



REPORT TO

SPECIAL BOARD

TCDSB RESPONSE TO COVID-19 – RETURN TO SCHOOL MODELS

*"The Lord gives sight to the blind, the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down, the Lord loves the righteous."
Psalm 146:8*

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
July 21, 2020	July 23, 2020	Click here to enter a date.

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RECOMMENDATION REPORT

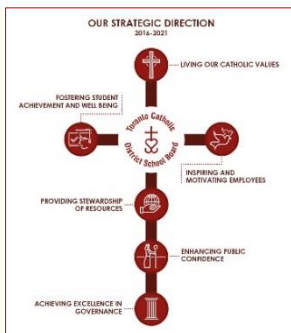
Vision:

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
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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On **June 19, 2020**, the Ministry released, “*Approach to Reopening Schools with guidelines for School Boards.*” This document advised all school boards in the province of Ontario to prepare planned models in three scenarios of return to school for September. Return to school models for each of three scenarios were presented at the **July 16, 2020** meeting of the Board.

Consultation with Ministry staff is scheduled to begin on **Tuesday July 28, 2020**. In preparation, staff have completed a Ministry generated checklist related to plans for school reopening.

This report reviews the models presented and recommends models best suited to address each of the three scenarios requested for consultation with the Assistant Deputy Minister.

The Toronto Student Transportation Group (TSTG) has advised both school boards that transportation would be significantly impacted by physical distancing restrictions imposed on school bussing in return to school scenarios and a potential shortage of bus drivers. TSTG has provided boards with recommended criteria to determine eligibility and a phased approach to implementation.

The Ministry of Education is encouraging school boards that share a transportation consortium to align their return to school models wherever possible to facilitate service delivery as much as possible.

The Ministry of Education will provide boards with a decision on reopening plans by **August 4, 2020**.

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 30 hours

B. PURPOSE

To provide the Board with response to motions raised at the July 16, 2020 meeting of the Board and to provide recommendations for Ministry consultation on three return to school scenarios.

C. BACKGROUND

1. *On June 19, 2020, the Ministry of Education released its guidelines* for school boards to plan for September 2020 student programming. The link to this document is here:
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/approach-reopening-schools-2020-2021-school-year#section-8>
2. *The province expects that students will be back in class this September* learning through face to face delivery every weekday, with class sizes that reflect current regulations, encouraging social interaction.
3. *School boards have been asked to be prepared with their plan for the upcoming school year by August 4, 2020.* Consultation and review with Toronto Public Health (TPH), union partners, principals and other school boards has been instrumental in development of the plan. Consultations will continue as we move toward a September start date.
4. The *2020-21 School Year Calendar* was approved at the July 16, 2020 Special Board meeting. The school year begins September 1, 2020 with Professional Development days held September 1, 2 and 3.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

5. *School boards have been asked to prepare for 3 scenarios:*

Scenario 1 - Normal School Day with enhanced public health protocols – This model involves the full return of students, with the exception of those that choose to remain at home, to a face to face environment. This scenario has been divided to reflect a plan for full return with regular class sizes (1a) and a full return with reduced class sizes (1b).

Scenario 2 - Modified School Day routine based on smaller class sizes, cohorting and alternative day or week delivery. This is an adaptive model that incorporates both face to face and online delivery of classes. Models have been defined in the summary below as 2a, 2b, etc. as required.

Scenario 3 – at-home learning with ongoing enhanced remote delivery. This model involves students at home with a continuation of distance learning.

6. It is important to note that a return of students in any scenario will require appropriate health and safety measures to reduce the chance of spreading the virus

- Masks, face shields, gowns, gloves provided (per TPH).
- Directional flows, staggered scheduling of entry/recess/breaks.
- Visitors will be restricted.
- Floor markings and signage to indicate routes of travel
- School entrances dedicated to specific grades/classes
- Clear and concise self-assessment info from health authorities provided to staff, students and parent/guardians

7. Elementary (Detailed models considered are included Appendix ‘A’):

<p>Scenario 1a – Full Return – regular class size</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regular staffing model and full class compliment • limiting large groups in communal gatherings • supervision to ensure adherence to safety protocols
<p>Scenario 1b – Full Return – reduced class size</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • average class holds 15; larger space allows larger class sizes (i.e. gym, library, etc.) • Space analysis has been completed for all board sites • $\frac{2}{3}$ elementary have sufficient capacity • $\frac{1}{3}$ elementary can only accommodate up to Grade 6 (<i>map Appendix ‘B’ and list of schools have been sent to Trustees via email</i>) • nearby TCDSB space will be utilized for extra space • Additional staff required for cohorts (teaching, custodial, administrative, etc)
<p>Scenario 2 – Adaptive –</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning time at start and end of day for all homeroom teachers (20/28) • Itinerant staff not required to provide planning time/allocated to full distance

