

# HALTON CATHOLIC STUDENT TAKES ON 'PERIOD POVERTY'

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It can be an awkward situation for a young woman.

The Halton Catholic District School Board unanimously passed a motion that will move free menstrual products out from behind the office desk and into more discrete areas in student washrooms in all elementary and secondary schools by the beginning of the 2020 to 2021 school year. The goal is to reduce the stigma and shame many women feel surrounding menstrual health and self-care.

Dylex Saun, the student trustee who put forth the motion, said when you talk to students about this you

**"We don't expect students to bring their own toilet paper,"**

- Dylex Saun

hear that a lack of access can create a stressful situation.

"You hear 'I didn't know where to go to find these products.' Even if they were available in the office areas they found it really uncomfortable getting them in the office asking someone to actually get these products in the first place. And, in the times when they most need them

they frankly don't have time," said Saun.

According to the Always Confidence and Puberty Survey one in seven girls in Canada have either left school or missed school entirely because they did not have access to period products.

There's been a growing movement to address what's come to be known as 'period poverty' - the lack of access to feminine hygiene products as a result of financial hardship. In 2019, the Toronto School Board moved to provide free menstrual products for all students who need them.

By putting pads and tampons in washroom dispensers the board hopes students wouldn't be deprived of the products they



Graham Paine/Torstar

Student trustee Dylex Saun successfully got a motion passed that will now see free tampons and pads offered at Halton Catholic schools.

need.

Saun said all the motion does is treat menstrual products the same way they currently treat toilet paper and soap.

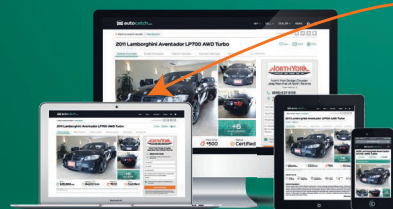
"I'm a male I don't experience these things on a daily

basis, but I guess when you hear a lot of the struggles it made me want to act. Quite frankly when you talk about access to menstrual products it's no different than toilet paper. It's no different than say soap. Everything

was on the same level. We don't expect students to bring their own toilet paper," said Saun.

"Their part of that whole idea of taking care of yourself. I didn't really see any difference."

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