less, 31% have grade 12 and 12% have university or college or technical school. For women, 60% have grade 11 or less, 33% have grade 12 and 6% have university, college or technical school.

- Of those who attended school and were assessed by counsellors, 25.6% were diagnosed with anger management problems, 19.1% with ADHD, 15.2% with hyperactivity and 4.5% with dyslexia.

> **It is estimated that there are at least 10,000 homeless youth in Toronto during any given year and as many as 2,000 on a given night.**

The National Center for Homeless Education (US) 2010 recommends strategies for teaching highly mobile students:



*Teachers should create **stable learning environments** with structured routine

*Assign a **buddy** to new students

*Handle disruptions in a **private and respectful manner**

*Make time to talk to students on a **personal level**

*Plan **mini-lessons** and units that can be completed in limited periods of time

*Include a **variety of levels** in reading materials about the same content

*Assess the **student's interests** to hook them into learning

*Give students credit for **partially completed work**

*Keep a supply of **healthy snacks** and **extra school supplies**

*Connect with school and community **support resources**

When we think of homeless youth, we immediately think of those living on the street. The term includes, however, those living in shelters or with friends, extended relatives, motels or sheltering overnight in vehicles. For every one of them, the situation can be traumatic and distracting. Having concerns for personal safety as well as shelter and food security causes constant anxiety. Living a life filled with uncertainty, even for a short period of time, can lead to withdrawn or aggressive behaviours.

Schools are places where homeless youth can feel safe. The challenge for educators is to build the kind of trust with students where they can share their stories and reach out for the help that schools are usually only too willing to provide.

## *How can we get to know our students?*

The May 2011 edition of the Ontario Ministry of Education Capacity Building Series, *Student Identity and Engagement in Elementary School* talks about student identity in elementary schools but is equally valid for secondary schools in its thinking that when we see the student as the whole person, know them in more dimensions than just academic, support their taking a more active role in their learning and including student voice in planning learning opportunities, we improve the quality of the teaching and learning:

*"The dimensions of identity are complex and far-ranging. They might include; ethnicity, gender, friendship circles, race, talents, language(s), social media involvement, expectations of self, aspirations, beliefs, spiritual beliefs, socio-economic situation, degree of self-awareness, passions and interests, sense of self-efficacy- in fact ,all the factors that form the unique person in the classroom. There is a rich repertoire of possibilities for inclusion, for drawing each individual into the classroom. Through feedback and conversation about different aspects of students' lives, teachers facilitate investment in learning."*

*http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/CBS_StudentIdentity.pdf*



Some students live in challenging situations. As housing gets more expensive, some low SES families are forced into smaller and smaller accommodations. Multi-family dwellings, multi-generational living arrangements with teens caring for younger siblings or aging grandparents after school in overcrowded environments puts stress on students who are trying their best to succeed.

Working at a part time job more than 20 hours per week greatly impacts student success, yet many of our students live with this reality.

Other students find the challenges of home too great and turn to shelters or alternate living arrangements.

# How Can We Prepare Students for a Successful Future?

Most would agree that education and skills attainment are important factors leading to student success upon graduation. But what skills and what level of education is really necessary for people to find meaningful employment and lead happy productive lives?  The Conference Board of Canada explains how educational performance can be measured.







# How can we put Canadian education and skills in context?

*In Canada, education is seen as the most desirable route to earning a decent living and to enhancing personal growth and happiness. Educated people not only earn higher incomes but also contribute disproportionally to business innovation, productivity, and national economic performance. There is a strong and direct relationship between investments in education, educational attainment, and economic growth. A 2003 multi-country study from the European Commission found that if the national average educational attainment level is increased by a single year, aggregate productivity increases by 6.2 per cent right away, and by a further 3.1 per cent in the long run. Recent evidence also suggests that educated people make decisions that lead to healthier and longer lives.[2] Education drives success.*

*Conference Board of Canada:  How Canada Performs:  Education and Skills, 2014*

## *How is education performance measured?*

Education performance is assessed using 20 indicators across three levels of labour market participation:

- Basic participants
- Mainstream participants
- Advanced participants



**Education and Skills Performance**

**Basic Participants**
- Students with low-level reading skills
- Students with low-level math skills
- Students with low-level science skills
- Adults with low-level literacy
- Performance of disadvantaged schools

**Mainstream Participants**
- High school completion
- Students with high-level reading skills
- Students with high-level math skills
- Students with high-level science skills
- Adult participation in non-formal job-related education
- Equity in outcomes

**Advanced Participants**
- University completion
- PhD graduates
- College completion
- Science, math, computer science, and engineering graduates
- Adults with high-level literacy
- Foreign student index
- Gender gap in tertiary education
- Return on investment in post-secondary education, men
- Return on investment in post-secondary education, women

1. **Basic participants**: These people have low literacy and basic skills, are often unemployed, lack coping strategies, and when employed, cannot perform most jobs fully competently. The goal for this group of participants is to prevent social exclusion, minimize the poverty trap, and strengthen their connection to the labour force. This is done by decreasing the proportion of students with low-level reading, math, and science skills, by decreasing the proportion of adults with low-level literacy skills, and by improving the performance of disadvantaged schools.
2. **Mainstream participants**: These people have mid-range literacy and job-specific skills, are usually employed and performing their jobs reasonably competently, but may be experiencing difficulties in adjusting to workplace change. The goal for this group of participants is to develop entry-level skills for the modern economy and to improve their ability to adapt to change. This is done by ensuring that people complete high school, by increasing the proportion of students with high-level reading, math, and science skills, by boosting adult participation in non-formal job-related education, and by improving equity in learning outcomes.
3. **Advanced participants**: These people have high literacy and job-specific skills and advanced thinking skills that enable them to adapt to workplace change, innovate, and create new processes, products, and services. The goal for this group of participants is to ensure the acquisition of skills that provide intellectual leadership, create new products, companies, and processes, and that benefit other members of society. This is done by focusing on increasing the university, PhD, and college completion rates, by increasing the proportion of graduates in science, math, computer science, and engineering disciplines, by increasing the proportion of students with high-level reading, math, and science skills, by increasing the proportion of adults with high-level literacy skills, by boosting the foreign student index, by reducing the gender gap in tertiary education, and by enhancing the return on post-secondary education.

