



REPORT TO

REGULAR BOARD

THE TORONTO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC CRISIS – JUNE 11, 2020 UPDATE

"Do not fear, greatly beloved, you are safe. Be strong and courageous."

Daniel 10:18

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
June 4, 2020	June 11, 2020	Click here to enter a date.

Rory McGuckin, Director of Education

Dan Koenig, Associate Director of Academic Affairs

Nick D'Avella – Superintendent of Equity, Diversity, Indigenous Education, and Community Relations

INFORMATION REPORT

Vision:

At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.

Mission:

The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ.

We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.



Rory McGuckin
Director of Education

D. Koenig
Associate Director
of Academic Affairs

L. Noronha
Associate Director of Facilities,
Business and Community
Development, and
Chief Financial Officer

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the fourth in a series of updates on the Toronto Catholic District School Board's (TCDSB) Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic Crisis. With three previous comprehensive reports, tabled on April 23, May 7, and May 21, this report provides information on a variety of topics related to *A Faith Community of Believers: TCDSB's Distance Learning Implementation Plan (Version 2.0)* as well as matters pertaining to the end of the academic year.

The TCDSB's response to the COVID-19 crisis continues to be informed by new Ministry directions and on-going formal and informal feedback from students, parents, teachers, principals, vice-principals, and union and non-union employee groups.

This report provides information on a variety of topics including those specifically pertaining to the end of the school year and learning continuity opportunities and programs during the summer months:

- Summer Learning/Summer Programs
- Assessment and Report Cards
- Nurturing Our Catholic Community – Graduation Liturgy
- Staff Engagement for Community Support
- The Angel Foundation for Learning – FOOD FOR KIDS
- Return to School Committee
- Safe Schools Update
- Supports for Students with Special Needs
- Mental Health Supports for Staff

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 20 hours.

B. PURPOSE

Focusing on the following emerging areas of interest to stakeholders, this report provides a high-level summary update on:

Report Component
Summer Learning/Summer Programs
Assessment and Report Cards
Nurturing Our Catholic Community - Graduation Liturgy
Staff Engagement for Community Support
The Angel Foundation - FOOD FOR KIDS
Return to School Committee Update
Safe Schools Update
Supports for Students with Special Needs
Mental Health Supports for Staff

C. BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 pandemic crisis presents unprecedented challenges for Ontario's Education System and for the TCDSB. With a commitment to sustaining faith development and an adherence to the principles of simplicity, flexibility, compassion, and equity the TCDSB has worked diligently to create and implement a distance learning plan that will ensure continuity of learning for its 90,000 students. The overarching challenge has been transitioning from a face-to-face education system to a virtual, teacher-led, distance learning mode of curriculum delivery and assessment.

In the new distance learning environment, the TCDSB is committed to adopting a system-wide learning stance for continuous improvement of its practices and procedures.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

Summer Learning/Summer Programs

- a. On May 19, 2020, the Ministry of Education (MOE) issued a Memorandum on Summer Learning.
- b. The Ministry memorandum has provided for:
 - Expanded e-class offerings with two distinct sections. Students can earn up to four credits; however, Continuing Education recommends that students attempt two credits.
 - CO-OP options via SHSM and FOY. Both will use virtual placements to meet the minimum number of hours. (Pending Ministry approval to commence FOY programming; prepared to deliver an 8 week program if possible.)
 - ILE programs only offered at the Secondary Level by Continuing Education for credit. International Languages programs are part of the summer elearning program for secondary students.
 - Continuing Education will offer reach ahead Transition program; students in grade 8 can also take e-class grade 9 and 10 classes with permission of the September school.
 - The Continuing Education Department will continue to offer a grade 6, 7, 8 literacy/numeracy program, starting with a session in July; a second session will be considered, pending Ministry and Public Health direction. Teachers will use a variety of Synchronous and Asynchronous modalities. We will also be using virtual synchronous tutors.
 - Coordination with Special Services Dept for Spec. Ed. Summer Special Education programs. These are outlined in greater detail under the “**Supports for Students with Special Needs**” section of this report.

Assessment and Report Cards

On May 27, the Ministry of Education issued a memorandum which provided additional assessment and reporting clarification and guidance information.

Comprehensive in scope, the memorandum addressed a wide range of key assessment and reporting issues for “... *for a reporting period that included*

provincially-mandated school closure from March 13, 2020 – June 30, 2020.” Key areas addressed by panel (elementary and secondary) included:

Elementary

- Completing the Kindergarten Communication of Learning
- Learning Skills and Work Habits
- Assessment of Learning
- French as a Second Language (FSL) Hours Requirement

Secondary

- Assessment of Learning
 - Civics and Citizenship and Career Studies Half-Credit Courses
 - Literacy Requirement for Graduating Students
 - Community Involvement Hours Requirement for Graduating Students
 - Specialist High Skills Major
 - Dual Credits
- a. Discussions on Ministry Guidelines on Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting have taken place at Education Council in order to consider their implementation for the final reporting cycle.
 - b. Subsequently, Ministry guidelines were presented and discussed in principals’ meeting and have been provided to staff, parents, and students.
 - c. Teacher professional learning focusing on using online tools to assess student progress with accuracy and fairness during the Distance Learning Phase continues to be provided by the central resource and administrative staff.