<p>Model 2a) Alternating Weekly</p> <p>Model 2b) Alternating Days</p>	<p>learning assignments, subject specific, timetables to be scheduled per class/cohort at home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohort groups attend OPTION A: alternate weeks 5 days; OPTION B: 2days/2 days/ alternate Wednesdays
<p>Scenario 3– Full Distance Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will deliver enhanced synchronous distance learning • All teachers maintain Google or other approved platforms, manage resources for distance learning • Access will be shared with relevant itinerant and admin staff to further support and monitor the platform • All itinerant staff will be timetabled to deliver subject specific synchronous learning of curriculum to assigned cohorts • Students will receive timetables outlining weekly schedules for all classes • Central staff will provide resources on board website to enhance learning in all subject areas • Roles and responsibilities of each employee group will be clearly defined; will support students through enhanced check and connect, etc. • Specific roles and responsibilities of non-teaching staff to be determined • Mental health team to provide enhanced resources to support students and families

Special Education:

Intensive Support Program (ISP) classes comply within the 1:15 ratio and will occur daily (in Scenarios 1 and 2) for enrolled students. ISP classes include Multiple Exceptionality, Developmental Delay (ME/DD), Behaviour, Autism, MID and DHH

8. *Secondary (Detailed models considered are included in Appendix ‘C’):*

<p>Scenario 1a – Full Return –regular class size- MODEL C</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regular staffing model and full class compliment • limiting large groups in communal gatherings • supervision to ensure adherence to safety protocols • staggered start and exit times • modifications in courses to enhance safety • local planning regarding lunch times
<p>Scenario 1b – Full Return – reduced class size - MODEL A and MODEL B</p>	<p>Full Return Model A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students are scheduled in a quad model and all students attend school every day. • 8-day cycle. • school day has two periods of 113 and 112 minutes respectively. • All courses are divided into two cohorts. • Each cohort attends in either Period 1 (am) or Period 2 (pm). • After four days the cohorts are flipped to attend in school in the opposite period to ensure equity and balance. • When students are not attending school, they are learning through asynchronous means through prepared teacher instruction. • Face to Face instruction accounts for 37.5% of the total instructional time. <p>Full Return Model B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school timelines are in a quad model and all students attend by every second day. • 4-day cycle. • school day has one period of 225 minutes. • All courses are divided into two cohorts. • Each cohort attends school every second day. In addition to face-to-face learning,

	<p>students experience learning through asynchronous means for 75 minutes daily at the end of each day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face to face instruction accounts for 37.5% of the total instructional time.
Scenario 2 – Adaptive – MODEL A	<p>Adaptive Return – Model A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students attend school every second day. 4-day cycle. • The school has one period daily of 150 minutes. • All courses are divided into two cohorts. Each cohort attends every second day. • In addition to face to face learning, students learn through on-line synchronous periods for 75 minutes daily. • Learning is supplemented through 75 minutes of asynchronous learning. • Face-to-Face instruction accounts for 25% of total instructional time.
Scenario 3 – Full Distance Learning – MODEL A	<p>Full Distance – MODEL A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students learn through Distance Learning means and supports. • Schools would follow the quad model to alleviate heavier course workload. • Dedicated synchronous and asynchronous minutes and instruction would be applied. Using the model for Scenario 2, the in-class experience would be replaced with a distance learning period.
Local Considerations	<p>All schools will plan locally and collaboratively with school community stakeholders in customizing local plans around health and safety protocols. The Board response plan document will be completed during August and will help to outline roles and expectations. In some specialized secondary schools, there will be further local planning regarding model adaptation once the</p>

	Ministry instructs the Scenario conditions for return to school.
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Special Education:

Intensive Support Program special education classes do not require cohorting and will return full time in all scenarios in order to support the learning needs of students in these specialty programs.