# *If inequalities in literacy translate to inequalities in income, how can schools boost literacy and numeracy skills?*

The World Literacy Foundation in its April 2012 report *The Economic and Social Cost of Illiteracy: A Snapshot of Illiteracy in a Global Context* explains the difference between complete and functional illiteracy:

*"Complete illiteracy means a person cannot read or write at all. Of equal relevance is the concept of functional illiteracy, which means an individual may have basic reading, writing and numerical skills but cannot apply them to accomplish tasks that are necessary to make informed choices and participate fully in everyday life. Such tasks may include:*

*Reading a medicine label*

*Reading a nutritional label on a food product*

*Balancing a cheque book*

*Filling out a job application*

*Reading and responding to correspondence in the workplace*

*Filling out a home loan application*

*Reading a bank statement*

*Comparing the cost of two items to work out which one offers the best value*

*Working out the correct change at a supermarket."*

They go on to describe the effects of poor literacy skills on a person's ability to function effectively in society. This is the level we would expect of our Catholic Graduates.

*"Poor literacy also limits a person's ability to engage in activities that require either critical thinking or a solid base of literacy and numeracy skills. Such activities may include:*

*Understanding government policies and voting in elections*

*Using a computer to do banking or interact with government agencies*

*Calculating the cost and potential return of a financial investment*

*Using a computer or smartphone to look up and access up-to-date news and information; communicate with others via email or social networking sites; or shop online, read product reviews and user feedback and get the best prices for goods and services*

*Completing a higher education degree or training*

*Analyzing sophisticated media and advertising messages, particularly for get-rich-quick scams*

*Assisting children with homework."*

**UNESCO** defines functional illiteracy as "measured by assessing reading, writing and mathematical skills in the various domains of social life which influence individual identity and insertion into society. From this perspective, literacy involves not only reading and writing but also the acquisition of the skills necessary for effective and productive performance within society"



Literacy Gains Fall 2012 edition *How to help Student Who Struggle with Reading* offers teacher strategies for helping struggling adolescent readers : "*struggling readers benefit from learning reading skills as subject content is taught rather than as an add-on that might be disconnected from their learning*".  The document then goes on to describe ways in which grade 7-12 teachers can identify student needs, devise and deliver purposeful assessment and deliver small group instruction within the regular classroom.

Since all adolescent learners need subject-specific literacy instruction about content, the targeted approach offers reading skills support at different levels in order to increase reading strategy acquisition as skills continue to develop.

For more information refer to *Adolescent Literacy Guide: A Professional Learning Resource for Literacy, Grades 7-12* and *The Third Teacher, Capacity Building Series*
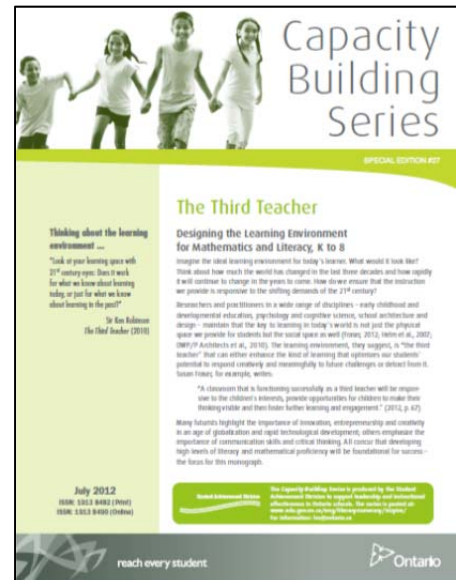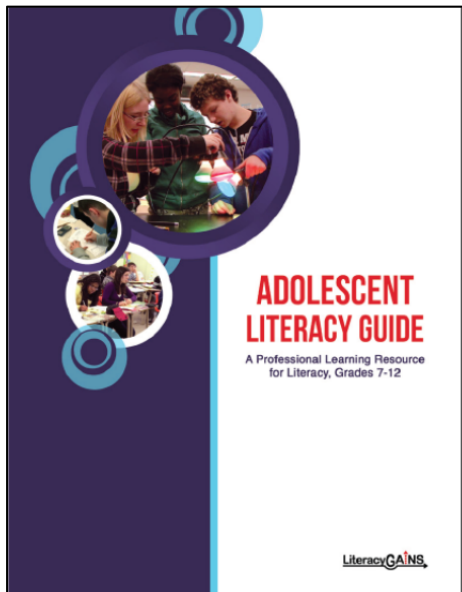
# What are the Effects of Poverty on Our Students?

*Brooks-Gunn and Duncan reported that children who experienced poverty during four to five of their first five years experienced a full nine-point decline in intelligence test scores compared to children who experienced no poverty; fewer years of poverty resulted in a four-point decline in test scores. It is important to recognize that different risk factors (e.g., poverty, father absence, maternal depression, low parental education) are cumulative in their effects. Poor children experience more risks than do non-poor children. Luthar argued that the effects of poverty are qualitatively different and worse for contemporary children (compared to earlier generations) because of the accumulation of multiple risks in poor families. Finally, it is important to recognize that the effects of poverty can be interactive as well as cumulative. That is, research indicates that poor children are more vulnerable to further negative influences than are children from families with higher incomes.*

Read more: **Poverty - Consequences Of Poverty - Children, Poor, Families, and Effects** - JRank Articles
*http://social.jrank.org/pages/500/Poverty-Consequences-Poverty.html#ixzz2Zo22xcYO*

Poor children are half as likely as well-off children to be taken to museums, theaters, or the library, and they are less likely to go on vacations or other fun or culturally enriching outings

***Teaching With Poverty in Mind*** Eric Jensen

*The educational needs of a child raised in poverty tend to be greater than those of the other children. The effects of malnutrition can make it difficult for these children to concentrate and learn. As a result, children may develop behavioural problems out of frustration. Stressful conditions within the home environment tend to be prone towards ineffective communication patterns, which serve to further hamper the child's ability to communicate within the classroom. As far as school supplies, and being able to attend educational activities that take place outside the classroom, these children are equipped with the bare minimum, and oftentimes go without the tools and resources needed to succeed. As children age, the effects of their circumstances become increasingly apparent in the form of delinquency, failing grades and an overall apathy towards education in general.*

Read more: **The Effects of Poverty**
*http://www.ehow.com/about_4613929_effects-poverty.html#ixzz2ZnzFCitR*

.