Nurturing Our Catholic Community - Graduation Liturgy

Communication, Prayer and Reflection

- a. The NCC, System Chaplaincy, Religious and Family Life Education, and the Catholic Student Leadership Team continues to provide timely system communications to all stakeholders to provide resources and information on a

variety of initiatives and supports, as well as opportunities for prayer and reflection, including:

- Weekly curricular activities for parents and teachers
- Nurturing our Families of Faith Newsletter – Ascension and Pentecost Edition
- Monthly Newsletter and Virtues for June
- Digital Resources for Admin and Teachers for June
- Emails to Everyone on Exchange
- Twitter and YouTube accounts specifically for NCC
- Daily Reflections through Twitter and Website
- Weekly Liturgies broadcast on NCC YouTube Channel (every Thursday at 4pm)
- Bi-Weekly Let's Talk Faith for Students
- Regular CSLIT and ECSLIT Meetings online
- Regular Meetings with secondary school Chaplains and Religion Department Heads

Graduation Mass – June 16th, 10am,

- a. An Archdiocese of Toronto Graduation Mass for Grade 8 and Grade 12 Graduates will be celebrated by Cardinal Collins on June 16th.
- b. The Mass will be livestreamed from St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica

Celebrating “we Believe” – June 18th, 4pm, on NCC YouTube Channel

- a. This culminating event will celebrate the 2nd Year of our Pastoral Plan – “we Believe” through prayer and reflection.
- b. It will showcase the many ways students and staff have been living their faith and bringing to life the pastoral plan:
 - We Believe in...
 - TCDSB/Radio Maria Faith Talk
 - Song, art, poetry, video showcase
 - A look ahead to the year of “we Become”

Staff Engagement for Community Support

- a. In response to the request for Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) for frontline health care workers, some TCDSB Resource teachers organized volunteer staff to use their schools' 3D printers at home.
- b. Currently, there are fifteen 3D printers producing various items of support.

Support Recipient	Specifics
Michael Garron Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 120 large head bands • Has surpassed their 1000 PPE goal
Humber River Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 253 large head bands • 80 small visors • 230 ear savers
PPE for Toronto Health Care Professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 150 large head bands • 230 ear savers
West Park Health Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 ear savers
Ivan Franko and the Ukrainian Canadian Care Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 250 large head bands • 175 lower reinforcements
St. Elizabeth Health Care Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75 large head bands

The Angel Foundation - FOOD FOR KIDS

- a. The Angel Foundation for Learning (AFL) continues to support TCDSB families through their student home nutrition initiative, FOOD FOR KIDS.
- b. This Program enables AFL to distribute food cards (\$50 per student) to the neediest members in the TCDSB community during this ongoing COVID-19 pandemic emergency.

- c. The Superintendent of Equity, Diversity, Indigenous Education, and Community Relations and the Executive Director of the AFL continue to send updates regarding this outreach.
- d. Phases 1-10 are complete.
- e. As of June 4 a total of 42,165 students have been offered grocery gift cards.

Return to School Committee Update

In the May 21, 2020 update, the committee was continuing to address ongoing business continuity planning and compiling data required to assess Return to School scenarios.

- a. Academic staff continue to create a framework for learning that includes required social distancing, synchronous learning, alternative day schedules, staggered bell times, instructional requirements, break times (recess) and transportation, consistent with the Ministry of Education guidance document, expected before the end of June 2020.
- b. Sub-committees have been created to address specific areas:
 - Personal Protective Equipment
 - Child Care
 - Learning Plan
 - Return to Office for Admin
- c. Planning is still dependent on Ministry directives, advice, and protocols of local public health agencies and remains fluid to adapt to the changing environment.
- d. Updates from the Provincial Working tables are considered at weekly meetings.
- e. Roll out of Student Retrieval of Items Protocol was been created and access to schools began June 8, 2020. All access protocols were approved by the Medical Officer of Health.

Safe Schools Update

Development of Resources

- a. Development of tips and guidelines for online distance learning for students, parents and staff:
 - Letter to Parents regarding Supporting Student Safety in a Virtual Environment
 - Online Safety Tips for students, parents and staff
 - Classroom Management Strategies for teachers
 - Progressive Discipline and Alternatives to Suspension for Principals

Student Voice Survey: Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic

A survey for Grades 6, 8, 10, 12 students has been conducted to include questions on student learning, safety and feelings during school closure.

Supports for Students with Special Needs

Supporting students with special needs in the virtual learning environment has been a formidable challenge. With the dedication and commitment of our Special Services Department, the TCDSB has been able to provide the highest possible level of care. The Special Services Department has worked diligently to address the following key areas:

Identification, Placement, and Review Committees (IPRCs)

- a. IPRCs should continue to conduct annual reviews.
- b. Any initial IPRC decisions that were in progress at the start of the school closure period should also continue.

