

Good evening. My name is Christin Carmichael Greb and I am Chair of the CSPC at Blessed Sacrament Catholic School in Ward 5.

Six months ago, no one could have predicted the way that this school year has turned out. The pandemic has been difficult for students, parents and teachers in so many ways. We know it's been challenging to pivot in this situation. We are all learning as we go, we are all trying our best. Teachers were not trained to teach from a distance during a pandemic. Parents are not trained educational professionals with the appropriate support structures to facilitate effective ongoing learning from home.

One of the observations many parents have made is that kids *really* miss their school, their friends and their teachers. The lack of school routine and socialization has been challenging and confusing for them. Any personal contact they get from their teachers – whether it's the sound of their voice, seeing their face on a videoconference, or simply getting a note of encouragement from them – is needed and valued.

Over the past few months, we have seen some great examples of teachers using a variety of ways to connect with their students from a distance. There are, however, inconsistencies, and many parents are frustrated.

In addition, we are disappointed that there has been a lack of clear direction provided to parents and teachers, and a lack of transparent communications from the Board overall.

We recognize that distance learning may continue to be a reality in September. Moving forward, we believe it is imperative that the Board lay out its plan for September, whether students are in the school building or not, full time or part time. The Board must set out a clear directive as to what teachers are required to achieve and what parents should expect to be required to do. The Ministry laid out a minimum requirement for students. The Board needs to be clear to administrators, teachers and parents that this is, in fact, just a minimum, and that we must strive for greater. Every student at every school across this Board deserves a robust, consistent distance learning experience. Parents and teachers expect and deserve that the Board communicate its plan in a clear, transparent manner, and that communications are shared well in advance of the start of the school year so there is adequate time to prepare.

We are asking for four things:

1. A more structured day for the distance learning environment – not just postings on Google Classroom at the beginning of the week – but a clearly laid out daily schedule.
2. More teacher-led learning – to date, all that has been required is teacher “assigning” with parents leading the learning.
3. Better tools for measuring learning and evaluating students. We must ensure that our children are achieving what is required from the curriculum, and that their progress can be accurately assessed
4. Finally, we ask that that the plan for September be communicated to the TCDSB community by August 10 to give parents and teachers the necessary time to prepare.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you this evening. Our community looks forward to working with the Board on a constructive way forward.