# *What does research say about the impact of low socioeconomic status on student learning?*

*"Children who experience poverty, especially persistently, are at higher risk of suffering health problems, developmental delays, and behaviour disorders. They tend to attain lower levels of education[1] and are more likely to live in poverty as adults."*
**Statistics Canada**: *Perspectives* Dominque Fleury (May, 2008)

*"Even when low-income parents do everything they can for their children, their limited resources put kids at a huge disadvantage. The growing human brain desperately needs coherent, novel, challenging input, or it will scale back its growth trajectory".*

**Teaching with Poverty in Mind** *Eric Jensen*

*"Poor children face a high risk of growing up illiterate or of not receiving an adequate education. This is because family poverty can negatively affect every aspect of a child's physical, emotional and intellectual development. While some people manage to do quite well despite difficult circumstances, many are held back throughout their lives because of poverty experienced during formative years."*

**National Anti Poverty Organization** *now known as* **Canada without Poverty**

*"Policies designed to improve literacy will have very limited effect unless they are linked to a serious attack on poverty. Moreover, because of the systematic inequality, the acquisition of literacy skills alone does not automatically lead to a better standard of living. Teaching people to read and write won't create jobs that don't exist or make it easier to get by on minimum wage or get rid of discrimination.*

*"Children deemed less able or less mature are very often those who, because of their less advantaged family background and early experiences, arrive at school with less prior learning, a more limited vocabulary, and less advanced intellectual development. Grouping them with other similar children and expecting less of them quickly becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy."*

**The Ontario Study of the Relevance of Education** George Radwanski (1987)

*"Based on the 2001 and 2004 PISA (OECD Programme for International Student Assessment) reading, math, and science tests, lower educational outcomes are clearly linked to family poverty. Failure to succeed at school has significant implications for these students' futures and for Ontario's social and economic welfare"* **Supporting Education…Building Canada Child Poverty and Schools** *Vivian McCaffrey (2009)*

## *What makes Catholic education different?*

Our intention is to look at how Catholic schools differ from other publicly funded schools and take a closer look at the demographic information currently available regarding people who live in poverty for Canadian and specifically Ontario schools. We will attempt to identify the manifestation of poverty's effects on student learning and look at suggested ways to scaffold remedial support. Ways to make our schools and classrooms welcoming for all families will be discussed as will strategies that TCDSB schools already have in place to address the problems low SES can present for families and students. We will draw on the research of other Ontario educators and offer suggestions on implementing their school based inquiry sessions as well as provide our own TCDSB electronic materials for Principals and SIT teams who want to build poverty mitigation goals into their School Learning Improvement Plans

Catholic schools are different by the very nature of their views. Our faith tradition respects the dignity and value of every person. It is through relationship and solidarity with each other in the Church and beyond that we best understand our human journey. Our Catholic education views are not limited only to expectations of knowledge and skill attainment, but also include the attainment of certain values, attitudes and expected actions. As educators, we are very fortunate to have the well-delineated guidelines of the Catholic Graduate Expectations.

*"The launch of the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations was imbued with the hope that in them, all members of the Catholic education community in Ontario would recognize themselves. Whether inside or outside the classroom; in both the elementary and secondary panels; from Board rooms to playing fields; from conversations among parents to those between the members of Catholic professional associations; these expectations have succeeded in giving to us all a language that has brought a higher degree of clarity and a renewed sense of the distinctiveness and purpose that is publicly funded Catholic education in Ontario."*

**Institute for Catholic Education**

Teachers are encouraged to refer to the expectations for program planning, assessment and evaluation purposes. School Improvement Teams can use them when planning for school success. Principals can use the language of the expectations when defining the values of our Catholic community with greater clarity.

# The Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations
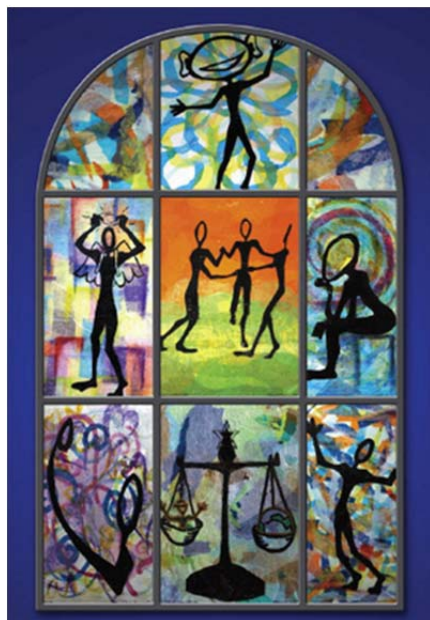


*A Graduate is expected to be:*

*A **discerning believer** formed in the Catholic Faith community who celebrates the signs and sacred mystery of God's presence through word, sacrament, prayer, forgiveness, reflection and moral living.*

*An **effective communicator**, who speaks, writes and listens honestly and sensitively, responding critically in light of gospel values.*

*A **reflective, creative and holistic thinker** who solves problems and makes responsible decisions with an informed moral conscience for the common good.*

*A **self-directed, responsible, lifelong learner** who develops and demonstrates their God-given potential.*

*A **collaborative contributor** who finds meaning, dignity and vocation in work, which respects the rights of all and contributes to the common good.*

*A **caring family member** who attends to family, school, parish and the wider community.*

*A **responsible citizen** who gives witness to Catholic social teaching by promoting peace, justice and the sacredness of human life.*

*Why is responding to the needs of our students who live in poverty demonstrating the key principles of Catholic Social Teaching?*

By providing scaffolds that enable students to be successful we are valuing the dignity of the person

By reaching out to our families in need we are fostering their ability to grow in community

By teaching the duties and responsibilities to one another and society we are enabling inalienable rights

By providing options for the poor we are attempting to meet their needs

By assuring people more than a minimal level of participation in the school community we are fulfilling a fundamental demand of justice

By reaching out to students in need we demonstrate our faith in their ability to succeed, find productive employment and decent and fair wages.