- c. Going forward, as set out in **Ontario Regulation 181/98**, initial IPRCs may be requested by parents and/or initiated by boards following the appropriate processes.

Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

- a. Prior to the school closure, the Term/Semester 2 IEP should have been completed. However, the IEP may have required update(s) for the Distance Learning environment if there has been any change to learning goals or instructional, environmental, or assessment accommodations.
- b. Comments provided on the Alternative Report Card relate to currently established goals on the Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Alternative Report Cards

- a. Comments provided on the Alternative Report Card relate to currently established goals on the Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- b. In order to achieve consistency with the expectations for reporting regarding students who do not have Special Education needs, any comments related to the IEP will be completed in the best interests of students with Special Education needs during the Distance Learning phase, so that reporting reflects the positive degree to which articulated goals have been met. Any currently established goals that have not yet been met should remain current on the IEP until they are achieved.

Effective Practices

Special Services Staff endeavour to foster inter-profession collaboration in the following ways:

- a. Inviting School Based Education Support Staff (SBESS including EAs/CYWs) to join classroom teachers in online class meetings;
- b. Holding online workshops/webinars to support staff with technology and professional learning needs;

- c. Providing exceptionality-specific supports to teachers and SBESS staff through the Accountability Frameworks for Special Services;
- d. Facilitating teleconferences and/or video conference meetings for staff and families;
- e. Special Services staff facilitate regular contact with students by:
 - checking in with families on a regular basis to provide an opportunity to listen and answer questions; and
 - engaging both synchronous and asynchronous teaching/learning opportunities that may include videoconferencing opportunities that fall within the parameters of the TCDSB DRAFT Video Guidelines.

Inter-Board Collaboration

Special Services staff collaborate with counterparts in other boards across the province to share effective practices with each other and the Ministry of Education.

Support for Virtual Care

- a. The Ministry has partnered with Ontario Health Network (OTN) to provide school boards with a free trial of OTN's video conferencing platform to support video visits with students, until October 31, 2020.
- b. The platform is used by hospitals and other regulated health professionals in the province. Ontario Health advises that its platform complies with the *Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004*.
- c. Ontario Health will provide online learning and support to registered users, who will be on-boarded in groups.
- d. School Mental Health Ontario will provide learning to school board employed regulated mental health professionals to support the use of virtual care for student mental health.

2020 Summer School And Summer Learning Opportunities: Special Education And Mental Health: Other Funding

- a. The Ministry of Education is investing \$22 million, funded through the Priorities and Partnership Fund (PPF), to provide supports to students with special education needs and mental health concerns over the summer.
- b. This funding will be allocated for:
 - regulated mental health professionals to provide direct supports to students on existing caseloads and to respond to crisis situations (\$8 million);
 - staffing resources to support students with special education needs in both expanded and new summer program offerings including special education resource teachers and educational assistants (\$6.4 million), and
 - in-person transition back to school programs and/or supports in the two weeks prior to the start of the 2020-21.

Mental Health Supports for Staff

- a. Key mental health supports from the Employee Family Assistance Plan (EFAP), as well as other resources from School Mental Health Ontario and other organizations have been distributed to all staff.
- b. Two live webinars on Staff Well-Being: Fostering Our Own Well-Being have been provided to all staff with about 40 participants in each session.
- c. EFAP brochure with a focus on the scope and variety of services has been provided including counseling, legal services, health consultation, etc.
- d. School Mental Health Ontario Tip Sheet addressing personal resiliency and personal care has been provided.
- e. Strategies supporting the physical, social, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual components of well-being have been provided.
- f. Concepts of positive psychology and cognitive behaviour techniques have been presented virtually by staff.
- g. Mindfulness and relaxation techniques that help manage stress, build resiliency and support good mental health have been provided.
- h. Existing EFAP supports and professional development opportunities have been identified and shared with all employees.

- i. Our EFAP provider (Morneau Shepell) has been engaged to develop custom material and training to support all employees in the following areas:
 - Professional Counselling,
 - Online Programming,
 - Topic Specific Bulletins and Articles,
 - Podcasts and live Facebook sessions,
 - Self-directed learning material, and
 - Targeted support.

E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1. The COVID-19 pandemic presents a constantly changing landscape requiring that the TCDSB be proactive, adaptable, and responsive.
2. With ongoing feedback from students, parents, teachers, unions and other employee groups, the TCDSB's teacher-led distance learning framework will evolve in order to meet new challenges resulting from the pandemic crisis.
3. With the creation of the Return to School Committee, the TCDSB will create a road map for a safe return school.
4. Using research-based practices, the aim of monitoring is to support, validate, mentor and nurture staff through the distance learning phase.
5. The senior team and school administrators will lead and learn in the virtual environment by:
 - a. checking and connecting with staff to provide professional supports validation, and affirmation of efforts;
 - b. continuing to listen and address issues and challenges articulated by staff;
 - c. supporting professional learning for improved efficacy;

- d. providing support for mental health and well-being;
- e. leading with an equity frame of reference; and
- f. leading with calm, compassion, and empathy.

F. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the consideration of the Board.