9. *Planning and Training for Principals has and will continue to take place over the summer months* to ensure that they are properly prepared to administer and adapt to any of the scenarios described herein as the Province responds to health trends. Weekly engagement of teacher federations and education worker unions has informed the models for each scenario.
10. *A handbook is being prepared as instructional material for administrative staff, parents and students* detailing safety protocols, outlining roles and responsibilities, day to day scheduling, flow of students and staff, staggering of recess/lunch/break times, PPE requirements and use.
11. *TCDSB registration is administered through the Student Online Admissions Registration (SOAR)* program beginning in January each year for Elementary and beginning in October of the previous year for the Secondary panel. This registration process continues throughout the summer. Through Trillium data and SOAR data, all current and new registrations will be contacted, via survey through email, to confirm registration for September following Ministry direction on the scenario for delivery.

Childcare /Before and After School Programs

12. *We continue to collaborate with Childcare Providers in our schools.*
Advice from Toronto Public Health is guiding all discussions with Toronto Children’s Services and School Boards. Childcare providers are working with families to determine needs and capacity of care available.
13. *Ministry of Education direction and Toronto Public Health safety protocols are guiding daily operations.* Clear guidelines will be communicated to parents and staff for daily screening prior to attendance. Enhanced cleaning protocols including disinfection between groups embedded in plans for exclusive and shared spaces in our schools.

14. ***Childcares are approved to increase class cohorts from 10 to 15 people, inclusive of staff, beginning July 27, 2020.*** The Ministry has allowed this increase as the province moves from Stage 2 to Stage 3 gradually.

Transportation

15. ***The Toronto Student Transportation Group (TSTG) has met on several occasions with both boards to determine a transportation model for a return to school in September.*** The Ministry has provided guidelines that limit seating on busses should physical distancing be necessary in September. Boards have been encouraged to align their return models where a consortium exists.

16. ***Under full return and full capacity (Scenario 1a), all students are expected to receive transportation*** with PPE considerations and enhanced cleaning measures in place. A delay in providing full services would still be expected as bus driver shortages in September may be a factor. The delay to reaching 100% service could be anywhere from 1 to 10 weeks depending on the severity of bus driver shortages. Depending on the status of the pandemic in the adult working population, 100% service for the 2020-21 school year may never be achieved.

17. ***Under Scenario 1b and 2a or 2b, face to face returns with full cohorting and social distancing measures in place, transportation will be limited and will require a phased in model.*** Depending on the status of the pandemic in the adult working population and social distancing/cohorting requirements for students, 100% service for the 2020-21 school year will likely not be achieved.

18. ***The phased-in approach will require strict adherence in order to provide equitable treatment.*** Exceptions to eligibility are not recommended, for example: older siblings of younger grades or special needs students who are eligible.

19. ***Priorities and eligibility will be assessed through a phased in approach*** in the following manner:

Phase One: (will begin on Sept. 8)

- i. Special education students (prioritized for full day service regardless of model chosen)

- ii. Students who would otherwise have challenges taking transportation, such as medically fragile or immunocompromised
- iii. Students requiring some form of accommodation (sometimes this will be family status or safety/hazard/ family medical concerns

Phase 2: (could begin 2 – 4 weeks later if all other variables remain unchanged)

- iv. Our youngest and most vulnerable students (i.e. JK-Grade 2 or 3)

Phase 3: (could begin 6 – 8 weeks later if social distancing requirements are eased)

- v. After the above is accounted for, then we would look at the remaining eligible students

Phase 4:

- vi. If there is any capacity remaining exceptions or empty seats will be considered late in the fall depending on the overall state of the service.

Health and Safety

20. The process for a return to school continues to be guided by advice received from the Ministry, Chief Medical Officer and Toronto Public Health.

21. Procurement of supplies is underway including cloth and non-surgical masks, gloves, face shields and hand sanitizer. The Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (MGCS) has provided boards with a method for centralized procurement of many PPE items and cleaning supplies. MGCS has indicated that a full month's supply of PPE, as identified in board weekly reports, will be delivered by August 15th. The TCDSB continues the regular procurement process for items not covered by the MGCS process.

22. PPE is being clarified and identified for each job function. These items will be catalogued and included in instructional materials for staff and parents.

23. Isolation Rooms have been identified in each school building and will be confirmed through consultation with school principals. Each room will be equipped with a PPE kit including mask, gloves, gown, face shield and no-touch thermometer.

24. ***Signage encouraging proper hand hygiene and physical distancing as well as floor markings will be placed in school buildings to assist with direction flow of students and staff.*** Further advice from the Ministry and/or TPH may require changes/replacement/additional signage.