By meeting the needs of our economically vulnerable students we are protecting them by our stewardship

By assuming responsibility for those less fortunate we are demonstrating our solidarity for an interdependent world.

By making our publically funded system accountable for others in our community we are promoting the common good.

By following our Catholic teachings regarding our duty to those who live in poverty we are promoting peace.

## A POOR FAMILY DEALING WITH ILLNESS

"Financial pressures can take an almost limitless toll. They add emotional stress to a situation that is already difficult to endure. The key word is resources. Families with means have options. For families living in poverty, options are limited…stress never stops being a variable. Parents really want to see children flourish. They pour all their abilities into taking care of their child, often at the detriment to themselves. They must multitask to ensure that all members of the family are cared for, so that siblings do not feel neglected and marriages are not strained."

*Justice Zucker*



**I would like to see a church that is poor and for the poor. (*Pope Francis, March 2013*)**

## *But how do we ensure that these lofty goals become reality?*

And equally important, how do we ensure that the goals apply to all our students, not just a chosen few? Do we uphold the same high standards of effective communication, holistic thinking, self-direction for every student? Do we sow the seeds of hope that each one will find meaningful, dignified work, contribute to the common good and become caring family members who promote social equity? Justice Marvin Zucker Ontario Court of Justice thinks we can: "*People who have fulfilled a latent possibility in themselves can sense the possibilities lying hidden in so many lives.*" He believes that education and the power of the caring teacher can bring hope even to those who despair.



Most teachers learn about Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as teacher candidates.

The day to day challenges many of these teachers face upon graduation is how to bring students to self-actualization or even foster self-esteem when their lives dwell in the first two levels of needs (Physiological and Safety).

Students who come to school hungry find it difficult to concentrate. Those kept awake by bedbugs, high noise levels or overcrowding also find it difficult to perform at their best.

Families who live in poverty face these types of challenges every day and the longer the situation continues, the more difficult it becomes to see a light at the end of the tunnel.

Children who experience poverty for three years, have no recollection of a previous way of life: new Canadians who enjoyed professional status in their country of origin and are unable to find suitable employment here, families who experience death or divorce, people who lose their jobs and those who experience illness or accident can quickly fall into this category. In fact, most schools will have some families with each of these challenges. Since we know that until basic needs are met, it will be extremely difficult to succeed academically, our first goal is to align families with the supports that are available in the school community as well as provide whatever support we can for students in the school. Providing a healthy breakfast or snack program is one response to child hunger.

Each community has its own challenges and individual schools can assess if issues such as:  housing, employment, grief or abuse counselling, intergenerational or episodic poverty and mental health issues (such as depression) need support through community outreach. A list of Catholic Community Supports is included for your reference. If we align the Catholic Graduate Expectations with the OECD education and skills performance levels, our goals should be to have all of our students as mainstream or advanced participants.

## *But can we afford to address the problem?*

The Expert Panel from the Canadian Academy of Health Science in their November 2012 Report on Early Childhood Development mentions the long term savings gained through the **Better Beginnings, Better Futures** (BBBF) Project: (see text box)*"Results of an economic analysis of BBBF indicated that the government saved approximately $4,500 per family, or $2.50 for each $1.00 invested in the project.*

The BBBF Project demonstrates that investing in communities pays off, both financially and in societal terms. One interesting fact about the project is that it didn't involve a great capital outlay, a great influx of experts or lots of technology to improve outcomes. What it did take was the desire to improve community life: to validate people living in the community, celebrate the good things about the community, improve the resources of the community on a grass-roots level. In other words, sow the seeds of hope where once there was despair.



**Better Beginnings, Better Futures** (BBBF) is a 25-year longitudinal prevention research project aimed at providing information on the effectiveness of prevention as a policy for children. Begun by the Ontario government in 1991, BBBF was based on a comprehensive, community-based model of primary prevention for families with young children in three high-risk communities. The model was designed to prevent long-term social, emotional and educational problems in adolescents and adults by improving family and community life for children in the 4-8 age range and their parents. Using a longitudinal research design, data were collected from a research group of 959 children from K – 3 and their families in the three project sites and in two demographically matched comparison neighborhoods. Follow-up data were again collected when these children were in Grades 6, 9, and 12. In Grade 12, 10 years after ending their program involvement, BBBF youth had higher average marks, used special education services less, and were less likely to be involved in committing property offences. Fewer BBBF parents were clinically depressed, and they reported drinking alcohol less frequently and having fewer smokers in the home and parents rated their neighbourhoods more positively.

# *What Suggestions Do People Have for Fighting Poverty in Schools?*

The 2011 **People for Education Annual Report** mentions that additional financial resources should be allocated by the Province to support these types of initiatives. The report concludes:

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

"The current Learning Opportunities Grant is neither protected, nor targeted at programs for disadvantaged students, and it is insufficient to support programs that would alleviate the effects of poverty. People for Education recommends



 • the provincial government develop a new Equity in Education Grant, designated solely for providing programs to mitigate socio-economic and ethno-racial factors affecting students, and

• further that the new Equity in Education Grant should be protected, and include a built-in accountability process to mandate that school boards report annually on the programs and services funded by the grant and on their effectiveness."

