



April 22, 2020

Dear TCDSB Board of Trustees,

On behalf of CPIC & OAPCE Toronto, we would like to once again recognize the continued efforts that the TCDSB Board and all Staff from schools have been doing during this unprecedented time. As parents we continue to support our children and are adapting to a different type of learning. We would like to present to you another update as to what we have been involved in as the two parent organizations at the TCDSB.

COVID-Communications

We appreciate having had the opportunity to connect with Board staff over the last number of weeks to provide feedback and advice. Communications staff have undertaken the work to update the FAQs with questions from parents. We would recommend that the fact these exist be communicated more often to all parents. It is still hard to navigate items on the website.

We have continued to stress that communications should provide parents with proper expectations or directions even when all the details or answers are not known. Without this we have worry, incorrect assumptions or a feeling nobody is listening.

Learn-At-Home

CPIC and OAPCE Toronto have been having meetings connecting with Catholic Parent Council Chairs, OAPCE Toronto representatives and

parents - two virtual roundtable sessions during the week of April 13-17, and two more coming up in the next week. The primary goals of these meetings are providing the parents with any updates we may have, allow them to address any concerns they have and be the conduit of their questions and issues with all of you. Parents were very appreciative for us to make that connection with them in these uncertain times, as quoted by one parent:

“Just wanted to quickly reach out and say thank you very much for having the OAPCE zoom meeting. That was a great meeting and is such a good feeling hearing all of the other parent representatives - we have not been able to speak to one another since school stopped. However, tonight's meeting was wonderful just to hear the similar challenges we are facing collectively as parents and going through something we, hopefully, will never experience again.”

The primary concern heard from parents were equity, special education & technology issues the Board continues to address -- the following feedback and recommendations we would urge the Trustees to look at:

- Platforms – Parents are still seeing inconsistency of platforms being used by Educators. Google Classroom was expected and seems to be used generally with some classes, but other platforms are being used and other 3rd party learning sites being referenced. Parents are concerned about the security of these platforms (have they been vetted & approved?) especially with personal information uploaded from students (videos, pictures) etc. One parent was juggling between lessons from her three children on D2L, Google Classroom, different apps, email etc.
- Parents are asking for live teacher directive learning wherever possible. There is a wide discrepancy between school Boards in this province, schools & teachers – and if not live, why not pre-recorded videos or audio?
- Utilizing best practices, some school administrators have “continued” morning announcements and prayer by way of daily videos intended to

start the day off for students with a routine. Why not offer a morning email to students/parents or even weekly.

- Understanding of key assessment expectations are disconnected again between schools and from what the Minister of Education has communicated to parents. Parents are seeing: Quizzes at set times, assignments (some come daily, some are assigned for the week) and specific hard due dates for work to be returned. As we know the school day is not common across all families (some parents work during the day, others work in critical sectors/essential services and have to leave the house). A concern from a parent was an assignment posted at 8:00 am and due at 12:00 pm. That same day.
- A minimum expectation is not consistent with the Ministry guidelines in some cases. While some families and students can only achieve the minimum time (either due to instructional time with parents, access to technology of other reasons) where others would welcome additional bonus materials to be provided to keep children busy.
- Parents are seeing expectations of needing to print learning materials and worksheets. Not all families have a printer these days and supplies can burn through fast in a multi-child household. There should no expectation of printing access.
- Consistent platforms and all assignments in one place, some teachers are emailing parents directly with work, others using different platforms than their “homeroom” teacher. This makes it difficult to catalogue and have a full inventory of what work is being assigned and expected to complete. This was more prevalent in elementary where parents were receiving different classrooms from different teachers. Expectation of parents to have to curate content and materials from different teachers back to their child adds undue pressure.

Parent Involvement & Parent Councils



We are pleased to see communications authorizing that CSPC meetings are to take place and a common platform will be utilized by principals using established best and secure practices.

We would like to point out that we have had a month of dealing with different school's turmoil causing friction between some CSPCs and principals about how, when, and if they could meet.

We would also like to ensure that the direction is that CSPC meetings should be taking place now if scheduled and feasible as there has been an incorrect assumption only meetings during May and June were permitted.

Current policies, for example in the case of budget allocations being spent by year's end need to accept – many CSPC's have spent the year fundraising for year-end activities which may not take place now – there needs to be provisions in the policy that allow CSPC's to carry over their funds until next year.

CPIC and OAPCE continue our parent outreach and have been providing a suggested list of relevant topics and discussion items to ensure continued student achievement advocacy and ability to make decisions to wind down CSPC activities for year-end. We are also exploring additional virtual parent learning opportunities in conjunction with CSPCs.

Governance & School Maintenance

We are pleased that the Board of Trustees reached a compromise to continue holding a minimum of two full Board meetings a month during the COVID-19 lockdown period.

The Board budget is extremely important and that once again a virtual townhall meeting has taken place with continued input of stakeholders being solicited.



We continue to urge that important policy work for the Board continue as we cannot afford to have everything on hold until the new school year. On the assumption that the new school year has some semblance of “back to normal” we don’t want to be in a position where another school year is lost because some policies require implementation from the start.

Examples of this are:

- Refresh of the Catholic School Parent Council Policy S.10
- Age Appropriate Placement - Curriculum and Program Supports
- Director of Education Assessment & Succession Planning

At some point, consideration needs to take place on how students will retrieve remaining items left in desks & lockers and that emptying of lockers and desks for food takes place to reduce risk of vermin and infestation. We have also heard from parents that with schools being empty, the hope is that areas of the school will be thoroughly cleaned that do not often get cleaned. (vents, light fixtures, tops of shelves that collect dust)

Once again we thank everyone for their contributions over the last month and truly appreciate the hard work that Staff has accomplished. We hope that everyone & their family continues to be safe during these times and we will continue to offer supports to parents & Parent Council functions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Del Grande'.

John Del Grande
CPIC Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Annalisa Crudo-Perri'.

Annalisa Crudo-Perri
OAPCE Executive Director