Financial Considerations

25. ***Most of the return school scenarios can be handled by existing budget allocations with some minimal (\$5 to \$15M) supplementation from the Ministry of Education.*** For Example: additional cleaning, PPE, loss of permit revenue, loss of International Student fees.

26. ***If a Full Return with distancing measures (Scenario 1B) is the chosen method for return to school, the following additional financial impact should be considered:***

Teachers	1,000 to 1,200 FTE	\$100M to \$120M
Custodial	75 to 145 FTE	\$5M to \$9.5M
PPE		\$3.7M
Cleaning Supplies		\$250K to \$500K
Total		\$109M to \$134M

Communications

27. ***A survey was issued to parents June 22 to receive input regarding potential models and willingness to attend via school bus support. Results:***

- a. ***a preference for a return to a classroom environment either through full return or partial return.***
- b. ***Of the responses from families typically eligible for transportation, approximately half would be likely to resume bussing with a quarter of respondents unsure at the time of the survey.***
- c. ***Parents indicated that they would likely opt for parent drop-off if transportation was not available.***

28. ***A second survey was issued to parents July 13 (Survey #2, Appendix ‘D’) to determine preference should an Adaptive Model (Scenario 2) be the direction of the Ministry.***

- d. *Preliminary results indicate that families are split* on alternating students between in-class and distance learning bi-weekly and alternating students between in-class and distance learning within the school week.
 - e. For secondary, families are split into thirds for a blended model, continued distance learning and full time return to school
29. *Parents will continue to receive regular* updates via School Messenger, the TCDSB website (COVID-19 webpage) and social media channels.
30. *A survey will be issued to families on July 24* to confirm registration for September, intent to physically attend school or distance learning, and intent to use transportation.

E. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1. *Considerations regarding implementation of these models have already been reviewed with staff and union partners in draft form on a regular basis.* Although OECTA representatives cannot make formal recommendations to these models due to the ongoing provincial discussions, staff have been attentive to local collective agreements in calculating time-bound duties of staff during the course of the day.
2. *Discussion with staff who monitor student attendance audits and instructional time have provided further input to these models.* Although there are outstanding questions to Ministry staff, the models presented have passed initial vetting by these school calendar specialists.
3. *Staff remains committed to all stakeholder groups including principals and parents.* Principal groups have been instrumental in providing feedback to these models and will be instrumental in leading local implementation. Parents have been updated concerning the process that will lead to a decisive model to be adopted. They will continue to be important partners and contributors through surveys and other feedback opportunities.
4. *Staff have been and will continue to be in direct communication with Toronto Public Health to receive their guidance and opinion regarding the nature of COVID-19.* These frequent interactions have impacted staff recommendations and future steps regarding the return to school models.

5. *A senior provincial representative will meet with the school planning team on behalf of the Minister of Education on July 28.* The discussion will centre around recommended models for each scenario. The Ministry is expected to provide a decision by August 4.
6. *Staff will continue to provide timely communications to Trustees* regarding the implementation planning for September 2020 return to school.

F. IMPLEMENTATION, STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

1. *A Return to School guidebook will be provided to staff and parents.* This guide will provide clear definitions, roles and procedures associated with returning to school during the pandemic.
2. *Engagement with stakeholder groups will continue during the summer to provide input into the guide and to plan appropriate aspects of return to school.* With approval of the 2020-21 school year calendar, the three professional development days preceding Labour Day will be vital opportunities for staff training and information. The re-purposing of these days to these themes will require Ministry approval.
3. *Parent voice will continue to be heard through an additional survey regarding confirmation of registration intentions.* Additionally, the board continues to provide updates and frequently asked questions and answers on the board website.
4. *Local planning considerations will take place at the school level in late August in collaboration with school principals.* Input gained through continued consultation with stakeholders will be considered during this process.

G. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

1. That the following learning models for each scenario be approved for presentation to the Ministry of Education:

Scenario 1 – Full Return

Elementary – Model 1A – full return – regular class size

Secondary – Model A – Quad Model – 8-day cycle

Scenario 2 – Partial Return - Adaptive

Elementary – Model 2B – Alternating Days – MT, ThF, and alternating Wed

Secondary – Model A – Quad Model – 8-day cycle

Scenario 3 – Distance Learning

Elementary – Full Distance with check and connect

Secondary – Full Distance - Model A – Quad Model – 8-day cycle

2. That the Board approve the Transportation restrictions and phased approach detailed in the body of this report.