In a 2007 *Toronto Star* article, **Schools Can Help Fight Poverty,** Gail Nyberg (Executive Director, *Daily Bread Food Bank*)**:**
*"Neighbourhood schools that welcome children from diverse cultures and economic backgrounds serve as the primary social institution to ensure equality of opportunity. Children from different backgrounds working and playing together contribute to tolerant, productive and engaged future citizens.*

*We believe that adequately funded local schools provide a tangible first step toward meeting the challenge of lowering the rates of child poverty and closing the unhealthy gap between rich and poor. The moment seems right to improve our schools in ways that will improve many young lives.*

*How to do so? We suggest beginning in the early school years to build a stronger system. All-day kindergarten available in elementary schools throughout the province should be a reality for all children. Children's entry to full-time schooling allows struggling families to return to work.*

*More importantly, quality early education lays the foundation for future school success, graduation and meaningful employment. For the best student outcomes, we believe that schools should be properly funded to become community hubs where access to nutrition, child care, after-school recreation programs and public health nurses would be readily available. Where six out of six Ontario children would have the prospect of a better future."*

## What does the TCDSB offer?

All 168 TCDSB elementary schools will have full day kindergarten by September 2014.

Currently there are:

- **Before and After School Programs** in 71 schools

- **Nutrition Programs** in 93 schools

- **Full Day Child Care** in 50 schools

- **Family Resource Centres** in 3 schools

- **Parenting and Family Literacy Centres** in 19 schools

- **After School Recreation Centres** in 7 schools

There are also ongoing partnerships with Ryerson and Centennial College Schools of Nursing to place **nursing students** in schools.

Formal remediation for struggling students is offered through: **Fifth Block**, **Junior Literacy Intervention**, the **HSC Empower Program**, **after school Literacy and Numeracy programs**, **summer Literacy and Numeracy programs** and **Head Start programs**.

**Settlement workers** are available to schools to assist new Canadians in navigating their way through the various supports and agencies available to them and to help with difficulties adjusting to a new country with different norms and procedures.

**Translator services** are available for parent teacher interviews, SBSLT or school conferences.

Many schools access these centrally provided resources once they determine the specific needs of their community.

In addition, schools often customize their response to the needs of their community.

Schools are very creative places. Together, principals and teachers come up with innovative ways to support learners. Often they depend on parent volunteers, student teachers, student CYWs and community partners to make this happen.

Often it is the end goal of increased student achievement that starts the discussion. Then once the barriers have been identified, staff can concentrate their efforts on remediation. Usually, however, the problem is complex and therefore several initiatives and approaches will be necessary before results are realized.

## *What are some ways individual TCDSB schools have addressed poverty challenges?*

TCDSB spans a city of 4,753,120 people or more than 7% of the total population of Canada. There are many neighbourhoods, many cultures and many barriers in the country's largest city. Schools in different neighbourhoods face different challenges due to the resources available to their school community. Some areas are considered to be "food deserts" because there is little access to affordable healthy food within



walking/easy transit distance. Purchasing necessities from the corner store is usually more expensive and impacts mostly those who have the least available income. Some communities are responding to this need by opening **community gardens** where, for a small annual fee, people can grow their own fruit and vegetables. Some schools in these communities have their own gardens and are teaching students how to grow healthy food along with nutrition education. Many other schools supplement their students' diet by offering **snack programs**.

Other communities face safety issues of busy streets or high crime pockets. One downtown school implemented a **Walking School Bus program** to help students navigate through busy streets and get a dose of daily exercise in the process.

Since many new Canadians often gravitate to neighbourhoods of a similar ethnic background, there will be times of political unrest or increased immigration that result in an influx of new students to the schools in those communities. **Settlement workers** have been very useful in greeting new families and setting up programs. **Community Relations Officers** and **board-approved interpreters/translators** are also available and a welcome addition to school events.

Transportation continues to be a major problem for many families in low-income neighbourhoods: *"Poverty has moved from the center to the edges of the city. In the 1970s, most of the city's low-income neighbourhoods were in the inner city. This meant that low-income households had good access to transit and services. Some of these neighbourhoods have gentrified and are now home to affluent households, while low-income households are concentrated in the northeastern and northwestern parts of the city (the inner suburbs), with relatively poor access to transit and services. These are long-term trends. The study looked at trends for a 35-year period, and found most of the changes to be persistent. The polarization of the city into wealthy neighbourhoods and greater numbers of disadvantaged neighbourhoods is continuing and middle-income neighbourhoods are disappearing."*

**Three Cities Within Toronto: Income Polarization among Toronto's Neighbourhoods, 1970-2005,** *David Hulchanski*

 www.urbancentre.utoronto.ca/...Hulchanski_Three_Cities_Toronto

One school partnered with the parish and a community volunteer to set up an **after school choir** in an effort to keep students busy and supervised until parents made the long trek from work to home. Other schools have close ties with **Boys and Girls Clubs** for the benefit of their students or encourage **Parks and Recreation** or **community-based sports programs** in their facilities to broaden the availability of organized play for families who work non-traditional hours or suffer transportation delays.
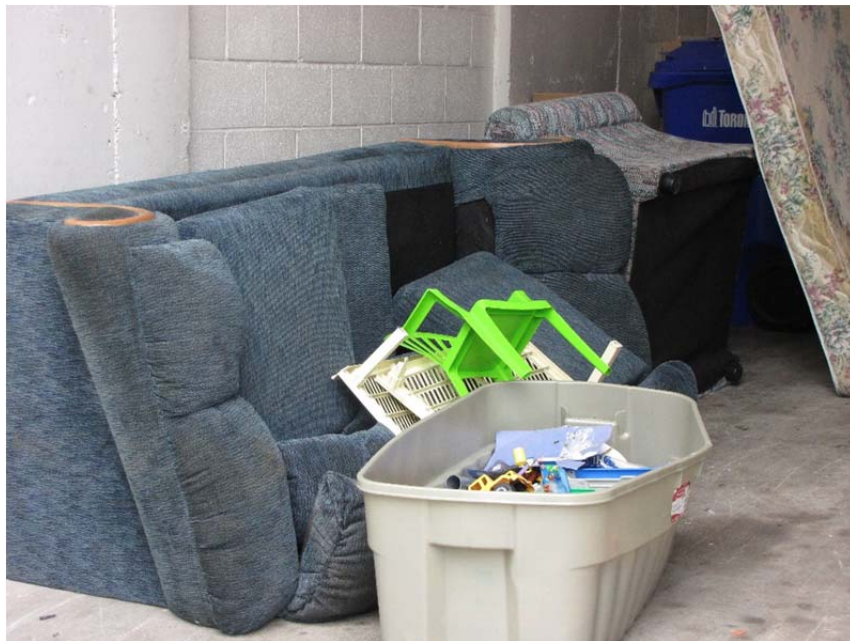


