



Message from the Director of Education and Chair of the Board

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

“People with disabilities are a gift, and an opportunity to grow in love, mutual aid and unity.”
– **Pope Francis**

Our Board is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment which actively promotes and supports human rights and accessibility for persons with special needs. We are committed to removing barriers, whether visible or invisible, so that all members of our community can use their abilities to the fullest.

December 3rd is International Day of Persons with Disabilities. We acknowledge the unique and wonderful contribution that each of us makes to our schools and workplaces, regardless of any physical, mental or emotional challenges in our lives. As the largest publicly funded Catholic school system in Canada, we accept our responsibility to continue our leadership role in guaranteeing that all individuals enjoy full inclusion.

As a Catholic community, we believe people thrive in a safe, healthy and compassionate environment grounded in respect for the diversity of every person. We are called to love, respect, and accept each individual regardless of their differences. Everyone in our system should feel accepted, valued and supported for the gifts that they bring to their classrooms, schools and places of work. In the spirit of our Pastoral Plan, “Rooted in Christ: we Belong” our focus is on ensuring that all members of the TCDSB community truly feel a sense of belonging.

We commend the Special Education Advisory Committee, Special Services Department, and educators and support staff who continue to advocate on behalf of all students, assuring that our students are not defined simply by their exceptionalities. These educators and groups provide opportunities for students to showcase their talents and celebrate with their peers through events such as the Special Mini Olympics, Best Buddies Program, Autism Awareness Day, the annual Deaf and Hard of Hearing Student picnic and more.

Thank you to each and every one of you for playing a crucial role in eliminating the stigmas that are associated with disabilities and ensuring that all students, staff and families feel welcome, included and appreciated. #TCDSBelongs.

Sincerely,

Rory McGuckin
Director of Education

Barbara Poplawski
Chair of the Board