Another challenge schools face is transience since families with low-socioeconomic status often are forced to move frequently. This can present many problems for families because moves can be stressful and expensive. Furniture and possessions sometimes have to be left behind.  Necessary papers have to be kept accessible. Clothes need to be laundered and put away.  Study spaces have to be carved out where sometimes there is little space available. Schools that help **cut through red tape** and assist families in transition are welcoming places that send a clear message that the family belongs in this school community. Even something as simple as a **smile or a handshake**, the principal coming out of the office to greet the newcomers or a welcome poster in the office, can bring hope and the promise of new start.

Schools with varying degrees of economic status have to deal with the digital divide. One east end school met this challenge by offering **loaner laptops** which could be signed out of the library for student home use. Another school opened the computer lab before and after school to align with the Library Technician's 8 – 4 schedule. Some schools offer **parent information evenings** to teach parents how to keep their kids safe on line or how to use some of the programs the students can access so that they can help with homework and keep abreast of student assignments.

Having limited funds often means making difficult decisions. One high school addressed the budgetary constraint of buying uniforms by opening a **free uniform store**. Donated uniforms were cleaned and arranged by size so that students could "shop" in an open and non-judgmental fashion for their required items.

At some Scarborough elementary schools, certain **food drive items are reserved for their own needy families** and discretely delivered without the students' knowledge.

The Rotary Club of Canada will provide **free winter gloves** to needy schools upon request. Even the small comfort of warm hands can brighten a child's day.

Through the lens of hope and faith, TCDSB schools, in partnership with parents and the school community, continue to show that we are resources for each other and that, in solidarity we can address these challenges.

*"As long as the balance between stressful life events and protective factors is favourable, successful adaptation is possible even for young children who live in high-risk conditions, such as poverty"*

**Resilience in Development, Current Directions in Psychological Science,** *Emmy E. Werner (June, 1995)*

If the goal is to provide a protective environment for children, then we must be cognizant not to engage in any exclusionary practices. The last thing that schools want to do is to teach the politics of social exclusion. And yet we continue to have practices such as pizza lunch day in our elementary schools when those with parents of adequate means can enjoy pizza and chips while those who come from economically challenged families often go without. A similar situation occurs during book fairs, when some children get the items on the list they draw up on the run through visit while others make excuses about forgetting to tell their parents. Indoor shoes, non-marking gym shoes, gloves, hats and warm coats are not items that children would willingly be without. Their lack of control over having these items is a situation that should be dealt with in the light of compassion. Some schools provide **free pizza lunch** to the list of needy children, have **toonies available on "shopping days"**, align with local agencies or discretely share **donated clothing items, winter boots** etc. with families lacking these resources. It is important to note here, however that schools who have adopted these practices have first created a **warm, welcoming and non-judgmental environment** where families feel comfortable expressing their challenges and children feel entitled to the equity.

## *What do welcoming school environments look like?*

Dr. John Ippolito lists 10 strategies for encouraging meaningful conversations about their children's education with parents and caregivers in the *What Works* monograph *Bringing Marginalized Parents and Caregivers into Their Children's School* (August 2012)*.* He points out that without **good communication** between home and school, there can be miscommunication, with issues such as: "*teachers express(ing) frustration at parents who don't return phone calls and parents at a loss to help children complete homework that no one at home understands."* When the lines of communication are open, issues like this can be discussed without fear of reprisal or hurt feelings. He suggests bringing parents/caregivers into the school on an informal basis first and not discussing their child's education in order to build relationship.
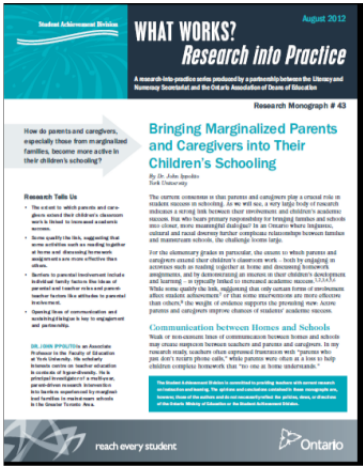
 With the starting point for any dialogue as **respect for the integrity of the person**, we keep in mind that everyone wants to feel that they belong.  By displaying the courtesies of acknowledgement schools can foster this feeling. For example, when we enter a store or office, we like to be acknowledged. If the person we are dealing with is busy, a simple "I'll be with you shortly" validates our presence. When someone refers to us by name we feel respected. If we have concerns that are listened to and treated as valid, often the concerns lessen. Although school offices can sometimes be very hectic places, taking the time to **greet and listen to the concerns** of parents, students and families goes a long way.

**Refreshments** are always a welcome addition to school meetings. Many CSACs set us a meet and greet table and offer coffee and a chat on parent interview nights. This can also help families feel that they are valued partners.

Schools that are active in the community and support community efforts entrench their place in the neighbourhood.  Families feel that the school is concerned about their community and value the whole student. **Cultural validation** is also important. Celebrating special occasions and heritage months demonstrates that the cultures of its families are respected in the school.Bringing cultural arts such as dance or music into the school helps bridge the gap between home and school cultures. Some schools have steel pan bands or Bollywood dance classes. There are other ways as well to celebrate the diversity in our schools. Some are starting to offer cricket as a team sport reflective of the sports their students play after school. Others participate in the TCDSB Oware tournament to celebrate the ancient African math game. Community Relations Officers offer many resources as well to help communities celebrate Heritage months together.

## *What is the asset approach*?

One TCDSB high school has adopted **Search Institute's Developmental Asset Approach** to increase what Peter Benson (President) calls "the potential for one individual to help, to heal, to support, to challenge, and to change, for the better, the life of a young person." The program identifies 40 positive experiences or qualities which can be drawn upon to build resilience. There are 8 asset categories: four of an external nature which focus on relationships or experiences (support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time) and 4 of an internal nature which deal with skill and values (commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies and positive identity).

With data compiled from over 150,000 students aged 11 – 18 years, the program is able to identify the number of assets in each category that can lead to positive behaviours and minimize high-risk or problem behaviours, regardless of circumstance. Their research indicates that the more assets the student possesses, the more successful he/she is in exhibiting leadership, maintaining good health, valuing diversity and  succeeding in school. Although the optimum number of assets is calculated at 31, only 8% of students meet that benchmark. The goal is to help students identify the areas in which they need additional assets and to help them build their reserve. Suggestions of home, school, neighbourhood and community are provided. The premise is:

- Everyone can build assets
- All young people need assets
- Relationships are key
- Asset building is an ongoing process
- Consistent messages are important
- Intentional repetition is important

Students complete a detailed questionnaire in their first and third year which is sent to the Institute for assessment and evaluation. Although the program is expensive to administer, educators report that the results support the expense. A greater sense of community, caring and undertaking of personal responsibility for one's success has been created in the school.

For more information refer to the website at www.search-institute.org/communities

The Institute's list of developmental assets needed for the eight areas of human development (**support**, **empowerment**, **boundaries & expectations**, **constructive use of time**, **commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, positive identity)** for adolescents is provided below.  There are also lists tailored for early childhood, Grades K-3, and middle childhood.

*A thousand words will not leave so deep an impression as one deed.*
*Henrik Ibsen*

# Search INSTITUTE > 40 Developmental Assets® for Adolescents (ages 12-18)

Search Institute® has identified the following building blocks of healthy development—known as **Developmental Assets**®—that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

## External Assets

**Support**
1. **Family support**—Family life provides high levels of love and support.
2. **Positive family communication**—Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.
3. **Other adult relationships**—Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
4. **Caring neighborhood**—Young person experiences caring neighbors.
5. **Caring school climate**—School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
6. **Parent involvement in schooling**—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.

**Empowerment**
7. **Community values youth**—Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
8. **Youth as resources**—Young people are given useful roles in the community.
9. **Service to others**—Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
10. **Safety**—Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.

**Boundaries & Expectations**
11. **Family boundaries**—Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
12. **School Boundaries**—School provides clear rules and consequences.
13. **Neighborhood boundaries**—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.
14. **Adult role models**—Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
15. **Positive peer influence**—Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.
16. **High expectations**—Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.

**Constructive Use of Time**
17. **Creative activities**—Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
18. **Youth programs**—Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.
19. **Religious community**—Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.
20. **Time at home**—Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.

## Internal Assets

**Commitment to Learning**
21. **Achievement Motivation**—Young person is motivated to do well in school.
22. **School Engagement**—Young person is actively engaged in learning.
23. **Homework**—Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
24. **Bonding to school**—Young person cares about her or his school.
25. **Reading for Pleasure**—Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.

**Positive Values**
26. **Caring**—Young person places high value on helping other people.
27. **Equality and social justice**—Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
28. **Integrity**—Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
29. **Honesty**—Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."
30. **Responsibility**—Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
31. **Restraint**—Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.

**Social Competencies**
32. **Planning and decision making**—Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
33. **Interpersonal Competence**—Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
34. **Cultural Competence**—Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
35. **Resistance skills**—Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
36. **Peaceful conflict resolution**—Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

**Positive Identity**
37. **Personal power**—Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."
38. **Self-esteem**—Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
39. **Sense of purpose**—Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."
40. **Positive view of personal future**—Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

Elementary school SIT Teams who identify literacy or numeracy as areas in need of improvement can access **PD sessions** for teachers through the Literacy or Numeracy Departments. These sessions inform teachers of proven effective pedagogical practices both in a group setting and in the co-teaching environment and are Primary or Junior grade specific.

The **Hospital for Sick Children Empower Reading Program** is offered to elementary schools on a withdrawal basis for readers who meet certain criteria, usually in grade 2 and 5. Its remedial approach*: "designed to teach the child word identification skills and decoding strategies and to promote their effective use (so) … the child can develop the basic skills needed for independent reading for meaning, information, or pleasure."*

### The Goals of Empower™ Reading

- Teach struggling readers a set of effective strategies for decoding words and understanding text.
- Allow students to experience success in reading and gain confidence in their own reading skills.
- Help students become independent readers equipped with multiple word attack strategies.
- Empower students to move beyond decoding strategies and read independently for meaning, information.

**Junior Literacy Intervention** and **Fifth Block** are offered in most TCDSB Superintendent Field areas to provide in school support for struggling primary and junior grade students.

In addition, many schools have found creative ways to boost literacy and numeracy skills for their students. Some examples are listed below.

### Early Reading Intervention

One Scarborough school when faced with struggling readers post Kindergarten, developed an **Early Reading Intervention Program (ERIP)**. Stemming from an analysis of test scores of students who were identified as struggling readers in grade one and their future academic success, it was determined that the earlier the intervention was provided, the lesser the achievement gap in later years. A multi-pronged approach was used wherein struggling grade one students received the ERIP, while low fluency and decoding challenged students in Grades 2 and 5 received the Hospital for Sick Children Empower program. The program consisted of having grade one struggling readers read aloud leveled books for 30 minutes a day to trained volunteers. On the fifth day they played word games. A tracking sheet was completed and tallied. The results supported the hypothesis, with the unseen additional result that the children who went through the ERIP program maintained their level of perceived reading ability and exited grade one with reading self-esteem still intact.

**Mathtivities Program**

In an effort to support math literacy skills while differentiating math instruction for different learning styles, the engaging play-based Mathtivites program was developed by one of our elementary schools. It has high-interest hands-on math activities which consist of learning stations to promote work in pairs and groups, as well as tiered tasks which address different levels of math literacy and learning environment preferences which encourage students to use their creativity to solve math problems. The program can be offered to grades 1 to 6 struggling students or as additional support for the regular math program.

Other schools offer **Math Clubs** for Level 2 Math students at lunchtime to support math concept acquisition. Often schools report having to turn students away who exceed the requirements due to the popularity of the program. Even though as a province and a Board, we are doing well by international standards, our goal is to offer the same promise for life success to all of our students, despite the presence or lack of financial advantages available to them in other areas of their lives.

## *Final Thoughts*

Poverty presents many challenges for schools. It skews the playing field; it robs people of their voice. Poverty unnerves, unravels and undermines those who live in it. And yet, our mandate is to form these children in the same manner we form those who come to us with so many more resources and supports. There is no qualifier of wealth in our Catholic Graduate Expectations. There are no exceptions in the Key Principles of Catholic Social Teaching. The standards we set are for all students.

Schools deal with issues of inequality every day. With dedication and genuine concern, they work through one situation after the other. Sometimes it seems like there is a re-set button to the optimism that teachers and administrators bring with them each morning. Sometimes labelled vocation or passion, there is something intangible that drives us. Justice Marvin Zucker, Ontario Court of Justice, talks about the power of the caring teacher who can bring hope even to those who despair in his publication The Future of Our Children:

*"People who have fulfilled a latent possibility in themselves can sense the possibilities lying hidden in so many lives"*

Maybe that's what it is. Maybe some people self-realize their own potential and have the need to ensure that others do too. Maybe that's what distinguishes the person who goes into Catholic education as a career. It's difficult to determine.

Just as difficult is the ability to maintain that drive day after day, year after year. There are five ways that this can be done:

The first is to accept that poverty will likely be with us for a long time to come. Social change comes about through political will. As a society, we need to make the fight against poverty a priority.

The second is to accept that you are human and unlikely to be able to perform miracles. In the long term heroes burn out whereas plodders eventually see progress.

The third is to be strategic in your approach to poverty mitigation. Identify its effects on those in your school community and align resources with needs.

The fourth is to build poverty mitigation into your School Improvement Plan. This way over time, you can measure success, review approaches that worked and those that were less effective and plan for the future.

The fifth is to look to those around you for support, encouragement and renewed vigour. TCDSB has a lot of educators. We are a very big team! Together we can fulfill the promise of helping everyone meet our high expectations.

## Catholic Community Supports

A community of
FAITH
anchored in
HOPE
with heart &
CHARITY

| | |
|---|---|
| **Canadian Feed the Children** | www.canadianfeedthechildren.ca |
| **Catholic Charities** | www.catholiccharitiestor.org |
| **Catholic Family Services** | www.cfstoronto.com |
| **Covenant House** | www.covenanthouse.ca |

**Fontbonne Ministries Sisters of St Joseph of Toronto**
www.csj-to.ca/fontbonne-ministries

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| **Good Shepherd Ministries** | www.goodshepherd.ca |
| **Share Life** | www.sharelife.org |
| **Society of St Vincent de Paul** | www.svdptoronto.org |
| **St Francis Table/St Clare Centre** | www.capuchinoutreach.org |
| **The Angel Foundation for Learning** | www.angelfoundationforlearning.com |

*Angel Foundation for Learning: Guardian Angel Funds*

THE ANGEL FOUNDATION for LEARNING
EDUCATE * INSPIRE * SUPPORT * NURTURE

Guardian Angel Funds

Sources of Funding – Total amount budgeted
1. Social Work Emergency Fund (SWEF) - $30,000
2. Tom Leon Family Support Extreme needs – $10,000
3. Melina De Meneghi Vision Fund - $5,000
4. Reliable Life Fund -$5,000
5. Maureen O'Neill Camp Fund - $15,000
6. Loblaw "Kids See Free"– 50 vouchers; can request additional once these are used
7. The Loretto Fund - $5,000

| Name | Amount | Send to |
|---|---|---|
| Social Work Emergency Fund<br>• emergency needs; food, clothing; etc. | $150.00 | Social Work Area Representative<br>• exceptional circumstances may be considered up to $300.00 |
| Tom Leon Family Support Fund<br>• extreme needs | $1,000.00 | John Wilhelm, Social Work Department, CEC |
| Melina De Meneghi Vision Fund<br>• cost of eye exam or eyeglasses | $150.00 | Marisa Celenza, Executive Director, The Angel Foundation for Learning, CEC |
| Reliable Life<br>• medical needs resulting from a school yard accident<br>• emergency medical needs | $500.00 | Social Work Area Representative<br>• greater amounts require AFL Board of Directors Executive approval |
| Camp Fund in honour of Maureen O'Neil<br>• to offset the cost of summer camp activities<br>• may be used for after school sports activities | $100.00 | Social Work Area Representative |
| Loblaw "Kids See Free"<br>• Free eyeglasses for students aged 5 to 18. Must have a prescription issued within the past year. | Vouchers for free eye glasses | Marisa Celenza, Executive Director, The Angel Foundation for Learning, CEC |
| The Loretto Fund<br>• for students who are recent immigrants to Canada to offset the costs of school related activities | $150.00 | Social Work Area Representative<br>• exceptional circumstances may be considered up to $300.00 |

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